

# An Action Study on Psychological Empowerment of Turkish Women: Effect of Psychoeducation Program Which is Grounded Self-Awareness of Women

## Türk Kadınlarının Psikolojik Güçlendirilmesine İlişkin Bir Eylem Araştırması: Kadınların Öz-Farkındalıklarını Temellendiren Psikoeğitim Programının Etkisi

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This study was presented as an verbal presentation at 1st International Mediterranean Women's Studies Congress, October, 21-23, 2021, Antalya, Türkiye.

**ABSTRACT Objective:** The study aim is to examine the effect of a psychoeducation program to provide psychological empowerment Turkish women. **Material and Methods:** The study was conducted by an action research design. The sample consisted of 14 women who agreed to participate in a psychoeducation program called "Woman in the Mirror of Existence." The research design consisted of 4 stages (reconnaissance, planning, action and observation, and collective reflection) and 1 cycle. Data were collected and analyzed based on a grounded theory approach. **Results:** The core category was "I gained self-awareness as a woman, and that's how the change in me has started." Participants stated that what empowered them were first "motivation", followed by "remembering their existence as woman", "awareness of body and self", and "cultivating self-compassion." Their inner journey inspired motivation and empowerment, which helped them "redefining the meaning of being a woman", "present their existence in society", and "having a balance in relationships." They also underwent the process of "change in meanings", "psychological growth and maturation", and "participation in the cycle of change." **Conclusion:** Women's awareness of their bodies and their existence as women have a wide range of impacts. At the community level, interventions should conduct to liberate women from the gender roles imposed by society and help them see themselves as an individual.

**Keywords:** Action study; empowerment; existence; mental health; women

**ÖZET Amaç:** Çalışmanın amacı, Türk kadınının psikolojik olarak güçlendirilmesine yönelik bir psikoeğitim programının etkisini ele almaktır. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Çalışma, eylem araştırması tasarımı ile yürütülmüştür. Katılımcıları, "Varoluşun Aynasındaki Kadın" adlı psikoeğitim programına katılmayı kabul eden 14 kadın oluşturmuştur. Araştırma tasarımı 4 aşamadan (keşif, planlama, eylem ve gözlem ve toplu yansıtma) ve 1 döngüden oluşmuştur. Veriler, temellendirilmiş teori yaklaşımına dayalı olarak toplanmış ve analiz edilmiştir. **Bulgular:** Çekirdek kategori "Bir kadın olarak öz farkındalık kazandım ve bende değişim böyle başladı."dır. Katılımcılar, kendilerini güçlendiren şeyin önce "motivasyon", ardından "kadın olarak varlıklarını hatırlama", "beden ve benlik bilinci" ve "öz-şefkat geliştirme" olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. İçsel yolculukları, "kadın olmanın anlamını yeniden tanımlamalarına", "toplumdaki varlıklarını sunmalarına" ve "ilişkilerde bir dengeye sahip olmalarına" yardımcı olan motivasyon ve güçlenmeye ilham vermiştir. Ayrıca "anamlarda değişim", "psikolojik büyüme ve olgunlaşma" ve "değişim döngüsüne katılım" sürecinden geçmişlerdir. **Sonuç:** Kadınların bedenlerine ve kadın olarak varoluşlarına yönelik farkındalıklarının çok çeşitli etkileri vardır. Toplum düzeyinde müdahaleler, kadınları toplumun dayattığı toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinden özgürleştirmeye ve kendilerini birey olarak görmelerine yardımcı olmalıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eylem araştırması; güçlendirme; varoluş; ruhsal sağlık; kadın

Gender roles determine women's academic life, working status, and position in the family. These factors alienate them from their bodies and existence, re-

sulting in them repressing or giving up on their desires and accepting a secondary position in life. Women alienated from their own bodies and exis-

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tence suffer from numerous mental problems.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, women who experience problems with gender roles feel like a failure and end up blaming themselves for it. Negative self-perception is associated with social isolation, low self-esteem and confidence, and hopelessness.<sup>2</sup>

Today, many policies have been developed to ensure gender equality, and important steps have been taken to that end. One of those steps is the discussion of the concept of empowerment in women. Empowerment of the women is a critical aspect of promoting gender equality with focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives.<sup>3</sup> However, there is no consensus on its definition because researchers have addressed it from different dimension.<sup>4</sup>

This study focuses on empowerment as a psychological construct which has received comparatively less attention than the structural perspective on empowerment. Psychological empowerment is a process in which women learn about the constructs that suppress them, making them more prepared to challenge existing power imbalances in society and take control of their own bodies and lives.<sup>5</sup> Psychological empowerment in women is associated with high self-awareness, self-efficacy and autonomy.<sup>6</sup> Empowered women are women with high self-esteem, self-efficacy, critical awareness, civic engagement, and control over their lives.<sup>7</sup>

There is a body of research on empowerment in women, but most of those studies focus on empowerment in the fields of development, politics, and education.<sup>8-10</sup> However, there are lack of the studies which focus on empowerment of women on the individual level. Empowerment is impossible unless one believes one can change one's situation and is willing to participate in activities to do it. It is clear that imperfections in psychological empowerment make all other forms of empowerment less effective. Psychological empowerment could be provided a concept of self-awareness, which defined as key element of psychology for people.<sup>11,12</sup>

Self-awareness is a realistic assessment of one's own feelings, thoughts, wishes, and knowing one's

strengths and weaknesses, knowing what we feel instantly, a realistic assessment of our abilities, and an appropriate perception of self-confidence with your internal principles.<sup>13</sup> Self-awareness is affected by the some individual and social factors. Social factors could be ranged as surrounding environment, culture, and gender issues while individual factors could be listed as one's values, feelings, goals, knowledge, abilities, and capacity.<sup>14-16</sup> Self-awareness is described as one the most important life skills as such the World Health Organization considers it among the 5 dimensions of life skills.<sup>17</sup> It has associated with the some basic psychological concepts include self-expression, self-evaluation, self-esteem, self-regulation, self-efficiency, and self-recognition.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine of a psychoeducation program to provide psychological empowerment with self-awareness approach on Turkish women.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### DESIGN

The present study used a qualitative action research design to examine the effect of a psychoeducation program on psychological empowerment in women. The action research was the design of choice to promote behavioral change in participants, to help them develop skills, and to inform and empower them.<sup>18</sup> This is because there should be dynamic mobility between experience, reflection, and related awareness to develop new knowledge, skills, and insight. This study was performed as an action research design because it aimed to raise participants' awareness through knowledge and practice and observe behavior change and empowerment.

### PARTICIPANTS

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, which allows the researcher to select participants who have experienced a specific phenomenon. Purposive sampling is used to collect "information-rich" data to gain a broad spectrum of views and identify emergent theories.<sup>19</sup> The research was announced during one month (January, 2020) through posters and information packs posted on online women groups. The

women who were volunteers to participate in the program were inclusion criteria. Sixteen women who were interested program contacted the researchers when they saw the announcement of the program. Two of them gave up to participate in the study because of their lack of time. Therefore, the participants consisted of 14 women who attended the program called “Woman in the Mirror of Existence.” Theoretical saturation was achieved with these 14 women when data were collected after the program. So an additional program to achieve more women was not announced. Participants were heterogeneous as regards age, education, and marital status (Table 1).

## ACTION

This action study consisted of four stages described by Kemmis, et al. The stages were conducted by the researchers.<sup>20</sup>

■ *Reconnaissance*: The researchers focused on social factors that left women powerless. They held a group meeting with them, where they shared their experiences and views on women’s social status and factors that rendered them powerless. The meeting addressed what participants wanted to do to achieve empowerment. To identify the factors, the researchers used their skills as facilitators, listened to all participants, and pinpointed critical points.

■ *Planning*: The researchers conducted 2 meetings. The goal of the first meeting was to set the roles of the participants and the researchers and establish a consensus. They also determined what topics the third stage should focus on. The researchers conducted a literature review in line with the “women empowerment approach” to choose activities related to the topics and presented them to the group. They all reached a consensus on the content of the intervention. Afterwards, the researchers gave participants those activities as homework assignments and instructed them on how to observe the impact of those activities on their bodies and lives.

■ *Action and observation*: Participants were placed in groups of 6 to 8. All groups attended a psychoeducation program (action) which consisted of structured activities around 5 key areas related to empowerment. The program was a 6-session process involving interactive activities on one general and 5 specific topics. One session was held each month for 6 months. The topics were: (1) Fear of being a woman, (2) woman and sexuality, (3) female power, (4) love and male-female relationships, and (5) women’s self-expression in life. The program integrated a variety of learning methods: psychodrama, relaxation techniques, mindfulness activities, and

**TABLE 1:** Characteristics of women.

Participants	Age	Education level	Occupation	SES*	Marital status	Number of children
F1	35	License	Teacher	4000-Upper ₺	Single	0
F2	43	License	Style consultant	4000-Upper ₺	Single	1
F3	41	License	Doctor	4000-Upper ₺	Married	1
F4	28	License	Interpreter	4000-Upper ₺	Single	0
F5	38	College	Teacher	4000-Upper ₺	Married	1
F6	43	License	Graphic artist	4000-Upper ₺	Married	1
F7	50	License	Accountant	4000-Upper ₺	Single	0
F8	45	Postgraduate	Clinical psychologist	4000-Upper ₺	Single	1
F9	50	License	Foreign language secretary	4000-Upper ₺	Single	1
F10	24	License	Yoga instructor	4000-Upper ₺	Married	1
F11	42	Primary School	Housewife	4000-Upper ₺	Married	3
F12	44	License	Bank officer	4000-Upper ₺	Married	1
F13	50	License	Interior architect	4000-Upper ₺	Single	1
F14	34	License	Assistant	4000-Upper ₺	Single	0

\*SES: Socio-economic status.

**TABLE 2:** Interview guide.

**Main question 1.** Could you share your experiences about empowerment program process?

**Main question 2.** Has there been any change in your life after the program? If yes, could you please tell about it?

**Sub question 1.** Do you think the empowerment program affects your perception of your body? If yes, could you please tell about it?

**Sub question 2.** Do you think the empowerment program has affected your perception of "being a woman"? If yes, could you please tell about it?

**Sub question 3.** Do you think the empowerment program affects your sexual life? If yes, could you please tell about it?

**Sub question 4.** Do you think the empowerment program has affected your communication with your partner? If yes, could you please tell about it?

**Sub question 5.** Do you think the empowerment program affects your existence in society? If yes, could you please tell about it?

**Sub question 6.** Do you think the empowerment program affects your meaning in life? If yes, could you please tell about it?

**Sub question 7.** Do you think the empowerment program affects your plans for the future? If yes, could you please tell about it?

homework assignments. [Table 2](#) shows the content of the program.

■ *Collective reflection:* Observation notes were discussed, and a group meeting was held at the end of the program to help participants identify what kind of transformation they went through, enabling them to open themselves up and use their inner strength. The interviews gave the researchers a signal for the end of active facilitation. The research was completed at one cycle because the interventions were refined enough to determine their impact.

#### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data were collected and analyzed using a grounded theory method. All women who attended the program agreed to be interviewed (n=14). The data were collected 3 months after the program to determine its impact. Semi-structured interviews were conducted between June and August 2020. An open-ended question form (interview guide) was used during the interviews. The researchers asked open-ended questions and actively listened to participants and encouraged them to identify and talk about their post-program experiences freely ([Table 3](#)). All interviews were conducted in a separate room and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researchers. Each interview lasted 40-60 minutes. Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously until data saturation was achieved based on the grounded theory methodology.

The transcripts were analyzed using Strauss and Corbin method, a hierarchical and systematic approach involving the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.<sup>21</sup> It is a constant comparative method that allows the researcher to consider all instances of variation in data to develop a theory. In the open coding stage, the researchers read the transcripts line by line to identify and organize emergent categories. In the axial coding stage, they made connections between the categories and developed subcategories. In the selective coding stage, they encoded the emergent themes to identify core categories, representing all major categories. Core categories are expected to explain most of the variation and most of the related categories.

#### RIGOR

Validity, reliability, and triangulation are 3 components for accuracy and credibility in action research. Triangulation means adopting several perspectives on an issue of research to provide depth and multidimensionality.<sup>22</sup> There are 4 ways in which triangulation can be achieved: (1) Collecting different types of data, (2) using different data sources, (3) collecting data at different times, and (4) have participants verify or revise findings. Therefore, this study adopted a grounded methodology and took a systematic and hierarchical approach to data collection and analysis which provides rigor.

**TABLE 3: Psychoeducation programme “Woman in the Mirror of Existence.”**

Session	Aim	Practice	Homework
1. Practice of preparedness practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce programme</li> <li>To make a cognitive preparation for the practices of program</li> <li>To present women in terms of emotion, mind and body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Psychodrama to description of belief and attitudes</li> <li>Relaxing techniques and meditation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a diary to observe changes</li> <li>Following the menstrual cycle and changes on their body</li> <li>Following the topics discussed in the session in daily life and taking notes</li> <li>Making practices of relaxing techniques and meditation</li> <li>Clarification of the values with the questions related with the content</li> </ul>
2. Fear of being woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To description of the women's fears which may have effects on their decision or attitudes in their lives</li> <li>To present how they cope with these fears</li> <li>To gain awareness of their body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fears which coming from back</li> <li>Mindfulness of fear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Touching of body</li> <li>Creating routines for their live</li> <li>Making practice for relaxing</li> <li>Thinking of whether of they have fears which have effect on their lives, decisions or attitudes.</li> <li>Clarification of the values with the questions related with the content</li> </ul>
3. Woman and sexuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To clarify taboos of sexuality which women internalize them</li> <li>To gain conscious of sexuality and its' dimensions of mental, emotional and physical structure of women</li> <li>To explore their sexuality with the practices</li> <li>To create healthy sexuality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice of awareness of the body</li> <li>Meditation related with content</li> <li>Mindfulness-based emotion management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a diary to taking notes what they learn and observe changes</li> <li>Making practice for promoting partner relationship</li> <li>Making practice for relaxing</li> <li>Clarification of the values with the questions related with the content</li> </ul>
4. Empowerment of the women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide definition of effects of power on women's life</li> <li>To expose of inner power and potential of women by conducting practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice of awareness of the body</li> <li>Meditation related with content</li> <li>Mindfulness-based emotion management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a diary to taking notes what they learn and observe changes</li> <li>Making practice for relaxing</li> <li>Clarification of the values with the questions related with the content</li> </ul>
5. Love, relationship of woman-man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To describe what is the love and relationship of woman-man</li> <li>To create real expectations in their relationship</li> <li>To observe their relationships and mobilize for the change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice of awareness of the body</li> <li>Meditation related with content</li> <li>Mindfulness-based emotion management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a diary to taking notes what they learn and observe changes</li> <li>Making practice for relaxing</li> <li>Making practice of the feminine and masculine looking</li> <li>Making practice of the feminine and masculine touching</li> <li>Clarification of the values with the questions related with the content</li> </ul>
6. Women's self-expression in life the awakening of the woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide reveal of themselves as a woman</li> <li>To provide use of power and observe their development during the programme</li> <li>To present way which provide moving effects of this programme on their future lives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice of awareness of the body</li> <li>Meditation related with content</li> <li>Mindfulness-based emotion management</li> <li>Celebration of the being a woman</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeping a diary to taking notes what they learn and observe changes</li> <li>Making practice for relaxing</li> <li>Clarification of the values with the questions related with the content</li> </ul>

**ETHICS**

The study was approved by the ethics committee of Akdeniz University (date: January 20, 2020, no: 11). A

written informed consent form was obtained from all participants. The study was carried out in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki 2008.

## RESULTS

**Core Category:** *“I gained self-awareness as a woman, and that’s how the change in me has started.”*

Participants defined the program as an inner journey, during which they discovered their bodies, selves, and existence as women. Participants, who were empowered, made their own definitions of “being a woman.” Empowerment allowed them to take control of their own lives. They experienced improvements in their relationships and were able to express themselves better in society. Participants, turning into “wise women,” noted that they wanted to participate in things that would make them stronger to perpetuate the change they were going through. Conceptual framework of the study was presented in Figure 1.

### MAIN CATEGORY: MOTIVATION

Participants define that what empowered them.

**Subcategory-1: Remembering their existence as woman**

Some participants pointed out that the definitions of their existence as women based on past teach-

ings assigned them many roles and responsibilities, alienating them from their own selves as women.

“What I most liked about the program was that I got to see that it’s all imposed by society. I thought about my own life and realized that I’d been living like a man in a woman’s body. All those impositions have made us forget about our essence, our existence as women. The program made the question ‘Who are we as women?’ clearer than ever before.” (F9)

**Subcategory-2: Awareness of Body and Self**

Some participants stated that some of the activities in the program (touch exercises, talking about the body chart, sesame oil massage, activities to start the day, etc.) made them more aware of their bodies. They spent more time on their bodies, which motivated them for empowerment. They noted that focusing on and learning about their bodies (e.g., menstrual cycle) helped them develop a positive body image, recognize their bodily needs, and accept their bodies for what they are.

“We’re born with some differences from men. The important thing is to accept those differences, like, breasts, the vagina, ovaries, the uterus, and the menstrual cycle. The program was very helpful in the

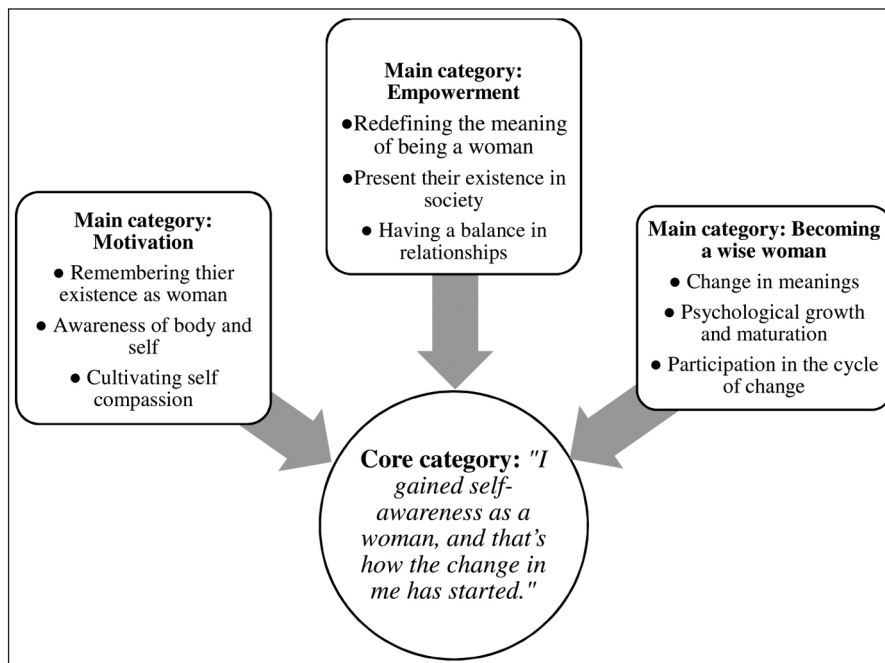


FIGURE 1: The conceptual model of the core category, main categories and subcategories.

sense that we got to learn what they were for, how to make sure that they function better, and whatnot. I mean, I've become more aware of the reproductive power of my body." (F2)

### ***Subcategory-3: Cultivating self-compassion***

Participants stated that the program helped them recognize their bodily needs and motivated them to do something to meet them. They made more time for themselves and performed activities tailored to physical comfort (massage, dance, daily rituals, creating comfort zones, etc.), resulting in a heightened sense of self-worth, bodily and spiritual self-compassion, and motivation for change.

## **MAIN CATEGORY: EMPOWERMENT**

Participants asserted that the program made them more motivated and helped them experience internal empowerment.

### ***Subcategory-1: Redefining the meaning of being a woman***

Some participants expressed that the inner journey they embarked on made them more motivated to emancipate themselves from the constraints of being a woman imposed by society. They realized that they were much more than wives and mothers and defined their own "existence as women", making them feel stronger and more valuable. It manifested itself in their relationships because they were more at peace with their selves.

For example, it was hard for me to say, "No, I can't." I'd think that it would make me seem weak. But now, I'm not afraid to say it. Maybe I can't do what men do because they are stronger than I am, but, as a woman, I'm more compassionate, and I'm happy being a woman." (F5)

### ***Subcategory-2: Presenting their existence in society***

Participants emphasized that empowerment helped them develop more effective decision-making mechanisms and made them more independent, active, and confident in their relationships. The program also made them strong enough to set their own limits in their relationships and taught them to say "No." The program made them feel more powerful as they

appreciated the position of women in society more. Participants noted that awareness and self-compassion enabled them to empathize with others, build constructive relationships, and reconsider their expectations in those relationships.

"The more you get to know yourself, the more you know what you want and how much you want it. I mean, we ended up being the ones who always ask for something, and so, we ended up getting disappointed when our expectations weren't met. We could build and protect our relationships now." (F3)

### ***Subcategory-3: Having a Balance in Relationships***

All participants stated that the program helped them with romantic relationships and problem-solving skills. They were passive in their relationships because they had given away their existence as women under social pressure and had minimal understanding of their own bodies. After the program, they turned into individuals who were more willing to express their expectations and were more active in their relationships. Active listening, and mindfulness-based emotion management allowed participants to communicate better with their spouses and made them emotionally more intimate and sexually more active and satisfied.

"I had difficulty expressing myself. I couldn't even talk about my needs. But, since I took part in the program, I've been able to talk to my husband about my problems, either sexual or everyday life, and he understands me." (F6)

## **MAIN CATEGORY: BECOMING A WISE WOMAN**

The main category described what consist of "becoming a wise woman".

### ***Subcategory-1: Change in Meanings***

Some participants remarked that some activities (e.g., 5-sense activities) taught them to find meaning in life and enjoy the moment. They saw the universe, nature, and all living things as a whole and were ready to accept anything for what it was. This new perspective helped them make sense of the moment and get through transition processes (menopause, ovulation problems, etc.) more easily.

“Now I enjoy life. Our senses and feelings are improving. I feel like we were in the all closed boxes before the program. The perspective that I got from the program made me feel like a whole.” (F8)

### ***Subcategory-2: Psychological Growth and Maturation***

Some participants reported changes in their perspectives. They defined this inner journey as growth and maturation. The program made them feel more mature, which they believed might pave the way for further personal development.

“The program changed how I looked at things. Now I’m more accepting, less critical, and I listen more and focus more on what is beautiful. You explore so many beautiful things when you look on the inside. In a way, you let go of your prejudices. What this is actually maturation.” (F3)

### ***Subcategory-3: Participation in the Cycle of Change***

Participants stated that they went through change and development during the program. One of the most important factors that triggered the change was activities that promoted internal communication (appointment with myself, etc.). They stressed that what they went through was an internal change affecting how they treated their children and husbands. They added that it also transformed the way their children and husbands looked at things. Most participants were excited about the change and wanted to take part in this process to change more.

## **DISCUSSION**

The aim of the present study was to examine the impact of a psychoeducation program to provide psychological empowerment with self-awareness of women approach on Turkish women. Some participants pointed out that the conventional definitions of their existence as women caused their alienation from their selves as women. Some others stated that the program “reminded them of their existence as women” and motivated them to change. They stated that the program helped them “redefine what it is to be a woman.” Women in societies where masculinity is associated with power are alienated from their own

bodies and femininity and adopt masculine traits and attitudes.<sup>23</sup> Women who adopt male-dominated roles feel detached from their existence as women because they take on agentic (being assertive, being self-focused, etc.) and communal traits (nurturing, selflessness, etc.) at the same time.<sup>24</sup> However, psychological empowerment is defined as intrinsic motivation that makes women capable of liberating themselves from gender roles.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, women should be allowed to carve out their own definition of being a woman. In addition, they should be provided with interventions to make sure that they define their existence as women positively.

The body-oriented activities in the program helped some participants recognize their selves as women and take control of their bodies and motivated them for empowerment. Psychological empowerment is defined as one’s ability to take control of one’s life. Michelsen et al. argues that mindfulness-based therapy contributes to psychological empowerment and self-compassion, which was another result of the present study.<sup>25</sup> Mindfulness-based meditation techniques (yoga, etc.) change how women perceive sexuality and gender roles. Such techniques set them free from gender stereotypes and make them motivated to be empowered.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, body awareness and satisfaction with body image through mindfulness-based activities play a mediating role in psychological well-being.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, action plans tailored to empowerment should involve interventions to raise women’s awareness of the body and self.

The program allowed participants to change the meanings they attributed to many concepts in their lives. Women with beliefs, principles, and values that give meaning to life feel spiritually strong and well. Finding meaning in life motivates one and makes one physically healthier and reduces lifetime mortality rates.<sup>28</sup> In short, finding meaning in life is one of the indicators of well-being. Chu and Mak conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of mindfulness activities on finding meaning in life.<sup>29</sup> They concluded that self-awareness, paying attention to positive experiences, and approaching things from a broader perspective, as well as mindfulness activities, had a



moderate impact on finding meaning in life. Therefore, we can state that activities on body and self-awareness not only promote social and psychological empowerment but also have a contribution on women's health and well-being.

### ***Strengths and Limitations***

This study is important as it presented a woman empowerment program as an action research. The action research contributed to the individual in terms of gaining knowledge, skills, and insight. Another strength of the study is that participants were involved in the planning of the action, and the actions were organized based on their needs.

The limitations of the study are that the majority of the individuals who participated in the program have higher education and economic income. Therefore, the changes that developed in the individuals encapsulate this group. However, it is no surprise that people from a certain socioeconomic status attended the program because the study was performed based on individual requests for participation.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the present study, participants reminded their own existence as women and helped them explore their motivation to recognize their bodies and selves and develop self-compassion. The motivation made them feel powerful enough to define their existence as women in their own words and mark their presence as active individuals in society. The empowerment encouraged them to attribute different meanings to things in their lives. They felt more mature and were excited about the change they went through.

Considering the effect of psychological empowerment on other dimensions of woman empowerment, the necessity of more studies addressing this topic is noteworthy. The self-awareness as a woman provided not only psychological and social empowerment but also promotion of health and well-being of women. Therefore, governments need to have policy to grow up women who have self-awareness as a woman. In the community level, interventions should conduct to liberate women from the gender roles imposed by society and help them see themselves as individuals.

### ***Source of Finance***

*During this study, no financial or spiritual support was received neither from any pharmaceutical company that has a direct connection with the research subject, nor from a company that provides or produces medical instruments and materials which may negatively affect the evaluation process of this study.*

### ***Conflict of Interest***

*No conflicts of interest between the authors and / or family members of the scientific and medical committee members or members of the potential conflicts of interest, counseling, expertise, working conditions, share holding and similar situations in any firm.*

### ***Authorship Contributions***

***Idea/Concept:*** Ayşe Deliktaş Demirci, Pervin Ahmedova; ***Design:*** Ayşe Deliktaş Demirci, Pervin Ahmedova; ***Control/Supervision:*** Kamile Kabukcuoğlu; ***Data Collection and/or Processing:*** Ayşe Deliktaş Demirci, Pervin Ahmedova; ***Analysis and/or Interpretation:*** Ayşe Deliktaş Demirci, Pervin Ahmedova; ***Literature Review:*** Kamile Kabukcuoğlu, Ayşe Deliktaş Demirci, Pervin Ahmedova; ***Writing the Article:*** Pervin Ahmedova, Ayşe Deliktaş Demirci; ***Critical Review:*** Pervin Ahmedova; ***References and Fundings:*** Kamile Kabukcuoğlu

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