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RELIGION AND WOMEN'S FERTILITY IN TURKEY: AN ISLAMIC CONTEXT

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Abstract

There is a scarcity of research on the association between religion and fertility outside of the Western world. Therefore, the main purpose of the present study is to examine the relationship between religious dimensions and women's fertility in Turkey. Guided by religious perspectives and by using data from the 2013 Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) (N = 7,219) several hypotheses were developed and tested to determine this relationship. Two indicators of fertility were used: number of children and number of children plus current pregnancy. Results from regression models indicated that three religious determinants including performing namaz, fasting, and wearing a headscarf were significantly and positively associated with women's fertility while attending the Quran course was negatively linked to women's fertility. The findings of the study were discussed in the social and cultural context of Turkey.

Keywords: *Religion, Quran, prayer, fasting, women's fertility, Turkey.*

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TÜRKİYE'DE DİN VE KADIN DOĞURGANLIĞI: İSLAMİ BİR BAĞLAM

Öz

Batı dünyası dışında gelişmekte olan ülkelerde din ve doğurganlık arasındaki ilişki üzerine araştırma yetersizliği bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Türkiye'deki dini faktörler ile kadının doğurganlığı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Dini perspektiflerin rehberliğinde ve Türkiye Demografik ve Sağlık Araştırması'ndan (TDHS) (N = 7.219) alınan veriler kullanılarak bu ilişkiyi belirlemek için çeşitli hipotezler geliştirilmiş ve test edilmiştir. Çalışmada temel İki doğurganlık göstergesi kullanılmıştır: çocuk sayısı ve çocuk sayısı artı mevcut hamilelik. Regresyon modellerinden elde edilen sonuçlar, düzenli olarak namaz kılmak, oruç tutmak ve başörtüsü takmak gibi üç dini belirleyicinin, kadınların doğurganlığıyla anlamlı ve olumlu bir şekilde ilişkili olduğunu gösterirken Kuran kursuna katılma ise kadınların doğurganlığı üzerinde negatif bir etki göstermiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları Türkiye'nin sosyal ve kültürel bağlamında tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Din, Kuran, namaz, oruç, doğurganlık, Türkiye.*

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Human fertility is a complicated process that serves as a tool for society's biological survival (Gracias, 1981). Fertility is defined as “a measure of the average number of children a woman will have during her childbearing years” (Norville et al., 2003: 2). For more than a few decades, many researchers have been interested in the issue of fertility, which is a critical component of contemporary social disciplines including sociology. In these decades, rates of fertility have fallen to markedly low levels in many developed countries (Ellison et al., 2018). For example, according to the World Factbook (2021), many European countries including Poland (1.39), Portugal (1.42), Italy (1.47), Germany (1.48), and Austria (1.5) have the lowest estimated fertility rates in the

world. On the contrary, developing Sub-Saharan countries have the highest estimated rates of fertility among all countries. Compared to the lowest and highest regions, Muslim countries, particularly Arabic countries, have fertility rates that can be considered as high. However, it is not possible to state that for every Muslim country. For instance, Turkey, as a secular country, is among the Muslim countries that have the lowest fertility rates (The World Factbook, 2021). In recent decades, Turkey has encountered remarkably dropped levels of fertility rates. More specifically, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat) (2019), the fertility rate for Turkey dropped from 4.33 births per woman in the mid-1970s to 1.99 births per woman in 2018, and the estimated fertility rate for 2021 is 1.94 (The World Factbook, 2021). Due to a decline in fertility rates, some statistics reveal that Turkey will experience a significant aging process in a short time compared to the aging process that has occurred in a hundred years in Europe (Çuhadar & Lordoğlu, 2016). Based on this situation, in recent years, the Turkish government has started to urge citizens to have at least three children to be shielded from the negative consequences of recent fertility declines (Malm, 2016).

Despite the importance of the issue, knowledge about female fertility in the Islamic world, particularly in Turkey, is still limited. The vast majority of research on this subject has focused on the United States (Hayford & Morgan, 2008; Mosher, 1988; Mosher & Bachrach, 1996), other developed Western societies (Adsera & Ferrer, 2016; Peri-Rotem, 2016), and some of them in non-Western contexts (Basten & Jiang, 2015; Peng, 1998; Poston & Gu, 1987; Retherford et al., 2005). Many of these studies have debated the reasons for the decline of the fertility rates and some examined the effects of socioeconomic and cultural factors on this issue. In developed countries, some of the main reasons for the fertility decline are the postponement of marriage and non-marital cohabitation that may cause childlessness. Marriage and parenthood are gradually being

postponed in developed societies in favor of educational attainment, career success, consumerism, personal satisfaction, and other individualistic and expressive ideals (Ellison et al., 2018). Moreover, economic development, welfare, and secularization have been related to alterations in family structure and fertility activity in Western societies (Ellison et al., 2018; Goldscheider, 2006).

Religion has long been acknowledged as a significant factor in fertility decisions. A handful of the studies, in the United States, Canada, and Europe, have focused on the probable role of religion in shaping fertility (Adsera, 2006; Dilmaghani, 2019; Peri-Rotem, 2016). Previous work from the western context suggests that one of the aspects of research on religion and fertility is Catholic-Protestant differences, and findings from research reported permanent disparities between these two denominations. Based on the data collected from 1,223 households in six metropolitan areas in the 1960s, Zimmer and Goldscheider (1966) found religious differences in fertility between two different religious groups and their findings revealed that Catholics had larger families and longer fertility spans more than Protestants. Their research also indicated that fertility differences between Catholics and Protestants were highly significant in the central city and suburban parts of bigger and small metropolitan areas (Zimmer and Goldscheider, 1966). Recent comparative studies of some cultures in Western societies suggest that fertility inequalities between Catholic-Protestant could still exist in those countries (Frejka & Westoff, 2008). Furthermore, research from the United States has reported that fertility rates are higher among Mormons (Heaton, 1986), and Latino background Catholics while it is lower among non-religious groups and liberal Protestants (Ellison et al., 2018; Mosher et al, 1992). In Europe, particularly in France, empirical research also found that Catholics have more children compared to the rest of the population (Baudin,2015). Besides, the underlying cause of the Christian fertility discrepancy has been seen because the

Catholic Church has long been opposed to divorce and maintains that the primary aim of marriage is to reproduce children (Dilmaghani, 2019).

Many theoretical principles in social sciences have emphasized the roles of cultural values and norms in understanding demographic behaviors. In this contexts, theoretical approaches on religion and female fertility have attempted to explain the influence of religious institutions, practices, and beliefs on fertility. Most of the research has focused on the changing fertility disparities between religious groups and practices, as well as the links between religious involvement and fertility (Frejka & Westoff, 2008). According to McQuillan (2004), there are three important components to explain the effect of religion on fertility. First, religious groups and traditions have conservative rules and norms regarding close factors of fertility including ideal family size, abortion, contraception, and sterilization. Second, religions have an effective force on adherents to follow these teachings and rules. Third, since religious belief is such an integral part of their social identity, adherents align their social interests with religious teachings. Due to social identity, the violation of religious teachings will be lower among adherents. Moreover, when religious institutions can express beliefs to their members and implement mechanisms to encourage enforcement and punish nonconformity, religious values are more likely to matter (Okun, 2017). Based on the McQuillan (2004) approach, many scholars extended his ideas by using social and cultural determinants to show the impact of religion on fertility in different contexts (Dilmaghani, 2019; Goldscheider, 2006; Okun, 2017; Peri-Rotem, 2016).

There are several dimensions of religion including belief, experience, affiliation, religious practice, participation, religious knowledge, individual moral consequences, and social consequences (De Jong et al., 1976; Sherkat & Ellison, 1999). Among previous studies, which examined the link between religion and fertility, one of the most used aspects of religion is religious involvement. In terms of the impact they

have on fertility, public aspects of religious participation are generally separated from private aspects (Dilmaghani, 2019). Religious organizations and groups bring people together who share similar beliefs, interests, and activities; these groups provide fertile ground for the formation and preservation of new friendships (Ellison et al., 2018). Regular participation in these religious organizations may increase socialization among attendants. Participation in religious groups assists in the establishment of reciprocal aid networks where psychological and social support is shared (Lim and Putnam, 2010). These benefits may have a positive effect on fertility by lowering the perceived costs of childbirth and easing the burden of growing a family (Dilmaghani, 2019). Based on the relationship between religious attendance and fertility, studies found that religious participation has a positive effect on fertility and future childbirth (Adsera, 2006; Baudin, 2015; Berghammer, 2012; Okun, 2017; Philipov and Berghammer, 2007).

Another important aspect of religion that has been found to related fertility is the self-reported importance of religion. Many who believe "religion is more important" possess more stereotypical gender and family attitudes, and these perceptions account for a significant portion of the fertility gap (Hayford & Morgan, 2008). Regarding the importance of religion, previous research found a significant relationship between the personal given importance to religion and fertility. For example, Zhang (2008) reported that by using the data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, the importance of religious beliefs has a statistically significant and positive effect on fertility. Overall, based on this literature, it is possible to state religion plays a significant role in childbearing practices even in cultures where replacement fertility has been achieved (Heaton, 1986). Almost all religions recognize the important role of families in society. Individual religious commitment tends to strengthen family beliefs and behaviors (Goldscheider et al 2014), therefore, influence fertility practice. From western perspectives, a growing literature studies work on fertility repeatedly indicated that religious individuals

report having more children when compared to non-religious individuals and/or couples.

In many countries, including Turkey, there is still a significant gap in the understanding of the religious dimensions that influence female fertility. Therefore, the current study purposes to add to the body of knowledge in this field by reflecting on the relationship between religion and female fertility in Turkey, a substantial non-Christian society. A study conducted by Acevedo and colleagues (2015) well documented the factors for the importance of Turkey to study familial issues in this non-Christian but candidate country of the European Union. First, the majority of Turks are predominantly Muslims (Oktem, 2002), procuring an opportunity to investigate the position of religious factors in a context ruled by another big world religion, which is Islam. Second, although the majority population of Turkey believes in Islam, the state is governed by secular legislation that underlies the history of the rebuilt Republic in 1923. Particularly, this point is very important to examine the relationship between religion and fertility in a context of secularization, which has been seen as one of the important determinants of declining fertility and in a nation that is nearing the end of its fertility transition (Yavuz, 2006). Finally, recently the majority of the population is well-educated, urbanized, and live in an industrialized economy compared to other Muslim countries. The importance of the present research is to examine how women's self-reported religious attendance (attending Quran course), Islamic prayer practices (Namaz and fasting), and Islamic clothing rules (wearing headscarf) shape female fertility by using a subsample obtained from *Demographic and Health Survey* project in Turkey. First, the current research will review the earlier studies dealing with Islam and fertility. Then fertility in Islamic theology will be documented. Next, research hypotheses will be developed and tested by using data collected from female Turkish respondents. After revealing the main findings of the analysis of the study, I will discuss the significance of the results

for the literature on religion and fertility in the Islamic context and the limitations of the study will be determined.

1.1. Literature on Religion and Fertility in Muslim World

Although Islam is the second most populated divine religion in the World (Kaufmann, 2008), due to the scarcity of data, there is little attention has been given to the relationship between religiosity and fertility in the Islamic context. In other words, the lack of research that discusses fertility from an Islamic perspective is a major weakness in the empirical literature in this area. Nevertheless, the present study points out some insightful studies that have focused on the relationship between religious factors and fertility in different Muslim countries. In previous research, Muslim family socialization processes have been conceptualized in the form of collective/interdependent culture, therefore, concerns regarding the well-being of the family structure and society as a whole take precedence over individualism (Acevedo et al., 2015).

Some studies carried out in different regions and countries attempted to examine the fertility differences between Muslims and adherents of other religions (Morgan et al., 2002). Although there is no impact of culture on fertility in the western apart from the influence of socioeconomic factors, religious aspects are significantly linked to fertility in Muslim countries (Lutz, 1987). Regarding that association, a study conducted by Adhikari (2010) examined the relationship between demographic, socio-economic, and cultural determinants and fertility differences in Nepal. Regarding fertility differential among religious groups, the study found that Muslim women had more children compared to Hindu counterparts. Moreover, research indicated that members of Islam possess more fertility rate than adherents of Christianity, Hindu, Jews, folk religions, and Buddhism (Hackett & Lipka, 2018). Research in Europe also

reported the same findings. For example, a study carried out by Burner (2012) found that fertility among Muslims was higher than non-Muslims, Muslim women were more religious than non-Muslims counterparts, and the probability of possessing at least two children was higher for religious women, with the robust links among Muslim women. In addition, Selim and colleagues (2018), by using World Values Survey, attempted to examine fertility differences between Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox faiths and they found that fertility among Muslim adherents is higher compared to Orthodoxes while it was close to the followers of the Catholic faith.

A few studies examined the relationship between religious dimensions and fertility (Kaufmann, 2009; Westoff & Frejka, 2007). By using a compounded data from European Value Survey, Westoff and Frejka (2007) attempted to examine the comparative analysis of religiosity and fertility focusing on Muslim women in European countries. They measured religious affiliation by several aspects of religiosity including, the importance of religion, attendance, subjective religiosity, religious traditionalism, prayer practice, and importance of God. Their findings indicated that religious Muslim women had more children compared to non-religious Muslim women. Kaufmann (2009) found that traditional religious beliefs among Muslims from different countries are associated with a higher rate of fertility. In another study, by using World Value Survey 2010-2014 data, Selim and Bilgin (2020) found that adherents who believe that religion is very important had more children while less attendance at religious services and less prayer decreased the number of children among Muslims.

In the body of the work focusing on fertility, whether from an Islamic perspective or not, previous studies have been conducted on Turkey as a case study (Karakaya et al., 2017; Karaoğlan & Duman, 2017). Yavuz (2006) found

that the fertility process is influenced by marital characteristics such as traditional or modern family lifestyles. Additionally, women located in the Eastern part of the country hold more traditional beliefs, therefore, are exposed to ineffective contraception methods that cause in having more children. As a first study, Aksoy and Billari (2015) attempted to examine the influence of local Islamic governance (Justice and Development Party) on fertility and marriage rates in Turkey. Their findings demonstrated that under the governance of the Justice and Development Party around five to eight more birth per 1000 women reported in a five-year period of 2005 and 2010 (Aksoy & Billari, 2015). The literature studies above demonstrate and strengthen the influence of Muslim culture in shaping fertility practice among individuals in modern Turkish society.

1.2 Islamic Theology on Fertility

The Islamic faith possesses a consistent influence on demographic behaviors and when it comes to shaping these behaviors Islam is a more patriarchal faith than other religions (Morgan et al, 2002). For many scholars, Islam is more than a religion; it is a total lifestyle, complete with an institutional and organizational structure that ties the community together (Jones, 2006). Therefore, adherents of Islam, one of the great monotheistic religions worldwide, it has been demonstrated that stronger individuals stick to it and follow the regulations of faith more strictly (Roggemans et al., 2015). Moreover, unlike many other faiths, Islam has a full code of life (Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha, 2015). In the context of fertility, marriage has been considered half of the faith. In Islam, marriage serves two key purposes: legal sexual pleasure and procreation, which is regarded as a sacred right; it is among the five fundamental objectives of Islamic law, alongside the protection of faith, self, intellect, and property (Husain, 2009). As a result, children are regarded as a great and blessed gift from Allah in Islam (Abu-Rabia, 2013).

Islamic natural law is a collection of values, obligations, and rights derived primarily from the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad's practices (Ekmekci, 2017; Husain, 2009). When Muslims are looking for ethical advice, they turn to the Holy Quran first, which is the first point for all research in any familial issue. Since the Qur'an is actually God's own words, it cannot be denied or overridden (Ekmekci, 2017). As a result, the legal precepts of Sharia law found in the Quran provide a detailed social structure designed to control and regulate all dimensions of a faithful Muslim's life (Acevedo et al., 2015). Therefore, in the issue of fertility, first, we have to look at verses from Quran to explain Islamic theology on this issue. In one of the verses of the Holy Quran, it states:

> "Wealth and children are the adornments of this worldly life, but the everlasting good deeds are far better with your Lord in reward and in hope." (Quran, 18:46)

From this verse, we understand that children are seen as the wealth of the families, and the reproduction of children, either boys or girls, is determined by the will of Allah (God). To support this idea, later verse consolidates the importance of children in the Quran, and it is stated that:

> "To Allah alone belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates whatever He wills. He blesses whomever He wills with daughters and blesses whomever He wills with sons, or grants both, sons and daughters, ˹to whoever He wills˺, and leaves whoever He wills infertile. He is indeed All-Knowing, Most Capable." (Quran, 42:49)

In addition to these verses, Islam is against contraception or abortion. To support that idea, another passage from Quran reveals that:

> "Lost indeed are those who have murdered their own children foolishly out of ignorance and have forbidden what Allah has provided for them—falsely attributing lies to Allah. They have certainly strayed and are not ˹rightly˺ guided." (Quran, 6:140)

Another passage points out that:

> "Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Surely killing them is a heinous sin." (17:31)

The "Sunna" or "Hadith," which is a compilation of Prophet Muhammed's specific way of doing things, sentences, and behaviors, is the second source of moral advice in Islamic theology (Ekmekci, 2017). Muslims believe Prophet Muhammad was sent to the world to spread the message of God's unity and to create an ethical order under Allah's will (Sachedina, 2005), and, therefore, his words and deeds help in the correct understanding of the Quran. In the issue of fertility, Prophet Muhammad's words also show the importance of having children for Muslims' life. According to a related hadith, the Prophet Muhammad said (Al-Bar & Chamsi-Pasha, 2015):

> "Marry the kind and fertile women who will give birth to many children for I shall take pride in the great numbers of my ummah"

Based on these verses from the Quran and hadith, there is no doubt to point out that, in Islam, reproduction is considered a sacred right. Therefore, children are regarded as a crucial and blessed gift from Allah, according to Islamic theology.

1.3 Hypotheses

The verses above, taken together, affirm some fundamental doctrines of Islam. Thus, the present study anticipates that religiosity can affect fertility in relation to the faith's moral principles. More specifically, this study predicts Islamic religious dimensions to be positively linked the fertility. Hence, it is possible to expect the following hypotheses:

H1: Women who show more attendance at religious services will have more children than those who never attended.
H2a: As one of the five pillars of Islam, women who performing the practice of prayer (Namaz) regularly will have more children than those who do not perform prayer.
H2b: As one of the five pillars of Islam, women who fasting regularly will have more children than counterparts who do not fast.
H3: Women who wear a headscarf when go out will have more children compared to women who do not wear a headscarf.

2. METHOD

2.1. Data and Sample

Data from the current study were attained from the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey – Turkey conducted by Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies funded by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) from September 2013 to January 2014. TDHS used a weighted, multistage, and stratified cluster to select a nationally representative sample of 11794 households in 2013 (TDHS, 2013). The current research used data collected from all women who are from 15-49 years old in the households and were eligible for an individual and face-to-face interview. The 2013 TDHS has 9,746 cases of women and gathered data from all women samples. Owing to the present study focuses on married women, we selected only cases of

married women from the 2013 TDHS. After the elimination of single women from the 2013 TDHS, 7,219 cases remained in the study for statistical analysis.

2.2. Variables

Dependent Variable

Two dependent variables were used in the analysis of the current research. First, *the number of living children* is a continuous variable reflecting how many children women had so far. Second*, the number of children plus current pregnancy* is used as a second dependent variable to represent women's ongoing fertility behavior.

Independent Variables

Four independent variables were used in the analysis of the present research as religious factors associated with fertility among married women in Turkey. First, attending religious services is an important indicator of religiosity. Therefore, this research used *women's attendance at the Quran course* as an independent variable. This variable is dichotomous with 0 = Not ever attended the Quran course and 1 = ever attended the Quran course.

Second, *Namaz* (prayer) is a substantial practice that reflects individuals' religiosity among Muslims. Performing Namaz is a categorical variable with 0 = not performing Namaz, 1 = performing Namaz regularly, and 2 = performing Namaz irregularly. Third, fasting or in Turkish *oruç* is also an important practice that represents Muslim's religiosity. Likewise, fasting is a categorical variable that was created by DHS with 0 = not fasting, 1 = performing fast regularly, and 2 = performing fast irregularly.

Finally, the last independent variable is *wearing a headscarf* when the woman goes out. For Muslim women, wearing a headscarf, particularly in the public, is an essential behavior to represent their religiosity (Sheen et al., 2018). Because of the small frequency of irregularly wearing a headscarf, wearing a headscarf was recoded as a dichotomous variable with 0 = not wearing a headscarf when goes out and 1 = wearing a headscarf when goes out.

Control Variables

Five demographic variables were included in the analysis to control for their effects on the women's fertility behavior. First, women's *age* is a continuous variable range from 15-49 years old. Second, *residence location* represents the degree of urbanization and for the present study, it is a dichotomous variable (0 = rural, 1 = urban). Third, the *age of the first cohabitation* is a continuous variable. Fourth, the respondent's *educational level* is a categorical variable (0 = no education, 1 = primary education, 2 = secondary education, and 3 = higher education). Finally, *household wealth* is an index variable created by DHS echoes household resources. The scale of household wealth range from 1 = poorest to 5 = richest.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Sample Characteristics

Table 1 shows sample characteristics of married women in Turkey in TDHS 2013. For demographic features, the age of respondents in the sample ranges from 15-49 years with a mean of 34.81 (SE = .095). The majority of the women

live in urban areas (73.2%) compared to rural areas (26.8%). The mean level of the age of the first cohabitation was 20.27 (SE = .049). Around half of the women had primary education (47%), secondary education was more than 29%, no education was more than 13%, and married women with higher education were the smallest percentage (10.7%). The mean level of wealth was 2.88 on a five-point index (SE = .016). Regarding religious aspects, more than half of the respondents reported they have never attended the Quran course (53.7%). More than half of the married women reported they performing Namaz regularly (53.8%) and approximately a quarter of them praying irregularly (24.8%). Most of the respondents reported that they fulfilling fasting regularly (86.7%) while a small portion of them not performing fasting (7.8%). Almost a

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Variables	*n*	*Percentage*	*Min.*	*Max.*
Rural (ref.)	1,935	26.8%	-	-
Urban	5,284	73.2%		
No Education (ref.)	953	13.2%		
Primary Education	3,393	47.0%		
Secondary Education	2,102	29.1%	-	-
Higher Education	771	10.7%		
Ever attended the Quran course	3,875	53.7%	-	-
Never attended the Quran course	3,342	46.3%		
Not performing Namaz (ref.)	1,541	21.4%		
Regularly performing Namaz	3,874	53.8%	-	-
Irregularly performing Namaz	1,786	24.8%		
Not performing fasting (ref.)	554	7.8%		
Regularly performing fasting	6,196	86.7%	-	-
Irregularly performing fasting	395	5.5%		
Not wearing headscarf	1,894	26.3%		
Wearing headscarf	5,316	73.7%		

	M	*SE*		
Age	34.81	.095	15	49
Age of first cohabitation	20.27	.049	10	45
Wealth	2.88	.016	1	5
Number of children	2.36	.019	0	12
Number of children + pregnancy	2.42	.019	0	12

third of fourth women reported that they wearing a headscarf when goes out (73.7%). Regarding dependent variables, the mean level of the number of living children was 2.36 (SE = .019) ranged from 0-12 and the mean level of the number of living children and current pregnancy was 2.42 (SE = .019).

3.2. Multivariate Analysis

Five nested linear regression models were carried out to test the hypotheses of the current study. In other words, linear regression was used to determine the net effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable after correcting for the effect of demographic variables. For analysis of data, Model 1 was the control model, which includes a dependent variable and fıve demographic variables. Model 2 assesses the attendance of religious services, Model 3 appraises prayer practices, Model 4 evaluates the religious concept of privacy on the estimation of women's fertility whereas demographic characteristics were controlled. The full model (Model 5) includes all variables to demonstrate the sole effect of independent variables on women's fertility. Parameter estimates were reported to interpret statistically significant results from the analysis of data. For each model, due to the small portion of missing values, final cases remain lower than the exact sample. I did not use missing values, which are slightly available in categorical independent variables, to avoid bias in the data analysis.

Table 2 displays the linear regression models that estimate the women's fertility in Turkey. Model 1 indicates that age is positively and significantly while age of the first cohabitation, education, and household wealth were negatively and significantly associated with the number of children. More specifically, one-year increase in respondent's age, the expected number of children increases by .076 units (b = 0.076, t = 28.41, p < .001). One-year increase in the age of the first cohabitation, the expected number of children decreases by a factor of .120 (b = -0.120, t = -25.86, p < .001). Regarding educational level, the mean level of the number of children is 1.143 units lower for having primary education (b = -1.143, t = -13.25, p < .001), 1.373 lower for secondary education (b = -1.373, t = -15.42, p < .001), and 1.372 units lower for higher education (b = -1.372, t = -13.97, p < .001) than for respondents who have no education. In the context of household wealth, for one-unit increase in wealth, the expected number of children decreases by .148 units (b = -0.148, t = -8.69, p < .001).

Model 2 demonstrates that attending religious service (Quran course) is not significantly linked to the number of children. Model 3 exhibits that regular Namaz and regular fasting positively and significantly associated with women's fertility. More precisely, holding all other variables constant, the mean level of the number of children is .243 units higher for women who performing Namaz regularly than counterparts who do not perform Namaz (b = 0.243, t = 5.99, p < .001). All else being equal, the mean level of the number of children is .209 units higher for women who fasting regularly than their counterparts who do not fast (b = 0.209, t = 3.56, p < .001). Model 4 shows that wearing a headscarf is positively and significantly related to women's fertility. Holding all other variables constant, the mean level of the number of children is .342 units higher for women who wear a headscarf than women who do not wear a headscarf when goes out (b = 0.342, t = 11.14, p < .001). Model 5 (full model) exhibits that performing regular Namaz, fasting, and wearing a headscarf remains statistically

significant and positively associated with the number of children. In this model, attending the Quran course become statistically significant and negatively linked to the number of children. More specifically, the mean level of the number of children is .132 units lower for women who have attended the Quran course than counterparts those who have never attended the Quran course (b = -0.132, t = -4.13, p < .001).

Apart from only examine the number of living children in Table 2, Table 3 examines the role of religious factors on the number of children plus current pregnancy. Model 1 shows that age is positively and significantly (b = 0.069, t = 26.15 p < .001) while age of the first cohabitation (b = -0.116, t = -24.99, p < .001), education (primary: b = -1.159, t = -13.49, p < .001; secondary; b = -1.408, t = -16.05, p < .001; higher: b = -1.383, t = -14.04, p < .001), and household wealth (b = -0.147, t = -8.60, p < .001) is negatively and significantly associated with the number of children plus current pregnancy among married women.

Model 2 reveals that attending the Quran course is not significantly associated with the number of children plus current pregnancy. Model 3 demonstrates that performing Namaz regularly, irregularly, and fasting regularly positively and significantly linked to the number of children plus current pregnancy. Findings reveal that all else being equal, the mean level of the number of children plus current pregnancy is .261 units higher for women who performing Namaz regularly (b = 0.261, t = 6.35, p < .001), .088 units higher for women who performing Namaz irregularly (b= 0.088, t = 2.03, p < .05) than women who do not perform Namaz. Holding all other variables constant, the mean level of the number of children plus current pregnancy is .208 units higher for women who fasting regularly than their women who do not fast (b = 0.208, t = 3.60, p < .001). Model 4 examines the role of wearing a headscarf on the number of children plus current pregnancy. Results indicate that wearing a headscarf when

goes out is positively and significantly related to the number of children plus current pregnancy. All else being equal, the mean level of the number of children plus current pregnancy is .366 units higher for women who wear a headscarf than women who do not wear a headscarf when goes out (b = 0.366, t = 11.84, p < .001).

In the full model (Model 5), the effect of performing regular Namaz, regular fasting, and wearing a headscarf remains significant while performing Namaz irregularly is no longer statistically significant. In this model, similar to Table 2, when practicing Namaz, fasting, and wearing a headscarf are entered, attending the Quran course engrossingly becomes significant and negatively associated with the number of children plus current pregnancy. More precisely, the mean level of the number of children plus current pregnancy is .142 units lower for women who have attended the Quran course than counterparts who have never attended the Quran course (b = -0.142, t = -4.37, p < .001).

Table 2. Linear Logistic Regression: Parameter Estimates of the Number of Living Children

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)
Age	0.076***	0.076***	0.076***	0.077***	0.076***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
Urban	0.016	0.018	-.004	0.020	0.004
	(.059)	(.058)	(.059)	(.059)	(.059)
Age of First Coh	-0.120***	-0.120***	-0.118***	-0.115***	-0.116***
	(.005)	(.005)	(.005)	(.005)	(.005)
Primary Ed.	-1.143***	-1.132***	-1.109***	-1.131***	-1.065***
	(.086)	(.086)	(.087)	(.087)	(.087)
Secondary Ed.	-1.373***	-1.363***	-1.307***	-1.293***	-1.232***
	(.089)	(.089)	(.090)	(.090)	(.090)
Higher Ed.	-1.372***	-1.365***	-1.261***	-1.207***	-1.153***
	(.098)	(.098)	(.100)	(.099)	(.100)
Wealth	-0.148***	-0.147***	-0.142***	-0.124***	-0.124***
	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)
Quran course		-0.035			-0.132***

		(.031)			(.032)
Regular Namaz			0.243***		0.197***
			(.041)		(.044)
Irreg. Namaz			0.071		0.060
			(.042)		(.043)
Regular Fasting			0.209***		0.173**
			(.059)		(.061)
Irreg. Fasting			-0.021		-0.010
			(.074)		(.074)
Headscarf				0.342***	0.221***
				(.031)	(.037)
R^2	.431	.431	.442	.439	.446
N	7,219	7,217	7,140	7,210	7,136

* p<.05. ** p<.01. *** p<.001

Table 3. Linear Logistic Regression: Parameter Estimates of the Number of Living Children Plus Current Pregnancy

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)	B(SE)
Age	0.069***	0.068***	0.068***	0.069***	0.069***
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)
Urban	0.001	0.003	-0.020	0.005	-0.012
	(.059)	(.059)	(.059)	(.060)	(.060)
Age of First Coh	-0.116***	-0.116***	-0.114***	-0.111***	-0.112***
	(.005)	(.005)	(.005)	(.005)	(.005)
Primary Ed.	-1.159***	-1.146***	-1.125***	-1.146***	-1.078***
	(.086)	(.085)	(.087)	(.086)	(.087)
Secondary Ed.	-1.408***	-1.397***	-1.340***	-1.322***	-1.261***
	(.088)	(.088)	(.088)	(.088)	(.089)
Higher Ed.	-1.383***	-1.375***	-1.270***	-1.207***	-1.151***
	(.099)	(.099)	(.100)	(.099)	(.101)
Wealth	-0.147***	-0.146***	-0.140***	-0.121***	-0.120***
	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)	(.017)
Quran course		-0.040			-0.142***
		(.031)			(.033)
Regular Namaz			0.261***		0.208***
			(.041)		(.044)
Irreg. Namaz			0.088*		0.074
			(.043)		(.044)
Regular Fasting			0.208***		0.166**
			(.058)		(.060)
Irreg. Fasting			-0.019		-0.006
			(.075)		(.075)
Headscarf				0.366***	0.246***

				(.031)	(.037)
R^2	.410	.410	.422	.419	.426
N	7,219	7,217	7,140	7,210	7,136

* p<.05. ** p<.01. *** p<.001

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between religious determinants and women's fertility in an ever married sample of Turkey. From the western perspective, there is a long tradition of theoretical approach and systematical research on this important demographic issue. The majority of this research has examined religion's effect on attitudes toward fertility and fertility practice by using several dimensions of the different religious affiliations (Adsera, 2006; Dilmaghani, 2019; Frejka & Westoff, 2008; McQuillan, 2004). However, in the context of an Islamic and secular society, there is s dearth of research that examined the relationship between Islamic religious dimensions and women's fertility. Therefore, this study focused on how four important aspects of Islam, provided by TDHS, which are attending the Quran course (attendance at religious service), performing namaz and fasting (religious practices), and wearing a headscarf or hijab (religious symbol) can shape women's fertility in Turkey.

First, the findings of the current study rejected the first hypothesis (H1), which predicted that women who ever attended the Quran course would have more children than counterparts who have never attended. Even though reading the Quran regularly is an important indicator of religiosity in Muslim culture, attending Quran courses may not demonstrate the same results. Because most of the people, in Turkey, attending these courses in their childhood enable them to learn how to read its passages in the Arabic language (Kılavuz, 2009).

Although there is not any segregation between childhood and adulthood to learn the Quran, the distinction is about attending voluntarily. For example, in 2013, more than 3 million children attended the Quran courses offered by Religious Affairs Directorate around this secular country (Hürriyet Daily News, 2013). However, these courses take only a short time and are commonly obtained in the summer holidays. Therefore, one possible comment may be made as follows these courses are not positively effective on demographic behaviors as permanent attendance at religious services in adulthood such as attending mosques to prayer. In addition, it is necessary to note that, attending the Quran course was not a significant factor in women's fertility by itself. There was a moderation effect of other religious determinants that made attending these services in a lifetime negatively link fertility in Turkey.

Second, previous research indicated that religious practices are crucial factors that can shape fertility (Lehrer, 2004). Guided by this perspective, this study developed two hypotheses (H2a, H2b), which predicted that Turkish women who performing prayer practice and fasting would have more children than those not. The results from the statistical analyses provided strong support for these hypotheses. It was found that Turkish women who practice namaz and fasting regularly in their lifetime had more children compared to women who do not perform both practices. Importantly, these behold influences of religious practices are consistent with prior several studies in that religiosity is associated with higher fertility (Dilmaghani, 2019; Peri-Rotem, 2016). However, caution should be exercised in understanding these results, as the data does not explicitly assess the motivations for Turkish men's involvement in fertility. Nonetheless, it seems rational to remark that the central tenets such as religious practices can be generalized to the Turkish context in accounting for women's fertility.

In the western context, one of the most contentious dimensions of Islam is the hijab. Unfortunately, one consequence that is often addressed in non-Muslim "Western" cultures is that Muslim women wearing a headscarf are often perceived negatively (Everett et al., 2015; Sheen et al., 2018; Unkelbach et al., 2010). According to Islamic beliefs, God has asked women to wear hijab to attain modesty and to steer women's attention away from the material world and toward God's more spiritual realm (Hwaij, 2018). Therefore, the hijab, a head covering worn by certain women in public, is one of the important tenets and symbols of the identity of women in Islam throughout the world (Sheen et al., 2018). Thus, the current research included wearing a hijab as one of the aspects of Muslim religiosity, and findings revealed that women who wear a headscarf when going out were more likely to have children. These findings mightily support Hypothesis 3. The findings from the present study suggest that Turkish women who wear the headscarf are aware of and follow their religion's values and norms.

Before moving to the limitations of the present study, apart from religious determinants, it is necessary to open a bracket about the effects of demographic characteristics on fertility. In other words, a few expositions on the more prominent effects of these demographic factors are required. First, findings from the statistical analysis revealed that age has a positive influence on fertility among women in Turkey. On the contrary, the age of the first cohabitation, education, and income had negative effects on women's fertility in this country. These results were consistent with previous studies that have found the relationship between these demographic factors and fertility in different societies (Castro Martin, 1995, Guinnane, 2011). These results also support the conceptualization that fertility has decreased as a result of the shift from ruralization to urbanization and industrialization that began in the late nineteenth century (Dribe et al., 2017; Guinnane, 2011).

There are a few limitations that can be considered characteristics of the Demographic and Health Survey used in the present research that restrict the reach and veracity of the results. First, although the DHS project has specific strengths and has been used for many studies examined social and public issues, it is focused on a repeated cross-sectional design and therefore is not a panel data, rendering it difficult to perform a systematic study of religious change at the personal level. Second, despite DHS mostly focuses on public health issues, it is important to include some religious variables. However, particularly in the Islamic context, more questions including religious traditional beliefs, reading the Quran, and personal religiosity needed to be asked to respondents to obtain information about their religiosity as a whole. Finally, DHS gathered the last data from Turkey in 2013, and more recently data needed to be done by the project in a society that undergoing rapid change.

Despite these limitations, the analysis of this study makes many contributions to the available literature, particularly in an Islamic context. The current research examined the relationship between religious dimensions and women's fertility in Turkey. Results of this study demonstrate a significant link between increased Muslim devoutness and women's fertility. Therefore, it is crucial to note that there is a parallel between the results of this research and the previous studies conducted in the context of Western societies. Overall, it is my suggestion for future research to work on the relationship between fertility (as an independent factor) and religious dimensions in an Islamic context. Based on that future research, it would be crucial to indicate whether there is a bidirectional relationship between fertility and religion in Turkey.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

İnsan doğurganlığı bütün toplumların biyolojik olarak hayatta kalabilmesi için bir araç görevi gören önemli ve bir o kadar da karmaşık bir süreçtir. Doğurganlık toplum bilimciler tarafından şu şekilde tanımlanmıştır: "bir kadının doğurganlık yıllarında sahip olduğu ortalama çocuk sayısının bir ölçüsüdür" (Norville vd., 2003: 2). Birçok araştırmacı, sosyologlar da dâhil olmak üzere, son otuz yıldan fazla olmak üzere çağdaş sosyal disiplinlerin kritik bir bileşeni olan doğurganlık konusu ile ilgilenmişlerdir. Özellikle batılı gelişmiş ülkelerde doğurganlık oranlarının belirgin bir şekilde düşmesiyle birlikte doğurganlığı etkileyen faktörler ile ilgili yapılan araştırmalar daha da önem kazanmıştır. Fakat toplumun ayrılmaz bir bileşeni olan din ile doğurganlık ilişkisi batılı ülkelerin dışındaki toplumlarda hak ettiği ilgiyi ve sistematik bir araştırma yöntemini henüz görememiştir. Bundan dolayı, son yıllarda doğurganlık oranlarının önemli bir düşüş gösterdiği Türkiye'de bu ilişkiyi incelemek ehemmiyet kazanmıştır ve bu çalışmanın ana amacı din ile kadın doğurganlığı ilişkisini İslami bir perspektiften ele alarak teorik ve sistematik olarak incelemektir.

Teorik olarak din ile doğurganlık ilişkisini ele alan ve literatürde en çok kullanılan kuramlardan birisi McQuillan'ın yaklaşımıdır. McQuillan'a (2004) göre, dinin

doğurganlık üzerindeki etkisini açıklamanın üç önemli bileşeni vardır. Birincisi, dini gruplar ve gelenekler, ideal aile büyüklüğü, kürtaj, doğum kontrolü ve kısırlaştırma dâhil olmak üzere doğurganlığın yakın faktörlerine ilişkin muhafazakâr kurallara ve normlara sahiptir. İkincisi, dinler kendi taraftarları üzerinde bu öğretileri ve kuralları takip etme konusunda etkili bir güce sahiptir. Üçüncüsü, dini inanç sosyal kimliklerinin böylesine ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğundan, taraftarlar sosyal ilgi alanlarını dini öğretilerle aynı hizaya getirirler ve dini sosyal kimlik nedeniyle, taraftarlar arasında dini öğretilerin ihlali daha düşük olacaktır. Dahası, dini kurumlar üyelerine inançlarını ifade edebildiklerinde ve yaptırımı teşvik etmek ve uygunsuzluğu cezalandırmak için mekanizmalar uyguladıklarında, dini değerlerin önem kazanması daha olasıdır. Birçok batılı din araştırmacısının ele aldığı bu kuramsal yaklaşımların Türkiye gibi gelişmekte olan ve batılı dinlerden ayrı bir dine sahip olan toplumlara genelleştirilip genelleştirilemeyeceği de bu çalışmanın amaçlarında birisidir. Bu yüzden bu araştırmada bu dini kuramsal görüşlere dayanarak birçok hipotez oluşturulup test edilmiştir.

Çalışmanın verileri 2013 yılında Türkiye'de evli kadınlardan toplanan Türkiye Demografik ve Sağlık Anketinden elde edilmiştir. Bu anket şirketi dünyada en çok tanınmış şirketlerden birisidir ve özellikle doğurganlık, doğum kontrolü, aile içi şiddet, şiddete yönelik tutumlar ve cinsiyet roller ile ilgili konularda her beş yılda bir dünyanın birçok gelişmekte olan ülkesinde veriler toplamaktadır. Özellikle kadınlardan elde edilen bu veriler birçok araştırmada kullanılmıştır ve kullanılmaya da devam etmektedir. Çalışmada iki bağımlı değişken, dört bağımsız değişken ve beş control değişkeni kullanılmıştır. Bunlara bağlı olarak çalışmada ilk önce örneklemin demografik özellikleri sunulmuştur. Burada çalışmaya katılan evli kadınların orta yaşlarda olduğu, genç yaşlarda evlendiği, daha çok kentsel alanlarda yaşadığı, çoğunluğunun ilkokul mezunu olduğu ve hane halkı zenginliği olarak orta seviyelere yakın oldukları görülmüştür.

Ana bulguları elde etmek için, bu çalışmada karmaşık örnek tasarımı kullanılarak regresyon modelleri elde edilmiştir. Birinci model sadece kontrol değişkenlerinden oluşmaktadır. İkinci model dini etkinliklere katılım olarak Kuran kursuna katılımı, üçüncü model dindarlığın en önemli göstergelerinden olan namaz kılma ve oruç tutma, dördüncü model evden dışarı çıkarken başörtü takma ve sonuncu model ise bütün değişkenlerden oluşan modeldir. Bütün bu modeller kontrol değişkenlerini de içerip control edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, sadece control değişkenlerle içerdiğinde Kuran kursuna katılım ile doğurganlık artasında bir anlamlı ilişki bulunmamıştır. Diğer modellerdeki bulgularda ise, düzenli olarak namaz kılmanın, düzenli olarak oruç tutmanın ve başörtüsü takmanın kadın doğurganlığı üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif bir etkisi olduğu bulunmuştur. Tam model, yani bütün değişkenlerin birlikte kullanıldığı modellerde ise ilginç bir şekilde Kuran kursuna katılım kadın doğurganlığı üzerinde anlamlı fakat olumsuz bir etki göstermiştir. Bunlara ek olarak, kontrol değişkenleri arasında yaş, ilk evlilik yaşı, eğitim seviyesi ve hane halkı zenginliğinin ve kadın doğurganlığı arasında anlamlı ilişkiler bulunmuştur. Yaş arttıkça doğurganlık artarken, evlilik yaşının artması, eğitim seviyesinin yükselmesi ve hane halkı zenginliğinin artışı doğurganlık üzerinde negatif bir etkiye sahip olmuştur. Bütün bu bulgular iki bağımlı değişken üzerinde de hemen hemen aynı etkiyi göstermiştir.

Sonuç olarak, doğurganlık bir toplumun devam edebilmesi için en önemli bileşenlerin başında gelmektedir. Bundan dolayı doğurganlık oranlarının düştüğü Türkiye'de bunu etkileyen faktörleri araştırmak daha çok önem kazanmıştır. Bundan dolayı bu çalışma ana amaç olarak din ile kadın doğurganlığı ilişkisini sistematik olarak incelemiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları namaz kılma, oruç tutma ve başörtüsü takma açısından genel olarak çalışmanın hipotezlerini desteklemiştir. Fakat Kuran kursuna katılım kurulan hipotezin tam tersi bir sonuç ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bütün faktörler birlikte kullanıldığı zaman

Kuran kursuna katılım kadın doğurganlığını olumsuz bir şekilde etkilemiştir. Buradan anlaşılması gereken nokta Kuran kursuna katılım daha çok küçük yaşlarda gerçekleştiği için, ileriki yaşlarda dindarlığı devam ettiren bir faktör olup olmadığı üzerinde daha detaylı bir çalışma ve tartışma gereklidir. Çalışmada kullanılan verilerde ve ankette sadece Kuran kursuna katılım sorulmuştur. Güncel Kuran okuma sıklığı sorusu ileriki anketlerde sorulması gereken bir sorudur. Bu faktörün doğurganlık üzerindeki etkisi ileriki çalışmalarda ele alınması gereken bir konudur.