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WOMEN'S CHILDBEARING MOTIVATION IN THE WEST MEDITERRANEAN REGION OF TURKEY

TÜRKİYE'NİN BATI AKDENİZ BÖLGESİNDE KADINLARIN ÇOCUK DOĞURMA MOTİVASYONU

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ABSTRACT

The most crucial factor influencing population growth is fertility. The fertility rate is associated with individuals' desire in society to have children. In recent years, the fertility rate in Turkey has been gradually declining, and an increasing number of women are opting to remain childless. Alongside biological, social, and economic variables, motivations for childbearing also play a significant role in the decrease of the fertility rate. Based on this premise, the current study aimed to identify the effective fertility motivations that contribute to the diminishing desire of Turkish women to have children. The research included a total of 255 women within the age group of 25 to 29, representing the segment with the highest fertility rate in Turkey. The "Childbearing Motivation Scale" was utilized to gather data. The analysis involved examining the arithmetic mean and standard deviation values of various motivations for childbearing through the use of the t-test for Independent groups. As a result, it was found that positive motivations for childbearing women were mainly associated with couple relationships from socio-economic perspectives, whereas negative motivations were predominantly related to socio-ecological concerns. Additionally, the study revealed that the level of education significantly affected positive motivations for childbearing.

Keywords: Childbearing, Childbearing motivation, Couple relationships, Fertility, Woman

ÖZET

Nüfus artışını etkileyen en önemli etken doğurganlıktır. Doğurganlık hızı toplumdaki bireylerin çocuk sahibi olma arzusu ile ilişkilidir. Son yıllarda Türkiye'de doğurganlık hızı giderek düşmekte ve artan sayıda kadın çocuksuz olmayı tercih etmektedir. Doğurganlık hızının düşmesinde biyolojik, sosyal ve ekonomik değişkenler etkili olduğu gibi çocuk sahibi olma motivasyonları da etkilidir. Bu düşünceden hareketle Türk kadınlarının çocuk doğurma isteğinde hangi doğurganlık motiflerinin etkili olduğunu belirlemek amaçlanmıştır. Türkiye'de yaşa özel doğurganlık hızının en yüksek olduğu 25-29 yaş diliminde yer alan toplam 255 kadın ile çalışılmıştır. Verilerin toplanmasında, Çocuk Sahibi Olma Motivasyonları Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde, çocuk sahibi olma motivasyon türlerinin aritmetik ortalama ve standart sapma değerlerine bakılmıştır. Bağımsız Gruplar için t-testi kullanılmış, Araştırma sonucunda kadınların çocuk sahibi olma olumlu motivasyonunda çift ilişkileri ve sosyal ekonomik görüşün daha baskın olduğu, olumsuz motivasyonlarında ise sosyal ekolojik kaygılara ilişkin güdülerin daha baskın olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca eğitim durumunun çocuk doğurma olumlu motivasyonunda etkin olduğu belirlemiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çift ilişkileri, Çocuk doğurma, Çocuk doğurma motivasyonu, Doğurganlık, Kadın

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INTRODUCTION

Total fertility, which is the main component of the population dynamics of countries (Roy and Hossain, 2017), is the most important factor influencing the size and composition of the population (Alkema et al., 2011). Fertility behavior is a complex issue with deep cultural roots and socio-economic development (Keshavarz, Bahramian, Mohajerani & Hossein-Pour, 2012). The decrease in fertility rate has been a fundamental social change globally. After the 1970s, low fertility rates have become the global norm in many parts of the world. One of the most important factors affecting fertility decline in Turkey is education. Increasing the education level of women has effectively decreased fertility in Turkey (Akça & Ela, 2012). In addition to this increase, women have been more involved in both the labour force and the economy (Başkaya & Özkılıç, 2017; Ünalan, 2005). Moreover, the spread of reliable birth control methods on a global basis has been effective in decreasing fertility in Turkey (Gemicioğlu, Şahin & Er, 2019). In Turkey, the fertility rate per woman in 1930 was 7.1 children per woman. This rate dropped to 4,7 in 1975, followed by 3.8 only two decades later at the end of 1995s and was found to be 2.1 in 2015 (Turkish Statistical Institute., 2018). Today, the total fertility rate (TFR) worldwide is 2.4 per woman while the rate of children per woman in Turkey is 1.70 (Turkish Statistical Institute., 2021). In this decrease, an essential factor is the increase in the age at first-birth of women. In 2001, the average age at first birth was between 20 to 24, while this number has increased to the range between 25 to 29 in twenty years, in 2021 (Turkish Statistical Institute., 2021).

In many countries with high incomes, the majority of women give birth after the age of 30 (Schmidt et al., 2012). In Turkey, the average age at which women giving birth is 29.0 (Turkish Statistical Institute., 2021). It took almost 60 years for the birth age to rise and the ratio of children per woman to fall from 6 (Peker, 2016) to 1.7 in Turkey (Turkish Statistical Institute., 2021). In the last 20 years, many women in Turkey have started to give birth at a later age than their parents and prefer to have fewer children. There has been a steady decline in the fertility rate in Turkey between the years 2000-2021. The fertility rate, which was 2.38 in 2001, decreased to 2.08 in 2010 and 1.7 in 2021 which was the lowest level of the last two decades. It should be noted that the fertility rate in Turkey varies depending on the geographical region. Women in western Turkey have a fertility rate (fertility rate=1.69) lower than those living in eastern Turkey (fertility rate=3.34) (Turkish Statistical Institute., 2021).

Studies reveal that education, having a job, making money, and making a career are increasingly prioritised by women (Van de Kaa, 1987), and having a child or being childless has become a personal choice (Hammarberg et al., 2017; Lutz, Skirbekk & Testa, 2006). In the last 60 years, it can be said that empowerment policies towards women such as education, work, and social participation, technological and economic changes, changing norms, and social changes such as family planning have been effective in the decrease in fertility rates in Turkey. Considering the latest changes in the fertility rate in Turkey, it is crucial to investigate the childbearing motivation of Turkish women in order to understand the process of reproduction, and the decision-making behind it. Therefore, the present study focuses on determining the primary motivations that lead to having children or avoiding having children in order to understand women's conceptions of fertility in Turkey.

OBJECTIVES

In this study, the fertility tendencies and motifs that are more prominent in these tendencies in Turkish women between the ages of 23-30 were questioned, which is the age group that is thought to have the least risk in terms of biological fertility. This study, seeks answers to the following questions, in guidance of our main purpose: 1) Which tendencies are at the forefront of childbearing motivation in women? 2) Do the childbearing motivation of married or single women differ? 3) Do women's childbearing motivation differ according to their education level?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Giving birth is considered to be a cultural requirement for the continuation of a generation and for the construction of a dynamic social structure in every society. Despite that, the developments in global reproductive health have been effective in postponing the first-birth age in women. With the first-birth age getting later over the years, the fertility rate has shown an inevitable decline. Furthermore, social sustainability has been affected negatively. (Schmidt et al., 2012). The motivation to have a child is as effective as social-economic transformations in the decrease in the fertility rate (Abbasi-Shavazi, McDonald & Hosseini-Chavoshi, 2009; Shoaee et al., 2020). The relationship between fertility

preferences and the motives to have children has been shown to be significant by multiple studies (Khadivzadeh, Latifnejad & Bahrami, 2014; Miller & Maner, 2011; Pezeshki, Zeighami, & Miller, 2005).

Childbearing is a difficult decision to make that has effects on multiple aspects of life in the very long term. In this decision, an individual's attitude towards childbearing, the number of wanted kids, and the timing play a great role as well as the expectations from parenthood, socio-cultural norms and responses to economic contexts (Varas &Borsa, 2021). Childbearing motivation is an individual tendency towards reacting either negatively or positively to childbearing in multiple aspects (Pasta & Miller, 2000).

At the core of individuals' behaviours to either have or avoid having children lies the opinions and evaluations of individuals towards the consequences of parenting whether positive or negative (Miller, 2011). These evaluations are based on individuals' beliefs, attitudes, motives, and desires. They are also affected by social conditions and individual available resources (Bachrach & Morgan, 2013). An individual's intention to have a child may be related to the strong desire to be a parent, whereas the intention not to have children may be related to avoidance of giving birth (Mynarska & Rytel, 2020). For this reason, motivation to have a tendency towards childbearing has two types (negative and positive). Positive motivation includes tendencies like having the desire to have children, the pleasure of pregnancy-birth-baby, traditional parenting perceptions, the sense of connectedness, the instrumental value of the child in society, and child-rearing satisfaction (Guedes et al., 2015; Miller, 1995; Shoaee et al., 2020). Miller (1992) argues that childbearing motivation is determined in part by genetic structure and is shaped by psychosocial forces in the life cycle. The biological basis of individuals' desire to have children refers to their personality traits, and psycho-social dynamics refers to personal experiences in their developmental life cycles. Especially in a family-centred value system, positive experiences such as identification with positive parental roles, and child care during adolescence or youth (such as taking care of siblings) have a strong effect on individuals' desires to have children. In addition, many social phenomena such as relations with the family, stable marriage and spousal relations, religious beliefs and loyalties, and competitive perspectives on parenting during adulthood also have strong effects on the individual's desire to have a child or not. Negative motivation, on the other hand, includes parenting fears and worries, parental stress or the difficulties of childcare, concerns about pregnancy and birth ailments, and the tendency to avoid childbearing (Guedes et al., 2015). For a woman, deciding to have a child is one of the most important decisions in her life. In every society, individuals make conscious choices to have or avoid having children. Some women choose to have children in order to continue their lineage or adopt a gender role such as motherhood, while others make the choice not to have children for reasons such as increased environmental restrictions or the desire to maintain their perfect body shape.

Although having a child is something that couples have to decide on their own, the expectations of society can be quite effective. One of the main purposes of starting a family or getting married in Turkish culture is to have children. In recent years, the increase in the marriage and childbearing age of women in Turkey has started to increase the tendency of couples to be voluntarily childless. Considering that the fertility rate has started to decline in Turkey, it is necessary to focus on childbearing motivations in order to predict the future of fertility in Turkey. Therefore, it is important to determine which motivation sources are influential in women's decisions to have a child. Determining which fertility patterns are effective in Turkish women of childbearing age is also important in terms of comprehending social-demographic changes in Turkish society. Additionally, understanding the key determinants that affect women's childbearing.

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

The Mediterranean Region, one of Turkey's seven geographical regions, is located in the south of Turkey. The region, which has eight different city centers, ranks fourth among the regions in terms of socio-economic development. 13% of Turkey's population (10,552,942) is living here and the total female population is 5,269. The Mediterranean Region is also divided into two sub-regions, namely the Western Mediterranean and the Eastern Mediterranean. The region expressed as the Eastern Mediterranean includes the provinces of Adana, Hatay, Kahramanmaraş and Osmaniye and Western Mediterranean includes Antalya Burdur and Isparta.

The Eastern Mediterranean Region is similar to the Western Mediterranean in terms of its climatic characteristics. However, culturally, the Eastern Mediterranean can be considered closer to the Eastern culture and the Western Mediterranean to the Western culture. Although there has been a lot of migration to the Western Mediterranean region to find a job due to the developing tourism activities and economic conditions recently, this cultural difference does not seem to have changed much. Therefore, it is expected that there will be differences between the two sub-regions in terms of childbearing motivations.

There are three cities in the western Mediterranean part, namely Isparta, Burdur and Antalya. These three provinces are culturally close to each other and have a very intertwined structure. In this respect, Antalya is the center of this sub-region and it is a province that affects other provinces culturally and economically. Although there is intertwinedness, there are differences between provinces in terms of socio-economic, political and cultural norms. Antalya, as a province, is an international tourism center and a settlement where many different cultures meet, settle and affect each other. For this reason, child fertility motivation may also differ in terms of these provinces. Therefore, this and similar studies can form a basis for the Western Mediterranean Region and be a precursor for the Mediterranean Region or the other 7 regions. According to 2021 data, the population of Antalya is 2,619,832 (female population 1,305,077), the population of Burdur is 273,716 (female population is 136,344) and the population of Isparta is 445,678 (female population is 224,979). While the age for women in the Western Mediterranean region is 27.4 to give birth for the first child in Antlaya, it is 25.5 in Isparta and Burdur. The general fertility rate is 1.59. The fertility rate across cities, on the other hand, decreased from 1.74 in 2016 to 1.54 in 2021 in Isparta. While the fertility rate in Antalya was 1.93 in 2016, it decreased to 1.53 in 2021. In Burdur, while it was 1.74 in 2016, it decreased to 1.50 in 2021. Considering the fertility rate data, it is seen that there is a significant decrease in the fertility rate in the region (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2021).

Research Methology

This research was conducted to determine the positive and negative childbearing motivation sources of women in Turkey context and was conducted using a descriptive survey model.

Sample and Participant Selection

Participants in the study were chosen from three different localities in the West Mediterranean region of Turkey, which has a lower birth rate (Antalya 1.53; Burdur 1.41; Isparta 1.45) than the mean birth rate (1.7) based on 2021 statistics. A consent form was sent to the women via Google Forms. In the form, the purpose of the study was stated in addition to the fact that participation was on a voluntary basis. Written informed consent was requested before completing the questionnaire and scale items that evaluated demographic characteristics were sent via the Google Form. A total of 255 women between the ages of 23-35 were included in the study as a result of applying the purposive sampling method to the total of 570 participants who completed the the consent form. Those with missing data were excluded from the analysis. In terms of age groups, 52.9% of the women included in the study were between the ages of 23-26, whereas 47.1% were between the ages of 27-30. Regarding marital status, 39.2% of the women were unmarried and 60.8% were married. In terms of the area they were living in, while 50.5% of the participants lived in urban areas, 49.5% of the participants stated that they lived in rural areas. Regarding family structure, 85.1% had a nuclear family, 10.2% had a traditional one, and 4.7% had a single-parent family structure. 55.7% were with children (5% with one child, 50.7% with two children), and 44.3% were without children.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Research data were collected with the Childbearing Motivation (CMS) Scale. The scale was developed by Pires, Carvalho, and Canavarro (2013) adapted it into Turkish by Hüseyinzade-Şimşek in 2017.

Childbearing Motivation Scale (CMS): CSM consists of two different scales, namely Positive Childbearing Motivation (PCM) and Negative Childbearing Motivation (NCM). Each scale also has three sub-dimensions within itself. The three sub-dimensions of Positive Childbearing Motivation to have a child are, socio-economic view (10 items), personal satisfaction (5 items), and couple relationship (7 items) and there are 22 items in total (Hüseyinzade-Şimşek, 2017). *The social-economic aspects* of CMS is composed of extrinsic motivations for the extrinsic rewards of having a child, such as social

support, familian value, relations or heritages, social recognition, labour force. *Personal fulfillment* subdimension of PCM is composed of parameters such as fulfilling a biological instinct, pressure of the biological clock, bonding with a child, sex role fulfillment, experiencing pregnancy, and including intrinsic motivations (Miller 2009). *The couple relationship* includes the strengthened partnership bonds of having a child as a couple, fulfilling a partner's wish, and motivations for self-expression in family and partnership relationships (Guedes et al., 2015). 5-point Likert (5- Completely, 4- A lot, 3- Moderately, 2- A little, 1- Not at all) scaling is used as a scoring method. As the scores obtained in each dimension increase, the positive childbearing motivation scores also increase.

The negative childbearing motivation consists of 13 items and three sub-scales: marital stress, social-ecological worry, and financial problems and economic constraints. *Social and ecological worry* contains those that focus on the future of children due to social insecurity resulting from social and environmental risks or a pessimistic worldview resulting from an unstable past. *Marital stress* is constituted by individuals' joint autonomy, lifestyle, and restrictions on intimacy, concerns about divorce, among others. Lastly, socio-economic difficulties such as unemployment or job insecurity, financial crises, concerns about lifestyle and career constraints constitudes *Financial problems and economic constraints* (Guedes et al., 2015). The scale scoring is in a 5-point Likert type, and as the scores obtained in each dimension increase, negative tendencies towards having a child also increase.

The reliability (Cr-α) coefficient for the entire Motivation to Have a Child Scale is 0.916 (Hüseyinzade-Şimşek, 2017). In this study, the Cr-α value was calculated as 0.91 for the Positive Motivation subscale, 0.92 for the socio-economic view dimension, 0.71 for the personal satisfaction dimension, and 0.82 for the couple relationship dimension. The Cr-α value was calculated as 0.88 for the Negative Motivation sub-dimension, while social-ecologocical anxiety subdimension had a calculated Cr-α value of 0.85, the marital stress sub-dimension had a calculated Cr-α value of 0.88, and financial problems sub-dimension had a calculated Cr-α value of 0.80.

Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and percentage were used in describing socio-demographic variables. For the analysis of the childbearing motivation to have children scores parametric tests were performed. In the implemented analysis, the skewness values of the motivation scores were calculated to be between 0.134 and .203, and the kurtosis values between 0.530 and-0.565. Since the skewness and kurtosis values of the variables were between ±1, it was assumed that the data showed a normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2016), and the t-test analysis was therefore used.

RESULTS

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation Values of Women's Childbearing Motivation

PCM	Mean	Std. Deviation	CI
Socio-economic aspects	2.42	1.09	0.92
Personal fulfillment	3.19	1.02	0.71
The couple relationship	3.72	1.00	0.82
Total	2.95	.921	0.91
NCM			
Social and ecological worry	3.06	1.37	0.88
Marital stress	2.30	1.17	0.85
Financial problems and economic constraints	2.70	1.15	0.88
Total	2.63	.952	0.80

Note. N=255. PCM=Positive Childbearing Motivation. NCM= Negative Childbearing Motivation. CI = confidence interval. Adapted from "Adaptation of Childbearing Motivation Scale into Turkish: A Validity and Reliability Study" by A. Hüseyinzade Şimşek, 2017, *The Journal of Social Science*, 13, p. 395-408

The descriptive statistics show that women of fertility age have low childbearing motivation (Table 1). In the context of Turkey, it is seen that *couple relations* and *personal fulfillment* are at the forefront in terms of women's tendency to have children, and *social and ecological aspects* remain at the forefront of avoiding childbearing.

As also observed in the analysis (Table 2), married women's desire to give birth is higher than single women's [$t_{(255)} = 3.186$; p=.002]. The positive childbearing motivation of married women is found to be personal fulfillment and their drives in the couple relationship. When it comes to their negative motivations, social-ecologic worry was a higher aspect than single women. Nevertheless, the results show that the socio-economic motives as a positive motive were in common in both married and single

women as well as the financial problems-economic and marital stress and constraints being a negative motive.

Table 2. Childbearing Motivation in Married and Singel Women

		Self-reported childbearing motivation				
	Variable	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Daviti	t
PCM	**Socio-economic aspects**	Single	100	3.07	.978	
		Married	155	3.27	1.05	-1.545
	Personal fulfillment	Single	100	2.12	.984	-3.614**
		Married	155	**3.61**	1.11	
	The couple relationship	Single	100	3.56	1.00	-2.108*
		Married	155	**3.83**	.988	
	Total	Single	100	2.73	.880	-3.186**
		Married	155	**3.09**	.922	
NCM	**Social and ecological worry**	Single	100	2.92	1.32	-1.339**
		Married	155	**3.15**	1.40	
	Marital stress	Single	100	2.43	1.15	1.399
		Married	155	2.22	1.18	
	Financial problems and economic constraints	Single	100	2.74	1.12	.469
		Married	155	2.67	1.16	
	Total	Single	100	2.66	.942	.433
		Married	155	2.61	.960	

Note. N=255. PCM=Positive Childbearing Motivation. NCM= Negative Childbearing Motivation. *p <.05. **p <.01.

Table 3. Analysis of Women's Childbearing Motivation in Terms of Education Background

		Self-reported childbearing motivation				
	Variable	**Groups**	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Davition**	**t**
PCM	**Socio-economic aspects**	High school	91	3.02	1.10	5.184**
		Bachelor	164	2.23	1.01	
	Personal fulfillment	High school	91	3.64	1.03	4.080**
		Bachelor	164	3.05	.984	
	The couple relationship	High school	91	4.04	.847	3.202**
		Bachelor	164	3.62	1.02	
	Total	High school	91	3.44	.922	4.990**
		Bachelor	164	2.80	.867	
NCM	**Social and ecological worry**	High school	91	3.28	1.40	1.460
		Bachelor	164	2.98	1.36	
	Marital stress	High school	91	2.32	1.18	.154
		Bachelor	164	2.29	1.17	
	Financial problems and economic constraints	High school	91	2.87	1.12	1.321
		Bachelor	164	2,65	1,15	
	Total	High school	91	2.75	.935	1.174
		Bachelor	164	2.59	.956	

Note. N=255. PCM=Positive Childbearing Motivation. NCM= Negative Childbearing Motivation. *p <.05. **p <.01.

Motivations in women with Bachelor's degrees towards the desire to have a child (considering socio-economic aspects, personal fulfillment, and couple relationships) were lower than in those who graduated from high school (Table 3). But, there were no differences in negative childbearing motivation among women of different education levels. These findings show that educational background is a significant variable in women's desire to give birth, but is not a significant variable in reasons for avoiding childbearing.

DISCUSSION

Fertility behaviour is an issue with cultural, behavioural, and ideological roots together with economic and social development. The motivation to have a child, which is defined as the tendency to respond positively or negatively to various aspects of parenting (Mills et al., 2011; Mynarska & Rytel, 2020; Pedro et al., 2018), plays an important role in the fertility behaviours of individuals. In this study, in

which we examined childbearing motivations in the context of Turkey, significant evidence was obtained showing that women between the ages of 23-30 have a low desire to have a child. In our opinion, this result explains why Turkish women have had fewer children than their parents in recent years.

The present study provided information on the antecedent motivations of women in Turkey that are effective in their decisions of having children or not or not. It was determined that the positive childbearing motivations for personal satisfaction and couple relationships (Guedes et al., 2015) were more prominent in women's desire to have a child. This result shows that reciprocal financial, instrumental, and emotional support is essential in positive motivation in addition to intrinsic motivations such as bonding with the child, and experiencing pregnancy. This finding supports the literature suggesting that personal satisfaction and couple relationships are important sources of motivation in childbearing desire. Much research on motivation for giving birth exhibits data regarding the importance of personal satisfaction and social support sources on the decision and action of childbirth (Bühler and Philipov, 2005; Miller, 1992; Kavas & De Jong, 2020).

According to Bühler and Philipov (2005), the life choices and social decisions of individuals can be affected by social interaction networks. Individuals are aware of their social network and they take their awareness into consideration on their decisions and plans. In both Bernardi and Klärner (2014), and Keim, Klärner & Bernardi (2009) social mechanisms are shown to act within individual interactions and have a great role in fertility motivation. The presence of such social support sources allows couples to think that the uncertainties regarding life standards and childbearing costs would be clarified. As a result of this, the execution of intentions towards childbearing has been highly affected.

Research emphasizes that in childbearing motivation, cultural norms are important as a social network. Cultural norms can hinder social support sources for childbirth as much as they can encourage it (Kavas & De Jong, 2020). Also, Kavas & De Jong (2020) have shown findings regarding the importance of social networks on the positive tendency of Turkish women towards childbearing.

Researchers associated this finding with culture emphasizing the socially supportive role of family members apart from the spouses. Not only the support from spouses but also social assistance such as childcare, and financial support provided by their parents was pointed out to strengthen the tendency of childbearing in women.

It was also determined that social and ecological concerns were at the forefront of women's tendency to avoid childbearing. Our study results, in line with research findings in different cultures (Avison & Furnham, 2015; Pezeshki et al., 2005), show that emotional reactions such as pregnancy, birth, and caressing a baby are at the centre of women's desire to have a child. Moreover, the study showed that social and ecological concerns are at the forefront in the Turkish context, although women do not avoid childbearing. The same findings were found in the studies of Miller (2015) and Mynarska & Rytel (2020). Miller (2015) stated that the social and ecological concerns of parents are positively related to the desire to have a child. According to Miller (2015) and Mynarska & Rytel (2020), parents' altruistic fears about their child's well-being and safety may be reflected in their motivation to have a child. According to Warr (1992), “altruistic fear is a concern for the safety of others and especially loved ones”. Considering the Turkish cultural characteristics, women's fears about the safety of children can particularly come to the fore. Therefore, in the context of Turkey, altruistic fears towards children can come to the fore in parents' parenting styles. The pessimistic worldview stemming from the economic, and financial instability experienced in the global context in recent years has increased the concerns about the future throughout the country. The perception of social insecurity and instability experienced by society may have increased the social and ecological concerns of women about avoiding childbearing.

Another important finding of the present study with respect to the motivations of personal satisfaction and couple relations in married women's desire to give birth is that the avoidance of childbearing and motivations related to social-ecological concerns were higher. According to Karaman and Doğan (2018), traditional perceptions that children are important for a happy and satisfying relationship and that children can strengthen family ties between spouses are common in Turkish culture. Culturally, one of the main motivations for marriage is to have children. After marriage, couples are expected to have children to strengthen family ties. Similar results can be seen in the research done by Kavas & De Jong, (2020). Researchers point out that social pressure and social support and mechanisms are intertwined in the complex relationship phenomenon of women with their own mothers in Turkish

society, and that these complex social motives have great importance in shaping women's reproductive plans. Social pressure and social support and mechanisms are intertwined in the complex relationship between women and their mothers in Turkish society. This cultural and social phenomenon can be influential in shaping the reproductive plans of women and changing the direction of their tendency towards the desire to have children. When the results obtained are interpreted from this context, it can be attributed to the internalization of social motives such as the desire of married women to have children to create strengthened family ties and transfer family values.

Another valuable result of the research is that education is an effective variable in the desire to have a child. The childbearing tendency of women who have a high school education degree as their final level of education is found to be higher than those of women with a high education degree. In studies conducted in different cultures, it is stated that there is a strong inverse relationship between education level and fertility. As education increases, the desire to give birth decreases and the timing of women's first birth is delayed (Kargı, 1999; Kalwij, 2000; Lam & Duryea 1999; Mynarska & Rytel, 2020; Rindfuss, Bumpass & St. John, 1980). Similarly, Selim and Üçdoğruk (2005) stated in their study that as the education level of women increases, fertility rates decrease. All the aforementioned reports verify the findings of the current study.

CONCLUSION

As a result, we see that the tendency of women in Turkey to have children is changing. This study confirms the results of studies obtained in different cultures. Therefore, it is consistent with the results showing that fertility expectations of societies are affected by similar factors. Although factors related to cultural traditions and family policy, socio-economic conditions, and country-specific clusters cannot be ignored, we predict that a strong variable such as education will continue to be influential in women's desire to have a child. As stated in the literature, we predict that as education increases, women's tendency to both consciously delay childbearing until they reach the end of the reproductive period or to give up having children as they become accustomed to a childless lifestyle (Miettinen, Basten & Rotkirch, 2011; Tanturri & Mencarini, 2008) will increase.

Limitations of the study

In our study, we involved women of fertility age living only in the West Mediterranean region of Turkey. Although they are representative of a large group, they do not cover the general population of fertility age women. Therefore, future research can be repeated with sample groups in a larger geographical and demographic.

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