IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING & GUIDANCE

MASTER'S THESIS

INVESTIGATION OF IN-GROUP AND OUT-GROUP DYNAMICS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG IMMIGRANT ADOLESCENTS IN BAŞAKŞEHİR/ISTANBUL

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ISTANBUL, 2025

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Art in Psychological Counseling and Guidance

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This thesis has been read by us, and it has been decided that it is sufficient in terms of scope and quality to obtain a master's degree in the field of Psychological Counseling and Guidance.

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ACADEMIC HONESTY ATTESTATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZ

İSTANBUL/BAŞAKŞEHIR'DAKI GÖÇMEN ERGENLER ARASINDA GRUP İÇI VE GRUP DIŞI DINAMIKLER ILE PSIKOLOJIK SAĞLIĞI İNCELEMESI

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Çalışmamızda, farklı ülkelerden Türkiye'ye, özellikle de İstanbul'un Başakşehir bölgesine aileleri ile birlikte göç eden ergenlik döneminde gençleri, sosyal deneyimlerini ve bu gençlerin sosyal sağlığını incelemektedir. Türkiye'ye gelen bu genç göçmenler, yeni bir kültüre ve dile uyum sağlama ve yeni arkadaşlar edinme sürecinde çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaşmaktadır. Bu zorluklardan biri, aynı anda hem "grup içi" hem de "grup dışı" aidiyet hissetmelidir. Göçmen çocuklar bir yandan kendilerini rahat ve kabul edilmiş hissettikleri kendi ülkelerinden gelen diğer göçmenlerle yakın bir bağ kurma eğilimindeyken, diğer yandan "grup dışı" olarak nitelendirilen Türk toplumuyla ilişkiler geliştirmeye çalışmaktadırlar. Ancak bu süreçte, zaman zaman dışlanmış hissetme, ayrımcılıkla karşılaşma veya Türk toplumunda arkadaş edinme konusunda zorluk yaşama gibi durumlar, onların psikolojik iyi oluşlarını ve kendilik algılarını olumsuz etkileyebilmektedir.

Bu araştırmada "social Identity Theory" kullanılarak gençlerin ait oldukları gruplar ile kurdukları bağların güçlenme nedenleri ve farklı gruplar arasındaki çatışma dinamikleri açıklanmaya çalışılacaktır. Araştırma kapsamında Başakşehir'de yaşayan göçmen gençler ile derinlemesine röportajlar yapılarak, bunların günlük yaşamdaki deneyimleri,

karşılaştıkları sosyal zorluklar ve kendilerini daha iyi ve bağlı hissetmek için benimsedikleri stratejiler üzerinde durulacaktır. Göçmen gençlerin bu süreçteki hikayelerini dinleyerek yaşadıkları mücadeleleri ve elde ettikleri başarıları anlamak hedeflenmektedir. Elde edilen bilgilerin, göçmen gençlerin sosyal ve psikolojik uyum süreçlerinin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkı sağlayarak, bu alandaki gelecekteki araştırmalara ve göçmen gençlere yönelik destek çalışmalarına yön vereceği öngörülmektedir

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç Psikolojisi, Gruplararası İlişkiler, Kimlik Oluşumu, Sosyal Dışlanma.

ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATION OF IN-GROUP AND OUT-GROUP DYNAMICS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG IMMIGRANT ADOLESCENTS IN BAŞAKŞEHIR/ISTANBUL

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Social identity is a fundamental concept for humans, especially those in the age of forming identities. Including the theory of social identity, out-group prejudice and in-group favoritism can be serious problems for those in the years of adolescents who are immigrants. We must understand the processes and coping mechanisms of youngsters due to the importance of social identity and the sensitivity of their age. Issues of identity development might affect mental health and social integration.

We aim to investigate the lived experiences of Başakşehir's immigrant teenagers. The emphasis will mainly be on how they improve their psychological health and cultural integration.. We want to know how they manage social exclusion (if there is) and form their social identities.

The research employs a qualitative methodology, gathering comprehensive viewpoints from immigrant adolescents via in-depth interviews.

It includes adolescent immigrants, ages 18 and above, particularly those from Central Asia and the Arab world, who reside in Başakşehir, Istanbul, and who did so during their teenage years when they formed their social identity.
We hope to illuminate how social identities are created, how individuals respond to exclusion and discrimination, and how these factors impact teens' social integration and mental health.

This study can be a base for future research in immigration psychology. By filling in information gaps about the experiences of adolescent immigrants in Turkey, it can also help create more effective strategies for promoting psychological resilience and social cohesiveness among young migrants.

Keywords: Identity Formation, Immigration psychology, Intergroup Relations, Social Exclusion.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated with all my love and gratitude to the incredible people who have been my pillars of strength throughout this journey. To my beloved husband, Shawgi, for your unwavering support and encouragement. Your belief in me, even during moments of doubt, has been my most significant source of inspiration.

To my sister, Afnan, for being my cheerleader and source of endless laughter. Your unwavering belief in me and constant encouragement have meant the world to me.

To Baba & Mama, who taught me the value of education and hard work, your sacrifices and prayers have been the foundation for all my achievements.

I dedicate this work to all my family members, who were always there to listen, provide advice, and celebrate small victories along the way.

Thank you for being part of this journey; I could not have done it without you.

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I present my endless love and respect to my family, who did not leave me alone at every stage of my thesis.

Alaa ALAWAMI

İSTANBUL, 2025

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

SIT Social Identity Theory

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The area of global migration is constantly shifting, which in turn impacts the social and cultural fabric of nations worldwide. Both the communities that are hosting migrants and the migrants themselves face new issues and possibilities as a result of migration (Adger et al., 2024). Countries worldwide are experiencing unprecedented waves of immigration, which is changing demography and social structures. This is occurring due to the increasing degree of globalization and political instability. The same may be said about Turkey. The country of Turkey has become a significant destination for immigrants over the last several decades. It has been witnessing complicated migratory patterns on a massive scale, particularly in the context of regional conflicts and economic inequality (Tolay, 2012; İçduygu & Yükseker, 2012).

It is essential to know that the Syrian Civil War, which started in 2011, represented a turning point in the history of migration, especially in Turkey. Millions of Syrians were forced to flee their homes and seek safety in other countries, with Turkey becoming the principal host country for these refugees due to the fact that it is a neighboring country.

Reports say that Turkey has taken in over 3.6 million Syrian refugees by the year 2020, making it the country that has taken in the most refugees of any other nation in the world, according to the UNHCR (2020). Substantial socio-political repercussions for the nation due to this massive influx of refugees were inevitable. The Turkish government adopted the open-door policy, providing refugees with basic life help like healthcare, education, and housing (Kirişci, 2014). On the other hand, the process of integrating Syrian refugees into Turkish society for an extended period is a multifaceted challenge, especially considering the growing social tensions and economic strains within the population that is hosting them (Özden, 2013; Erdoğan, 2020).

Turkey has been a focus point for migrants from other Arab nations, such as Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, and Libya, pushed by political instability and military conflicts. This is in addition to the disaster that is occurring in Syria. According to Danış (2021), Between what is happening in Yemen and Iraq, combined with the difficult living situation and the political uncertainty in Egypt and Libya, and not to forget the situation happening in Palestine, Turkey has become a very recognized place for people from these countries to seek refuge and the opportunity to improve their circumstances.

According to Icduygu (2015), these migrants usually stay in big metropolitan areas such as Istanbul and collectively habituate in certain districts (like Başakşehir) to build communities that provide comfort and support to one another in the new place. This clustering, which not only indicates a survival strategy but also illustrates both of these phenomena, demonstrates the establishment of in-group and out-group dynamics, which affect their experiences of integration.

According to Icduygu and Yukseker (2012), Turkey's geographical location as a bridge between Europe and Asia makes it an appealing destination for labor migrants from Central Asian nations such as Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Iran. These migrants travel to Turkey in pursuit of greater economic opportunities. These waves of migration form a complex social environment in which immigrant populations coexist alongside Turkish residents.

Of course, among the migrants from different parts of the world are the young ones who come along with their families to reside in Turkey as a family. Moving to a new country during adolescence makes them immigrant adolescents. These young ones face particular obstacles that are usually more nuanced than the obstacles other older immigrants face as they go through the complexities of transitioning from one culture to another during a critical developmental period.

We focus on this group of people in our research because this makes them one of the most vulnerable groups. According to Erikson (1968), the adolescent years are a vital stage for

creating an individual's identity. During this time, people battle concerns regarding their sense of belonging and self-concept. The period could be much more difficult for immigrant adolescents because the experience is also influenced by being an immigrant and being viewed as an "out-group" member, resulting in constant social exclusion or discrimination (Berry, 1997).

Understanding how these young people manage their social identities and deal with in-group favoring and out-group prejudice is vital to promoting their psychological well-being and social integration (Berry et al., 2006; Gungor et al., 2013).

An examination of how individuals obtain a sense of identity from their participation in social groups is the focus of social identity theory, which was initially presented by Tajfel and Turner (1979). This theory offers a theoretical framework for conducting this examination. According to Tajfel and Turner's (1986) hypothesis, individuals try to preserve a positive social identity by giving preference to their own in-group and frequently undervaluing members of other groups and communities. According to Brown and Hewstone (2005), social categorization can result in intergroup prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. This is especially true when individuals see risks to the status or identity of their group being threatened. To successfully navigate these dynamics, immigrant adolescents in Turkey must not only create their own in-group identity (based on race, nationality, or religion) but they must also negotiate their connections with Turkish adolescents, who represent the in-group of the host community.

The social dynamics discussed here may be seen in miniature in Istanbul, notably in neighborhoods such as Başaksehir. It serves as a nexus for both local Turkish populations and immigrant groups, making it an ideal location for researching the dynamics of in-group and out-group relationships among immigrant youths. A sizeable number of immigrants, mainly Syrians, Arabs, and Central Asians, have settled in Başaksehir, resulting in the formation of communities of migrants that are near one another. It is common for these communities to form strong in-group attachments, which not only provide support and solidarity but also increase sentiments of isolation from the larger

Turkish community (Özer, 2022). This study intends to investigate how immigrant teenagers in Başakşehir develop their social identities within these groups, as well as how they face and cope with prejudice from both inside and outside their group.

In their new contexts, immigrant adolescents regularly face social marginalization, bullying, and discrimination, which can have a detrimental influence on their psychological well-being (Ramos & Sanchez, 2014; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2010). Previous research has shown that these experiences might hurt the psychological well-being of these adolescents. Although coping techniques differ from person to person and from cultural group to cultural group, they frequently consist of strengthening relationships with their ethnic in-group, developing bicultural identities, or, in some instances, retreating from social engagement entirely (Gungor et al., 2013; Berry, 1997). The study's goal is to look at the real-life experiences of immigrant adolescents in Başakşehir in order to figure out how social factors affect how they build their personalities and the mental changes they go through as they grow up. It will also look into the ways that people deal with the effects of bias and social exclusion to learn more about how these things affect people's mental health and their ability to fit in with society.

We will also investigate the strategies individuals use to deal with the consequences of social exclusion.

To give a more nuanced knowledge of the social issues that immigrant teenagers in Istanbul experience, the purpose of this project is to answer the following research questions:

- How do out-group prejudice and in-group favoring manifest themselves in the daily lives of immigrant adolescents?
- How do they cope with feelings of prejudice or social exclusion?
- How do these social dynamics impact their mental health, identity development, and overall social integration into Turkish society?

The research will make use of an all-encompassing qualitative technique to attempt to provide answers to the mentioned issues. An extensive amount of personal interviews and focus groups will be carried out with immigrant teenagers in Başakşehir. These activities aim to collect rich and comprehensive narratives of their experiences in social settings. According to Creswell (2013), this qualitative technique is appropriate for capturing the intricacies of social identity development and intergroup connections since it provides insights into individual and community experiences. The study will also make use of concepts from developmental psychology and acculturation theory to situate the psychological well-being of teenagers within the context of their larger social environment (Berry, 1997).

This research has significant importance. Not only does it contribute to the expanding body of research on immigration and the development of adolescents, but it also provides insights useful to policy on the several ways in which social integration may be encouraged among young immigrants. This work can potentially contribute to efforts to increase social cohesion and psychological resilience among young migrants in Turkey and worldwide (Phinney et al., 2001; Verkuyten, 2005). This is because it provides an understanding of how immigrant adolescents develop and navigate their social identities.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction to Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT) was originally developed by Tajfel (1978) and later expanded by Tajfel & Turner (1979). The theory offers a theoretical framework to explain the formation of group identities and the social dynamics resulting from group membership. SIT suggests that individuals strive to achieve a positive social identity through self-categorization into social groups. This categorization was later theorized to lead to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The theory is instrumental in understanding the social experiences of our immigrant adolescents, who must navigate the complexities of belonging to their ethnic in-group and the broader societal out-group.

A few key concepts about Social Identity Theory must be understood:
Social Categorization is the process through which individuals classify themselves and others into distinct social groups based on shared characteristics (Turner et al., 1987). This classification is a fundamental component of social identity theory that explains how group membership influences individual behavior, self-concept, and intergroup dynamics. From a cognitive perspective, social categorization is essential for simplifying and organizing the social environment. It allows individuals to process large amounts of social information by grouping people into categories based on perceived similarities. This process reduces complexity in one's brain, leading individuals to judge others and their place in social hierarchies rapidly. However, prejudices and stereotyping are frequently the results of this cognitive "shortcut." After being divided into groups (such as "us" vs. "them"), people have a tendency to see members of the same group more positively and members of other groups less favorably. The intergroup dynamics that Social Identity

Theory aims to explain are fundamentally shaped by this cognitive bias, which is also referred to as in-group favoring and out-group prejudice.

Identity development is significantly influenced by this social categorization. Social Identity Theory states that people's affiliation with particular social groups contributes to their sense of self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Self-categorization is the process by which people place themselves into specific social groupings in addition to classifying others. This concept is furthered by Turner's (1987) self-categorization hypothesis, which explains how individuals take on the customs and social behavior of their “in-group”.

Stereotyping is also one of the effects of social classification. After being placed into groups, people are frequently perceived through the prism of group-based prejudices. While in-group members are seen as more unique and varied, this might result in out-group homogeneity, which is the idea that members of the out-group are more alike than they are (Park & Rothbart, 1982).

These preconceptions frequently lead to biased attitudes and discriminatory actions and are used to excuse unfair treatment of different groups. For example, members of the host culture may discriminate against immigrant adolescents due to stereotypes about their national origin or ethnicity (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). Adolescent immigrants may experience detrimental effects on their psychological health as a result of this prejudice, which may intensify their sense of alienation and exclusion.

Intergroup conflict is also associated with social categorization. SIT contends that grouping people into discrete categories fosters an "us versus them" mentality that can result in rivalry and intergroup strife. When resources, power, or status are at risk, people who strongly identify with their in-group may view out-groups as a threat (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This trend might manifest in immigrant populations, like those in Turkey, as there is social and economic rivalry between immigrant communities and native populations. The likelihood that discriminatory practices, prejudice, and intergroup

animosity would surface increases with the perceived gap between the in-group (native population) and out-group (immigrants) (Brewer, 1999).

Social categorization is a normal cognitive process. Cross-group friendships and interactions might lessen negative impacts, such as stereotyping and intergroup prejudice. Increased interaction between members of various social groups can lower prejudice, enhance attitudes toward outgroup members, and decrease intergroup conflict, according to research by Pettigrew & Tropp (2006). Positive intergroup contacts assist people in recategorizing others by highlighting common identities and lessening the importance of group barriers. Encouraging cross-group connections helps lessen the social obstacles brought on by social categorization in multicultural environments like Istanbul, where immigrant teenagers often engage with Turkish natives. Adolescent immigrants can successfully integrate if they participate in programs that promote cross-cultural communication and understanding (Allport, 1954; Berry, 2005).

So, what is social identity? It is the part of an individual's self-concept derived from their membership in a social group (Tajfel, 1981). Groups can be national, religious, or ethnic; they can also be social, political, or professional. In the 1970s, Henri Tajfel and John Turner created the Social Identity Theory (SIT) to explain how group membership affects people's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. A key component of SIT is social identity.

Fundamentally, social identity gives people a feeling of purpose, belonging, or self-worth by assisting them in defining who they are in the social environment. Another consequence of this group identification process is creating borders between in-groups, the groups we identify with, and out-groups, which are the groups we do not belong to. This theoretically leads to biases or discrimination.

The central claim around SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is that humans aspire to have a solid social identity because it may be related to one's sense of self-worth. People supposedly want to make their group stand out to preserve or improve their self-worth. In other words, people frequently develop a predilection for their in-group to boost their self-esteem. This

continuous boosting aids the creation of bias due to the belief that one's group is better than others. Similarly, boosting may also lead to discrimination, which involves devaluing or treating groups less favorably to strengthen the identification of the “in-group.” The in-group members' social identities are typically strengthened, and differentiation between the groups is maintained through this comparison process. The theory emphasizes how group membership dynamics may influence social conduct. In-group members naturally believe they have similar values and ethical features, which promotes unity within the group and a sense of shared identity. On the other hand, out-groups are perceived as being different or even hostile, resulting in prejudice and, eventually, conflict of any sort (Tajfel, 1981).

In-group identification is thought to generate some sense of emotional support and belonging, which is crucial for immigrant or minority groups because they depend on their ethnic or cultural in-group for identity validation and social support (Jetten et al., 2012). Moreover, discriminatory actions or negative sentiments toward outgroups might result from social comparison processes. Perceived threat due to competitiveness is frequently the driving force behind this (Brewer, 1999). So, People are more inclined to highlight the advantages of their in-group and disparage out-groups in contexts where they perceive a danger, such as social rivalry. This dynamic then shows up as an increased in-group preference among immigrant teenagers as a coping strategy to avoid prejudice or social rejection.

Social Identity Theory explains behavior between groups. Tajfel and Turner (1979) assert that members of the in-group may act in ways that uphold the group's identity and safeguard its interests when they believe that their position or uniqueness is in danger, which may raise conflict between groups. The importance of social identity might affect how immigrant adolescents face discrimination or assimilate in multicultural environments like Istanbul, where they interact with Turkish locals. To maintain their feeling of identity and belonging, immigrant adolescents may strengthen their in-group bonds as a result of their frequent social isolation from the dominant national group.

Another important notion about social identities in heterogeneous communities is that they can change according to the situation.

For example, Phinney et al. (2001) say that immigrant groups may have to manage several social identities while trying to balance their ethnic identification and their wish to become part of the host nation's identity. This process can become the leading fast-lane identity conflict. It creates the feeling of being caught between two worlds.

Adolescent immigrants in areas like Başakşehir frequently struggle with these conflicting identities. Why? Because they connect with their own ethnic group, they also struggle to fit in the Turkish society.

In-group Favoritism is the phenomenon where people behave and think positively toward members of their own group while acting negatively or with less positivity toward members of other groups. The human drive to preserve a good social identity and sense of belonging is the source of this tendency (Tajfel, 1981). People boost their personal self-esteem and fortify group cohesion by favoring their in-group.

By identifying with a respected group, in-group partiality enables people to validate their sense of self. According to research by Hogg and Abrams (1988), people are driven to have a good opinion of their in-group because it makes them feel more valuable and like they belong. Strong ties inside the group are fostered by in-group preference, which encourages collaboration, trust, and support for one another. For immigrant or minority groups, who could depend on in-group assistance to deal with difficulties in the host society, this is especially crucial (Phinney et al., 2001). However, excessive in-group favoritism can hinder cross-cultural exchanges and integration and result in social isolation if group members only give priority to their in-group.

According to Brewer (1999), in-group partiality frequently results in competitive behavior, especially in situations when there is perceived danger or a lack of resources, even while it does not always entail animosity toward out-groups. Strong in-group

identification may make people favor their own group more in certain situations, which might result in exclusionary actions.

Negative attitudes or behaviors are directed toward those not perceived as part of the in-group (Brewer, 1999). According to SIT, out-group prejudice results from the urge to maintain a good self-concept and to create uniqueness between groups by disparaging those who are viewed as different or dangerous (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). From covert forms of exclusion or stereotyping to overt antagonism and aggressiveness, this phenomenon can take many different forms.

People frequently assign generic, stereotyped traits to the group after classifying others as belonging to an outgroup, believing that its members are all the same. Out-group homogeneity is a process that enhances prejudices and decreases empathy (Park & Rothbart, 1982). In fact, according to research, when the in-group believes the out-group poses a danger to its resources, values, or social standing, out-group prejudice increases (Brewer, 1999). Adolescent immigrants, for example, may experience prejudice from members of the host culture who view them as rivals for resources or as defying the majority group's cultural norms. Also, out-group prejudice was found to be more significant in instances of symbolic danger (such as cultural values) and reality threat (such as economic rivalry) in research by Stephan & Stephan (1996). This resulted in unfavorable attitudes and actions against out-groups.

In Turkey, immigrant adolescents, particularly those in urban centers like Başakşehir, face the challenge of balancing their ethnic identities with the pressures of integrating into a Turkish society where they are often perceived as out-group members. They frequently find themselves in an ambiguous situation where they belong to an ethnic in-group but are viewed as out-group members by the majority of Turkish people as a result of this dual identity struggle. Acculturation frameworks and Social Identity Theory (SIT) provide important insights into how these teenagers manage their social identities in the face of discrimination, in-group and out-group dynamics, and the psychological effects of belonging.

Adolescent immigrants frequently turn to their ethnic groups in multicultural environments to forge a strong sense of identity and belonging, particularly if they feel excluded from the host culture (Phinney et al., 2001). Their ethnic identification acts as a barrier against marginalization and offers emotional stability for these teenagers. Language, customs, and values are maintained and strengthened within ethnic in-groups, providing a source of cultural continuity and promoting in-group cohesion (Berry, 1997). Youngsters in Başakşehir might get support from classmates who share their experiences thanks to the close-knit networks formed by several immigrant populations. Although this solidarity aids in the development of a good social identity, it may also restrict relationships between different groups. In-group favoritism, according to SIT, occurs when people identify strongly with their in-group and view the out-group—in this example, Turkish society—as different or even hostile (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Although this process of identification frequently fortifies ethnic ties, it can also erect social barriers that prevent integration.

The perception of being an outgroup member by Turkish classmates and society at large sometimes presents a barrier for immigrant teenagers in Turkey, even when they develop strong in-group ties. They are frequently the targets of social classification and stereotyping because of this view, which views them as belonging to an "out-group" that is apart from the national identity (Verkuyten, 2005). These teenagers endure both overt and covert kinds of exclusion or bias because of their immigrant status, which is exacerbated by the process of social categorization (Brewer, 1999).

Studies reveal that out-group prejudice can significantly affect the psychological health of immigrant teenagers, resulting in feelings of exclusion, diminished self-worth, and even doubt about one's identity (Schmitt et al., 2014). This is especially important for teenagers from visible minority groups in Turkey, like Syrians, who could encounter prejudice and social hurdles that prevent them from assimilating into the general population. Many immigrant teenagers in Başakşehir may, therefore, encounter increased group borders, which might exacerbate the social split and strengthen their feeling of "otherness" in the host nation.

Adolescent immigrant acculturation in Turkey entails balancing two cultures: Turkish culture and their ethnic background. Adolescent immigrants who want to preserve their ethnic identity while also pursuing acceptance in the host community may encounter identity conflict, according to acculturation theory (Berry, 1997). Feelings of being "caught between two worlds," where they may want to blend in with Turkish culture yet feel loyal to their ethnic group, are a common manifestation of this tension.

Table 1.1. Berry's Acculturation Model

Berry's Acculturation Model			
Assimilation Abandoning ethnic identity to fully adopt host culture.	**Separation** Retaining ethnic identity and rejecting host culture.	**Integration** Balancing both ethnic and host identities, which is the most adaptive approach.	**Marginalization** Feeling disconnected from both cultures, which can lead to psychological distress.

Strong ethnic groups in Başakşehir might encourage a separation strategy in which immigrant teenagers struggle to integrate with their Turkish classmates while maintaining a high degree of in-group attachment. Separation can strengthen ethnic identification, but if teenagers believe that they are unable to interact with the wider community, it can also result in social isolation. However, implementing an integration approach necessitates having the chance to engage positively with Turkish peers, which may be constrained by social and cultural hurdles.

In line with Social Identity Theory, situations where there is perceived danger or discrimination intensify in-group favoring and out-group prejudice (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Adolescent immigrants in Turkey may use in-group identification as a coping strategy to deal with social isolation and prejudice from out-groups. Although this in-

group preference offers psychological advantages like emotional support and self-esteem, it also strengthens the social divide between them and Turkish society, making integration more difficult (Jetten et al., 2012). Because frequent exclusion exacerbates feelings of alienation and erodes adolescents' sense of belonging in the host culture, negative experiences with out-group discrimination can result in psychological distress (Pavlopoulos & Motti-Stefanidi, 2014). This could mean that adolescent immigrants may have poor self-esteem and increased anxiety in the absence of adequate support networks or constructive intergroup interactions, which might negatively affect their mental health and general social development.

2.2. Social Identity Formation in Immigrant Adolescents

Forming a social identity is an integral part of growing up, as teenagers and youth work to comprehend who they are, both personally with themselves and in their social world. For immigrant adolescents, this process is even more complex because they will have to balance between staying connected to their cultural roots while also adjusting to life in a new country (Phinney et al., 2001). as their identity construction involves juggling how they see themselves and how others see them, which becomes more challenging in a different cultural environment. Immigrant teenagers often feel a sense of belonging in their own ethnic community, but they may also be seen as strangers and outsiders in their host society, making this process more difficult and challenging (Berry, 2005; Phinney, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In areas with many immigrants, powerful social networks within the ethnic communities can offer adolescents a sense of fulfillment and pride in their heritage and help protect them from discrimination and prejudice. Because of that, these ties can positively shape their identity (Portes & Rumbaut, 2014; Titzmann, 2014). Nevertheless, while these networks provide support, they can also restrict opportunities for interaction with individuals and groups outside the community, which can result in slowing down integration into the larger society (Cherng, 2015).

At the same time, immigrant adolescents often encounter discrimination or feel like they don't fully belong in the host society. These encounters and experiences, whether systemized exclusion or open hostility, can hurt their self-esteem and make it harder for them to generate a positive social identity (Schmitt et al., 2014; Kunst et al., 2018). Feeling undervalued by society, which is known as an identity threat, can force them to rely more on their ethnic group for support and legitimacy. While this can defend their sense of identity, it may also create more substantial divisions between groups, reducing social harmony (Steele et al., 2002; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2022).

To steer these challenges, immigrant adolescents often use different techniques to adapt. According to Berry's (1997) acculturation theory, they may choose assimilation (which stands for adopting the host culture), separation (which is sticking to their ethnic culture), integration (which is balancing both), or marginalization (which is rejecting both).

Research shows that integration—preserving their ethnic identity while participating in the host culture—can improve psychological health and social skills (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Adolescents who achieve this balance can embrace two identities, as they can combine their ethnic and national identities in complementary patterns (Schwartz et al., 2020). This dual identity often supports reducing stress, improving academic performance, and building resilience, though it requires positive relations and exchanges with members of the host society, which isn't consistently manageable because of prejudice or discrimination (Vedder & Phinney, 2020; Ramos et al., 2021).

A strong, positive social identity—whether embedded in ethnic pride, national affiliation, or both—can empower immigrant adolescents and teens and help them overcome their challenges. It boosts self-esteem, and the sense of trust-building provides social support and fosters coping skills (Jetten et al., 2012; Luyckx et al., 2021). Regardless, influential barriers like ongoing discrimination or lack of support can lead to feelings of anxiety, depression, and uncertainty regarding their identity (Smith & Silva, 2011).

2.2.1. Dual Identities: Ethnic and National Identity

Young people frequently feel that they have two sides to themselves when they relocate to a new nation, such as Turkey. One aspect is their ethnic identification, which is how they identify with their family's language, customs, and values.

Their national identification, on the other hand, refers to their sense of belonging to the nation in which they now reside, such as speaking Turkish or commemorating Turkish festivals. It can be advantageous to have two identities. Because they may identify with their roots and integrate into the new community, it can give them a sense of strength and confidence. For instance, a large number of immigrant teenagers in Başakşehir find solace in culturally similar areas (Phinney, 1990; Schwartz et al., 2007).

They get a sense of belonging and support from these relationships. Teens are capable of balancing both aspects when things go well. They feel accepted in Turkey while maintaining the customs of their family. They become healthier and happier when they feel linked to both cultures via activities like multicultural festivals or Turkish language lessons (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Some teenagers, however, would solely associate with their own ethnic group and refrain from interacting with their Turkish peers. This might occur if their surroundings are substantially different from Turkish culture or if they feel welcomed (Ward, 2001). It might seem safer to stay close to their group, but it can also make it more difficult to interact with other people. Teens may feel as though they don't quite belong anyplace as a result of this disconnection. Therefore, it's like walking a tightrope to be a member of two cultures. Teens may have the best of both worlds if they have the proper assistance. However, it may be difficult and lonely if they feel left out.

2.2.2. The Role of Social Networks in Identity Formation

When adolescents relocate to a new nation, they increasingly rely on social networks as a means of gaining a better understanding of who they are. For immigrant children living in the multicultural neighborhood of Başaksehir, their identities are profoundly influenced by the ethnic communities to which they belong. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979) and Portes and Rumbaut (2001), individuals who have networks of friends and family members who share a language, cultural norms, and rituals experience a greater sense of connection to their roots and receive support during difficult times. In order to maintain a connection to their cultural heritage, they could engage in activities such as speaking their native language or attending traditional celebrations.

Especially for young people who are experiencing feelings of alienation or unjust treatment in their new surroundings, these networks have the potential to serve as a safety net. There is a strong sense of belonging among adolescents as a result of the presence of neighborhood clubs, cultural events, and even language programs that provide both emotional and practical support (Berry, 2005; Rania et al., 2022). As a result of their ethnic identity, they might experience reduced feelings of isolation or rejection.

While this is going on, these tight-knit communities might be difficult to traverse at times. There is a possibility that adolescents who primarily interact with members of their own ethnic group will have difficulty relating to their Turkish peers. The ability of these individuals to properly integrate into society is hindered as a result of this scenario. Teenagers who are members of ethnic networks that are less restrictive, on the other hand, may discover that it is simpler for them to associate with others who come from a variety of backgrounds, venture outside of their comfort zone, and experience a sense of belonging in Turkish society. According to Phinney et al. (2001) and Berry (2005), these contacts have the potential to both offer new opportunities and eliminate feelings of isolation.

In a nutshell, social networks are a double-edged sword: they may be valuable in terms of providing support, but they also have the potential to make it more difficult to form relationships with individuals who belong to different ethnic groups. In order to successfully manage their identities, children of immigrants in Başakşehir need to find a way to maintain a connection to their heritage while also establishing new cultural relationships.

Table 2.1. Social Networks and the Impact on Identity Formation

Social Networks	**Impact on Identity Formation**
Strong In-group Networks	Reinforces ethnic identity; offers social and emotional support but can limit integration.
Weak In-group Networks	Encourages cross-group interactions; may foster greater integration into the boarder society.

Immigrant youths in Başakşehir struggle to integrate into Turkish society while preserving their culture. Similar-race or ethnicity social networks can soothe you. If kids only hang out in these groups, they may feel alone among their Turkish peers, making it tougher to fit in. Tajfel and Turner (1979) state that social identity theory states that this separation might cause an "us versus them" mentality. Teenagers who mostly hang out with people of their own race may start to see their Turkish friends as outsiders. This can make it hard for them to balance their ethnic identity with a sense of belonging in their new community.

People are affected by this divide, but it can also make it harder for everyone in Başakşehir to get along. When ethnic groups and the host society don't mix, it's harder for people from different countries to understand each other, and differences get worse. People from all walks of life can get to know each other better through neighborhood projects, events at school, or events in public places. Teens can meet people of different races through

these programs. This way, they can feel supported by their own group while also learning about Turkish culture. Having two good identities that honor their heritage and their new home helps them feel good about who they are.

2.3. In-Group Favoritism and its Effects

In-group favoritism represents preferring individuals from your own group over others, which is a key idea from Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Normally, People split themselves into groups to feel better about themselves and often consider their own group more positively (Hewstone et al., 2002). This bias can lead to more relative group collaboration and favorable sentiments about in-group members' actions (Brewer, 1999).

While in-group favoritism can reinforce bonds within the group and enhance self-esteem, it can also cause prejudice, discrimination, and conflict between groups (Allport, 1954; Brown, 2000). For immigrant teens, in-group ties are an essential way to manage challenges like cultural adjustment and prejudice (Berry, 1997). Nonetheless, these ties can have both positive and negative consequences on mental health and social integration.

For young immigrants who are facing cultural change, in-group favoritism can provide emotional and social benefits, where they can feel that they belong to a group and receive community support, as being recognized by an in-group can create emotional security and boost self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This feeling of belonging can safeguard immigrant adolescents from feelings of othering, loneliness, and identity loss (Ward et al., 2001). Also, facing challenges like prejudice, discrimination, or language barriers is easier with support from peers in the exact ethnic or cultural group (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007). Teens with firm in-group ties usually accommodate better psychologically in diverse settings (Phinney et al., 2001).

Not forgetting the fact that it might be comforting, in-group favoritism can have negative consequences for mental health and social integration as others can also isolate and marginalize them, and favoring in-group members can exclude individuals from other

communities, restricting communication between groups and cultures (Brewer, 1999; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). This exclusion maintains and limits group framework and decreases opportunities for meaningful connections and participation in the more prominent host communities. (Pettigrew, 1998).

Additionally, a strong affiliation to one's group can increase negative stereotypes about others, which can lead to discrimination (Esses et al., 2006). Even when group dissimilarities are artificially made, studies show people can easily display favoritism (Tajfel, 1981).

Also, studies show that over-reliance on in-group connections can isolate teens from the wider community, making it more difficult for them to adjust socially. Berry (1997) argues that's why acculturation theory implies that mental well-being needs to find a balance between cultural integration and maintaining cultural identity. That means that teens who concentrate too much on their in-group risk being socially isolated, which affects their long-term adjustment (Schwartz et al., 2006).

These in-group favoritism processes are particularly prominent in Başakşehir. The Başakşehir district in Istanbul is home to a diverse and thriving immigrant population and presents a remarkable setting to study in-group favoritism. Young immigrants in this diverse location usually depend on their cultural groups to face the challenges of adapting to a new culture. Shared language, traditions, and migration experiences reinforce these ties (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Nevertheless, limited relationships with other local communities and groups can lead to social fragmentation (Crul & Schneider, 2010).

Educational establishments and community programs in Başakşehir play a key role in balancing in-group harmony with intergroup interaction. Inclusive initiatives, such as collaborative learning and cross-cultural dialogues, reduce the negative influences of in-group bias (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). These efforts support young immigrants in maintaining their cultural identity while building relationships with

counterparts from other backgrounds and enhancing both mental well-being and social integration (Schwartz et al., 2006).

2.3.1. Mechanisms of In-Group Favoritism

The growth of group unity is one of the main ways that in-group bias functions. Teens often develop close connections with others who share their understanding, culture, background, language, or cultural experiences when they go through common problems or cultural dissonance.

Usually, Adolescents tend to connect with others who share similar backgrounds, languages, or cultural backgrounds, particularly when encountering day-to-day challenges. These connections provide acceptance, emotional stability, and mutual support (Jetten et al., 2012). For immigrant Adolescents, group unity serves as a cushion against prejudice, discrimination, social rejection, and cultural adjustment hardships. Research shows that these connections reduce negative experiences like exclusion and stereotyping (Phinney et al., 2001).

For example, in Başakşehir, close-knit ethnic communities provide Adolescents with a sense of belonging and resilience while enabling them to adapt to the new cultural environment.

Additionally, belonging to valued groups shapes people's self-concept, enhancing their self-esteem (Crocker et al., 1987). Immigrant teens with a positive view of their in-group have higher self-esteem, which is critical for mental health. This approach helps them feel valued and reinforces the significance of their cultural heritage (Verkuyten, 2005).

Yet, excessive reliance on in-group ties can restrict broader social interactions. While boosting self-esteem, over-identification with a group can restrict relationships with outsiders and slow social integration (Brewer, 1999).

So, in Başakşehir, schools, and community initiatives need to balance these methodologies and approaches by constructing spaces for both in-group support and cross-cultural engagement.

2.3.2. In-Group Favoritism as a Barrier to Integration

The integration of immigrant adolescents into bigger host communities can hardly be impeded by in-group favoritism despite the fact that it offers psychological advantages and social support.

Despite its benefits, in-group favoritism can restrict immigrant adolescents' integration into the bigger community. Strong in-group relationships can facilitate communication with other groups, which can lead to few platforms and opportunities for social cohesion and exchanges. This is evident in Başakşehir, where teens often mingle and exchange mainly within their ethnic groups, which reduces interchanges with Turkish peers (Cherng, 2015).

Bounded intergroup connections can boost feelings of loneliness and slow the formation of cross-cultural friendships. Aggressiveness or discrimination from out-groups can also heighten in-group bias, as teens turn to their groups for reassurance and social validation (Flippen et al., 1996). In resource-scarce or competitive environments, discrimination also strengthens ethnical and racial divisions (Perry et al., 2013).

Programs enabling productive intergroup communications, such as collaborative activities and intercultural initiatives, can decrease discrimination and prejudice while also fostering empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Without such efforts, teens may stay sheltered in their ethnical groups, which will make constructing long-term integration and assimilation more complicated.

These conclusions emphasize the importance of educational approaches and community programs in diverse areas like Başakşehir. These initiatives can bridge the gaps between diverse groups, improve social cohesion, and enhance the well-being of immigrant teens.

2.4. Out-Group Discrimination and its Impact

Research has repeatedly demonstrated that emotions of alienation, anxiety, and depression can result from being ostracized or alienated from the host community (Berry, 2001; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Adolescents are in a developmental stage where peer acceptance and belonging are essential for identity construction and self-esteem, which frequently exacerbates these emotional reactions.

When immigrant kids encounter out-group prejudice, they frequently turn more inward toward their ethnic in-groups in search of social support. This reinforces in-group preference and creates a feedback loop that makes it difficult for them to associate with people from different groups (Schmitt et al., 2014). These dynamics may be especially noticeable in Başakşehir, where immigrant teenagers often reside in close-knit, ethnically homogeneous areas. Exclusion from Turkish peers or hostile interactions might reinforce ethnic borders and deter attempts to integrate with larger social networks.

Additionally, studies show that outgroup prejudice can take both overt and covert forms. Microaggressions, such as dismissive attitudes or stereotyped beliefs, can also build up over time and have a detrimental impact on the well-being of immigrant teenagers, even if explicit discrimination entails overt hostility or exclusion (Sue et al., 2007). According to Priest et al. (2013), these accumulated experiences might lead to increased stress, scholastic problems, and social disengagement.

The effects of out-group prejudice extend beyond personal welfare. Encouraging mistrust between various groups also undermines social cohesiveness and further splits communities (Stevens et al., 2014). According to Pettigrew et al. (2011), discriminating actions undermine the possibility of good intergroup connections by eroding empathy and

trust across groups. This is especially difficult in multicultural neighborhoods like Başakşehir, where immigrants' sentiments of exclusion are made worse by a lack of productive intergroup communication.

Community initiatives must concentrate on creating inclusive settings and addressing the biases that support out-group prejudice in order to lessen its consequences. Intergroup encounter programs have been shown to promote mutual respect and lessen bias (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In particular, educational institutions are essential because they offer forums for interaction and stereotype-challenging between native-born and immigrant youth, which eventually helps to dismantle the obstacles brought about by out-group discrimination (Schwartz et al., 2006).

Teenagers may feel sad, worried, or even unhappy if they think the host society doesn't accept them (Berry, 2001; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Teenagers need to get to know themselves and feel like they belong by fitting in with their friends. Not being accepted could make these bad feelings worse.

Teens and adults of color often turn to their ethnic groups to feel safe and get help when they are being treated poorly or differently by others. Schmitt et al. (2014) say that this makes it harder for them to connect with people from other groups. They happen a lot in Başakşehir, where a lot of immigrant families live close to each other. If these kids' Turkish peers don't include them or are mean to them, they may feel even more alone and be less likely to make new friends.

Sometimes, prejudice is obvious, like when someone is left out, and sometimes it's more subtle, like when someone is hurt by hurtful words or assumptions about their past (Sue et al., 2007). Negative views or stereotypes can hurt a teen's mental health over time. Repeated bad events, according to Priest et al.. (2013), can lead to stress, issues at school, and a feeling of being alone.

Treating others poorly or excluding them because they are from a different group hurts both the individual and the community as a whole. Crowds of fear and mistrust make it harder for people to understand and work with each other (Stevens et al., 2014). People can't get along or handle problems together if they don't believe in or care about each other, according to Pettit et al. (2011). Families from various backgrounds live together in Başakşehir. Some people feel even more alone because they don't understand others, which makes it harder for them to make friends.

To make sure that no one is treated unfairly, communities need to work to get rid of false ideas and a sense of belonging for everyone. Programs that bring together various groups can help lower bias and improve communication between them (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Kids from both native-born and immigrant families can meet new people, learn about other countries, and get rid of stereotypes at school. Many people might feel more connected, and discrimination-related walls might fall down (Schwartz et al. 2008).

2.4.1. Psychological and Social Impact of Out-Group Discrimination

Teenagers from other countries can have serious mental health problems if they are treated unfairly or are left out of social groups. On occasion, they feel sad or tense more than usual (Berry, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2014). Priest et al.'s (2013) research showed that people may have low self-esteem and a bad view of themselves when they are treated unfairly, especially because of their race or background. Teenagers in Başakşehir have more problems because they don't have many friends from different cultures who can help them. This makes it easier for these feelings to spread.

Teenagers' self-perception and knowledge of society may be hurt by discrimination. (2008) Taylor et al. (2014) and Umaña Teenagers who are immigrants are taught to see themselves as less important or "othered," which makes it harder for them to fit in with their new society and figure out who they are. Feelings of shame and low self-worth may get worse, which can make mental health problems worse.

Discrimination hurts people's mental health and their ability to do well in school. Teenagers who feel left out or judged at school are less likely to want to study, which hurts their grades. A study done by Pfeifer et al. in 2007 showed that being alone with peers from European racial minorities hurt their academic progress. In other ethnic settings, research has also shown that bias leads to less participation, more absences, and lower academic performance (Benner & Graham, 2011). Both of these results are similar. Although immigrant teens in Başakşehir may have trouble in school because they don't have many friends who are Turkish, they may also have trouble making friends. According to Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2012), bias in schools could make students less interested and motivated to learn, which could cause them to fail over and over again. The fact that these kids can't use social networks or go to events outside of school makes them feel even more alone. In turn, this limits their chances to learn and grow.

2.4.2. Coping with Discrimination

Teenage immigrants often get help from friends and family in their own ethnic groups when they are having a hard time. Studies have shown that this kind of emotional and practical help can keep them safe from the bad effects of prejudice (Phinney & Chavira, 1992). Being with people who share their culture makes them feel understood and like they fit in, which makes them feel less lonely. It also gives them a safe place to talk about their thoughts and feelings during hard times, which makes them stronger (Yoon et al., 2013).

Teens also deal with stress by staying away from people of different races to avoid being discriminated against. This could mean skipping some social events or spending less time with friends (Schwartz et al., 2006). It's possible that this method will briefly ease tension, but it can make it harder to make friends and build strong relationships. Avoiding social interactions may make you feel even more lonely and hurt your mental health in the long run (Rumbaut, 2005).

There is another way that some teens do things. They stand up to injustice and fight against unfair treatment. According to Branscombe and Ellemers (1998), this can make them stronger and help them stay true to who they are. This might work in some situations, depending on how confident the teen is and how many people they have in their support network. If you don't handle a conflict well, it could get worse, so teens need to carefully weigh the risks and rewards (Cuddy et al., 2007).

The manner in which children manage challenges influences their mental health. Enhanced health correlates with positive contacts among individuals of the same ethnicity, whereas conflict or avoidance may provide ambiguous outcomes. Avoiding social interaction may alleviate stress temporarily, although it can hinder long-term transformation. Although adolescents may enhance their strength and self-assurance through confrontation, it is optimal for them to get support from adults or peers (Crocker et al., 2007; Yoon et al., 2013).

2.5. Identity Development in Adolescents: The Role of In-Group and Out-Group Dynamics

Teens invent their self-identities through a combination of personal experiences and social effects. For immigrant adolescents, this approach is even more complicated as they navigate the balance between their racial identity and the expectations of the host culture where they live. Understanding how group dynamics influence their identity construction provides practical insights and information to their social and emotional growth.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) describes how a sense of self impacts individuals from their community in social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For immigrant teens, ethnic identity is a key part of their self-concept or the way they define themselves. In-group dynamics, such as shared language, cultural traditions, and experiences, support this identity. Interactions with out-groups, on the other hand, can challenge or confirm their sense of belonging there.

In-group connections provide a safe space for teens to examine their ethnic identity. It has been found that supportive in-group relationships foster community recognition and belonging, enabling adolescents to adopt and welcome their cultural heritage (Phinney, 1990). Research indicates that positive in-group experiences boost self-esteem and reinforce ethnic identity (Phinney et al., 2001). For instance, participating in cultural events and community movements creates more ties to their backgrounds while building resilience against external pressures.

Nevertheless, depending exclusively on in-group interactions without positive out-group relationships may lead to a narrow worldview. Teens who remain within their in-group may invent stereotypes about others, making it more difficult to adjust and integrate into the broader society (Schmitt et al., 2014). Thus, balancing in-group connections and productive out-group interactions is important for promoting a nuanced understanding of identity for youth in new host communities.

In multicultural environments, out-group interactions play an influential part in crafting the identity of immigrant teens. Experiences of prejudice or exclusion from out-groups can construct identity conflicts that can lead to internalized stigma and more subordinate self-esteem (Yoon et al., 2013). These challenges can disrupt the growth of a cohesive identity that incorporates ethnic heritage with the actualities of the host culture.

On the other hand, positive out-group exchanges can sustain identity formation. Constructive relationships with various peers promote empathy, challenge stereotypes, and foster mutual understanding of culture (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Approaches and programs like collaborative projects and cross-cultural exchanges promote mutual respect and support teens in constructing a balanced identity that incorporates elements of both cultures.

In mixed neighborhoods like Başakşehir, immigrant adolescents often encounter pressures to preserve their ethnic identity while integrating into their new host communities. Balancing these expectations can lead to anxiety, stress, and identity confusion,

particularly when cultural values conflict between their own ethnic identities and the values of their host community.(Schwartz et al., 2006).

Measures to support identity development should concentrate on promoting both in-group solidarity and out-group engagement. Programs encouraging cross-cultural communication can support teens in designing a complex identity that appreciates their heritage while integrating into the host culture.

2.5.1. The Role of Group Belonging in Identity Development

Adolescence is a vital period for identity formation, especially for immigrant teenagers. Erikson (1968) emphasized that a sense of belonging to social groups plays a key role during this stage. For immigrant adolescents, belonging to their ethnic in-group feeds their emotional resilience and continuity, which are essential for self-discovery (Phinney, 1990).

In Başakşehir, where immigrant groups are frequently concentrated in ethnically homogeneous areas, in-group networks provide support via shared language, traditions, and values. These connections serve as a buffer against cultural dissonance and sentiments of alienation in a foreign territory (Berry et al., 2006), where the interactions with counterparts who share equivalent experiences help teens produce a healthy ethnic identity while enhancing their overall well-being.

Verkuyten (2013) underlines how in-group belonging provides emotional reinforcement and supports teens in understanding their own experiences. Shared cultural practices and common challenges produce a sense of solidarity that helps teenagers manage the anxiety and stress of acculturation (Rania et al., 2022). These networks promote a secure ethnic identity, creating a foundation for psychological stability.

While in-group connections are critical, positive out-group interactions are equally crucial for encouraging empathy, tolerance, and understanding in these societies. Interacting with

individuals from other cultures enables broadening adolescents' perspectives, decreasing stereotypes, and encouraging inclusive attitudes (Hewstone et al., 2002). For immigrant adolescents in Başakşehir, engaging with Turkish peers and other cultural groups can improve their social skills and equip them for integration into a multicultural society.

Out-group interactions help adolescents balance their ethnic identity with the host culture's standards and expectations (Berry, 1997). This process reinforces the development of a bicultural identity, linked to more reasonable social and academic outcomes and higher self-esteem (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

Nevertheless, the advantages of out-group interactions rely on the quality of these experiences. In Başakşehir, language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and economic disparities can determine meaningful cross-cultural engagement and the reinforcement of social divides. Addressing these challenges is vital to cultivating effective in-group and out-group dynamics.

A healthy balance between in-group and out-group relationships is necessary for forming a healthy identity. While ethnic in-groups provide emotional support and cultural backup, excessive dependence on them can limit the opportunities for broader social integration (Cherng, 2015).

Adolescents in Başakşehir who isolate themselves within their in-group may struggle to develop a cooperative social identity that incorporates both their ethnic heritage and their place in the host community. Ward (2001) states that while ethnic networks are valuable for emotional support, they can disrupt integration if they control meaningful interactions with the dominant culture.

To encourage balanced identity development, schools, community programs, and policies in Başakşehir need to create opportunities for cross-cultural interaction while maintaining the value of in-group support. These initiatives can assist young immigrants build strength, resilience, adaptability, and a feeling of belonging in the broader community.

In summary, group belonging has an influential role in shaping immigrant teens' social and mental well-being. Strong ethnic identity promotes self-esteem and resilience, while negative out-group experiences can lead to marginalization and identity difficulties (Schmitt et al., 2014). and programs that enable both in-group support and cross-cultural engagement are crucial for promoting healthy identity development and long-term assimilation and integration into the new host society.

2.6. Psychological Health and Sense of Self

Teenagers go through a lot of changes as they try to figure out "who they are." This is even harder for foreign teens because they have to keep up with their homeland culture while also fitting in with the culture of the country they now live in. You feel like you belong to a group based on things like your ethnicity or nationality. This is called social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

For many teens in Istanbul's Başakşehir district, being part of their ethnic group makes them feel safe and like they belong. They feel like they are part of an "in-group" and less alone because they share the same culture, traditions, and sometimes even language. This link is very important for their mental health because it gives them support and a sense of stability when things are tough, like when they are having a hard time at school or adjusting to a different culture. Phinney et al. (2001), while other experts say that teens who feel like they belong to their ethnic group are stronger, feel better about themselves, and have higher self-esteem.

Teenagers may not be able to make friends from other races if they only hang out with people of the same race. If you want to live in a new society, Berry's (1997) acculturation model says that you should "integrate." This means that you should stay true to your culture while also making friends with people from other cultures. Turkish teens who don't spend enough time with their Turkish friends may feel lonely or even ignored. After bad things happen, like being mistreated or not being accepted, people may feel stressed, sad, or unsure of who they are (Schmitt et al., 2014). They could feel torn between their own

culture and the host culture, which could make them fight with each other (Verkuyten, 2013).

But making friends with different groups can be super important! Young people from different places come together to meet and care for one another at school, cultural, and neighborhood events. Everyone feels like they fit in, and there is less unfairness (Hewstone et al., 2002). Nguyen and Benet-Martínez (2013) say that being around people from different countries and backgrounds can make you happier and help you make friends more quickly. Schools, community centers, and places of worship in Başakşehir are great places for young people to make friends. Teens from other countries can feel more welcome and happy in these places because they help everyone understand each other better (Ward, 2001).

In simple terms, immigrant teens in Başakşehir are happy and healthiest when they have strong ties with people of different ethnic groups and strong ties with people of their own ethnic group. Because of this mix, they always feel like they belong.

2.6.1. In-Group Identification and Psychological Resilience

Life may get really difficult when immigrant youths settle in a new area, said Başakşehir in Istanbul. They have to cope with fresh cultures, new classrooms, and occasionally even left-out or biased attitudes. However, a great difference can be made by closely relating oneself to one ethnic or cultural group—also known as an in-group. This relationship makes children feel protected, supported, and proud of who they are, therefore sustaining their mental strength and capacity to meet obstacles.

Psychological resilience is the capacity to "stay strong during difficult times." Teens who live near their cultural group find stability and confidence increase (Schwartz et al., 2007). For instance, joining a support group helps a teen who experiences discrimination or feels alienated remember their value and maintain good self-esteem. Teenagers who have a strong connection to their in-group have demonstrated in studies that they are more in

charge of challenging circumstances and managing their stress (Jetten et al., 2015; Schmitt et al., 2014). Their friends and relatives enable them to view issues from numerous angles, therefore simplifying their handling of them (Branscombe et al., 1999).

Participating in an in-group also helps teenagers find better means of managing their stress. For example, individuals are more likely to confide in friends or relatives when they are depressed or seek guidance in order to address issues (Haslam et al., 2009; Phinney & Ong, 2007). Common issues for children experiencing a lot of change or prejudice are anxiety and sadness, so this form of assistance helps them to be less prone to these emotions (Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Yoon et al., 2013).

Helping immigrant teenagers in Başakşehir feel linked to their background mostly depends on community centers, cultural events, and venues where they can gather. Teenagers who spend time with others from their culture feel less as though they are confronting their challenges by themselves. Rather, their history and customs provide solace, and they view it as a shared experience. Any unfavorable treatment individuals experience from the greater society can be offset by their pride in their cultural identity (Baumeister et al., 2003).

Participating in a group also provides a sort of "emotional shield" that shields teenagers from experiencing hurt from prejudice or exclusion. Haslam et al.. (2009 have coined this as the social identity buffering effect. Teens who identify with a strong, encouraging group create something known as communal resilience. They do not feel alone; they know others support them through their difficulties (Berry et al., 2006).

Immigrant teenagers can feel as though they are in a "safe space" in areas like Başakşehir, where many people have similar cultural backgrounds. People speak their language, follow their customs, and know their experiences surround them. This kind of surroundings encourages people to feel good about who they are, lowers their stress, and lets them fit into the new culture more quickly (Schwartz et al., 2006, 2007).

2.6.2. Out-Group Exclusion and Psychological Distress

In Başakşehir, Istanbul, immigrant teenagers who are excluded by others—whether through unfair treatment, prejudice, or being left out—often struggle with serious mental health challenges. This is especially true for those who experience social isolation or don't get enough opportunities to connect with peers their age. Teenagers who feel excluded may begin to feel as though they belong nowhere or that they are "different" from the people around them (Berry & Hou, 2016; Schmitt et al., 2014). This type of exclusion over time can cause major issues, including anxiety, depression, or loss of confidence (Pavlopoulos & Moti-Stefanidi, 2014; Priest et al., 2019).

For teenagers especially, being accepted by others is crucial since they are still developing their identity. Long-term exclusion of immigrant teenagers could lead to their beginning to believe the terrible things people say about them. They could feel as though they are somehow "less" than others or inadequate overall (Schwartz et al., 2015; Huynh et al., 2018). This might make it difficult for people to balance their identity—where they come from and where they are now—leading to long-term challenges with their mental health (Schmitt et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2018).

Teenagers suffer more the longer they experience exclusion. Studies reveal that consistently being treated unfairly or left out can make it more difficult for someone to remain emotionally strong. It can cause continuous worry, difficulties controlling their emotions, and even complete avoidance of social events (Garcia-Coll & Marks, 2011). Teenagers who go through this sometimes exhibit symptoms of anxiety and sadness since the hurt simply continues piling up (Schmitt et al., 2014).

Many teenagers respond to marginalization by ignoring others or focusing just on members of their own cultural group. This could make them lonelier over time, even when it would momentarily make them feel safe. It gets far more difficult to build fresh acquaintances and fit in if they avoid engaging with peers from the local culture. This loop helps children to feel more like outsiders (Branscombe et al., 1999; Verkuyten, 2016).

Lack of constructive engagement with others can aggravate issues in areas like Başakşehir, where many immigrant teenagers live largely among people from their own ethnic group (Heath & Demireva, 2014; Phinney, 1992).

Schools and communities must design inclusive environments where everyone feels welcome if they want to correct this. It has been shown that programs that help kids make friends from different cultures and get social support can really change their lives. These programs can help immigrant teens feel like they belong, improve their self-esteem, and learn how to deal with tough situations better (Brown et al., 2020; Berry & Hou, 2016). Having good interactions with other people makes teens feel less alone, more confident, and stronger.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter discussed how Social Identity Theory (SIT) might help us better grasp how immigrant adolescents create their identities and interact with others, particularly in mixed areas like Başakşehir, Istanbul. People's perspectives, behavior, and feelings about other people depend much on their capacity to place themselves and others into "in-groups" and "out-groups." Immigrant teenagers particularly struggle with this process since they must balance their links to their ethnic heritage with the demands of blending in with the host culture.

Strong in-group networks provide immigrant youth with emotional support, resiliency, and a feeling of community. These particularly benefit the young people who are left out of the host community or bullied. Although these connections can be consoling and steady, depending too heavily on them can also strengthen social walls, prevent people from having meaningful interactions with people from other cultures, and make it more difficult for people to integrate. Teenagers' mental health and self-esteem may suffer if they feel even more alone, in turn from attitudes of exclusion, discrimination, and stereotyping from the host society.

If we want to solve these problems, we have to create pleasant surroundings that enable good relationships between different groups. Research shows that methods that encourage friendly interactions, cross-cultural conversation, and shared identities between groups help lower prejudice, heal social wounds, and assist immigrant teens in creating healthy identities. It's important for schools, community groups, and social projects to find a balance between national pride and opportunities to be involved in the host community.

Ultimately, the greatest strategy to support immigrant youngsters in doing well is to create inviting environments where group unity and understanding among people may flourish. By enabling young immigrants to develop two identities—one based on their cultural background and one based on their place in the host country—these initiatives can help them enhance their mental state. This can also unite individuals and equip them with the means to manage the demands of multicultural life.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction to Research Design

This section provides a thorough overview of the rationale for the study, the issues it addresses, and the methodologies employed for investigation. It examines the inquiries posed, the participants engaged, the methods of information collection, the instruments employed, the documentation and analysis processes, the selection criteria for participants, the accepted truths, potential obstacles, and the validity of the findings.

In order to thoroughly investigate the social identity development and psychological well-being of immigrant adolescents in Başakşehir, this study uses a qualitative technique. And because social identity is such an interesting concept that has many layers, using a qualitative approach lets us hear the personal stories and feelings of young people in a way that's really special. Semi-structured interviews are to be conducted to learn all about their thoughts and feelings, making sure we get a big picture of what everyone thinks together and on their own.

3.1.1. Research Purpose

This study seeks to explore how immigrant adolescents in Istanbul, especially in the Başakşehir area, handle the challenges of making friends and figuring out their identities when they face different groups of people. The study looks at teenagers from different backgrounds to understand how they handle feelings about others, show support for their own group, and feel about themselves in a new cultural place. The study aims to shine a light on the social elements that can make a big difference in how young people feel and

fit into Turkish society, especially during the important time of adolescence and the extra challenge of acclimating to a new place.

Primarily, the study will try to answer the following queries:

- How do out-group prejudice and in-group favoring manifest themselves in the daily lives of immigrant adolescents?
- How do they cope with feelings of prejudice or social exclusion?
- How are their mental health, identity development, and overall social integration into Turkish society impacted by these social dynamics?

Our study aims to share a clear view of the social challenges faced by immigrant adolescents and suggest ways to help them gain resilience and stick together using a qualitative method, employing interviews.

3.1.2. Research Importance

This study is important because it helps us understand the tricky social and emotional challenges that young immigrants go through. These kids are often overlooked in migration research, even though they are a vulnerable demographic. Young migrants face both exciting opportunities and tricky challenges in their own communities and the new places they live as they grow up during the important time of being an adolescent in one of Turkey's areas. Adolescence can be really tricky when figuring out who you are, and these kids have even more on their plates as they try to fit in with new ways of doing things and dealing with tough situations. We intend to learn more about what affects how people feel mentally in our group and explore how they experience being treated differently by others. This will help us understand how they feel about fitting in and being part of a community.

The findings are thought to play a role in shaping future studies about immigration psychology, as well as upcoming programs and laws for immigrants. Even more importantly, initiatives that foster social cohesion and resilience may be better crafted with the study's results in mind. The study shares valuable ideas about making friendly spaces

that help immigrant teens grow and feel good about themselves. It looks at the ways they handle their different identities and how that helps them be a part of the community. This research aims to contribute to the literature on migration and adolescent development by offering important data on social cohesion and integration for teenage migrants in Turkey and other global circumstances.

3.1.3. Participants

The study group will be made up of young people who have moved here, who are 18 years old and older, and who live in Başakşehir. This age group is picked because they have passed the age of creating an identity according to Erikson's (1968) idea about the super important stage of figuring out who you are during those teenage years (12-18). The people chosen are picked carefully, making sure there are lots of different kinds of backgrounds from the Başakşehir district. To guarantee varied data and saturation, a total of five participants, including a balanced gender representation, will be included.

3.1.4. Data Collection Tools

We will conduct individual digital interviews to explore personal experiences related to identity formation, in-group and out-group dynamics, and the psychological effects of these experiences. Open-ended questions will invite participants to share rich stories, enabling thorough analysis.

Data collection will be conducted in three phases:

- Initial Contact and Rapport Building: Participants will be introduced to the study's purpose, and confidentiality and the voluntary nature of their participation will be explained. Parental consent will be obtained for minors if there are any.
- Interviews: The interviews will take place online to ensure a safe space for participants.
- Recording and Transcription: All sessions will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Field notes will also be taken during interviews and discussions for additional data.

3.1.5. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis will be employed to identify patterns and themes within the data. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach will guide the process:

- Familiarization: Reading and re-reading transcripts to immerse in the data.
- Generating Initial Codes: Systematic coding of interesting features across the dataset.
- Searching for Themes: Collating codes into potential themes and subthemes.
- Reviewing Themes: Refining themes to ensure they accurately represent the data.
- Defining and Naming Themes: Develop clear definitions and names for each theme.
- Producing the Report: Integrating thematic findings with participant quotes to illustrate key points.

3.1.6. Ethical Considerations

This study will follow the provided ethical guidelines to keep everything fair and safe, making sure everyone knows what's happening, keeping their names secret, and letting them quit whenever they want. The study will ask for approval from the ethics committee at the university.

3.1.7. Limitations

One possible drawback is that data interpretation might be impacted by cultural differences and participants' lack of language proficiency. Another limitation is that the research only looked at Başakşehir. Therefore, the results may not apply to other areas.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The goal of this study was to explain and study the relationships among teenagers in their host society as well as study the psychological well-being of immigrants during the age of adolescence. This chapter presents the thematic findings from in-depth interviews that have been conducted with adolescents above the age of 18 who have lived their years of adolescence in Turkey as immigrants. Direct quotes from participants will be used to describe these findings in order to highlight the complexity of their experiences and offer deep, qualitative insights.

Table 4.1. Participants' Characteristics

Participants	Age	Gender	Place of birth
NS	19	Female	Palestine
RD	18	Female	Yemen
MA	19	Male	Yemen
DB	19	Female	Syria
HH	21	Female	Syria

In addition to respecting young people's opinions, this method provides a sophisticated knowledge of how social contacts influence the results of their mental health. Also, we are interested in learning about the methods that teenagers use to cope with the effects of social exclusion or prejudice, and we will categorize the replies as we are doing the

analysis. Lastly, findings concerning the ways in which social dynamics impact the construction of identities and mental health will hopefully be clarified.

Direct quotes from participants will be used to describe these findings in order to highlight the complexity of their experiences and offer deep, qualitative insights. In addition to respecting the young people's opinions, this method provides a sophisticated knowledge of how their social contacts influence the results of their mental health.

This chapter is written in addition to the larger conversation about the mental health of immigrants. It is an essential first step in comprehending how in-group and out-group dynamics appear in their lives and how these elements might be handled to support psychological health in this susceptible group. Understanding the intricacies of immigrant teenagers' lived experiences in Başakşehir requires an understanding of the data in this chapter. They will serve as the foundation for the discussion that follows regarding how these dynamics affect psychological support and social integration.

4.1.1. Results Concerning In-Group & Out-Group Experiences

A large number of participants feel a deep attachment toward their cultural in-group. It is not just the emotional stability that relationships bring but also the feeling of identification and belonging that is provided in a new place. A number of participants said that they have a sense of belonging, even when they are in a host nation such as Turkey, where they are surrounded by people who share their language or part of their background.

An example of this could be how N.S. described how her relationships with Palestinian friends provided her with a feeling of understanding and comfort: *"I feel more comfortable with Palestinian friends because we understand each other better. There is no need to tell them about my background since they just get it."* (A transcription of the N.S. interview). Also, D.B. similarly expressed: "At first, I was scared, shy, and hesitant to engage. But being around people from my community gave me a sense of stability and familiarity,".

In a similar vein, M.A. stressed the value of maintaining his identity via these interactions, saying, *"When I meet Yemeni friends, I feel like I haven't lost my identity. My Yemeni accent reminds me of home, and it feels good to know I still belong to my culture."* This kind of in-group bonding may also serve as a coping technique for people who are experiencing difficulties in adjusting to a new culture. Some participants indicated that they use their in-group as a source of support. In support of that, H.H. noted: *"Even when I started learning Turkish and forming other friendships, my Arab friends always felt like my safety net,*" Stressing the importance of in-group bonds.

Nevertheless, other difficulties were noted. R.D. said, *"I love being around people from my culture, but it makes it harder to step out and connect with others, like Turkish peers."* This is an example of how being too focused on one's in-group may sometimes make it more difficult to form wider social ties. This brings us to the thought that although there are certain negatives associated with in-group friendships, they continue to be an essential component of the social networks of immigrant adolescents. These attachments seem to provide a secure environment in which to express one's self and maintain cultural identity while navigating the intricacies of living in a new nation.

4.1.2. Out-Group Experiences and Exclusion

It is normal that teenagers encounter difficulties when engaging with people who are not a part of their cultural group, despite the fact that in-group attachments may give a feeling of comfort and security. At the same time, when people engage with members of other groups, they often experience emotions of exclusion and, sometimes, prejudice. People's experiences are typically shaped by factors such as language difficulties, cultural differences, and their own preconceptions. As an example, N.S. discussed the challenges she had in school as a result of her low proficiency in the Turkish language. She said, *"In school, teachers and classmates treated me differently because I didn't speak Turkish well at the time. It made me feel left out, especially during group activities".*

It is not always the case that this feeling of exclusion was the result of overt prejudice; rather, it often originated from misunderstandings or difficulties in communication. *"Before I learned Turkish, I felt like an outsider,"* M.A. reminisced on how his early challenges with the Turkish language hampered his capacity to interact with others. *"It wasn't because they were mean to me, but because I didn't know how to connect with them. I just didn't have the words." Also,* R.D. shared during her interview: *"It wasn't just about communication; it was about being seen as part of the group. Before I learned the language, I felt invisible."* R.D. shared this during her interview.

Participants also reported that these sentiments of isolation dramatically decreased as their confidence and proficiency in the Turkish language increased. *"At first, I felt like I was invisible in class because I couldn't participate like the others,"* R.D. said of her experience. *"But once I learned the language, everything changed. I could make friends and feel more included."*

Cultural preconceptions were also noted by several individuals as a cause of out-group difficulties, despite language being the most often reported obstacle. N.S., for example, described an event in which she felt unjustly condemned: *"Some Turkish people assume that Arabs are troublemakers, and it can be hurtful when they treat you differently because of that."* Adding her voice to this, H.H. reflected, *"It wasn't only that they didn't understand me; they didn't seem to want to. I remember feeling like I was being judged just for being Arab."*

Overall, the majority of participants said that while early out-group encounters often posed problems, these issues diminished with time, effort, and better communication. Their stories highlight the value of knowing one another and the vital role that language plays in overcoming cultural differences.

4.2. Handling Social & Cultural Challenges

We noticed that participants used a variety of tactics to overcome the difficulties they encountered assimilating into Turkish culture. As they attempted to close the gap between their new surroundings and their cultural heritage, these tactics often demonstrated their flexibility and persistence. Learning the language and juggling cultural identities were two important coping strategies, as deduced from the interviews.

4.2.1. Learning the Language

The adoption of a language is now recognized as the most crucial technique for overcoming feelings of isolation and integrating into society. Participants often emphasized that studying Turkish not only enhanced their ability to communicate with others but also elevated their self-confidence and brought them a greater feeling of belonging.

As M.A. noted, having a command of Turkish enabled him to establish contacts that were significant to him: "*Learning Turkish was crucial. Once I could communicate, everything became easier. I could participate in conversations, make friends, and even contribute in class.*" The absence of language abilities at an early stage was a significant barrier for some individuals. Before she became more proficient in Turkish, N.S. highlighted the challenges she faced: *"Without knowing Turkish, it's hard to participate in activities or make friends. Language is the most significant barrier."*

We also noticed that learning a language was not only a requirement from a practical standpoint but also a very transformational experience that led to the development of new connections and possibilities. R.D. concentrated on the ways in which language assisted her in interacting with Turkish society: "*When I started understanding and speaking Turkish fluently, I felt like I was part of the community. It wasn't just about communication; it was about feeling included*." These experiences highlight the significance of language learning as a basic method for teenagers who are immigrants

dealing with the challenges of adjusting to life in a new country. "*Learning Turkish was life-changing for me,"* emphasized H.H., *"not just for making friends, but also for feeling less alien."*

4.2.2. Dual Cultural Identities

Additionally, the capacity to preserve their indigenous cultural identity while also assimilating into Turkish society was an essential tactic. The participants discussed the significance of striking a balance between maintaining their heritage and accepting parts of the culture of the host country.

The following is a description of M.A.'s delight in maintaining his Yemeni customs while also assimilating into Turkish society: *"I hold on to my Yemeni traditions, like my accent and customs, but I've also learned a lot from Turkish culture. It's about balancing both worlds."* Along the same lines, N.S. noted the significant role that her family played in ensuring that she remained linked to her roots: "*My mother always reminds me what's right in our culture, so I can adapt but not lose myself. This has helped me stay grounded.*"

In order to achieve social integration, it was often believed that it was essential to conform to the norms and practices of Turkey. However, the participants made it abundantly evident that this adaptation did not come at the price of their own identities. This equilibrium was summed up by R.D.: *"I've learned to embrace Turkish traditions while keeping my own. It's not about choosing one over the other—it's about blending them in a way that feels right."*

Balancing their cultural identities was not only a means of surviving for these teenagers, but it was also a means of thriving in the multiple cultural situations in which they found themselves. One way in which they built a sense of self that was both robust and adaptable was by recognizing their origins while also interacting with the culture of the host country.

4.3. The Effect of Social Dynamics on the Process of Identity Formation and Well-Being

It is no secret that the development of identities, psychological well-being, and social integration of immigrant adolescents are profoundly influenced by social dynamics (Berry, 1997; Güngör et al., 2013; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which include contact with members of both the in-group and the out-group. The participants discussed the ways in which their experiences of inclusion and exclusion influenced their capacity to integrate into Turkish society, as well as how they developed their sense of self and their emotional resilience.

M.A. discussed how his time spent in Turkey enabled him to incorporate elements of Turkish culture while maintaining his connection to his Yemeni roots: *"I thought moving to Turkey would take away my Yemeni roots, but it helped me develop a more balanced identity. I've learned to adapt without losing who I am."* A feeling that R.D. expressed was quite similar, and she emphasized the flexibility that she had developed: *"Being surrounded by Turkish culture made me adopt new habits, but my core identity remains the same. It's like I've added layers to who I am."* A source of strength rather than a cause of conflict, this dual cultural identity was considered a source of power. *"I felt torn between wanting to belong and staying true to who I am,"* admitted H.H., *"but as I grew older, I realized being mixed culturally is a strength."* Most of the participants stated their satisfaction with their capacity to successfully traverse two different cultural realms while remaining faithful to their roots.

4.3.1. Psychological Well-Being

While the participants were in the process of adjusting to life in Turkey, they reported experiencing a range of consequences on their psychological well-being. Despite the fact that the first phases of migration brought about feelings of stress and loneliness, many teenagers eventually learned the ability to be resilient and self-sufficient.

R.D. vividly articulated the emotional toll that comes with adjusting to a new situation: *"At first, I was shy and scared, and I felt like crying all the time. It was overwhelming to start over in a place where I didn't belong."* Quite a few of the participants emphasized the personal development that they had undergone as a direct consequence of these difficulties. As M.A. pointed out: "*Over time, I realized being an immigrant made me stronger and more responsible. I've had to handle things I never would have faced back home.*" D.B. also expressed the importance of time and communaş support by saying, *"but eventually, therapy and support networks made a big difference in how I coped."*

On top of that, the role of family support was evident as the importance of family as a source of emotional and psychological stability was considerably emphasized. Recognized by N.S: *"Having my parents with me helped me stay grounded and supported during tough times. Their presence made a huge difference in how I adjusted."*

What we understood from this is that in spite of the challenges they had in the beginning, the majority of participants said that their psychological well-being greatly improved as they grew more integrated into Turkish culture.

4.3.2. Social Integration

Different participants experienced different levels of social integration; while some of them were able to develop a strong feeling of belonging in Turkish society, others struggle with obstacles. Several characteristics, such as the degree of language competency and the degree of openness of their social networks, often determine the degree of integration.

M.A. emphasized the sense of belonging that he had as a result of his interactions with Turkish peers: *"I made friends with Turkish peers and started feeling more at home here. They showed me aspects of their culture I hadn't understood before."* Some of the participants, however, continued to struggle with issues such as problems in communicating in their own language and cultural misunderstandings. H.H. participated and stated: *"Some days I feel completely integrated,"* she explained, *"but other days, I'm*

reminded I'll always be seen as different in some way." To clarify, N.S. said: *"Without strong Turkish language skills, it's still hard to fully participate in university activities. Sometimes I feel like I'm on the outside looking in."* According to these results, even if a significant number of immigrant teenagers are able to form meaningful ties within Turkish culture, their capacity to completely integrate into Turkish society may still be hindered by structural and social challenges.

The results indicate that social dynamics have a significant influence on the construction of identities and the psychological well-being of adolescent immigrants. These teenagers often emerge with a better sense of who they are and greater adaptability as a result of successfully navigating the complicated dynamics of both their in-group and their out-group. On the other hand, obstacles such as language hurdles and social isolation highlight the significance of inclusive policies and practices in order to assist the socialization and well-being of individuals with disabilities.

The results provide insight into the intricate relationship that exists between the in-group and out-group experiences of immigrant adolescents, the methods that they use to deal with difficulties, and the larger effects that these influences have on their sense of identity and psychological well-being.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

The study looked into in-group and out-group behaviors, as well as how they affected the mental health and identity formation of immigrant teens in Istanbul. This part talks about the conclusions that were taken from the study's results. The discussion connects the data to other research and gives more information about the real lives of foreign kids.

5.2. Conclusions Based on Research Objectives

5.2.1. In-Group and Out-Group Experiences

The study found that immigrant teenagers depend greatly on their cultural groups for emotional stability, identity, and belonging. Being around people who share their language and cultural background makes them feel more understood and less alone.

For example, N.S. stated how her Palestinian friends helped her with belonging: *"I feel more comfortable with Palestinian friends because we understand each other better. There is no need to tell them about my background since they just get it."* In a similar manner, M.A. stressed the need to preserve his Yemeni identity via in-group connections: *"When I meet Yemeni friends, I feel like I haven't lost my identity. My accent reminds me of home, and it feels good to know I still belong to my culture."* H.H. also emphasized the comfort of shared experiences, saying: *"With my close friends from my country, I don't feel like an outsider anymore because we are going through the same things together."*

While in-group connections may provide a sense of comfort, it might also restrict possibilities to develop meaningful relationships with Turkish peers as R.D.: *"I love being around people from my culture, but it makes it harder to step out and connect with others, like Turkish peers."* Language barriers and cultural misunderstandings characterized early out-group encounters. D.B. described her experience of being excluded from school because of her accent: *"When I spoke, they would sometimes laugh or not take me seriously because of my Arabic accent."*

People who took part said that learning Turkish and trying to interact better made them feel a lot less alone, even though problems with the out-group were clear at first. For instance, many teens said that learning Turkish helped them stay in touch with their Turkish friends, attend more school events, and feel like they belonged in their daily lives. It was clear that language helps youth from different countries understand and talk to each other.

On the other hand, it's difficult to say enough about how significant the in-group is as a space for meeting and finding your identity. M.A., N.S., H.H., and others who participated discussed how belonging to their ethnic group helped them feel comfortable, particularly initially. As they got used to their new lives, being part of their ethnic group helped them. When they were with people who spoke the same language, had the same traditions, or had been through the same things, they felt understood, encouraged, and less alone.

Those who participated, like D.B. and R.D., however, showed how difficult it is to handle issues and ideas that aren't shared by everyone. Their poor language proficiency made it difficult for them to feel like they belonged in society and to make friends. They said that foreigners still felt left out because people still had bad ideas about them even after they tried to talk. Cultural beliefs and ideas can make it harder for some kids to fit in than others. This experience shows how deeply they can affect the process.

Immigrant teenagers benefit from support from their in-groups, but unfavorable perceptions and linguistic hurdles make it more difficult for them to adapt to their new

country. For many of them, being able to speak in Turkish was a crucial step. It changed their chance to interact with people and join the group.

5.2.2. Coping Mechanisms and Social Integration

Our study revealed two key coping methods employed by immigrant teenagers to deal with social and cultural impediments:

- Language

Learning Turkish was the most effective coping method for overcoming isolation and promoting inclusion. M.A. noticed: *"Learning Turkish was crucial. Once I could communicate, everything became easier. I could participate in conversations, make friends, and even contribute in class."* H.H. added that her confidence grew with language proficiency: *"I realized people were more welcoming once I started speaking Turkish better. It made me braver."*

- Dual Identity

Participants show a remarkable capacity to maintain a healthy balance between their cultural heritage and the demands of Turkish society. This equilibrium was described by D.B.: *"I keep my Arabic traditions alive at home, but outside, I've learned to act like everyone else here. It helps me fit in."* R.D. also emphasized: *"I've learned to embrace Turkish traditions while keeping my own. It's not about choosing one over the other—it's about blending them."*

The concept of dual identity was explained by N.S when she gave the credit to her family because they were the ones helping her with maintaining her roots: *"My mother always reminds me what's right in our culture, so I can adapt but not lose myself."*

This leads us to the conclusion that acquiring a second language and maintaining a sense of equilibrium between two identities are two essential ways of overcoming cultural obstacles. Based on the findings provided by participants, these techniques help to

cultivate stronger resilience and facilitate a more seamless integration into Turkish society.

5.2.3. Identity Formation and Psychological Well-Being

The development of the participants' identities and mental well-being were greatly impacted by their social contacts and the coping techniques they used. A number of immigrant adolescents detailed the process of acquiring several identities. This development was remarked upon by M.A.: *"I thought moving to Turkey would take away my Yemeni roots, but it helped me develop a more balanced identity. I've learned to adapt without losing who I am."* H.H. similarly noted: *"I've added parts of Turkish culture to myself, but I still carry my country's traditions. It's a part of who I am now."*

Participants reported growing emotional resilience despite the fact that early exclusion caused stress and loneliness. This is what R.D. said: *"At first, I was shy and scared, and I felt like crying all the time. It was overwhelming to start over in a place where I didn't belong."* in addition to that, according to what N.S. said, the support of family had a stabilizing role: *"Having my parents with me helped me stay grounded and supported during tough times. Their presence made a huge difference in how I adjusted."*

D.B. clearly depicted the idea of personal growth: "It was difficult at first, but I feel like I became stronger. I've learned to stand up for myself." The capacity of the participants to adjust to their environment had a significant impact on the formation of their identities as well as their psychological well-being. The resiliency that our participants have shown demonstrates that they are capable of thriving in spite of the difficulties they first encountered.

5.3. Discussion

5.3.1. Social Identity and In-Group Favoritism

Based on the data, we see that in-group favoritism was a characteristic of the social lives of the participants. Some of them even shared their experiences of having relationships with peers who had the same cultural background, which gave them a feeling of security and provided them with emotional support. This puts us in accordance with Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory (SIT), which places an emphasis on the fact that participation in a group leads to a positive self-concept and a feeling of belonging; this situation is consistent.

In-group alliances and the reliance on people from the same background were apparently tools for navigating the new culture and are used as a common coping mechanism. *"I feel more comfortable with Palestinian friends because we just get each other; I don't have to explain who I am."* M.A. stressed the importance of maintaining his Yemeni identity by saying, *"When I'm with Yemeni friends, I feel like I still belong to my culture even though I'm far from home."*

This is consistent with Phinney et al. (2001), who contend that robust ethnic networks help to counteract prejudice and alienation, hence promoting stability and resilience. These results also fit Berry's (1997) acculturation paradigm that was mentioned before, that says that people use defensive mechanisms when they feel alienated from the host community by keeping links to their ethnic group.

Although in-group favoring might provide a sense of emotional stability, it is also shown to result in social isolation. As R.D. says, *"I love being around people from my culture, but it makes it harder to step out and connect with others, like Turkish peers."* This captures Cherng's (2015) worry about depending too much on ethnic groups slowing down integration efforts and creating cultural silos. As the literature notes, Brewer (1999)

cautions that while in-group bias promotes group solidarity, it may also aggravate intergroup conflicts.

5.3.2. Exclusion and Psychological Well-Being

When we talk about psychological well-being, out-group exclusion seems to be the leading factor in enduring positive psychological well-being among the participants. There were a number of factors that led to feelings of marginalization, like language barriers and prejudices. For example, N.S. recalls the difficulties she had in school as a result of language: "*Teachers treated me differently because I couldn't speak Turkish well, which made me feel invisible.*" M.A., in a similar manner, referred to the isolation that was brought about by communication gaps: "*I didn't feel they were mean, but I couldn't connect with them because I didn't have the words*."

According to Berry (2005) and Schmitt et al. (2014), out-group discrimination raises the risk of psychological distress, reduces self-esteem, and amplifies stress; these experiences are consistent with their findings. During the process of internalizing their "outsider" position, teenagers who are subjected to recurrent exclusion may develop anxiety and depression, as stated by Pascoe and Richman (2009). The findings of Priest et al.. (2013) imply that microaggressions, which are similar to dismissive attitudes, might build up over time and have a negative impact on mental health.

According to our findings, excluded individuals not only had an effect on their mental well-being but also made it more difficult for them to integrate into Turkish society. *"Even after I learned Turkish, I still felt like I wasn't really part of their group."* Said R.D., who made this observation. This is consistent with the findings of Verkuyten (2005), who contends that perceived challenges to an individual's identity, whether they are symbolic or concrete, strengthen commitment to one's in-group while simultaneously widening splits with out-groups.

5.3.3. Dual Identities

Participants emphasized the difficult process of maintaining two identities, which involves striking a balance between the demands of adjusting to Turkish society and the desire to maintain their ethnic history. Berry's (1997) acculturation theory provides useful insights in this context, as teenagers in Başakşehir displayed a variety of methods for integration, separation, and marginalization.

As an example, M.A. highlighted his delight in maintaining a balance between his heritage and aspects of Turkish culture, saying: *"I hold on to my traditions but also embrace parts of Turkish life. It's about finding the right bal.ance"* A similar sentiment was expressed by N.S. on the importance that her mother plays in establishing her ethnic identity. She,aid: "*My mom reminds me of our culture, so I adapt but never lose myself*."

These stories match what Nguyen and Benet-Martínez (2013) say, that blending in—keeping your own culture while joining in with the new one—brings the happiest feelings. On the other hand, those who found it hard to find this balance felt a little lost and alone. D.B. said: *"I don't feel I fit in either group sometimes. It's like I'm caught between two worlds."* This connects with what Phinney and friends said in 2001, pointing out that when kids are figuring out who they are, it can sometimes make them feel all mixed up and stressed out during those teenage years.

5.3.4. Social Identity and Psychological Well-Being

The results show how closely our social identity and happiness are connected. People said that being close to their group made them feel strong and safe, especially when they felt left out. This matches what Schmitt et al. said in 2014, where they talked about how being part of a group can help protect against stress from discrimination.

Simultaneously, extended isolation and a lack of out-group connections had a detrimental influence on psychological well-being. As stated by R.D.: *"I felt like crying every day at*

first because I didn't belong anywhere." These experiences are consistent with Erikson's (1968) notion of adolescence as a vital time for identity formation, in which disturbances to belonging might impede emotional progress.

The study shows how engaging programs from different cultures and friendly rules can help people feel strong and stick together. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) say that when different groups come together in a friendly way, it can help people be nicer, change wrong ideas about each other, and feel more understanding. To help immigrant adolescents in Başakşehir develop their dual identities and improve their mental health, schools, and community activities facilitate interactions between immigrant adolescents and their Turkish peers.

5.3.5. Social Integration

Participants reported varied experiences with social integration. While individuals established connections with Turkish counterparts, others encountered ongoing obstacles. These results underscore the significance of community-based activities and educational interventions in closing the divide between immigrant youth and the host society.

Schools that promote collaborative learning and intercultural discourse may effectively remove preconceptions and mitigate discriminatory attitudes. This corresponds with Allport's (1954) Contact Hypothesis, which asserts that significant intergroup interaction may cultivate mutual regard and diminish prejudice. Programs that advocate for biculturalism, as proposed by Berry (1997), may enhance teenage immigrants' capacity to cultivate resilient and balanced identities.

In conclusion, the discourse demonstrates that the experiences of immigrant teenagers in Başakşehir include larger theoretical frameworks, including Social Identity Theory, Acculturation Theory, and developmental psychology. In-group favoring offers emotional stability but may hinder social integration, while out-group exclusion exacerbates psychological pain and identity problems. Reconciling ethnic heritage with participation

in the host culture is essential for mental health and social unity. By advocating for inclusive practices, cultivating cross-cultural understanding, and establishing supportive settings, educational institutions and community organizations may assist immigrant adolescents in overcoming these obstacles and flourishing within their new cultural contexts.

5.4. Gaps in the Study and Directions for Future Research

The study's shortcomings call attention to the need for more research in the field of immigration psychology, but overall, it sheds light on how immigrant adolescents in Başakşehir create social identities, interact with their in-group and out-group, and feel emotionally and psychologically well.

The study's narrow scope—it only included teenagers from Istanbul's Başakşehir district—is a major limitation. While the immigrant kids of this area reflect the diversity of Turkey as a whole, it does not provide a complete picture of the experiences of immigrant youth across the world. The experiences of immigrant teenagers may be shaped differently depending on the city, community, and sociopolitical setting in which they find themselves. For example, issues of social isolation, resource scarcity, and cultural difference perceptions may manifest differently in less multicultural districts or in rural locations. To better comprehend the many realities that immigrant teenagers encounter, it would be beneficial to broaden the research's geographical reach.

The results may not be applied to a broader population since this research used a small sample size of about five people, which is acceptable for a qualitative method. Future research should aim to recruit larger and more representative samples to improve data quality and for cross-sectional comparisons across demographics such as age, ethnicity, and gender. The long-term psychological effects of migration may be better understood, for instance, by comparing the experiences of first- and second-generation immigrants with regard to the formation of social identity and mental health.

Perhaps the dependence on interviewees' self-reported narratives is another possible weakness. Qualitative approaches are subjective by their very nature, yet they are priceless for revealing the richness and complexity of individual experiences. Because of cultural conventions, linguistic obstacles, or discomfort in addressing delicate subjects, participants may have omitted or filtered certain parts of their accounts. For a more complete picture of immigrant teenagers' lives, researchers should combine qualitative methods with quantitative ones, such as surveys.

Institutional and systemic variables, including government programs, social services, and educational regulations, were also not thoroughly investigated in this research despite their potential impact on immigrant adolescents' mental health and social integration. Immigrant kids experience complex patterns of exclusion and inclusion; future studies should examine the role of structural impediments like economic hardship, uneven educational opportunities, or discriminatory institutional practices in these dynamics. If lawmakers could get to the bottom of these systemic impacts, they could solve social and psychological problems at their source.

Future research should delve into the ways in which variables, including community initiatives, peer pressure, and family support networks, impact resilience and mental health outcomes among immigrant teenagers. This study focused on coping methods. The changing character of immigrant adolescents' identity development and psychological adjustment might be better understood with the use of longitudinal studies that follow these young people over time.

The complex character of migration necessitates, lastly, more interdisciplinary cooperation within immigration psychology. For a more comprehensive understanding of the difficulties immigrant youth encounter, research integrating the fields of psychology, sociology, education, and policy analysis is needed. Strategies to enhance social integration, minimize prejudice, and improve mental health outcomes for immigrant adolescents may be developed by researchers by investigating how cultural, political, and economic issues are connected with individual psychological experiences.

Ultimately, more research is needed to understand the relationship between migration and teenage development fully; however, this study does add to the existing knowledge. Future studies should explore structural impacts on immigrant well-being, broaden their geographical emphasis, increase the variety of their samples, and use mixed techniques. This will help researchers and professionals empathize with immigrant youth and provide spaces where they may flourish by learning about their experiences.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

ETHICS COMMITTEE PERMISSION

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 25.12.2024-51116

İBN HALDUN ÜNİVERSİTESİ

T.C.
İBN HALDUN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği
Kurulu Başkanlığı

Sayı : E-71395021-050.04-51116 25.12.2024
Konu : Etik Kurul Kararı - Alaa Ahmed Yahya AL-AWAMI

İLGİLİ MAKAMA

Kurulumuza başvuran Alaa Ahmed Yahya AL-AWAMI'nın, "İstanbul/Başakşehir'daki Göçmen Ergenler Arasında Grup İçi ve Grup Dışı Dinamikler ile Psikolojik Sağlığı İncelemesi" isimli projesi; amaç, araştırma türü, veri toplama araçları, süreç ve işlemler, veri analizleri dikkate alınmak suretiyle 15.11.2024 tarihinde değerlendirilerek 2024/09-07 karar numarası ile etik açıdan uygun bulunmaktadır.
Bilgilerini ve gereğini arz/rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Alev ERKİLET
Başkan

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

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APPENDIX B

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Dear Participant,

As part of the Master's Program in Psychological Counseling and Guidance at İbn Haldun University, I am conducting a thesis study entitled "Investigation of In-group and Out-group Dynamics and Psychological Well-being among Immigrant Adolescents in Başakşehir/İstanbul." This research aims to explore how immigrant adolescents in Başakşehir experience social dynamics, such as in-group and out-group interactions, and how these experiences affect their psychological well-being. Your insights and experiences will be invaluable to this research and are highly appreciated, as this study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges immigrant adolescents face and to inform future support programs.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and there is no risk involved for you. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any point, without any repercussions, whether before, during, or after our conversation.

Please be assured that all personal information, including your name and identifying details, will be kept strictly confidential. Your responses will be used solely for scientific purposes. The interview will last approximately one hour, and, with your permission, it will be recorded to ensure accuracy and ease in data collection.

Thank you in advance for your valuable contributions to this study.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

I have read the information provided above, which should be given to the participant/volunteer before the study, and I fully understand the scope and purpose of the research I am being asked to participate in. I have received both written and verbal explanations from the researcher named below regarding the study, had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study, and received satisfactory answers. I have been informed verbally about the possible risks and benefits of participating in this research. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without having to provide any reason and without facing any consequences.

Under these conditions, I willingly agree to participate in the study of my own free will, without any pressure or coercion.

Participant:
Name-Surname: …….

Signature:

Note: This form is prepared in duplicate. One copy is given to the volunteer with a signature, and the other is retained by the researcher.

Researcher's Information:

Name-Surname: Alaa Ahmed Yahya Alawami
Signature:

Interview questions:

Open-ended questions were chosen to capture real day-to-day experiences and take a closer look at how social identity influences interactions and psychology

1. Sense of Identity and Cultural Integration:

How would you describe your sense of identity? Which aspects of your cultural background are most meaningful to you, and how do you integrate them with life in Turkey?

2. Social Connections and Support Networks:

Do you find it easier to connect with people who share your background or those from different backgrounds? How do your friendships here influence your sense of belonging and identity?

3. Experiences with Discrimination and Exclusion:

Have you ever felt excluded or treated differently because of your background? How did you handle these situations, and what strategies helped you cope with such experiences?

4. Impact of Migration on Identity Development:

How has moving to Turkey affected your sense of self and cultural identity? Have your views or feelings about your identity evolved since moving here?

5. Barriers to Social Integration and Participation:

What challenges do you face in forming friendships or participating in school or community activities? Do you feel that aspects of your background create any barriers?

6. Emotional and Psychological Well-Being:

How would you describe your mental well-being since moving to Turkey? What kinds of challenges do you encounter, and who or what do you rely on for support when feeling stressed or anxious?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full Name:

Alaa Ahmed Yahya Alawami

Contact Information:

E-mail (1):

E-mail (2):

Education:

2006 – 2010	BA in Psychology, İbn Haldun Üniversitesi, Türkiye
2010 – 2012	MA in Psychological Counseling and Guidance, İbn Haldun Üniversitesi, Türkiye