

Araştırma Makalesi

Social Dominance Orientation, Eating Attitudes, and Emotional Appetite: A Cross-Sectional Study

Sosyal Baskınlık Yönelimi, Yeme Tutumları ve Duygusal İştah: Kesitsel Bir Çalışma

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between social dominance orientation (SDO), emotional appetite, and eating attitudes among political party members during the election period, which is characterized by increased psychosocial stress and changes in daily routines. A total of 631 participants (mean age 34.02±12.73 years) completed the Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO7), Emotional Appetite Questionnaire (EMAQ), and Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26) through face-to-face interviews. The findings revealed that individuals with higher SDO scores exhibited lower emotional appetite and reduced “eating preoccupation” in negative emotional situations ($p<0.01$). Additionally, when the “anti-egalitarianism” sub-factor of SDO increased by one unit, emotional appetite decreased by 0.800 times in negative situations, while it increased by 0.350 times in positive situations ($p<0.001$). Furthermore, a one-unit increase in this sub-factor was associated with a 0.259 times decrease in eating disorder behaviors ($p<0.001$). Overall, the results suggest that social dominance orientation plays a significant role in shaping individuals’ eating behaviors by influencing both emotional appetite and eating attitudes, particularly under stress-related conditions such as election periods, and may contribute to more controlled eating patterns in certain contexts.

Keywords: Social dominance, eating behavior, emotional eating, psychological stress, eating attitudes.

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Öz

Bu çalışma, seçim döneminin artan psikososyal stres ve günlük yaşam düzenindeki değişikliklerle karakterize edilen yapıyı içinde, siyasi parti üyelerinde sosyal baskınlık yönelimi (SDO), duygusal iştah ve yeme tutumları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Toplam 623 katılımcı (ortalama yaş 34,02±12,73 yıl), Sosyal Baskınlık Yönelimi Ölçeği (SDO7), Duygusal İştah Anketi (EMAQ) ve Yeme Tutum Testi'ni (EAT-26) yüz yüze görüşmeler yoluyla tamamlamıştır. Bulgular; sosyal baskınlık yönelimi puanı yüksek olan bireylerin olumsuz duygusal durumlarda daha düşük duygusal iştaha ve daha az “yemekle aşırı meşguliyet” düzeyine sahip olduğunu göstermiştir (p<0,01). Ayrıca, sosyal baskınlık yöneliminin “eşitliğe karşı olma” alt boyutundaki bir birimlik artış, olumsuz durumlarda duygusal iştahın 0,800 kat azalmasına, olumlu durumlarda ise 0,350 kat artmasına yol açmıştır (p<0,001). Bununla birlikte, bu alt boyuttaki bir birimlik artışın yeme bozukluğu davranışlarında 0,259 kat azalma ile ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur (p<0,001). Sonuç olarak, sosyal baskınlık yöneliminin, özellikle seçim dönemleri gibi stresli süreçlerde, bireylerin duygusal iştahını ve yeme tutumlarını etkileyerek yeme davranışlarının şekillenmesinde önemli bir rol oynadığı ve bazı durumlarda daha kontrollü yeme davranışlarına katkı sağlayabileceği söylenebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Sosyal baskınlık, yeme davranışı, duygusal yeme, psikolojik stres, yeme tutumu.

1. Introduction

Election, as a constitutional and political term, is defined as the selection of individuals or committees that will carry out a public office by voters among certain candidates (Nişancı & Özdemir, 2017). Election periods are characterized by heightened psychosocial demands for both society and politicians, and elevated rates of anxiety, depression, stress disorders and addiction have been reported among politicians (Flinders, 2020; Isohanni, Miettunen, & Penttilä, 2020).

According to the social dominance theory developed by Sidanius and Pratto, individuals' support for these structures or social dominance orientations have an important place in the maintenance of existing hierarchical structures (Tooper & Özdemir, 2019; Zhu, Su, Zhang, Yin, & Liu, 2023). Although social dominance orientation is the psychological element of the theory, it corresponds to the tendency to support group-based hierarchical structures (Kaynak, Ekinci, & Kaya, 2021).

Individuals with high social dominance orientation may differ in emotion regulation and coping strategies, particularly in psychosocially demanding environments. Previous literature suggests that individuals endorsing hierarchical and control-oriented beliefs may exhibit higher behavioral control and suppression tendencies, which can influence eating-related responses in high-demand contexts (Tesi et al., 2023; Mezuk et al., 2022). Furthermore, emotional regulation difficulties and maladaptive coping styles have been associated with emotional eating and disrupted eating behaviors (Kaiser et al., 2022; Yilmazturk et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2021). Therefore, SDO may shape eating attitudes indirectly through mechanisms such as emotional regulation, perceived control, and **behavioral coping styles** rather than through ideology alone.

When this theory is evaluated in terms of individuals who are members of political party organizations, the sense of dedication felt during the election period may develop a “social dominance orientation” such as the protection and glorification of the hierarchical structure that can be associated with the ideological stance advocated by the political party to which one belongs. In addition, as a result of the changes in the sleep, physical activity and dietary habits of political party members during the intensive pre-election campaign process, it is inevitable that the general health of these individuals will be affected (Braunsberger et al., 2021; Kaynak et al., 2021).

Emotional appetite is defined as overeating as a reaction to negative emotions such as stress, anger, anxiety, etc. This condition may impact general health through excessive energy intake and mental health related to the risk of developing eating attitudes such as binge eating (Reichenberger, Schnepfer, Arend, & Blechert, 2020). Literature suggests that exposure to physiological and psychological stress may increase the tendency towards delicious foods with high energy/simple sugar/fat content in relation to the individuals' capacity of responding to hunger/satiety signals Hill et al., 2022; Fuente González et al., 2022). In recent studies, mood and emotional appetite have been found to be effective on eating behavior (Bilici, Ayhan, Karabudak, & Koksall, 2020; Öngün Yılmaz & Köse, 2020). During the pre-election period, which represents a context of heightened psychosocial demands and altered daily

routines, it is important to evaluate the relationship between politicians' social dominance orientation with emotional appetite and eating behavior.

In this study, it is aimed to assess the relationship between eating attitudes and emotional appetite of politicians that may develop a 'social dominance orientation' such as the protection and glorification of the hierarchical structure that can be associated with the ideological approach advocated by the political party to which they belong during the pre-election period, which constitutes a context of significant psychosocial demands and routine disruption for politicians, and may also change in relation to the change in eating routines during this period.

2. Purpose and Method

2.1. Study Design

This study has been planned as a cross-sectional and descriptive type of research. The research was conducted during the months of January-May 2023, covering the election preparation period in Turkey. The research data were collected face-to-face with individuals who are members of the organizations of political parties with high potential to nominate candidates for the General Election in Istanbul (Political Party 1, Political Party 2, Political Party 3, Political Party 4, Political Party 5, Political Party 6, Political Party 7, Political Party 8) (Political parties were anonymized to minimize potential political sensitivity and ensure participant confidentiality). Individuals who are not members of the specified party organizations, those with physical or mental problems, those with congenital or acquired cleft palate, tongue, or food intake issues, those diagnosed with any psychiatric illness by a doctor, or those using any psychiatric medication prescribed by a doctor were excluded from the study. The study was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki 2013. Ethical approval was obtained from The Üsküdar University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants in the informed consent form and those who agreed to participate were included in the study. It was explained to the participants that the information obtained would be confidential and would not be used anywhere outside the research.

The sample of the research was obtained by simple random sampling and the number of the sample was obtained by using the sampling formula ($n = Nt^2pq / [d^2(N-1) + t^2pq]$). When the population of Istanbul is considered to be 16 million people, the total number of members of 8 political parties in Istanbul is 3,245,883. In order to conduct the study, at least 246 people were needed for the calculation of the sample volume with a sampling error of 0.05 and a 95% confidence interval.

2.2. Measures

In this study, a questionnaire form including questions about sociodemographic characteristics and eating habits, "New Social Dominance Scale", "Emotional Appetite Scale" and "Eating Attitude Scale" was applied to the individuals.

2.3. New Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO₇)

This scale was developed by Ho et al. in 2015 to measure individuals' social dominance orientation (Ho et al., 2015). The adaptation of the scale into Turkish, validity and reliability study was conducted by Kaynak et al. in 2021 (Kaynak et al., 2021). This scale consists of a total of 16 items, including 8 items measuring the tendency to dominance and 8 items measuring the tendency to be against equality. The scale is constructed on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1= Strongly Disagree and 7= Strongly Agree) and the social dominance levels of the participants are determined as a result of the scores to be obtained from the reverse and straight coded items.

2.4. Emotional Appetite Questionnaire (EMAQ)

The Emotional Appetite Questionnaire is a scale developed by Nolan et al. in 2010 to determine the effect of emotions and situations on appetite and adapted into Turkish by Demirel et al. (Demirel, Yavuz, Karadere, Şafak, & Türkçapar, 2014; Nolan, Halperin, & Geliebter, 2010). Consisting of 14 items, this questionnaire has 2 dimensions. One is "Positive Emotions and Situations" and "Negative Emotions and Situations". The other is "Positive/Negative Emotion" and "Positive/Negative Situation". The options about the effect of emotional states on appetite are between 1-9. The scale also includes "Not Applicable" and "I don't know the answer" options, which are left to the individual's preference.

Although the scale does not have any cut-off point, it has been interpreted that an average of 1 to 4 decreases appetite, an average of 5 does not affect appetite, and an average of 6 to 9 leads to a higher appetite (Demirel et al., 2014).

2.5. Eating Attitude Test-26 (EAT-26)

This is the 26-question short form of the Eating Attitude Test-40 developed by Garner and Garfinkel (1979), which was later revised and shortened by Garner, Olmstad, Bohr, and Garfinkel (1982) (Garner, Bohr, & Garfinkel, 1982; Garner & Garfinkel, 1979). The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Ergüney-Okumuş and Sertel-Berk in 2019 (Ergüney-Okumuş & Sertel-Berk, 2020; Garner et al., 1982; Garner & Garfinkel, 1979). EAT-26 is a six-point Likert-type scale. The cut-off value for the test is 20 points. As the score obtained from the scale increases, the presence of eating attitude disorder becomes more apparent. The scale has 3 sub-scores: dieting, bulimia and food preoccupation, and oral control. Scores of 20 and above are considered as 'unhealthy and abnormal eating behavior' or below 20 as 'normal eating behavior' (Ergüney-Okumuş & Sertel-Berk, 2020).

2.6. Data Analysis

Categorical and continuous variables were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. The normality of continuous variables was evaluated using visual methods (histogram and Q-Q plots) and analytical tests, including the Shapiro–Wilk test. Descriptive statistics were presented as frequency (n), percentage (%), mean, and standard deviation (SD). For comparisons between groups, appropriate parametric or non-parametric tests were applied according to data distribution, and post hoc multiple comparison analyses were conducted where necessary. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to examine relationships between variables that did not demonstrate normal distribution. In addition, multiple linear regression analyses were performed to evaluate the cumulative effects of SDO7 sub-dimension scores on EMAQ sub-dimension scores and EAT-26 total scores. In the regression models, the SDO7 sub-dimensions “Social Dominance Orientation–Anti-Equality” (SDO-E) and “Social Dominance Orientation–Dominance” (SDO-D) were included as independent variables, whereas EMAQ-Negative, EMAQ-Positive, and EAT-26 total scores were separately included as dependent variables. Prior to regression analyses, assumptions including normality of residuals, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were assessed using residual plots, histogram and Q-Q plot examinations, and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. All regression assumptions were found to be acceptable. Unstandardized regression coefficients (B), standard errors (SE), t values, 95% confidence intervals (95% CI), and adjusted coefficients of determination (Adjusted R²) were reported for each regression model. Statistical significance levels were accepted as p<0.05, p<0.01, and p<0.001. All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA).

2.7. Ethical approval

The study was conducted in accordance with the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki 2013. Ethical approval was obtained from The Uskudar University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants in the informed consent form and those who agreed to participate were included in the study. It was explained to the participants that the information obtained would be confidential and would not be used anywhere outside the research.

3. Results

In the study, 50.4% of participants are male, while 49.6% are female. The mean age of all individuals is 34.02±12.73 years, and the mean BMI is 25.21±4.54 kg/m² and 47.7% are married. The distribution of individuals according to the political party they belong to is as follows: 16.0% CHP, 18.1% AKP, 15.8% MHP, 6.5% DEVA, 16.0% IYI Party, 16.3% Saadet, 5.7% Future Party, and 5.5% Democrat Party. The meal that individuals skip the most is lunch, at 44.8%. The majority of individuals, at 46.4%, have a normal weight, and it has been found that 77.8% of them do not have an eating disorder (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of individuals participating in the study

	Male (n=318)		Female(n=313)		Total (n=631)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age (years) ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	35,03 \pm 13,49		33,00 \pm 11,84		34,02 \pm 12,73	
BMI (kg/m²) ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	26,12 \pm 3,88		24,28 \pm 4,97		25,21 \pm 4,54	
Waist/Hip Ratio ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	0,93 \pm 0,10		0,79 \pm 0,11		0,86 \pm 0,13	
Waist/Height Ratio ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	0,51 \pm 0,09		0,48 \pm 0,10		0,49 \pm 0,09	
Meal Skipping Status						
Yes	234	73,6	237	75,7	471	74,6
No	84	26,4	76	24,3	160	25,4
Skipped Meal Status						
Breakfast	78	32,9	54	22,2	132	27,5
Lunch	93	39,2	122	50,2	215	44,8
Dinner	8	3,4	11	4,5	19	4,0
Breakfast-Lunch Break (Morning)	22	9,3	27	11,1	49	10,2
Lunch-Dinner Break (Afternoon)	25	10,5	15	6,2	40	8,3
Night	11	4,6	14	5,8	25	5,2
BMI Group						
Underweight (<18.5 kg/m ²)	7	2,2	21	6,7	28	4,4
Normal Weight (18.5-24.9 kg/m ²)	122	38,4	171	54,6	293	46,4
Preobese (25-29.9 kg/m ²)	139	43,7	88	28,1	227	36,0
Obese (\geq 30 kg/m ²)	50	15,7	33	10,5	83	13,2
Eating Disorder Status						
No Eating Disorder	261	82,1	230	73,5	491	77,8
Yes Eating Disorder	57	17,9	83	26,5	140	22,2
Marital Status						
Single	157	49,4	173	55,3	330	52,3
Married	161	50,6	140	44,7	301	47,7
Political Party Membership						
Polital party 1	50	15,7	51	16,3	101	16,0
Polital party 2	62	19,5	52	16,6	114	18,1
Polital party 3	53	16,7	47	15,0	100	15,8
Polital party 4	27	8,5	14	4,5	41	6,5
Polital party 5	45	14,2	56	17,9	101	16,0
Polital party 6	50	15,7	53	16,9	103	16,3
Polital party 7	17	5,3	19	6,1	36	5,7
Polital party 8	14	4,4	21	6,7	35	5,5

*The batch names corresponding to the batch numbers are indicated in the materials and method section.

The total score of the SDO7 scale exceeds the average, signifying that the study participants exhibit a strong inclination towards social dominance. The total score of EMAQ-Negative is below average, indicating that individuals have a low emotional appetite in negative emotions and situations. The total score of EMAQ-Positive is above average, indicating that individuals have a high emotional appetite in positive emotions and situations. Additionally, the total EAT-26 score is below average, indicating that individuals have a low incidence of eating disorders (Table 2).

Table 2. Sub-factor and total scores of individuals in SDO7, EMAQ, and EAT-26

	Median (min-max)	$\bar{X} \pm SD$
New Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO₇)		
SDO-Egalitarianism (SDO-E)	36 (18-54)	36,65±5,40
SDO-Dominance (SDO-D)	31 (14-47)	30,59±4,72
SDO7 Total	67 (46-88)	67,25±5,84
Emotional Appetite Questionnaire (EMAQ)		
EMAQ-Negative total	40 (0-104)	42,37±19,45
EMAQ-Positive total	43 (8-72)	41,69±14,36
Eating Attitude Test-26 (EAT-26)		
Eating Preoccupation	6 (0-33)	6,79±6,08
Restriction	3 (0-21)	4,20±3,74
Social Pressure	0 (0-12)	1,83±2,47
Total	12 (0-66)	12,81±8,99

As the scores of the "Social Dominance Orientation – Anti-Equality" sub-factor of SDO7 increased among the individuals participating in the study, a decrease of 23%, 21%, and 15.6% was observed in the "EMAQ-Negative (Negative Emotion and Situation / Negative Emotion and Situation)", the "Eating Concern" sub-factor score of EAT-26, and the "Total EAT-26" score, respectively. Additionally, a 13% increase was found in the "EMAQ-Positive (Positive Emotion and Situation / Positive Emotion and Situation)" sub-factor scores of EMAQ. This situation indicates that as individuals' scores on the sub-factor "being against equality" of the Social Dominance Orientation increase, emotional appetite and eating behavior disorders decrease in negative emotions and situations, while emotional appetite increases in positive emotions and situations ($p<0.01$; $p<0.001$). As individuals' scores on the "Social Dominance Orientation – Dominance" sub-factor of SDO7 increased, an 11.6% increase was observed in the scores of the "EMAQ- Negative (Negative Emotion and Situation / Negative Emotion and Situation)" sub-factor of EMAQ. This situation indicates that as individuals' scores on the "dominance" sub-factor of the social dominance orientation increase, their emotional appetite in negative emotions and situations also increases ($p<0.01$). As the "Total SDO" scores of SDO7 increase, a decrease of 11.6%, 16.3%, and 12.8% respectively is observed in the "EMAQ-Negative (Negative Emotion and Situation)" of EMAQ, the sub-factor "Eating Preoccupation" of EAT-26, and the "Total EAT-26" scores. Additionally, a 10.1% increase is found in the sub-factor scores of "EMAQ-Positive (Positive Emotion and Situation)" of EMAQ. Based on the results; it was found that when the participants' social dominance orientations increased, their emotional appetites' negative emotions and states decreased, the scores for eating preoccupation and eating disorder from eating behavior disorders decreased, and their emotional appetites' positive emotions and states increased (Table 3).

Table 3. Correlation coefficients between the SDO7 sub-factor and total scores of individuals and the sub-factor and total scores of DIA and EAT-26

	SDO-E		SDO-D		SDO7 Total	
	s	p	s	p	s	p
EMAQ-Negative total	-0,230	<0,001***	0,116	0,004**	-0,116	0,004**
EMAQ-Positive total	0,130	0,001**	-0,044	0,267	0,101	0,011*
Eating Preoccupation	-0,210	<0,001***	0,045	0,259	-0,163	<0,001***
Restriction	0,001	0,981	-0,070	0,077	-0,044	0,273
Social Pressure	-0,063	0,114	0,018	0,649	-0,037	0,350
EAT-26 Total	-0,156	<0,001***	0,014	0,717	-0,128	0,001**

SDO-E: Social Dominance Orientation-Anti-Equality; SDO-D: Social Dominance Orientation-Dominance; EMAQ-: Emotional Appetite Questionnaire EAT-26: Eating Attitudes Test-26

s: Spearman Rank Difference Correlation Coefficient

* $p<0,05$; ** $p<0,01$; *** $p<0,001$

It was found that the sub-factor scores of the SBY7 "Social Dominance Orientation - Anti-Equality" of the individuals participating in the study had a statistically significant effect ($\beta=-0.800$; $t=-5.377$; $p<0.001$) on the sub-factor score of the EMAQ "EMAQ-Negative (Negative Emotion and Situation / Negative Emotion and Situation)." On the other hand, it was found that the sub-factor scores of the SDO7 "Social Dominance Orientation – Anti-Equality" statistically affected the sub-factor score of the EMAQ "EMAQ-Positive (Positive Emotion and State / Positive Emotion and State)" ($\beta=0.350$; $t=3.123$; $p<0.01$). Finally, it was found that the sub-factor scores of SDO7's "Social Dominance Orientation - Anti-Equality" had a statistically significant effect ($\beta=-0.259$; $t=-3.706$; $p<0.001$) on the sub-factor score of EMAQ's "EMAQ-Positive (Positive Emotion and State / Positive Emotion and State)." Based on the results, it was found that when there is a one-unit increase in individuals' scores for being against equality in social dominance orientation, their emotional appetite for negative emotions and states decreases by 0.800 times, and their emotional appetite for positive emotions and states increases by 0.350 times. Additionally, it was found that when there is a one-unit increase in the score of being against equality in the social dominance orientation of the individuals participating in the study, eating behavior disorders decrease by a factor of 0.259 (Table 4).

Table 4. The cumulative impact of individuals' SDO7 sub-factor scores on EMAQ sub-factor and EAT-26 total scores

		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p	%95 β Confidence Interval		Adjusted R ²
		B	SE			Lower	Upper	
EMAQ-Negative total	(Constant)	68,190	8,753	7,791	<0,001***	51,001	85,378	0.12
	SDO-E	-0,800	0,149	-5,377	<0,001***	-1,092	-0,508	
	SDO-D	0,114	0,170	0,673	0,501	-0,219	0,448	
EMAQ-Positive total	(Constant)	28,434	6,590	4,315	<0,001***	15,493	41,374	0.05
	SDO-E	0,350	0,112	3,123	0,002**	0,130	0,570	
	SDO-D	0,014	0,128	0,112	0,911	-0,237	0,265	
EAT-26 Total	(Constant)	24,037	4,114	5,842	<0,001***	15,958	32,116	0.07
	SDO-E	-0,259	0,070	-3,706	<0,001***	-0,396	-0,122	
	SDO-D	-0,056	0,080	-0,707	0,480	-0,213	0,100	

SDO-E Social Dominance Orientation-Anti-Equality; SDO-D: Social Dominance Orientation-Dominance; EMAQ-: Emotional Appetite Questionnaire EAT-26: Eating Attitudes Test-26. β : Beta Coefficient; SE: Standard Error. ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$. R²: Adjusted coefficient of determination. ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$.

4. Discussion

A relationship between the social dominance orientation of political party members during the election period and their emotional appetite and eating attitudes prior to the election period was investigated in this study. The study was conducted in order to determine the extent of this relationship. Based on the data that was collected, it can be concluded that the social dominance orientation has a positive impact on the eating behaviors of individuals, which in turn has an effect on their emotional appetite and eating attitudes.

In this study, politicians were found to have high social dominance orientation. This situation can be explained by the fact that social dominance orientation, as a personality variable interpreting political and political attitudes, is higher among individuals who are members of political parties (Okumusoglu, 2017).

In this study, as the scores of the sub-factor "being against equality" of the social dominance orientation increase, the scores of the sub-factor "eating preoccupation" and eating behavior disorder decrease in negative emotions and situations. Being socially dominant, like the process of 'being against equality,'

may be associated with heightened emotional demands, which in turn can affect appetite and consequently contribute to changes in eating attitudes (Cooper et al., 2022; Jaeger, 2023). In studies conducted, it has been observed that stress affects emotional appetite (Bennett, Young, Butler, & Coe, 2021; Marx et al., 2021; Muscogiuri, Barrea, Savastano, & Colao, 2020). These findings may also be interpreted within the framework of emotional regulation and behavioral control mechanisms. Individuals with higher anti-egalitarian tendencies may employ more suppressive or control-oriented coping strategies under emotionally demanding conditions. This may contribute to reduced emotional appetite and lower eating preoccupation during negative emotional states. This interpretation is further supported by evidence that cognitive reappraisal — a strategy more commonly associated with ideologically structured, control-oriented individuals — is linked to reduced emotional eating, whereas expressive suppression is associated with greater eating disorder risk (Leehr et al., 2015). In contrast, the positive association between the dominance dimension and emotional appetite in negative situations may reflect greater emotional reactivity and stress sensitivity among individuals with stronger dominance-related traits. Indeed, Ha and Lim (2023) highlight that emotional eating can function as a maladaptive coping mechanism driven by heightened reward sensitivity and reduced cognitive control under negative emotional conditions — a profile that may be more characteristic of dominance-oriented individuals than of those high in anti-egalitarianism (Ha & Lim, 2023). Therefore, different dimensions of social dominance orientation may operate through distinct psychological pathways rather than reflecting a single ideological construct. This interpretation is consistent with studies indicating that coping strategies, perceived control, and emotional regulation processes are associated with stress-related eating behaviors (Kaiser et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2021).

According to the findings of this study, when individuals' total scores of social dominance orientation increase, the scores of "eating preoccupation" and the eating behavior disorder sub-factor decrease in negative emotions and situations. On the other hand, when the scores of the "dominance" sub-factor of social dominance orientation increase, emotional appetite increases in negative emotions and situations. This circumstance can be explained by the fact that election processes may contribute to shifts in the emotional states of politicians and society more broadly, alongside increased psychosocial demands that may heighten vulnerability to anxiety-related responses (Feenstra, Tormey, Casero-Ripollés, & Keane, 2017; Flinders, 2020; Zaghini, Fiorini, Piredda, Fida, & Sili, 2020). In parallel, individuals may have altered their eating attitudes as a behavioral response to the emotionally demanding conditions characteristic of the pre-election period (Bremner et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2022).

The literature is supported by the findings of this study concerning the relationship between social dominance orientation and emotional appetite and eating attitudes. Social dominance orientation effects the potential to influence both appetite and eating attitudes. Additional research is required to investigate the relationship between social dominance and eating attitudes in a variety of occupational and work groups. The opposite effects of anti-egalitarianism and dominance dimensions suggest that different components of social dominance orientation may operate through distinct psychological pathways. Anti-egalitarianism may reflect greater behavioral restraint, emotional suppression, and control-oriented coping tendencies, whereas dominance may be associated with competitiveness, emotional reactivity, and heightened stress sensitivity (Tesi et al., 2023). This distinction may explain why the anti-egalitarianism dimension was associated with reduced emotional appetite in negative emotional states, while the dominance dimension predicted increased emotional appetite under similar conditions. The opposing directions of the anti-egalitarianism dimension on emotional appetite across positive and negative emotional states further illustrate this asymmetry. The increased emotional appetite observed in positive emotional states among anti-egalitarian individuals may reflect a reward-oriented relaxation of behavioral restraint — a pattern consistent with evidence that positive emotion dysregulation plays a transdiagnostic role in facilitating dysregulated eating behaviors, even among individuals with generally high behavioral control (Selby et al., 2024; Bilici et al., 2020; Reichenberger et al., 2020). Previous studies have also demonstrated that emotional regulation styles and stress coping mechanisms may differentially influence eating-related behaviors under psychosocial stress (Kaiser et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2021). This distinction aligns with the broader literature indicating that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, particularly those involving emotional reactivity and poor inhibitory control, are more strongly associated with disordered eating patterns than ideologically motivated restraint (Leehr et al., 2015; Ha & Lim, 2023).

Although the present findings provide evidence for associations between social dominance orientation and eating-related outcomes, alternative explanations should also be considered. The observed relationships may not solely reflect controlled eating behaviors associated with higher anti-egalitarianism. Instead, they may also be influenced by impression management processes, particularly in politically salient contexts where individuals may regulate their eating behavior in line with social desirability and public image concerns. In addition, political role-related self-discipline and identity-driven behavioral regulation may contribute to restrained eating patterns among individuals with higher ideological commitment. In support of this, Leehr et al. (2015) demonstrated that adaptive emotion regulation strategies, including cognitive reappraisal and problem-focused coping, are associated with lower levels of binge eating and eating disorder psychopathology, suggesting that individuals with higher regulatory capacity may be buffered against stress-related eating disturbances. Furthermore, Braunsberger et al. (2021) directly demonstrated an association between SDO and dietary and lifestyle choices, suggesting that ideologically motivated behavioral preferences may contribute to more structured eating patterns among individuals with higher dominance orientations (Braunsberger et al., 2021).

Moreover, competing hypotheses should be acknowledged. While some individuals may exhibit reduced appetite under stress due to emotional suppression and heightened cognitive control, others may respond to the same conditions with increased food intake as a form of emotion-focused coping (Hill et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2021). These divergent responses highlight the heterogeneity of stress-related eating behaviors.

Overall, these findings may be interpreted through multiple psychological mechanisms, including emotional suppression, coping style differences, and behavioral self-regulation processes, rather than a single explanatory pathway (Kaiser et al., 2022). Consistent with Ha and Lim's (2023) observation that self-controlled, health-oriented eating decisions are mediated by cognitive control systems, the present findings suggest that the relationship between SDO and eating behavior reflects a complex interplay of ideological identity, behavioral self-regulation, and contextual social pressures rather than a straightforwardly pathological association (Ha & Lim, 2023).

This study has a number of strengths, one of which is that it is quite original considering that it is the first study to include political psychology and nutrition. Additionally, it will serve as a guide for future research on this subject, which is another one of its strengths. It is important not only because it will reveal the circumstances that affect the health processes of political actors who play a role in the political processes of countries in parallel with nutrition, but also because it will provide resources for the support programs that are intended to be used for the development and improvement of health policies on a societal basis. The most important limitation of the study is that communication and interviews are limited because the people included in the study are politicians. In addition, the sample consisted only of political party members living in Istanbul. As a highly urbanized, socioeconomically diverse, and politically polarized metropolitan city, Istanbul may differ from other regions of Türkiye in terms of political participation patterns, stress exposure, and eating-related behaviors. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be fully generalizable to political party members living in different sociocultural contexts across Türkiye. A further limitation concerns the absence of a direct measure of psychological stress. Although data collection was conducted during the pre-election period, a context associated with heightened psychosocial demands and disrupted daily routines in the existing literature, no validated stress instrument such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was administered. Consequently, while the election period provides a theoretically and contextually informed framework for interpreting the findings, the proposed links between stress, social dominance orientation, and eating-related outcomes remain inferential rather than empirically established. Future studies should incorporate standardized stress measures to enable more rigorous testing of these associations

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Research Article

Social Dominance Orientation, Eating Attitudes, and Emotional Appetite: A Cross-Sectional Study

Sosyal Baskınlık Yönelimi, Yeme Tutumları ve Duygusal İştah: Kesitsel Bir Çalışma

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Genişletilmiş Özet

1. Giriş ve Amaç

Seçim dönemleri, hem toplum hem de siyasetçiler için psikososyal açıdan son derece yoğun süreçlerdir. Bu dönemde politikacılar arasında kaygı, depresyon, stres bozuklukları ve bağımlılık gibi sorunların arttığı bilinmektedir. Seçim kampanyaları boyunca yoğun bir program içinde bulunan siyasi parti üyelerinin uyku düzeni, fiziksel aktivite alışkanlıkları ve beslenme rutinleri ciddi ölçüde bozulmaktadır. Bu değişkenlerin genel sağlık üzerinde olumsuz etkileri kaçınılmazdır.

Sidanius ve Pratto'nun sosyal baskınlık teorisine göre bireyler, toplumsal hiyerarşik yapıları destekleme eğilimi taşıyabilir. Sosyal baskınlık yönelimi (SBY), bu hiyerarşik yapıların korunmasına yönelik psikolojik bir eğilimi ifade etmektedir. SBY, iki temel alt boyuttan oluşmaktadır: Baskınlık (dominance) ve eşitliğe karşı olma (anti-egalitarianism). Siyasi parti üyeliğinin SBY'yi yükselttiği düşünüldüğünde, politikacıların seçim dönemlerinde sergiledikleri yeme davranışları ile SBY arasındaki ilişki araştırılmaya değer önemli bir konu haline gelmektedir.

Duygusal iştah; stres, öfke ve kaygı gibi olumsuz duygulara tepki olarak aşırı yeme eğilimi şeklinde tanımlanmakta ve yeme bozuklukları ile yakın ilişkili olduğu bilinmektedir. Bu bağlamda söz konusu çalışma, seçim öncesi dönemde siyasi parti üyelerinin sosyal baskınlık yönelimleri ile duygusal iştah ve yeme tutumları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

2. Yöntem

2.1. Araştırma Deseni ve Örneklem

Araştırma, kesitsel ve tanımlayıcı nitelikte tasarlanmıştır. Veriler, Türkiye'deki 2023 Genel Seçimleri öncesindeki hazırlık dönemini kapsayan Ocak–Mayıs 2023 tarihleri arasında toplanmıştır. İstanbul'da aday gösterme potansiyeli yüksek sekiz siyasi partinin (anonim olarak Siyasi Parti 1–8 şeklinde adlandırılmıştır) örgütlerine üye bireylerle yüz yüze görüşmeler yürütülmüştür. Siyasi parti üyesi olmayan, fiziksel veya zihinsel sorunu bulunan, doktor tarafından tanı konulmuş bir psikiyatrik hastalığı olan ya da psikiyatrik ilaç kullanan bireyler çalışma dışı bırakılmıştır.

Örneklem, basit rastgele örnekleme yöntemiyle belirlenmiştir. İstanbul nüfusunun yaklaşık 16 milyon, sekiz siyasi partinin üye sayısının ise toplam 3.245.883 olduğu hesaba katılarak, %5 örnekleme hatası ve %95 güven aralığıyla en az 246 kişilik örneklem büyüklüğüne ulaşılması gerektiği saptanmıştır. Çalışmaya toplam 631 katılımcı dahil edilmiş; katılımcıların yaş ortalaması $34,02 \pm 12,73$ yıl, ortalama VKİ ise $25,21 \pm 4,54$ kg/m² olarak belirlenmiştir. Katılımcıların %50,4'ü erkek, %49,6'sı kadındır.

2.2. Veri Toplama Araçları

Araştırmada üç ölçme aracı kullanılmıştır. Birincisi, Ho ve arkadaşları (2015) tarafından geliştirilen ve Kaynak ve arkadaşları (2021) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanan Yeni Sosyal Baskınlık Yönelimi Ölçeği'dir (SBY7). Ölçek, baskınlık ve eşitliğe karşı olma alt boyutlarından oluşan toplam 16 maddeyi içermekte ve 7'li Likert tipi bir yapıya sahip bulunmaktadır. İkincisi, Nolan ve arkadaşları (2010) tarafından geliştirilen ve Demirel ve arkadaşları (2014) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanan Duygusal İştah Anketi'dir (DİA/EMAQ). Bu anket, olumsuz duygular/durumlar ve olumlu duygular/durumlar olmak üzere iki alt boyuttan oluşan 14 maddeli bir yapıya sahiptir. Üçüncüsü ise Garner ve Garfinkel (1979) tarafından geliştirilen ve Türkçe geçerlik-güvenilirlik çalışması Ergüney-Okumuş ve Sertel-Berk (2020) tarafından yürütülen Yeme Tutumu Testi'dir (YTT-26). Yirmi altı maddeli ve 6'lı Likert tipi bu ölçek; kısıtlama, yeme bozukluğu ve yemekle aşırı meşguliyet ile sosyal baskı alt boyutlarını kapsamaktadır. Eşik değeri 20 puan olarak belirlenmiş olup bu değer üzerindeki puanlar sağlıklı yeme davranışına işaret etmektedir.

2.3. İstatistiksel Analizler

Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesinde Spearman sıra korelasyon katsayısından yararlanılmıştır. Sosyal baskınlık yönelimi alt boyutlarının duygusal iştah ve yeme tutumları üzerindeki kümülatif etkilerini değerlendirmek amacıyla çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. Bağımsız değişkenler olarak SBY-E (eşitliğe karşı olma) ve SBY-D (baskınlık) alt boyutları; bağımlı değişkenler olarak ise DİA-Negatif, DİA-Pozitif ve YTT-26 toplam puanları modele dahil edilmiştir. Analizlerin tümü IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 yazılımı aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir.

3. Bulgular

Katılımcıların %16,0'ı CHP, %18,1'i AKP, %15,8'i MHP, %6,5'i DEVA, %16,0'ı İYİ Parti, %16,3'ü Saadet, %5,7'si Gelecek Partisi ve %5,5'i Demokrat Parti üyesidir. En sık atlanan öğün %44,8 oranıyla öğle yemeğidir. Katılımcıların %46,4'ü normal kilolu, %77,8'inde ise yeme bozukluğu saptanmamıştır.

SBY7 toplam puanı ortalamayı aşmakta olup katılımcıların sosyal baskınlığa güçlü bir yönelim sergilediğini göstermektedir. DİA-Negatif toplam puanı ortalamanın altında kalarak olumsuz duygu ve durumlarda düşük duygusal iştahın varlığına işaret etmektedir. DİA-Pozitif toplam puanı ise ortalamanın üzerinde olup olumlu duygulardaki iştahın yüksek olduğuna işaret etmektedir. YTT-26 toplam puanı da düşük bir yeme bozukluğu prevalansına karşılık gelmektedir.

Korelasyon analizleri, SBY'nin eşitliğe karşı olma alt boyutunun DİA-Negatif ile anlamlı düzeyde negatif ($s=-0,230$; $p<0,001$), DİA-Pozitif ile ise anlamlı düzeyde pozitif ($s=0,130$; $p=0,001$) ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Söz konusu alt boyut, YTT-26 toplam puanı ile de negatif ilişkili bulunmuştur ($s=-0,156$; $p<0,001$). SBY'nin baskınlık alt boyutu ise DİA-Negatif ile pozitif yönde ilişki sergilemiştir ($s=0,116$; $p=0,004$).

Regresyon analizlerinden elde edilen bulgulara göre, eşitliğe karşı olma alt boyutundaki bir birimlik artış; DİA-Negatif puanında 0,800 kat azalma ($\beta=-0,800$; $t=-5,377$; $p<0,001$), DİA-Pozitif puanında

0,350 kat artma ($\beta=0,350$; $t=3,123$; $p<0,01$) ve YTT-26 toplam puanında 0,259 kat azalma ($\beta=-0,259$; $t=-3,706$; $p<0,001$) ile ilişkili bulunmuştur. SBY'nin baskınlık alt boyutunun ise bağımlı değişkenler üzerindeki etkisi istatistiksel açıdan anlamlı düzeye ulaşmamıştır.

4. Tartışma

Politikacılarda yüksek SBY düzeylerinin gözlemlenmesi, SBY'nin siyasi tutumları yorumlayan bir kişilik değişkeni olması ve siyasi parti üyeliğiyle bağlantılı olduğu düşüncesiyle açıklanabilmektedir. Eşitliğe karşı olma alt boyutundaki artışın olumsuz duygularda duygusal iştahı ve yemekle aşırı meşguliyeti azaltması, bu bireylerin yüksek duygusal talep içeren koşullarda daha baskılayıcı ya da kontrol odaklı başa çıkma stratejileri benimseyebileceğini düşündürmektedir. Bilişsel yeniden değerlendirme gibi adaptif duygu düzenleme stratejilerinin duygusal yemeyle negatif ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koyan literatür bulguları bu yorumu desteklemektedir.

Baskınlık alt boyutunun olumsuz duygu durumlarında duygusal iştahı artırması ise bu bireylerin daha yüksek duygusal reaktivite ve stres duyarlılığına sahip olabileceğine işaret etmektedir. Ha ve Lim'in (2023) vurguladığı gibi duygusal yeme, ödül duyarlılığının yüksek olduğu ve bilişsel kontrolün zayıfladığı durumlarda işlevsel olmayan bir başa çıkma mekanizması olarak ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Bu durum, iki alt boyutun birbirinden farklı psikolojik mekanizmalar aracılığıyla işlediğine ilişkin güçlü kanıtlar sunmaktadır.

Eşitliğe karşı olma alt boyutunun duygusal iştah üzerindeki olumlu ve olumsuz duygulardaki zıt etkileri de dikkat çekicidir. Olumlu duygulardaki duygusal iştah artışı, davranışsal kısıtlamanın ödül odaklı bir şekilde gevşemesiyle açıklanabilir; bu örüntü, olumlu duygu disregülasyonunun yeme bozukluklarında transdiagnostik bir rol oynadığını gösteren literatüre paralellik taşımaktadır. Alternatif bir açıklama olarak izlenim yönetimi süreçleri de göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır; özellikle siyasi açıdan belirgin bir bağlamda bireyler yeme davranışlarını sosyal kabul görme ve kamuoyu imajı kaygısıyla şekillendirebilmektedir.

5. Sonuç ve Sınırlılıklar

Bu çalışma, siyasi psikoloji ile beslenme bilimini bir araya getiren ilk araştırma olması bakımından alanyazına özgün bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Elde edilen bulgular; sosyal baskınlık yöneliminin, özellikle seçim dönemleri gibi stresli koşullarda, bireylerin duygusal iştahı ve yeme tutumları üzerinde belirleyici bir rol oynadığını ve bazı durumlarda daha kontrollü bir yeme örüntüsüne katkıda bulunabileceğini göstermektedir. SBY'nin farklı alt boyutlarının (baskınlık ve eşitliğe karşı olma) yeme davranışlarını zıt yönlerde etkilemesi, bu boyutların farklı psikolojik mekanizmalar üzerinden işlediğine güçlü biçimde işaret etmektedir.

Çalışmanın birkaç önemli sınırlılığı bulunmaktadır. Her şeyden önce, örneklem yalnızca İstanbul'daki siyasi parti üyelerinden oluşmakta ve bu durum bulguların farklı sosyokültürel bağlamlara genellenebilirliğini kısıtlamaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, doğrudan bir psikolojik stres ölçümü kullanılmamıştır; seçim dönemi nesnel stres bağlamını temsil etse de stres ve SBY arasındaki ilişkiye dair çıkarımlar kesin verilere dayanmamaktadır. İleride yürütülecek araştırmalarda Algılanan Stres Ölçeği gibi standart araçların eklenmesi, bu ilişkilerin daha sağlam biçimde test edilmesine olanak tanıyacaktır. Ayrıca, iletişim kısıtlılığının politikacılarla görüşmeleri zorlaştırması ve tanımlayıcı araştırma deseni nedeniyle nedensellik ilişkisi kurulamadığı da göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, SBY ile yeme davranışı arasındaki ilişkinin ideolojik kimlik, davranışsal öz-düzenleme ve bağlamsal sosyal baskıların karmaşık bir etkileşimini yansıttığını ortaya koymaktadır. Siyasi aktörlerin yeme sağlığına ilişkin politika destek programlarının geliştirilmesine ve farklı meslek grupları ile iş yükü bağlamlarında SBY ile yeme tutumları arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen ileri araştırmalara temel oluşturması beklenmektedir.