AKADEMİK PERSPEKTİFTEN SOSYOLOJİ

Editör: Doç.Dr.Yonca ALTINDAL

yaz
yayınları

Akademik Perspektiften Sosyoloji

Editör

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yaz
yayınları

2025

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İÇİNDEKİLER

THE DESIRE FOR INFINITE PLEASURE AND THE CRISIS OF MEANING: A PHILOSOPHICAL VIEW OF TODAY'S SOCIETY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The individual of the 21st century has access to pleasure and satisfaction in ways that may be unmatched by any previous era in history. Yet, simultaneously, they face a deep and pervasive crisis of meaning. Advances in technology, lifestyles shaped by digital connectivity, and endless opportunities for consumption appear to offer freedom to the modern person. However, this freedom often creates a paradox: individuals feel forced to make choices, yet they lack clarity about *why* they choose what they do. In this state, decision-making becomes detached from purpose or self-awareness. Modern humans no longer seek pleasure; they have also become beings haunted by the fear of not being able to access pleasure - a persistent dread of exclusion from the unending cycle of satisfactions that mark life today (Bauman, 2007).

The pleasure-centered understanding of life, deeply intertwined with modernity's process of secularization, has weakened individuals' ability to create meaning and intensified their sense of existential emptiness. Jean Baudrillard (1998) argues that consumer society transforms individuals into "sign-

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consumers," where pleasures no longer satisfy "real" needs but instead feed symbolic desires. In this way, individuals construct their identities not by reflecting on *why* they live but by fixating on *what* they consume.

This book chapter examines the ethical, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of modern humanity's pursuit of pleasure. Specifically, traditional and alternative life principles—such as the "ethics of contentment"—will be explored as potential solutions to this crisis. The approach here will not only critique contemporary morality but also demonstrate how modern lifestyles create a void in individuals' capacity to generate meaning.

Within this framework, the chapter will focus on the following core questions:

- How does the pursuit of pleasure shape the direction of individual lives in today's society?

- In what ways does consumer culture's constant production of pleasure create cycles of dissatisfaction within individuals?

- What is the "crisis of meaning," and how is it linked to broader societal transformations?

- What ethical and philosophical approaches could be developed to address this crisis?

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND: PLEASURE, MEANING, AND HUMAN EXISTENCE

Pursuing pleasure, one of the most powerful forces shaping modern life, is not as superficial a drive as it might seem. As noted in the introduction, this pursuit has evolved into a deep existential orientation beyond mere consumption behaviors.

Pleasure no longer serves only as a source of physical gratification but has become a vehicle for values tied to identity construction, social validation, and even meaning itself. For this reason, to understand the relationship between pleasure and meaning in contemporary society, we must first examine these concepts' philosophical roots and historical evolution.

2.1. The Concept of Pleasure: The Fluctuation Between Desire and Satisfaction

At its core, pleasure can be understood as the tendency of living beings to seek experiences they associate with pleasantness. In ancient Greek thought, this concept was explored extensively by Epicurus, who grounded his philosophy not in the pursuit of limitless indulgence, as often misunderstood, but in a balanced approach to pleasure. Epicurus's goal was not momentary pleasures but *ataraxia*, a state of inner calm and freedom from disturbance (Nussbaum, 1994). However, this measured perspective has faded mainly in modern society, replaced by a relentless cycle of dissatisfaction driven by ever-expanding desires.

Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian philosophy in the modern era assigned pleasure a more calculable and measurable value. According to Bentham, human nature inherently seeks pleasure and avoids pain; thus, the moral worth of an action should be judged by the total pleasure it generates (Bentham, 1988). Yet this quantitative framing of pleasure has stripped individuals of their connection to inner meaning, reducing them to mere agents of maximum benefit. From this point onward, pleasure ceased to be a moral good and became a numerical measure of performance.

2.2. The Search for Meaning: The Call of a Soul Unsatisfied by Pleasure

Turning to pleasure does not always align with the pursuit of meaning. On the contrary, a lack of meaning can intensify an

individual's reliance on pleasure. Viktor Frankl's concept of "logotherapy," developed from his experiences in concentration camps, offers a critical framework here: humans, he argues, are driven by a search for meaning in all circumstances, and this search is the most powerful motivation for survival (Frankl, 2017). For Frankl, pleasure is fleeting, while meaning is a foundational element of existence.

Within this framework, Charles Taylor explains the modern individual's identity crisis as a result of the collapse of "horizons of meaning." In traditional societies, individuals found their place and purpose within structures like religion, family, and community. Modernity, however, has dissolved these fixed frameworks of meaning. As a result, the individual becomes a subject forced to construct their existence solely through personal choices, yet lacks a clear basis for making those choices (Taylor, 1989).

2.3. Asceticism and Hedonism: Two Opposing Faces of Life

To better understand the relationship between pleasure and meaning, we must examine historical philosophies of life such as asceticism and hedonism. Asceticism refers to the practice of self-discipline through avoiding worldly pleasures. Max Weber extensively analyzed how this concept transformed into the ethics of modern capitalism. According to Weber, the Protestant ethic—particularly its Calvinist interpretation— framed worldly success as a sacred duty, thereby turning religious asceticism into a form of practical, worldly rationality (Weber, 2002). This process gave rise to a way of life that appeared disciplined but was ultimately focused on worldly gains. Over time, this duality dissolved, transforming individuals into subjects obsessed solely with achievement and pleasure. In this context, modern hedonism has strayed far from the moderate, selective

understanding of pleasure advocated by classical hedonist thinkers. Instead, it has become an economy of pleasure driven by endlessly stimulated desires that consume the self (Campbell, 2020).

2.4. The Transformation of Pleasure into Spectacle: Identity, Image, and Consumption

Pleasure is no longer merely a sensory experience—it has become a spectacle. Jean Baudrillard argues that consumer societies operate not on fundamental human needs but on symbolic value. For example, a perfume is not about scent but the image of the "attractive woman"; a car is not a means of transportation but a symbol of "success" and "power" (Baudrillard, 1998). In this symbolic world, individuals constantly pursue proving themselves, staying visible, and appealing to others' approval. This shift makes the search for pleasure increasingly abstract, more profound, and insatiable. Pleasure is no longer an experience but a performance—a social media post, an object of display. Meanwhile, meaning quietly retreats from the stage.

3. THE CONSTRUCTION OF PLEASURE IN MODERN SOCIETY**

The concept of pleasure has evolved into a foundational axis shaping not only individual psychology but also economic structures, social relations, and cultural norms in contemporary societies. Today, pleasure is no longer merely an experience but a systematic mode of organization—a social construct. This construct traps individuals in the role of consumers by perpetually stimulating their desires. Within the cycle of production and consumption, the pursuit of pleasure is structured to ensure the continuity of the system (Zuboff, 2019).

3.1. The Simulation of Pleasure on Digital Platforms: Infinite Scrolling and Instant Gratification

Digital platforms exemplify the most visible manifestations of modern pleasure constructs. Social media applications—Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter)—offer users an endless cycle of micro-pleasures through features like "infinite scrolling." With each swipe, the user encounters new visuals, videos, or social validation, increasing dopamine levels. However, this fleeting satisfaction quickly dissolves, leaving a renewed sense of emptiness (Alter, 2017). This cycle shifts the individual's focus toward pleasure-centric engagement while eroding cognitive processes such as deep reflection, patience, and constructing meaning.

Moreover, these platforms transform into stages where individuals seek pleasure and perform it. Dynamics such as receiving likes, being shared, or "trending" equate an individual's sense of purpose with visibility and interaction metrics. This phenomenon has contributed to significant increases in anxiety disorders, body image issues, and depression rates, particularly among adolescents and young adults (Twenge et al., 2018; APA, 2023).

3.2. Advertising, Desire, and the Production of Artificial Needs

Within capitalist systems, pleasure is not merely a demand but a commodified product. Advertising is a primary tool that shapes and exploits individuals' pursuit of pleasure. Before a product is sold, the "lifestyle" associated with it is marketed: coffee is no longer just a beverage but a symbol of "freedom," and perfume is not merely a scent but an embodiment of "seduction." As Jean Baudrillard noted, modern consumer objects derive their value not from utility but from their symbolic significance (Baudrillard, 1998).

A concrete example of this is influencer marketing. Today, many products are promoted through social media personalities, who frame consumption as a lifestyle practice—even an ethical norm. For instance, in 2023, brands like L'Oréal and Gucci allocated 65% of their advertising budgets to influencer campaigns (Likhareva & Kulpin, 2018). This reflects how consumption is coded as a form of "self-expression," with individuals' desires systematically directed by external forces.

3.3. Identity, Performance, and the Social Display of Pleasure

Pleasure-centric systems reshape not only our bodies but also our identities. Through the lens of Judith Butler's concept of "performativity," identity today is constructed not through fixed traits but through performances rooted in visibility, likes, and social approval (Butler, 1990). Actions such as dancing on TikTok, sharing filtered selfies on Instagram, or posting "daily routines" on YouTube have become expressions of identity.

These performances are directly tied to pleasure and validation. For example, Dumas et al. (2017) found that young people often distort their authentic experiences to create content that is likely to garner likes. Thus, pleasure becomes a tool not only for projecting oneself to the world but also for self-deception.

3.4. The Aestheticization of Consumption Over Ethics

Traditional societal structures regulated consumption through moral boundaries, whereas modern society reduces these boundaries to aesthetic preferences. Even movements like "minimalism" are no longer ethical lifestyles but vehicles for curating a specific aesthetic image. Simple furniture from IKEA, organic products, or "low carbon footprint" foods are often acquired not for ethical reasons but as markers of prestige (Soper, 2023). Through these aesthetic choices, individuals derive

pleasure and seek existential satisfaction by convincing themselves they are "living correctly." However, as long as this satisfaction remains tied to new forms of consumption produced by the system, it becomes a self-consuming cycle.

4. THE CRISIS OF MEANING AND SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS

The constant stimulation of desires, fleeting satisfactions, and performative displays offered by a pleasure-driven society redirects individuals toward external gratifications while eroding their internal sense of meaning. Modern individuals are left grappling with the loss of fixed norms defining what is "good" or "right," turning instead to value systems rooted in performance, visibility, and success. However, these metrics generate perpetual comparison and feelings of inadequacy rather than enriching existential purpose (Rosa, 2019).

4.1. Deepening Meaninglessness: From Achievement to Burnout

In modern society, pursuing meaning in life is often conflated with performance. Yet every achievement sets a new benchmark, fueling an endless cycle of escalating expectations. This dynamic has led to widespread "corporate burnout," particularly among high-pressure white-collar workers. For instance, a 2021 McKinsey study revealed that 42% of female white-collar employees in the U.S. and Europe could not find a "meaningful life purpose," leading them to question their careers (Thomas et al., 2021).

Similarly, the concept of "quiet quitting"—where individuals strictly adhere to job descriptions while resisting extra demands imposed by the system—has gained traction. Such behaviors stem not from economic motives but existential ones,

reflecting individuals' questioning of their place within societal structures.

4.2. Inner Void in the Digital Age of Spectacle

Social media platforms have become stages where individuals seek pleasure and construct their identities. On platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn, users no longer merely consume content—they showcase their values, bodies, and achievements. However, this relentless quest for visibility ties self-worth to external validation. A 2022 Oxford University study found that individuals spending over five hours weekly on social media reported higher levels of emptiness and purposelessness in daily life (Orben et al., 2019).

The most popular social media content often consists of superficial, easily digestible posts that deliver instant gratification. Yet consuming such content rarely fosters lasting fulfillment; instead, it reinforces a compulsion to prove oneself constantly. Experiences unshared are deemed "unlived," transforming subjective time into a script shaped by external approval (Han, 2017).

4.3. New Psychological Pathologies: Pain Born of Emptiness

The void of meaning is not merely psychological distress but an increasingly somaticized mental state. Phenomena like "emotional fatigue" and "existential numbness," now recognized in psychiatric literature, are particularly prevalent among young adults (Yalom, 2008). Recent studies highlight alarming trends in the search for meaning among university students. A 2021 Iranian study found that 95% of medical students lacked or had abandoned a sense of life purpose, signaling a potentially catastrophic psychological condition (Mahdavinoor et al., 2022). Similarly, research in Mexico revealed that 51.5% of new university students grappled with uncertainty and existential

emptiness (Chan Chi, 2021). In Sweden, a study on coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic found nature-based approaches most common among university communities (Ahmadi et al., 2022). Earlier research linked intrinsic motivation to greater well-being, life purpose, and academic success in first-year students, while apathy correlated with poor outcomes (Bailey & Phillips, 2016). These findings underscore the urgency of addressing meaning and motivation to support mental health and academic achievement.

4.4. Societal Reflections: The Collective Cost of Meaninglessness

The erosion of meaning is not merely an individual void but a risk of societal fragmentation. As shared frameworks of meaning that foster a sense of "we" weaken, distrust, polarization, and apathy rise. This trend is evident in voter behavior across Western Europe and North America. For example, in Germany's 2023 local elections, over 32% of young voters abstained for the first time, with many citing a belief that "nothing holds meaning anymore" (Addeo et al., 2024).

Meaninglessness also manifests in growing nihilistic tendencies. Japan's "hikikomori" phenomenon (social withdrawal) is interpreted not just as individual isolation but as a reaction to systemic dysfunction. Similarly, the spread of "doomer" culture in the U.S., where youth adopt a deeply pessimistic view of the future, reflects the digital and cultural imprint of the meaning crisis (Teo, 2010).

5. AN ALTERNATIVE ETHIC: THE MORALITY OF CONTENTMENT AND ACTIVE ASCETICISM

In today's world, characterized by pleasure-driven and consumption-oriented lifestyles, individuals face a profound loss of meaning, increasing environmental degradation, and growing social alienation. In response, ethical traditions from both Eastern and Western cultures are being re-evaluated around the principles of moderation, simplicity, and inner richness. The morality of contentment and active asceticism offers two distinct yet complementary responses to this existential and social crisis. These ethical models manifest across different cultures in varied forms and potentially transform life on both individual and collective levels.

5.1. The Morality of Contentment: "Sufficiency" as an Intercultural Virtue

In Islamic moral philosophy, contentment is not merely an economic attitude but also a form of spiritual liberation. Al-Ghazālī defines contentment as "freedom from the slavery of the world" (Gazzâlî, 1981). Similarly, in the Confucian tradition, the principle of moderation (*zhōng yōng*) lies at the heart of virtuous living; it encourages individuals to avoid excess and establish a harmonious internal and external balance (Tu, 1985).

Contemporary applications of this principle can be seen in policies such as *Buen Vivir* ("Good Living") in Argentina. Inspired by the daily practices of Indigenous communities, this approach considers the consumption of more than what is necessary to be ethically inappropriate. It emphasizes responsibility toward community, nature, and future generations (Gudynas, 2011).

In Turkey, an illustrative case is the "Tatlarin Women's Cooperative for Production and Enterprise," founded in the

village of Tatlarin in Nevşehir. This cooperative enables women to build a sustainable production-consumption cycle that is in harmony with nature and rooted in the principles of "take only what you need, share, and live simply." These women produce mushrooms in traditional cave dwellings, contributing to their household incomes and sharing their yields with the community. This practice closely aligns with the ethics of contentment and moderation in Islamic and Confucian traditions (Alkan, 2025).

5.2. Active Asceticism: Gaining Freedom Through Ethical Boundaries

Active asceticism refers to the deliberate imposition of ethical limits on the modern individual's pace of life and pursuit of pleasure. It is not confined to religious retreats or monasteries; rather, it is a way of living that is possible in cities, digital spaces, and shopping malls.

An example from Turkey is the *Cittaslow* movement in Seferihisar, which represents a collective and ethical stand against the culture of speed imposed by consumer society. Principles such as slow living, local production, neighborly relations, and modest consumption embody a metropolitan form of active asceticism (Tunçer & Olgun, 2017).

Similarly, in Japan, the *Danshari* movement promotes a lifestyle in which individuals intentionally avoid accumulating unnecessary possessions. Following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake, this approach gained significant traction among Japanese citizens, symbolizing both simplification and a quest for meaningful connection and psychological balance (Kondo, 2014).

5.3. The Psychological Basis of Contentment: Gratitude, Balance, and Solidarity

Contentment is not simply a behavioral stance but a psychological structure rooted in specific emotions—gratitude, balance, and solidarity. It is formed through the individual's ability to make meaning from what they already possess, to recognize the presence of others, and to align with a shared sense of good. In this light, Mevlânâ's principle "Eat little, sleep little, speak little" serves as a call for inner awareness and guidance for living in harmony with the world (Eroğlu, 2022). This ethos encourages individuals to minimize excessive action and reconnect with their essence.

Supporting this, the results of an 80-year longitudinal study by Harvard University indicate that individuals who lead simple lives but maintain strong social bonds report significantly higher levels of life satisfaction and meaning than those who live in material abundance (Waldinger & Schulz, 2023).

5.4. Collective Practices of Contentment and Ascetic Ethics

These ethical approaches do not merely inform individual decisions; they also shape collective forms of living. Across the globe, civil, local, and cultural organizations are implementing these ethical transformations.

In Italy, for instance, the *Bologna Urban Gardens Project* encourages urban agriculture to promote simple living, cooperative production, and harmonious interaction with the natural environment. It exemplifies a community-based active asceticism (Casadei & Bazzocchi, 2018).

In Turkey, the *TaTuTa Ecological Farms Network* promotes ecological living by encouraging volunteers to

contribute physical labor and reflect on and reconsider their consumption habits (Altunsoy, 2022).

Meanwhile, in Germany, "Slow Tech" initiatives in certain schools promote designated device-free days during the week. These programs aim to reduce dependence on digital technologies, instead cultivating virtues such as focus, patience, and introspection (Jacobs, 2023).

These collective examples show that contentment and ascetic ethics are not limited to individual behavior but can serve as the basis for reimagining community life, challenging dominant cultural narratives of constant consumption and productivity.

6. DISCUSSION

The structure of contemporary society, which compels individuals to pursue pleasure relentlessly, may suggest that this cultural framework is organized around personal desires. However, in reality, the quest for gratification is rooted in individual psychology and structural and hegemonic forces. Digital platforms, media, advertising, and consumer economies continuously stimulate individual desires, thereby contributing to the system's reproduction. At this juncture, the notion that individuals make "free" choices is essentially an illusion, as they are subtly guided toward predetermined living patterns (Baudrillard, 1998; Althusser, 1971). Althusser's theory of ideological apparatuses explains this process by arguing that even when individuals feel "free," they become conduits for systemic norms. In this context, the importance of ethical alternatives to the gratification culture becomes increasingly critical. Contentment (*kanaat*) ethics and active asceticism emerge as powerful tools that enable individuals to question the values embedded within the prevailing consumption system and reinterpret the meaning of their lives. Contentment, in this sense,

is not merely material restraint but an act of redefining what is truly valuable. Taylor (1989) highlights the weakening of meaning-making mechanisms in modern identity, noting that individuals increasingly prioritize transient preferences over enduring values. Contentment, however, serves as an ethical framework that redirects individuals toward their internal reference points. In Turkish-Islamic thought, this ethical stance is seen as an economic choice and a form of liberation. According to Al-Ghazâlî (1981), contentment does not entail rejecting worldly goods but rather freeing one's heart from enslavement. Yunus Emre's poetic lines, *"Owner of wealth, owner of property / Where is its original owner?"* encapsulate this idea succinctly. In contrast to the transient satisfactions offered by a pleasure-driven society, contentment represents not deprivation but intentional simplicity and conscious moderation—a means to reconstruct meaning.

In this light, contentment transcends individual virtue, becoming a metaphysical interpretation of existence. Modern individuals often relate to existence through possession and consumption. Contentment, however, embodies an awareness of life's impermanence, the illusion of ownership, and the distinction between need and desire. In Islamic thought, this awareness is achieved by maintaining spiritual distance from worldly temptations and directing devotion solely toward the Divine. Thus, contentment becomes a liberating inner discipline with the potential to dissolve dependencies tied to consumption.

Active asceticism represents the practical application of contentment. This ethical stance involves consciously setting boundaries around desires and consumption habits without withdrawing from societal life. It aligns with Michel Foucault's (1992) concept of ethical practices as interventions in processes of self-formation, emphasizing internal regulation of desires. Active asceticism is not an external imposition but a self-directed

discipline that fosters liberation. Byung-Chul Han's (2017) critique of neoliberal culture, which transforms individuals into "performance subjects" burdened with endless self-optimization, underscores the urgency of such ethical practices. Asceticism, then, redefines freedom rather than rejecting it.

These ethical practices also enhance psychological resilience. Research indicates that individuals embracing simple and content lifestyles exhibit lower stress and anxiety levels, greater emotional balance, and stronger community ties (Waldinger & Schulz, 2023). This reveals contentment as an ethical stance and a psychological anchor, enabling individuals to cultivate a stable sense of self amid rapid change and construct meaning from within, rather than being swayed by shifting desires. The transformative potential of these ethics is amplified when applied collectively. Local production-consumption networks, eco-villages, minimalist communities, and "slow city" movements demonstrate their societal viability. For instance, Cittaslow practices in Seferihisar and Japan's Danshari movement illustrate how these principles can manifest as lived realities (Altunsoy, 2022; Kondo, 2014).

The relationship between contemporary technology and ethics must also be reimagined. Contentment operates not through scarcity but through intentionality. Digital tools, too, can be ethically regulated: social media fasting, screen-time limits, and offline days represent modern forms of active asceticism. This demonstrates that ethical living is not confined to the past but can be consciously reinvented.

Nevertheless, challenges persist. The normalization of gratification culture through media and technology complicates societal acceptance of contentment and asceticism, which are often dismissed as "regressive" or "nostalgic escapism" (Zuboff, 2019). Sustaining these ethics demands high self-awareness,

discipline, and willpower—qualities requiring cultural and educational transformation. Yet these limitations do not diminish their significance. Despite the hegemony of consumerism, contentment and asceticism hold critical potential for psychological well-being, social solidarity, and planetary sustainability. They redefine not only consumption but also relationships, time use, definitions of success, and humanity's connection to nature. Contentment asserts that individuals can attain wholeness without comparison to others or exploitation of nature. Active asceticism translates this wholeness into practice. Together, they represent personal boundaries and a rediscovery of existential freedom.

7. CONCLUSION

This study examined the "age of pleasure" not merely as a lifestyle choice but as a multi-layered cultural, economic, psychological, and ontological structure shaping modern life. The pursuit of endless pleasure does not lead to fulfillment; rather, it traps individuals in chronic dissatisfaction and integrates them into a social order that constantly demands performance. In such a system, the crisis of meaning is no longer seen as a disruption but almost as a natural condition of human existence. In a digital society, pleasure is not simply an experience—it becomes a display, a mode of self-representation, and, in many cases, a form of power performance. As such, instead of helping individuals establish a coherent sense of self, pleasure often leads to fragmentation and a relentless search for external validation.

To counter this fragility, the ethical approach advocated throughout this work is grounded in the morality of contentment and the practice of active asceticism. Contentment is not simply about material restraint, but about reconfiguring the value of life through meaningful connections rather than possessions. On the

other hand, active asceticism does not call for withdrawal from society but enables liberation through the conscious application of ethical boundaries in response to the overstimulation of modern life. These approaches carry transformative potential—not only for individual well-being but also for community solidarity, environmental sustainability, and emotional balance. Within this framework, several practical recommendations come to the fore.

At the individual level:

- Digital mindfulness practices, such as digital fasting, notification detoxes, and unplugged days, should be promoted to help individuals regain control over their time and attention.

- Simplicity-focused living groups and ecological awareness seminars should be supported in urban areas to encourage shared experiences and ethical habits of moderation.

- Approaches to psychological well-being should prioritize meaning-oriented frameworks rather than relying solely on pharmaceutical or clinical solutions, especially in addressing existential voids.

At the societal and institutional level:

- The education system should incorporate ethical consumption, contentment, digital awareness, and slow-living content. Modules on digital media literacy, values education, and ecological ethics can integrate these topics into middle and higher education.

- Local governments should prioritize projects that promote simple living, neighborly relations, slow city practices, ecological production, and barter economies. As demonstrated by the example of Seferihisar in Turkey,

such initiatives have the power to foster both environmental responsibility and cultural consciousness.

- Social policies should be restructured to focus on economic growth and overall quality of life. Rather than incentivizing consumption, public policy should support community-based solidarity through cooperatives and shared ownership models.

This study's theoretical and conceptual conclusions also provide a solid foundation for future empirical and interdisciplinary research. Several potential areas for investigation include:

- **The psychological impact of contentment and simple living practices:** How do contentment-based lifestyles affect stress, anxiety, and life satisfaction levels across different age groups?

- **The contemporary interpretation of contentment in Turkish-Islamic culture:** How do the teachings of figures such as al-Ghazālī, Yunus Emre, and Mevlânâ relate to today's existential and social crises?

- **The social impact of local anti-consumption movements:** How do initiatives like TaTuTa Ecological Farms, women-led cooperatives, and sharing economies influence people's sense of meaning, emotional balance, and relationship with nature?

- **The influence of pleasure-centered digital culture on youth:** Qualitative studies with high school and university students can examine how phenomena such as FOMO (fear of missing out), digital self-construction, aesthetic pressure, and the performativity of identity shape emerging generations.

- **The influence of contentment and ascetic ethics on urban planning and architecture:** How do minimalist design, shared living spaces, and multi-use environments affect behavioral and psychological patterns?

These solutions and research suggestions underscore that the crisis of meaning is not merely an individual ailment but a systemic rupture that demands deep reflection and collective transformation. The morality of contentment and active asceticism is not a romantic ideal from the past; they represent essential foundations for future models of sustainable, cooperative, and meaningful living. In light of this, we must ask a critical question of our times: Can we truly remain human by consuming more, or by living more deeply and building meaning instead?

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THE GENDERED NATURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS IN TÜRKİYE[1]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is widely acknowledged as a critical factor in shaping global economies and societies. It serves not only as a driver of economic growth and job creation but also as a platform for social change. As economies evolve, entrepreneurship has become an essential vehicle for fostering innovation and improving national welfare (Balaban and Özdemir, 2008). More recently, scholars like Audretsch have highlighted the transformative impact of entrepreneurship, particularly in how it drives economic changes, fosters competitiveness, and creates new opportunities for growth.

A crucial dimension of entrepreneurship is its potential to challenge traditional gender roles. Women, through entrepreneurial ventures, are able to achieve financial independence, balance family responsibilities with work, and break through barriers that have historically limited their career

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[1] This article is produced from the thesis titled "The Gender of Entrepreneurship: A Qualitative Analysis on Entrepreneurship in Türkiye", written by the first author under the supervision of the second author; and submitted to Ondokuz Mayıs University.

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advancements. The ability for women to scale the 'glass ceiling' in their careers and assert themselves as competitive economic players is increasingly recognized as a vital contributor to national economic development (Harper, 1991; Audretsch, 1999). This dynamic offers an invaluable opportunity to rethink the intersection of gender and entrepreneurship, ensuring that women are not only seen as contributors but as key drivers of economic and social change.

This study, therefore, aims to explore the motivations, challenges, and personal traits of women entrepreneurs in Türkiye, with a special focus on how these factors relate to gender equality within the entrepreneurial landscape. By examining 74 academic studies on female entrepreneurship in Türkiye, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers and opportunities that shape the entrepreneurial experiences of women, and how these experiences intersect with broader societal shifts toward gender equality.

Through this analysis, the study hopes to shed light on the evolving role of women in entrepreneurship and advocate for a more inclusive and equitable environment that supports the full potential of women entrepreneurs.

2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TÜRKIYE

Beginning with the founding of the Republic in 1923, there was a national drive in Türkiye towards creating a cadre of entrepreneurs that was evidenced by decisions at the Izmir Economy Congress on March 4, 1923. From 1923 to 1930, there was an effort at creating a counterweight to the predominance of foreign firms and promoting entrepreneurship. A landmark in industrialization was the "Promotion of Industry Law," passed in 1927, which allowed private companies to establish factories and permitted national banks (Kayıran and Saygın, 2019).

Whereas the period between 1970 and 1980 was one of import subcontracting, it proved not to be that much of a setback as the decline in public investment during this time was compensated for by vast industrialization and private-sector entrepreneurship (Danışık, 2001). The important phases of entrepreneurship in Türkiye were rooted in the 1980s, with policy changes effected through the January 24, 1980, economic development package, establishing an export-based strategy dovetailing entrepreneurship and export-oriented enterprise into the free market economic system (Özdemir, 2007).

Foreign trade policy in the 1980s was oriented toward increasing exports and liberalization of international trade. Customs duties were reduced, and quantitative import restrictions are gradually removed. In the 1990s, this role of the state in the economy was growing; it caused growing uncertainty. Despite that, the startup scene in Türkiye grew rapidly. Entry into the Customs Union required business owners to develop strategies for foreign trade, emphasizing language skills, international marketing, and competitiveness (Müftüoğlu, 2001).

In the early 21st century, rapid developments in science and technology increased the economic importance of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship, emphasizing human intellectual production and individual-based entrepreneurship (Yıldız, 2020).

Entrepreneurship in Türkiye has evolved significantly over the years, becoming a driving force for economic growth and development. The sector is increasingly diversified, with prominent contributions from the services, trade, industry, and technology sectors. As of 2020, the service sector holds the largest share in the entrepreneurial landscape, while technology and digital enterprises are rapidly expanding. Despite this, there is also a notable rise in entrepreneurship within manufacturing and

industrial sectors, with a significant focus on export-oriented ventures. The distribution of entrepreneurship across different sectors in Türkiye reflects the changing dynamics of the economy and workforce (TÜİK, 2021).

In recent years, women's participation in entrepreneurship has also gained momentum. Women entrepreneurs in Türkiye primarily operate within the service sector, including retail trade, healthcare, and education. However, they face various challenges, such as limited access to financial resources, mentorship opportunities, and social norms that may hinder their growth. To support and empower female entrepreneurs, various government-backed projects and private sector initiatives have been developed, providing them with the tools needed to achieve economic independence and succeed in their ventures. Understanding the role of women in entrepreneurship is crucial to comprehending the full scope of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Türkiye, especially in light of the growing emphasis on gender equality and inclusive economic growth (Özdemir and Yıldız, 2021).

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A female entrepreneur is a woman who runs her company, produces goods and services, solves problems of business encounters, adapts to changes, and seeks sector experience. Participation rates for women, despite increasing involvement in business, are still lower than that of men. Many women enter self-employment to balance professional goals and family commitments (Arslan and Toksoy, 2017).

While women entrepreneurs share some of the elements of male entrepreneurs, the former are basically different as they are

committed to home and business simultaneously. Women entrepreneurs respect others' opinions more than their male counterparts. They are conservative, sensitive, and nervous. They are readily available for consultation and have a feeling of empathy compared to entrepreneurs. The advantages that entrepreneurship offers, freedom, financial opportunities or job opportunities, are material and ethical benefits (Soysal, 2010).

According to the March 2023 Labour Force Statistics, the employment rate for women aged 15 and over was 30.7%, while that for men was 66.0%. The current data on labor force dynamics thus shows a slight increase compared to previous years. The average number of years that women participate in work has increased, and in 2018 it was 19 years on average, longer than previous periods. Of course, support to women still has some obstacles, where recently only 3% of women who are entrepreneurs had to give up their entrepreneurial effort due to many challenges and problems in the process of scaling up their business (TÜİK, 2023).

In Turkey, geographical differences in women's labor force participation rates are clearly observed. For example, provinces in the Black Sea region (Ordu, Giresun, Trabzon, Rize, and Artvin) exhibit the highest participation rates, while regions like Southeastern Anatolia show lower rates (TÜGİAD, 2020).

In terms of education, the majority of female entrepreneurs have a high level of education; according to a 2019 study by the Turkey Women Entrepreneurs Association (KAGİDER), 90% of female entrepreneurs have at least a university degree or equivalent education (KAGİDER, 2019).

In terms of economic contribution, female entrepreneurs accounted for 17.4% of the total entrepreneurs in Turkey in 2023, reflecting the increasing economic contribution of women. Socially, female entrepreneurship supports gender equality by

improving women's social status and increasing their financial independence. This situation enhances income distribution within families, raising overall welfare levels. Additionally, female entrepreneurs create social capital, strengthen support networks, and develop solidarity networks within communities (Dünya Bankası, 2023)

Where gender and development are concerned, the process of economic and social development remains incomplete and surpassingly fragile without meaningful participation from women. Women make up half of Türkiye's population; as such, failing to exploit this potential in terms of knowledge, talents, and experiences will be a great loss. Entrepreneurship offers activities in the line of economic activities in which women could be involved, and female entrepreneurship is currently taking center stage considering the fight against massive unemployment and poverty. Integrating female entrepreneurs into the workforce improves the country's economic efficiency (Keskin, 2014).

Countries like Sweden, Finland, and Rwanda have shown how female entrepreneurship can significantly contribute to national development. For example, Sweden's supportive policies for gender equality have led to increased female participation in businesses, particularly in sectors like technology and health services. In Rwanda, women account for over 50% of entrepreneurs, and their contributions have been crucial in the country's post-genocide recovery and economic growth. These countries have demonstrated that empowering women entrepreneurs not only strengthens the economy but also promotes social stability, increases employment, and helps alleviate poverty. By fostering female entrepreneurship, these nations have enhanced their economic efficiency and global competitiveness (World Bank, 2012).

As to Türkiye, women are involved in key high-responsibility economic spheres in contemporary Türkiye. They enjoy greater working conditions and benefit from related legal protection that, in turn, contributes to their involvement in the shifting labor market. Popularization of women's entrepreneurship in Türkiye began in the second half of the 1990s, though complete information about the problem was missing. It is presumed that the belated development of women's entrepreneurship in Türkiye has been caused by a lack of theoretical and empirical inquiries into the topic. Nevertheless, in the recent past, interest and knowledge of women's entrepreneurship have been growing rapidly with the increasing influence of public and commercial institutions, and non-governmental groups (TÜİK, 2022). The 2023 "Women in Statistics" research by the Turkish Statistical Institute shows that this inequality in labor force participation remains very far from being closed. Accordingly, whereas the women's involvement percentage is 35.1 percent, that of men stands at 71.4 percent. In particular, this gap is even more generalized among mothers with small children, where only 28% get opportunities to work, while the rate stands at 90.5 percent among fathers in similar situations (TÜİK, 2023).

There are several reasons for the inequality in labor force participation and possible solutions to address this issue in Türkiye. Some of the key reasons include women's domestic responsibilities, deeply rooted gender roles, inequalities in education, societal norms that hinder women's participation in the workforce, and gender discrimination in workplaces (Çınar, 2019). Additionally, a significant factor preventing women from joining the labor force is the lack of adequate childcare services and flexible work models.

To address these issues, various solutions have been proposed. Strengthening social policies such as flexible working

hours, remote work options, and parental leave are suggested to encourage women's labor force participation (İşçi, 2018). Furthermore, increasing the availability of state-supported daycare services can facilitate women's entry into the workforce. Promoting gender equality through educational programs and implementing equal practices in workplaces are also important steps (Yılmaz, 2020).

These solutions not only aim to increase women's participation in the labor force and reduce inequality but can also have a positive impact on overall economic development.

Understanding how women fare globally is important in advancing gender equity and achieving development that includes all. A host of complementary reports, such as the UNDP Human Development Index, OECD assessments, and analyses from the World Economic Forum, shed different lights on how issues are faring globally for women.

The UNDP Human Development Index is but one of the broader yardsticks by which human development can be measured, according to key indicators about life expectancy, education, and per capita income. The shift in the ranking of Türkiye to position 45 in the 2024 report out of the 193 countries shows how long a way the country has covered in many development areas and, more importantly, in the area of gender equality. The ranking equally opens a window to persisting challenges, most especially on women's rights and empowerment. While this is true that Türkiye has made immense progress, such challenges still prevail regarding gender-based violence, education, and access to health and underrepresentation in decision-making. Beating such challenges will, therefore, call for sustained efforts to ensure gender equality and opportunities for women in all walks of life (UNDP, 2024).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development regularly publishes enlightening reports on gender equality, analyzing indicators of economic participation, political representation, and health and education. Details of the 2023 report on where Türkiye ranked could not be found, but more general trends do indicate that Turkish women face the same set of continued barriers to participating fully and equally in society as many other countries around the world do. These are challenges based on very fundamental gender biases, ranging in nature from wage disparities on the one end to certain discriminating laws and practices on the other. Indeed, the holistic approaches toward meeting such calls are extenuative legislative reforms, societal initiatives, and changes in the cultural outlook toward gender roles (OECD, 2023).

In this regard, women's entrepreneurship is a force for economic growth and women's empowerment globally, according to insights procured by the WEF Global Gender Gap Report. This leading report sheds light on some of the challenges and opportunities of women entrepreneurs, underlining the acute need to bridge gender gaps in business networks and resource and financing access. Today, barriers persist, many of which include cultural biases, lack of access to funding, and unfair opportunities for scaling ventures (WEF, 2022).

The analysis nonetheless brings out a positive relationship between higher education attainment and female participation in the labor market. In this regard, the participation rate for women holding higher education degrees stands way above at 68.8%. This explains that more women work part-time jobs compared to men; 16.1% of employed women compared to 6.7% of employed males (TÜİK, 2023).

The TÜSİAD's proposals have included tax benefits and legislative assistance like copyright laws, decreased bureaucratic

hurdles, and imposing fair competition in business. Overcoming these difficulties is one of the means to create an atmosphere where women can freely embark on business with confidence (Hancı, 2004). KAGİDER's paper repeatedly states that what is important in the budgeting processes is the "gender-sensitive budgeting" or "gender budget," not making different budgets for men and women. The methodology stresses that what lies at its heart is political will and institutional design. It insists that all the institutions of government should be wholly committed to women's empowerment.

From the literature review above, it is evident that this study is being undertaken to investigate entrepreneurs' motives, challenges, and personal characteristics in a gender perspective in Türkiye. The following are the research questions of the study:

1. According to the existing literature, What are the motivations of women entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial experience in Türkiye?
2. What are the challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs identified from the current literature in Türkiye?
3. What are the personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs in existing literature about Türkiye, and do these characteristics imply any gender-based attributions associated with femininity?
4. To what extent can motivation, challenges, and personal characteristics endured or enjoyed by women entrepreneurs provide adequate information about gender equality in entrepreneurship? How so?

5. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted through periods and techniques of a qualitative research paradigm, which is a process for

producing one of the knowledge areas about lifestyles, stories, human behavior, organizational configurations, and social movements. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Since the purpose of this study is to examine and understand the complex dynamics of entrepreneurship in Türkiye, it was perceived as feasible to fulfill that from within qualitative techniques and methods.

6. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This study was designed with content analysis as part of the scientific approaches or strategies for qualitative analysis, to be in a position where messages are given in verbal, written and other materials that should be systemized into numbers and/or infer (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001).

7. POPULATION, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING

The research population consists of Academic studies published onmotivations, challenges, and personal traits of entrepreneurs in Türkiye.

It was shown that there were a total of 74 documents when the thesis, dissertations, and articles were sought. Since it is not possible to research all of the above-mentioned population, The population was sampled using sampling. Criterion sampling is one of the purposeful samplings. (Patton, 1990), Was conducted to the population and was clarified the sample through:

Criteria 1: The document to be used is a a dissertation, published thesis and/or an article.

Criteria 2: The documents regarding the entrepreneurs will be published in Türkiye.

Criteria 3: The papers should contain some information on the female and male entrepreneurs of Türkiye regarding motives, problems, and personal characteristics.

This sample includes 74 items: 40 master's theses, 4 dissertations, and 30 articles were published about motives, problems, and personality of entrepreneurs in Türkiye.

8. DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURE

The document analysis technique, as a method of analyzing a wide range of documents including written materials, visual materials, and anything short of text would represent a potential source for qualitative analysis (Patton, 2015).

In this respect, the data set was compiled from various databases. The subjects of the thesis and dissertation were obtained from YÖKTEZ, and the subjects of the scientific articles were obtained from ResearchGate, Web of Science, Academia, Google Scholar, Scopus, EBSCO, and ScienceDirect.

The search was carried out with these catchwords in both Turkish and English:

1. Keywords in English: "entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, motivations, women, woman entrepreneur, female entrepreneur"

2. Turkish keywords: "girişimcilik, girişimci, motivation, kadın, kadın girişimci, kadın girişimciliği"

The result of this research and sampling technique has been the identification of 40 master's theses, 4 doctoral dissertations, and 30 scientific articles published between 2006 and 2024, which were analyzed and included for this study.

9. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was based on Dey's (1993) Qualitative Data Analysis approach, which consisted of three phases: defining, classifying data, and drawing connections.

a) Defining: It is that stage, a continuous process beginning with the very conception of the research and proceeding with data gathering, reduction, and write-up.

b) Classifying data: This step starts right at the beginning of the research and becomes intense while going through the analysis, and it involves two aspects such as tagging data and grouping tagged data. Tags or labels may be in the form of images, numbers, symbols, words, phrases, themes, etc.

c) Making connections: in this phase, the concepts are connected to each other to build a cohesive whole (Baptiste, 2001).

Through this research, the following figure indicates the acts done to give major findings.

10. THE METHODOLOGICAL PHASES FOR UNCOVERING THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Table 1. The Data Analysis Conducted Through Dey's QDA

1. Defining	2. Classifying Data	3. Making Connections
Conducting database research using keywords such as entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, motivations, women, woman entrepreneur, female entrepreneur	Sorting each research unit (thesis/dissertation/article) into Motivations, Challenges, and Personal Traits.	Making relevant connections between the categories.
Clarifying the data set by summarizing them.	Summarizing common motivations, challenges, and personal traits by identifying patterns across multiple units.	Commenting on gender differences and similarities in motivations and challenges.
	Converting the dataset into a visual representation, like a table or figure.	Analyzing the personal traits of the female and male entrepreneurs.

The above Table 1 illustrates a systematic process of uncovering research findings through various methodological stages. The first phase is "Defining", where rigorous research in the database has been conducted with the aid of applicable keywords such as "entrepreneurship," "gender," "motivations," and "women" to create a base for further analysis. Further elaboration of the data set is obtained by summarization.

The second phase is an extended sorting of the research units into Motivations, Challenges, and Personal Traits. It explores what's common between them by searching for patterns in multiple units; then it transforms this dataset into a visualization with clarity and interpretability. The third stage of "Connecting Categories in a Relevant Manner" encompasses detailed exploration of the differences and similarities of gender-related motivations and issues. This further extends into stereotyping in regard to personal traits for female and male entrepreneurs through the adapted Bem's Sex Role Inventory by

Özkan and Lajunen in 2005. A method so systematic and structured will ensure that the research findings are adequately explored and represented for an in-depth understanding of these complex relationships under the studied parameters.

Traits existing in Bem's Sex Role Inventory and its adapted version by Özkan and Lajunen in 2005 have been used to assert the personal traits of female and male entrepreneurs. It is a tool created by Bem back in 1974 to determine masculinity and femininity stereotypes caused by gender. The short form of this inventory, adapted to Turkish society by Özkan and Lajunen in 2005, contains 10 items for male and 10 items for female traits. These traits are presented in **Table 2** to provide a clear comparison between gendered characteristics commonly associated with male and female entrepreneurs.

Table 2. Masculine vs. Feminine Traits

Masculine Traits	Feminine Traits
1. Possesses leadership qualities	1. Caring and kind-hearted
2. Forceful	2. Empathetic
3. Determined and confident	3. Comforting and emotionally supportive
4. Advocates for own thoughts and beliefs	4. Soft-spoken and polite
5. Authoritative	5. Admires and enjoys being around children
6. Self-reliant and free-spirited	6. Attentive to others' emotions
7. Capable and resourceful	7. Charming and approachable
8. Has a resilient and strong character	8. Emotionally delicate
9. Courageous in opposing views	9. Thoughtful and considerate
10. Thrives on taking risks	10. Friendly and welcoming

As illustrated in Table 2, masculine traits typically emphasize assertiveness and independence, while feminine traits reflect emotional sensitivity and interpersonal care.

11. MASCULINE ITEMS

The traits listed on this inventory show characteristics that are typical of values traditionally held regarding the masculine gender. This can be seen through the leadership and resolute determination expressed by the traits "Has leader abilities" and "Aggressive," showing a formation of effective leadership and confidence in one's opinion. Further, there is much focus on independence and strength, as evidenced by traits like "Self-Confident" and "Forceful," meaning independence and having a decided influential presence.

1.   Possesses leadership qualities

2.   Forceful

3.   Determined and confident

4.   Advocates for own thoughts and beliefs

5.   Authoritative

6.   Self-reliant and free-spirited

7.   Capable and resourceful

8.   Has a resilient and strong character

9.   Courageous in opposing views

10. Thrives on taking risks

12. FEMININE ITEMS

The feminine attributes in this inventory bring out a different emphasis on attributes like gentleness and compassion. In the upbeat analysis, there are features like "Affectionate" and "Compassionate," showing a proficiency attribute skills inventory of comprehending to help. This underlines a natural ability to

express sympathy and concern, especially for others in alleviating their emotional distress.

1. Caring and kind-hearted
2. Empathetic
3. Comforting and emotionally supportive
4. Soft-spoken and polite
5. Admires and enjoys being around children
6. Attentive to others' emotions
7. Charming and approachable
8. Emotionally delicate
9. Thoughtful and considerate
10. Friendly and welcoming

13. ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In this research, the dataset is limited to the above-mentioned sample, which is based on the availability of resources. The studies included in this research were freely available, archived, theses, dissertations, and articles. It was assumed at the outset that the methodological quality of studies included in this study was trustworthy and adequate.

14. ETHICAL ISSUES

In this study, all rules specified within the scope of the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" have been complied with. Permission for the use of the inventory was obtained from Özkan and Lajunen (2005).

15. **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE MOTIVATIONS BEHIND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS**

This part is a reply to the first research question "1.According to the existing literature, What are the motivations of women entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial experience in Turkiye?".

By analyzing several documents, it was possible to identify that literature suggested different motivations of female entrepreneurs, and those may be put into 6 different categories :

a) Pursuit of Economic Independence: Women are driven by the desire to be financially independent and free from traditional constraints, which empowers them but challenges social norms (Oktan, 2015).

b) Harmonizing Work-Life Balance: women emphasize balancing work and family, requiring adaptability and endurance to navigate changing gender roles (Kikanlan, 2006).

c) Passion and Genuine Interest: Their passion for work and family necessitates flexibility, leading to significant societal role changes (Ağar, 2022).

d) Empowerment and Autonomy: Entrepreneurship empowers women, breaking social roles and contributing to business and economic development (Alibhai et al., 2019).

e) Social Impact: Entrepreneurship drives social change and economic development (İlkkaracan, 2012).

f) Challenge of Gender Stereotypes: They defy traditional stereotypes, showing resilience and tenacity in their entrepreneurial journeys (Halaç, 2018).

16. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE CHALLENGES FACED BY FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

This part is a reply to the second research question "What are the challenges faced by the women entrepreneurs identified from the current literature in Türkiye?".

By analyzing the various documents, it has been possible to put the main challenges that female entrepreneurs in Türkiye face into 6 different categories:

a) Sociocultural Barriers: Women encounter challenges balancing opportunities in urban areas with traditional values in rural settings (Sallan Gül and Altindal, 2015).

b) Access to Funding: Women lag professionally because of their facing a series of social, economic, and cultural upheavals; working women encounter the leading problems of inflexible gender roles, heavy workloads, lack of financial support, low education levels, and family reactions (Çağla, 2019; Bağrıaçık, 2023).

c) Networking and Mentorship: The system of education in Türkiye fails to develop effective entrepreneurial skills among women (Demirez, 2016).

d) Balancing Work and Family: Traditional gender roles force women to juggle professional ambitions with family responsibilities (Mungan, 2013).

e) Bureaucratic Hurdles and Education: Women face bureaucratic red tape, logistical problems, and an

unprepared education system, necessitating tailored training programs (Akca, 2019).

f) Market Stigma and Role Models: Patriarchy creates hurdles, with women having to overcome societal perceptions and resistance from husbands (Aydın, 2023).

17. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

This part is a reply to the third research question "What are the personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs in existing literature about Türkiye, and do these characteristics imply any gender-based attributions associated with femininity?".

It has been underlined by the current literature that female entrepreneurs' traits can be classified into two groups, as shown in Figure 6.3. below. First, the traits that are not gender-biased and, second the traits that are gender-biased, that are present in Bem's inventory adapted version of Turkish society by Özkan and Lajunen, 2005. It means that on one hand, some of the personal traits of female entrepreneurs in Türkiye are similar to those of Bem's Inventory and its adapted Turkish version by Özkan and Lajunen, 2005; and gender-bound; and some of them are not.

Group 1: Traits Not Associated with Gender
a) Creativity and Cooperation
b) Leadership and Vision

Group 2: Gender-Associated Traits (Listed in the Inventory)
a) Empathy
b) Tenderness
c) Sensitivity to the Needs of Others

d) Warmth

e) Comprehension

This research is targeted at the female entrepreneurial personality, outlining that they were found to have stronger emotional, communicative, and social inclinations than male entrepreneurs. Consecutively, different forms of female entrepreneurship and the linked demographic and personal characteristics were identified (Çabuk et al, 2015).The findings suggest that composed behavior is valued in the definition of masculinity, as against aggression found in earlier studies. Traits like independence, assertiveness, and leadership are valued irrespective of gender and reflect changing societal norms. (Bem and Özkan and Lajunen, 2005). Differences in gender-neutral traits highlight cultural diversity in gender perception (Eller and Dodder, 1989; Lara-Cantu and Suzan-Reed, 1988). These findings, in general, reflect the change in gender roles and also open up further research opportunities within the Turkish cultural environment.

Gender-neutral Traits:

1. Creativity and Collaboration: Female entrepreneurs are organizational, intuitive, independent, good communicators, and empathic. They are resilient, financially disciplined, innovative, and risk-taking but patient and determined. They become the creative, collaborative force that develops innovations and strategic partnerships (Çivici, 2007).

2. Leadership and Vision: Women leaders lead with exemplary skills, mentorship, and innovation toward social progress and solving key issues (Gülçubuk et al., 2011; Abdullahi, 2017).

Gender-biased Traits:

1. Compassionate: Women entrepreneurs form meaningful relationships and show sincere interest in the welfare of employees and customers (Güleç, 2011).

2. Gentle: They maintain a calm reaction to conflicts, fostering a respectful organizational atmosphere (Şimşek, 2018).

3. Sensitive to Needs: They promptly address team members' emotional and practical needs, creating a nurturing work environment (Tatar, 2018).

4. Sympathetic: They build strong support networks through empathy, aiding the establishment, growth, and sustainability of their businesses (Erkan, 2014; Yaşar, 2017).

5. Understanding: They excel in understanding others' perceptions, enhancing communication and problem-solving skills, and creating a respectful, inclusive business environment (Güneş and Şekerdil, 2021).

18. EVALUATING GENDER EQUALITY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE MOTIVATIONS, CHALLENGES, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

This part is a reply to the fourth research question "To what extent can motivation, challenges, and personal characteristics endured or enjoyed by women entrepreneurs provide adequate information about gender equality in entrepreneurship? How so?".

Motivations, difficulties, and personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs can inform us much about the state of

gender equality in this or that field of entrepreneurship. The reasons and the ways are given below :

Motivations: The motivations driving women towards entrepreneurship provide valuable insights into the gender equality landscape within this field. These motivations can be enlightening, revealing both the opportunities available to women and the challenges they encounter along the way (Alaybeyoğlu, 2014).

The very fact that necessity is the motivating factor for womento become entrepreneurs suggests that there is something basically wrong with the present system of employment and investment, which hinders women's access to equal opportunities compared to their malecounterparts. If provided with equal opportunities, making a choice of entrepreneurship, the motivations among women would center aroundaspects like creativity, autonomy, and economic self-sufficiency (Balkı, 2022).

More generally, this understanding of what drives women to entrepreneurship provides much-needed insight into gender dynamics in the field of entrepreneurship. If it is known what motivates women to start businesses and what are the barriers to their businesses, This would enable system stakeholders to collaborate in creating a more inclusive and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Addressing these disparities is crucial not only for ensuring gender equality but also for fostering economic growth and driving social progress (Cansiz and Tekneci, 2018).

Challenges: The evident challenges in the lives of women entrepreneurs are therefore illustrative of the state of gender inequality within the entrepreneurial sector. These difficulties illustrate the presence of systemic bias and structural barriers that

handicap the potential of women-owned businesses for success and growth (Ermiş, 2021).

While entrepreneurship is essentially challenging and full of risk-taking, the unique challenges women entrepreneurs face demonstrate inequalities associated with it that must therefore be bridged to foster encouragement in the field (Mirza, 2019). One of the most notable challenges women encounter is the lack of access to essential resources such as funding, networks, mentorship, and support services (Gökçil, 2019).

It has been recorded that, compared to men, women entrepreneurs have a harder time getting enough financing to establish and continue their business undertakings. Additionally, the limited opportunities for mentorship and support networks keep women at a disadvantage in their efforts to become entrepreneurs, shutting them off from many valuable sources of information and resources (Gençay, 2017).

The other major obstacle that women entrepreneurs face is discrimination and gender stereotypes. The regional culture, societies' general attitude, and religious values dominate in some regions often putting more hurdles for a woman to create and grow her business. Most women face varied forms of discrimination that affect them, including biased treatment by authorities, pressure from society to comply with traditional gender roles, and a lack of access to education and technology (Mert, 2018).

These challenges require an addressing approach by policymakers, organizations, and women entrepreneurs. To begin with, there is a need for governments to establish policies that accord legal protectionagainst gender discrimination, hence creating an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship. In this respect, organizations and institutions should also take center stage in providing specific support programs, including

financial assistance, training, and networking opportunities. This will go a long way in empowering women and greatly enhance their prospects for entrepreneurial success (Tunç and Palalar Alkan, 2019).

In entrepreneurship, an understanding of challenges by women entrepreneurs should garner deep insights into gender equality and status. This will ensure that stakeholders address systemic bias and structural barriers, coupled with socio-cultural constraints, for an enabling and inclusive environment where women are accorded equal opportunities for becoming successful entrepreneurs (Kikalan, 2006).

Personal traits: These personal traits of women entrepreneurs in Türkiye received conformance with traditional feminine qualities, as described by the Bem Sex Role Inventory and its adapted version by Özkan and Lajunen in 2005, though there were some egalitarian traits. Therefore, society may have broader expectations regarding the roles of a woman as caretaker and nurturer. This set of traits in a person is very important for creating collaborative and supporting business environments and would bring about much greater satisfaction and loyalty among employees (Esen, 2024).

The feminine traits underline, however, the gender-based attributions that hitherto characterize the landscape of entrepreneurship. Commonly associated with women entrepreneurs, these traits tell of traditionally ingrained stereotypes of femininity that is, societal expectations remain as the basis on which the perception of and behavior by women in business are made, and this would be an advantage and a limitation at the same time (Yalcintas, İyigun and Karabulut, 2021).

First, with these traits, women entrepreneurs can hold people together in strong teams; because of their more empathetic

leadership, they can create cultures that are inclusive at work, which could then be tooled toward very high levels of employee engagement and thereby customer satisfaction. On the other side of this coin, however, are attributions that link back to gender-based stereotyping: because a woman is deemed better suited to a nurturing role, she may not have the leadership acumen for strong positions and decision-making. The latter reduces the perceived capability of women within the more traditionally "masculine" fields of entrepreneurship, such as risk-taking and strategic planning (Küçük, 2014).

Moreover, while these competencies specifically pinned to the feminine traits are no doubt useful, in a male-oriented world of business dominated by aggressive and forefront, highly competitive personalities, they tend to become devalued. The challenge, therefore, is that women entrepreneurs have to somehow balance these traits with traditionally masculine qualities to gain more universal acceptance and success in their endeavors (Temür, 2022).

Equally significant is the way women entrepreneurs manage and lead, as it reflects their experiences and sheds light on the challenges they navigate within the entrepreneurial landscape. In this respect, women may revert to collaborative, inclusive, and relationship-building approaches of leading that are often considered less typical, or even less aggressive, juxtaposed against more traditional, masculine styles of leading. The reception of these styles by stakeholders, investors, and peers allows insight into general attitudes and biases that women leaders and entrepreneurs have to face (Yenilmez, 2019).

19. CONCLUSION

Gender disparities cut throughout all aspects of life to shape the educational, professional, and societal expectations that

define women. Women are typically excluded from the workforce due to the nature of the division of labor by gender and by social norms that are traditionally devoid of education opportunities. The status of women in the work life of entrepreneurs has been the focus of the research, whereby an in-depth understanding of the multidimensional landscape of female entrepreneurship in Türkiye is sought to decipher the motivation, challenges, and personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs and evaluate gender equality within the same context.

Through a comprehensive review of extensive literature and an in-depth analysis of 74 academic documents, the study highlights the diverse motivations encouraging women to enter the entrepreneurial world in Turkey, such as economic independence, social impact aspirations, and breaking down gender stereotypes. These motivations reflect not only personal ambitions but also the broader social dynamics and institutional barriers that limit opportunities for women in this field.

First and foremost, rich and mixed reasons catalyzing women's entrepreneurship in Türkiye have come into view. From economic independence to socially impactful intentions and breaking down gender stereotypes, the journey of women entrepreneurs is indeed one with a myriad of aspirations. Such motivations, in real life, smell or hint at an aspect reflecting not only private aspirations but whole major social dynamics and structural barriers that are liable to shape the entrepreneurial concerns of women.

Despite the growing recognition of their contribution to entrepreneurship, serious problems persist. In Türkiye, sociocultural barriers, restricted access to sources of funding and financial instruments, gaps in networking and mentorship, problems with work-life balance, bureaucratic hurdles, and

market stigmas greatly add to the already bulkier challenge for women entrepreneurs.

More than that, women entrepreneurs' characteristics show the condition of gender inequality in this entrepreneurial landscape. Whereas only a few of these characteristics include adaptability, creativity, leadership, passion, and ethical standards, other common traits are usually considered rather feminine.

By analyzing women entrepreneurs' motivations, challenges, and personal traits, entrepreneurship in Türkiye can be described as a gender-stereotyped sphere dominated by men and portrayed as masculine. Besides, in this context of entrepreneurship, there is also a distinction between the public and private spheres.

This, however, is a very critical factor: despite improvements on some fronts in terms of recognition for the efforts that women entrepreneurs make, differences and barriers coexist at many levels. A diversified approach to handling these challenges by policymakers, organizations, and society as a whole is called for. It generates an enabling environment that empowers women in general and brings about gender equality in entrepreneurship.

In a situation where knowledge of motivations, challenges, and personal traits exists, it helps all concerned stakeholders
aim for more inclusiveness and equitability in
the environment; thus, everyone-regardless of gender-can fulfill oneself in becoming successful withone's entrepreneurial actions.

20. RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

To foster an inclusive entrepreneurial environment in Turkey, a multi-level and multifaceted approach is needed:

1. Policy-Level Solutions:

   - Establish policies that promote gender equality and ensure women's access to financial resources.

   - Provide tax incentives or financial grants to businesses owned by women, especially in sectors with low female representation.

   - Develop regional support centers targeting women in rural areas and regions influenced by traditional values.

2. Institutional Support:

   - Strengthen mentorship and professional guidance programs and create networking platforms for women in business.

   - Encourage universities and business incubators to offer entrepreneurial programs that focus on women.

   - Promote collaboration between the public and private sectors to support female entrepreneurship in high-growth sectors.

3. Cultural and Social Change:

   - Launch national awareness campaigns to challenge and change societal perceptions of women in business.

   - Incorporate entrepreneurship into school curricula with a focus on gender equality.

4. Sector-Specific Strategies:

   - Support women in male-dominated industries such as technology, construction, and heavy industries.

   - Provide legal support services and market-entry assistance for female entrepreneurs in sectors facing specific bureaucratic challenges.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

   - Create a national database to track the entrepreneurial activities of women by sector and region.

   - Use this data to refine support strategies and identify underserved groups.

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DİJİTAL ÇAĞIN AİLE ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ

Damla TOPÇU[1]

1. GİRİŞ

Toplumun temel yapı taşlarından biri olan aile kurumu, geleneksel dönemden günümüz dijital çağa uzanan süreçte sürekli bir dönüşüm geçirerek, her dönemin toplumsal ve teknolojik gereksinimlerine paralel olarak işlevlerini yeniden tanımlamış, geliştirmiş ve geliştirmeye de devam etmektedir.

Dijitalleşmenin hız kazandığı günümüz toplumlarında bireyler, yaşamlarını sürdürebilmek için yalnızca fiziksel altyapılara değil, aynı zamanda dijital iletişim ağlarına da bağımlı hâle gelmiştir. Bu iletişim ağları, bireyler kadar kurumlar ve toplumsal yapının bütünü için vazgeçilmez bir unsur hâline gelmiş; sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel süreçleri derinden etkilemeye başlamıştır. Gelişmiş toplumlarda bireyler, boş zamanlarının önemli bir bölümünü dijital ortamlarda -özellikle mobil cihazlar, internet ve yayın platformlarında- geçirmektedir. Medya ve ekonomik ağların küresel ölçekte yaygınlaşması, dünyayı dijital bağlantılarla örülü bir bütün hâline getirmiştir. Toplumun "sinir sistemi" hâline gelen bu dijital iletişim ağlarının bireysel ve toplumsal yaşam üzerinde giderek derinleşen bir etkisi olduğu görülmektedir (Van Dijk, 2018: 11-13).

Çağdaş toplumlarda meydana gelen hızlı dönüşümler; ekonomi, teknoloji, bilim ve sosyo-kültürel yapılar üzerinde belirgin etkiler yaratmaktadır. Bilimsel ve teknolojik ilerlemelerle birlikte sanayileşme, modernleşme ve şehirleşme

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gibi dinamikler, geleneksel toplumsal rollerin yeniden şekillenmesine yol açmaktadır. Bu köklü değişimler, toplumun yapı taşı olan aile kurumunu ve onun bireylerini doğrudan etkilemektedir (Zeybekoğlu Akbaş ve Dursun, 2020: 2247).

Toplumsal düzenin en temel kurumsal yapılarından biri olan aile, tarihsel süreçte ekonomik sistemler, dini inanış biçimleri, kültürel kodlar ve eğitim düzeyi gibi çok katmanlı değişkenlerin etkisiyle evrilmiştir. Geleneksel aile yapıları ile bu yapılara eşlik eden kültürel normatif değerler ve iletişim pratikleri, dijitalleşmenin hız kazandığı son dönemde derin bir dönüşüm geçirmektedir. Dijital teknolojilerin baş döndürücü bir hızla gelişmesi, sosyal medya platformlarının gündelik yaşamın ayrılmaz bir unsuru hâline gelmesi ve dijital medya araçlarının yoğun biçimde kullanılması; aile içi iletişimin doğasını, ebeveynlik yaklaşımlarını ve çocukluk deneyimlerini yapısal olarak yeniden biçimlendirmektedir (Semiz Türkoğlu, 2025: 379).

Günümüzde dijital teknolojilerin hayatın her alanına nüfuz etmesi, aile yapıları üzerinde de derin etkiler yaratmaktadır. Dijital çağ, iletişim olanaklarını artırmakla birlikte aile içi ilişkilerde yeni sınamalar da ortaya çıkarmıştır. Özellikle sosyal medya, akıllı cihazlar ve dijital oyunlar gibi araçlar, bireylerin zaman yönetimini, yüz yüze iletişim becerilerini ve duygusal bağlarını etkilemektedir. Bu doğrultuda çalışmada dijitalleşmenin aile üzerindeki etkileri anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır.

2. DİJİTAL ÇAĞDA AİLE SORUNLARI

Teknoloji, toplumsal dönüşümlerin hem nedeni hem de hızlandırıcısı olarak öne çıkan temel unsurlardan biridir. Günümüzde aile yapısında teknolojinin yeri ve etkisi, geçmiş dönemlerle kıyaslandığında çok daha belirgin ve yoğun biçimde hissedilmektedir. 1990'lı yılların sonlarına doğru internetin

küresel ölçekte yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte, "Dijital Çağ" adı verilen yeni bir dönem başlamıştır. Dijitalleşmeyle birlikte dünyada yaşanan hızlı değişim, geleneksel aile modelinden uzaklaşılarak, çocuk merkezli çekirdek aile yapısına doğru bir yönelim ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Dijitalleşme sadece aile yapısını değil aileyi oluşturan ebeveynlerin ve çocukların yaşam tarzlarını da değiştirmektedir. Dijitalleşmenin küresel ölçekte etkisini artırmasıyla birlikte, çocuklar artık çok küçük yaşlardan itibaren teknolojiyle yoğun biçimde karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Farklı dijital araç ve uygulamaları aktif şekilde kullanmaları sayesinde, zengin ve karmaşık bir dijital deneyim edinmektedirler. Bu gelişmeler, yalnızca çocukların günlük yaşantısını değil, çocukluk kavramının kendisini de dönüştürmektedir (Zeybekoğlu Akbaş ve Dursun, 2020: 2248-2251). Çocukların dijital araçlar ile olan deneyimlerinin artması, ebeveynlik rollerini de değiştirmekte ve ebeveynlerin dijital ebeveynlik konusunda bilgili olmalarını gerektirmektedir.

Dijital çağda toplumsal gerçeklik ve insan etkileşimleri; ağ yapıları, bilgi akışı ve dijital içerik aracılığıyla yeni bir biçim kazanmakta, giderek sanal bir gerçekliğe evrilmektedir. Sosyal yapıyı ve ilişkileri anlamada önemli bir kavram hâline gelen 'ağ', dijital çağın dinamiklerini kavramak açısından büyük önem taşımaktadır. Teknoloji ve bilgiye dayalı olarak internetin sağladığı çevrim içi hareket serbestliği, tıpkı diğer toplumsal değişimlerde olduğu gibi, sosyal yapılar ve ilişkiler üzerinde kalıcı dönüşümler yaratabilecek bir zemin hazırlamaktadır (Aygül ve Apak, 2019: 150-151). Dijital dönüşüm sürecinde, aile içinde bireylerin yaşam tarzlarında ve karşılıklı ilişkilerinde belirgin değişimlerin yaşandığı açıkça görülmektedir (Lokke, 2018: 27). Bu değişimler dijital çağda aile olmanın zorluklarını da beraberinde getirmektedir.

Dijital çağ, aileye ilişkin önemli fırsatlar sunmakla birlikte, beraberinde çeşitli sorunları da getirmektedir. Bu

araştırma, dijital çağda aile olmanın karşı karşıya kaldığı temel sorunları ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, iletişim bozuklukları, ebeveyn rolünün değişmesi (dijital ebeveynlik), aile bireyleriyle kaliteli zaman geçirme eksikliği, dijital bağımlılık, mahremiyet ihlalleri ve güvenlik sorunları, dijital çağın aile üzerindeki etkileri kapsamında incelenmektedir.

2.1. İletişim Bozukluğu

İletişim, "insanlar arasında duygu ve düşüncelerin, ortak anlamlar verdikleri semboller ile değiş tokuş edilmesi süreci" olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Hançerlioğlu, 1993). İletişim, yalnızca bilişsel düzeyde bilgi aktarımıyla sınırlı kalmayıp; duygusal paylaşım, toplumsal öğrenme süreçleri ve ilişkisel bağların inşası bakımından da kritik bir işlev görmektedir. Bu bağlamda, aile içi karşılıklı iletişim dinamikleri, bireylerin kimlik oluşumu, sosyal uyum kapasitesi ve psikolojik iyi oluş düzeyi üzerinde belirleyici bir rol oynamaktadır (Semiz Türkoğlu, 2025: 380).

Aile içi iletişim, aile bireyleri arasında bilgi paylaşımını, duyguların ifade edilmesini ve etkileşimi kapsayan temel bir süreçtir. Etkili iletişim; açık ifade, aktif dinleme, çatışma yönetimi ve olumlu ilişkilerin sürdürülmesiyle sağlanmaktadır. Bu süreç, güven ortamı ve duygusal bağların gelişimini desteklerken, çocukların sosyal ve duygusal gelişiminde de kritik bir rol oynamaktadır (Parlar ve Dere, 2025: 84). Aile içinde etkili iletişimin sağlanabilmesi, aile bireylerinin duygu ve düşüncelerinin karşılıklı olarak önemsenmesine bağlıdır (Cihangir Çankaya, 2011: 4).

Aile içi sağlıklı iletişim, öncelikli olarak ebeveynler arasında kurulan etkili ve yapıcı iletişim diline bağlıdır. Ebeveynler arası sağlıklı etkileşim, çocukların duygusal, sosyal ve bilişsel gelişimlerini olumlu yönde etkileyerek sağlıklı bireylerin yetişmesini desteklemektedir. Bu bağlamda, sağlıklı aile yapısının temeli, doğru iletişim becerileriyle donatılmış anne-

baba tutumlarıyla şekillenmektedir. Ancak dijital teknolojilerin gündelik yaşamın ayrılmaz bir parçası hâline gelmesiyle birlikte, selfie kültürü, dijital oyunlar, sosyal medya ve çevrim içi içeriklere yönelik aşırı bağımlılık, özellikle çocuklar ve gençler olmak üzere tüm aile bireylerini etkileyen ciddi bir risk unsuru hâline gelmiştir (Şen ve Erol, 2024: 3–4). Televizyon, cep telefonu ve bilgisayar gibi dijital aygıtların yaygın kullanımı, hem aile içinde hem de bireylerin sosyal çevresinde yüz yüze iletişimin giderek azalmasına yol açmaktadır (Avcı ve Topçu, 2020: 117).

Bireylerin teknolojiye ve "Yeni Medya" platformlarına bağımlılık geliştirmesi, yüz yüze iletişimin zayıflamasına neden olmakta ve bu durum, aile yapısını olumsuz yönde etkileyen başlıca etkenlerden biri hâline gelmektedir. Eşler birbirleriyle sağlıklı iletişim kuramadığında ve birlikte zaman geçiremediğinde, dikkatlerini genellikle "akıllı" telefonlara vermeye başlamaktadırlar. Bu durum ilişki sorunlarını daha da belirgin hâle getirmektedir. Sürekli telefonlarıyla meşgul olan ebeveynlerin bu davranışı yalnızca kendilerine değil, tüm aileye zarar vermektedir. Özellikle dijital bağımlılığın yüksek olduğu bir aile ortamında yetişen çocuklar, bu durumdan en fazla etkilenen bireylerdir (Alkan, 2023: 232).

Sanders'a göre, elektronik iletişimde yüz yüze etkileşim bulunmaması, iletişimin doğallığını ve derinliğini azaltarak onu yapay ve yüzeysel bir hâle getirmektedir. Özellikle televizyon, bireylerin karşılıklı ve sözlü iletişim becerilerinde zayıflamaya yol açmaktadır. Buna karşın, insanlar söz konusu etkileşimden yoksun olan bu aracı kullanmaya devam etmektedirler. Dahası, çocuklar erken yaşlardan itibaren televizyon aracılığıyla şiddet ve cinsellik gibi içeriklere maruz kalmakta; bu durum onların hayal gücü, dil gelişimi ve psikolojik sağlığı üzerinde olumsuz etkiler yaratmaktadır (Sanders, 2017: 49-50). Ebeveynlerin çocukların dijital araçlar ve internetle geçirdikleri zamanı yaş gruplarına

uygun şekilde içerik ve süre açısından sınırlandırmamaları durumunda, ilerleyen dönemlerde çocukların giderek kendi özel alanlarına çekilerek "odadan çıkmama kültürü" olarak tanımlanabilecek bir durumla karşılaşmaları olası görünmektedir (Zeybekoğlu Akbaş ve Dursun, 2020: 2262). Aile içi iletişimin zayıflamasıyla birlikte, sohbet etmeyen ve güçlü bağlar geliştiremeyen bireylerden oluşan yeni nesillerin yetişmesi kaçınılmaz hâle gelecektir. Bu durumun yaygınlaşması, değerlerde çözülmeye ve toplumsal dönüşümlere zemin hazırlayacaktır (Alkan, 2023: 232).

2.2. Ebeveyn Rolünün Değişimi

İnternet ve dijital teknolojiler, bireylere çok yönlü avantajlar sunmakla birlikte, özellikle gelişim çağındaki çocuklar açısından çeşitli riskleri de beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu risklerin farkına varma ve gerekli önlemleri alma sorumluluğu ise büyük ölçüde ebeveynlere düşmektedir. Dijital çağın getirdiği yeni iletişim araçları ve medya ortamları, ebeveynlik rollerinin yeniden tanımlanmasını ve bu rollere ilişkin sorumlulukların dönüşmesini kaçınılmaz hâle getirmiştir (Yurdakul vd., 2013: 887). Bu doğrultuda dijital çağda, modern aile yapısından toplumsal beklentilerin niceliksel ve niteliksel olarak arttığı gözlemlenmektedir. Bu dönüşüm sürecinde ebeveynlik rolleri çok boyutlu bir şekilde çeşitlenmiş; özellikle dijital okuryazarlık becerileri ile dijital ebeveynlik yeterlilikleri, çağdaş aile dinamikleri içerisinde merkezi ve işlevsel bir konum edinmiştir. Ebeveynlerin dijital ortamlarda rehberlik edebilme yetkinliği, çocukların bilişsel, duygusal ve sosyal gelişimlerinin sağlıklı bir şekilde desteklenmesi açısından kritik bir öneme sahiptir (Yücel, 2025: 413).

Dijitalleşme süreci, ebeveynlik hedeflerinin niteliğini dönüştürmekte; ebeveynleri, çocuklarını dijital ortamlara hazırlamak ve bu ortamlarda onları olası risklere karşı korumak

gibi yeni sorumluluklarla karşı karşıya bırakmaktadır (Bostancı, 2023: 983). Geçmiş kuşaklar çocukluk dönemlerini doğa ve fiziksel çevreyle etkileşim hâlinde geçirirken, günümüz çocukları dijital ekranlarla yoğun bir temas içerisinde geçirmektedir. Önceki dönemlerde ebeveynler, çocuklarının medya kullanımını daha çok televizyonla sınırlı bir perspektiften değerlendirirken; günümüz ebeveynleri, hızla evrilen dijital teknolojiler ve çeşitlenen medya araçları nedeniyle daha kapsamlı ve dinamik bir medya ekosistemiyle karşı karşıyadır. Dijital cihazların çeşitliliği ve teknolojik dönüşümün sürekliliği, ebeveynlerin medya kullanımına ilişkin karar alma süreçlerini karmaşıklaştırmakta ve denetim işlevlerini zorlaştırmaktadır (Goodwin, 2018: 9-10).

Dijital ebeveynlik, ebeveynlerin çocuklarının dijital ortamlardaki deneyimlerini yönlendirme ve denetleme sürecini ifade etmektedir. Bu kavram, çocukların dijital araçları güvenli, etik ve bilinçli biçimde kullanmalarını sağlamayı amaçlamakta; çevrimiçi risklere karşı korunmalarını ve dijital fırsatlardan etkin biçimde yararlanmalarını hedeflemektedir. Dijital okuryazarlık, iletişim, güvenlik, hukuk ve sağlık gibi alanlarda gelişmiş ebeveynlik becerileri bu sürecin temel unsurlarını oluşturmaktadır (Bostancı, 2023: 984).

FOSI'nin (2021) belirttiğine göre, etkili dijital ebeveynlik için uyulması gereken temel ilkeler arasında ebeveynin kendini dijital alanda eğitmesi, çocukla açık iletişim kurması, ebeveyn denetim araçlarını kullanması ve belirlenen dijital kuralları tutarlılıkla uygulaması yer almaktadır. Ayrıca, çocuğun mahremiyetini gözeterek sosyal medya etkinliklerini izlemek, dijital ortamları birlikte deneyimlemek ve ebeveynin dijital dünyada olumlu bir rol model olması da önem taşımaktadır. Bu ilkeler, ebeveynlerin dijital yeterliliklerini geliştirmelerini gerektiren stratejik yaklaşımlardır.

Dijital çağda, ailenin çocuk ve gençlerin dijital ortamlara uyum süreçlerinde koruyucu ve yönlendirici bir rol üstlendiği görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bireylerin dijital dünyaya bilişsel, sosyal ve duygusal boyutlarda sağlıklı biçimde uyum sağlayabilmeleri için, ebeveynlerin hem eğitsel ve destekleyici içerikler konusunda hem de olası gelişimsel riskler hakkında bilgi düzeylerini artırmaları önem arz etmektedir. Bu süreçte dijital medya okuryazarlığı, ebeveynlik işlevinin temel bileşenlerinden biri hâline gelmiştir (İnan Kaya, 2021: 89).

Uzmanlar, çocuklar için en önemli rol modellerin öncelikle anne ve baba olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Her ağladığında ya da yemek yemediğinde eline telefon verilen çocuklar, erken yaşlardan itibaren yoğun dijital ekran maruziyeti yaşamakta; bu durum da ilerleyen yıllarda çeşitli fiziksel ve psikolojik sorunlarla karşılaşma riskini artırmaktadır. Çocukların erken yaşlardan itibaren ekran karşısında büyümesi, zamanla duygusal tepkilerinde azalmaya ve hissizleşmelerine neden olabilir. Bu şekilde yetişen bir çocuk, ilerleyen yaşlarda sosyal ilişkilerinde, eğitim hayatında ve iş yaşamında çeşitli olumsuzluklarla karşı karşıya kalabilir. Böyle bir ortamda yetişen bir çocuğun, büyüdüğünde ebeveynlerinden farklı bir yaşam tarzı benimsemesi pek olası değildir; aksine, kendi döneminin teknolojik koşullarıyla benzer bir hayat sürdürecektir. Tam da bu noktada, aile yapısı sarsılmakta ve köklü bir değişim sürecine girmektedir(Alkan, 2023: 232). Dijital ebeveynlik becerilerinden yoksun olan ve dijital teknolojilerle sonradan tanışan "dijital göçmen" ebeveynler açısından, dijitalleşmenin yoğun etkileriyle şekillenen günümüz yaşamında ebeveyn otoritesinin zayıfladığını söylemek mümkündür (Bostancı, 2023: 984).

2.3. Kaliteli Zaman Eksikliği

Çalışan ebeveynlerin bulunduğu aile yapılarında, bireyler genellikle yoğun iş temposu ve dış çevrenin baskısı nedeniyle ev

ortamını yalnızca uyuma ya da dinlenme alanı olarak görme eğilimindedir. Ekonomik kaygılar ve belirli bir yaşam standardını koruma isteği, pek çok ebeveyni kariyer odaklı bir yaşam tarzını benimsemeye zorlamakta; bu durum, çocuklarına ayırabilecekleri zamanın azalmasına yol açmaktadır. Ebeveynleri çalışan çocuklar ise günlük zamanlarının büyük kısmını okulda geçirmekle birlikte, okul sonrası saatlerde kendi başlarına kalmak durumunda kalmaktadırlar (Macionis, 2012: 471). Gün sonunda yorgun şekilde eve dönen ebeveynlerin çocuklarıyla yeterli zaman geçirememesi ve ortak etkinliklerde bulunmaması, çocukların dijital araçlara daha fazla yönelmesine neden olmaktadır.

Dijital teknolojilerin çağdaş aile yapısı üzerindeki etkisi, özellikle modern toplumlarda aile bireyleri arasındaki etkileşimin niteliğini ve yoğunluğunu derinden etkilemektedir. Zaten küçülme eğiliminde olan çekirdek aile yapısı, dijital araçların yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte daha da bireyselleşmekte; bu durum, aile üyelerinin ortak zaman geçirme pratiklerini önemli ölçüde azaltmaktadır. Özellikle serbest zamanlarda, dijital medya kullanımının artması, aile içi iletişim kanallarının zayıflamasına ve uzun vadede dijital bağımlılığa zemin hazırlayan bir sürece dönüşebilmektedir (Yıldırım, 2021: 1242-1244).

Dijitalleşme, aile bireylerinin birlikte zaman geçirmesini sınırlandırmakta ve ev içi etkileşimi zayıflatarak yabancılaşmayı artırmaktadır. Geçmişte ortak yaşam alanlarında kurulan aile içi bağlar, günümüzde bireylerin farklı odalarda vakit geçirmesiyle yerini bireysel yalnızlığa bırakmaktadır. Özellikle medya tüketiminin yaygınlaşması, aile içindeki etkileşimi azaltan temel faktörlerden biri hâline gelmiştir (Kılıç, 2011: 31-32). Ebeveynlerin çoğunluğu çocukların internet kullanım sürelerini kendilerine zaman ayırmak için bir fırsat olarak görmektedir (Kırık, 2017). Bu durum, aile bireylerinin birbirlerine ayırdıkları zamanı nitelikli şekilde değerlendiremediklerini ve bunun

sonucunda dijital araçlara daha fazla yöneldiklerini ortaya koymaktadır.

Günümüzde gençler, internet teknolojileri ve sosyal medya platformlarıyla yoğun biçimde etkileşim hâlindedir. Bu durum, gençlerin hem psikososyal gelişimini olumsuz etkilemekte hem de aile bireyleriyle geçirilen zamanın azalmasına neden olmaktadır. Dijital mecralarda geçirilen aşırı süre, aile içi etkileşimi zayıflatmakta ve bireyler arasında duygusal uzaklaşmayı artırmaktadır (Kırık, 2017: 257).

2.4. Dijital Bağımlılık

Dijital bağımlılık (digital addiction), uzun süreli ve kontrolsüz biçimde ortaya çıkan internet, dijital oyun, sosyal medya ve diğer çevrimiçi medya kullanımına yönelik bağımlılık davranışlarını kapsayan üst bir kavramdır. Bu terim, farklı dijital platformlarda gelişen bağımlılık türlerini içeren çok boyutlu bir olguyu tanımlamaktadır (Christakis, 2019). Bilgisayar ve internet kullanımının küresel ölçekte yaygınlaşması, bireylerde teknoloji kaynaklı bağımlılık ve çeşitli davranış bozukluklarının ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Dijital bağımlılıklar, araç temelli (televizyon, bilgisayar, tablet, telefon) ve ortam temelli (internet, sosyal medya, sanal alışveriş) olmak üzere iki temel kategoriye ayrılmaktadır. Bu bağımlılıklar içinde internet bağımlılığı, ilk tanımlanan tür olup bireyleri fiziksel ve psikolojik açıdan etkilemektedir (Arslan, 2020: 29).

Günümüzde internet, bilgiye erişim ve işlemlerin hızlı bir şekilde gerçekleştirilmesi açısından yaşamın merkezî bir unsuru hâline gelmiştir. Bunula birlikte, dijital ortamların sunduğu ilgi çekici içeriklerin yoğunluğu, bireylerin bu alanlarda daha fazla zaman geçirmelerine ve dijital platformlara yüksek düzeyde bağımlılık geliştirmelerine neden olmaktadır. Fonksiyonel yapıları ve kullanıcıya sundukları kolaylıklarla özellikle akıllı telefonlar, bireylerin günlük yaşamlarının ayrılmaz bir parçası

hâline gelmiştir. Bilgisayar, tablet, cep telefonu ve televizyon gibi cihazlar üzerinden oynanan çevrimiçi ya da çevrimdışı dijital oyunlar, dijital bağımlılığın yaygınlaşmasına zemin hazırlamaktadır. Bu durum, bireylerin fiziksel sağlığı, psikolojik iyi oluşu ve sosyal etkileşimleri üzerinde olumsuz etkiler doğurabilmektedir (Yıldırım, 2021: 1238).

İnternet tabanlı çevrim içi oyunlar, dijital oyun bağımlılığının oluşumunda temel bir etken olarak öne çıkmakta; özellikle çocuk ve gençler arasında yaygınlaşarak bilişsel, sosyal ve duygusal gelişim üzerinde olumsuz etkiler yaratmaktadır. Bu oyunlarla uzun süre vakit geçiren bireylerde, oyunu bırakmada zorlanma, günlük sorumlulukların aksaması, yüz yüze iletişimde zorluk, sosyal izolasyon ve yalnızlaşma gibi çeşitli sorunlar gözlemlenmektedir (Arslan vd., 2015: 39). Ayrıca, bireylerin çevrimiçi etkileşimlere yönelerek fiziksel ve sosyal çevreden uzaklaşması, psikososyal bütünlüklerini zedeleyebilmekte; bu durum da çeşitli psikolojik ve sosyolojik rahatsızlıkların ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlamaktadır (Şahin ve Tuğrul, 2012). Dijital araçların kullanım süresinin artması, sosyal medya etkileşimlerini artırmakta; bu durum bireylerin psikolojik sağlığı, sosyal ilişkileri, fiziksel aktiviteleri, akademik performansı, beslenme alışkanlıkları ve uyku düzenleri üzerinde olumsuz etkiler doğurmaktadır (Arslan ve Bardakçı, 2020: 38). Tüm bu olumsuzluklar, bireylerin yalnızca kişisel yaşamlarını değil, aynı zamanda aile içi ilişkilerini de derinlemesine etkilemektedir. Dijital araçlara aşırı yönelim, aile bireyleri arasındaki yüz yüze iletişimi azaltmakta; ortak zaman geçirme olanaklarını kısıtlayarak aile bağlarının zayıflamasına neden olmaktadır.

2.5. Mahremiyet İhlali ve Güvenlik Sorunu

Mahremiyet olgusu, toplumsal yapıya ve kültürel normlara bağlı olarak farklı şekillerde tanımlanabilir. Ancak bu çeşitlilik, bireylerin mahremiyet sınırlarını tamamen öznel

tercihlere göre belirleyebileceği anlamına gelmemektedir. Bu sınırların belirlenmesinde temel referans noktası ilahi ölçülerdir. Zira mahremiyetin muhafazası, bireyin haya ve iffet gibi ahlaki değerlerini koruduğunun da dolaylı bir göstergesidir (Özden, 2022:102).

İnternetin çok boyutlu ve yaygın kullanımı, beraberinde bireysel ve toplumsal düzeyde çeşitli mahremiyet ve güvenlik sorunlarını gündeme getirmektedir. Özellikle sosyal medya platformları aracılığıyla özel alan ile kamusal alan arasındaki sınırlar belirsizleşmekte; böylece bireylerin mahremiyet alanları çeşitli şekillerde ihlal edilebilmektedir. Bu dönüşüm, yalnızca bireysel mahremiyeti değil, aynı zamanda toplumsal birlikteliği sağlayan ahlaki normları da etkilemekte; teknolojik gelişmelerin yönlendirdiği yeni iletişim biçimleri, geleneksel değer yapılarının çözülmesine neden olabilmektedir. Ayrıca, dijital ortamlarda normal dışı davranış biçimlerinin hızla yayılması, bu tutumların toplumsal görünürlüğünü artırarak gerçek yaşam pratikleri üzerinde de belirleyici hâle gelmektedir (Avcı ve Topçu, 2020: 110).

Toplumsal ilişkilerde bir araya gelmek ve ortak paylaşımlarda bulunmak büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda sosyal medya önemli bir platform olsa da, güven duygusu oluşturma açısından yeterince etkili değildir. Bu durum, sosyal medyanın güven ilişkileri kurmadaki yetersizliğinin, aynı zamanda sosyal sermayenin gelişimini de sınırladığını ortaya koymaktadır (Babacan, 2017: 185). Ayrıca, sosyal medyada yapılan paylaşımların çok kısa sürede geniş kitlelere ulaşması, bu içeriklerin izlenmesini ve denetlenmesini zorlaştırmaktadır (Vural ve Bat, 2010: 3352). Bu yönüyle de dijital platformlar güvenirliğini kaybetmektedir.

Zira dijital iletişim çağında gözetim yalnızca fiziksel kameralarla sınırlı kalmamaktadır. İnternetin sağladığı veri

izleme teknolojileri, bireylerin gündelik sosyal etkileşimlerinden karmaşık ticari faaliyetlere kadar pek çok süreci, kullanıcıların farkına varmaksızın dijital olarak kaydetmekte ve analiz etmektedir (Çaycı ve Çaycı, 2016: 166). Bireyin rızası ve bilgisi dışında, kişisel verilerinin uzaktan izlenmesine imkân tanıyan gözetim ve takip teknolojileri, özel hayatın gizliliğinin ihlali riskini beraberinde getirmektedir (Van Dijk, 2018: 27). Bu dijital izleme biçimleri yalnızca bireysel mahremiyeti değil, aynı zamanda aile mahremiyetini de tehdit edebilmekte; aile içi etkileşimlerin şeffaflaşması ya da denetim odaklı dönüşmesi gibi yeni dinamikler ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

3. SONUÇ

Dijital çağda meydana gelen gelişmeler, insan yaşamını birçok açıdan kolaylaştırırken; beraberinde çeşitli risk ve sorunları da gündeme getirmektedir. Dijital çağda yaşanan dönüşümler, aile yapısı ve aile ilişkileri üzerinde de önemli etkiler yaratmaktadır.

Günümüzün dijital çağı, aile kurumunu çok yönlü biçimde etkileyerek geleneksel ve modern ailevi değerlerde dönüşüme neden olmaktadır. Bu süreçte yüz yüze iletişim zayıflamakta, ebeveyn rolleri değişmekte ve dijital ortamlarda geçirilen sürenin artmasıyla birlikte aile içi nitelikli zaman azalmaktadır. Aynı zamanda dijital bağımlılığın yaygınlaşması, çocukları çevrim içi ortamların risklerinden koruma noktasında ebeveynlere önemli sorumluluklar yüklemektedir. Dijital platformların güvenilirlik sorunları ve anlık paylaşıma olanak tanıması ise aile mahremiyetinin ihlali gibi ciddi sorunları gündeme getirmektedir. Bu bağlamda, dijital çağda sağlıklı bir aile yapısının sürdürülebilmesi için dijital farkındalık, bilinçli teknoloji kullanımı ve aile içi etkileşimi güçlendiren stratejilerin geliştirilmesi büyük önem arz etmektedir.

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AKADEMİK PERSPEKTİFTEN

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