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Associations Between Religiosity and Marital Beliefs among Emerging Adults*Beliren Yetişkinlerin Dindarlıkları ve Evlilik İnançları Arasındaki İlişkiler*Gökay Keldal **Authors Information****Gökay Keldal**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the links between emerging adults' religiosity and their marital salience, marital timing, and marital readiness. Participants included 434 never-married Turkish emerging adults. Hierarchical multiple linear regression techniques were performed for data analysis. Results indicated that religiosity was a significant predictor of emerging adults' marital salience, marital timing, and marital readiness. A higher level of religiosity was associated with a greater belief in marital salience and also linked to an earlier expected age of marriage. A higher level of religiosity was also related to more financial readiness, emotional readiness, and interpersonal relationship readiness. Furthermore, it was linked to the feeling of being prepared for family life and a family role, as well as readiness to take on social responsibility.

Article Information**Keywords**

Marital Salience
Marital Timing
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Anahtar Kelimeler

Evliliğin Önemi
Evliliğin Zamanlaması
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Bu çalışmanın amacı beliren yetişkinlerin dindarlıkları ile evliliğin önemi, evliliğin zamanlaması ve evliliğe hazır oluşları arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 434 bekâr beliren yetişkin oluşturmuştur. Verilerin analizinde hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Dindarlık beliren yetişkinlerin evliliğin önemi, evliliğin zamanlaması ve evliliğe hazır oluşlarına ilişkin inançların anlamlı bir yordayıcısıdır. Yüksek düzeyde dindarlık evliliğe daha fazla önem vermeye ilişkilidir. Yüksek düzeyde dindarlık daha erken yaşta evlenme beklentisiyle ilişkilidir. Yüksek düzeyde dindarlık daha fazla finansal hazır oluş, duygusal hazır oluş, kişiler arası ilişkilere hazır oluş, aile hayatı ve rollerine hazır oluş ve toplumsal sorumluluklara hazır oluş ile ilişkilidir.

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INTRODUCTION

Evidence that the perspective on marriage has changed over time can be found in the following research: decrease in direct marriage and increase in cohabitation over time as the first union formation (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008; Kuperberg, 2019; Manning et al., 2014), spread of serial cohabitation (Eickmeyer & Manning, 2018; Lichter et al., 2010), increase in the duration of the first cohabitation and decrease in the rate of cohabitators transitioning to marriage (Lamidi et al., 2019), the expectation of many people to cohabit with their future spouse (Manning et al., 2019), increase in nonmarital childbearing (Perelli-Harris et al., 2012) and the increase in median age at first marriage in both women and men gradually (Manning et al., 2014). All these findings can be presented as indicators that young people's beliefs about marriage should be given importance.

Marital beliefs in western societies have been examined frequently in the last decade (Allison & Risman, 2017; Willoughby, 2015; Willoughby, & Carroll, 2012; Willoughby, & Hall, 2015; Willoughby, Medaris et al., 2015). The results of these studies suggest that marital beliefs are associated with certain behaviors. Allison and Risman (2017) found a positive association between perceived ideal age at first marriage and hookup ("sexual encounters outside of romantic relationships" p.472) frequency. Willoughby (2015) revealed that greater belief in marital salience and marital permanence were associated with a higher level of commitment among dating, cohabiting, and married individuals. Willoughby, Medaris et al. (2015) stated that higher marital salience was associated with less binge drinking. These studies showed that marital beliefs play an important role in the behavior of young people. However, in the literature, there have been only a limited number of studies revealing the factors that play a role in the formation of marital beliefs. Accordingly, the focal point of the current study was the association between Turkish emerging adults' religiosity and their marital beliefs. Studies on this subject were conducted in western societies (Ellison et al., 2011; Leonhardt & Willoughby, 2018; Mosko & Pistole, 2010). Researchers have not yet focused on the association between religiosity and marital beliefs in Turkish society. Accordingly, the goal of this study is to examine the associations between Turkish emerging adults' religiosity and their marital salience, marital timing, and marital readiness.

Religiosity and Marital Beliefs

Religiosity level is an important factor associated with marital readiness (Mosko & Pistole, 2010). Young people with a higher level of religiosity believe marital timing should be at an earlier age in their lives and attach more importance to marriage (Willoughby et al., 2012). A higher level of religiosity is also associated with placing more importance on marriage, believing less in the advantages of being single versus being married, and earlier expected marital timing (Willoughby, Hersh et al., 2015). Leonhardt and Willoughby (2018) concluded that a higher level of religiosity among young people is associated with more emphasis on marriage, increased belief in marital centrality, earlier ideal age of marriage, less emphasis on sexual readiness, and less permissive sexuality. Ellison et al. (2011) reported a positive association between the level of subjective religiosity of women and the importance they give to marriage, as well as their expectation of early marriage. Arocho (2019) determined that believing that religion is very important increases the odds of getting married. Henderson et al. (2018) concluded that sharing similar religious beliefs with their partner, participating in regular religious activities with their partner, and believing that their relationship is blessed by God, increases the expectation of marrying the partner.

As the level of religiosity increases in single individuals, the importance given to virginity also increases (Hardy & Willoughby, 2017). When religiosity increases, the number of sexual partners a person has is expected to decrease (Barkan, 2006). Štulhofer et al. (2011) found that levels of religiosity in women are negatively correlated with the numbers of their sexual partners. Barry et al. (2015) revealed that an increase in personal religious worship by single individuals who are in a committed relationship reduces the probability of sexual intercourse. Lefkowitz et al. (2004) stated that individuals who consider religion as a part of their daily lives have more conservative sexual attitudes. Burdette et al. (2009) expressed the view that, for women, attending church reduced the odds of hooking up outside a committed relationship.

The level of religiosity is also associated with beliefs about cohabitation without marriage as well as attitudes towards sexuality. Willoughby and Carroll (2012) determined that as the level of religiosity of adolescents increased, their beliefs about the benefits of cohabitation without marriage and their endorsement of cohabitation, with or without marital plans, decreased. Manning, Smock, et al. (2014) revealed that individuals with higher religiosity are less likely to cohabit together without getting married. Manning et al. (2019) determined that single women who stated that religion in their daily lives was not important, or only somewhat important, were more likely to have expectations of cohabitation than those who stated that religion in their daily lives was very important.

The examination of the studies conducted in Turkey revealed that there are no studies directly exploring the relationship between religiosity and marital beliefs. However, some studies report an association between religiosity and some premarital attitudes. Sakallı et al. (2001) reported that religious people have a more negative attitude towards women having premarital sexual intercourse compared to non-religious people. Bener (2011) determined that the level of religiosity is important in terms of identifying the characteristics sought in potential spouse candidates. The study conducted by Hatipoğlu-Sümer (2015) revealed that believing that religion is not important is associated with having more liberal attitudes toward masturbation and abortion. As can be deduced from these studies, religiosity is important in terms of premarital factors in Turkish society. While studies conducted with specifically Christian participants explored the relationships between religiosity and premarital factors, the studies conducted with Muslim participants did not focus on these relationships.

Theoretical Framework

Research on marital belief in social sciences is not new. Until recently, the studies in this area have been mostly atheoretical, and there has been no conceptualization and measurement consistency (Willoughby, 2015). To overcome this deficiency, Willoughby et al. (2015) proposed the marital paradigm theory. The current study has drawn on this theory. Willoughby et al. (2015) stated that marital paradigm theory is divided into two dimensions; namely beliefs about getting married and beliefs about being married. Also, the theory includes six specific dimensions under these two categories. While beliefs about getting married involve marital salience, marital timing and marital context, beliefs about being married involve marital processes, marital permanence, and marital centrality.

The current study has focused on marital salience, marital timing, and marital context, which are all in the category of beliefs about getting married. According to Willoughby et al. (2020), marital salience refers to beliefs about the overall importance that a person attaches to marriage, while marital timing includes

beliefs about the ideal and expected timing for marriage and relationship commitments. Marital context involves beliefs about the circumstances under which marriage will occur, as well as beliefs about marital readiness and marriage preparation. Willoughby et al. (2015) expressed the view that marital salience is the most studied dimension among marital beliefs. In recent years, researchers (Allendorf et al. 2019; Allison & Risman, 2017; Hall & Willoughby, 2016; Willoughby, & Hall, 2015) have focused on belief in marital timing. Marital context has also been the subject of many studies (Carroll et al., 2009; Hall & Willoughby, 2016, 2018; Holman & Li, 1997; Larson & LaMont, 2005; Leonhardt et al., 2022; Mosko & Pistole, 2010).

Current Study

As stated earlier, this study aimed to examine the associations between Turkish emerging adults' religiosity, and their marital salience, marital timing, and marital context. Although the associations between religiosity and marital beliefs were investigated in previous studies, these studies were generally conducted with Christian samples. There are important gaps in the literature regarding the examination of these associations in Muslim societies. In Turkey, a study conducted by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (2014) revealed that 99.2% of the participants were Muslims. When evaluated from this point of view, examining the associations between religiosity and marital beliefs in a society where the majority believes in the religion of Islam will fill an important gap in the literature.

There are a limited number of studies examining the role of religiosity on premarital factors in Turkish culture. Keldal (2021a) determined in a qualitative study that emerging adults consider religion as an important factor affecting their perspective on marriage. Baynal (2019) found in a qualitative study that religiosity is an important criterion in choosing a mate. These findings indicate that religiosity is important in Turkish society in terms of premarital factors. An important contribution of this study is that it provides an opportunity to understand the role of religiosity in the formation of marital beliefs. The lack of studies on this subject in Muslim societies causes an important dimension not to be addressed when developing premarital intervention programs. Thus, examining religiosity and especially beliefs about getting married is important for understanding union formation behavior. Based on the research, the following hypotheses were proposed.

H1: A higher level of religiosity would be associated with an earlier expected age of marriage and greater belief in marital salience.

H2: A higher level of religiosity would be associated with less sexual readiness, but with more readiness for social responsibilities, family life and roles, as well as with emotional, interpersonal, and financial readiness.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were 434 (326, (75%) females) never-married Turkish emerging adults. Thirty-six percent of emerging adults have a romantic relationship. They ranged in age from 18 to 25 years ($M=21.08$, $SD=1.42$). Ninety percent of the participants reported that their parents were married, 5% reported that their parents were divorced, and 5% reported that at least one parent had died. It was revealed that 43% did not feel ready for marriage, while 51% were partially ready and 6% felt fully ready.

Twenty-nine percent of the emerging adults in this study stated that they prayed every day, 18% said twice a week, 15% once a week, 22% once a month, and 16% stated that they never prayed.

Ethical Statement

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Nigde Omer Halisdemir University (2020/06-07). All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of Nigde Omer Halisdemir University Ethics Committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Procedure

The study data were collected online in September 2020, and participants were contacted via e-mail. An information message and a data collection form were sent to the students' e-mail addresses during the period when education continued online due to the pandemic conditions and the study was conducted with the data obtained from the participants who provided feedback. All necessary information about the study was given to the participants and informed consent was obtained from everyone who agreed to participate. The e-mail address of the researcher was given to those who wanted to get information about the study results afterwards, and they were given feedback via email. Participants completed 56 items that were included on the form and their response time was approximately 25 minutes.

Measures

Religiosity. The level of religiosity was assessed with the Religiosity Tendency Scale developed by Karaçay (2011). The scale consists of 14 items (sample item: I believe God will treat all believers equally) and one dimension. The response format of the scale is a 4-point Likert type (1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree). There is one reverse item in the scale. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale is .93.

In this study, the hypothesis model of the Religiosity Tendency Scale was retested in a sample of Turkish emerging adults. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated the general model fit $\chi^2/df=4.32$, CFI= .92, TLI= .90, SRMR= .04 and RMSEA= .08. According to the findings, the general coefficients of model fit were sufficient. In this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .95.

Marital Beliefs. Marital salience was assessed with five items. While developing these items, previous studies (Hall & Willoughby, 2016; Willoughby & Hall, 2015) were drawn on. These items were: "I consider marriage as an important goal" (factor loading: .86), "Marriage precedes my other life goals" (factor loading: .72), "I believe marriage has many advantages over being single" (factor loading: .80), "I believe marriage is necessary" (factor loading: .80) and "I think not getting married would be an important shortcoming in my life" (factor loading: .67). A 5-point Likert rating scale (strongly disagree to strongly agree) was used to determine the participants' response levels. The reliability was calculated with an internal consistency coefficient and was found .88. Marital timing was assessed with a single item; the participants were asked about their expected age of marriage.

Marital Context. The marital readiness level of the participants was assessed with the Marital Readiness Scale, developed by Keldal (2021b). This scale consists of 30 items and six dimensions. These dimensions are as follows: financial readiness (six items, sample item: When I get married, I can earn a living for my

family without financial support from anyone else); emotional readiness (six items, sample item: I can commit to a long-term relationship); social responsibility readiness (six items, sample item: I can create a family environment that can keep our values alive); sexual life readiness (four items, sample item: I can maintain a healthy sex life in my marriage); family life and family role readiness (four items, sample item: I can fulfill my responsibilities regarding child care); interpersonal relationship readiness (four items, sample item: I can form healthy relationships with my spouse's family). The response format of the scale is a three-point Likert type (not appropriate for me – appropriate for me). Instead of getting a total score from the scale, each dimension was assessed within itself. The reliability work was made by calculating the internal consistency coefficient. The internal consistency coefficient was determined as .85 for financial readiness, .85 for emotional readiness, .77 for interpersonal relationship readiness, .76 for family life and family role readiness, .87 for sexual life readiness, and .84 for social responsibility readiness.

Controls. In this study, the demographic variables of gender, romantic relationship status, and age were used as control variables. The first two were categorized as follows: gender (0=female, 1=male) and relationship status (0=I do not have a romantic relationship, 1=I have a romantic relationship).

Data Analysis Plan

The hierarchical multiple linear regression techniques were employed in the data analysis. In these analyses, a model was formed for each outcome variable. In the first step of the analysis, the control variables were included in the model, and in the second block religiosity, (the focal variable) was introduced. In the study, the significance level was taken as .05.

RESULTS

The mean, standard deviation, and bivariate correlation coefficients for the variables are presented in Table 1. In Table 2, hierarchical regression analysis results are given.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for study variables

Variables	<i>M(SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Religiosity	46.27 (10.03)	.95 ^α								
2. Marital salience	13.62 (4.91)	.44**	.88 ^α							
3. Marital timing	26.26 (2.49)	-.33**	-.44**	-						
4. Financial readiness	11.89 (3.46)	.23**	.34**	-.14**	.85 ^α					
5. Emotional readiness	16.54 (2.28)	.19**	.33**	-.28**	.34**	.85 ^α				
6. Interpersonal relationship readiness	10.79 (1.59)	.17**	.27**	-.20**	.36**	.79**	.77 ^α			
7. Family life and family role readiness	10.58 (1.76)	.23**	.33**	-.30**	.42**	.74**	.71**	.76 ^α		
8. Sexual life readiness	10.47 (2.04)	.00	.29**	-.18**	.34**	.59**	.54**	.58**	.87 ^α	
9. Social responsibility readiness	16.53 (2.50)	.30**	.36**	-.30**	.41**	.78**	.71**	.79**	.57**	.84 ^α

**p<.01, α= Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

There were low and moderate associations between religiosity and outcome variables. No significant association was found only between religiosity and sexual life readiness.

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analysis results

Marital salience							Marital timing					
Predictor variables	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Gender	3.33	.52	.29*	3.65	.46	.32*	.74	.26	.13*	.62	.25	.11*
Relationship status	.94	.47	.09*	.98	.42	.10*	-	.24	-.26*	-1.37	.22	-.27*
Age	-.15	.16	-.04	-.10	.14	-.03	1.36	.26	.15*	.24	.08	.14*
Religiosity	-	-	-	.22	.02	.46*		-	-	-.08	.01	-.32*
R		.30			.55			.33			.46	
R²		.09			.30			.11			.21	
adjusted R²		.09			.29			.10			.20	
Financial readiness							Emotional readiness					
Predictor variables	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Gender	1.43	.38	.18*	1.55	.37	.19*	.53	.25	.10*	.59	.25	.11*
Relationship status	.11	.34	.02	.12	.33	.02	.47	.23	.10*	.47	.22	.10*
Age	.21	.12	.08	.22	.11	.09*	.04	.08	.03	.05	.08	.03
Religiosity	-	-	-	.08	.02	.24*	-	-	-	.04	.01	.19*
R		.20			.32			.14			.24	
R²		.04			.10			.02			.06	
Adjusted R²		.03			.09			.01			.05	
Interpersonal relationship readiness							Family life and family roles readiness					
Predictor variables	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Gender	.33	.18	.09	.37	.17	.10*	.19	.19	.05	.25	.19	.06
Relationship status	.30	.16	.09	.30	.16	.09	.33	.18	.09	.34	.17	.09*
Age	.03	.05	.03	.04	.05	.03	.12	.06	.10*	.13	.06	.11*
Religiosity	-	-	-	.03	.01	.18*	-	-	-	.04	.01	.24*
R		.13			.22			.15			.28	
R²		.02			.05			.02			.08	
Adjusted R²		.01			.04			.02			.07	
Sexual life readiness							Social responsibility readiness					
Predictor variables	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Gender	1.07	.22	.23*	1.08	.22	.23*	.59	.28	.10*	.70	.27	.12*
Relationship status	.76	.20	.18*	.76	.20	.18*	.26	.25	.05	.27	.24	.05
Age	.16	.07	.11*	.16	.07	.11*	.06	.09	.03	.08	.08	.04
Religiosity	-	-	-	.00	.01	.02	-	-	-	.08	.01	.31*
R		.31			.31			.12			.33	
R²		.10			.10			.01			.11	
Adjusted R²		.09			.09			.01			.10	

*p<.05

Table 2 contains the findings of the regression analysis. The model for the prediction of marital salience (F(4, 429)= 45.28, p<.001) was found significant, and religiosity (B=.22, β = .46, t=11.20, p=.00) was

also a significant predictor of emerging adults' marital salience. In addition, the control variables of gender and relationship status contributed significantly to the model. According to these results, a higher level of religiosity was significantly associated with a greater belief in marital salience. Furthermore, being male and having a romantic relationship was also associated with this greater belief.

The model for the prediction of marital timing ($F(4, 429) = 27.94, p < .001$) was found to be significant in that religiosity ($B = -.08, \beta = -.32, t = -7.40, p = .00$) was a predictor. The control variables of gender, relationship status, and age also contributed significantly to the model. According to these results, a higher level of religiosity was associated with an earlier expected age of marriage. Being male was associated with a later expected age. Also, having a romantic relationship was associated with an earlier expected age of marriage.

The model for financial readiness ($F(4, 429) = 11.82, p < .001$) was found significant and religiosity ($B = .08, \beta = .24, t = 5.29, p = .00$) was an important predictor for this. The control variables of gender and age were also positively and significantly associated with financial readiness. A higher level of religiosity was associated with a higher level of financial readiness and being male was associated with more financial readiness compared to being female. Being older was also significantly associated with more financial readiness.

The model for the prediction of emotional readiness was found significant ($F(4, 429) = 6.51, p < .001$). Religiosity ($B = .04, \beta = .19, t = 4.13, p = .00$) was a significant predictor and the demographic control variables of gender and relationship status also contributed to the model. A higher level of religiosity was associated with greater emotional readiness. Being male and being older, as well as having a romantic relationship, were associated with greater emotional readiness.

The model for the prediction of interpersonal relationship readiness ($F(4, 429) = 5.26, p < .001$) was also found significant. Religiosity ($B = .03, \beta = .18, t = 3.70, p = .00$) and gender were significant predictors of interpersonal relationship readiness. A higher level of religiosity was also associated with greater interpersonal relationship readiness. Being male, rather than female, was more associated with interpersonal relationship readiness.

The model for the prediction of family life and family role readiness ($F(4, 429) = 9.26, p < .001$) was found significant. Specifically, religiosity ($B = .04, \beta = .24, t = 5.19, p = .00$) was an important predictor of such readiness. Control variables of relationship status and age also significantly contributed to the model. A higher level of religiosity was associated with greater family life and family role readiness. In addition, those having a romantic relationship had more family life readiness, as well as family role readiness, compared to those who did not have one. In addition, being older was associated with greater readiness for family life and a family role.

The model for the prediction of sexual life readiness ($F(4, 429) = 11.56, p < .001$) was also found significant. Religiosity ($B = .00, \beta = .02, t = .44, p = .66$), the main variable in the study, was not a significant predictor of sexual life readiness, but, on the other hand, all of the control variables were significant predictors. In accordance with this result, being male was more associated with sexual life readiness than being a female, and so was having a romantic relationship as opposed to not having one. Being older was also associated more with sexual life readiness.

The model for predicting social responsibility readiness ($F(4, 429) = 12.89, p < .001$) was found significant, too. Religiosity ($B = .08, \beta = .31, t = 6.69, p = .00$) was a significant predictor of readiness for social responsibility. Among the control variables, only gender was a significant predictor. According to these findings, a higher level of religiosity was associated with greater readiness for social responsibility and being male was more strongly associated than being female.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study have several implications for the relationships between Turkish emerging adults' religiosity and their marital salience, marital timing, and marital readiness. First, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed. A higher level of religiosity in emerging adults was found to be related to a greater belief in marital salience. In their study with an American sample, Willoughby, Hersh et al. (2015) revealed that emerging adults' higher level of religiosity is associated with greater emphasis on marriage and that it is also associated with less belief in the advantages of being single versus being married. Similarly, Leonhardt and Willoughby (2018) reported that a higher level of religiosity in emerging adults is linked to a greater belief in marital salience. In their study with young adults, Willoughby et al. (2012) determined that there is a positive relationship between religiosity and importance given to marriage. Arocho (2019) concluded that giving great importance to religion increases the odds of marriage when compared to considering religion as only somewhat important. Willoughby and Carroll (2012) reported in their study with young people that there is a negative correlation between religiosity and belief that cohabitation is beneficial. As can be seen from the findings summarized above, a strong positive association between religiosity and marital salience is expected. Specifically, Islam's encouragement of marriage between young people is important in explaining this finding. In a study of Turkish culture, Bacanlı (2001) revealed that sexual intercourse has an important place among the meanings given to marriage. Because avoiding sin is among the teachings of Islam, young people may refrain from sexual intercourse outside marriage. Because of this, achieving a healthy sex life may cause them to give more importance to marriage. Keldal (2021c) specified that almost one-third of young people approached cohabitation positively. In this respect, it can be stated that non-marital relationship formations are likely to become widespread. For this reason, it can be also stated that those who perceive themselves as more religious attach more importance to marriage.

Another important finding of this study is that a higher level of religiosity is associated with expecting an earlier age of marriage. Willoughby, Hersh et al. (2015) determined that religiosity is a negative predictor of marital timing. Leonhardt and Willoughby (2018) found that a higher level of religiosity in emerging adults is associated with an earlier ideal age of marriage. Willoughby et al. (2012) reported that religiosity is a negative predictor of young adults' ideal marital timing. When these findings are assessed together, it is an expected result that there would be a negative relationship between the level of religiosity and the expected age of marriage. It is well known that the religion of Islam regards adultery as forbidden. When considered from this point of view, it is possible that young people with a higher level of religiosity expect to marry at an earlier age in order to avoid adultery.

In the present study, Hypothesis 2 was confirmed to a large extent. Religiosity was not found to be a significant predictor of sexual life readiness. However, a higher level of religiosity in emerging adults was related to greater financial readiness, emotional readiness, interpersonal relationship readiness, family life and family role readiness, and social responsibility readiness. Mosko and Pistole (2010) found a positive

relationship between religiosity and marital readiness. Their finding supports the result of the present study. The most striking result here is that financial readiness is positively predicted by religiosity. The fact that young people with a high level of religiosity do not have many financial expectations to establish and maintain a marriage union may be shown as an important reason for explaining this. The positive associations between religiosity and the variables of emotional readiness, interpersonal relationship readiness, family life and family role readiness, and social responsibility readiness can be explained by the fact that young people with higher religiosity prioritize the teachings of Islam. In addition, Keldal and Şeker (2021) revealed that being ready for marriage increases the likelihood of prioritizing marriage in the life plan. In this respect, it can be seen that being ready for marriage is an important step in getting married. In this context, it can be expected that those who perceive themselves as more religious will attach more importance to being ready for marriage in order to be able to get married.

The present study discovered no significant relationship between religiosity and sexual life readiness. Leonhardt and Willoughby (2018) determined in their study with emerging adults that there are negative associations between religiosity, and sexual readiness as well as permissive sexuality. Barry et al. (2015) reported that increasing personal religious practices inside a committed relationship decrease the possibility of sexual intercourse. When these findings are assessed together, it is expected that there would be a significant negative relationship between religiosity and sexual readiness. However, considering premarital sexual intercourse in Islam as sin may prevent young people from forming an attitude towards sexual life readiness. For this reason, a significant association may not have emerged.

The present study has several limitations to be considered. First, it was carried out with a sample of university students and university graduates, predominantly female. Therefore, the findings should not be generalized to cover all emerging adults in Turkey. In the future, researchers may examine whether the findings of this study are replicable, especially in a population sample of non-college emerging adults. Second, the present study was designed as cross-sectional. Hence, it is impossible to infer causal directions regarding the relationships between religiosity and marital beliefs. Willoughby, Medaris et al. (2015) reported that emerging adults' marital beliefs change over time. When evaluated in this context, longitudinal studies are needed when examining the associations between the religiosity of emerging adults and their marital beliefs. Finally, the participants of this study are Turkish emerging adults who are Muslims. However, in Turkey, there can be emerging adults who believe in other religions or who do not believe in any religion. This situation should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

Despite these limitations, the present study has made a significant contribution to the field in several ways. First, it is significant for examining the associations between religiosity and marital beliefs in a sample of Muslims. Second, it is important for revealing the variables associated with the marital beliefs of Muslims and developing an understanding of the marital behaviors of emerging adults. Scholars should continue to investigate marital beliefs to explain marital union formation behavior.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Statement

The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Nigde Omer Halisdemir University (2020/06-07). All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of Nigde Omer Halisdemir University Ethics Committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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