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Gendered Tears: The Relationship of Gender Roles and Perceptions to Crying

Cinsiyetlendirilmiş Gözyaşları: Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rolleri ve Algılarının Ağlama ile İlişkisi

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Abstract

This research is a quantitative study that aims to examine how gender roles and beliefs affect crying behaviour in adult individuals living in an environment where gender norms are pronounced, such as Turkey. Conducted using a descriptive survey model, the study analysed data collected through an online questionnaire. The study revealed that gender roles significantly shape crying behaviour. It was determined that crying is not only a biological response but also a behaviour culturally and socially associated with gender. The findings show that women's crying behaviour is considered more socially acceptable and tolerated, while men experience more negative social interactions when they cry. Men's crying is generally perceived as a sign of weakness, which leads to the suppression of their emotional expressions due to social pressures. Although women have more freedom to express their emotions, this sometimes leads to negative labelling. In social contexts, both genders are reluctant to cry in public, but this reluctance is more pronounced among men in the workplace and among women in social spaces. Although participants accepted crying as a universal and natural human response, they were seen to perpetuate and reproduce traditional gender stereotypes. The restrictive effect of gender norms on emotional expression can lead to socio-psychological pressure in men and, in women, to a perception of manipulation, despite this being a relatively more socially acceptable situation. The research indicates that greater awareness is needed in society regarding gender equality and freedom of emotional expression. To this end, the study presents various important recommendations, such as transforming representations in the media and introducing emotional literacy programmes in education.

Keywords: Gender, Crying, Gendered Behavior, Gender Roles, Gender Perceptions.

Öz

Bu araştırma, Türkiye gibi toplumsal cinsiyet normlarının belirgin olduğu bir ortamda yaşayan yetişkin bireylerde, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri ve inançlarının ağlama davranışını nasıl etkilediğini incelemeyi amaçlayan nicel bir çalışmadır. Betimsel tarama modeliyle yürütülen araştırmada, çevrimiçi anket aracılığıyla toplanan veriler analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin ağlama davranışını belirgin bir biçimde şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ağlamanın yalnızca biyolojik bir tepki değil, aynı zamanda kültürel ve toplumsal bağlamda cinsiyetle ilişkilendirilmiş bir davranış olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, kadınların ağlama davranışının toplumsal olarak daha hoşgörülü ve kabul edilebilir bulunduğunu, erkeklerin ise ağlama eylemiyle daha fazla olumsuz sosyal etkileşim yaşadığını göstermektedir. Erkeklerin ağlaması genellikle zayıflık olarak algılanmakta, bu da toplumsal baskılarla duygusal ifadelerinin bastırılmasına yol açmaktadır. Kadınların ise daha fazla duygusal ifade özgürlüğüne sahip olmalarına rağmen, bu durum bazen olumsuz etiketlemelere neden olmaktadır. Sosyal bağlamlarda her iki cinsiyet de kamusal alanda ağlamaktan çekinirken, bu çekince erkeklerde iş yerinde, kadınlarda toplumsal mekânlarda daha belirgindir. Katılımcılar her ne kadar ağlamayı evrensel ve doğal bir insan tepkisi olarak kabul etseler de geleneksel cinsiyet kalıplarını sürdürdükleri ve yeniden ürettikleri görülmektedir. Toplumsal cinsiyet normlarının duygusal ifadeyi sınırlandırıcı etkisi erkeklerde sosyo-psikolojik baskıya, kadınlarda ise toplum tarafından görece daha kabul gören bir durum olmasına rağmen manipülasyon algısına neden olabilmektedir. Araştırma, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ve duygusal ifade özgürlüğü konusunda toplumda daha fazla farkındalık yaratılması gerektiğine işaret etmektedir. Bunun için çalışmada, özellikle medyada temsillerinin dönüştürülmesi ve eğitimde duygusal okuryazarlık programlarının devreye sokulması gibi önem arz eden çeşitli öneriler sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Ağlama, Cinsiyetlendirilmiş Davranış, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rolleri, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algıları.

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Gendered Tears: The Relationship of Gender Roles and Perceptions to Crying

Expressing our emotions is a core part of being human. It's how we share our inner world and connect with everything around us. Crying is a perfect example of this; it's a deeply personal response, yet it's also packed with social and cultural meaning. We cry for all sorts of reasons - joy, sadness, helplessness, even anger. It's truly a universal human experience, as researchers like Millings et al. (2016) point out. Big life events like weddings, births, goodbyes, and deaths can trigger tears, but so can everyday things, even small disagreements (Rottenberg et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the emergence, expression, frequency and perception of this natural behaviour are significantly influenced by an individual's social and cultural context, as well as their psychological state.

Among these factors, gender plays a decisive role in how individuals experience and express their emotions, and in how society responds to these expressions. Unlike biological sex, gender is the sum of cognitive patterns, expectations, attitudes and behaviours constructed and created by society (Bora & Üstün, 2005). The social construction of femininity and masculinity means even basic human behaviours such as crying become “gendered” actions, causing individuals to regulate their natural responses in line with social expectations. This demonstrates that crying is not merely a personal experience, but also reflects social norms and power relations.

The field of gender studies has evolved historically. Simone de Beauvoir's (2011) pioneering work The Second Sex emphasised the socio-cultural construction of womanhood rather than its biological nature, laying the groundwork for the concept of “gender” in the 1950s (Nas, 2017). Joan Scott (1986) really advanced our understanding by analyzing how culture perpetuates male-dominated power. In the 1970s, women's studies primarily focused on gender regimes and power dynamics (Sancar, 2011). But by the 1980s, the conversation shifted to highlight the diverse experiences of womanhood across age, class, and ethnicity. This evolution eventually led to the realization that patriarchal systems also restrict men, prompting the inclusion of men's studies in academia during the 1990s (Beynon, 2002). This broader perspective underscores why we need to examine “gendered” behaviors, like crying, by looking at both women's and men's experiences simultaneously.

Crying is one of the most obvious ways we express emotion, tied to feelings like sadness, disappointment, and joy. Society's attitudes toward this universal behavior (something everyone experiences) are largely shaped by gender norms. These norms dictate who can cry, when, and under what circumstances it's considered acceptable. In many cultures, including Türkiye, crying is seen as more appropriate for women than for men. This reinforces traditional gender roles: femininity is linked with emotional openness, while masculinity is associated with resilience and emotional control. These stereotypes don't just affect how individuals express their emotions; they also have significant consequences for mental health and social relationships. Crying is also a complex emotional behavior with various psychological and social functions. How often people cry and the situations in which they do so can vary by gender. Therefore, to truly understand the relationship between gender and crying, we need a multidimensional examination that considers socialization processes, cultural expectations, and even biological factors (Vingerhoets, 2013).

Türkiye's unique sociological structure (acting as a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures, where religious values often clash with secular life and patriarchal structures are undergoing significant change) provides an exceptional environment to explore the link between gender and emotional expression. In Türkiye, and many male-dominated cultures, crying is associated with femininity and is considered outside the norms of ideal masculinity. Statements such as “Boys don't cry!” or “Don't cry like a girl!” create strong social pressure for boys to suppress their emotions from an early age. This can prevent men from expressing emotions such as sadness, fear and disappointment, and may cause

them to avoid feeling these emotions altogether. However, emotions such as happiness, sadness, joy, crying and fear are universal and experienced by all human beings, not just women. This social pressure hinders emotional awareness and prevents individuals from managing their emotions healthily.

Despite the great interest in emotions and emotional expressions, existing literature reveals that surprisingly little research has been conducted on crying, and very little is known about the specific functions of this unique human emotional expression. Notably, there is a striking lack of knowledge regarding the background and developmental aspects of gender differences in crying (Vingerhoets et al., 2000; Van Tilburg et al., 2002). The insufficient exploration of the relationship between gender roles/perceptions and crying behaviour further deepens the scientific gap in this field. To address this, this study aims to systematically examine the relationship between gender roles/perceptions and attitudes towards crying behaviour among adults in Türkiye using quantitative methods, providing empirical data to the national literature on this field.

Türkiye has a social structure in which strong patriarchal traditions and modernisation dynamics are intertwined. In this context, the expectation to “be strong” and “control emotions” is widespread, particularly in the construction of masculinity, and the saying “men don't cry” is frequently used. Conversely, femininity is generally associated with emotionality. This cultural background has a profound influence on how crying behaviour is perceived and experienced based on gender. In academic studies conducted in Türkiye, crying has generally been considered a universal phenomenon, with little attention given to how individuals experience it in their own lives. However, crying has different meanings for different individuals and can provide relief for some and be an expression of suppressed emotions for others. People carry their own stories about when, why and how they cry in their daily lives. Nevertheless, studies that shed light on these personal experiences are limited (Çelik & Durmuş, 2018). Further research is required to understand how crying interacts with not only emotions, but also social contexts, relationships and a person's self-perception. Such studies will enable us to consider crying as both a reaction and a human condition.

The suppression of crying can have negative psychological, social and physiological effects (Schlosser, 1986; Levoy, 1988; De Fruyt, 1997; Becht & Vingerhoets, 2002; Peter et al., 2001; Vingerhoets & Schiers, 2000; Rottenberg et al., 2008; van Hemert et al., 2011; Bastian et al., 2012; Simons et al., 2013; Vingerhoets, 2013; Denckla et al., 2014). These multi-layered health risks constitute the practical rationale for the importance of this study. In this context, the study aims to shed light on the health costs of emotional suppression triggered by gender norms. The main objective is to determine the relationship between gender roles, perceptions, and crying behaviour among individuals aged 18 and over living in Türkiye, using quantitative methods. To this end, a quantitative survey design was employed to address the following research questions:

1. What are people's attitudes towards crying?
2. Is there a relationship between gender stereotypes and attitudes towards crying?
3. Do attitudes towards crying differ according to biological sex and gender perceptions?
4. In what ways do gender roles influence crying behaviour differently in women and men?
5. How does the acceptability of crying behaviour vary according to gender perceptions in different social environments (e.g. family, workplace, peer group)?

Following the introduction, the article will present the conceptual framework of the study and review the literature on gender, masculinity, femininity and crying behaviour. This will be followed by a methodology section detailing the research method, population and sample, data collection tools, data analysis processes, the researcher's role, limitations and other relevant information. The study's findings

and discussion will be presented in separate sections, and the article will conclude with a summary of the findings and recommendations.

Sex, Gender and Gender Identity

The Turkish Language Association (2025) defines "sex" as the totality of biological characteristics that distinguish females from males. These characteristics manifest as specific qualities, such as chromosomal differences, voice tone, physical strength, height and weight. The fundamental distinction relates to reproductive form, and these characteristics are innate and unchangeable (Dalkılıç, 2019).

In contrast, gender refers to the set of cognitive patterns, expectations, attitudes and behaviours constructed by society, especially patriarchal structures (Bora & Üstün, 2005; Martineza & Blanco, 2014). This concept is referred to as "cultural constructs" (Scott, 2007; Beauvoir, 2011; Çelik, 2016). As Scott (2007) emphasises, gender is a social category imposed on the biological body. It is learned and internalised during socialisation and involves adopting societal norms. Therefore, it is not innate, but rather taught by society and transmitted through culture (Oakley, 1985; Sancar et al., 2006; Slattery, 2014). Masculine and feminine characteristics may vary according to culture and time. Gender as a whole regulates the division of labour, roles, personal characteristics, behaviours and power relations (Oakley, 1985; Bhasin, 2003).

Gender identity, on the other hand, is how an individual defines themselves as masculine or feminine. Masculinity is associated with objectivity, analytical thinking, competition and concealing emotions, while femininity is associated with emotionality, expressing emotions and talkativeness. An individual with a male biological sex may identify as feminine (with a female gender identity) or vice versa (Ersöz, 2016). According to Jung (2016), every man has a feminine side, and complete masculinity is based on suppressing this side. Gender identity differs from sexual orientation and forms part of identity development (Pedagogy Association, 2018). Identity issues can be caused by biological, psychological, or sociological factors.

This conceptual distinction is important for understanding that behaviours such as crying are shaped by social norms and personal perceptions rather than biological drives. While sex is biological, gender is learnt, and gender identity is an individual's self-perception. This distinction explains why norms such as "boys don't cry" are social rather than biological. If crying were solely the result of biological differences, gender roles and gender identity would not be as influential. A mismatch between biological sex and gender identity can exacerbate the pressure and internal conflicts caused by social roles. The construction of gender through patriarchal systems influences perceptions of masculinity and femininity, as well as forms of emotional expression (such as crying). Therefore, the relationship between gender roles and crying behaviour is an important topic that must be addressed theoretically. The following headings will help to clarify this relationship.

Gender Construction of the Patriarchal System and Mechanisms of Correction

The patriarchal social structure plays a fundamental role in constructing gender, creating a gender regime consisting of deeply rooted beliefs and values concerning femininity and masculinity (Beynon, 2002; Çelik, 2016; Dalkılıç, 2019). This regime is critical to understanding the gender regime (Bora & Üstün, 2005). From infancy, society instils certain roles and responsibilities in individuals according to their gender. While women are confined to the private sphere (e.g. household chores and childcare), men's presence in the public sphere is reinforced. This division of labour is socially constructed, not biological (Ortner, 1974; Slattery, 2014; Çelik, 2016), and not universal (Oakley, 1985; Slattery, 2014). In addition to promoting male dominance, the patriarchal system has destructive effects on men by

imposing “impossible” qualities on them. Men are forced to perform roles that are difficult to fulfil (Goldberg, 2010; Çelik, 2016).

Society expects the gender stereotypes it has created to be adhered to completely. Behaviours that do not conform to norms (e.g. men crying) are treated with “double the seriousness” and “correction mechanisms” are employed (Goodman et al., 2002; Çelik, 2016). Both women and men are involved in this process. Girls learn to internalise the process of becoming a woman as secondary genderisation in the private sphere (Chodorow, 1978; Bell, 2003; de Beauvoir, 2011). Beauvoir's (2011) statement that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' reflects this socialisation. Similarly, patriarchal correction mechanisms reinforce feelings of shame and emotional suppression by punishing behaviours that do not conform to gender roles (e.g. men crying) (Biernat, 2003; Fischer et al., 2013; Fischer & LaFrance, 2015; MacArthur, 2019). While statements such as “Boys don't cry” suppress boys' emotional expression, the phrase “Crying like a girl” positions women as weak and othered (Omay, 2021). This not only exerts external pressure, but also acts as an internal control mechanism that shapes an individual's self-perception and leads to self-censorship.

Gender perceptions are constructed through children's observations and experiences from birth to adulthood (Fine, 2010; Ruble et al., 2008). Fine (2010) and Ruble et al. (2008) use the “eye colour” metaphor to illustrate this process. According to this metaphor, brown-eyed children are treated as “emotional/delicate” and given baby toys, while blue-eyed children are called “strong” and given car or gun toys. Societal attitudes, such as “blue-eyed children don't cry” or “brown-eyed children are bad at maths”, cause children to position themselves according to these stereotypes. This example demonstrates how traditional gender roles are effectively taught by society.

Social Construction of Perceptions of “Masculinity” and “Femininity”

Masculinity is a socially constructed performance that must be constantly proven. Scully (2014) presents the four foundational components of Brannon (1976, cited in Çelik, 2016) as follows: These are avoidance of feminine traits (not being a “mama's boy”), pursuit of status and success (being a “top dog”), emotional toughness and independence (being “rock-solid”), and aggression and risk-taking (having a “show your stuff” attitude). Bozok (2011), citing Gilmore, emphasises four moral conditions for men: impregnating women, caring for dependants, protecting the family and achieving personal autonomy. These components are reinforced by social rituals such as circumcision, military service, finding a job, marriage and fatherhood (Bell, 2003; Selek, 2010; Çelik, 2016), trapping men in a constant cycle of “proving themselves”.

The idea of “being as strong as a rock” can lead to the suppression of emotions, particularly crying, which is stigmatised as a sign of weakness. Goldberg's (2010) emotion dilemma transforms this pressure into a tragic paradox. According to this, men who show their emotions are perceived as “unstable”, while those who hide them are seen as “cold”. This dilemma creates a deep internal conflict. Suppressed sadness and fear often manifest as anger or physical symptoms. Ultimately, emotional restraint can lead to anxiety, relationship problems and violent tendencies, threatening both individual and societal well-being (Çelik, 2016). The prohibition of crying is the most concrete manifestation of this toxic cycle.

Femininity is constructed through a socialisation process summarised by Beauvoir's (2011) statement that 'one is not born a woman, one becomes a woman'. The idea of being confined to the private sphere (home and care) and a secondary status is internalised by directing women towards emotional expression (Ortner, 1974; Çelik, 2016). Research shows that “feminine” emotions such as sadness, fear and happiness are encouraged, while “masculine” emotions such as anger and pride are discouraged (Shields, 1987; Fischer, 1993; Hess et al., 2000). This socialisation begins in early childhood. Parents

talk more about their daughters' emotions, while peers reinforce gendered emotional norms (Fivush et al., 2000; Chaplin & Aldao, 2013).

As a natural result of this process, crying is coded as a “feminine” behaviour. Vatandaş's (2007) study in Türkiye found that 74–82% of the population considered crying to be feminine. However, this apparent acceptance is not freedom, but a double bind. On the one hand, women are labelled as “easy cryers” (Özdem, 2019), and on the other, this expression is stigmatised as “weak”, “uncontrolled”, or “irrational” (Shields, 1991; Jansz, 2000). In professional settings, crying is seen as a “manipulation tool” (Elsbach & Bechky, 2018). Hiding emotions carries the risk of being accused of “emotional detachment”. Thus, women are subject to social judgement regardless of how they express themselves.

In conclusion, when men are forbidden to cry, it leads to psychological distress because they suppress their emotions. For women, while crying might be “permitted,” it's often limited by the stigma of weakness and manipulation. In both scenarios, crying—a truly universal human response—gets twisted by the rigid rules of patriarchal gender ideology. These oppressive mechanisms undermine both individual well-being and healthy social relationships by restricting people's freedom to experience authentic emotions. This study's main goal is to expose the destructive consequences of this complex oppression.

Definition, Causes and Functions of Crying Behavior

Crying is a unique and universal form of emotional expression marked by the production of tears. As Millings et al. (2016) note, it's an integral part of being human and can happen during major life events like weddings, births, and deaths, or even in response to everyday things like minor arguments. Why and how we cry has fascinated researchers from Aristotle's time right up to today (Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2001). It's well-known that negative emotions centered on helplessness or powerlessness—such as anger, sadness, fear, and disappointment—often trigger tears (Cretser et al., 1982; Vingerhoets et al., 2001; Vingerhoets & Bylsma, 2016; Cordaro et al., 2016). However, some studies have shown that crying can also be sparked by positive emotions like success, love, beauty, and enjoyment, as well as moral emotions such as pride, elevation, and gratitude (Schnall et al., 2010; Denckla et al., 2014; Vingerhoets & Bylsma, 2016; Seibt et al., 2017; Zickfeld et al., 2020).

Regarding the internal functions of crying, it has been suggested that it reduces tension and facilitates physiological recovery after distress (Rottenberg et al., 2008; Simons et al., 2013). Bindra (1972) and Frey (1985) state that crying reduces an individual's tension by enabling the release of excess emotional energy (see also Vingerhoets & Bylsma, 2016). Bylsma and colleagues (2008) found that crying after a joyful moment has a positive effect on mental health. The psychological and physiological benefits of crying are supported by scientific research. Studies have shown that people feel better physically and psychologically after crying, whereas those who suppress their tears feel worse (Schlosser, 1986; Levoy, 1988; De Fruyt, 1997; Vingerhoets & Schiers, 2000; Peter et al., 2001; Becht & Vingerhoets, 2002; van Hemert et al., 2011; Bastian et al., 2012; Denckla et al., 2014). Omay (2021) states that crying releases happiness hormones and facilitates stress management and the elimination of toxins, which underlie the feeling of “relaxation”. Emotional awareness (the ability to experience emotions without distortion, avoidance or denial) is closely related to this process (Steiner, 2009). Steiner (2009) emphasises that this requires being realistic about emotions and confronting defence mechanisms. Accepting and expressing emotions can promote inner peace and reduce negative outcomes such as emotional burden, detachment and fatigue (Levoy, 1988; Öksüz, 2005). Öksüz (2005) states that this improves overall quality of life.

At an interpersonal level, crying conveys pain and distress to others and provides comfort and emotional support (Kottler, 1996; Cornelius, 1997; Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000; Vingerhoets et al.). , 2001;

Özdem, 2019), and can manipulate the social environment (Ward & Beck, 1990; Kottler, 1996; Frijda, 1997; Diekman et al., 2010; Brinke et al., 2011; Azar et al., 2013; Lanaj & Hollenbeck, 2015; Elsbach & Bechky, 2018; Muñoz-García et al., 2021). Montagu (1981) suggested that crying helps build social cohesion and individual health by deepening empathy and emotional sharing, essentially laying the groundwork for social solidarity. Studies have even found that people who cry are generally seen as warmer, more honest, sincere, and trustworthy across various cultures (Van de Ven et al., 2017; Picó et al., 2020; Van Roeyen et al., 2020; Zickfeld et al., 2020). However, despite these benefits, crying can sometimes be perceived negatively or even used manipulatively, especially in places like the workplace (Cretser et al., 1982; Elsbach and Bechky, 2018). The very concept of "malicious tears" (Brinke et al., 2011; Motro & Ellis, 2017) shows that crying isn't always seen in a positive light. This really suggests that crying is a complex social signal, far more than just a simple emotional response. It also highlights that its effects change depending on the context, the crier's intention, and the observer's perception, making it a highly context-sensitive form of communication loaded with strong social and cultural meanings.

The Relationship between Gender and Crying

The connection between gender roles and crying behavior is shaped by a variety of complex social, cultural, psychological, and even biological factors. These factors lead to distinct differences in how often people cry, in what situations, and how crying is perceived. To explore these differences in detail, this section will first look at how crying varies between sexes. Then, it will delve into how emotions are shaped through social learning, how crying is viewed in different cultural contexts, and various theories that explain this phenomenon.

Sex Differences in Crying: Social and Biological Factors

Research has consistently shown that there are clear differences between men and women when it comes to how often they cry and how intensely. Numerous studies, including those conducted in 37 countries across America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, confirm that women cry more frequently and for longer periods than men (Williams, 1982; Frey, 1985; Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000; Bekker & Vingerhoets, 1999, 2001; Becht et al., 2001; Van Tilburg et al., 2002; Becht & Vingerhoets, 2002; Van Hemert et al., 2011; Fischer & LaFrance, 2015; MacArthur, 2019). However, it should be noted that this difference is not innate and is not evident in infancy or early childhood (Feldman et al., 1980; James-Roberts and Halil, 1991; Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000; Hastrup et al., 2001). Differences begin to emerge around the age of 11–13 with the onset of puberty; the decrease in crying in males is more noticeable than the increase in females (van Tilburg et al., 2002). This suggests that biological (hormonal) and social learning factors interact in a complex manner, with sex socialisation (the expectation of emotional suppression in males) playing a dominant role over biological predispositions (Frey, 1985; Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000; Van Tilburg et al., 2002).

Four main hypotheses have been proposed in the literature to explain sex differences in crying (Van Tilburg et al., 2002). The first hypothesis focuses on social learning processes. It suggests that the difference is explained by the fact that boys are not allowed to cry, while crying is more acceptable for girls, and by norms such as "boys don't cry". The second hypothesis points to differences in emotional exposure and perception. According to this hypothesis, men and women perceive and respond to emotional stimuli differently. The third hypothesis is based on sex differences in personality and coping styles. The fourth hypothesis emphasises biological factors (hormones). The increase in emotional tear production due to the prolactin hormone, which increases in women during puberty while androgen levels are inversely related to crying (Moir & Jessel, 1995), provides a biological explanation. However,

the lack of a consistent relationship between menarche (first menstruation) and crying behaviour undermines the idea of biological determinism.

In conclusion, it is emphasised that differences in crying are largely due to men expressing crying less frequently (De Fruyt, 1997; Vingerhoets & Schiers, 2000; Peter et al., 2001). This finding, where social learning (gender norms) clearly outweighs biological predispositions, strikingly shows how gender can actually transform biology. Men's tendency to suppress emotions powerfully demonstrates how social norms can change behavior.

Norms of Emotion Expression and Social Learning Processes

Emotional expression norms are the unwritten social rules that guide how we show our feelings in different social and cultural settings. These norms are crucial in building gender roles and, in turn, heavily influence how we cry (Fischer & LaFrance, 2015). Research shows that consistent gender-specific patterns of expression exist. Men tend to express “strong” and hostile emotions, such as anger, while showing less tolerance for emotions requiring vulnerability, such as sadness and shame. Conversely, women more frequently express vulnerable emotions such as sadness, fear and shame than anger (Zeman & Garber, 1996; MacArthur & Shields, 2015). This differentiation clearly indicates how gender structures emotional repertoires. These patterns are reinforced through socialisation processes from early childhood. Parents encourage anger expression in boys while suppressing sadness. Conversely, they adopt the opposite approach with girls (Fivush et al., 2000; Brody, 2001; Chaplin et al., 2005). The phrase “boys don't cry” symbolises this socialisation process (MacArthur and Shields, 2015). Consequently, men are expected to experience greater shame when crying than women (Becht & Vingerhoets, 2002).

Signs of a relaxation of these norms emerged in Western societies in the late 20^(th) century. The media began portraying male characters who cried or displayed fear (Labott et al., 1991; Jansz, 2000), suggesting that norms can be context-dependent. However, Timmers et al. (2003) discovered an intriguing paradox in their study in the Netherlands. Although explicit norms regarding the appropriateness of expressing emotions such as sadness and fear did not differ by gender, women were still expected to express these emotions more than men. This finding demonstrates the persistence of implicit gender expectations, even when explicit rules change (Fischer & LaFrance, 2015).

Gender norms are not just visible rules. They also include deep, implicit structures that guide emotional expression. These structures operate along two primary dimensions. The social/care dimension attributes empathy, kindness and social conformity to women, while the dominance/power dimension restricts women's expression of “strong” emotions such as anger, and limits men's expression of vulnerability. This framework explains why behaviours such as crying are gendered. In conclusion, individuals' experiences of and responses to emotions continue to be shaped by invisible yet powerful social norms (Fischer & LaFrance, 2015).

Perception and Evaluation of Crying: Contextual and Cultural Influences

How society views crying changes a lot based on who's crying, the situation, what people think the intention is, and cultural norms. Generally, those who cry are seen as warmer, more honest, sincere, and trustworthy, no matter the culture (Picó et al., 2020; Van de Ven et al., 2017; Van Roeyen et al., 2020; Zickfeld et al., 2020). However, there isn't much evidence to back up these positive judgments (Curry et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2013; Gray et al., 2012).

Even though crying at work is common, reactions can differ based on gender and perceived intent (Fischer and LaFrance, 2015; Elsbach and Bechky, 2018). For men, crying is generally seen as unusual

and negative because it goes against the stereotype of men as "strong and unemotional" (Motro & Ellis, 2017). This is consistent with West and Zimmerman's (1987) theory of gender construction. As the researchers point out, behaviours that do not conform to masculine norms are punished. While crying is generally accepted as a normal emotional response for women, it can be perceived as a form of manipulation to achieve a desired outcome (Elsbach & Bechky, 2018; Pittarello & Motro, 2024). "Bad-faith tears" are less accepted because they conflict with the honest/kind stereotypes associated with women (Ward & Beck, 1990; Azar et al., 2013; Muñoz-García et al., 2021). However, there is evidence that men are more susceptible to emotional manipulation (Grieve et al., 2019; Hyde & Grieve, 2014).

Gender norms are not absolute. In contexts associated with hegemonic masculinity (e.g. sports), crying by men may be socially acceptable. In competitive sports, for example, tears following defeat or retirement are often seen as a sign of strength or authenticity (Fox, 2004; Wong et al., 2011; Nelson, 1994). Sports provide a space in which men can express emotions that are usually considered "off-limits" (e.g. joy and close physical contact) (Kneidinger et al., 2001; Walton et al., 2004). According to hegemonic masculinity theory (Connell, 1995) and the insecure masculinity hypothesis (Vandello & Bosson, 2013; MacArthur, 2019), crying can reinforce "earned" masculinity status.

Culture has a deep influence on the perception of crying. Sharman et al. (2019) state that there is no sex difference in some countries, and that crying occurs more frequently in individualistic societies. However, the assertion that gender equality leads to women crying more frequently (Becht & Vingerhoets, 2002) has been refuted by Fischer et al. (2004). According to Fischer et al., there is no correlation between gender equality at the national level and the frequency of crying. This contradiction highlights the complex interplay between biological and social factors. Crying can become strategic depending on social status (e.g. "earned masculinity").

Basic Theoretical Approaches: Naturalist, Developmentalist, Social Role and Queer Approaches

Various theoretical approaches explaining the relationship between gender roles and crying behaviour have emerged in the literature. These approaches span a broad spectrum, ranging from biological determinism to social constructionism. The first perspective we'll look at is the "naturalist" approach. This view argues that the behavioral differences we see between women and men (crying included) come from innate biological differences. According to this approach, women's perceived physical weakness and their role in fertility led them to take on "nature-oriented" roles, like housework and childcare. Meanwhile, men's physical strength supposedly pushed them into roles outside the home, such as working and managing society (Slattery, 2014; Ortner, 1974). You can see examples of this thinking in Freud's (2018) famous statement, "anatomy is destiny," and Durkheim's (2013) belief that behavior is biologically based. Researchers like Baron-Cohen (2003) and Levy (2004) even point to differences in brain function, such as women generally having greater empathy and men tending toward more analytical thinking, to support this view. This approach emphasises the biological determinism of social roles and emotional tendencies, supporting the immutability of gender roles and the legitimisation of inequalities. However, it has been criticised for ignoring cultural diversity and social factors.

The second approach is the "developmental" or "social learning/construction" approach. In contrast to the naturalistic approach, this approach argues that behavioural differences (including differences in crying) are constructed by society and culture (Oakley, 1985; Slattery, 2014). Adler (1999), Oakley (1985) and Slattery (2014) contend that male dominance is justified by biology and that the division of labour is influenced by culture. Unlike biological sex, gender provides an analytical framework for understanding cultural norms (Bhasin, 2003). This approach asserts that there are no substantial psychological or biological differences between women and men. It emphasises that women perform better in endurance tests and that men are at least as emotional as women, but hide and suppress their

emotions due to social expectations (Slattery, 2014). Therefore, gender roles and emotional behaviours (such as crying) are learned and reproduced through cultural and historical processes, rather than being innate. Women crying more and men suppressing their emotions are not biological imperatives, but learned responses shaped by social norms and expectations.

Another approach is the “social role” approach. According to this approach, gender stereotypes and the greater acceptability of women crying compared to men are explained by the different distribution of social roles between women and men (e.g. women in the home and men as providers) (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2012; Wood & Eagly, 2010, 2012). This distribution leads to women being encouraged to express their emotions and men being encouraged to suppress theirs (Clark et al., 2004; Kelly & Hutson-Comeaux, 1999). Due to their lower status and power (Ridgeway, 2012; Ridgeway and Bourg, 2004), women's crying is more likely to be interpreted as “powerless” emotions (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Brody and Hall, 1993; Fischer and Evers, 2011). Crying is not just an individual response, but a practice shaped by social roles and imbued with meaning. The acceptance or suppression of emotional expressions relates to an individual's social position and place in the power hierarchy.

Judith Butler's (1990) groundbreaking “Queer Theory” suggests that gender isn't something we're born with or a fixed trait. Instead, it's a socially constructed “performance” that we're constantly putting on. According to Butler, gender roles like femininity and masculinity are performances that individuals repeatedly display through things like their clothing, gestures, speech patterns, and emotional expressions including crying. In this light, crying becomes a gender performance. Society codes women's crying as “feminine” and acceptable, while men's crying is seen as “unmanly” or weak. These codes don't come from some innate essence, but from these constantly repeated social performances. When emotional expressions are “atypical,” like a man crying, it challenges the dominant norms of masculinity, showing just how flexible and constructed gender truly is. These kinds of “performance errors” can actually push existing gender boundaries and open the door for new ways of expressing ourselves.

In conclusion, while the naturalistic approach argues that differences in crying between women and men are rooted in biology, the developmental approach emphasizes that these differences come from cultural learning and social norms. The social role approach highlights how emotional behavior is shaped by social status and power dynamics. Women's tendency to cry more is often linked to their lower social status, whereas men's emotional suppression is associated with their positions of power and control. Finally, the queer approach adds a critical and deeper dimension to how society perceives crying. It treats crying as both a personal expression of emotion and a performative act through which gender is constantly reproduced and sometimes even transformed. To sum it all up, while the biological approach prioritizes innate biological causes, the developmental, social role, and queer approaches all emphasize the powerful influence of social and cultural factors.

Method

This study adopted quantitative research methods to determine the effect of gender roles and perceptions on crying behaviour. Such research focuses on the analysis of numerical data and observable facts, taking a realistic approach to facts and events. The data obtained in such studies are quantified and presented in a generalisable form using numerical expressions (Patton, 2005). According to Gürbüz and Şahin (2017), the main purpose of quantitative research is to seek answers to questions such as “how much”, “to what extent”, and “how often” a phenomenon occurs. The basic research questions of this study are consistent with this objective of quantitative enquiry and aim to analyse data numerically to understand gender roles and crying behaviour. To this end, quantitative data obtained through a survey were used in the research.

A descriptive survey design based on the general survey model was adopted. Survey research designs are a type of quantitative research in which the researcher collects information by administering a survey to a sample group or the entire population, in order to explain their attitudes, opinions, behaviours or characteristics (Creswell, 2020). According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), survey-based research has three core characteristics. In this model, researchers consult individuals from a specific population to understand their opinions or traits, like their abilities, perceptions, attitudes, or beliefs, on a given subject, then they describe these findings. The research data comes from responses to questions asked of these group members. Crucially, this data is collected from a sample that accurately represents the larger population and reflects their views. To examine the current state of a subject in this model, researchers use descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, averages, and standard deviations. The descriptive survey model is an excellent choice for systematically defining the specific characteristics or conditions of a large population and revealing its current state at a particular moment (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017). This study, for instance, aims to describe the current state of the relationship between gender and crying among Turkish individuals over 18. It's worth noting that descriptive survey research is very common in the social sciences.

This study also used a cross-sectional design, which is a type of survey model. This design is useful for getting a general picture at the time the research is conducted since it's done in a single session. It's the most suitable design for identifying phenomena, problems, attitudes, and prevalence by taking a "snapshot" of the population (Kumar, 2011). This approach provides a clear view of the relationship between gender and crying at the specific point in time when the data was collected. It vividly reveals the current state of perception and can serve as a valuable baseline for comparisons or a starting point for future longitudinal studies, allowing researchers to track changes in perception over time. Selecting a descriptive survey and cross-sectional design demonstrates that it is a powerful tool for determining the current status and prevalence of the relationship between gender roles and crying behaviour in a clearer and more instantaneous manner. The cross-sectional design is an effective and efficient method of obtaining instantaneous profiles of large populations (such as Türkiye) when time and resource constraints are considered (Mann, 2003). However, it should be noted that the cross-sectional design provides measurements at a single point in time and therefore does not allow for the measurement of long-term changes.

The study population comprises all individuals aged 18 and over living in Türkiye. As of the study date, this population was estimated to comprise approximately 64,221,000 individuals (TÜİK-Turkish Statistical Institute, 2024). Brown (2006) defines the population as "the entire group of people of interest in a particular study". The research universe is defined as all individuals to whom the research findings can be generalised. A sample is a part of the research universe and is defined as a group of individuals who can best represent the population as a whole (Baltacı, 2018). Selecting a sample from the population is known as sampling. In quantitative research, large and random samples are often used to increase generalisability because the aim is to generalise. The representativeness of the sample is indeed critical for the validity and generalisability of the findings (Cohen et al., 2018).

In this study, various formulas were used to determine the sample size. The first of these is Cochran's (1977) formula. According to this formula, the minimum sample size required to achieve a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error for the population size of the study was calculated to be 384 individuals. Israel's (1992) formula states that when the population size exceeds 100,000, the required sample size to achieve a 95% confidence level is 400. Fowler (2009) recommends a sample size of 371 individuals under the same assumptions of a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. When a population is larger than 100,000, Neuman (2016) suggests that a sample size of around 400 is enough to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. With these calculations and

recommendations in mind, we made sure our study's sample size went beyond these minimums. While we initially had 742 participants, we excluded surveys with more than a 10% non-response rate or those showing inconsistencies. This left us with a final analysis based on data from 722 participants. This number is well above the calculated minimums (371–384–400) and is considered sufficient to accurately represent the population. Furthermore, by using several accepted formulas for sample size calculation and exceeding the minimum requirements, we enhanced the statistical power and representativeness of our findings (Bartlett et al., 2001).

The study used convenience sampling, a non-probability technique. This method relies on how accessible participants are to the researcher and is often chosen in quantitative research because it's practical when time and resources are limited (Patton, 2005; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016; Creswell, 2017). However, we acknowledge that the main drawback of convenience sampling is its potential for selection bias, meaning it might not fully represent the entire population (Neuman, 2016). Because it's a non-probability method, our sample's ability to represent all individuals aged 18 and over in Türkiye is limited. This means we might not have captured the experiences of people without digital access, those with lower socioeconomic status, elderly individuals, or those living in rural areas. Therefore, the findings might not be generalizable to these groups, and the results should primarily be interpreted within the context of our participating sample. Aware of these limitations, we took steps like increasing the sample size and gathering data from various online channels. This approach also allowed us to quickly reach a large group of participants through online surveys (Sue and Ritter, 2012).

In the findings section of the study, data were obtained from the “Survey on the Relationship Between Gender Roles, Perceptions, and Crying”, consisting of 48 items prepared by the researchers. This survey included pre-determined, structured questions and answer options, which are characteristic of quantitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Punch, 2011). Four of the survey items collect socio-demographic information; 35 are five-point Likert-type questions (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree); and the remaining nine items are closed-ended, multiple-choice questions where participants can select more than one option. The core measurement items in the second section of the survey consist of Likert-type questions. This type of question is widely accepted as a reliable tool for measuring attitudes and perceptions (Joshi et al., 2015). The first section of the survey collects participants' demographic information (age, gender, education, income, etc.). The second section contains statements that measure participants' views on gender and crying. These target key concepts and relationships identified through a review of the relevant literature. During the preparation of the questionnaire, field experts were consulted, after which the questionnaire was administered to a small pilot group and the necessary revisions were made. This process aimed to increase the comprehensiveness and clarity of the questionnaire. The pilot study is an important stage in determining the clarity and appropriateness of the questions and identifying technical issues, thereby contributing to the questionnaire's validity (Polit & Beck, 2012).

The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of Siirt University (Protocol No: 2025/1133, Decision Date: 05/05/2025). The survey was created and distributed online using Google Forms to facilitate access for participants. The survey link was shared with potential participants via WhatsApp groups, social media groups, email lists and various online platforms (e.g. university student groups, academic sharing groups and various NGOs) using the convenience sampling method (i.e. aiming to reach existing information in the fastest and most practical way). Data were collected online between May and July 2025, with no regional restrictions within the country. Although online surveys offer advantages such as overcoming geographical restrictions, reducing costs and enabling rapid data collection, they also have limitations, such as excluding groups without internet access and being unable to verify participant identity (Wright, 2005). Although the data were collected in Türkiye, it should be

noted that gender perceptions and crying behaviours may vary across cultures. Ethical considerations were carefully observed at every stage of the research process. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Each participant was informed of the study's purpose, their rights (including confidentiality and anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any time), and electronic consent was obtained before the survey began. This ensured the protection of participants' rights and the ethical conduct of the research. The informed consent process and data confidentiality are indeed particularly important in online research.

The collected data were reviewed for errors and omissions prior to analysis, and incomplete or inconsistent responses were excluded. Ultimately, all 722 survey responses were included in the analysis. The survey data collected via Google Forms were transferred to the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software package for analysis. Double-checking was performed during data entry to ensure accuracy. Data cleaning and validation after entry are critical steps that improve data quality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Descriptive statistics for continuous variables in the quantitative part of the study are expressed as the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values. For categorical variables, they are expressed as frequencies and percentages. These descriptive statistics play a fundamental role in quantitatively describing the general distribution, central tendency and variability of the relationship between gender and crying. Descriptive statistics are an indispensable first step in summarising the basic characteristics of a dataset and understanding its distribution (Field, 2018). The obtained data were evaluated to reveal the relationship between gender roles and crying behaviour, particularly in terms of the gender variable. The results were interpreted from a theoretical perspective in the discussion section of the study and compared with the relevant literature.

Descriptive quantitative studies are generally aimed at defining or describing a fact, situation, or phenomenon. They do not manipulate variables or examine causal relationships (Creswell, 2017). Therefore, hypotheses are not required in descriptive research. This is because they generally focus on describing the current situation and defining the data (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017). However, in some cases, descriptive research may include hypotheses aimed at testing specific characteristics of a particular phenomenon. These hypotheses tend to focus on defining the characteristics of existing situations rather than causal relationships (Ochoa-Pachas, 2021). Therefore, depending on the research design and purpose, either hypotheses or research questions may be used, but neither are a requirement for descriptive research. As the primary objective of this study is to describe the relationship between gender roles, perceptions, and crying behaviour, no hypotheses were formulated during the research process. However, the introduction section of the study contains research questions.

Findings

This section presents the main findings of the study. A range of factors will be discussed, from the demographic characteristics of the participants to the relationship between crying and gender. The detailed findings obtained in relation to these issues are presented below.

Demographic Information of Participants

This section details the demographic characteristics of the individuals who participated in the research. Basic demographic information, such as the participants' gender, age, marital status and level of education, constitutes an important basis for the overall findings and analysis of the research. These characteristics are discussed in detail under each sub-heading below.

Table 1

Distribution of Participants by Gender

Sex	n	%
Male	276	38.2%
Female	446	61.8%
Total	722	100%

The majority of the research group were women (n=446; 61.8%), while the remainder were men (n=276; 38.2%). The higher participation rate among women compared to men may be related to their interest in gender-related issues. However, while acknowledging the limitations of convenience sampling, the proportional distribution of each sex group was considered in the data analysis, aiming to mitigate the impact on the generalizability of findings. In fact, given that existing literature shows that women cry more frequently, the high representation of women enriches the diversity of crying experiences and sex comparisons.

Table 2

Distribution of Participants according to Age

Sex	18-22	23-27	28-32	33-37	38-42	43-47	48-52	53 +	Total
Male	67	55	33	52	41	11	7	10	276
Female	216	124	42	37	14	7	4	2	446
n	283	179	75	89	55	18	11	12	722
%	39.2%	24.8%	10.4%	12.3%	7.6%	2.5%	1.5%	1.7%	100%

Examining the age distribution of the study participants reveals that the majority are young adults (aged 18-32; approximately 75%). The percentage of participants aged 33 and over is relatively low (around 25%). This can be explained by either the study topic attracting the interest of young people, or by the fact that data were collected in a virtual environment. While this allows robust conclusions to be drawn about the behaviours, attitudes and opinions of young adults, the underrepresentation of middle-aged and older adults may make it difficult to generalise the findings to these groups. However, as the primary focus of the study is gender, it is believed that the age limitation will not significantly impact the results.

Table 3

Distribution of Participants according to Marital Status

Sex	Single	Married	Divorced	Wife Deceased	Total
Male	164	105	6	1	276
Female	351	88	7	0	446
n	515	193	13	1	722
%	71.3%	26.7%	1.8%	0.1%	100%

Examining the distribution of marital status reveals that the vast majority of participants are single (n=515; 71.3%), while married individuals (n=193; 26.7%) and those who are divorced or widowed account for much lower proportions. The high proportion of single individuals is consistent with the young age distribution of the sample, and can be explained by factors such as individuals not yet reaching marriageable age, or postponing marriage decisions. While the large size of the single subgroup could limit the power of the analyses, it is assessed that this distribution will not undermine

the validity of the findings relating to the study's primary focus variable (gender) and research objectives.

Table 4

Distribution of Participants according to Educational Status

Sex	-	Primary School	Middle School	High School	Associate Degree	Bachelor's degree	Postgraduate	Total
Male	2	0	3	58	87	88	38	276
Female	0	6	8	123	190	105	14	446
n	2	6	11	181	277	193	52	722
%	0.28%	0.83%	1.52%	25.07%	38.37%	26.73%	7.20%	100%

The highest education rates among male participants in the research group were observed among graduates with a bachelor's degree (88 people, 31.9%) or an associate degree (87 people, 31.5%), while those with a high school diploma ranked third (58 people, 21%). The postgraduate education rate was noteworthy at 13.8% (38 people). Among women, the highest education rates were observed among associate degree holders (190 individuals, 42.6%) and high school graduates (123 individuals, 27.6%), while bachelor's degree holders ranked third (105 individuals, 23.5%). The postgraduate education rate among women is quite low at 3.1% (14 individuals). The fact that men have higher education rates than women may be related to gender dynamics or differences in access to education. The intersection of education level and sex may directly affect how individuals perceive the acceptability of crying. Indeed, men with higher levels of education are known to view crying more positively, while women with lower levels of education are more likely to express their emotions in a traditional manner. While the “level of education” variable is not of primary importance in terms of the research itself, this issue has been considered in the study's discussion section.

The demographic findings of the study indicate that the participants were predominantly highly educated, young, single and female. These findings do not suggest that the study focused on a specific target audience. Based on the “gender” variable, which was of primary importance to the study, analyses were conducted taking into account the relative proportions of sex groups within the sample. Therefore, it is considered that the structure of the sample does not limit the scope, purpose or generalisability of the study.

Findings on the Relationship between Crying and Gender

This section presents findings examining the relationship between crying behaviour and gender from various perspectives. It details how gender norms shape individuals' crying behaviour and the perceived differences between the sexes. Various assessments are made regarding the meaning of crying at social, cultural and individual levels. The research findings reveal gender-based tendencies in areas such as the causes of crying, its social perception, emotional responses and manipulation, particularly through an examination of sex differences.

Table 5

Sex Differences in the Causes of Crying

In which situations do you usually cry?	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Emotional movies/books/music	139	12.3%	370	10.2%	509	10.7%
Sadness	129	11.4%	349	9.6%	478	10.0%
Mourning/Death/Loss	192	17.0%	312	8.6%	504	10.6%
Disappointment	63	5.6%	285	7.8%	348	7.3%
Anger	74	6.6%	248	6.8%	322	6.8%
Farewell moments	87	7.7%	245	6.7%	332	7.0%
Longing	74	6.6%	211	5.8%	285	6.0%
When I see someone else crying	68	6.0%	200	5.5%	268	5.6%
Physical pain	35	3.1%	199	5.5%	234	4.9%
Stress	34	3.0%	197	5.4%	231	4.8%
Fights/Relationship conflicts	22	2.0%	186	5.1%	208	4.4%
Depression	31	2.7%	185	5.1%	216	4.5%
Happiness	51	4.5%	138	3.8%	189	4.0%
Anxiety	18	1.6%	135	3.7%	153	3.2%
Loneliness	36	3.2%	130	3.6%	166	3.5%
Emotional closeness	33	2.9%	126	3.5%	159	3.3%
Social pressure	8	0.7%	94	2.6%	102	2.1%
Other	16	1.4%	16	0.4%	32	0.7%
I never cry	18	1.6%	12	0.3%	30	0.6%
Total	1128	100%	3638	100%	4766	100%

The table showing sex differences in crying triggers indicates that the most frequently reported cause of crying for men is “grief/death/loss” (17.0%), whereas for women, the most common triggers are “disappointment” (7.8%), “physical pain” (5.5%) and “stress” (5.4%). “Emotional movies/books/music” and “Sadness” were significant triggers for both sexes, though women reported higher overall frequencies for these. Notably, “Social pressure” was cited as a cause of crying considerably more by women (2.6%) than by men (0.7%).

Table 6

Sex Differences in Responses to Crying

How do people around you usually react when you cry?	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Supportive	148	40.5%	321	48.6%	469	45.7%
Indifferent	56	15.3%	97	14.7%	153	14.9%
Overprotective	41	11.2%	90	13.6%	131	12.8%
Mocking	32	8.8%	48	7.3%	80	7.8%
Disturbing	32	8.8%	42	6.4%	74	7.2%
Blaming	12	3.3%	34	5.1%	46	4.5%
I never cry	29	7.9%	14	2.1%	43	4.2%
Other	15	4.1%	15	2.3%	30	2.9%
Total	365	100%	661	100%	1026	100%

The table showing how participants perceived the reactions of others to crying reveals clear sex differences. Women reported receiving “supportive” responses more frequently than men (48.6% vs. 40.5%). Conversely, “mocking” and “disturbing” reactions were more prevalent for men (both 8.8%) than for women (7.3% and 6.4% respectively). “Overprotective” responses were more common for women (13.6%), while men reported saying “I never cry” at a significantly higher rate (7.9%) compared to women (2.1%).

Table 7

Sex Differences in Restrictions on Crying

In which situations are you afraid to cry?	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
In public (street, public transportation, etc.)	157	22.8%	250	26.3%	407	24.8%
At work	154	22.4%	220	23.2%	374	22.8%
Within the family	116	16.8%	171	18.0%	287	17.5%
In the presence of friends	115	16.7%	120	12.6%	235	14.3%
Next to my partner/lover/wife	80	11.6%	68	7.2%	148	9.0%
I don't hesitate at all	26	3.8%	80	8.4%	106	6.5%
I never cry	27	3.9%	17	1.8%	44	2.7%
When you're alone	9	1.3%	19	2.0%	28	1.7%
Other	5	0.7%	5	0.5%	10	0.6%
Total	689	100%	950	100%	1639	100%

The reluctance of participants to cry in various social settings differed according to sex. Both men and women most frequently expressed hesitation to cry “In public” (22.8% of males; 26.3% of females) and “At work” (22.4% of males; 23.2% of females). Notably, men were more hesitant to cry “In the presence of friends” (16.7%) and “Next to my partner/lover/wife” (11.6%) compared to women (12.6% and 7.2% respectively). A higher percentage of women (8.4%) reported “I don't hesitate at all” to cry, contrasting with men's higher rate of “I never cry” (3.9%).

Table 8

Gender Dynamics of Tear Suppression

Have you ever tried to hold back tears? Why?	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I don't want to look weak	132	33.8%	208	29.7%	340	31.1%
I know I shouldn't cry	89	22.8%	195	27.8%	284	26.0%
Perceived as attention-seeking	58	14.8%	144	20.5%	202	18.5%
Crying is useless	46	11.8%	74	10.6%	120	11.0%
People around me will feel uncomfortable	43	11.0%	57	8.1%	100	9.2%
Other	13	3.3%	13	1.9%	26	2.4%
Did not happen	10	2.6%	10	1.4%	20	1.8%
Total	391	100%	701	100%	1092	100%

Participants reported different reasons for holding back tears, depending on their sex. The most common reason for both men and women was “I don't want to look weak,” cited by 33.8% of men and 29.7% of women. Women were more likely than men to suppress tears because “I know I shouldn't cry” (27.8% vs. 22.8%) and due to the fear of being “Perceived as attention-seeking” (20.5% vs. 14.8%). Men, conversely, were more concerned that “People around me will feel uncomfortable” (11.0%) compared to women (8.1%).

Table 9

Emotional Correspondence of Crying in the Social Sphere

How does it make you feel to cry in front of others?	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Feel powerless	123	35.4%	195	35.1%	318	35.3%
Feels normal	84	24.2%	171	30.8%	255	28.3%
Feels embarrassing	60	17.3%	70	12.6%	130	14.4%
Makes you feel comfortable	32	9.2%	81	14.6%	113	12.5%
I never cried	41	11.8%	31	5.6%	72	8.0%
Other	7	2.0%	7	1.3%	14	1.6%
Total	347	100%	555	100%	902	100%

The emotional responses of participants to crying in front of others were examined, with a feeling of "powerlessness" emerging as the primary reason for both sexes. Specifically, 35.4% of men and 35.1% of women reported feeling "powerless" when crying in front of others. Women were more likely to find this situation "normal" (30.8%) or "comfortable" (14.6%) compared to men (24.2% and 9.2% respectively). Conversely, men were more likely to feel "embarrassed" (17.3%) when crying in front of others compared to women (12.6%). A higher percentage of men (11.8%) also stated they "never cried" at all, compared to women (5.6%).

Table 10

Emotional Dynamics Between Sexes After Crying

How do you feel after crying?	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Relieved	167	40.5%	344	41.1%	511	40.9%
Vulnerable	34	8.3%	95	11.3%	129	10.3%
Alone	38	9.2%	79	9.4%	117	9.4%
Powerful	32	7.8%	80	9.5%	112	9.0%
Liberated	30	7.3%	75	8.9%	105	8.4%
Unchanged	38	9.2%	51	6.1%	89	7.1%
Worse	29	7.0%	43	5.1%	72	5.8%
Embarrassed	19	4.6%	35	4.2%	54	4.3%
Criminal	6	1.5%	26	3.1%	32	2.6%
I never cry	16	3.9%	7	0.8%	23	1.8%
Other	3	0.7%	3	0.4%	6	0.5%
Total	412	100%	838	100%	1250	100%

The most commonly reported emotion after crying was "relief", which was found to be similar for both sexes. The predominant emotion for both men (40.5%) and women (41.1%) was feeling "relieved" after crying. However, women were more likely to report feeling "vulnerable" (11.3%), "powerful" (9.5%), and "liberated" (8.9%) compared to men (8.3%, 7.8%, and 7.3% respectively). Conversely, men reported higher rates of feeling "unchanged" (9.2%) and "worse" (7.0%) after crying than women. A significantly higher proportion of men (3.9%) also stated that they "never cry" compared to women (0.8%).

Table 11

Sex-based Perception Differences in Responses to Crying Individuals

What do you think/feel when you see a woman/man crying?	**When I see a man crying;**				**When I see a woman crying;**			
	Male		**Female**		**Male**		**Female**	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
I feel sad	137	16.2%	246	19.2%	163	15.2%	324	20.0%
I think he's helpless.	116	13.7%	162	12.7%	139	13.0%	210	13.0%
There must be something serious	116	13.7%	132	10.3%	93	8.7%	142	8.8%
He must be in great pain	111	13.1%	133	10.4%	109	10.2%	171	10.6%
There is mourning	108	12.8%	102	8.0%	105	9.8%	143	8.8%
Family problems	73	8.6%	101	7.9%	99	9.2%	173	10.7%
Economic hardship	47	5.5%	62	4.8%	58	5.4%	89	5.5%
It is an ordinary. normal thing	28	3.3%	72	5.6%	79	7.4%	120	7.4%
Powerless	42	5.0%	51	4.0%	86	8.0%	109	6.7%
I find it brave	26	3.1%	58	4.5%	22	2.1%	40	2.5%
I've never come across it.	14	1.7%	68	5.3%	15	1.4%	9	0.6%
I would be surprised	8	0.9%	51	4.0%	19	1.8%	16	1.0%
Emotional exploitation	6	0.7%	23	1.8%	53	4.9%	42	2.6%
Other	9	1.1%	9	0.7%	9	0.8%	9	0.6%
I feel uncomfortable	6	0.7%	9	0.7%	23	2.1%	20	1.2%
Total	847	100%	1279	100%	1072	100%	1617	100%

The study revealed in detail how participants perceived crying individuals. When observing a crying man, male participants most often reported feeling “sad” (16.2%) or thinking “he is helpless” (13.7%). Female participants, when seeing a man cry, also frequently reported feeling “sad” (19.2%) or thinking “something serious is going on” (10.3%). Conversely, when presented with a crying woman, male participants again cited feeling “sad” (15.2%) and “helpless” (13.0%), while female participants emphasized feeling “sad” (20.0%) and perceiving “family problems” (10.7%). The perception of crying as “emotional manipulation” was notably higher among male participants (4.9%) when seeing a woman cry, compared to female participants (2.6%).

Table 12

Effect of Gender Norms on Crying Behavior and Sex Differences in Perceptions

		Sex	**Strongly Agree**		**Agree**		**Undecided**		**Disagree**		**Strongly Disagree**	
1	*I believe that gender roles influence crying behavior.*	M	70	25.4%	145	52.5%	36	13.0%	14	5.1%	11	4.0%
		F	125	28.0%	229	51.3%	55	12.3%	30	6.7%	7	1.6%
2	*“A man does not cry” is still a common belief in society.*	M	91	33.0%	127	46.0%	28	10.1%	21	7.6%	9	3.3%
		F	144	32.3%	220	49.3%	23	5.2%	37	8.3%	22	4.9%
3	*It is more acceptable for women to cry than for men to cry.*	M	68	24.6%	107	38.8%	31	11.2%	53	19.2%	17	6.2%
		F	61	13.7%	135	30.3%	60	13.5%	137	30.7%	53	11.9%
4	*A man crying affects me more than a woman crying.*	M	92	33.3%	92	33.3%	43	15.6%	41	14.9%	8	2.9%
		F	98	22.0%	152	34.1%	73	16.4%	89	20.0%	34	7.6%

The views of participants on the effect of gender norms on crying behaviour were collected. A large majority of both male (77.9% combining “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”) and female (79.3%) participants agreed that gender roles influence crying behavior. Furthermore, 79.0% of men and 81.6%

of women affirmed that the belief "A man does not cry" remains common in society. While 63.4% of male participants found it more acceptable for women to cry than men, female participants showed a more varied response, with 44.0% agreeing and 42.6% disagreeing with this statement. Lastly, a significant proportion of both men (66.6%) and women (56.1%) reported being more affected by a man crying than a woman crying.

Table 13

Perception of Normality of Crying by Sex

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Crying is a behavior attributed to men and considered normal for them.*	M	14	5.1%	20	7.2%	40	14.5%	118	42.8%	84	30.4%
		F	22	4.9%	67	15.0%	70	15.7%	213	47.8%	74	16.6%
2	*Crying is a behavior attributed to women and considered normal for them.*	M	49	17.8%	85	30.8%	30	10.9%	79	28.6%	33	12.0%
		F	39	8.7%	157	35.2%	49	11.0%	136	30.5%	65	14.6%

The social perception of crying as normal or not according to sex was examined, and it was found that traditional views are still prevalent. Most participants rejected the idea that crying is normal for men, with 73.2% of men and 64.4% of women disagreeing with this statement. This highlights the persistent cultural pressure on men to suppress emotional displays. Conversely, crying was widely considered normal for women, with 48.6% of men and 43.9% of women agreeing with this perception. These findings underscore how deeply gender roles influence the social acceptance of emotional expression.

Table 14

Perceptions of the Relationship Between Socioeconomic Status and Crying

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Men of high status cry less.*	M	49	17.8%	72	26.1%	67	24.3%	70	25.4%	18	6.5%
		F	43	9.6%	96	21.5%	104	23.3%	148	33.2%	55	12.3%
2	*Women of high status cry less.*	M	31	11.2%	64	23.2%	70	25.4%	87	31.5%	24	8.7%
		F	32	7.2%	90	20.2%	92	20.6%	169	37.9%	63	14.1%
3	*Socioeconomic status is associated with crying behavior.*	M	47	17.0%	102	37.0%	66	23.9%	48	17.4%	13	4.7%
		F	50	11.2%	131	29.4%	110	24.7%	115	25.8%	40	9.0%

The study also examined how people perceive the effect of socioeconomic status on crying. A notable 43.9% of men agreed that high-status men cry less, indicating a perceived link between male status and emotional restraint. Women showed less agreement (31.1%) and higher disagreement (45.5%) with this idea. For women of high status crying less, agreement was lower for both genders (34.4% of men, 27.4% of women), with higher rejection rates, particularly among women (52.0%). Overall, a majority of men (54.0%) and a significant portion of women (40.6%) acknowledged that socioeconomic status is associated with crying behavior.

Table 15

Sex Differences in Perceiving Crying as "Manipulation"

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*I interpret men crying as "manipulation".*	M	14	5.1%	17	6.2%	63	22.8%	121	43.8%	61	22.1%
		F	39	8.7%	66	14.8%	85	19.1%	156	35.0%	100	22.4%
2	*I interpret women's crying as "manipulation".*	M	43	15.6%	54	19.6%	68	24.6%	88	31.9%	23	8.3%
		F	18	4.0%	44	9.9%	64	14.3%	175	39.2%	145	32.5%

The study revealed sex-specific interpretations by examining how crying is perceived as "manipulation". Only 11.3% of men and 23.5% of women interpreted men crying as manipulation, indicating that male tears are largely not seen as insincere. However, 35.2% of men agreed that women's crying is manipulative, suggesting a greater suspicion of female emotional displays among men. In contrast, a strong majority of women (71.7%) rejected the idea that female crying is manipulative, highlighting a significant gender gap in this perception.

Table 16

Perception of "Appropriateness" of Crying by Sex

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Crying suits men better.*	M	13	4.7%	6	2.2%	31	11.2%	130	47.1%	95	34.4%
		F	26	5.8%	16	3.6%	46	10.3%	208	46.6%	150	33.6%
2	*Crying suits women better.*	M	41	14.9%	54	19.6%	40	14.5%	91	33.0%	50	18.1%
		F	29	6.5%	58	13.0%	38	8.5%	166	37.2%	155	34.8%

Sex-based perceptions of whether crying is appropriate or not have been examined. An overwhelming majority of both men (81.5%) and women (80.2%) disagreed with the statement "Crying suits men better," demonstrating a widespread rejection of this traditional gender norm. Conversely, when considering if "Crying suits women better," 34.5% of men agreed, while significantly fewer women (19.5%) held this view. A strong 72.0% of women rejected the idea that crying is more appropriate for their gender, indicating a critical stance against gender stereotypes.

Table 17

Perceptions of Representations of Crying in The Media by Sex

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Men crying is portrayed positively in the media, TV series and movies.*	M	24	8.7%	60	21.7%	89	32.2%	81	29.3%	22	8.0%
		F	30	6.7%	147	33.0%	130	29.1%	108	24.2%	31	7.0%
2	*Women's crying is portrayed positively in the media. TV series and movies.*	M	39	14.1%	84	30.4%	70	25.4%	65	23.6%	18	6.5%
		F	42	9.4%	141	31.6%	116	26.0%	116	26.0%	31	7.0%

This study examined the perceptions of both genders regarding positive portrayals of crying in the media. Regarding men crying being positively portrayed, 30.4% of men agreed, compared to a higher 39.7% of women. This suggests women are more receptive to or perceive more positive depictions of emotional male characters. For women crying in media, perceptions were more balanced, with 44.5% of men and 41.0% of women agreeing on positive portrayals. This similarity indicates that societal expectations often lead media to depict female emotionality in traditional ways, resulting in less divergence in perception between genders on this aspect.

Table 18

Perceptions on Social Pressure and Male Crying

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Society forces men to suppress their crying.*	M	74	26.8%	121	43.8%	37	13.4%	30	10.9%	14	5.1%
		F	120	26.9%	198	44.4%	43	9.6%	59	13.2%	26	5.8%
2	*Boys are taught not to cry.*	M	47	17.0%	116	42.0%	42	15.2%	54	19.6%	17	6.2%
		F	72	16.1%	183	41.0%	61	13.7%	88	19.7%	42	9.4%

It has been identified that there are strong social beliefs that men should not cry. A vast majority of both male (70.6% combined Strongy Agree and Agree) and female (71.3%) participants agreed that society forces men to suppress their tears. Disagreement with this view was notably low for both genders. Furthermore, 59.0% of men and 57.1% of women agreed that boys are explicitly taught not to cry. These findings collectively underscore the deeply ingrained social norms and educational practices that enforce emotional suppression in men from an early age.

Table 19

Sex-based attitudes toward crying as a sign of weakness

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*I think crying is a sign of weakness.*	M	18	6.5%	42	15.2%	31	11.2%	98	35.5%	87	31.5%
		F	17	3.8%	25	5.6%	41	9.2%	170	38.1%	193	43.3%
2	*I see men crying as "emotional weakness".*	M	30	10.9%	53	19.2%	36	13.0%	101	36.6%	56	20.3%
		F	16	3.6%	48	10.8%	49	11.0%	174	39.0%	159	35.7%

Participants' attitudes toward crying as a sign of weakness were revealed. Overall, the majority rejected the notion that crying signifies weakness, with 67.0% of men and a higher 81.4% of women disagreeing with this view. However, distinct gender differences emerged when evaluating men's crying as "emotional weakness". A notable 30.1% of male participants interpreted other men's crying as emotional weakness, whereas only 14.4% of women held this view. The tendency to reject this interpretation was stronger among women (74.7%) than men (56.9%). These findings highlight the internalised pressure on men to perceive male tears as a weakness, a view less commonly held by women.

Table 20

Social Perceptions of Male Crying

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Crying damages a man's dignity.*	M	25	9.1%	65	23.6%	45	16.3%	108	39.1%	33	12.0%
		F	25	5.6%	40	9.0%	53	11.9%	185	41.5%	143	32.1%
2	*Men's crying is found to be understandable only with death.*	M	48	17.4%	88	31.9%	43	15.6%	70	25.4%	27	9.8%
		F	39	8.7%	106	23.8%	57	12.8%	151	33.9%	93	20.9%
3	*Men crying is perceived in society as a sign of courage.*	M	18	6.5%	46	16.7%	58	21.0%	100	36.2%	54	19.6%
		F	28	6.3%	77	17.3%	88	19.7%	178	39.9%	75	16.8%

The various social perceptions surrounding men crying have been examined. A significant sex difference was observed regarding the belief that "Crying damages a man's dignity". While 32.7% of men agreed with this statement, only 14.6% of women did. Men were also more likely to reject this view (51.1%) than women (73.6%). The idea that "Men's crying is found to be understandable only with death" was accepted by 49.3% of men but only 32.5% of women. Conversely, women were more likely to oppose this restrictive view (54.8%) compared to men (35.2%). These findings highlight enduring traditional beliefs about male emotional restraint, particularly among men.

Table 21

Perceptions of the Influence of Religion, Culture, and Family on Attitudes Toward Crying

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*My religion/sect influences my attitude towards crying.*	M	19	6.9%	45	16.3%	49	17.8%	106	38.4%	57	20.7%
		F	30	6.7%	46	10.3%	59	13.2%	186	41.7%	122	27.4%
2	*My culture influences my attitude towards crying.*	M	35	12.7%	98	35.5%	59	21.4%	55	19.9%	29	10.5%
		F	35	7.8%	103	23.1%	71	15.9%	155	34.8%	82	18.4%
3	*In my family. "crying" is encouraged as a sign of emotion.*	M	12	4.3%	30	10.9%	49	17.8%	128	46.4%	57	20.7%
		F	20	4.5%	62	13.9%	88	19.7%	195	43.7%	81	18.2%

The perceived influence of religion, culture and family on attitudes towards crying has been revealed. A majority of male (59.1%) and a larger proportion of female (69.1%) participants stated that their religion/sect did not influence their attitude towards crying. Regarding cultural influence, 48.2% of men agreed that culture shapes their crying attitudes, compared to only 30.9% of women. Conversely, 53.2% of women disagreed with cultural influence, versus 30.4% of men. Lastly, the majority of both men (67.1%) and women (61.9%) disagreed that crying is encouraged as a sign of emotion within their family. These findings suggest that while personal religious beliefs may have less direct impact, cultural and family norms play distinct and often restrictive roles in shaping emotional expression.

Table 22

Pressure of Traditional Gender Roles on Crying

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Men should be strong, they should not cry.*	M	37	13.4%	46	16.7%	42	15.2%	110	39.9%	41	14.9%
		F	18	4.0%	42	9.4%	40	9.0%	205	46.0%	141	31.6%
2	*Men need to be "tough" and women need to be "sensitive".*	M	41	14.9%	62	22.5%	45	16.3%	89	32.2%	39	14.1%
		F	36	8.1%	90	20.2%	58	13.0%	160	35.9%	102	22.9%

The views of participants on rigid gender role expectations regarding emotional expression were examined. For the statement "Men should be strong, they should not cry," a striking 77.6% of women strongly rejected this traditional rule, while the rejection rate among men was lower at 54.8%. This highlights women's greater willingness to challenge norms that restrict male emotionality. Conversely, a higher proportion of men (30.1%) supported this view compared to women (13.4%). Similarly, regarding the belief that "Men need to be "tough" and women need to be "sensitive"," 37.4% of men agreed, while women's agreement was lower at 28.3%. Opposition to this rigid distinction was strong, with 46.3% of men and a higher 58.8% of women expressing dissent. These findings indicate a significant questioning of traditional gender stereotypes, particularly by female participants.

Table 23

Social Acceptances Regarding Women's Crying Behavior

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Women are emotional, their crying is accepted in society.*	M	57	20.7%	132	47.8%	31	11.2%	40	14.5%	16	5.8%
		F	70	15.7%	224	50.2%	59	13.2%	56	12.6%	37	8.3%
2	*Women cry more than men.*	M	116	42.0%	123	44.6%	18	6.5%	11	4.0%	8	2.9%
		F	167	37.4%	226	50.7%	23	5.2%	25	5.6%	5	1.1%
3	*Crying is a "feminine" behavior.*	M	20	7.2%	36	13.0%	44	15.9%	101	36.6%	75	27.2%
		F	25	5.6%	46	10.3%	40	9.0%	180	40.4%	155	34.8%

This study has revealed traditional and changing societal perspectives on women crying. A large majority of both men (68.5%) and women (65.9%) strongly agreed with the traditional idea that "Women are emotional, their crying is accepted in society." Similarly, the belief that "Women cry more than men" was widely accepted, with 86.6% of men and 88.1% of women agreeing, and very few disagreeing. However, when it came to the statement "Crying is a 'feminine' behavior," most participants disagreed significantly: 63.8% of men and a substantial 75.2% of women. This suggests that while people accept women's emotionality and their reported higher frequency of crying, there's a growing resistance to explicitly labeling crying as only a feminine trait.

Table 24

Social Acceptance of the Naturalness and Function of Crying

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*Crying is a natural and healthy reaction for everyone.*	M	95	34.4%	116	42.0%	38	13.8%	14	5.1%	13	4.7%
		F	217	48.7%	162	36.3%	38	8.5%	18	4.0%	10	2.2%
2	*Crying is a gender-neutral behavior.*	M	90	32.6%	108	39.1%	31	11.2%	33	12.0%	14	5.1%
		F	232	52.0%	144	32.3%	25	5.6%	32	7.2%	13	2.9%
3	*Crying is sometimes a kind of defense mechanism.*	M	47	17.1%	113	41.1%	55	20.0%	47	17.1%	13	4.7%
		F	104	23.3%	163	36.5%	70	15.7%	80	17.9%	29	6.5%

Findings have been obtained on how people perceive crying, particularly its naturalness, gender differences, and function. An overwhelming majority of both men (76.4%) and women (85.0%) agreed that "Crying is a natural and healthy reaction for everyone." This clearly shows a widespread personal acceptance of crying as a universal human response. Similarly, the idea that "Crying is a gender-neutral behavior" also received strong backing, with 71.7% of men and 84.3% of women agreeing. This suggests a desire for crying to be seen independently of specific gender associations. Finally, a majority of both men (58.2%) and women (59.8%) agreed that "Crying is sometimes a kind of defense mechanism," indicating an awareness of its varied psychological roles.

Table 25

External Evaluation Anxiety and Feelings of Discomfort in Crying Experience

		Sex	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
1	*When I cry, I think I will be judged by others.*	M	28	10,1%	77	27,9%	51	18,5%	93	33,7%	27	9,8%
		F	41	9.2%	90	20.2%	75	16.8%	179	40.1%	61	13.7%
2	*It makes me uncomfortable to be around other people when I cry.*	M	69	25.0%	104	37.7%	48	17.4%	38	13.8%	17	6.2%
		F	83	18.6%	159	35.7%	76	17.0%	94	21.1%	34	7.6%

Findings have been obtained concerning participants' feelings of anxiety and discomfort about crying in social settings. Regarding the statement, “When I cry, I think I will be judged by others,” participants generally didn't agree with this anxiety, with 43.5% of men and 53.8% of women disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. However, a significant portion still reported feeling this concern (38.0% of men and 29.4% of women). More distinct gender differences showed up when it came to discomfort: 62.7% of men reported feeling uncomfortable crying when others are around, compared to 54.3% of women. This suggests that men experience greater social discomfort with public emotional displays. On the flip side, a higher percentage of women (28.7%) than men (19.9%) said they don't feel uncomfortable crying in front of others.

Discussion

This study examined how gender norms, social structures and cultural values shape crying behaviour, and how men and women experience it differently. The findings clearly demonstrate that crying is not merely a biological response, but rather a gendered phenomenon influenced by societal and cultural norms. The boundaries of the legitimacy of emotional expressions are determined by cognitive patterns and expectations constructed by society. This study examined elements such as participants' reasons for crying, environmental responses and suppression mechanisms within fundamental theoretical frameworks, including the social role approach (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2012; Ridgeway, 2012) and social learning/construction processes (Oakley, 1985; Van Tilburg et al., 2002; Slattery, 2014). The main findings of the study clearly demonstrate that gender norms play a significant role in shaping individuals' emotional expressions, exerting considerable pressure on fundamental emotional responses, particularly crying.

The findings reveal significant sex differences in the triggers of crying. The finding that for men, “mourning/death/loss” was the most common trigger for crying, while for women, “disappointment”, “physical pain”, and “stress” were also significant triggers, suggests that gender norms encourage men to suppress their emotions and view crying as a sign of weakness, allowing it primarily under extreme conditions such as death. Brannon's (1976, cited in Çelik, 2016) principle of “being as solid as a rock” from the components of masculinity suggests that men's emotional expression is limited and only gains social legitimacy under extreme conditions (such as death). The perception among men that crying is socially unacceptable is a widespread phenomenon that leads them to remain emotionally withdrawn. As Goldberg (2010) emphasises, this results from the expectation that men should be strong and in control, with behaviours such as crying being labelled as “weakness”. While men are expected to be emotionally strong and in control, behaviours such as crying are labelled as “weakness” according to social norms. This pressure is a typical manifestation of the patriarchal system's “correction mechanism”. Norm violations are punished with internalised feelings of shame. Indeed, the fact that men are more likely than women to respond “it makes me feel ashamed” to the question “how does crying in front of others make you feel?” reflects the internalisation of these normative pressures. This finding confirms previous research.

Despite men being subject to social pressure regarding emotional expression, women's experiences differ. They are encouraged to express their emotions, meaning that their emotional responses, such as crying, are seen as more acceptable by society. Their tendency to cry more in response to emotional states such as disappointment indicates that society tolerates their emotional openness more and is less constrained by social norms. However, even when women's emotional expression is socially accepted, it can sometimes be labelled as “weak” or “emotional”. These labels can unfortunately lead to women's emotional behavior being marginalized. Vatandaş's (2007) research actually confirms this dilemma, showing that women themselves tend to view crying as “feminine.” The fact that women's emotional openness is both socially acceptable and yet sometimes seen as “emotional manipulation” or

“weakness” really highlights the contradictory ways gender impacts emotional expression. Interestingly, though, in our study, participants generally rejected the statement “crying is a feminine behavior.” This contradicts Vatandaş's (2007) findings. Given that our study involved a younger, more educated sample, this difference might suggest that perceptions of gender roles in Türkiye have shifted over time, and these stereotypes are now being questioned. The general acceptance of crying as a universal and healthy human response among our participants could signal a growing resistance to such gendered labeling.

These conflicting perceptions beg the question: how exactly is crying shaped by social expectations, individual experiences, and what triggers it? Research here suggests that women cry more than men in response to psychological factors like physical pain and stress. This could be because women are more sensitive to physical and psychological sensations, or perhaps men suppress their emotions in these situations due to societal expectations of “pain tolerance.” Oakley (1985) and Çelik (2016) have thoroughly analyzed how gender roles shape emotional expression. They highlight that societal pressure on men to suppress their emotions is a major factor preventing men from crying. Our study's findings echo this, showing that men's avoidance of behaviors seen as weak, like crying, is indeed a result of gender norms.

Our findings also reveal that men and women receive different reactions to their crying from those around them. Notably, women receive more “supportive” reactions than men. Conversely, the rates of “indifferent” reactions were similar for both sexes. This suggests that society is generally less tolerant of emotional expressions like crying, and that men are particularly expected to be strong and less emotional (Connell, 1995; Goldberg, 2010). This difference aligns with the emotional control expected by “hegemonic masculinity.” Within this framework, male tears are seen as violating the rules of the patriarchal order (Connell, 1995; Beynon, 2002). While Montagu (1981) emphasizes how crying contributes to social cohesion, this function doesn't seem to apply to men. Instead, male tears are often interpreted as a “loss of status” rather than fostering connection. Gender norms constantly scrutinize men's emotional expressions, branding crying as “weakness” (Fischer and LaFrance, 2015). Our research findings show that men themselves are more likely than women to see crying as a sign of weakness. In particular, male participants were significantly more likely than women to interpret other men's crying as “emotional weakness.” This highlights the constant pressure on men's emotional expressions, forcing them to appear stronger and remain emotionally guarded due to gender norms (Biernat, 2003). The fact that men face this emotional pressure creates a significant distinction regarding how crying functions for individuals and society. While Van de Ven et al. (2017) and Picó et al. (2020) found that people who cry are generally perceived as warmer, more honest, sincere, and trustworthy across different cultures, our findings suggest that this positive perception doesn't necessarily extend to men who cry. While crying individuals are typically considered “honest,” this doesn't hold true for men. Male tears are generally seen as “atypical” and “norm-violating” (Motro & Ellis, 2017).

Although women are generally more tolerant of emotional displays like crying, these behaviors can sometimes be negatively viewed as “manipulative” or “weak” (Shields, 1991). Brinke and colleagues (2011) even refer to this perception as “malicious tears.” In the workplace especially, women's tears are often interpreted as a tactical tool (Elsbach & Bechky, 2018). This contradiction shows that even though women's emotional expressions are socially accepted, they can still be negatively labeled (Slattery, 2014). Elsbach and Bechky (2018) emphasize this duality, noting that tears in the workplace are met with suspicion and seen as a “manipulation tool.” This clashes with the stereotype that “women are honest and compassionate.” Consequently, the perception of manipulation intensifies negative responses toward women (Ward & Beck, 1990; Muñoz-García et al., 2021). This demonstrates that women's emotional expressions are heavily influenced by gender norms, being both accepted and

negatively labeled (Fischer & LaFrance, 2015). Social role theory also helps explain this contradiction, suggesting that women's lower-status roles mean emotionality is perceived as “natural” for them.

However, this acceptance can reinforce power relations (Eagly, 1987; Ridgeway, 2012). Women face social judgements that interpret crying as “seeking attention”. Indeed, women are significantly more likely than men to fear that crying will be perceived as “seeking attention”. This difference reflects the risk of women's emotionality being labelled as “manipulative”. Society's tendency to characterise women's tears as “dramatic” or “calculated” may be the root cause of this internalised fear. Bhasin (2003) observed that women's emotional expressions are often perceived as “manipulation” and “flattery”, thereby restricting their emotional expression. This situation clearly demonstrates how social norms and negative attitudes shape women's emotional expressions.

Significant sex differences have been observed in the negative reactions received by people who cry. The fact that men encounter mocking and disturbing reactions more often than women shows that they are subject to emotional punishment when their crying does not conform to social expectations. This strongly indicates that emotional expressions conflicting with social norms of “masculinity” are excluded and negatively received. Indeed, Scott (2007) and Oakley (1985) emphasise that the strict gender norms create an expectation for men to suppress emotional expressions such as crying.

The reluctance to cry in social settings demonstrates the impact of gender on individuals. The finding that men are reluctant to cry in public or at work shows that they suppress their crying behaviour in accordance with gender norms. Conversely, women's greater reluctance to cry in public spaces such as the street or public transport indicates that they are subject to greater expectations of “emotional discipline”. Social control mechanisms assign women's bodies to the private sphere while imposing “controlled emotionality” in public spaces. The risk of being labelled “unstable” or “weak” if a woman cries in public may be the main reason for this reluctance. This finding clearly reveals how gender regulates women's emotional expression and the social sanctions against it in public spaces. This is because the historical construction of the “public sphere” with masculine codes (e.g. rationality and control) leads to women's emotional expressions in this space being interpreted as a “decrease in competence” (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Fischer et al., 2013). Therefore, women face certain normative boundaries regarding their emotional expression in both social and professional settings.

While both genders experience a similar fear of crying at work, the underlying dynamics of this fear differ according to gender. Women tend to avoid expressing emotion due to concerns about their professional reputation stemming from the “emotional woman” stereotype and the expectation to be rational and professional. This is because emotional expression in women is generally associated with weakness. Conversely, men are expected to maintain the image of a “strong man”. If they cry, this calls into question the “leadership” qualities expected of them by social norms. As Goldberg (2010) and Slattery (2014) point out, this leads men to suppress their emotional expression in professional settings and conform to rigid, socially constructed norms of masculinity. Thus, emotional expression in the workplace is deeply shaped by gender, revealing differing professional expectations for men and women.

Similar gender dynamics can also be observed in more personal social relationships, as well as in public spaces such as the workplace. The reluctance to cry in social relationships also yields noteworthy findings. Men are significantly more reluctant to cry than women, especially among friends. This can be explained by societal constructions of masculinity, which deem emotional openness unacceptable among friends. Stereotypes such as “men don't cry” act as a mechanism that prevents emotional sharing, particularly among young men. This finding clearly demonstrates that gender suppresses men’s emotional expression, making it socially unacceptable for them to open up to others emotionally. As Çelik (2016) and Connell (1995) emphasise, identifying masculinity with masculine traits demonstrates

that social expectations regarding men's emotional expression hinder emotional sharing. Consequently, men may feel that their social status is under threat when they display emotional vulnerability in such settings.

A similar picture emerges in close relationships. According to this, men are more reluctant than women to cry in front of their spouses/lovers/partners. This finding highlights the psychological burden of the obligation to maintain a "protective and strong" image, even within intimate relationships. Conversely, women are more comfortable expressing their emotions in this context. As Beauvoir (2011) and Slattery (2014) point out, emotional expression is more socially acceptable for women than for men, and men's emotional openness in similar situations is considered incompatible with masculine norms. Even in romantic relationships, the expectation that these norms should not be compromised can push men into emotional isolation, exposing them to serious emotional pressures at both the social and individual levels.

Similarly, women are reluctant to cry in certain social settings. However, while women generally have more freedom to express their emotions in society, their reluctance to cry in the workplace is noteworthy. This suggests that women's emotional displays at work may be seen as unprofessional, putting women under greater emotional pressure (Elsbach & Bechky, 2018). This reluctance reflects the conflict between the masculine codes of the "public sphere" (rationality and control) and the feminine codes of the "private sphere" (emotionality and care) (Ortner, 1974; Slattery, 2014). This reservation stems from the historical construction of the "public sphere" with masculine codes (Dalkılıç, 2019). Indeed, Fischer et al. (2013) found that women's emotional displays in professional settings are perceived as a reduction in competence. Brescoll and Uhlmann's (2008) findings confirm this conflict. According to them, emotional displays by women in positions of power are interpreted as "competence deficiency". Women face normative constraints on their emotional expressiveness in both social and professional settings (Fischer, 1993; Fischer & LaFrance, 2015).

The widespread belief that men's crying has a greater emotional impact is shared by both genders. This mirrors findings from Çelik and Durmuş (2018), where female students reported being more moved by men crying, and male students said they reacted more strongly to men's tears than to women's. Interestingly, a significant number of female participants in our study didn't agree with this view. This suggests that while men crying might be seen as a deviation from social norms (West & Zimmerman, 1987) and therefore more impactful, this impact isn't universally accepted and remains a point of contention. Women's critical stance on this perception highlights the complexities surrounding the social acceptance of men crying.

Similarly, the fact that a notable portion of female participants either disagreed with or were undecided about the idea that "women's crying is more acceptable" points to a critical perspective on the "natural" acceptance of women's crying. This finding suggests that even when women's emotional expressions are socially accepted, this acceptance is still shaped by gender roles. Within the framework of Judith Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity, women's opposition to this statement and their rejection of crying as a gendered cliché indicates a critical awareness of social norms.

The belief that high-status men cry less reveals a clear perception gap between the sexes. The idea that men must control their emotions to maintain their status is a deeply ingrained societal belief. However, the fact that women reject this norm at a higher rate than men highlights an important critique of gender roles. This shows that social pressures are questioned not only by men, but by women too, and that a critical attitude has developed towards the pressures on men's emotional expressions. This dual trend gains greater significance in the context of Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) concept of symbolic capital. According to Bourdieu, symbolic capital refers to the resources individuals possess to gain prestige and respect in the social sphere. In this context, emotional control and refraining from crying become an

element of symbolic capital internalized by men to maintain high status and “masculinity.” In contrast, women perceive this restriction as a patriarchal tool of domination and seek to express their emotions more freely in response to this symbolic pressure.

It's quite rare for men's crying to be seen as “emotional manipulation.” A significant proportion of male participants in the study rejected this idea. This suggests that society either overlooks men's crying or interprets it as a more sincere expression of emotion. Erving Goffman's (1959) “social faces” theory sheds light on this finding. According to this theory, the “faces” or identities that individuals present in social interactions are shaped by social norms and expectations. Since emotional displays from men are generally uncommon and “unexpected,” they are often considered “genuine” and “natural” when they do occur. This “atypicality” can, paradoxically, increase social acceptance of male tears, as they are interpreted as a “pure” expression rather than “calculated” manipulation.

The emotions people experience after crying are clearly influenced by gender. For instance, men reported feeling more “powerless” after crying than women did. This reflects how violating social norms can impact self-esteem (Omay, 2021; Çelik, 2016). While men are expected to suppress their emotions and appear strong, feeling “weak” after crying underscores the negative impact of societal pressures on their emotional health (Fischer, 1993). In contrast, women tend to feel more “relieved” after crying. While the release of stress hormones and the secretion of happiness hormones are known to provide physiological benefits that support this sense of relaxation (Schlosser, 1986; Bastian et al., 2012; Omay, 2021), it's interesting to note that women also reported feeling more “vulnerable” after crying. This suggests that, although emotional expression is socially accepted for women, it is often still labelled as “weak” or “vulnerable” (Shields, 1991). Although crying provides women with emotional relief, gender norms can associate this emotional openness with feelings of fragility and vulnerability (Fischer and LaFrance, 2015). At this point, Steiner's (2009) emphasis on “emotional awareness” becomes important. According to her, accepting and expressing emotions is key to resolving internal conflicts.

Perceptions of the positive portrayal of men crying in the media differ significantly between genders. Female participants found such portrayals more positive than men did, suggesting that emotional male characters are more readily accepted by women in the media. This indicates that masculinity norms are more rigidly internalised by men, who tend to be more cautious towards portrayals of emotional men. Indeed, numerous studies, including those by Labott et al. (1991) and Jansz (2000), support this observation. Evaluating these findings within the framework of Liesbet van Zoonen's (1994) feminist media theory shows that the media's power to transform male emotionality varies according to how individuals perceive gender roles.

There is no significant difference between women and men in terms of their perception of the positive portrayal of women crying in the media. Both sexes support this representation in similar proportions. This similarity indicates that society generally accepts that the media still portrays female emotionality within traditional patterns. Representations of crying in the Turkish media present a dilemma that coincides with Nilüfer Göle's (2000) concept of “conservative modernity”. While the image of powerful men in TV series reinforces traditional gender roles, the prominence of emotional male figures in reality shows allows for the normalisation of emotional expression. Participants' opposition to these contradictory representations, and their high level of indecision, clearly reflect this situation. In summary, although the media has demonstrated its ability to transform gender norms, it is evident that deeply ingrained gender perceptions underpin the contrasting attitudes of men and women towards these portrayals. The more limited and cautious depiction of men crying in the media indicates that traditional masculine norms persist, yet also acknowledges the growing demand among women for greater

emotional freedom. This change indicates the evolution of gender norms through the media, as well as growing individual and collective criticism of these norms.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that crying behaviour is influenced by gender norms, cultural values and historical processes. The findings confirm the radical distinction between “gender” and biological sex. Differences in crying behaviour are not innate, but rather the result of social learning and patriarchal construction. However, this is not the case in every society. Indeed, Sharman et al. (2019) found no sex difference in crying after trauma in certain cultures. This demonstrates the cultural relativity of norms. While men are pressured to suppress their emotions due to gender norms, women are encouraged to express their feelings more openly. However, this openness can sometimes lead to women being labelled as “weak” and “manipulative”. Gender not only shapes individuals' emotional worlds, but also profoundly affects how these worlds are reflected in social relationships (Connell, 1995; Slattery, 2014; Fischer & LaFrance, 2015). These findings clearly demonstrate the interplay between basic emotional behaviours such as crying and gender, as well as the influence of social norms on these behaviours. Examining the relationship between crying and gender in more depth will help us to better understand the effects of gender norms on individuals.

In summary, these findings demonstrate the media's capacity to transform gender norms while revealing that deeply entrenched gender stereotypes underlie men's and women's different attitudes towards these representations. The more limited and cautious portrayal of men crying in the media shows that traditional masculine norms still exist, but also that women's demand for greater emotional freedom is part of social change. This shift points to the evolution of gender norms, influenced by media, and a growing critical stance towards these norms from both individuals and society. Considering all these detailed analyses, this study once again confirms that crying is a complex social phenomenon, profoundly shaped by gender norms, cultural values, and historical processes. The final conclusions and recommendations of this study will be laid out in detail in the upcoming section.

Conclusion

This quantitative study clearly shows that crying behavior in Turkish adults is shaped more by gender norms and cultural values than by being a simple biological response. Using a survey designed to measure participants' perceptions of gender and their attitudes towards crying, the study analyzed how this relationship is influenced by cultural values, psychological states, and social structures. The findings consistently revealed that crying is a behavior heavily influenced by social and cultural norms, not just a biological reflex. Ultimately, our perceptions of gender significantly impact how we express emotions, especially when it comes to crying.

In response to the research questions, the study reached several important conclusions. The vast majority of participants strongly agreed that gender roles influence crying behaviour. The view that crying is “normal” for women is much more widely accepted than the view that it is “normal” for men. Society is more restrictive and judgemental about men crying. Participants strongly agreed that society pressures men to suppress crying and teaches boys not to cry. The tendency to view crying as a “sign of weakness” was widely rejected, particularly by female participants. However, men are more likely than women to evaluate other men's crying as “emotional weakness”. Although traditional gender stereotypes such as “women are emotional and their crying is acceptable” and “women cry more than men” are widely accepted, the idea that “crying is a feminine behaviour” is strongly rejected.

Significant gender differences have been observed in the triggers of crying behaviour. Men cry most often in situations involving grief, death or loss, while women cry more in situations involving disappointment or physical pain. In terms of social context, both groups tend to avoid crying in public spaces such as streets, workplaces and public transport. Indeed, men and women both feel

uncomfortable crying in public and at work. The predominance of feelings of shame in men and feelings of relief in women after crying shows that social norms influence emotional responses. The findings demonstrate that gender influences crying differently depending on the social context. Accordingly, men limit emotional communication by labelling crying as “weakness”, even in close relationships, more than women do. Views that crying is a “universal and healthy response” which should be accepted as “gender-independent behaviour” have found very high levels of support in both gender groups. This reveals a contradiction between participants' personal beliefs and social norms. In other words, although the vast majority of participants view crying as a human right, they still consider the rule that “men don't cry” to be valid. This contradiction reflects the powerlessness of individual beliefs in the face of social norms. Men were more likely to perceive women's crying as manipulation than women were to perceive men's crying as manipulation. Women, on the other hand, largely rejected accusations of manipulation regarding crying in their own gender. Men are less likely than women to view crying positively in media. Restrictive ideas like “crying damages a man's dignity” and “men only cry in situations of death” are far more accepted by men than women. This clearly shows the significant influence of internalized social pressures concerning men's crying.

In summary, this study reveals the complex and sometimes contradictory dynamics of crying behavior - its triggers, consequences, and how it's perceived, especially through the lens of gender roles. While participants personally accepted crying as a natural and gender-neutral response, it's clear that traditional gender norms and societal pressures profoundly and lastingly influence men's experiences of crying and their perceptions of those experiences. The findings offer valuable insights into both the current challenges and the potential for progress in achieving gender equality and freedom of emotional expression.

Crying is a significant form of individual emotional expression and also plays a crucial role in our relationships with others. It helps people strengthen social bonds, build empathy, and offer social support. However, gender norms can really warp how this function is perceived. While women's crying is generally accepted as a way to show empathy and provide emotional support, men's crying is often seen as a sign of weakness and emotional instability. Gender truly shapes our emotional awareness and how we see ourselves. Men suppress their emotional expressions and behaviors, like crying, in line with internalized norms and social pressures. Women, on the other hand, while often encouraged to express emotions, face different kinds of social constraints and negative labeling.

Even though participants personally accept crying as a “natural” response, gender norms actively prevent this response from being fully expressed. While this study shows that individuals see crying as a “natural” and “gender-independent” emotional expression on a personal level, it also uncovers a deep contradiction in how society restricts them. Because crying is still largely seen as a sign of weakness for men, there are strong negative social norms and pressures against this behavior. For women, crying is more associated with “emotional openness” and is therefore more accepted within gender norms. However, the existence of such contradictions in social perceptions highlights a clear need for change in how individuals and society interpret and, often, suppress emotional expression.

This research reveals that crying is more a social behaviour shaped by social and cultural norms than a biological behaviour. Therefore, the study emphasises the importance of social awareness campaigns on gender equality and freedom of emotional expression. The influence of gender norms on crying behaviour can negatively affect individuals' emotional health, revealing the need to change these norms to build a healthier social structure. The influence of gender norms on crying is not merely an academic phenomenon. It is a social problem requiring practical intervention. The findings also reveal that gender-based restrictions on emotional expression can negatively impact mental health. In this context, schools should provide education on “emotional literacy” or “freedom of emotional expression” to teach boys

that crying is a natural human response. Psychological counsellors and guidance teachers, particularly in schools, play an important role in developing emotional awareness in children and adolescents and can make significant contributions to identifying and transforming gender-based emotional constraints at an early age. The media reinforces traditional norms by perpetuating hegemonic masculinity through representations such as “men who don't cry” in TV series. This is one of the biggest obstacles to potential social change. For this reason, great care should be taken to ensure that media representations of crying focus on gender equality. For instance, TV series, films or public service announcements that promote gender equality could be encouraged on digital platforms affiliated with the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK).

This study has several limitations. Although the convenience sampling method is practical in terms of time and resource constraints, it does not fully represent the entire population of individuals aged 18 and over in Türkiye, and there is a risk of selection bias. In particular, individuals with no digital access, those with a low socioeconomic status, the elderly, and those living in rural areas may not be adequately represented in the sample. This may limit the generalisability of the findings to these groups, meaning that the results should primarily be evaluated in the context of the participating sample group. The study was conducted in a single phase using descriptive survey and cross-sectional research designs. While this design is effective in revealing the current state and perceptions at a specific point in time, cross-sectional studies do not allow for the examination of causal relationships between variables and are not suitable for measuring long-term changes. Therefore, while the findings explain “how” the relationship between gender norms and crying behaviour exists, they cannot directly demonstrate “why” this relationship exists or “how it has evolved over time”. Furthermore, when researching sensitive topics such as emotional expression, there is always a risk of social desirability bias. Participants, particularly in cultures where strong social norms such as “men do not cry” exist, may be inclined to provide responses that are perceived as more socially acceptable.

Future research offers important opportunities to address the limitations of the current study. Firstly, mixed-methods approaches combining quantitative surveys with qualitative in-depth interviews or focus group discussions can be employed to mitigate social desirability bias in sensitive topics. Second, future studies should examine crying behaviour in different cultural and social contexts, and the effects of gender perceptions on this behaviour, in more detail. Studies that address the relationship between social pressures on men's and women's emotional expressions in a balanced manner should also be included. Research emphasising the need to change social norms can contribute to raising awareness of gender equality and freedom of emotional expression. Longitudinal studies following changes in social norms or perceptions over time are also important, using qualitative interviews (especially with male participants) to examine the individual and social meanings of crying in depth. Finally, probability-based sampling methods (e.g. stratified or cluster sampling) should be employed to ensure balanced representation of Türkiye's regions and socioeconomic levels

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval

This study involved human participants. The research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and was approved by the Ethics Committee of Siirt University (Protocol No: 2025/1133, Decision Date: 05/05/2025).

Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Author Contributions

The authors contributed equally to the conception, design of the study, data acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of the results. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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The authors declare no competing interests.

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Data Availability Declaration

All data supporting the findings of this study are available within the paper and its referenced sources in the bibliography. Additional data are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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