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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Social Identity Scale: A Validity and Reliability Study

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to develop a measurement tool that assesses the level at which adult individuals identify with their social identities. The scale has been prepared in a Likert-type format, and data has been collected from 325 individuals to reveal the structure of the scale, from 301 individuals to confirm the structure of the scale, from 103 individuals to determine the criterion validity, and from 90 individuals to examine the test-retest reliability. The results from the analyses conducted on the obtained data reveal the scale to be valid and reliable. According to the results from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the scale has a three-factor structure. The analyses examined the relationships between the scale's subscales and revealed the factors to be positively and significantly related to one another. The goodness-of-fit indices for the model were found to be quite high, with the confirmatory factor analysis confirming the results from the EFA. The internal consistency coefficient obtained for the entire scale has been determined to be .86.

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religion • political • identity • gender • social identity

The field of identity in social sciences is a unique one that brings together scholars from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, geography, social politics education, and politics (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Identity is a central concept in modern societies and a focal point of social psychological theory and research (Howard, 2000). While identities did not play a significant role in static societies, they have become a matter of personal choice and acceptance in modern societies. However, identity takes on the burden of how to define the self (Howard, 2000) and is furthermore a fundamental concept that explains how people become who they are and how they act in their sociocultural context (Côté, 2009).

Regardless of how identity is imagined while being defined, addressing the fundamental issue that identity answers is crucial. Identity includes one's verbal and unconscious responses to the question "Who are you?" (Vignosel et al., 2011) and is a multidimensional construct of self-qualities that provide people with a feeling of sameness over diverse circumstances and continuity over time (Erikson, 1968). An individual's identity comprises one's physical appearance, personal qualities, beliefs and objectives, employment and education, interpersonal interactions, and group participation (Daniels & Gillen, 2015). The literature has developed several categories for identity, suggesting three different types.

Personal identity refers to self-related characteristics such as skills, abilities, and temperament. Relational identity comprises an individual's responsibilities toward important persons (e.g., spouse, child, relative, parent) and how these roles shape relationships (Vignoles et al., 2011), while social identity involves the knowledge acquired through identifying oneself with social groups and one's cognitive and emotional connection to this identification (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010).

According to Tajfel (1981, 1982), social identity is a component of one's self-conceptualization that is derived from the knowledge of one or more social groups' worth and emotional importance. Turner (1982) defined social identity as the knowledge a person has about their participation in a social group that is emotionally signif-

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icant to them. Social identity theory is concerned with collective rather than individual identities, with some philosophers arguing social identities to be distinct from individual identities (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 1982).

Social group membership and the resulting identities are innate processes that are integral to human existence. While individuals may occasionally desire to differentiate themselves and seek solitude, being part of a social group is a by-product of the human evolutionary process (Dunbar, 1998). Being part of a social group is a fundamental need for individuals, as this helps them maintain their well-being, security, and self-esteem (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Having a social identity has numerous benefits, including differentiating oneself from others, developing a sense of belonging to a group, accepting and being accepted by others, a sense of control, competence, and meaning in life (Hortasçu, 2007). Membership in social groups also satisfies individuals' need for approval and acceptance. According to Kağıtçıbaşı (2010), people need autonomy and a desire to feel connected to others, and those who can fulfill both requirements have high levels of well-being. Therefore, individuals have a strong drive to join social groups, and finding social support during challenging situations that might harm one's well-being, such as discrimination and prejudice from outside groups, is also essential (Paolini & McIntyre, 2019).

Social identity theory's central principle is social identification, which refers to an individual feeling integrated or affiliated with a specific social group. In other words, social identification is the notion that describes an individual's sense of belonging and connection to a particular social group. Social identity comprises two components: affective, which requires emotional awareness, and evaluative, which requires group appraisal (Tajfel, 1982). Group commitment, views toward group membership, the value placed on the group, and status are all closely linked to social identification with a group (Ellemers et al. 2002). Social identification with social identities covers how people identify their social identities and in which categorization system they place themselves and others (Turner, 1982). People's behavior changes based on the level at which they affiliate with a group. Individuals with high social identification show greater levels of ingroup attractiveness, favoritism, and discrimination than those with low social identification (Ellemers et al., 2002). Research has indicated those with strong social identification to also demonstrate increased ingroup prejudice (Dimmock et al., 2005; Jetten et al., 2001).

Identity is a crucial concept in interactions between individuals and society, as well as in various cultures. Therefore, identity and its related social identity categories are essential in the study of social psychology. Religious identity, political identity, and gender identity are the most well-established social identity categories and are all influenced by a society's cultural and social variables (Eckes & Trautner, 2012). Gender is a complex concept and a social category that highlights the differences between men and women; in addition to biological features, it is also influenced by attitudes, beliefs, actions, and conventions regarding what is expected, perceived, and regarded in society. Gender is produced and influenced by society and is primarily associated with power, identity, and sexuality. Gender stereotypes are societal and cultural assumptions that result from identifying people as male or female, such as gendered attitudes, behaviors, and actions (Kısaç, 2000). While being born is sufficient to determine a person's gender, learning is required to develop a gender identity (Lindsey, 2012).

Among other factors, religion plays a significant role in shaping the formation of community identities. Social identities, including religious identities, are crucial for allowing both individuals and society to make sense of the world. People seek to understand and identify themselves through various references, and religion is one such entity that can effectively fulfill this need by playing an active role in constructing one's social identity (Özdil, 2017). Religious beliefs form an entire value system and are pivotal in shaping religious identities, which are unique social identities (Tajfel, 1981). In other words, religious identity is a social identity construct that is built on an individual's religious beliefs and provides a sense of belonging (Yanmış & Kahraman, 2013).

Political identities are formed through political and social values and beliefs. Unlike other social identities, political identities tend to be more fluid, and this heterogeneity stems from individual characteristics and contextual factors such as political, economic, and social contexts. Nowadays, people who've identified with one particular political identity may switch to another. However, if an individual identifies more closely with an ideology or political group, their political identity may become more rigid and less susceptible to change. In contrast, social identities tend to be more fluid and to change according to various social, economic, and political factors (Smith, 2004).

The primary aim of this study is to develop an instrument for assessing the degree to which individuals identify themselves with the three different social identities of gender, religion, and politics.

Method

The aim of this study is to develop a measurement tool that assesses the level at which adult individuals identify with their social identities. The scale has been prepared as a Likert-type scale, which presents individuals' behaviors, views, tendencies, and attitudes in a ranked order. The purpose of a Likert-type scale is to be able to rate participants' thoughts and attitudes about an event or phenomenon in a certain sequence (Arıkan, 2000).

Study Group

The first stage of scale development study reached a total of 325 individuals, including undergraduate and graduate students from Marmara, Yüzüncü Yıl, and Fırat Universities, as well as teachers working in state schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education. Of this study group, 102 (31.4%) are male and 223 (68.6%) are female. In terms of education level, 242 (74.5%) are undergraduate students, while 83 (25.5%) are graduates of undergraduate or graduate programs. The mean age of the study group is 28.2 years.

To confirm the structure of the scale, data were collected again, this time from a sample of 301 individuals consisting of 103 (34.21%) males and 198 (65.79%) females. The criterion validity analysis of the scales reached 103 individuals, of whom 35 (33.99%) were males and 68 (64.01%) were females.

For the test-retest reliability of the scales, data were then collected from a study group of 90 individuals that included 25 male (38.8%) and 65 female (61.2%) undergraduate students at Yüzüncü Yıl University, with a two-week interval occurring before administering the retest.

Scale Development Process

To develop the Social Identity Scale, a scale development study was carried out based on the following 10 steps Carpenter (2018, p. 26) proposed for developing scales in the field of social sciences: 1) determine the meaning and scope of the theoretical concept to be studied, 2) determine the sample group, 3) examine suitability of the data, 4) examine factorization, 5) factor analysis, 6) determine the factor analysis technique, 7) determine the number of factors, 8) determine the factor rotation technique, 9) evaluate the analysis results, and 10) report the data results.

Starting with Step 1, this research examined the literature on social identity theories in detail, looking closely in order to decide which social identities to study. Readings were made about gender, political, and religious identities within the scope of the study. In addition, English and Turkish scales in the literature were examined, and an article pool was created, with a 34-item trial form being created for the Social Identity Scale.

One of the validity requirements of a scale is to have scope validity, and one method for ensuring scope validity is the Lawshe (1975) technique. According to this technique, experts evaluate the scale items in one of three possible ways: a) an item is necessary, b) an item is necessary but insufficient, or c) an item is unnecessary. To find the scope validity value, the number of experts who marked a scale item as being necessary is then divided it by the number of experts who responded to the item. Expert opinion is then consulted to ensure the validity of the scope. The trial form of the scale was sent to 6 behavioral scientists who are measurement and evaluation experts, as well as to two language experts. The specialists have at least a doctorate in the field. If 10 experts are evaluating the validity of the scope, the scope validity value must be greater than .80. For the coverage validity to achieve this critical value, 9 out of 10 experts must agree that an item is necessary. As a result of the received opinions, four of the 34 items on the trial form of the Social Identity Scale were removed for not meeting the criterion of scope validity.

One of the prerequisites for performing factor analysis is to have a sample group of sufficient size. Although different opinions exist regarding sample size, Kline (2015) stated that data should be collected at a ratio of 20 participants per parameter being measured. Based on these explanations, data were collected from 325 people for the Social Identity Scale. For the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), data were collected from 303 people.

Data Collection Tools

Identity Attitudes Scale. This scale was developed by Yazıcı (2016) as a measurement tool that assesses individuals' attitudes toward differences in collective identity. The scale consists of five subdimensions and measures attitudes toward national, gender, ethnic, religious, and political identity differences. The scale is comprised of 28 items distributed over five factors. The total variance explained by the scale is 48.58%. The factor loadings for the scale items range from .39 to .81. Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency for the scale is .85.

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis of the data was performed using the AMOS, SPSS 22, and Lisrell software programs. Frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, and means are used to describe the study group. Exploratory factor analysis and CFA have been used to analyze the validity and reliability of the scale. In addition, the t-test has been used for comparing the upper and lower 27% of the scores, while Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency and correlation analyses were used for the test-retest and criterion validity analyses.

Results

The EFA and CFA, criterion validities, and test-retest results from the Social Identity Scale are reported below, with Table 1 providing the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett Globality Test results for the scale.

Table 1

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett Globality Test Results

Scale	**Test**	χ^2	***df***	***p***
Social İdentity Scale	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)			.855
	Barlett Globality Test	3,472.30	136	.000*

The KMO test was performed to assess whether the data are suitable for factor analysis. A KMO value between .80-.90 is considered good, while values greater than 0.05 are acceptable (Field, 2000). The data are seen to be appropriate as the values for the scale are between .80-.90.

The Barlett Globality Test was performed in order to test whether the scale under development can be divided into subfactors, with a significance value less than .05 indicating the data to have multiple normal distributions (Özdamar, 2017). Upon examining the analysis results, this value was found to be less than .05 for the scale being developed; therefore, the data are suitable for an EFA. Table 2 provides the factor loading values of the scale, the eigenvalues for the subdimensions, the variance ratios, and the total variance ratio as described by the scale.

Table 2

Factor Loading Values for the Social Identity Scale, Rates of Variance for Each Subdimension, Eigenvalues, and Total Variance Explained by the Scale

Item Number	**Factors**		
	Religion identity	**Political identity**	**Gender identity**
M8	.96		
M7	.93		
M6	.90		
M9	.83		
M10	.75		
M11	.74		
M16		.84	
M14		.82	
M13		.80	
M15		.78	
M12		.77	
M17		.69	
M3			.87
M5			.86
M1			.58
M4			.54
M12			.45
Variance explained per factor	33.99%	20.23%	10.57%
Total explained variance	63.79%		

Which rotation method to use is determined by how the factors relate to one another. Promax is one oblique rotation method that may be preferred when factors are related to one another. The analysis results revealed the factors to be related to each other, and thus the Promax rotation method has been preferred as a suitable and simple technique, and it operates by looking at the total variance that a scale explains with regard to the measurement power. For measurement instruments with more than one factor, the factors together are expected to account for at least two-thirds of the total variance. However, due to this value being difficult to reach in the social sciences, having a total explained variance between 40-60% is seen to be sufficient (Çokluk et al., 2012).

Eigenvalues were also examined to in order to identify the number of factors. With higher values increasing the variance that factor is able to explain (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). After deciding on the number of factors, the factor loadings for the items under that factor were examined. A factor loading indicates the relationship an item has to the factor under which it is located, with a low factor loading indicating the item to not measure the factor being explained. Values higher than at least 0.32 are preferred (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001).

This study examined the relevant values of the scale in line with the information given above and has shown the Social Identity Scale to have a three-factor structure. When examining the variance rates, the subdimension of religious identity is seen to explain 33.99% of the variance, the subdimension of political identity to explain 20.23% of the variance, the subdimension of gender identity to explain 10.57% of the variance. The total variance rate for the whole scale is seen to be 63.79%. When also examining the factor loading values, the lowest factor loading value is seen to be 0.449 and the highest to be .957. Table 3 provides the standard deviation, mean, and correlation values for the subdimensions of the Social Identity Scale.

Table 3

Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation-Values of the Subdimensions of the Social Identity Scale

Factors	χ	***df***	**1**	**2**	**3**
1-Religion identity	22.74	5.74	1		
2-Political identity	18.28	4.97	.169**	1	
3-Gender identity	19.40	3.55	.434**	.21*	1

$^{**}p < .01$

When examining Table 3, the mean and standard deviation values are seen to be 22.74 ± 5.74 for the subdimension of religious identity, 18.28 ± 4.97 for the subdimension of political identity, and 19.40 ± 3.55 for the subdimension of gender identity. The correlation values are .169 between the subdimensions of political identity and religious identity, .434 between the subdimensions of with gender identity and religious identity, and .121 between the subdimensions of gender identity and political identity. Cronbach's alpha of reliability values for the Social Identity Scale and its subdimensions are given in Table 4.

Table 4

Cronbach Alpha Reliability Values for Social Identity Scale and Subdimensions

Factors	**Cronbach Alpha Value**
Religion identity	0.93
Political identity	0.87
Gender identity	0.73
Social Identity Scale	0.86

Cronbach's alpha values are examined to evaluate whether the conditions are met for a scale's internal consistency and homogeneity. These value range from 0 to 1, with values greater than 0.70 being considered reliable (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). When examining the results, Cronbach alpha is seen to be 0.93 for the subdimension of religious identity, 0.87 for the subdimension of political identity, 0.73 for the subdimension of gender identity, and 0.86 for the overall scale. As a result, the internal consistencies for all the subdimensions of the scale as well as the overall scale can be said to be sufficient and homogeneous. Table 5 shows a comparison of the upper and lower 27% of the group in order to determine the distinctiveness of the scale.

Table 5

27% Lower-Upper Group Comparison

Variables	**Groups**	***n***	***X***	***df***	**t test**	
					t	***p***
Gender identity	Lower	92	23.45	1.13	37.19	.000*
	Upper	92	14.72	1,94		
Religion identity	Lower	92	29.14	.94	38.45	.000*
	Upper	92	14.95	3.40		
Political identity	Lower	92	24.64	2.36	40.61	.000*
	Upper	92	12.31	1.69		

$*p < .05$

When the difference between the average scores of the lower and upper groups is statistically significant, the scale can be said to make a distinctive measurement. Using this method requires analyzing the average scores of the lower and upper segments separately for each subdimension (Çokluk et al., 2012). According to the results of the independent groups t-test, the scores for the subdimensions of gender identity ($t = 37.194$, $p < .05$), religious identity ($t = 38.457$, $p < .05$), and political identity ($t = 40.617$, $p < .05$) show statistically significant differences between the lower and upper groups. According to these results, the scale's subdimensions are distinctive.

CFA was performed for the Social Identity Scale. The results from the first-level CFA revealed some goodness-of-fit indices to be at insufficient levels, with the proposed modifications having been made to account for this. Modifications were made to Items 1 and 2 within the subdimension of gender identity and between Items 3 and 5 within the subdimension of political identity As a result of the modifications, the scale's goodness-of-fit values are seen to be at an adequate level and presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Compliance Values from the First-Level CFA of the Social Identity Scale

Level	χ^2	***df***	χ^2 / ***df***	***RMSEA***	***GFI***	***CFI***	***SRMR***
First Level	296.28	109	2.71	0.078	0.91	0.92	0.08

According to the results from the first-level factor analysis, χ^2 / $df = 2.71$, $RMSEA = 0.078$, $CFI = 0.92$, $GFI = 0.91$, and $SRMR = 0.08$, all of which are considered acceptable. As a result, the scale can be said to have been verified at the first level. Figure 1 presents a first-level CFA diagram for the Social Identity Scale.

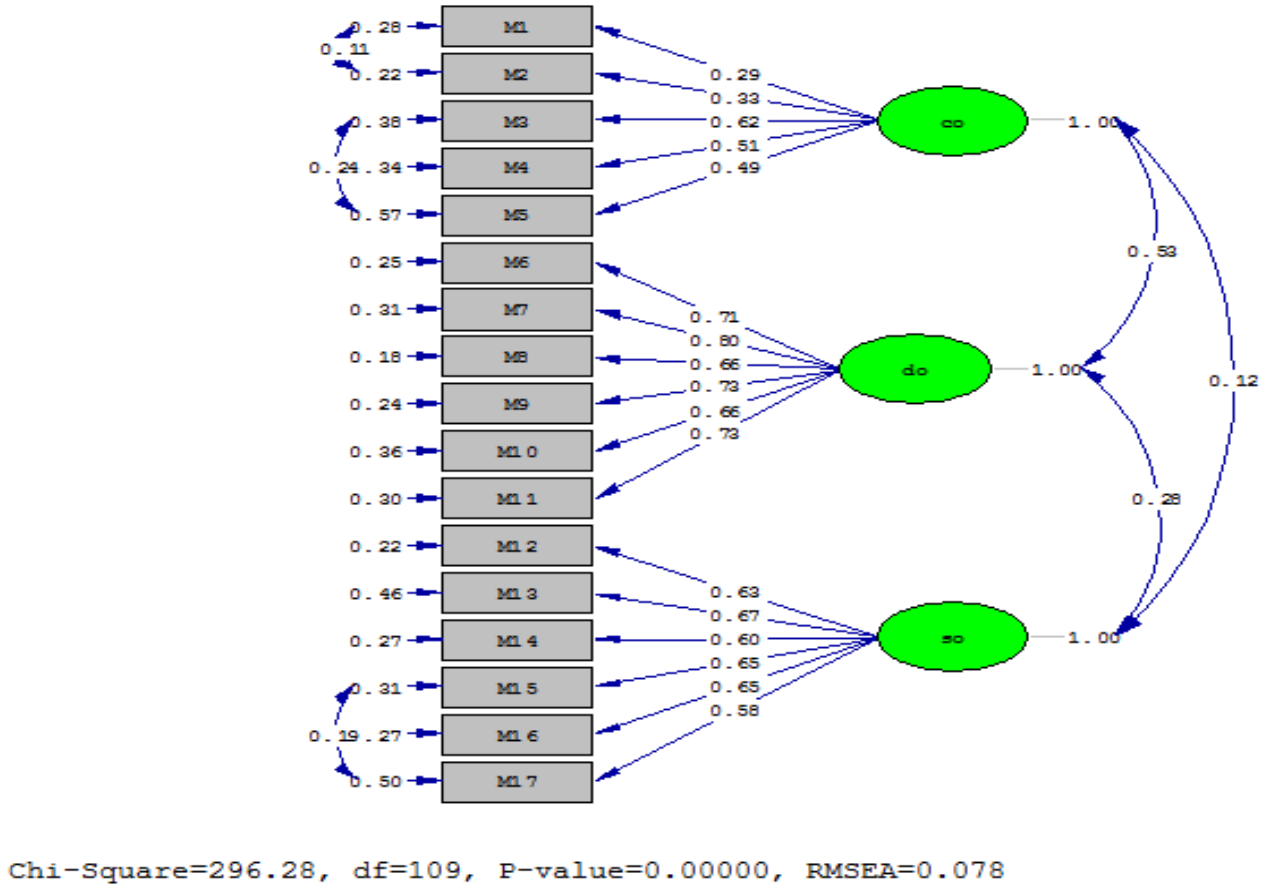

Figure 1. First-level confirmatory factor analysis diagram of the Social Identity Scale.

Figure 1 confirms the three-factor structure of the Social Identity Scale. For the criterion-related validity, the stud examines the relationships between the Social Identity Scale and the Identity Attitudes Scale (Yazıcı, 2016), with the results being presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Correlation Coefficients for the Social Identity Scale's Sub-Dimensional Relationships with the Identity Attitudes Scale

Subdimensions	1	2	3	4
1-Religous identity	1			
2-Political identity	.25*	1		
3-Gender identity	.31**	.264*	1	
4- Identity Attitudes Scale	.22*	.339	.269*	1

*$p < .05$

When examining Table 7, a positive statistically significant relationship is seen to exist between the Identity Attitudes Scale and subdimensions of religious identity ($r = .22$, $p < .05$), political identity ($r = .25$, $p < .05$), and gender identity ($r = .31$, $p < .05$).

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study has been to develop a valid and reliable Likert-type measurement tool for assessing the levels at which adult individuals identify with social identities. Likert scales are measurement tools developed to gather information on a property being measured (Tezbaşaran, 2008). EFA is used to test the construct validity and structural theories of the scale (Çokluk et al., 2012). Prior to factor analysis, the results from the KMO and Bartlett's tests were observed to be suitable for EFA, the results of which obtained a 3-factor scale with 17 items. When examining the item distributions of the scale, the items were found to clearly belong to the relevant subdimensions of social identity. Therefore, these subdimensions were named as religious identity, political identity, and gender identity.

CFA is used to test the factor structure as determined by the EFA (Byrne, 2012). Data were recollected for the CFA, which obtained goodness-of-fit indices that confirmed the 3-factor, 17-item structure.

Cronbach's alpha of internal consistency has been calculated to assess whether the items in the scale form a coherent whole and to determine the internal consistency of the items from the scale (Özdamar, 2016; Tezbaşaran, 2008). The reliability analyses of the scale revealed Cronbach's alphas of at least .73, with values greater than .70 indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency (Çokluk et al., 2016). Therefore, Cronbach's alphas for the subdimensions and overall scale can be concluded to be adequate and the scale to form a coherent whole with high internal consistency.

To determine the stability of the scale, test-retest analyses were conducted by administering the scale to the same group with a two-week interval between tests. The correlation coefficient between the two administrations was found to be .80 or higher, indicating adequate internal consistency for both the overall scale and its subdimensions.

Performing independent group t-tests is recommended for determining whether factors are differentiated by the top and bottom 27% groups and for making comparisons between these groups (Altunışık et al., 2004). Significant differences have been found as a result of the independent group t-test, with the significant difference being found in favor of the top 27% group. The factors in the scale have been determined to differentiate the groups' scores on the scale in terms of the desired characteristics.

Item-total correlation values are calculated to determine the relationship between scale items and the desired characteristic, with item-total correlation values being at least .30 (DeVellis, 2002). When examining the item-total correlation coefficients for this scale, a positive significant relationship was observed, with the lowest item-total correlation value being found as .32.

The correlation values between the Identity Attitudes Scale (Yazıcı, 2016) and the scale developed herein indicate both scales to measure similar structures; therefore. criterion validity has been achieved. While total scores were able to be obtained for the scale's subdimensions, a general score was not. In conclusion, the Social Identity Scale is seen to be a reliable and valid measurement tool that determines the level at which adult individuals identify with their religious, political, and gender identities and to be useable in scientific research.

Ethical approval

Ethics committee approval for this study was obtained from Marmara University Ethics Committee (Date: 31.08.2022 No: 06-22).

Authors' contribution

"Author Contributions: Conception/Design of study: İ.H.D., A.S.T; Data Acquisition: İ.H.D., Data Analysis/Interpretation: İ.H.D., A.S.T; Drafting Manuscript: İ.H.D., A.S.T; Critical Revision of Manuscript: İ.H.D., A.S.T; Final Approval and Accountability: İ.H.D., A.S.T.

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The authors report no conflict of interest.

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