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A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMMIGRANT FATHERS' EXPERIENCES
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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A Qualitative Analysis of Immigrant Fathers' Experiences During the Covid-19
Pandemic

Göçmen Babaların Covid-19 Pandemisi Sırasındaki Deneyimlerinin Niteliksel Bir
Analizi

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to explore migrant father's pandemic related experiences. Eight Turkish migrant fathers whose ages were between 31 to 37 and had a baby during pandemic participated. Thematic analysis from semi-structured online interviews revealed three main themes; fatherhood is a developmental transition, silver lining in pandemic and the hard journey toward hope. Fatherhood is a developmental transition consisted of three sub-themes; anticipating fatherhood: mixed feelings, learning fatherhood and relating to the parent role. Silver lining in pandemic involved negative and positive aspects of pandemic. The hard journey toward hope consisted of four sub-themes; the process of migrating, downgrading at work, fathering as a grounding experience as a new migrant and adjustment and future. The process of migrating theme also included three sub-themes; making plans to migrate, economic and political reasons for migrating, challenges involved in the process of migrating and settling. Results portrayed that migrant fathers had difficult experiences in pandemic and transitioning to fatherhood, but they were found to be involved in their children's lives. Migration was also discussed in terms of reasons to migrate and forming their identities in relation to fatherhood. Considering the literature, the significance of the findings, limitations, and ideas for further research are reviewed.

Keywords: migrant, migrant fathers, pandemic, infancy, infant-father relationship

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, göçmen babaların pandemi ile ilgili deneyimlerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Pandemi döneminde bebek sahibi olan ve yaşları 31 ile 37 arasında değişen sekiz Türk göçmen baba araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Yarı yapılandırılmış çevrimiçi görüşmelerden elde edilen tematik analizler üç ana tema belirlemiştir; babalık gelişimsel bir geçiştir, pandemideki umut ışığı ve umuda doğru zor bir yolculuk. Babalık gelişimsel bir geçiştir, üç alt temadan oluşmuştur; babalıkla ilgili beklentiler: karışık duygular, babalığı öğrenmek ve ebeveyn rolüyle bağlantı kurmak. Pandemideki umut ışığı, pandeminin olumsuz ve olumlu yönlerini içeren iki alt temadan oluşmuştur. Umuda doğru zor bir yolculuk; göç süreci, işyerinde sınıf gerilemesi, yeni bir göçmen kimliğinde temel bir deneyim olarak babalık ve uyum ve gelecek olarak üç alt temadan oluşmaktadır. Göç süreci kategorisi de üç alt temadan oluşmuştur; göçün ekonomik ve politik nedenleri, göç ve yerleşme sürecindeki zorluklar. Sonuçlar, göçmen babaların pandemi ve babalığa geçişte zor deneyimler yaşadıklarını ancak çocuklarının hayatlarına dahil olduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Göç ve babalıkla bağlantılı olarak göç etme nedenleri ve kimliklerini oluşturma açıları tartışılmıştır. Literatür bulguları doğrultusunda, bulguların önemi, sınırlamalar ve ileri araştırmalar için fikirler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: göç, göçmen babalar, pandemic, bebeklik dönemi, bebek-baba ilişki

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to examine the experiences of immigrant fathers who had a child during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to recent numbers, there are more than 520 million confirmed cases worldwide. This corresponds to 65 percent of the world population. Total death numbers have been established as 6.2 million which estimates at around 2%. Different countries tried to cope with infection and treatment of Covid-19 by making restrictions on daily life. These restrictions and the effect of the Covid-19 virus have affected millions of people in terms of both physical and mental health.

Several meta-analytic studies have been conducted to understand the effects of the pandemic on mental health. A meta-analysis by Vindegaard and Benros (2020) explored the psychological effects of Covid-19 among pre-psychiatric patients, health care workers, and the normal population. Among Covid-19 infected patients, PTSD symptoms were more prevalent. The mental health condition of pre-psychiatric patients was the worst. Among health care professionals, anxiety, depression, and stress levels were high. Being a woman, having poor health, and having relatives who were affected by Covid-19 were found to be risk factors for mental health problems. Another meta-analytic study by Salari et al. (2020), reviewed the effect of the pandemic' on the general population. Increased levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms were found to be linked with the pandemic, with high rates of mortality and uncertainty about the future being the main sources of anxiety. A meta-analysis by Prati and Mancini (2021) reviewed the longitudinal studies and natural experiments conducted about lockdowns due to the pandemic. Results portrayed that anxiety and depression levels were significantly affected by lockdowns, but the effect size was small. On the other hand, mental health indicators such as well-being and life satisfaction did not have a significant relationship with the lockdown. It should be noted that a small effect size does not undermine the practical effects and importance on emotional

well-being, and it should not imply that the effect of COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns on emotional well-being is insignificant. It is also true that people can show resilience in the worst of circumstances including very negative life events.

In Turkey, a longitudinal and mixed-method study conducted by Karakose and Yayla (2020) portrayed how having Covid-19 diagnosis affected mental health, parental attitudes towards children and marital relationships in Turkey. The first phase of data collection of surveys and interviews was done till October 2020 and the second phase of data collection was done after three months in December 2020. In total 515 participants completed the study 264 of whom had been diagnosed with Covid-19. Parents were found to primarily experience difficulties in their children's social-emotional development, followed by children's difficulties in friendships, psychological problems, internet, and social media use, falling behind in education, and the intensity of housework. It was found that these difficulties were similar in individuals with and without a diagnosis of COVID-19, and that the level of these difficulties increased over time in both groups. The increase in these difficulties among individuals married with children was associated with an increase in psychological symptoms and a decrease in marital adjustment. In a qualitative study conducted with 39 people within the scope of the research, participants described how their lives were restricted by the pandemic and how this sense of limitation became more prominent, especially during the curfew periods. Experiences regarding children's feelings of frustration at home were also shared.

The fathering experiences of immigrant fathers during the pandemic were the subject of this study. Immigration is defined as the act of moving to another country by a non-citizen, to settle or reside there, due to several reasons such as taking up employment or becoming a permanent resident (US Immigration, 2022). Immigration is a process which comprises relocating for social and personal reasons which frequently lead citizens from less developed countries to those with more resources (Hernandez, 2009). Voluntary or involuntary, there are several reasons for people to migrate, such as disasters, political conflicts, war, dread, and economical struggles. In the last few years countries have driven a huge number of individuals to relocate from their nations of origin to others with the hope of

building a better life for themselves and their families. Turkey was one of the countries which received massive influx of immigrants, including from the Middle East, while witnessing an influx of skilled Turkish migrants to Western countries.

According to the Turkish Statistical Institute's latest report on immigration in 2019, nearly 330 thousand people migrated from Turkey to the rest of the world. This corresponds to 0.39 percent of the total population in 2019. Most of the immigrants in 2019 were in the age group of 25-29 with 15.2 percent. This age group was followed by the 30-34 age group with 13 percent and the 20-24 age group with 12.6 percent (TUIK, 2019). It can be stated that 40.9 percent of immigrants were between the ages of 20-34.

Since 1960s, the trade agreements between Turkey and various European countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Sweden, allowed Turkish workers to move to Europe and they became the first massive Turkish migrant group, setting an example to international migration movement in Turkey (Tekin, 2007). After several decades, skilled migrants have also begun to migrate due to several reasons. In recent years, Turkey has started to be recognized as a brain drain country within the scope of international migration. Turkey's international migration experience has taken place on the axis of brain drain; the loss of qualified individuals and influx of refugees (Karatas, Ayyildiz, 2021). According to the study by Karaduman and Coban (2019), on the motivational factors which drive skilled migrants, economic, social, political, and vocational factors are the main reasons to move. When Turkish migrants are specifically examined, political and occupational considerations stand out. There is no data after 2019 from the Turkish Statistical Institute but according to the news reports, it has dramatically increased due to political and economic difficulties (Cumhuriyet, 2021). Because the pandemic started in the last months of 2019, immigrant lives might have been particularly affected. The present study's focus was to understand how immigrant fathers who had a baby during Covid-19 pandemic were affected.

1.1 Fatherhood and Turkish Fathers

Fathers' direct behaviors which include maintaining affection, guidance, play, punishment, and disregard are considered to have a variety of effects on their children's development. It was discovered that rather than the attributes that come with being a father (e.g., manliness, intelligence, judgment, and affection), the features of the connections that they have built with their children are more essential. If a child has a safe, loving, caring, mutually respectful and emphatic relationship with his parents, children might adjust well. In a broader concept society and culture is also related with fathers' influence on children so it is also important to look at societies and culture's relation when assessing father-child relationship.

Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Levine (1987)'s conceptual model of paternal involvement is the most significant and pertinent models on fatherhood. Lamb et al. (1987) argued that paternal involvement constitutes of three realms: interaction, accessibility, and responsibility. Interaction includes father's straight engagement with child. Accessibility is defined as whether the father is accessible materially or emotionally with his child. Responsibility is thought to be related with whether father is aware of his impact on child's well-being and care.

In line with the historical changes in the family dynamics fathers today are much involved in childcare than they were some decades ago. The active role of fathers has increase scientific interest in fatherhood studies (Waldvogel & Eehler, 2016). A recent study by Schoppe-Sullivan (2021) shows that father's prenatal and postnatal anxiety predicts infant negative emotionality, as well as partner satisfaction. It can be concluded that from a very early point of life, father's effect on children is very important.

The role of fathers in Turkish culture is an understudied area and the studies have assessed mainly father's investment of their time during preschool years and adolescent-father relationship dynamics (Metindogan, 2015). Although it can be argued that first years of life is very important for a child's well-being, the literature on father-infant dynamic in Turkey still has some gaps. As Kagitcibasi (1996) described, Turkish fathers are the main decision makers for family, main source of finances and therefore mothers are the main caregivers for children and fathers.

Infant-father relationship dynamic is an understudied area because infant care has been seen as mother's work (Metindogan, 2015).

Even though father-infant relationship is an understudied area there are some studies in Turkey which point to some possible trajectories. Kurucirak (2010) assessed child-care activities of families from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, with 4–12-month-old infants. In most families rather than having a prominent caregiver, fathers played a part as apprentices in infant care-giving activities. It was found that fathers had the highest involvement scores in play, accompanied by health and psychical care. Fathers from high socio-economic backgrounds had higher levels of involvement. Number of children also found to be related; fathers who had fewer kids were found to be more involved. Arslan, Erturk, Demir and Aksoy (2015) assessed fathers with 4–12-month-old infants, showing becoming a father at a young age, having first baby and healthy baby, having high marital satisfaction, being affectionate towards baby and attending to the childbirth were related with a secure attachment with the infant.

In the literature, the influence of father's relationship with their own fathers on their parenting has also been studied. To examine this topic Kislal and Cetin (2022) recruited 313 fathers who had 6 to 12 months of old babies. Fathers completed surveys about father-infant attachment and a paternity scale for their relationship with their fathers. Results portrayed a negative relationship between an increase in fathers' feelings of "patience and tolerance" and "love-pride" with their children and their unfavorable feelings toward their own fathers. Fathers' affection for their own fathers and strong relationships with them favorably affected and enhanced father-infant attachment status by improving the scores for love, pride, and tolerance that were successful in helping parents' bond with their children.

Kislal and Cetin's (2022) study was important to show links between father's relationship with their own fathers and their relationship with infants, but this study lacked data on how fathers involved in child-rearing and child-care practices. In a study by Boratav, Fisek and Ziya (2017), married fathers were asked questions about their own parents, children, and wives. The researchers argued that childrearing is a complicated process because it involves men's relationship with

their own fathers, men's desires, and limitations in terms of parental engagement and their current ideas of fatherhood. Most participants stated that their fathers were emotionally unavailable, and they did not feel their engagement emotionally. The importance of "respect" was noted, but "fear, remoteness, and restriction" all surfaced in these men's descriptions of their interactions with their fathers (p. 306). Fathers who have lower levels of education and come from low socio-economics appear to struggle more than urban fathers with high levels of education to define and fulfill their current duties as fathers. Fathers reported that they engaged more in their children's emotional wellbeing and made an effort to be more connected and open with them, but these fathers did not claim that they increased their caring obligations.

Samyeli (2022) conducted a qualitative study with 16 mothers and fathers during the Covid-19 pandemic. The focus of the study was to assess how the pandemic affected mothers' and fathers' working conditions, relationship with spouses and children, household chores and child-care practices. It was observed that most of the participants stated that they built their own fatherhood roles, and they exhibited an attitude between questioning and rebuilding the traditional values learned from their own fathers. Most of the participants described their paternal roles differently from their own fathers; they defined it through the qualities that they were concerned with, showing love, being non-violent, trying to listen and understand, and devoting all his time to his children outside of work. Based on the participants' discourses, it is thought that fatherhood is a role that is built through interactions and changes over time, that fathers personalize what they learn from their parents, maintain positive roles, and change negative characteristics. The concept of care for the participating fathers was described in terms of three different dimensions as protection, meeting basic needs, and taking care of children.

1.1.2 Transition to Fatherhood

During the last two decades, researchers have also looked at the literature on men's psychological transition to fatherhood. Genesoni and Tallandini (2008)

reviewed articles between the years of 1989 to 2008. Their goal was to learn about a father's transition during their child's first year. Results were grouped under three intervals: prenatal, labor and delivery and postnatal period. In the prenatal period fathers reported contradictory feelings during pregnancy. They wanted actual proof of their unborn child's existence, but this did not undermine their need for an emotional connection. The second factor mentioned was difficulty in couple relationships due to male and female relationship expectations. Lastly fathers were found to have an identity alteration from a partner to a father. It was hypothesized that childbirth would be the most stressful period, but it was found that pregnancy was the most stressful period of their experience. This was thought to be linked with psychological reconstruction of their identity in terms of building an image of fatherhood involving intimate participation in family and childcare. During labor and delivery, fathers reported feeling nervous, powerless, and useless. Since they also participated labor to support their views fathers thought labor was a physically difficult and demanding procedure. In the postnatal period fathers reported to have a more intimate contact but not having enough time. They also felt restricted in their leisure time. Fathers also compared themselves with mothers in terms of skills in infant care and did not feel as good as mothers. Coping mechanisms in postnatal phase were found to be more in control by achieving infant-care skills. At the same time if they had a positive relationship with mother and with their work, a high standard of living and social support transition to fatherhood was smooth (Genesoni & Tallandini, 2008).

Chin, Hall and Daiches (2011) tried to make a composite of qualitative studies of their transition to fatherhood. Three themes emerged from the findings of six qualitative studies: emotional reactions to transition into fatherhood, defining their role as a father, and reformulate identity and relationship with partner. During pregnancy fathers reported to have feelings of inaccessibility towards unborn child. Fathers felt that they were ineffectual during the process of labor, and that labor was a vague memory. During the first months of birth fathers felt affection, parental efficiency, amazement, overwhelming and disorientation. Fathers also had to go back to work which conflicted with their wish to stay at home and be with the infant.

In terms of defining their roles as fathers; they compared their own fatherhood abilities with their own fathers. Some fathers expressed their anxieties towards raising a child, but this decreased as they gained experience and confidence. Fathers see themselves as providers for their families financial and future needs. In terms of reformulating their identity fathers felt they developed themselves as mature adults. Their relationship with their partner is also felt more connected and united.

1.1.3 Immigrant Fathers' Involvement and Personal Characteristics

It is important to understand that besides general stress and anxiety, how specific stressors such as immigration, acculturative stress or a disaster in a global context would add to these specific stressors in fathers' life.

Research on immigrant fathers reveals two competing theoretical perspectives: the deficit perspective and the generative/resilience perspective (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). Deficit perspective suggests that immigration has a negative effect on fatherhood since immigration is a stress and risk factor. Immigration, according to the deficit perspective, poses a threat to family cohesion, functioning, and relationships. According to Hernandez and McGoldrick (1999), when parents relocate, they need to adjust to a new social milieu, language, household setting, culture, work, and profession. It was hypothesized that parents' physical and psychological health, self-image, stress tolerance, and anxiety levels may all be tested (Hernandez & McGoldrick, 1999).

Although immigration may have a negative impact on fathers, it has also been linked to improved family cohesion and child outcomes. This perspective is called the generative/resilience perspective (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). According to Strier and Roer-Strier's (2010) literature review immigrants might have powerful economic sources, stronger family bonds and immigrant fathers perceive new culture as a way of give new meanings to traditional roles and redefine earlier definitions of parenthood. Roer-Strier, Strier, David Est, Shimoni, and Clark (2005) conducted one of the most unique research with 54 fathers from 12 different nations who migrated to Canada and Israel. The authors attempted to analyze their

fatherhood values, expectations, roles, and views. Regardless of age, culture, or socioeconomic class, fathers were highly active and motivated in their children's lives, according to the findings. They saw themselves as breadwinners and they took the role of responsibility of the household. Even while unemployment and a language barrier pose a threat to fathers, the new country's new prospects and resources provide hope for their children and family (Roer-Strier et al., 2005).

It might be beneficial to look at how the experience of migrating has affected their lives. In her review article, Bond (2019) summarized pre-migration trauma, acculturation stress, underemployment, and ambiguous loss as some aspects of fathers' social stressors and barriers. Bond (2019) also stated that some resilience factors for fathers are hope for a better life in the new country, family cohesion and ethnic honor. According to Lamb and Bougher (2009) fathers may accept jobs that are highly demanding, low paid and with a downgrade in job position. It was also seen that they can work at multiple jobs to pay for the costs. Some researchers compared acculturation processes of fathers with mothers and children. It was speculated that fathers are experiencing stress with the burden of work and downgrading while mothers and children can be experiencing positive aspects of the new culture (Crockett et al. 2009; Qin 2009; Lee et al. 2009) According to Lamb and Bougher (2009) this can lower men's standing even more, making them feel alienated and humiliated by society as well as in their own families. In her study of Chinese origin families in the USA, Qin (2009) observed a tendency on the part of immigrants to compare the 'here and now' with the 'there and then'. According to Shimoni et al. (2003) study immigrant fathers saw their job as a guide, educator, and mentor for their children as critical to their long-term well-being.

Acculturation and parenting practices of fathers have also been studied. Jain and Belsky (1997) investigated involvement levels of fathers with 18 to 44 months of children. Naturalistic one hour home observations were videotaped once a week. Caretaking, playing, discipline and teaching levels of fathers were rated in two minutes periods. Levels were determined on a four-point scale ranging from no involvement to high involvement. Caretaking activities were determined as feeding,

bathing and comforting. Playing activities involved plays with toys, social play and physical reciprocal play (peek-a-bo). Teaching activities involved reading a book, teaching a name of a toy or showing how to use it. Lastly, discipline styles and teaching social manners were examined. Researchers also measured acculturation levels of fathers with language, communications and travel to home country, preferences of food and media contact. Analysis showed three types of fathers: caretaking, engaged and disengaged. Caretaking fathers only scored high on caretaking activities, whereas engaged fathers scored high on discipline and teaching. Last group of disengaged fathers did not show any scores of any dimension of parenting. In terms of acculturation and parenting, it was found that acculturation levels were related with father's engagement levels. Mostly acculturated fathers were highly involved in fathering practices (Jain & Belsky, 1997).

In the literature Turkish immigrant father's parental involvement and their relation children's well-being is an understudied topic, Leyendecker (2016) assessed Turkish immigrant mothers and father's parental involvement, parent's perception of mutual support and children's well-being. They also compared Turkish immigrant mothers and fathers with German residents. Overall, German fathers were found to be more involved than Turkish fathers. It was found that fathers' commitment had a positive effect on children's well-being, especially when fathers were satisfied with their own parenting skills. Mothers also reported greater marital satisfaction when their partners were more involved. Another important result is that fathers who lived in Turkey at least until they were young are comparatively more committed than fathers who grew up in Germany. This study shows that fathers' involvement in everyday family and child-rearing activities not only has a positive effect on the marital satisfaction of the mother, but also on that of the children; the latter applies above all when the fathers are also satisfied with their own parenting skills (Leyendecker, 2016).

1.2 Immigration and mental health

Although migration can be a stressful life event, it may not result in mental health problems for everyone. Indeed, stressful life events such as migration would result in growth, and adaptation: whereas for some, in mental health problems. In a model proposed by Bhugra (2004) it is explained which factors might contribute to an immigrant's mental health. According to the migration and mental health model, individuals would have positive and negative mental health outcomes, based on the risk and resilience factors that are specific to the phases of immigration. These phases are named as: premigration, migration and post migration. In this section three phases of migration and their link with mental health will be investigated. In the pre-migration stage social skills, self-concept, psychological, social, and biological aspects of an individual emerge as important. At the stage of migration voluntary or forced conditions of migration become influential. Migration experiences include loss of social support and network, cultural identity, and family history. Also, during migration negative or positive life events may occur. In post migration stage, stress of adaptation, discrimination, economic difficulties, rootlessness, racial discrimination, cultural identity achievements and expectations become salient (Bhugra, 2004).

In the pre-migration stage, vulnerability factors are stated as personality aspects, deficit of skills, involuntary migration, whereas preparation for migration is found to be a protective factor. During the migration phase, post-traumatic stress disorder, death or loss could be vulnerability factors, but social support is found to be a protective factor. Lastly in the post migration phase, conflicts or shock towards culture, lack of accomplishment is stated as vulnerability factors, whereas social support, socio-economic asset and positive cultural fit are found to be resilience factors. Vulnerability factors may lead to estrangement and deculturation and have a negative effect on emotional wellness. Resilience factors, on the other hand, assist them to get back to their typical existence with more grounded renditions of themselves (Bhugra, 2004).

In his model, Bhugra (2004) also discusses age, gender, and family's impact on migration. In Turkey, young adults are more likely to migrate, according to

migration statistics. Young men are thought to opt to move, and women act in accordance with men (Bhugra, 2004). In Turkey, 54.6 percent of men migrated in 2019 (TSI, 2019). It was acknowledged by Bhugra (2004) that men have a higher risk of a mental disorder, but that at the same time due to their flexibility, they might be better able to adapt. Young adults are in process of developing their cultural identity; therefore, interacting with a different culture may develop cultural disorientation and confusion (Bhugra, 2004). When it came to determining whether to migrate alone or with family, it was discovered that single men were both distressed by assembling the family. On the contrary it was found that single men can find the greatest resources (Bhugra, 2004).

1.3 The Covid-19 Pandemic's Effects on Turkish Families

Covid-19 pandemic had serious limitations for children and families. Due to the attempts for decelerate spread of the virus most families isolated themselves from the outer world. This also had an effect on family's overall well-being. In the literature, it has been shown that pregnant women had higher post-partum depression risk during the pandemic. Researchers also measured attachment levels of mothers and it has been found that those who had higher depression scores also had lower scores on maternal attachment inventory (Oskovi-Kaplan et al., 2021). It can be speculated that during the first phase of the pandemic many infants and new mothers were affected negatively by the pandemic.

The experiences of parents who had newborns during the pandemic have not been addressed in Turkey's literature, but the experiences of families with preschoolers have. Uzun, Karaca and Metin (2021) recruited 219 mothers and fathers to understand their pandemic experiences. These families had children between ages of 4 to 6. Parents filled out a demographic form and child-parent relationship inventory. Results portrayed that during the pandemic, unemployed father's practices for childrearing were higher than employed fathers. Researchers suggested that unemployed fathers interacted with mothers and played the paternal

role more effectively. It was also found that fathers who helped mothers for child-care enhanced mother-child communication.

Gelir and Duzen (2021) assessed qualitative aspects of the pandemic experiences of parents who had preschool children. Results portrayed three main themes from 81 parents: changes of behavior in kids, challenges and difficulties and positive aspects of parenting. Parents reported that their children became fearful and lonely. Challenges and difficulty's theme included parents' feelings of inadequacy regarding parenting. It was hard for these parents to balance their own responsibilities, child-care, and work obligations. On the contrary in the third theme, especially fathers reported having positive aspects of parenting such as being more involved in their child's life.

Lastly, Samyeli (2022) assessed how Covid-19 Pandemic influenced parenting practices of fathers. Results suggested that most of the participating men stated that their paternity practices had changed during the pandemic process and associated this change with 'the increase in time spent at home'. Participants stated that with the increase in the time they spend with their children, they got to know their children better and better understood their needs. Participants expressed their participation in care responsibility as an 'opportunity' for them in this process. They benefited from their participation in the care responsibility of their children; expressed with discourses such as increasing communication with their children, establishing emotional bonds and providing satisfaction.

1.3.1 The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Immigrant Families

Immigrants' experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic could be multifaceted, including work, health care, and the consequences of border closures. (Guadagno, 2020). Since immigrants working locations are mostly frontline, many migrants worked in regions that remained active during the pandemic. In many countries immigrants' migration status does not cover all access to health care and problems occurred to reaching out related services and verbal barrier in communication. Migrants lost social support and employment opportunities abroad

because of border closures (Guadagno, 2020). Literature shows that immigrant families were affected in job search, financial, health, place of accommodation, relationship problems, and restriction in access to resources during the pandemic (Santiago et al., 2021; Solheim et al., 2022).

The current study focuses on the experiences of new immigrant parents during the epidemic. To the best of our knowledge, there are no quantitative studies in the literature. Although the population do not cover immigrants, one quantitative study examined the experiences of new parents. In relation to raising a newborn during Covid-19 pandemic, researchers conducted a study in Israel. 606 parents' parental distress, attachment orientation, self-mastery and covid-19 related anxieties were assessed. Results showed that fathers' and mothers' scores in distress or anxiety did not differ from each other. Low levels of well-being, higher connection evasion and nervousness, lower self-mastery, and a more elevated level of COVID-19-related uneasiness over going for newborn child wellbeing tests contributed essentially to more prominent parental misery. Lower level of schooling, being a female, high scores in aversion and anxiety in attachment pattern, and more elevated levels of all COVID-19-related anxieties contributed altogether to more noteworthy pandemic-related dread. One can conclude that Covid-19 pandemic created distress for new parents; but with personal resources of good-enough attachment styles and self-mastery in parenting, this distress might be diminished (Taubman-Ben-Ari & Ben-Yaakov, 2020).

One qualitative study examined how immigrant mothers are affected by pandemic when they try to raise their infants. Mothers who participated in study had children whose ages were between one to fifteen months. Mothers were born in China and migrated to USA and they had low socio-economic status. Semi-structured interviews portrayed three themes; stress about family hardship, altered infant care and developmental issues and lastly coping strategies. First theme acknowledged that mothers had an economic problem related to working conditions. They had a hard time to look after their child and were alone while they were raising their kid. They also experienced racism due in terms of other people were afraid of them to catch Covid-19. Second theme included using masks or other

protective “equipment” to protect their infants. Mothers were stressed about infant’s socio-emotional development since their infants had limited outdoor activities and interaction with other infants. Mothers' coping techniques included hoarding necessities and modifying family diets, according to the last theme (Duh-Leong et al., 2022).

1.4 Current Study

Literature portrays that fathers have an important impact on children’s lives. It is important for us to understand how these mechanisms of resilience and coping are evolved when the negative life events and life changes take place. The pandemic, as well as adaption to resettlement during the pandemic, should be extremely difficult, especially during periods of developmental change such as becoming a parent. Historically, mothers have been overrepresented in research studies as primary caregivers, leading to a gap in understanding the process that fathers experience. In studies of heterosexual married couples, fathers are, usually considered as secondary or supplementary caregivers, and as supportive partners of the mothers.

Given this lack in the literature, this study aimed to examine the experiences of immigrant fathers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through semi-structured interviews, it is aimed to understand how fathers cope and navigate their multiple roles while dealing with the challenges posed by COVID-19 and migration.

The present study focused on immigrant fathers’ experiences during the pandemic. The aim of this study was to examine fatherhood experiences of immigrant fathers during Covid-19 pandemic. The research questions were the following:

1. What are the pandemic experiences of migrant fathers who had a baby?
2. How are fathers’ fatherhood experiences affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1 PARTICIPANTS

The criteria for inclusion in the study were the following:

- a. Having emigrated from Turkey after 2012.
- b. Becoming a father after November 2020.

Flyers were prepared to reach out to potential participants. These flyers were shared on Instagram, Facebook, clinical psychology department email groups, Whatsapp groups and to personal contacts. Snowball sampling was used as a main recruitment tool. Participants reached the investigator through her phone number, e-mail address or social media accounts.

Eight participants were recruited for this study. The year of migration of the participants was between 2013 and 2019, or between three to nine years ago, with an average of 5.5 years. Education levels were high, the lowest being an undergraduate degree and the highest being to a post doctorate. Participants' ages were between 37 to 31, with an average of 33.5. Only two fathers had their second and third children, and six fathers had their first child. The mean age of children has found to be 15 months. Socioeconomic level was high, ranging from middle SES to high SES.

Table 1*Demographic Information About the Participants*

Participant s	Age	Level of Education	Country of Residence	Year of Migration	Number of Children	Age of Children (months)	Immigratio n Status
A	33	Master's Degree	United States	2019	1	18	Voluntary
B	31	Post Doctoral Degree	United States	2013	1	17	Voluntary
C	32	Bachelor' s Degree	United States	2018	3	20	Voluntary
D	37	Bachelor' s Degree	Sweden	2017	2	14	Involuntary
E	35	Master's Degree	United Kingdom	2017	1	6	Voluntary
F	36	Bachelor' s Degree	Germany	2018	1	11	Voluntary
G	33	Bachelor' s Degree	Germany	2017	1	15	Voluntary
H	31	Post Doctoral Degree	United Kingdom	2013	1	20	Voluntary

2.2 PROCEDURE

After the Ethic Board approval, flyers were distributed throughout social media. Participants who were interested contacted the primary investigator through telephone, e-mail or instagram. Before explaining details of the research a second criteria check was done. Afterwards, a brief explanation was given which covered the aims of the study and confidentiality rules. After confirmation of their consent, possible dates and hours were discussed. It was stated that the consent form (Appendix A) would be sent before the interview and that participants must sign and send it back to the investigator before the interview. By the choice of the participants, interviews were conducted on whatsapp call, Zoom or FaceTime. Interviews lasted for 60 to 80 minutes.

First part was an introduction to the interview. Primary investigator also presented herself as a clinical psychology intern. Permission for audio recording was requested and all of them agreed. Audio recordings were taken by laptop and tape recorder and they were transcribed by the primary investigator. Before proceeding to the interview, demographic information about age, occupation, migration and birth of the child was obtained. Informed consent, password protected audio recordings and transcription will be saved by the primary investigator for five years.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to understand fathers' experiences. Thematic analysis is a method for examining and interpreting the significance of patterns in datasets of participants' unique experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke there are six steps in this method. In the following section these six steps will be reviewed.

First, primary investigator transcribed audiotapes into written material. Audiotapes and field remarks were reviewed several times for each recording to gain familiarity. For each participant one summary paragraph was written to pinpoint important aspects. Secondly, initial codes were generated in MAXQDATA Software program, staying close to the interviewee's own words.

Thirdly, these codes were combined under larger categories. Primary investigator turned back to field notes and one paragraph summaries in order to not miss out any important points. Finally, themes were reached. In order to be sure about the extent of themes primary themes were sent to thesis advisor and themes were discussed. Final themes were composed from these discussions.

Table 2.

An Illustration of How Initial Themes Develop

Initial Codes	Candidate Themes	Final Themes
“Things that I see from my father, family... Some instincts on the other hand there were things I did not know, I learned them.”	“Learning fatherhood”	
“I wonder about such a thing. I wonder how his voice will sound when he talks or something.”	“Before becoming a father”	“Fatherhood is a part of development”
“He is like our friend. We always hang out together.”	“Relating to fatherhood”	

2.4 RESEARCHER PERSPECTIVE

In my graduate and undergraduate years of education I have always been interested in research. In my first year of psychology major, I started to work as a research assistant in different types of projects. At that time there was a very limited number of topics that I could work on as a research assistant, so I would work in any project to learn about how a research was conducted. Therefore, I worked in different areas of psychology; developmental, cognitive, and social. In my first

graduate program I became interested in children's development, with a focus on cognitive aspect.

My research interest of children continued and to my realization I was mostly interested in children's and adolescents' psyches. So, I decided to pursue my career as a clinical psychologist. While I was working as an intern I worked with children and their families with a psychodynamic orientation. Family work mostly included mothers, as fathers' lacked interest in therapy. While fathers were very important figures in children's life it was very hard for me to reach out to them. My interest started at this point; Why do fathers appear to be less involved in the lives of their children? What are their experiences as fathers?

For the last few years, a very high portion of my social network migrated from Turkey. This migration happened in the scope of brain drain, as they mostly found jobs or academic opportunities and left. Then I was interested in migration as a research topic and combined my interests in fatherhood and migration.

Qualitative research was something that I did not have much experience of. During the pandemic, I worked as a research assistant on a project aimed at better understanding the pandemic experiences of individuals in Turkey who recovered from Covid-19 or were not infected by it. In this project I worked as a qualitative researcher and I conducted many interviews. I really enjoyed interviewing, coding, and developing themes. Rather than trying to generate a general understanding of a topic as in quantitative research, understanding unique experiences and subjective meanings caught my attention. I wanted to sustain qualitative aspect of research.

Running a research about fathers produced similar struggles in therapy; fathers were hard to reach, their interest to participate in a study seemed low. On the contrary, fathers who were willing to participate seemed very motivated and rather than finding new participants by my own I reached out to fathers via acquaintances of previous participants. In general fathers openly shared their experiences frankly so it was easy to maintain interviews. For some others I found myself to have very limited amount of information about their lives. As a reflection, I thought maybe not having enough information is a part of working with fathers.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1 THEMES

In the following section, results of the semi-structured interviews will be presented. Interviewees' experiences of pandemic and migration and of being a father were the focus of the thematic analysis. And three main themes of the data were: fatherhood as a developmental transition; the silver lining in pandemic; and the journey towards hope.

3.1.1 Fatherhood as a Developmental Transition

Participants talked about various aspects of being a father, and fatherhood stood out as a dominant experience and category discussed by all the participants with its positive and negative aspects. It was seen that fatherhood has its own developmental path. A major theme was: fatherhood as a developmental transition. And this theme has three sub-themes: anticipating fatherhood: mixed feelings, learning fatherhood, and relating to the parent role.

3.1.1.1 Anticipating fatherhood: Mixed feelings

Fathers reported their feelings before they became a father. When all aspects were examined, negative feelings such as anxiety, fear and not feeling connected to the unborn stood out. Positive aspects were excitement, happiness, and curiosity.

Three fathers reported stressful periods of pregnancy, referring to sources of stress such as illness and not being able to decide where to live. One father reported that he and his wife were in different countries during the pregnancy. Due to the issues related to his migration process, they saw each other only occasionally until the birth. His wife was under a lot of pressure because she was working on her thesis. There were also financial and situational difficulties, and it was a very stressful pregnancy for both of them.

Three fathers expressed their joy at learning about the pregnancy; they were happy that they conceived as planned. Two fathers described their excitement and curiosity regarding their unborn child, which were mostly about physical features.

“I began to imagine certain things. You know, let her/him do this, and so on. Let's see if she/he likes music. Will she/he like it? It's like there was more of a curiosity... I wonder how her/his voice will sound when she/he talks or something.” (Participant G).

One father stated that he was wondering about which hobbies his child will have. On the other hand, another father stated that he felt disconnected to the idea of being a father, because he was not feeling anything physical –there was no baby inside him.

Two fathers expressed conflicting emotions about the pregnancy; while they were pleased and happy, fear and anxiety were also there. One father stated that even though they were very definite about their planning of a child, they were anxious about the possibility of a miscarriage. He also pointed out that a child brings excitement and happiness, but the uncertainty of the world and life clouds pleasant emotions.

One father thought about different aspects of fatherhood before making up his mind about having a child. Although responsibilities of being a father were the focus of his thinking process, it was a very abstract idea back then:

“So having a child seemed like a huge responsibility to me. But I didn't know what this responsibility would entail. Now I know that it was just a general idea, the concept of responsibility. I mean, there was a definition of that concept, but it didn't have a practical side. You feel it in an abstract way, I meant it was what I felt.” (Participant D).

Having a child brings up new concerns about raising a child. One father told that he was worried about daily tasks such as changing diapers, but more generally,

he had serious concerns about his child's education. Two participants had questions about whether they can raise a child abroad all alone in a different culture.

3.1.1.2 Learning fatherhood

Four fathers described fatherhood as a learning process. One father mentioned that he did not like children under a certain age, but once he had his own child, he felt a strong bond with him regardless of his age. He also made connection between this experience and being an immigrant, and he told that if he was in Turkey, he could have seen different ways of being a father, but he ended up learning everything by himself. One father simply stated that fatherhood is something that can be learned, and he tried to learn how to take care of children. However, this learning process was experienced as something reciprocal: while fathers tried to learn how to develop a relationship with their child and to care for them, the children also tried to learn and adapt to them. Finally, one father felt that he had some sort of fatherly instincts, he discovered many things that were unknown to him as the processes of raising his child went on. Learning also included literal attempts; one father shared his personal experience of taking online parenting classes during pregnancy. Another father mentioned that he sought to improve as a parent by reading about psychological development of children.

One father talked about gender roles in raising a child and how it is related to being a migrant. He shared his observation about immigrant fathers who do not go on a parental leave.

“Here, fathers change the diaper. It’s different for migrants; they still have to learn to overcome those gender roles. They never do such things. I was like that too, but I learned. There is no other way, you have to learn.”
(Participant D).

Having a second child made learning easier for some fathers. Contrary to having a child for this time, they knew what to expect this time and they also had resources and tools, which made it easier to prepare for a child.

“The second child was pretty easy. Why? Because we have previous experience. [You already know] how children express themselves. You know from experience what to expect. It was comforting” (Participant D).

3.1.1.3 Relating to the parent role

Parenthood involved different dynamics. In general, relating to the parent role was explained in terms of relational aspects; fathers talked about different dimensions. In terms of emotions, reports were mostly positive; difficulties were found in two participants.

Fathers stated that they feel like a parent and a friend at the same time. According to two fathers, their children were like their friends they hang out together. One parent also put this as a long-term goal in future:

“I don’t want to idealize it, but as I said, I want to be with them. I want to be their friends, for example. I want them to call me when they feel bored. I would like to be with them both as a father and as a friend. Frankly, this is all I want.” (Participant D).

One father talked about different aspects of having a daughter. The common belief that daughters have a special bond with their fathers; the fact that they are thought to be more docile and quiet; and more helpful for their families in times of need made this father particularly happy about having a daughter.

One father stated that communication is a priority and his only wish regarding his child. He told that he wants to establish a smooth communication without any worries, reservations and obstacles. Wishing the child to be self-sufficient and free was another aspect of their experiences as a father. One father pointed out that he is perfectly aware that his child will be different a human with different worldviews, identity, feelings, and perception.

It is also seen that children take precedence over fathers’ personal plans, expectations, and goals in some cases. One father stated:

“I mean, when you become a parent, I guess it's like that. Of course, my daughter comes before what I want and wish; my personal expectations come later. She should go to a good school and have a happy life, you know, I have these kinds of hopes and wishes.” (Participant G).

Fatherhood is also described as being a logical and objective problem solver. One father stated that in difficult times when intolerance and fatigue become overwhelming and child goes through a crisis, he should analyze the situation from an objective standpoint. He also honed his skills as a logical problem solver; he was able to turn emotional behaviors into rational ones.

Seven participants shared their positive feelings towards having a child and being a father; feeling satisfied, spending quality time and the sense of a complete family with a child stood out as the positive aspects of being a father. One father stated that his child makes him so happy that he feels like he has butterflies in his stomach. When the child is asleep, fathers look through photos of them. Fathers stated that when they are far away from their children, they miss them and look forward to play with them again. One father was feeling very lucky to have his child. Two fathers made general statements of being very happy to have a child. Finally, one father stated that the child made the family complete.

“I'm very happy... When I am away from home, I look at his photos. After we put him to sleep, we talked about him with my wife. Sometimes when he is sleeping, we find ourselves looking at his pictures or watching the videos of him.” (Participant A).

One father told about his challenging emotions and negative aspects of being a parent. In his point of view, childcare is a very difficult and boring job. He finds it unfair, since he is aware how his actions as a parent might affect the development of his child. He also saw childcare as a very time-consuming and hard work. He stated that all he was doing is to take care of the child, he did not have personal space, and he even had to control how and to what extents he expresses his own emotions.

“You know, the stuff in Maslow's basic pyramid, the stuff underneath it. You know, it's like a dream to me. For example, to have undisturbed night's sleep. A place for myself. For example, I don't cry. If I feel very bad and want to cry my eyes out, I don't have a place to do that. In this big city, there is no such a place! Neither at school nor at home. Do know what I mean? I am always occupied with responsibilities and frankly that is not nice.” (Participant D).

Finally, one father remarked that being a parent has made him feel burdened. The child's reactions were also influenced by this sense of burden.

“We have too much burden than we wish to admit. It weighs us down. It also comes with fatigue. Our tolerance is very limited, and the child reacts in ways that we do not understand. I wish I had seen how to manage those reactions. We're learning, but... There were some points that I wished I had learned if I could get more support.” (Participant E).

3.2.1 The silver lining in the pandemic

In terms of pandemic experiences, fathers reported negative and positive aspects and that is why this theme has two sub-categories: negative and positive impacts of the pandemic. Generally, all participants tend to elaborate on the negative aspects more compared to the positive ones.

3.2.1.1 Negative impact of the pandemic

This sub-category includes social isolation, worrying about the disease, interference with children's social development and spousal relationships. First, social isolation is the category that was mentioned by all participants. Social isolation and loneliness progressed in accordance with different stages of having a child; namely pregnancy, childbirth and raising the child. Having no face-to face contact with relatives during pregnancy was difficult and gave way to a sense of

loneliness. Even though the mother has already a child, it was a frightening experience to go through because of the loneliness.

“There was an ongoing process of psychological loneliness during this pregnancy, I guess, for the last three or four months. Although she knows how the process will go, she has fears of what she will experience this time. If we were in Turkey during this pregnancy, we would have been able to get through this differently with her siblings and mother, but right now we are on our own.” (Participant E).

The possibility of contracting COVID-19 during the pregnancy was another source of fear, which further increased the social isolation the family. Especially for the parents who had their babies during the initial phase of the pandemic, full extent of the effect of COVID-19 on babies and pregnant women were unknown. Due to visa problems, the fathers also mentioned that their relatives were unable to be with them at birth. And because of pandemic regulations, several dads were unable to enter the hospital during the delivery of their children. One father stated that they couldn't have seen their extended family for one and a half year. In raising their children, fathers faced various problems, including lack of social life, inability to seek support due to isolation, lack of close friends abroad, and boredom due to isolation.

Four fathers spoke about the pandemic's effect on the social development of their children due to limited contact with other human beings regardless of age. One father was concerned about this issue and came up with solutions.

“Since he is always at home, he cannot participate in the social life. We're trying to get him to meet with his friends as much as possible right now. In other words, we try to take him to the park, because he did not socialize with other children except for the children of our friends. We are trying to introduce him to different environments. I don't know, for example, when I go to the market, I normally wouldn't take him with me, but now I want to. I want him to be a part of interactions.” (Participant B).

One father associated social isolation with immigrant identity in a broader sense:

“I mean, I felt sorry for the immigrants anyway. I said ah, every person started to experience my loneliness. Frankly, I felt sorry for this.”
(Participant D).

Two participants discussed how the pandemic affected their relationships with their wives. One participant stated that their relationship suffered considerably during the pandemic. The other participant told that their stress levels and lack of sleep caused intensified conflict.

3.2.1.2 Positive impact of the pandemic

This sub-category is related to childcare, spousal relationship and hope for the future. In relation to childcare, five fathers stated that the pandemic helped them making a connection to their child and learn to raise them. First, fathers stated that working from home and being able spend more time with their children facilitated a stronger relationship. One father compared this to the examples he knew from Turkey, saying that some of his relatives had not witness their children growing up. Secondly, they stated that they were able to help mothers with childcare. They had reservations about their ability to raise and connect to their children if they were not parenting them during the pandemic. Two fathers stated that the pandemic had a positive effect on spousal relationships:

“Because we had children. There is also a pandemic. You know, we work together against something in common, we struggle. It had a positive effect. In other words, it also increased the sense of solidarity in our relationship. I think it turned out better.” (Participant B).

Even though disagreements arose throughout the pandemic, one father claimed that this resulted in improved conflict resolution skills. He stated that they worked on their relationship issues. Lastly, two fathers shared their hopes about the

future. They both said that they believe the pandemic will be over, they will find a job soon and they are thinking about having another child.

3.3.1 The hard journey towards hope

This theme has four sub-themes. First one is about what happened before migration, which includes the planning, political reasons to migrate and difficulties of the migration process. The other three sub-themes are downgrading at work, fathering as a grounding experience with the new immigrant identity, and adaptation and future.

3.3.1.1 The process of migrating

The process of preparing to migrate involve three sub-themes: planning to migrate, economic and political reasons to migrate, and challenges in the process of migrating and settling.

3.3.1.1.1 Making plans to migrate

Overall, seven participants stated that their migration was planned. For some participants, planning took as much as six years, for others it was only a year. Two fathers moved to their partner's country of residence. One participant got a job offer from abroad, other participants looked for jobs by themselves before moving. One participant stated that having a job made his migration easier, especially compared to the experience of other immigrants.

“You know, I see people who come here and having a lot of trouble and don't exactly know what they are doing. It's a really difficult process. There are too many requirements and formalities. When I arrived, it was clear what I would do, and it was clear that I would not have any problems with the residence permit later.” (Participant C).

In terms of realizing these plans, it seems that having a job was as a starting point for many participants. It was also something that diminished the uncertainty.

“So, I think that what bothers me the most is the uncertainty... Naturally, when I came here, there was no uncertainty about my job. How do I make money? So, I wasn't too stressed. It's just that after starting the job, there were stressful situations related to my concerns about the job, but after we moved, we arranged the house within a month. Two weeks later we arranged the car. So, we carried on with our story.” (Participant C).

3.3.1.1.2 Economic and political reasons for migrating

Four people indicated economic considerations as a motivation for moving abroad. Two participants responded that they did not believe they would be able to make money as an academic in Turkey. One participant stated that even though he was okay with his job, he was making extra effort.

“Feeling of not being rewarded despite working hard, the feeling of worthlessness was increasing. Just too much effort. [These feelings] had a major impact. The economic and sociological conditions were deteriorating. It caused unhappiness. Given all these factors, we started to think about taking a chance, we thought that maybe we should go to a developed country like the US or Canada. We also thought if we are being dramatic, but then we decided to try.” (Participant F).

One participant's decision to move was related to his wife's economic difficulties in Turkey.

“There was a period when my wife had been looking for a job for a long time. It damaged her self-confidence. As far as I remember, it was when [Turkish lira] weakened further to 3.30 dollars from like 2.82 dollars. And there were some jobs that we thought she would land, but the hiring processes were suspended and she remained unemployed.” (Participant E).

In terms of political reasons, two participants were affected by the attempted coup and the Ankara bombings. One participant stated that they were in Turkey during the attempted coup, and for her foreign wife it was a devastating experience

to see tanks and planes in and above the city. Even though it was a terrifying and life-threatening experience for his wife, he did not understand what she felt until he moved abroad.

“My wife was scared [around the time of the attempted coup]. Guns, tanks... Really scary stuff. Planes are flying above etc. Now I understand why she was so afraid, because it was surreal. For someone who was born and raised here [the host country], I understand that now. They live in nature, they are a part of nature. Since we have never experienced it, I mean I haven't experienced it, I couldn't understand.” (Participant D).

Second participant was too close to the Ankara bombings; the incident occurred just a kilometer away. After this, he felt very threatened and as if he was in survival mode. He also associated this with political environment.

“I mean, I wasn't a political person, but I wasn't afraid to speak up when I saw something is wrong. But recently, it became something dangerous, there were consequences. And I knew that those consequences would come at some point. Polarization keeps getting more and more intense. It was overwhelming, but I also didn't want to compromise with my stance. I thought maybe I should go to my hometown for a while or maybe for good. It was essentially about safety, but it wasn't just about the coup, explosions or conflicts, political atmosphere was also weighing me down.” (Participant B).

3.3.1.1.3 Challenges involved in the process of migrating and settling

The process of migrating and settling was difficult for three participants. One participant had a very difficult time to get a visa during his wife's pregnancy; he was trying to make it to his child's birth. For the second participant, paperwork or institutional problems occurred. When they first arrived, settling was also difficult, and participants were comparing the process of finding a place to live with the issue in their home country.

“There were a lot of things to do when I came here. No insurance, no bank account, finding a house, etc., nothing happens. Everything is moving so slow. Finding a house in Turkey is a problem that can be solved much faster.” (Participant F).

3.4.1 Downgrading at work

Downgrading was something that happened to three participants. Participant C had a position which was very respectable in Turkey, but his social status totally changed when he moved abroad. He was a white-collar worker and taking a second job was not common where he comes from. Therefore, being forced to take a second job affected his mood negatively.

“It’s not only about money, I want to have a white collar job, like the one I had before, but it’s not easy. I have too much anxiety, I am so eager to take care of my child but my mind is always occupied with what I should do, like ‘Yes, I am delivering pizza, but what else I can do? Should I deliver some other stuff?’. I had never thought that I will have a job like this. I loved my previous job, but I had to leave it. At the moment, I am doing things that would bring money enough to save the day. At the restaurant, at the pizza place etc. These types of works are a bit tiring for me, especially psychologically. I know that it’s very common here. Americans, white Americans, they work at a bank, and then come here on Friday nights to make extra money. But it is not something I am used to, so it’s hard for me.” (Participant A).

One father started to work in business sector, even though he is an engineer, but it lasted only for four months, and he found a job as an engineer. Finally, one father shared his emotional struggles about downgrading, but he was also optimistic in the long run:

“The hardest part was... I came here and started to work, but I found myself in a downgraded position. I was doing something else before I came here

and now I have lower position. But it was inevitable. It was a price to pay for coming here, but it was hard. It was like move down in the world. This feeling lasted for a while like a year and a half; it kept nagging at me like voice in the background. But I have the ability to see the bigger picture. It always kept me up. When we look at the bigger picture, what is our situation? So, we've always been in the profit. We stayed on the positive side.” (Participant F).

3.5.1 Fathering as a grounding experience for a new migrant

Six fathers stated that migration facilitated their identity as fathers. Migration experience was related to child’s education and needs. Two fathers stated that they feel confident about supporting their children’s future needs. One father shared that he was not thinking too much about his child’s needs, because he is very confident that he will meet them. He was also confident about giving proper tools for different developmental stages in child’s life. It was also pointed out that being an immigrant father decreased economic concerns, that is why he was very certain about fulfilling child’s needs and providing good education.

Two fathers talked about how their fatherhood changed with their immigrant identity. One aspect was language. One father stated that his child will learn the language of their new country very fast, therefore he also started to learn that language to connect himself with her school, understand and deal with problems. Another issue related to being an immigrant was uncertainties and lack of a social life. For this father’s experience, this was something very hard to live with, so he focused on his children to protect his psyche.

“In the midst of lack of a social life and all kinds of uncertainties, this gave me something to focus on. I would have gone crazy if it wasn’t for this. I am going crazy now, but it’s a different kind of crazy; the other option would be uglier. Now, at least I feel like I am trying to do something good for two people in my life, I am doing things for them. But it is not like a sacrifice, it

is not their fault that I don't have a social life here. I would never let them feel like that, I would never say things like I gave everything up for you. I feel happy when I try to do something.” (Participant D)

One family made stability as migrants a priority before having a child. Things did not go as planned and they had an unexpected pregnancy. They had their child as a two-parent household without having any support from others. He felt as if raising a child in this way boosted his self-confidence. In terms of not having external support, another father stated that they did not have a social life or any friends, and this brought him closer to his wife and also affected his fatherhood.

Finally, one father also talked about how the host country would provide a secure base for his children's developing identity. He believed that his children would be free of pressure regardless of how their identities developed in the future. This is a powerful motivation for him.

“They won't be oppressed when they're gay here. Even if they don't have any religious beliefs, they will not be oppressed. This motivates me a lot here. That's why I can bear it. So just for that reason. I think that children will not face any pressure regarding the identity they choose.” (Participant D).

3.4.3. Adjustment and future

Adjustment stood out as a critical coping skill in the process of immigration. Four fathers stated that they are highly adaptive. This was presented as a personality trait. In their experience, it was not something they developed during the process, rather it was a trait that they already had.

In terms of adaptation, previous acquaintance with the new country was mentioned as something helpful. One parent had previously traveled to his new country and was confident in his ability to speed up the process.

On the other hand, one father explained adaptability as something like a piece added later rather than a part of his genuine self. Even though adaptation had a protective function for his mental health, it was hard.

“I had to be a self-disciplined man here, so I became a man like that. But to be honest, it’s not something that comes naturally to me. That’s not who I am, it’s just a role I assumed. I have to stick to this mindset, because I have no other option. I am studying, I’m trying to do it without going crazy. I am trying to keep going, but it’s really hard..” (Participant D)

Two fathers felt confident about their financial stability in the future. They wanted to realize their dream of having a great house and car. They were largely concerned about their child's future, but they were optimistic. One father talked about his own future and how he was building a new life in the new country. He was learning a new language and finishing his new major in university as compensation.

“What am I trying to compensate for this? Here is language learning, education. Some small things like this, I don't know, I will prepare for it at the university. When my school is over, the next term ends. I'm studying nursing. After that, after the next semester is over, I will work and prepare for the exam like this. I will try something.” (Participant D).

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

4.1 DISCUSSION OF THE THEMES

The goal of this study was to understand immigrant fathers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of semi-structured interviews was to learn how fathers adapt to and negotiate their numerous roles while coping with COVID-19 and immigration issues. Thematic analysis revealed three main themes in this study: fatherhood is a developmental transition, silver lining in pandemic and the hard journey towards hope. Themes are examined in relation to the relevant literature in the next section.

4.1.1 Fatherhood is a Developmental Transition

The present study portrayed that fatherhood has a developmental trajectory. This includes father's feelings and thoughts anticipating fatherhood: mixed feelings, learning fatherhood, and relating to the parent role. In the literature, transition to fatherhood for non-immigrant fathers has been explored in terms of prenatal, labor, and postnatal intervals during the first year (Chin et al. 2011; Genesoni & Tallandini, 2008).

In line with the research on non-immigrant fathers, before they had children, fathers in this study had mixed feelings towards pregnancy and becoming a father (Chin et al. 2011; Genesoni & Tallandini, 2008). In the present study immigrant fathers also stressed pregnancy as the most stressful period of their fatherhood. Literature from non-immigrant fathers also portrayed that fathers perceived pregnancy as the most stressful period of their journey. Genesoni and Tallani (2008) linked stressful pregnancy periods to the psychological reconstruction to maintain a father image. Another aspect was stated by Condon (2006) that fathers decide what kind of a father they want to be, and this process is something that helps adjustment. Even though in the present study pregnancy was stated as a stressful period, causes of stress was found to be related with problems which came from

being an immigrant and pandemic related anxieties of catching disease. In terms of psychological reconstruction of a father image the present study did not reveal any findings during pregnancy period. It was seen that fathers were excited, anxious, and curious about their unborn child but their perception about their own fatherhood only acknowledged through responsibility.

Fatherhood was defined as a learning process. Learning fatherhood included listening, trying to learn and adapt new ways of raising a child and literal attempts such as reading a book about child development, participating psycho-educational or infant care classes. Even though the literature did not portray any learning and fatherhood link Chin et al. (2011) stated that father's anxieties decreased as they became more confident through experience. Perhaps the literal learning efforts were an attempt to gather experience and reduce anxiety, as well as a method to gain confidence.

This theme also included aspects which came from being an immigrant. It was mentioned that the father might learn from other Turkish fathers if he weren't an immigrant, but loneliness also encourages learning fathering by himself without seeing any Turkish fathers' practices. On the contrary another aspect was stated as a comparison; one father stated that the new culture has highly involved fathers although other immigrants' do not take on those roles, he learned to become a highly involved father himself from the new culture. One can conclude that these two examples present different types of acculturation and fathering practices. According to Jain and Belsky (1997) highly acculturated fathers had higher levels of parental involvement with their infants.

Relating to the parent role was the third aspect of the first theme. Fathers portrayed an affectionate, close, playful, and happy relationship with their children. According to Chin et al. (2011) especially during the first month's non-immigrant fathers reported intimacy, parental competence, curiosity, overwhelm, and bewilderment. In the present study only two fathers described overwhelming and disoriented aspects of childcare such as childcare was seen as boring and difficult job that can come with burden and fatigue. It might be possible that for fathers',

negative aspects of child rearing were something that can be very hard to acknowledge so in general they talked more about positive emotions.

According to Lamb et al. (1987) conceptual framework parental involvement included three aspects of interaction, accessibility, and responsibility. The theme of relating to the parent role has covered these three aspects. In terms of interaction, fathers reported that they were playing and interacting with their children and enjoying their company. Fathers reported to have positive feelings towards their children, as well as finding their interaction to be a very close, bonding one. They reported to have an open and easy communication. In terms of accessibility, majority of the fathers reported to be accessible to their children, while one father discussed his need to not be always physically available and emphasized the importance of having a self-time. Responsibility aspect of fatherhood is also discussed by fathers in terms of their own personal needs are no longer thought to be relevant, their child's needs are more important over his needs or expectations. One father described himself as a logical problem solver and this aspect might also be included in responsibility aspect of fatherhood.

Even though fathers reported their feelings, communication, responsibility aspects of their relationship with their children their experiences lacked actual examples of experiences. In Turkey, Kurucirak (2010) argued that rather than being a primary caregivers fathers have a part in as helpers in infant's life. When the fathers in the present study seen as helpers, it is meaningful to have superficial experiences.

4.1.2 Silver Lining in the Pandemic

Pandemic experiences of fathers have been found to be related with positive and negative effects; therefore, the second theme was worded as the silver lining in the pandemic. Negative aspects were discussed more by the participants. Social isolation from extended family, worrying about the spread and interfering with children's social development and spousal relationship was found as examples of negative aspects.

All participants experienced social isolation. Social isolation was discussed as periods in pregnancy, childbirth and raising child. In one participant it was very frightening to lose this face-to face social support during delivering the child. Fathers needed their extended family members to be in the same city to feel more supported by them. Nevertheless, fathers mentioned about how their own social life is restricted by pandemic as they lost physical contact with their close friends, and their inability to seek help due to isolation and boredom. Findings were supported by the literature. As Guadagno (2020) portrayed border closures resulted in a loss of social support from extended family during pandemic for immigrants. Other researchers also showed that immigrants lost their access to social resources during the pandemic (Santiago et al., 2021; Solheim et al., 2022).

In the literature it was found that pregnant Turkish women reported to have high depression levels and obstacles in primary attachment with infants (Oskovi-Kaplan et al., 2021). In the present study fathers did talk about pregnancy periods of the mothers but did not report such obstacles. Worrying about the spread of the virus was found to be a main source of anxiety for all participants. Families were concerned since they didn't know how Covid-19 infection affects pregnant women and infants.

Another disadvantage of the pandemic was that babies had less contact with the outside world. Fathers expressed their worries about how their children's social development is being hindered. In literature Chinese immigrant mothers were also highly concerned about their babies limited social interaction (Duh-Leong et al., 2022). In Turkey one research also showed that older children's social-emotional development is negatively affected by pandemic restrictions (Karakose & Yayla, 2021). Even though it was not stated in results section, fathers did not talk about any current struggles regarding their baby's social development. It's possible to infer that, while it was a cause for concern in the early months of the pandemic, babies were able to retain their social development in the long run.

In the literature it was found that Turkish parents struggled to balance their work, private life, and responsibilities during pandemic (Gelir & Duzen, 2021). In the present study this aspect was not acknowledged by fathers. The fathers in the current study had, on average, migrated overseas five years prior. It can be argued that they are in acculturation processes so their work and private life might not be rich as Turkish parents. Therefore, their lack of experience to balance might be related with their life as an immigrant.

Positive aspects of pandemic were also stated by the participants. A very high portion of participants said that pandemic restrictions made them to be more involved in childcare and this facilitated a stronger relationship. It was also beneficial for these fathers to stay at home and learn how to care for a baby. They also mentioned that this also took a share of mother's load. Literature from non-immigrant fathers portrayed that fathers needed to have a more intimate contact with their babies but since they need to go back to work, they couldn't spend much time as they needed (Genesoni & Talladini, 2008). The present study showed that if they can find time, they could form a stronger relationship. It was also stated that fathers can compare themselves with mothers and this might lead to inadequacy feelings as a parent (Genesoni & Talladini, 2008). In this study, fathers were portrayed as a shareholder for their partner in parenting load. In Turkey literature suggested that unemployed fathers who stayed at home during pandemic play paternal role more effectively, fathers reported to have positive aspects of parenting in pandemic such as being more involved in their child's life and saw pandemic as an opportunity (Gelir & Duzen, 2021; Samyeli, 2022; Uzun et al., 2021) Maybe this led to a smoother fatherhood transition.

Present study also found a comparison in immigrant fathers' account of childcare. One father elaborated that if he was living in Turkey, he might not be as involved in his child's caretaking activities. Qin (2009) found a tendency of comparing their life as 'here and now' and 'there and then' from Chinese immigrant parents in USA. Maybe this tendency also made father's to be more in control and confident about their abilities towards childcare.

Some fathers stated that they and their wives worked together to overcome the difficulties of the pandemic. Sometimes they experienced conflicts, but this led them to an improvement in their conflict resolution skills. They felt a sense of comradery in their relationships because of this. Literature portrayed that during the pandemic marital satisfaction was affected negatively in Turkey (Karakose & Yayla, 2021). For migrants they were the life partner and one and only supporter of each other that is why they strength their quality of relationship. Genesoni and Tallani (2008) found that if non-immigrant fathers have a positive and good relationship with mothers their transition to fatherhood is smooth. It can be concluded that same aspect can be seen in immigrant fathers.

4.1.3 The hard journey towards hope

This theme consisted of four sub-themes. The first theme is about what transpired prior to migration, which includes the process of migrating, political motivations for migration, and migration obstacles. Downgrading at work, fathering as a grounding experience for a new migrant, and adjustment and future are found to be the three sub-themes.

Bhugra (2004) formulated that migration consists of three phases; premigration, migration and post migration. In the present study, the results portrayed a similar trend with Bhugra's model; fathers mentioned the premigration, migration and post migration experiences separately.

In the premigration stage, fathers talked about their planning. Overall, almost all participants had a long and detailed migration plan. For some participants they had kept their job offers ready. Two fathers moved to the country where their wives were located. Maybe having a job beforehand or moving to wife's country seems to keep them ready and facilitate their adaptation process. Bhugra (2004) stated that planned and voluntary migration acts as a resilience factor for mental health of migrants. It can be stated that in the present study fathers had these resiliency factors before moving out.

From an observational point of view, participants had detailed plans and job offers ready before they moved abroad. It can also be seen from the demographic

information that they were highly educated and skilled migrants. According to Karatas and Ayyildiz (2021) Turkey's international migration experience is on direction of brain drain.

Reasons to move abroad from Turkey involved economic and political reasons. Economic reasons included not believing to make enough money to survive or making extra effort while working. Economic reasons not only affected fathers; one participant stated that his wife extra effected by the economic uncertainties and this effected his wife's employment status. Political reasons included devastating effects of bombings and coup attempt. These events afflicted participants secure feelings towards their country, they felt like they were in survival mode. One participant elaborated more on this and stated that even though he was experiencing life threatening events he was also cannot express himself politically due to the intense polarization. Literature also portrays that in Turkey, economic and political reasons became prominent for reasons to migrate (Karaduman & Coban, 2019).

In the process of migration and settling participants shared their experiences of obtaining visa and documentation or institutional issues. In terms of settling, they found it challenging especially when they compare this to their home country. Even though participants had difficulties in migration phase Bhugra (2004) stated that loss of social support and network, loss of cultural identity and post-traumatic stress disorder are risk factors of migrants' mental health. Such risk factors were not found in the current study. The present study's population involved with highly skilled migrants with a good amount of planning. Perhaps therefore, during the migration phase, this group had no risk factors.

Downgrading at work is found to be an experience of fathers for postmigration phase. Fathers shared that after they moved abroad, they lost their social status at work. For some of them their social status went down to blue collar from white collar but for some others their social status decreased within white-collar. Fathers shared their struggling emotions in downgrading such as stress, exhaustion, ambiguity, and anxiety. Underemployment and downgrading in job position is found to be something that father's face when they become an immigrant

(Bond, 2019; Lamb & Bougher, 2009). In the present study one father shared his experience of working in multiple jobs and this is created acculturation stress because in Turkey it is not general practice for people to work at multiple jobs. Bond (2019) stated that immigrant father's social stressors include acculturation stress and underemployment. On the contrary one father acknowledged that even though his social status at work was downgraded he was seeing this as a cost to pay to move abroad but he was trying to see the positive sides of it in the long run. Bond (2019) stated that to cope with underemployment some fathers form resilience factors such as hope for a better life in the new country.

The third sub-theme fathering as a grounding experience as a new migrant involved how father's see their migration experience in relation to their fatherhood. Overall fathers thought that migration experience contributed their fatherhood identity through economic confidence. It can be stated that economical sufficiency made fathers feel confident about catering child's needs. According to Roer-Strier et al. (2005)'s research conducted with immigrants who have multiple cultural backgrounds it was seen that immigrant fathers see themselves as breadwinners. Their main responsibility was stated as taking the responsibility of household. It might be speculated that Turkish immigrant fathers also see themselves as breadwinners and it is an important aspect of their fatherhood.

Another aspect of not having social life and lack of social support also bring loneliness and becoming more closer with wife. According to Bond (2019) immigrant fathers experience an ambiguous loss in their social life.

One father's point of view portrayed that he struggled in his social life as an immigrant. Rather than focusing on his loneliness and lack of support he focused on raising his children. This coping mechanism of using child-care as a substitute for social life, is a contribution to the literature, where there is no such finding was evident in the prior literature.

Two fathers acknowledged that their children's adaptation to the new culture will be fast because of learning the second language and going to school therefore they are eager to learn language. In the literature for older school-age

children, it was stated that children serve as “community experts” in families, since they learn host community’s language and societal norms and bring these norms into family (Deng & Marlowe, 2013). It might be speculated that fathers might also use children’s expertise to acculturate into the new country.

One father discussed how the host country will provide a safe foundation for his children's growing identities. He believed that regardless of how his children's identities formed in the future, they would be free of pressure. Acculturation has traditionally been defined as the changes that occur when people from diverse cultural backgrounds interact (Berry, 2006). This father saw host culture’s characteristics as a foundation for child’s development. Even though the present study did not assess acculturation levels of father’s this might be an aspect.

Final theme was found as adjustment and future. For adjustment fathers mostly stated that they were highly adaptive before migration process. According to Bhugra (2004)’s model, positive personality traits play a resilience factor during migration. Being an adaptive person might be an important personality trait as a resilience factor. For one father he did not describe himself as an adaptive person before migration. Migration really changed who he is, and he became a self-disciplined man.

Fathers were optimistic about their future financial security. They wanted to make their goal of owning a beautiful home and automobile an actuality. They were mostly worried about their child's future, but they were hopeful. In terms of life satisfaction after migration it was found that Turkish immigrants were found to be stressed with decreasing of their level of work, but they were very optimistic about their life in the future. They were confident in the existing economic power and expect it will continue for the foreseeable future. This finding is matched with literature. According to Ataca and Berry’s (2002) research with Turkish immigrants in Canada it was stated that Turkish immigrants housing arrangements, schooling of their children and benefits from hospitals were upgraded in Canada even though they made less money when compared to Turkey. Therefore, Turkish immigrants

reported to feel gratitude to be an immigrant. Economic reasons played a crucial role for immigration plans for participants in current study, generally participants wanted a better life in future. Maybe optimism for future comes from their increased quality of their life.

4.1.4 Researcher Perspective

Fathers' experiences were examined with qualitative analysis, but observational data yielded some possible explanations for the present data. In this section results will be discussed in terms of the researcher's clinical perspective.

First, it has been seen that fathers tend to talk less about their struggles and negative emotions in many aspects. Even though they experienced one of the most unique events of our history, the pandemic, generally their negative emotions and traumatic experiences seemed to be not acknowledged by them. In the psychoanalytic literature this mechanism is defined as denial. According to Williams (2011) infants might reject the reality of painful events as a coping mechanism. It is argued that every one of us naturally engages in denial as our initial response to any tragedy. As Williams (2011) stated that this is a way of infant saying, "If I don't acknowledge it, it isn't happening" (p.91). She added that denying one's feelings can help them cope with stress and make life a little less painful. In the present study migration, pandemic and having a baby might be very stressful or painful events for a father to overcome so they might choose to deny these feelings.

Additionally, it has been observed that when fathers describe their experiences, they speak as though they are recounting those of a third person. Williams (2011) defined intellectualization defense as "isolation of affect from intellect" (p.110). Although there are emotion terms used in intellectualization, the listener might not perceive any emotion in the tone. She argued that intellectualization also lessens the overstimulation of the trauma. In the present study fathers seemed like they altered the emotional process but, in the reality, it is thought that their responses were highly intellectualized.

4.2 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Migration from Turkey to other countries has surged by 45 percent in the last three years, according to estimates (TUIK, 2022). The current study is the first to examine the causes for fathers' immigration, as well as their stories and fatherhood experiences during the pandemic, and adds a critical body of knowledge to the literature. Immigrant family literature relies mostly on mother and children's experiences and fathers' role has been underemphasized (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). The present study also expands our understanding of immigrant father's perspectives, values, attitudes, experiences, and coping mechanisms.

In Turkey research about fathers is a new area which is mostly focused on father involvement in preschool years and adolescent-father relationship (Metindogan, 2015). Present study also added an important body of knowledge in terms of the very early interaction of father-infant relationship which is an understudied area.

Pleck (2008) has written about whether it is better to conduct research with mothers, fathers, or with both. Including them both could give more information about parental influences on a child's outcome. Comparing fathers and mothers, on the other hand, can lead to the conclusion that the mother's practices, attitudes, and roles are a standard in a child's growth, while the fathers are a shortfall in the child's life (Pleck, 2008). Although the present study only included fathers; the substantial role of fathers in infants' lives has been foregrounded.

Qualitative research makes it easier to capture participants' expectations, perspectives and perceptions, experiences, and coping methods (Pleck, 2008; Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005). Present study added in-depth information by using a qualitative methodology.

In terms of recruitment to the study, immigrant fathers were hesitant, not accessible, and not enthusiastic to participate research projects. It was also stated

that especially when father's immigrant status is undocumented it is very hard to reach out to them (Pleck, 2008; Strier & Roer-Strier, 2010). Even though recruitment process was hard, the present study reached out to good enough number of immigrant fathers.

The length of immigrant status is linked with acculturation, acquaintance with the host country's language and employment status, which in turn, are linked to father's identities (Strier & Roer-Strier, 2005). The present study participants mostly migrated within the last five years. Therefore, the present study might contribute to expanding knowledge about recent immigrants. Longitudinal studies may give additional information about the changes in father's cultural identity.

According to Strier and Roer-Strier (2005)'s methodological discussion, fathering studies do not involve both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Mixed-methods approach might be beneficial in studies on immigrant fathers.

Overall, when participants age, education degree, previous work experience in Turkey were examined they could define as highly skilled migrants. As Bhugra (2004) theoretically conceptualized in pre-migration voluntary aspect of migration, high socio-economic status and good interpersonal skills are stated as protective factors for acculturation and mental health. Current study lacks experiences of immigrants who have low socio-economic background.

The current study included a self-selected sample. It might be speculated that fathers were motivated to talk about their fatherhood because they feel like they might have a more positive fatherhood experience. The present study might lack experiences of fathers who feel less adequate. In this study some men's spouses were also recruited to participate in research project on mothers' experiences during the pandemic. Maybe fathers thought that their responses might be compared with their spouses and this might promote self-defensing feelings. Nevertheless, they might think that their responses will also be shared with their spouses. Regarding these issues this might have also affected fathers' responses.

4.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

The current study adds to the body of knowledge by providing data for a specific study area as well as practical implications for practitioners.

Overall, it has been found that fathers mostly focused on technical issues of parenting and migration. Their psychological construction of a father image and their feelings around this issue were not emphasized. Mental health professionals might help fathers to express their feelings and thoughts regarding their issues around fatherhood.

Fathers' concerns about economic power and earning money were proven to be quite essential. It was also found that their participation in traditionally feminine aspects of childcare increased; they were affectionate and involved. It's possible to conclude that while their 'feminine' skills improved, their masculine characteristics remained unchanged. In literature Hauser (2015) assessed how fathers see their masculine and feminine characteristics of fathering with a qualitative research. Results portrayed that to conserve their masculine features they try to add masculinity into their fatherhood practices. Security, economy, and emotional control was found as a way of highlighting the masculine aspects. It might be speculated that immigrant fathers share a similar characteristic in their fatherhood identities. Intervention studies might take into consideration of this issue while working with fathers.

One aspect was found that learning opportunities are very important for fathers' they are eager to learn and develop themselves. While working with fathers', psycho-educational models might be beneficial for them to gain confidence in child-rearing practices. The learning attempts were only conceptualized from the perspective of child-rearing; it might be beneficial for these fathers to learn about psychological construction of a father identity from an educational perspective.

In the present study fathers migrated to the West. They were aware of underemployment issues in their country, and they choose West to access economic stability, academic or carrier opportunities. It might be said they did not share their experiences about the country they left behind. Fathers might be occupied learning about the new country while they were trying to settle. In the settlement phase maybe, it is more beneficial for these fathers to acquire technical skills. Future studies may investigate fathers who migrated long time ago.

The present study portrayed that immigrant fathers showed an effort to make a better relationship with their partners during the hard times. This might be a beneficial information for couple therapists. Fathers also talked about their coping mechanisms of thinking about positive aspects, trying to focus to the future processes. Support systems like this found to have a positive effect on marital satisfaction.

It was also found that fathers had problems about feeling lonely in new country and socialization problems in the new country. On one hand pandemic restrictions had a huge impact, but also fathers shared their emotions around loneliness. Non-governmental organizations or Turkish Embassy/Consulates might organize events which could help to form a micro support system as a community.

The extent of how much parents were socializing or were in isolation might have explained the different experiences of fathers in opportunity to observe and learn the parental practices of the host culture. Future studies should take account into the acculturation experiences in relation to their parenting practices.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the current study was to investigate the pandemic-related experiences of migrant fathers. Eight Turkish immigrant fathers who were between the ages of 31 and 37 who had a child during the pandemic took part. The literature from fatherhood studies in Turkey lacked experiences of infant fathers. Therefore, the themes considered to be very important to give insight to such an understudied area. Three key themes were found as: fatherhood is a developmental transition, silver lining in pandemic and the hard journey toward hope. Fatherhood is a developmental transition consisted of three sub-themes; anticipating fatherhood: mixed feelings, learning fatherhood and relating to the parent role. Silver lining in pandemic involved negative and positive aspects of pandemic. The hard journey toward hope consisted of four sub-themes: the process of migrating, downgrading at work, fathering as a grounding experience as a new migrant and adjustment and future.

The findings showed that migrant fathers faced challenges as they adjusted to fatherhood and the pandemic, but they were also discovered to be actively involved in their children' lives. Only through taking responsibility do fathers acknowledge their own image of fatherhood. Their image of fatherhood is also only endorsed by positive aspects which is thought to be related with denial and intellectualization defenses. Pandemic experiences were covered with negative and positive aspects and it was seen that worrying about disease, child's social development, social isolation, and relationship problems stood out. Positive aspects can be summarized as being very present as a father during pandemic. The reasons for migration and how being a father changed to establish their identities were also discussed. It can be argued that psychological support programs might be beneficial for immigrant fathers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form (In Turkish)

Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu

Sayın Katılımcı;

Bu araştırma, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi olan Hazal Çelik tarafından Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir. Bu çalışmada Covid-19 pandemi döneminde çocuk sahibi olmuş babaların deneyimlerini araştırılmaktadır. Bu çalışma sonucunda pandemi döneminde çocuk sahibi olmuş babaların bu süreçte yaşadıkları ve bu deneyimlerin babalık süreçlerine etkisi incelenecektir.

Araştırmaya katılım gönüllülük temeline dayanmaktadır. Çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz sizinle çevrimiçi olarak bir görüşme gerçekleştirilecektir. Görüşmenin yaklaşık 45 dakika sürmesi beklenmektedir. Görüşmeler esnasında izniniz doğrultusunda ses kaydı alınacak ve araştırmacı not tutacaktır.

Bu araştırma bilimsel bir amaçla yapılmakta ve katılımcı bilgilerinin gizliliği esas alınmaktadır. Verdiğiniz tüm bilgiler gizli tutulacaktır.

Bu görüşmeye katılmanın, olumsuz bir etki yaratması beklenmemektedir. Ancak görüşme sırasında yanıt vermek istemediğiniz, size kendinizi rahatsız hissettiren sorular olursa bu soruları yanıtlamadan geçebilirsiniz. Görüşme sırasında dilediğiniz zaman kaydın durdurulmasını isteyebilirsiniz. Görüşme başlamadan önce, görüşme sırasında veya sonrasında dilediğiniz zaman soru sorabilirsiniz. Katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir sebep göstermeden araştırmadan çekilme hakkına sahipsiniz. Araştırmadan çekildiğiniz durumda verdiğiniz bilgiler değerlendirmeye alınmayacaktır. Bu çalışma katılımcılara, terapi ya da psikolojik destek vermek amacını

taşınamaktadır. İstemeniz durumunda size psikolojik yardım alabileceğiniz yerler hakkında bilgi verilecektir.

Eğer bu araştırmaya katılmak istiyorsanız bu formun size iletildiği e-postaya cevaben “Ekte gönderilen Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formunu okudum ve anladım. Çalışmaya katılmayı ve ses kaydımın alınmasını kabul ediyorum.” cümlesini ve adınızı-soyadınızı yazmanız gerekmektedir.

Zaman ayırdığınız ve araştırmaya verdiğiniz değerli katkılarınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Bilgi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Hazal Çelik(Tel: 05350652075;eposta:pskhazalcelik@gmail.com) veya Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak (e-posta: hale.boratav@bilgi.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

APPENDIX B Interview Questions (In Turkish) Soru Formu

Merhaba, öncelikle bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim. Bugün sizinle pandemi, babalık ve göç süreciniz hakkında konuşacağız. Size pandemi öncesindeki göç deneyiminiz ve bu pandemi sürecinde babalık deneyimleriniz hakkında sorular soracağım. İhtiyaç duyduğunuzda ara verebiliriz.

A. Çocuk sahibi olmakla ilgili deneyimler

1. İlk çocuğunuz mu?
2. Eşinizin hamile olduğunu öğrendiğinizde neler hissettiniz?
3. Eşinizin hamilelik süreci nasıl geçti?
4. Hamilelik sürecinde eşiniz ile birlikte yakınlarınızdan destek görebildiniz mi?
5. (Varsa) Önceki babalık sürecine hazırlık deneyiminiz ile şimdiki deneyiminiz arasında fark var mı? Önceki sürecinizde (varsa) destek aldığınız kişiler kimdi?
6. Doğum nasıl gerçekleşti?
7. Doğumdan sonra size kim destek oldu?

8. Bebeğinizin cinsiyetinizi öğrendiğinizde ne hissettiniz? Kız ya da erkek tercihiniz var mıydı? Eşinizin tercihi var mıydı?
9. Doğumdan önce nasıl bir bebek olacağını düşünüyordunuz?
10. Eşiniz hamileyken bebekle ilgili kaygılarınız ve korkularınız oldu mu? Evet ise neler?
11. Bebeğinizi nasıl tarif edersiniz? Bebeğinizin günlük rutinleri nasıl?
12. Bebeğinizle ilgili yaşadığınız zorluklar nelerdir?
13. Bebeğinizi düşündüğünüzde onunla ilgili neler hissediyorsunuz? (gerekirse; İlk kucağınıza aldığınızda neler hissettiniz?)

B. Göç etrafındaki deneyimler

1. Ne zamandır Amerika'da/ Avrupa'da yaşıyorsunuz?
2. Taşınmaya nasıl karar verildi? Kimin kararıydı?
3. Taşınma kararınızın sebepleri nelerdi?
4. Taşınma /göç etme süreçleri ile başa çıkmanızı hangi kişisel özellikleriniz kolaylaştırdı, hangileri zorlaştırdı?
5. Bu süreçte sizi etkileyen başka olaylar oldu mu? Neler mesela?
6. Aileniz sizi destekledi mi? Bu destekler nasıl desteklerdi? İtiraz ettiler mi? Bu itirazların nedenleri nelerdi?
7. Arkadaşlarınız sizi destekledi mi? Bunlar nasıl desteklerdi?
8. Göç deneyiminin baba adaylığınızı nasıl etkilediğini düşünüyorsunuz?

C. Pandemi deneyimleri

1. Pandemi sürecinde baba adaylığı deneyimini nasıl tanımlarsınız?
2. Pandemi sizi nasıl etkiledi?
3. Pandemi gündelik hayatınızı nasıl etkiledi?
4. Pandemi eşiniz ile ilişkinizi nasıl etkiledi?
5. Baba olma ile ilgili beklentilerinizi nasıl etkiledi? Bundan sonrası için nasıl umutlarınız var?
6. Kendi deneyiminizden yola çıkarak düşünürseniz; bugün pandemide babalık sürecinin başında olan bir babaya neler önerirdiniz?

7. Pandemi süreci boyunca bir baba adayı olarak nasıl destekler aldınız? Aldınız mı? Almadıysanız nasıl başa çıktınız? Ne gibi destek alsanız iyi gelirdi, neye ihtiyaç duyardınız?
 8. Sizce pandemi sürecinde babalara ne gibi destekler verilmesi gerekirdi? (belediye vs.)
 9. Benim sormadığım ama önemli olduğunu düşündüğünüz ve sizin eklemek istediğiniz şeyler var mı?
 10. Sormak istediğiniz bir şey var mı?
 11. Bugün burada konuşmak, bu görüşmeye katılmak size nasıl geldi?
- Çalışmaya katıldığınız ve verdiğiniz cevaplar için çok teşekkür ederim.

ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

Ethics Board Approval is available in the printed version of this dissertation.