



Research Article

# A Spiritual Touch on Family Resilience: A Positive Psychology Based Group Study From Burnout To Hope

Deniz Eröz Özkapu<sup>1</sup>

Ministry of National Education

Halil Ekşi<sup>2</sup>

Marmara University

<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author: Deniz Eröz Özkapu, Ministry of National Education, Kazım Ozalp Primary School, Istanbul, Turkey. erokdeniz@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Halil Ekşi, Prof. Dr., Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Marmara University, Turkey. halil.eksi@marmara.edu.tr.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to develop and implement a spiritually oriented, positive psychology-based group counseling program to increase the level of family resilience of mothers and to determine whether this program produces a difference. The design of this study was a convergent parallel mixed design. In the study, the two databases, after being analyzed separately, were treated together and analyzed using the side-by-side comparison method. A quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was used in the quantitative part of the study. The conducted psychological counseling group comprises ten female parents (aged 32 to 40) whose children attend primary school. The participants received eight sessions of the psychological counseling program, each lasting 90 minutes and prepared by the researcher. This mixed research includes the interpretation of pretest-posttest data obtained from the Family Resilience Scale and the Spiritual Resources Scale, as well as the findings that emerged from qualitative observation, interview, recording, and analysis of documents obtained from research participants. The quantitative portion of the research was analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, while the qualitative portion was analyzed using thematic analysis. The study's quantitative findings indicate that psychological counseling practice with the group significantly increased the level of family resilience and the use of spiritual resources of the participants. Six themes emerged from the qualitative research analyses: hope, reliance (tawakkul), patience, social support, steps to change, and resilient attitude.

## Keywords:

Positive psychology • Spirituality, • Family resilience • Spiritual Resources • Group counseling

## Corresponding author:

Deniz Eröz Özkapu

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Spirituality is the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that result from one's relationship with the divine or transcendent (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Due to the positivist paradigm that prevailed in the previous era, the inclusion of spirituality in psychology took time, and the number of practices in the field remained limited until the early 2000s. However, research based on the consideration of spirituality as a psychological resource has increased in the second half of the twentieth century due to the emergence of the positive psychology movement and its influence over time (Shafranske & Sperry, 2007; Zinnbauer, 2009). In other words, the growing trend of the positive psychology movement has accelerated the recognition of spirituality as a significant phenomenon in mental health research.

Positive psychology is a concept that seeks to make people's life more effective by focusing on their strengths, positive attributes, virtuous behaviors, and motivations (Sheldon, Cheng, & Hilpert, 2011). The primary objective of the positive psychology method is to comprehend the conditions that enhance individuals' quality of life and investigate the processes that will improve the lives of individuals, institutions, and various human societies. Interventions based on the positive psychology approach do not aim to correct what is bad or wrong but rather to support the development of the individual by exploring ways to develop and nurture what is good (Seligman & Csikszentmihályi, 2000). Similarly, research undertaken in the last century in the mental health field demonstrates that the objectives that are mainly focused on are progressing based on individuals' well-being or supporting this well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Examining the basic concepts of positive psychology reveals that it contains numerous spiritual values, including psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), subjective well-being (Diener, 2005), hope (Snyder, 2002), flow (Csikszentmihályi, 1990), and compassion. However, positive psychology's emphasis on character strengths is equally notable. The concept of character strengths refers to the positive and robust aspects of individuals. Under the six fundamental virtues of courage, wisdom, love, justice, transcendence, and equilibrium, character strengths include values such as wisdom, love, justice, and transcendence; reasoning, creativity, curiosity, love of learning, perspective, determination, honesty, pleasure, love, social intelligence, kindness, justice, leadership and teamwork (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Positive psychology bases its studies on forgiveness instead of revenge, gratitude instead of anger or envy, and positive emotions such as happiness and hope instead of depressive emotions (Sheldon et al., 2011).

There are many similarities between spirituality and positive psychology when we consider the phenomena in the field of positive psychology. This demonstrates that one of the essential areas that can be studied within the scope of positive psychology is spirituality (Miller-Perrin & Krumreimancoso, 2015). While studying the

happiness of individuals, positive psychology assumes that systematized formations, such as spirituality/religion, are the factors that affect the happiness of individuals. It argues that religious behaviors and thoughts are essential structures for people to live peacefully and happily (Emmons & Hill, 2001). From this perspective, spirituality can be used as a significant resource in promoting mental health in practices based on positive psychology.

In positive psychology, resilience is one of the most critical concepts for supporting mental health, and the relationship between resilience and spirituality is frequently studied. Although this concept was initially considered in terms of individual resilience, over time, it has also been studied in terms of family, community, and institutional resilience (Gordon & Song, 1994; Walsh, 1988; Allison et al., 2003; McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996; Skovholt et al., 2001). Family resilience is expressed as the ability of family members to cope effectively with life changes, stressful situations, or unfavorable circumstances (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1996). Examining the definitions used to describe the concept of family resilience reveals that two primary themes are highlighted. The first is the family's exposure to any threat or stressful situation, and the second is the family's ability to adapt in the face of this challenging experience (Rutter, 2006).

Family resilience is shaped by the belief systems within the family, the way the family is managed, and the communication processes of family members. Families' belief systems, on the other hand, include evaluation of suffering and crises, commitment to the family, having integrative values, making sense of unfavorable situations, courage, optimism, having a positive outlook centered on power, faith, and religious/spiritual rituals (Walsh, 2006). Similarly, Defrain (1999) emphasized that spirituality is a crucial resource that family members use to overcome challenging and stressful life circumstances.

All forms of spirituality in human life contain four fundamental elements. These four fundamental elements are relationships, values, meaning in life, and commitment. Each of these values has been proven to be directly related to the negative life experiences or stressful situations that a person encounters (Seaward, 2005). All of these values, behaviors, and attitudes mentioned are strongly associated with an individual's level of resilience. In many communities, spiritual/religious practices (prayer, meditation, thinking work, journaling, yoga, mindfulness) are increasingly adopted as a coping resource (Neal, 1999). In various domestic and international research on the significance of religious/spiritual resources in coping with stressful situations, spirituality has been found to play a significant role in the literature (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009; Bayraklı et al., 2011; Özbay & Aydoğan, 2013; Bhana & Bachoo, 2011; Klerk & Greeff, 2011; Tekdemir & Gürses, 2020).

When one considers the relationships between the phenomena of spirituality, resilience, and positive emotions as a whole, one finds that they have two essential elements in common. These fundamental elements are expressed as personal meaning and life purpose (Smith et al., 2012). Personal meaning can be defined as goals that a person considers essential in life and the motivation to achieve those goals. The individual's self-determined goals for this purpose constitute the life purpose. The person who has a personal meaning acts regularly and consistently for the sake of that meaning and experiences a sense of satisfaction when they achieve those goals (Reker, 2000). Given all of this information, it is believed that spiritually oriented, positive psychology-based group counseling that increases family resilience in mothers will have important effects on increasing the resilience of individuals.

Looking at the literature, we find several group counseling practices where positive psychology and spiritual resources are discussed together (Elham et al., 2015; Fallah et al., 2011; Lambert et al., 2010; Peng, 2015; Park & Peterson, 2008). All of these research findings are significant indications that religious/spiritual-based positive psychotherapy approaches provide effective results, particularly for people with a strong spiritual/religious orientation. In addition, it was noted that when relevant research was examined, there were a limited group and mixed-method studies for parents.

The purpose of this study is to implement a group counseling program based on spiritually oriented positive psychology and to test the effectiveness of this program. In this context, answers were sought to whether there are changes in the level of mothers' family resilience and their use of spiritual resources, as well as the type and quality of these changes.

## **Research Process**

### **Research Model**

This research employs a convergent parallel mixed method design. In the convergent parallel mixed method, quantitative and qualitative data are collected simultaneously, but the obtained data are analyzed independently. The basic assumption of this approach is that both qualitative and quantitative data provide the researcher with different types of information. In this design, qualitative data reflecting participant viewpoints and quantitative data derived from measurement instruments are collected. The findings obtained from the analyzes are examined to see if they corroborate one another (Creswell, 2017).

The dependent variables of the study are mothers' level of family resilience and their use of spiritual resources, and the independent variable is a psychological counseling program with a positive psychology-based spiritually oriented group.

The mothers who will take part in the study were selected using the criterion sampling method. Criterion sampling is a technique for reviewing and analyzing situations based on predetermined criteria (Patton, 2015).

In the quantitative part of the study, a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design was used. The quantitative part of the study was analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, one of the non-parametric tests ( $n < 30$ ). In the qualitative part of the study, a thematic analysis was conducted.

### **Study Group**

The study group in this research consists of ten mothers between the ages of 32 and 40 whose children attend a public primary school in the Sultangazi district of Istanbul. Participants in the study group were selected from among parents who indicated that they had difficulties coping with challenges in their family life with their children, spouses, or extended families and that they needed to demonstrate their ability to cope with these difficulties.

Research shows that mothers have to cope with many difficult situations on their own, both in the family and social life (Demirgöz Bal, 2014; Elçi, 2011; Powell & Greenkouse, 2010; the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry General Directorate, 2010). Since the work to be implemented to develop family resilience of mothers, who play one of the most critical roles in family and community life, will positively affect their individual and family lives, the entire study group consists of mothers.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of positive psychology-based spiritually oriented group counseling in enhancing the family resilience of mothers. The content of group counseling sessions has been prepared to be related to family resilience by shaping the concepts of responsibility, trust, hope, contemplation, compassion, and gentleness, which are regarded by spiritual systems and form the foundation of the positive psychology approach. The aims of the spiritually oriented positive psychology-based group counseling program were determined to be becoming aware of family experiences and building a relationship with the spiritual aspect, the group members' reviewing their spiritual backgrounds, recognizing that spirituality is also a resource in the face of life's obstacles, recognizing the relationship between family resilience and spirituality, and effecting the awareness gained on the individual to exhibit a more resilient stance in the face of family problems in daily life.

The majority of group counseling methods and approaches as an intervention within the scope of the research were prepared by the researcher herself. However, the "Spiritual Life Maps" (Özkapu, 2022, pp. 349-357) and "Journey to Values"

(Yavuz, 2022, pp. 53-61) activities were used by quoting in the second and third sessions, respectively. A lecturer who is an expert in the Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling examined the planned program, and required adjustments were made in response to this review. The psychological counseling program with this group consists of eight 90-minute sessions. Counseling sessions with the group were held once a week in a suitable room of the public school where the children of the participating parents were enrolled.

### **The Flow of Research**

The flow of the research is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**  
*The Flow of Research*

- Announcing the “Positive Psychology Based Spiritual Oriented Family Resilience Group Work” to the parents.
  - Participant selection based on criteria identified from a participant pool formed among volunteers.
  - Establishment of the experimental group.
  - Application of pre-testing.
  - Holding 90-minute group counseling sessions once a week for eight weeks, as planned by the researcher.
  - Post-test application following the eighth session.
  - Testing hypotheses and discussing findings.
- } Collection of qualitative data

### **Content of Group Counseling Sessions**

**Session 1:** Information and orientation; family and resilience concepts.

**Session 2:** Practices of recognizing the spiritual past and spirituality as a coping resource.

**Session 3:** Spiritual life patterns, discovering values, and developing a sense of purpose

**Session 4:** Religious/spiritual leaders’ important personality qualities and parenting processes.

**Session 5:** The relationship between patience as a spiritual resource and family resilience.

**Session 6:** The relationship between the concepts of responsibility, trust, and contemplation from spiritual resources and family resilience

**Session 7:** The relationship between hope as a spiritual resource and family resilience.

**Session 8:** Concluding, sharing of experiences.

### Data Collection Tools

**Family Resilience scale:** The 37-item scale created by Kaner & Bayraklı (2010) has four sub-dimensions: combativeness, commitment to life, self-efficacy, and control. The scale is of the 5-point Likert type. High scores on the scale suggest that the individual has a high perception of resilience. In the data set obtained from female participants, the internal consistency coefficients of the scale were found to be .90 for the sub-dimension of combativeness and challenge, .87 for the commitment to life sub-dimension, .71 for the self-efficacy sub-dimension, and .43 for the control sub-dimension.

**Spiritual Resources scale:** Çelimli et al. (2019) conducted the Turkish language validity and reliability evaluations of the scale, which was developed by Westbrook et al. (2018). The scale consists of 24 items and contains four sub-dimensions: religion, nature, humanitarianism, and transcendence. The coefficient of test-retest reliability was determined to be .65. For all sub-dimensions, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was determined to be .88.

## Findings

### Quantitative Findings

**Table 1**

*The Results of The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests for Pretest-Posttest Scores of Sources of Spirituality of Experimental Group*

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z
Experimental Group				
NegativeRank	0	,00	,00	-2,807
PositiveRank	10	5,50	55,00	
Ties	0			
Total	10			

P<.05

As evidenced by the table, the difference between the mean scores was found to be statistically significant as a result of the Non-Parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks

Test, which was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and post-test scores of the participants in the Spiritual Resources scale ( $Z=-2.807$ ;  $p<05$ ). The stated difference favored the post-test. As a result, after the group practices, it was discovered that the level of using the spiritual resources of the mothers who formed the experimental group increased significantly.

**Table 2**

*The Results of The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests for Pretest-Posttest Scores of Family Resilience of Experimental Group*

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z
Experimental Group	NegativeRank	2	3,75	7,50	-2,040
	PositiveRank	8	5,94	47,50	
	Ties	0			
	Total	10			

$P<.05$

As displayed in the table, the difference between the mean scores of the experimental group was found to be statistically significant as a result of the Non-Parametric Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, which was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the participants in Family Resilience scale ( $Z=-2.040$ ;  $p<05$ ). The stated difference favored the post-test. As a result, after the group applications, it was discovered that the family resilience levels of the mothers in the experimental group increased significantly.

## Qualitative Findings

**Statements of participants before group counseling and themes.** At the beginning of the group counseling practice, the participants were asked about the challenges they had encountered in family life and their feelings and views regarding these obstacles. The emergent themes are described below.

***Intolerance:*** This theme represents the participants' behaviors toward their children that they are unhappy with but continue to display because they cannot tolerate them. Below is a selection of examples from the participants' statements on this theme.

*P1: According to what I've learned from books I've read or psychologists I've seen on TV, the behaviors I exhibit have a negative impact on my child.*

*P3: I struggle for the sake of my child, after all. I say it in a friendly way, and I get angry when my child still doesn't do it.*

*P9: I love my children so much, but I am not always patient with them. Even though I don't want to, I insult them when angry. I feel regret later, but at that moment, I can't help myself.*

These participant statements demonstrate that there are some actions that mothers unintentionally engage in during the child-rearing process and that they experience feelings of regret as a result of these behaviors. The mothers' expressions indicate they are unaware of what they can do to be more patient in this regard.



**Helplessness:** This theme contains the participants' statements that they do not know what to do in the face of difficulties they experience in the family. Below are a few selected examples of this theme.

*P1: I tried everything. No matter what I do, nothing works.*

*P3: I make that much effort. I try to avoid using bad language. Neither his father nor I even gave him a flick. But even on doing the homework, we're still unable to agree. Both his father and I tried. We speak with his teacher. Again, it doesn't work. Day by day, I begin to believe that there is nothing I can do.*

*P2: I no longer even say it. No matter what he does.*

*P8: I attempted several times to tell my husband's family. But there is no way I can make them listen to me. They continue to interfere with everything with my child, no matter what we say.*

In the face of the challenges they confront with their children and other family members, these statements can be regarded as evidence that mothers have a strong sense that there is nothing left for them to accomplish. It was observed that most participants made statements similar to the content of this statement. These statements indicate that participants need to possess the ability to be resilient in the face of difficulties.

**Control Compulsion:** This theme reflects the participants' perceptions of the power of control in their life and their thoughts on how this circumstance has affected them. Some examples from the participants' statements on this theme are presented.

*P3: Don't you think it is right for me to want my child to be neat and clean? Otherwise, his life will be affected badly. I realize I'm being domineering, but I believe this will better his life.*

*P5: It drives me crazy when girls don't clean up their rooms and make a mess. I can't stop, no matter how many times I tell myself things like "hold yourself." I tidy up instead of them, and no matter how much I tell them, they don't change.*

*P6: I'm a very obsessive person. I want everything to be neat. I keep having thoughts about it. I reflect that to my children as well. I want their stuff to be in an order.*

These statements can be viewed as evidence that mothers feel the responsibility to exert control over the majority of situations in their lives. Also, participants have an unrealistic perception that they can control most events. The participants also expressed how this compulsion made their lives more challenging. Therefore, it is possible to interpret these statements as a reflection of how mothers' tendencies to control most aspects of daily life make their lives more challenging.

**Inadequacy:** This theme represents the mothers' thoughts and perceptions that they cannot perform the obligations and responsibilities expected of them within the family. The following are examples selected from the participants' statements on this theme.

*P1: I don't have enough time to spend with my children. I sometimes feel guilty about treating them unfairly. My husband sometimes helps, but since he works all day, he doesn't have anything to do either.*

*P4: I'm a mother of three. Since my son is disabled, I spend the whole day taking care of him. I can't give my other two daughters any of my time. My conscience is not at all clear about this. My husband is only home in the evenings. All he does is eat and rest. That's how it goes.*

*P8: I fight with my two daughters and my son all the time because they don't do their homework and make a mess of the house. No matter what I say, I can't make them pay attention to my advice. My husband does nothing to help out. I already have my own problems. Even so, I do my best to take care of them, but no matter what I do, we always fight.*

*P7: I get along well with my children and my husband. Still, I worry that I don't spend enough time with my two children. We find it hard to do things as a family where everyone takes part and shares things.*

The statements of the participants are significant reflections of their feelings of frustration and inadequacy as a result of the many responsibilities that are expected of them. It can be observed that the expectations that exist in the nature of motherhood, as well as the expectations established by the surroundings, force the participants. Therefore, it is evident that this circumstance harms the lives of women who experience intense feelings of inadequacy.

**Loneliness:** This theme includes statements indicating that the participants lack the social support necessary to share their family responsibilities. Following are selected examples of this theme.

*P6: My mother-in-law lives in the same building as us. But instead of asking her for help, I'd better do it myself. Because she gets everything done the way she wants or does it herself.*

*P8: No one ever asks how I'm doing. According to the people around me, I must do everything on my own.*

*P10: They are my priority. I usually put my own wants last. If I want anything, I don't say anything about it. I can handle my own things. After all, my husband works. Also, for some reason, if I want something for myself, I end up feeling selfish.*

These statements significantly emphasize the necessity for women to share their responsibilities. Although many participants have large families, it is recognized that they do not receive the help they anticipate from their husbands, relatives, or close friends or that they are hesitant to ask for it.

**Participant statements revealed during the group counseling process and themes.** Throughout the group counseling process, qualitative data were collected from participants via observations, interviews, recordings, and documents. The emergent themes are described below.

**Hope:** This theme includes statements about positive expectations that participants have developed for the future. Below are selected examples of this theme.

*P6: I've previously said about my desire to attend university. Despite the fact that many things prevented this, I think I can try new things about education. I want to study something that interests me. Nothing is ever too late.*

*P8: During this session, I looked at the little girl inside me and thought, "Wow, what have you done with your little self?" It made me feel so good to do this. If that little girl could accomplish that, I can do better.*

*P9: My soul rested. It felt very good to return to the past, to live, to feel, and to observe how everything had passed.*

The participants' statements indicate that they have developed a perspective that includes more optimistic future expectations. It has been observed that this hopeful perspective positively impacts participants to make them more resilient in their personal and family lives.

**Reliance (Tawakkul):** This theme comprises the participants' thoughts and behaviors regarding the positive impacts of incorporating the concept of reliance into their daily lives as a result of the practices conducted. Following are selected participant statements on this theme.

*P6: I think my life has changed since we watched the video about reliance. I even showed a few of my friends this video. I learned that most things can't be changed, no matter how hard I try. It also made me less obsessed.*

*P3: You need to make a connection to life with three words; reliance, contemplation, and smile. Reliance is a very important concept for me in life. When I was sick and everyone was waiting for me to die, this word kept me alive. If something is in your destiny, you can learn from anything, even an ant, but if it is not in your destiny it wouldn't matter even if the whole world was put in front of you.*

*P4: With the help of Allah, I can overcome any difficulty if I trust in Him.*

*P7: Sharing, and acting out past emotions has given me relief. I realized that some things cannot be changed and that acceptance is the best way.*

These sentences reflect the participants' statements regarding the processes of accepting situations over which they have no right or power to change. It was found that all of the participants provided varied examples of reliance from their own life, indicating that they regard reliance as a significant coping resource. In addition, it was noted that remembering reliance and related notions of reliance more frequently during the process led to positive changes in the participants' daily lives.

**Patience:** This theme includes various participant expressions regarding the attitudes they adopted toward being patient with their children following group counseling sessions. Selected of these statements are presented below.

*P3: A neighbor told me this week that he saw my older son smoking. I would have normally acted very differently. But I paused and thought about how I should react so he can better understand me. Then I went to him and spoke calmly. He said he didn't smoke. I remained silent even though I did not believe it. At least we did not fight and hurt one another.*

*P8: Before I say something to my son, I try to calm down. I take deep breaths. If I have to, I go somewhere else. This helps me to be more patient with the things that anger me a lot.*

*P9: After we talked, I decided to say "salawat" (a religious term) to my children before I get angry. I tried that this week. I was able to hold myself many times, but not all of the time. I felt good that I hadn't hurt them.*

Throughout the session, it was noted that the participants developed numerous ways to be more patient with their children. These strategies include methods that each participant develops, such as using religious resources, breathing exercises, remaining in the moment, and thinking. This situation can be viewed as a reflection that the participants gained the motivation to be patient in difficult family situations and put them into practice.

**Social Support:** This theme reflects the participants' experiences receiving support from their environment. Selected of these participant statements are presented below.

*P3: It's great to share and learn from each other. There were already chat groups that I had joined, but I'll do it more often.*

*P6: This group made me feel so good that it was a relief to see that other people have had similar feelings. I wasn't alone. My obsessions have even gotten less.*

*P8: I've been to a psychologist before but this was the first time I opened myself to this extent. Everyone in this group gave me confidence. I'd love to have someone with whom I could share my experiences in the future.*

*P10: Everyone in this group taught me something. After the group, I hope to see you. I will do my best for it.*

All of the participants reported that listening, telling, and sharing was very beneficial to them and that they have made various plans to repeat that experience in the future. These participant statements indicate that they have formed a social support area that they can apply against future challenges.

**Steps to Change:** The participants' actions and life plans, which were shaped by the group counseling process, are reflected in this theme. The following are some selected expressions relating to this theme.

*P4: This week, I returned to my old knitting hobby this week to relax myself. I make tiny hairpins and ornaments out of knitting for children. I don't know how time goes by so quickly when I do these. Having some time to myself was good for me. That can also help me make money.*

*P6: Although I wanted to do it for a long time, I couldn't do it. This week, I enrolled in a Quran course. It was great to have taken this step.*

*P7: I haven't tried it yet, but I'll tell my husband what I want now. My first goal is to tell my husband which armchair I like better, even if they don't like it.*

*P8: I placed the names of Allah above my bed. Every day, I will come to realize something about these names and put it into action.*

These statements reflect how mothers have developed strategies to strengthen their life resilience. It was revealed that each participant set various short- and long-term goals in light of their values and took significant steps toward achieving these objectives. These statements might indicate that the group counseling process provides participants with motivation and the courage to change.

**Resilient Attitude:** This theme comprises the participants' statements on the coping methods they have developed in response to life's challenges. Below are selected examples of this theme.

*P1: My sister left us; my brother became a drug addict. We are bankrupt. Everything in our lives has changed, but we stood up and held hands. We helped each other all the time. I don't know what's next for us. Life is hard and full of surprises. But if I've made it this far, I'll be able to make it through the next ones.*

*P4: I coped with what happened to me after that bad thing that happened to my sister when I was young. I got through the death of my father. I dealt with the situation of my own child's health. First, my faith in God and then my own strength was always with me as I did all of these things. I hope that this is how it will be in the future.*

*P10: We will act as if we have armors in front of us when we don't want to hear rumors in conversations that can't be learned from. I can't wait to give it a try. If I do it without exaggeration, it will contribute a lot to my life.*

Looking at the statements of the mothers, it is noticeable that they have developed an awareness that they can do something rather than feeling helpless in the face of the difficulties they face. These expressions can be interpreted as an essential reflection of the participants' determination to develop critical strategies to remain psychologically resilient by creating their unique meanings.

## Discussion

This study aimed to improve the family resilience levels of mothers by providing them with eight sessions of spiritually oriented, positive psychology-based psychological counseling to enable them to discover their resources and use them more effectively in their daily lives. A pretest-posttest single-group experimental design was used in the quantitative part of the study, whereas a thematic analysis was used in the qualitative part. Based on the quantitative analyses conducted to evaluate the differences between the applied group and the psychological counseling sessions, it was determined that the group had a positive and significant change in spiritual resources and family resilience. By examining both the processes of the participants before group counseling and the changes brought about by the process from various aspects, many themes were reached by evaluating qualitative data collected during the research process.

Before the implementation of group counseling sessions, participants made statements on the themes of intolerance, helplessness, control compulsion, inadequacy, and loneliness, and during and after the counseling practice, they made statements that formed the themes of hope, reliance, patience, social support, resilience, and steps to change.

While raising their children, parents may face various challenges or obstacles. Depending on the age of the children, their temperament, or the number of children their parents have, these difficulties may vary (O'Brien, 1996). The presence of themes obtained, such as helplessness, loneliness, inadequacy, and intolerance in the qualitative data, maybe a similar indicator of the various difficulties encountered in these areas.

It was discovered that individuals' family resilience levels significantly increased as a result of the psychological therapy intervention with a spiritually oriented positive psychology-based group. This situation serves as an example of the effect of spirituality on resilience. The idea that spirituality is an essential component of human nature is now widely accepted. According to research, spirituality is a valuable resource used for coping with difficult living conditions (Ayten et al., 2012; Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013; Cummings & Pargament, 2010; Sağlam-Demirkan, 2020; Spacious, 2019; Zwingmann et al., 2006). Positive religious coping describes using religious and spiritual dimensions as a resource for coping with negative or challenging occurrences. Positive religious coping is characterized by a secure relationship with the creator, the development of a belief in the significance of life, and a sense of spiritual commitment. Spirituality, therefore, has a considerable effect on individuals and families' mental, physical, and social health (Gall & Younger, 2013; Pargament et al., 2001).

Family resilience refers to the ability of a family to cope effectively with life crises, stresses, or difficulties. This concept provides an explanation for why some family dynamics remain healthy and robust while others are unable to withstand adversity (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988). Every family faces various problems or stress

factors from time to time. This difficult circumstance has the potential to damage the functioning of the family as well as the potential to enhance the family if the appropriate steps are taken (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1993). Therefore, it can be said that the mothers', who have a crucial role in family systems, the discovery of their spiritual resources and their ability to utilize them to strengthen their resilience has a protective and enhancing result.

When faced with life's challenges, many families use the spirituality they share based on a common belief system to exhibit an optimistic (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1988; Mahoney et al., 2001; Marks, 2004; Rew et al., 2004; Tanyi, 2006; Walsh, 1998;).95% of the parents who participated in the meta-analysis conducted by Mahoney et al. (2001) reported that religion is an essential factor in the family. When examining the family structure of Turkish society, it is seen that families are comprised of nuclear and extended family structures, each with its certain value systems (Sayın, 1987). In a survey performed by the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry General Directorate of Family and Social Research (2010) to reveal family values in Turkey, 96.8% of participants stated that the family holds a significant place in their lives, and 87% stated that when confronted with financial or moral issues, they should first turn to their family for support. 90.3% of the participants indicated that they would be willing to face any challenges for the sake of their family. According to the research, values such as loyalty, support from extended family, respect, and commitment to religious and spiritual values were prominent; frequently praying in the face of problems experienced in the family, adherence to religious rules in daily life, and adherence to values that are considered important in the family are used as coping mechanisms. This study's qualitative and quantitative data reveal results that parallel these findings. In the subthemes derived from the qualitative data acquired during the study process, it was discovered that the majority of participants used religious rituals to overcome the difficulties they met in life and that this circumstance had a good effect on their lives. Many participants indicated that they developed coping mechanisms, such as saying salawat, using Allah's names, and relying on Allah. Additionally, it was noted that there was a notable increase in the use of spiritual resources after the program to build resilience was implemented.

Examining the findings from qualitative data reveals the emergence of positive psychology concepts such as hope, trust, and patience. Similar to this conclusion, a literature review reveals that spiritually-based group counseling practices have effective results on the development of numerous positive psychology-related phenomena in persons. Fallah et al. (2011) conducted sessions with spiritually-based group counseling practices for women with cancer that included positive psychology ideas, including gratitude, forgiveness, patience, and hope. After the study, it was discovered that there was a substantial difference in the participants' levels of life

satisfaction, happiness, and hope. Elham et al. (2015) carried out a study with a spiritual/religious basis and interventions on providing hope, sharing spiritual experiences, strengthening family ties, prayer, and worship on 66 patients receiving treatment in the coronary care unit; it was discovered that the individuals' anxiety levels decreased while their well-being increased. In the study conducted by Lambert et al. (2010), the participants were assigned the task of praying about a friend, praying for a friend's well-being, and praying about any subject every day for four weeks and as a result of the application, the participants demonstrated an increase in their capacity for forgiveness. All of this research demonstrate that spiritually-based positive psychology practices, such as those in this study, produce positive changes in variables related to an individual's level of resilience.

All of the participants in the study group of this research are female. The cultural structure of the society in which people reside establishes various patterns and expectations for how women and men should behave and think (Powell & Greenkouse, 2010). Most of the gender-specific expectations that people confront are shaped within the family. When examining the roles assigned to women by society, it is evident that there are many expectations in areas such as education, employment, and marriage and that these expectations can negatively impact the lives of women (Demirgöz Bal, 2014). Women in a discourse analysis on being a woman in Turkey said they felt compelled to carry out obligations placed on them by society. However, while most women expressed the problems they encountered in life, they talked about the problems related to family and home life (Elçi, 2011). According to the research conducted by the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry General Directorate of Family and Social Research (2010), there are many expectations placed on women in Turkey, including family duties, housekeeping, care, economic management, relationships with society, relationships with relatives and neighbors, and being caring and loving. Due to these imposed gender roles, women endure various emotional, mental, and social issues, as evidenced by these findings. Therefore, it is believed that this study, which was undertaken for women to enhance family resilience, will have a positive impact on many facets of their lives.

It is believed that this research will serve as a significant example of spiritually oriented positive psychology-based group studies, family resilience support, and the utilization of spiritual resources, all considered lacking in the national literature. The application of this study to women who face many problems in the areas of child-rearing, daily responsibilities, and family relations, and who play a prominent role in the family is thought to increase the family resilience levels of mothers and bring about positive changes on both an individual and social level. In addition, it is believed that these studies can be conducted regardless of gender and age and that the implementation of the projects will have significant effects on the health of families and communities.



**Ethical approval.** The study named “A spiritual touch on family resilience: A positive psychology based group study from burnout to hope” and approval numbered 01-21 was examined by the Marmara University Institute of Educational Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee and it was decided that the research was ethically appropriate.

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