



Exploring the Evil Eye Beliefs: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract

The concept of the evil eye refers to the belief that gazes of individuals with envious feelings can have harmful effects on living and non-living entities. On this subject, there appears to be very few quantitative studies in literature. The aim of the present study was to investigate evil eye beliefs (EEBs) in Türkiye. A total of 601 participants (68.55% female, $M_{age} = 27.92$, $SD = 10.03$) completed measures of demographic information, benign envy, malicious envy, nonreligiousness-nonspirituality, and paranormal beliefs. The descriptive results showed that 58.24% of the participants endorsed the statement “I believe in the evil eye” and females had significantly stronger EEBs than males ($d = 1.01$ $p < .001$). The multiple regression analysis revealed that benign envy, malicious envy, nonreligiousness-nonspirituality, and nonreligious paranormal beliefs were significant predictors of EEBs, explaining 60.50% of the variance in EEBs. Moreover, nonreligiousness-nonspirituality was a significant moderator in the relationship between nonreligious paranormal beliefs and EEBs, suggesting that nonreligious paranormal beliefs may be more essential motivators of EEBs for individuals with lower levels of religiousness-spirituality. The results and limitations were discussed and suggestions for future studies were proposed.

Keywords:

The evil eye • Envy • Religiousness • Spirituality • Paranormal beliefs

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Introduction

The monitoring of others' gaze may have played a crucial role in the evolution of social interactions (Cañigual & Hamilton, 2019). Previous research has shown that individuals tend to focus their gaze on the eyes rather than other parts of the human face (Hessels, 2020). Hood et al. (1998) revealed that infants as young as three months possess the ability to discern gaze direction, which subsequently influences their attention patterns. The direction of others' gazes can provide valuable insights into their attention, potential sources of interest, and imminent threats (Hadjikhani et al., 2008). In this context, evil eye beliefs (EEBs), which are closely associated with gazes, fall into the side of the potential danger.

The concept of the evil eye originates from a supernatural belief that certain individuals or beings, driven by envy, possess the ability to inflict harm or destruction upon a person, newborn, livestock, crops, or other entities. (Berger, 2012; Elliott, 2016). As a consequence of the evil eye, livestock may perish, crops may wither and rot, and individuals may suffer from mental health issues (Berger 2012; Hamid, 2012). It is widely believed that the evil eye can manifest through either direct eye contact or verbal compliments (Holden, 2000). According to Elliott (2016), infants, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and exceptionally attractive individuals are considered to be more susceptible to the influence of the evil eye. Moreover, the evil eye can be cast both intentionally and unintentionally (Begiç, 2020). It is also worth noting that it is possible to cast the evil eye on other individuals without being physically close to them (Rassool, 2018). While EEBs' origin can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as the Sumerians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, EEBs are still present in the modern world (Elliott, 2016), especially in Türkiye. A study conducted among Turkish pediatric nurses revealed that 37% of them held the belief that the evil eye can cause pain (Beybut et al., 2009). Additionally, 54% of the nurses utilized prayer as a protective measure against the evil eye, 10.8% carried evil eye beads and 5.4% employed both prayer and evil eye beads. Another study conducted with university students showed that 32.06% of the participants reported that they carry evil eye beads (Ögenler & Yapıcı, 2012). Two more recent studies conducted in Türkiye found that approximately 84% (Çınarer, 2022; Türkmenoğlu-Berkan & Tuncer-Manzakoğlu, 2016) of the participants reported believing in the evil eye.

The evil eye encompasses a complicated set of beliefs and practices employed for protection, including prayers, rituals, the wearing of amulets, and the execution of specific hand gestures. (Elliott, 2016). Since ancient times, individuals have believed that the evil eye comes from eyes and have used eye-shaped figures for protection (Koç & Temür, 2014). To state differently, it was widely believed that the detrimental effects of the evil eye could be mitigated or redirected by utilizing an eye-shaped figure or image that was susceptible to and capable of absorbing

the negative influences emanating from the evil eye. In Mediterranean cultures, particularly in Italy, individuals use the hand gesture “*corna*” (the sign of the horn) to protect themselves from the “*malocchio*” (evil eye) (Bohigian, 1997). Irish people may say “God bless it” (Dundes, 1992) to protect individuals when they are praised, while Jewish people prefer to say “*kenehora*” (without evil) (Berger, 2013). In India, people hang lemons and chilies on their door to prevent the evil eye (An et al., 2019). Finally, Turkish people frequently rely on reciting Quranic verses, using amulets believed to ward off the evil eye, and uttering the phrase “*mashallah*” (meaning Allah has willed it) to protect themselves and their loved ones from negative influences of the evil eye (Bayar, 2020; Begiç, 2020; Şevli, 2023). Koç and Temür (2014) asserted that the utilization of eye symbols, such as evil eye beads, throughout history and in contemporary societies originates from a primal desire to exert control over uncontrollable phenomena. Consequently, these beliefs and practices serve as protective mechanisms against inherent natural uncertainties, apprehensions, economic challenges, familial conflicts, and psychosocial obstacles.

Purpose

Although there were several studies investigating the role of gazing in social interactions and perception by referring to the evil eye conceptually (Alper et al., 2019; Giacomantonio et al., 2018; Kuin et al., 2017; van de Ven et al., 2010; Vargas, 2021) or exploring economic origins of EEBs (Gershman, 2015), only very few quantitative studies, to our knowledge, has directly examined EEBs in psychology. We conducted a preliminary study which investigated the relationship between EEBs and possibly related concepts such as benign envy (BE), malicious envy (ME), nonreligiousness-nonspirituality (NRNS), and nonreligious paranormal beliefs (NRPBs). First of all, we decided to examine the relationship between EEBs and envy, because the emotion of envy has been culturally believed to be a proximal motivator of the evil eye (Elliott, 2016). Envy is an emotional response triggered by the perception of other individuals possessing desirable possessions, achieving success, or exhibiting certain personal attributes (Çırpan & Özdoğru, 2017). This response often involves a desire to either diminish or eliminate the perceived advantages (Spielman, 1971). In many cultures, envy is regarded as a negative emotion and is associated with feelings of resentment and hostility (Elliott, 2016). When someone experiences envy towards another person, it is believed that their negative energy or ill can be projected through their gazes, leading to the curse of the evil eye (Elliott, 2016; Holden, 2000). In his article *Uncanny*, Freud (1919) also asserted that EEBs may be originated from the projection of one’s envy to others. Apart from envy, we also preferred to evaluate the relationship between EEBs, NRNS, and NRPBs. This is because NRNS and NRPBs are essentially related to EEBs. The evil eye is a belief rooted in a supernatural understanding of the world and is intertwined with religious beliefs and practices across the globe (Berger, 2013; Elliott, 2016; Rassool, 2018).

Based on the information about EEBs related concepts, we investigated possible gender differences on EEBs as the findings have shown that females are more likely to believe in the paranormal (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005; Rice, 2003; Roohee & Sunbal, 2023). Furthermore, we conducted a multiple regression analysis to examine whether BE, ME, NRNS, and NRPBs can predict EEBs. Finally, we examined the possible moderator role of NRNS in the relationship between NRPBs and EEBs.

The hypotheses of the present study were:

- H1. Females would have higher EEBs scores than males.
- H2. Higher BE would predict higher EEBs.
- H3. Higher ME would predict higher EEBs.
- H4. Higher NRNS would predict lower EEBs.
- H5. Higher NRPBs would predict higher EEBs.
- H6. NRNS would moderate the relationship between NRPBs and EEBs.

Method

Participants

A total of 601 participants (412 females, 68.55%) were recruited for the study with convenience sampling via announcements in social media and the internet. The mean age of the sample was 27.92 (*SD* = 10.03). More than half of the participants (59.40%) reported having university-level education. In terms of employment status, only 36.44% of the participants were employed. The majority of the participants (78.20%) stated their marital status as single. Finally, approximately half of the participants (47.92%) were from middle socio-economic status (SES). The details regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.
The demographic characteristic of the participants

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	27.92	10.03
Traditional religious beliefs (Islam)	31.45	12.03
	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Female	412	68.55
Male	189	31.45

Table 1.
The demographic characteristic of the participants

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Education		
<i>High School</i>	46	7.65
<i>University</i>	382	63.56
<i>Master's degree</i>	117	19.47
<i>PhD.</i>	56	9.32
Employment		
<i>No</i>	382	63.56
<i>Yes</i>	219	36.44
Marital Status		
<i>Single</i>	470	78.20
<i>Married</i>	114	18.97
<i>Divorced</i>	17	2.83
Socioeconomic Status		
<i>Very Low</i>	78	12.98
<i>Low</i>	135	22.46
<i>Middle</i>	288	47.92
<i>High</i>	99	16.47
<i>Very High</i>	1	.17

Instruments

Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form was used to examine the characteristics of the participants such as age, gender, education level, employment status and marital status. In addition, socioeconomic status of the participants was measured with the question of “How would you describe your income situation when you think about your monthly earnings?”.

Benign and Malicious Envy Scale (BEMAS)

Lange and Crusius (2015) developed the Benign and Malicious Envy Scale to measure dispositional BE (emulation) and ME (envy). Participants rate each item on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 6 = Strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of BE and ME. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Çırpan and Özdoğur (2017). The internal consistency coefficients for BE and ME were .78 and .86, respectively. In the present study, the BEMAS was used to assess BE and ME of the participants.

NonReligious-NonSpiritual Scale (NRNSS)

The NonReligious-NonSpiritual Scale was developed by Cragun et al. (2015) to

measure the religiosity and spirituality levels of individuals. Participants are asked to rate their degree of agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 Strongly agree; 5 = Strongly disagree). Higher scores indicate lower religiousness-spirituality. The NRNSS was adapted to Turkish by Sevinç et al. (2015). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the Turkish form was reported as .96. In the current study, the NRNSS was used to assess religiosity and spirituality levels of the participants.

Paranomal Beliefs Scale (PBS)

The Paranormal Beliefs Scale was developed by Tobacyk and Milford (1983) to assess the paranormal and religious beliefs with seven subscale which are traditional religious beliefs, psi, witchcraft, superstition, spiritualism, extraordinary life forms, and precognition. Participants score each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher endorsement of paranormal beliefs. The adaptation study of PBS to Turkish culture was conducted by Arslan (2010). The internal consistency coefficient of the total scale was reported as .85. In the present study, we used six subscales of the PBS, excluding traditional religious beliefs because the subscale has an item about the evil eye and there was a high correlation between the subscale and the NRNSS. ($r = .88$), suggesting that the NRNSS measures the same construct. Traditional religious beliefs subscale was used to assess participants belief in Islam.

Assessment of The Evil Eye Beliefs

Since there were no measure of EEBs in Turkish, we assessed EEBs with five statements pertaining to the evil eye. The instruction of the statements read as "The evil eye is a belief that individuals can have a negative effect on living or non-living beings through their gaze. Please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements about the belief in the evil eye.". The five statements used in the present study were rated on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree) and can be seen in Table 2. In the present study, the total score of responses to these five

Table 2
The responses of the participants to the evil eye beliefs statements

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
	% (f)				
1) I believe in the evil eye.	17.80(107)	7.82(47)	16.14(97)	35.11(211)	23.13(139)
2) I use some practices (using evil eye beads, praying, saying "mashallah", etc.) to protect myself from the evil eye.	24.63(148)	10.98(66)	12.98(78)	35.94(216)	15.47(93)
3) If a person looks at someone with admiration or envy, it can cast the evil eye.	19.47(117)	11.15(67)	18.64(112)	34.78(209)	15.97(96)
4) Verbal expression of one's admiration or envy can cast the evil eye.	22.46(135)	13.31(80)	22.46(135)	28.62(172)	13.15(79)
5) One can cast the evil eye to oneself.	22.63(136)	12.81(77)	17.80(107)	30.62(184)	16.14(97)

statements was used to assess EEBs of the participants.

Procedure

The ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of the Middle East Technical University (Protocol No. 145-ODTU-2021). The package of questionnaires, including the demographic information form and measures of the study were administered to participants online through the Qualtrics Survey system in a counter-balanced order. The participants received comprehensive information on the research's goals, confidentiality procedures, and their right to leave the study at any time. It took about 20 minutes to complete the study.

Statistical Analysis

The analyses of the study were conducted via SPSS 25 (data cleaning and moderation analysis) and JASP 0.19.3 (correlations and multiple regression). Gender differences in EEBs were examined with Welch t-test due to violation of the equal variance assumption. Equality of variance assumption was assessed with Levene's test, while normality was evaluated with skewness (2.0, -2.0) and kurtosis (7.0, -7.0) values. A multiple regression was conducted to predict EEBs based on BE, ME, NRNS, and NRPBs. The data were screened for assumptions of regression and multiple outliers. The assumptions of regression were checked by scatter plot, Q-Q plot standardized residuals, Durbin-Watson value of 2.00, residuals versus predicted plot, and tolerance ($> .01$) and VIF ($< .10$) values. PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2017) was used to examine the moderator role of NRNS in the relationship between NRPBs and EEBs.

Findings

Descriptive statistics and correlation analyses

The results regarding the participants' endorsement of EEBs can be seen in Table 2. A total of 58.24% of the participants responded to the statement "I believe in the evil eye" as "Agree" (35.11%) and "Strongly Agree" (23.13%). In terms of gender differences, a Welch t-test analysis ($n = 601$) showed that females ($M = 17.42$, $SD = 5.34$) have a significantly stronger belief in the evil eye than males ($M = 11.72$, $SD = 6.33$), $t(599) = 11.44$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.01$. The descriptive results of responses to the PBS can be found in Table 3.

Table 3*The responses of the participants to the Turkish Paranormal Beliefs Scale*

	1 - Strong- ly Disagree	2 - Dis- agree	3 - Uncer- tain	4 - Agree	5 - Slightly Agree
	% (N)				
1) The soul continues to exist though the body may die.	13.48(81)	10.65(64)	19.47(117)	33.11(199)	23.30(140)
2) Some individuals are able to levitate (lift) objects through mental forces.	40.43(243)	27.29(164)	16.81(101)	12.98(78)	2.50(15)
3) There really is black magic that harms people.	25.79(155)	19.80(119)	14.64(88)	31.28(188)	8.49(51)
4) A black cat brings bad luck.	77.21(464)	16.81(101)	2.33(14)	3.33(20)	0.33(2)
5) Your mind or soul can leave your body and travel.	23.63(142)	24.79(149)	20.13(121)	25.79(155)	5.66(34)
6) From time to time there are alien beings (UFOs) from other planets that visit our world.	23.13(139)	18.97(114)	26.79(161)	21.96(132)	9.151(55)
7) Astrology (the science of making judgments from the movements of the stars) is an accurate way of predicting the future.	33.44(201)	26.46(159)	11.81(71)	24.46(147)	3.83(23)
8) There is a being called Satan.	20.63(124)	13.81(83)	13.31(80)	25.96(156)	26.29(158)
9) The movement of objects through psychic powers, does exist.	39.93(240)	26.46(159)	16.31(98)	14.48(87)	2.83(17)
10) Wizards still exist.	26.29(158)	15.97(96)	15.97(96)	32.11(193)	9.65(58)
11) It is bad luck to pass under the ladder.	79.20(476)	16.47(99)	2.66(16)	1.50(9)	0.17(1)
12) During altered states, such as sleep or trances, the spirit can leave the body.	28.79(173)	19.80(119)	20.63(124)	26.12(157)	4.66(28)
13) Blessings fall on the house where Hızır visits.	36.11(217)	14.81(89)	21.80(131)	22.80(137)	4.49(27)
14) Horoscopes (knowing the position of the stars at the time of one's birth, horoscope) give us accurate information about one's future.	36.27(218)	24.63(148)	12.65(76)	23.30(140)	3.16(19)
15) I believe in Allah.	12.31(74)	9.82(59)	8.15(49)	20.63(124)	49.09(295)
16) Even though we cannot see them with the naked eye, beings such as jinn do exist.	20.30(122)	9.65(58)	16.14(97)	29.29(176)	24.63(148)
17) It is possible to cast a spell on a person by using certain magical formulas and words.	29.12(175)	18.97(114)	16.64(100)	26.29(158)	8.99(54)
18) It is a fact that people with evil eyes can curse other people.	21.46(129)	11.31(68)	10.82(65)	39.10(235)	17.30(104)
19) There is life on other planets.	3.99(24)	5.82(35)	28.12(169)	39.10(235)	22.96(138)
20) Some psychics can predict the future.	37.27(224)	22.46(135)	15.64(94)	22.96(138)	1.66(10)
21) There is a heaven and a hell.	17.80(107)	9.82(59)	16.64(100)	19.97(120)	35.77(215)
22) It is impossible to read the other person's mind.	4.99(30)	33.61(202)	21.13(127)	26.62(160)	13.64(82)
23) There are actual cases of witchcraft.	27.62(166)	17.30(104)	20.63(124)	28.12(169)	6.32(38)
24) Some people have an unexplained ability to predict the future.	25.79(155)	17.64(106)	18.47(111)	32.78(197)	5.32(32)
25) Blessed people can help people by giving their blessings and prayers.	31.12(187)	17.80(107)	15.14(91)	29.62(178)	6.32(38)
26) Angels are beings of light.	23.96(144)	7.49(45)	15.31(92)	30.78(185)	22.46(135)
27) The miracles of the saints are real.	29.78(179)	12.15(73)	22.46(135)	25.29(152)	10.32(62)

Note. Traditional religious beliefs subscale includes items of 1, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 25, 26, 27.

The Pearson correlations among the study variables were reported in Table 4. The results of the correlation analyses yielded that individuals with higher EEBs were more likely to emulate and envy other individuals and have stronger nonreligious beliefs in paranormal. On the other hand, individuals with lower EEBs were less likely to be religious-spiritual.

Table 4
The correlations among the study variables (N = 601)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1) Evil Eye Beliefs	-				
2) Benign Envy	.16***	-			
3) Malicious Envy	.13**	.36***	-		
4) Nonreligiousness-nonspirituality	-.65***	-.03	.05	-	
5) Nonreligious Paranormal Beliefs [†]	.68***	.08*	.11*	-.51***	-
<i>M</i>	15.63	17.52	9.41	48.85	44.12
<i>SD</i>	6.26	6.00	4.85	17.02	13.04
<i>Min</i>	5.00	5.00	5.00	17.00	19.00
<i>Max</i>	25.00	30.00	30.00	80.00	78.00
<i>α</i>	.94	.81	.84	.93	.89

Note. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. [†]Traditional religious beliefs subscale was excluded.

Multiple Regression

Four outliers, detected by Mahalanobis distance, were removed from further analyses and the final sample consisted of 597 participants. All assumptions of linear regression (i.e., linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity) were met. The model consisted of BE, ME, NRNS, and NRPBs was significant and explained %60.50 of the variance in EEBs, $F(4, 592) = 227.09, p < .001$. All variables were significant predictors of EEBs. Higher BE, ME and NRPBs predicted higher EEBs, but higher NRNS predicted lower EEBs. The details of the regression model can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5
The multiple regression model predicting evil eye beliefs (N = 596)

	ΔR^2	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Model	.61				
Intercept		11.98	1.13		10.64***
Benign Envy		0.10	0.03	0.09	3.33***
Malicious Envy		0.10	0.04	0.07	2.63**
Nonreligiousness-nonspirituality		-.16	0.01	-0.44	-14.41***
Nonreligious Paranormal Beliefs		0.20	0.01	0.43	13.82***

Note. ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. [†]Traditional religious beliefs subscale was excluded.

Moderation Analysis

The final sample was 593 after the removal of eight multiple outliers identified by Mahalanobis distance. To test moderator role of NRNS in the relationship between NRPBs and EEBs, a moderation analysis was conducted using Hayes Macro. All

assumptions of linear regression (i.e., linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity) were met. NRNS, NRPBs, and EEBs were included in the model. The overall model accounted for 60.31% of variance in EEBs, $F(3, 589) = 298.389$, $p < .001$. Conditional effect of NRNS in the relationship between NRPBs and EEBs was significant, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 589) = 13.03$, $p < .001$. The interactions were probed with pick a point method for NRNS (-1 SD, mean, and 1 SD). There were no statistical significance transition points within the observed range of the moderator variable found using the Johnson-Neyman method. The results revealed that the conditional effects for NRPBs at -1 SD, mean, and 1 SD of NRNS scores were 0.16 ($p < .001$), 0.21 ($p < .001$) and 0.27 ($p < .001$), respectively (see Table 6).

Table 6
Conditional effects of nonreligious paranormal beliefs on evil eye beliefs at values of nonreligiousness-non-spirituality

Nonreligiousness-nonspirituality	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
-1 <i>SD</i>	0.16	.02	7.92	< .001	0.12	0.20
Mean	0.21	.01	14.18	< .001	0.18	0.24
1 <i>SD</i>	0.25	.02	13.02	< .001	0.22	0.29

Discussion

To our knowledge, the present study was one of the first quantitative studies investigating EEBs in psychology. The descriptive results revealed that approximately 58.24% of participants believe in the evil eye. Despite with a lower percentage, this finding was in line with previous findings in Türkiye (Çınarar, 2022; Türkmenoğlu-Berkan & Tuncer-Manzakoğlu, 2016) and revealed that EEBs are still prevalent among Turkish population. Comparison based on gender supported the first hypothesis and indicated that females believe EEBs more strongly than males. Previous studies on gender differences regarding PBs also showed similar results across cultures (Aarnio & Lindeman, 2005; Mowen et al., 2022; Remsburg et al., 2024; Rice, 2003; Roohee & Sunbal, 2023; Silva, 2023; Ward & King, 2020). It was argued that combination of psychological, social, and cultural factors such as female’s higher reliance on intuition (Ward & King, 2020) or higher marginalization in society (Irwin, 1993) and men’s higher reliance on rationality (Maqsood et al., 2018) or their higher propensity for masculinity (Silva, 2023), may play roles in the gender difference regarding PBs. This gender difference may also apply to EEBs, one of the prevalent PBs in Türkiye.

The results of regression analysis indicated that higher BE, ME and NRPBs predicted higher EEBs, while higher NRNS predicted lower EEBs. The overall model significantly explained 60.50% of variance in EEBs. The findings regarding the relationships between BE, ME, and EEBs supported the second and third hypotheses and the cultural notion linking envious feelings to EEBs (Bayar, 2020). In his comprehensive cross-cultural study of the evil eye, Elliot (2016) commented

that “this association of Evil Eye and envy is one of the most pronounced and constant features of the Evil Eye belief complex over time and across cultures.” (p. 109). Individuals having envious feelings towards other individuals may fear that others have similar feelings towards them, felt threatened, and this may eventually exacerbate their EEBs. Regarding the role of projection mechanisms in the evil eye, it could be argued that cognitive efforts to suppress thoughts about a particular negative trait such as being envious inadvertently may make this trait highly accessible, subsequently shaping the perception of others (Baumeister et al., 1998). Despite the present findings associating envy and the evil eye, Freud’s hypothesis that EEBs is driven by individuals’ projection of their envy to other individuals require further investigation.

Unsurprisingly, NRNS and NRPBs were significant predictors of EEBs, supporting the fourth and fifth hypotheses. Previous studies revealed significant associations between religiosity, spirituality, and PBs (Riekk et al., 2013; Schofield et al., 2016; Singh & Dangwal, 2019). In this context, EEBs can be regarded as paranormal beliefs. Moreover, the cultural notions and practices pertaining to EEBs are nested in religious practices and beliefs in Türkiye (Çıblak, 2004), such as saying “*mashallah*” or using amulets with verses of the Quran (Begiç, 2020). This relationship between the evil eye and religious practices and beliefs extends to other religions and cultures, including ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Greek cultures (Koç & Temür, 2014) and “the sacred literature of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles, the parabiblical writings, the Jewish Mishnah, Talmud, and rabbinic texts, and the writings of the Christian church fathers.” (Elliot, 2016, p. 45). In addition, the results of the moderation analysis showed that NRPBs had a stronger predictor power on EEBs when the levels of NRNS were higher, supporting the sixth hypothesis. This finding may suggest that when individuals have lower levels of religiousness-spirituality, EEBs may be motivated more by their NRPBs.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the present study that should be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, the majority of the sample consisted of young, female, university students which limits the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Future studies, therefore, may use more balanced samples in terms of age, gender, education level, and SES. Secondly, the social desirability bias was not controlled in the present study, and it may have influenced the measurement of envy. Future research should therefore seek to address this issue by using measures to control social desirability. Thirdly, EEBs were measured with five statements due to the lack of a scale to measure EEBs in Turkish. Further research is needed to develop a comprehensive scale that measures EEBs with all aspects. Finally, the cross-sectional nature of the present study prevents inferences regarding the causal

relationship between study variables. Therefore, future studies can use experimental and longitudinal methods to investigate the relationships between study variables.

Conclusion and Suggestions

To sum up, the present study suggests that a remarkable percentage of individuals in Türkiye still believe the evil eye. On this notion, Begiç stated (2020, p. 186): “In Turkish culture, the belief in Central Asian Shamanism and the belief in the evil eye, which has been passed down to the present day in social life after the acceptance of Islam, continues with different practices in various regions of Anatolia.”. The belief in the evil eye manifests itself in many aspects of Turkish culture from architecture (Budak, 2020) to music (Koç et al., 2016). Türkarslan and Kozak (2024) showed that the evil eye can even become a topic in psychotherapies with Turkish clients. Clients may talk about their beliefs in the evil eye, explain their bad lucks in terms of the evil eye or attribute their difficulties to mention their good fortunes to the evil eye (Türkarslan & Kozak, 2024). The present study suggests that the evil eye related issues in psychotherapy can be understood and discussed in relation to envious feelings, religiosity-spirituality, and non-religious paranormal beliefs of the clients.

We believe that the evil eye being embedded in Turkish culture makes EEBs an important and interesting research topic. Further studies of EEBs can include variables regarding personality, cultural orientations, and economics. For example, in societies

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with visible economic disparities, envy is a natural response to perceived imbalances, which can fuel beliefs in the evil eye (Ben-Ze’ev, 1992). However, to conduct further quantitative studies, there is a strong need for development of a comprehensive scale that measures various aspects of EEBs in Turkish.

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