

Nationalism in Germany: Perspectives and Its Influence on the Turkish Diaspora and National Identity Preservation

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Abstract: This article presents an analytical exploration of the preservation of national identity among Turks living in Germany. In addition to a theoretical framework, the study incorporates empirical data collected through surveys conducted among young and middle-young generations. The article begins by examining the concept of nationalism—its potential harms, development trajectories, and its contemporary impact.

The analysis is grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, which serves as a sociological lens to interpret the interactions between identity, power, and social structures. The empirical results reflect both similarities and divergences in perspectives, revealing a range of both pessimistic and optimistic views regarding identity preservation. Moreover, the study considers the influence of ethical and economic challenges on national identity. By integrating theoretical and empirical dimensions, the article offers a nuanced understanding of how national belonging is negotiated in the diaspora context. The empirical part of this study was conducted through Microsoft Forms in full anonymity, ensuring the confidentiality and voluntary participation of all respondents.

Keywords: *Pierre Bourdieu, nationalism, education, school, language*

Nationalism remains one of the most pressing socio-political phenomena of the contemporary world. Although its origins can be traced back to the late eighteenth century, nationalism evolved into a more sophisticated and romanticized form by the early twentieth century. The modern international system is predominantly composed of nation-states, yet this configuration is a relatively recent outcome of historical developments. Merely 150 years ago, more than half of the existing nation-states had not yet been established. Particularly over the past two centuries, millions of individuals have committed or condoned acts of hostility, violence, and even mass atrocities against other ethnic and national groups, driven by their unwavering allegiance to their own nation (Anderson 2006 ; P. 179-183).

In recent times, a form of romantic nationalism has emerged. This paradigm encompasses respect and admiration for other nations, yet it places primary emphasis on the advancement and success of one's own nation. It must not be conflated with patriotism, which entails a broader and more abstract sense of devotion to the state and homeland. Romantic nationalism, while still oriented toward protecting

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the state and nation, introduces a layer of emotional partiality that can foster ambivalence or even exclusion. The critical distinction lies in the fact that, unlike patriotism, romantic nationalism may not extend unconditional emotional solidarity to those beyond one's national identity. When individuals of other ethnic or national backgrounds perceive this conditional form of affection—where the rhetoric of “my nation first” prevails—they may reasonably question the nationalist’s capacity for inclusive protection and empathy. From socio-psychological, socio-religious, and socio-ethical perspectives, this dynamic reveals several inconsistencies. For instance, many religious and ethical systems advocate for universal brotherhood, altruistic love, and the prioritization of others’ well-being over one’s own. Ethical principles such as offering moral support, viewing all citizens as part of a collective whole, and recognizing shared humanity under the umbrella of a single state, are often in tension with nationalist exclusivity. Consequently, skepticism toward nationalism is not unfounded; rather, it stems from legitimate concerns about its compatibility with broader humanistic and democratic values. In light of such considerations, modern educational and socio-political frameworks, particularly those emphasizing multiculturalism and tolerance, have increasingly sought to instill in younger generations a critical distance from the emotionally charged narratives of classical and romantic nationalism. Instead, they promote a vision of social cohesion rooted in inclusive love, mutual respect, and the principle of social justice (Anderson 2006 ; P. 145-155).

Germany is a country that experienced two major world wars and successfully restored its economic power in the aftermath. The nationalist sentiment that emerged during Germany’s classical period of nationalism gradually transformed into a rigid and overtly racist ideology. This transition is most clearly exemplified by the hatred directed towards other ethnic groups during the Second World War, as well as the mass deportations, executions, concentration camps, and prisoner-of-war camps that characterized this era. Although the peak of racial ideology in Germany occurred around 1936, its wide-reaching consequences were neither widely acknowledged nor adequately addressed at the time. Political leaders often failed to take its implications seriously. Under Adolf Hitler’s regime, newlywed couples were gifted a copy of his book *Mein Kampf*, and children were taught the supposed distinctions of the “superior race” in school curricula. These ideas were propagated in such a deceptively appealing manner that much of the population remained oblivious to the impending catastrophe. This was primarily due to the fact that certain dangerous ideological elements within the prevailing social atmosphere were never critically examined or purged. Consequently, existing social voids were filled with extreme nationalism and racial dogma. During a period of widespread poverty and unemployment, Hitler promised the people improved living conditions and full employment—promises which he indeed managed to fulfill. This success enabled him to exploit the social stress caused by the economic crisis and to strengthen his ideological narrative. Once he had gained the loyalty and admiration of the masses through initial success, the figure of the “heroic leader” emerged—one whose every word was accepted as absolute truth. To recognize such developments in time, critical thinkers and social institutions must remain vigilant and proactive. After Germany’s defeat in the war, many among the population began to deny responsibility, claiming: “We didn’t say anything like that.” This demonstrates how dangerous ideological currents can spread rapidly when emotional manipulation fills a momentary social vacuum. The collective emotions of the masses are most vulnerable when those voids are left unaddressed by rational tolerance and inclusive values.

As Winston Churchill reportedly remarked, “If we had thoroughly and seriously read *Mein Kampf*, we would not have allowed the Second World War to begin.” This statement underscores the catastrophic consequences of underestimating dangerous ideologies. A lack of seriousness, political incompetence, disengagement from daily sociopolitical realities, failure to challenge toxic ideas, and the absence of multicultural education can all lead to unwanted “social dreams”—hallucinations from which societies may wake up too late. And when they do awaken, they often must start again from scratch—if it is not already too late (Gilbert, Martin. 1991; 400-620).

Today, Germany is one of the leading members of the G7 and holds a strong and resilient economy. It is home to millions of people from various national backgrounds, the largest of which is the Turkish community—estimated to be around eight million individuals. Like all national groups, many Turkish immigrants aspire to preserve their cultural and national identity, which includes the desire for education in their native language or, at the very least, the maintenance of cultural values in the face of social pressure. They seek an environment where raising their children according to their cultural norms at home is not contradicted or undermined by the external social setting. Freedom to practice religion without obstruction is also seen as a vital pillar in preserving national identity. Religion, in many societies, functions as a cultural cornerstone. All major religions have historically contributed to the development of independent moral and ethical systems within civilizations. Islam, likewise, plays a foundational role in the cultural identity of many communities. Authenticity, language, religion, and spiritual values are among the essential elements that contribute to the long-term endurance of a people. Nevertheless, in many parts of Europe, waves of Islamophobia and increasingly hostile rhetoric against immigrants are becoming more frequent. These often manifest in the form of protests containing hate speech, verbal abuse, and even, in some tragic cases, acts of violence and murder. Such actions are typically driven by artificially manufactured mass sentiments, often lacking clear or constructive objectives. Under mounting political pressure, governments may at times be compelled to adopt policies aligned with these populist voices. However, from a sociological perspective, the motivations behind these mass movements demand deeper analysis (BBC News; VOA News).

Key questions emerge:

1. What is the root of the public’s discontent?
2. What external factors are pressuring society toward such responses?
3. Is there a perceived threat to cultural or national identity?
4. Are immigrants being scapegoated for economic decline?
5. Concern about the erosion of the genetic pool
6. Do some perceive immigrants as contributing to a decline in moral values?
7. Is there concern over the erosion of native language, religion, and mental frameworks?
8. Is resentment fueled by the perception that immigrants enjoy better living conditions than locals?
9. Are rising instances of disregard for national laws and values among immigrants contributing to public concern?
10. Are there actual or perceived tax advantages for immigrants, and how are they being interpreted?

The mass adoption of xenophobic or nationalist rhetoric does not arise spontaneously. It is typically the result of accumulated socio-political and psychological factors. While racism is universally condemned both ethically and sociologically, the emotional and structural damages it causes to a society are often rapid and far-reaching. Nonetheless, in order to avoid societal collapse and the need to "start from zero," it is imperative to conduct a sober and thorough analysis of the underlying causes. Recognizing these root issues is essential to building a more tolerant and stable multicultural society (Betz, Hans-Georg. 1994 ; P. 50-58).

Pierre Bourdieu's Field Theory offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing how different dimensions of society operate and interact. But first, what is a "field" in Bourdieu's conceptualization? Society, according to Bourdieu, is not a monolithic or uniform structure but a collection of overlapping and interrelated fields with its own rules, power dynamics, and hierarchies. These fields function as semi-autonomous social arenas in which actors (individuals or institutions) struggle for dominance, recognition, or resources. Among the most influential fields in shaping an individual's development are the economic field (workplace), the educational field (school), and the media field. Each of these domains exerts distinct forms of symbolic power and plays a crucial role in the construction of identity, values, and social capital. It is important to note that within each field, actors strive to advance—that is, to gain more capital (economic, cultural, social, or symbolic) and thus enhance their position relative to others. The actor who manages to accumulate and convert the most capital is typically perceived as the most "powerful" or "successful" within that field.

In this sense, Bourdieu conceptualizes social life as a competitive arena, a constant struggle in which individuals or groups try to secure or maintain positions of advantage. These struggles are not random but are structured by the habitus of the agents (their internalized dispositions) and the logic of the field in which they operate. Therefore, the field functions as a kind of battleground, governed by implicit rules, in which actors with varying levels and types of capital continuously contest meaning, legitimacy, and status. By applying Field Theory to contemporary sociopolitical or multicultural tensions, one can trace how different actors (e.g., immigrants, native citizens, media entities, political groups) navigate and struggle within specific fields—such as the political or cultural field—each influenced by broader power structures and historical conditions (Bourdieu; 1984. P. 169-174).

Achievements attained within these fields are indebted to capital. In these fields, which possess their own obligatory forms of capital, it is impossible to occupy a dominant position without possessing them. Therefore, cultural and scientific capital are taken as fundamental. A teacher in a school has their own rules specific to their field: authority, language, discipline within norms or strict discipline, dominance derived from school regulations, and so forth. The student standing opposite also possesses their own capital within their field. These include acquiring knowledge through learning, embracing education, being consistently active, valuing one's personal beliefs, and representing those beliefs through academic engagement. Conflict arises when obligations and values within these respective fields attempt to assert themselves using their own capital in order to defend their positions. In such cases, the regulations of the school or the discriminatory impact of a racist teacher may counteract. At this point, what the student experiences may begin to form their habitus. However, this transformation may either occur immediately or gradually over time. When the student perceives their

field as isolated, recognizing their language and values as increasingly marginalized, it may result in emotional distress and perceived social neglect. Over time, this leads to the development of a particular habitus for the future. The concept of criminalization can be understood more clearly from this perspective: a socially traumatized child may be pushed towards a path of criminality—as if being compelled into it. In this sense, the individual may evolve into such a figure. Inducing such a transformation aligns with the concept of criminalization (Bourdieu 1977; P. 50–57).

The way Turks or Turkey are represented in the media can influence public perception among the local population. Even if an individual holds German citizenship, their identification with Turkish ethnicity leads them to perceive Turkey as their homeland—and Germans, in turn, often perceive them as Turks, or at least as "German Turks." The presence of the word "Turk" retains significance, and depending on worldview, educational background, and analytical capacity, it can shape opinions across various segments of German society. If a person occupies a position representing the state, they symbolize the values and laws of the nation. However, it does not mean that they speak on behalf of the entire population. An individual might express views aligning with those of seven people but certainly not with a hundred. In such a context, the political framework itself may not function directly, yet minds influenced by political context remain active.

To grasp these dynamics more deeply through empirical means, a conditional analysis is necessary. This can involve both anonymous survey questionnaires and ethnographic observation. Survey questionnaires play a significant role in terms of scale. When conducted purposefully and within a pre-identified group, they yield high-quality results. These surveys should not target random individuals but rather be directed at a specific community whose perspectives are intentionally being examined. Ethnographic observation, on the other hand, requires a longer period but allows naturalistic insight into both positive and negative social impacts, which are recorded systematically. The observer takes on the role of a member of the community being studied. This approach can be divided into two types: participant observation and non-participant observation. The former involves, for example, a Turkish individual participating in the daily life of a community in a specific field and recording experiences, while the latter involves observing without direct involvement. In this context, the role of habitus, the means by which capital is acquired, the motivations behind acquiring certain types of capital, and the dynamics of voluntary or involuntary behavior are all revealed. For example, by attending mosques on Fridays and examining the atmosphere in Turkish communities, one can study the lived religious environment. Observations during Ramadan or daily prayers can reveal both positive and negative elements. These are religious factors that contribute to the preservation of national identity. The same analytical lens can be applied to educational contexts, particularly when dealing with sensitive subjects that play a strong role in identity formation.

Bourdieu's theory of fields demonstrates, from a socio-psychological perspective, the power of structural pressure. However, it can also explain the emergence of shifting perspectives among different communities, often occurring after a certain age or following particular ideological influences. For example, a fifth-grade Turkish student in a German school might perceive the concept of the "field" differently compared to an eleventh-grade student who, due to increased maturity and cognitive development, interprets social structures with more depth and critical awareness. Such

developmental differences can be empirically tested. The variation in worldview between age groups may not necessarily be understood as inconsistency or insincerity within the field; rather, what is often interpreted as disingenuousness may in fact be the result of obligation and discipline. This can also be interpreted as a form of bureaucratic necessity. Max Weber's analysis of bureaucracy serves as clear evidence in this context: through his concept of the "iron cage," he shows how creativity is lost and individuals begin to function like semi-robots, executing orders merely as a response to procedural mandates. On the other hand, when viewed from the perspective of preserving national identity, these constraints might be seen as secondary or even tertiary in importance. People may interpret this situation as the state's irresponsibility or negligence toward ethnic minorities. From one perspective, there are legitimate reasons behind such perceptions. If laws are imperative for teachers as representatives of the state, then modifications or flexibility in those laws may be equally necessary for minority groups. It is a moral right for every nation to develop its identity in its own language. In a socio-psychological context, this issue—when framed through policy—may be perceived as a method of mass control, whereby certain rights are instrumentalized to transmit bourgeois ideologies. Such manipulation of discourse can serve to normalize systemic inequality under the guise of national unity or bureaucratic order (Weber 1978 ; P. 998-1004).

The entry of the popular classes onto the political stage, that is, their gradual transformation into ruling classes, constitutes one of the most prominent characteristics of our transitional period. This entry did not occur through universal suffrage as such, nor was it, for a long time, truly free from the perspective of the ruling elite, being highly subject to various controlling influences. The rising assertiveness of the masses primarily expands through the dissemination of certain established ideas, which gradually take root in consciousness and subsequently enable the gradual formation of individuals' associations aimed at carrying out theoretical deliberations. Through these associations, the masses develop ideas for their own interests—if not always in perfect justice, then at least in a clearly defined manner—and thereby acquire an understanding of their own power. The masses organize trade unions. All governing authorities successively submit to each other, and labor units are formed to manage working conditions and labor rights. The masses send representatives, who are mere instruments in the hands of the committees that elected them, to government institutions, thereby restricting any genuine initiatives.

The common symptoms observed in all nations indicate that the masses are increasing both their speed and their own power, and no thought is allowed to suggest that this power will not rapidly grow. Even if the masses do not immediately bring about tangible results, we must nonetheless come to terms with their presence. All reasoning or opposition against their power amounts to empty words. It is certainly possible that the rise of the masses marks one of the final stages of Western Civilization. This shift to a fully passionate and transient era, it seems, occurs, as in all previous advanced societies, before their own decline. How can one prevent this? So far, the most decisive role of the masses has been to displace outdated civilizations. Their role does not begin today; history shows that when the spiritual forces driving civilizations weaken, the ultimate destruction is orchestrated by the will and roots of the masses, often labeled barbarian. Civilizations are created and preserved by a small intellectual aristocracy, never by the masses. The power of the masses is solely directed towards

destruction, and their rule is always indicative of a stage of barbarism. The progress of civilizations, characterized by defined goals, order, and the transition from instinctive to rational behavior, represents a highly developed form of culture. The masses, which are self-enclosed and isolated, can never realize these conditions (Le Bon 2020 ; 80-83).

However, since obtaining parental consent is mandatory for surveys involving minors, I conducted the survey exclusively with participants aged 18 and above. Although not all participants are currently students, the perspectives of individuals who have completed school offer valuable insights into worldview variations by age group. This is particularly relevant because comparing younger and middle-aged groups can reveal significant differences in attitudes and opinions. It is plausible that views change with age due to various underlying factors, making this age-based distinction important for the research.

The survey was conducted online among younger and middle-aged generations using Microsoft Teams:

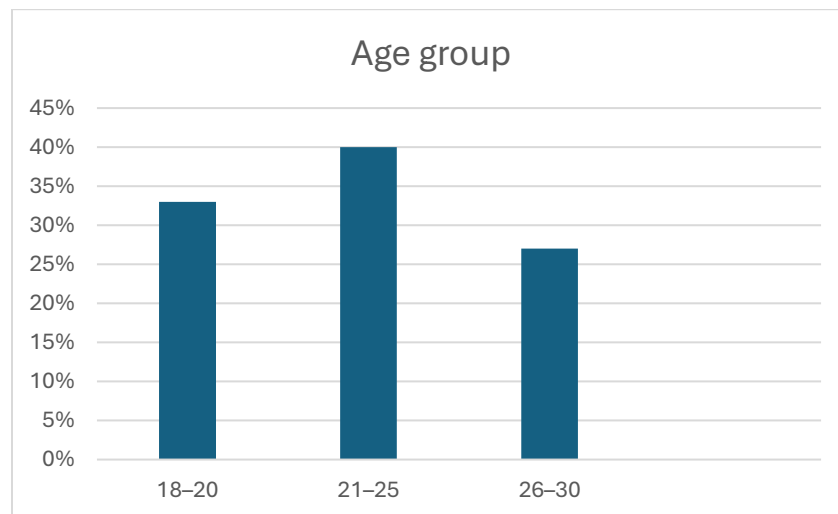


Figure 1 shows the age distribution.

Question 1: Age Distribution

18–20 years: 26 respondents (32%)

21–25 years: 33 respondents (40%)

26–30 years: 23 respondents (28%)

Detailed Explanation:

The age distribution shows a relatively balanced spread among young Turkish individuals living in Germany, with a slight majority in the 21–25 age group. This age bracket typically includes university students, early-career professionals, or young adults who are actively exploring their cultural identities and social environments. Younger respondents (18–20) may still be closely connected to family traditions and parental influences, whereas those aged 21–25 often experience greater independence,

more exposure to German culture through education or work, and are in a transitional phase between adolescence and full adulthood. The 26–30 group, while smaller, often has more stable life conditions, possibly balancing bicultural identities in personal and professional contexts. Understanding age distribution is crucial because it frames all other responses; cultural preferences, language use, and social values often shift with age and life stage.

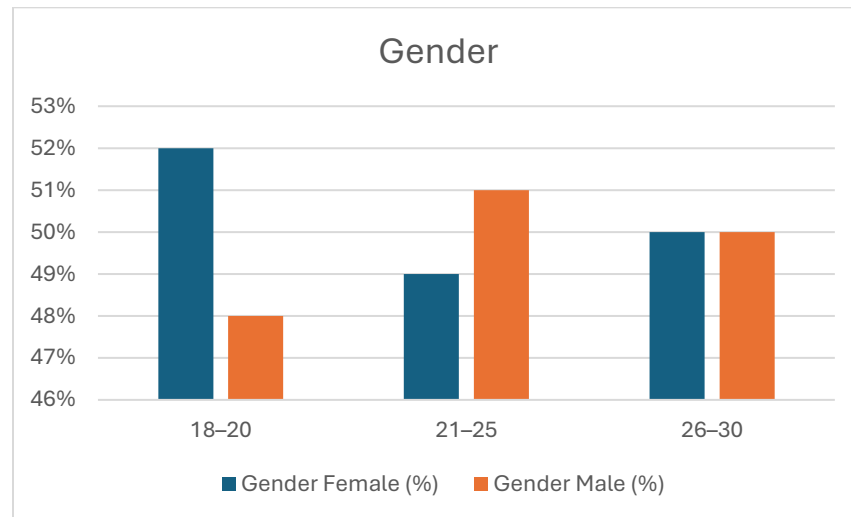


Figure 2 presents the gender distribution.

Question 2: Gender

Female: 42 respondents (51%)

Male: 40 respondents (49%)

Detailed Explanation:

The gender distribution among respondents is nearly equal, with a slight majority of females. This balanced representation allows for comprehensive insights into the experiences and attitudes of both young Turkish females and males living in Germany. Gender can influence many aspects of cultural identity, social behavior, and educational experiences. For instance, females might experience different social expectations both within their families and in broader society, which could affect their integration and cultural interests. Similarly, males might have distinct social roles and opportunities that shape their perceptions and choices. Having an almost equal number of males and females ensures that the survey results are not biased toward one gender's perspective, enabling a more nuanced understanding of the community's dynamics. It also helps to explore gender-specific trends in language use, cultural interests, values, and future aspirations.

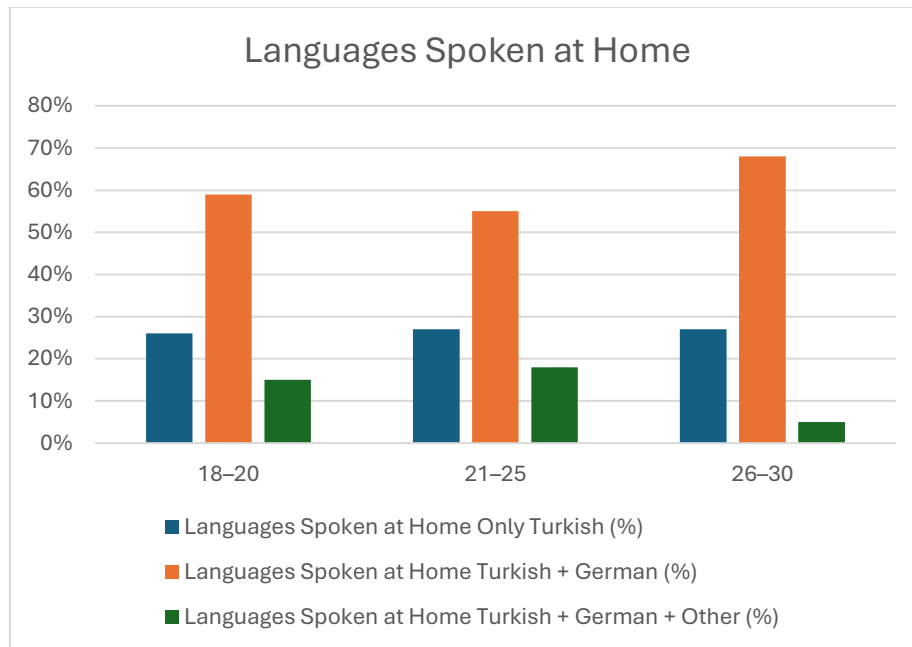


Figure 3 shows the statistics of languages spoken at home

Question 3: What languages are spoken at home?

Only Turkish: 22 respondents (27%)

Turkish and German: 47 respondents (57%)

Turkish, German, and other languages: 13 respondents (16%)

Detailed Explanation:

The majority of respondents (57%) speak both Turkish and German at home, which reflects a bilingual environment. This bilingualism indicates that young Turkish individuals in Germany often maintain their Turkish heritage while simultaneously integrating into the German cultural and linguistic landscape. Speaking only Turkish at home is less common (27%), and this group is likely more closely tied to their cultural roots and possibly experiences less exposure to German in the family setting. This could affect their language proficiency and comfort in broader German society but also strengthens cultural identity and family cohesion. The 16% who speak Turkish, German, and other languages at home show a multicultural and multilingual background, possibly due to diverse family origins or social networks. This group might have the broadest cultural exposure and adaptability. Overall, language use at home is a key indicator of cultural integration and identity. Bilingualism can facilitate better social and academic outcomes in Germany while helping maintain a connection to Turkish heritage.

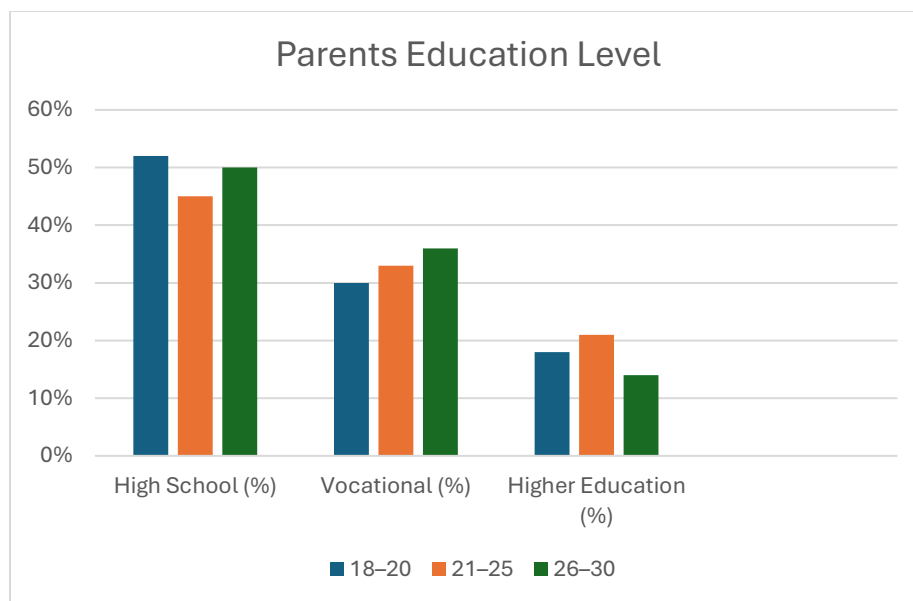


Figure 4 shows the educational level of the parents.

Question 4: Your parents' education level

High school: 40 respondents (49%)

Vocational education: 27 respondents (33%)

Higher education: 15 respondents (18%)

Detailed Explanation:

The educational background of parents is a crucial factor influencing the educational aspirations and cultural capital of the younger generation. Nearly half of the respondents' parents have completed high school, reflecting a solid but moderate educational foundation common in many immigrant families. This suggests a relatively stable social environment, where education is valued but may not always extend into higher academic realms. Vocational education (33%) represents a significant share and is important in the German context because vocational training is a respected and practical pathway to stable employment. Families with parents who pursued vocational education might emphasize practical skills and early workforce entry, influencing their children's educational and career decisions. Only 18% of respondents have parents with higher education degrees, indicating that university-level education among immigrant parents is less common. This might limit some children's access to academic role models or resources, potentially affecting their own educational trajectories. However, younger generations often seek to surpass parental achievements, which can drive strong motivation for academic success. The variation by age group often reflects a trend where children of parents with higher education are more likely to pursue or be encouraged toward higher education themselves, especially in the 21–25 and 26–30 age groups. Families with vocational backgrounds may foster a more pragmatic approach to education and career, balancing cultural expectations and economic necessities. The distribution points toward ongoing social mobility challenges but also

opportunities, as many young Turkish-Germans navigate between their parents' educational backgrounds and their own ambitions in a different cultural system.

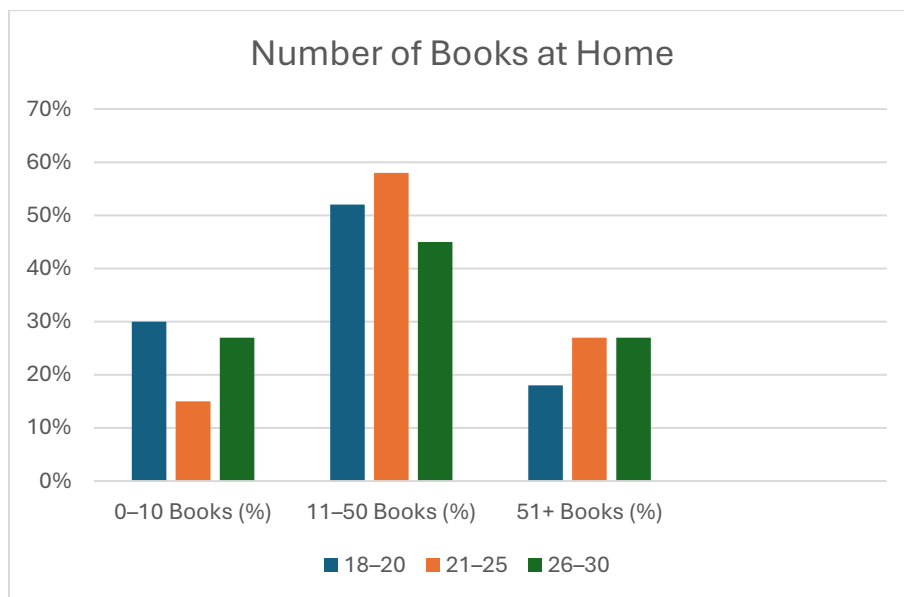


Figure 5 shows the number of books at home

Question 5: Number of books at home

0-10 books: 19 respondents (23%)

11-50 books: 37 respondents (45%)

51 or more books: 26 respondents (32%)

Detailed Explanation:

The number of books in a home is often used as an indirect indicator of the educational environment and cultural capital available to young people. Nearly half of the respondents live in homes with a moderate number of books (11-50), suggesting that many families maintain an environment that values reading and learning, even if not extensively. About 32% of respondents come from homes with a rich collection of 51 or more books, indicating strong support for literacy and intellectual development. These environments likely encourage curiosity, academic success, and a broad worldview, which can be critical for children growing up in a bicultural context like Turkish-German communities. Conversely, 23% of respondents report having 10 or fewer books at home. This smaller number might reflect limited access to reading materials or less emphasis on book culture, possibly due to economic constraints or differing cultural habits regarding education and leisure. The distribution suggests a socio-economic gradient where access to books correlates with parents' education levels and possibly with integration levels. Homes with more books might foster bilingual literacy, as children have resources to develop both Turkish and German reading skills. The presence of books also relates to extracurricular habits such as reading for pleasure, which can impact academic performance and identity formation.

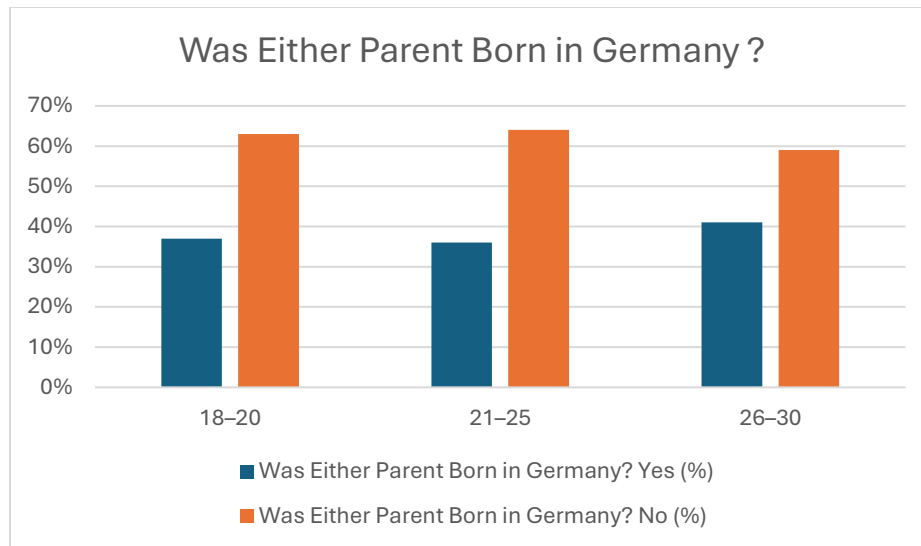


Figure 6 shows the statistics of both parents being born in Germany.

Question 6: Was either of your parents born in Germany?

Yes: 31 respondents (38%)

No: 51 respondents (62%)

Detailed Explanation:

This question addresses the generational status within the Turkish community in Germany, which plays a significant role in cultural integration and identity formation. Around 38% of respondents have at least one parent born in Germany, indicating that a considerable portion belongs to the second or even third generation of Turkish immigrants. Parents born in Germany are often more acculturated to German society, fluent in the language, and familiar with local institutions. This background can facilitate smoother social integration for their children, including better educational outcomes and bicultural identities. These families might blend Turkish traditions with German cultural norms more seamlessly, resulting in a hybrid identity that eases social navigation. On the other hand, 62% of respondents have parents born outside Germany, likely first-generation immigrants. These families may place stronger emphasis on preserving Turkish language and culture but might face more challenges related to language barriers, cultural adaptation, and socio-economic mobility. Respondents with parents born in Germany may feel more “at home” in German society, influencing their cultural preferences and future plans. The generational difference can shape attitudes towards education, bilingualism, and cultural engagement. This division may also impact experiences of discrimination or social acceptance, with longer-established families potentially facing less exclusion.

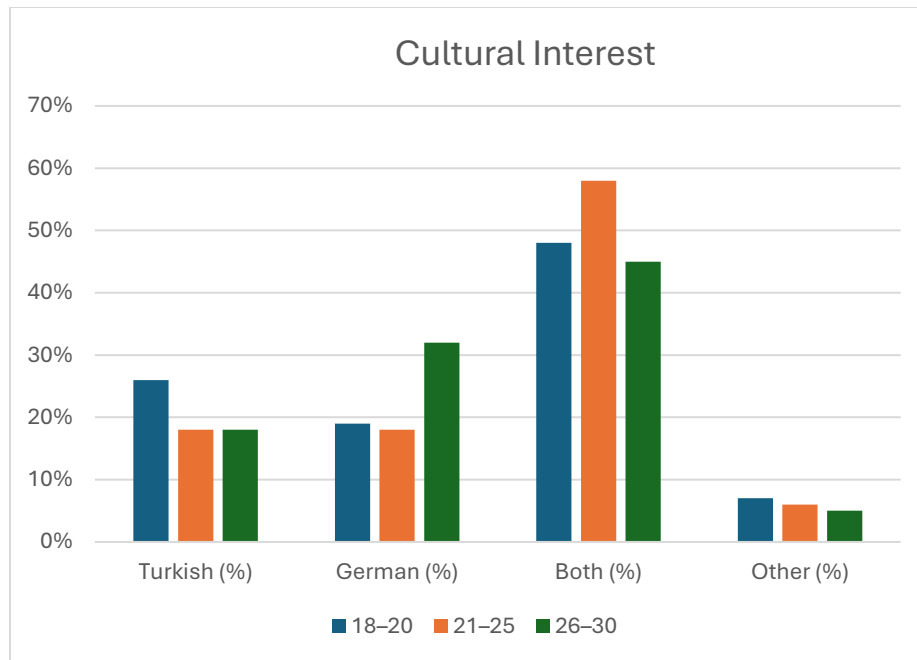


Figure 7 shows the statistics on interest in culture.

Question 7: Which culture are you most interested in?

Turkish: 20 respondents (24%)

German: 13 respondents (16%)

Both: 39 respondents (48%)

Other: 10 respondents (12%)

Detailed Explanation:

This question sheds light on cultural identity and the degree of bicultural integration among Turkish youth in Germany. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) expressed interest in both Turkish and German cultures, indicating a strong bicultural orientation. This group likely embraces elements of both heritages, reflecting a flexible and integrative identity that can help them navigate life in a multicultural environment successfully.

Those who identified primarily with Turkish culture (24%) may have a stronger connection to their roots, valuing traditions, language, and community bonds. This group might prioritize maintaining Turkish customs within their family and social circles, which can provide a sense of belonging but might sometimes complicate integration into broader German society. Respondents interested mainly in German culture (16%) show an orientation toward assimilating or identifying more closely with the host society. This might correlate with factors such as length of residence, parents born in Germany, or greater exposure to German education and social environments. The 12% who chose “Other” could reflect interest in additional cultures due to multicultural family backgrounds, friendships, or personal experiences, highlighting the diverse nature of identity formation in immigrant communities.

The strong bicultural interest reflects an adaptive strategy where youth balance and blend multiple cultural influences. Cultural preference can impact language use, social networks, and future aspirations, including education and career choices. The presence of “Other” highlights the complexity of identity beyond binary ethnic categories, showing openness to multiculturalism.

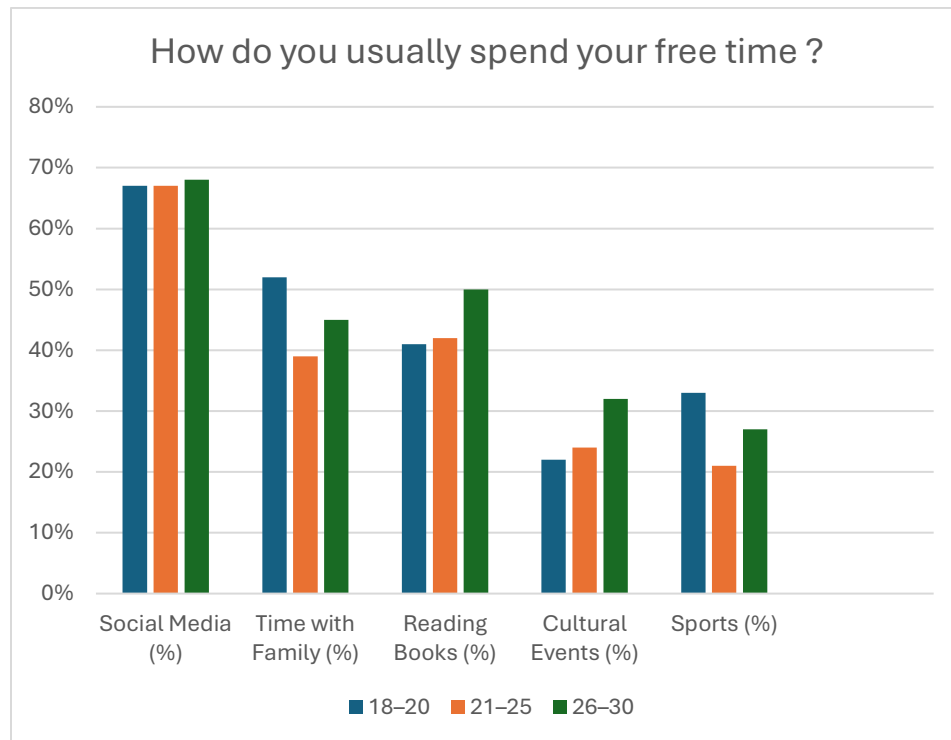


Figure 8 shows the statistics on how free time is spent.

Question 8: How do you usually spend your free time? (Multiple answers allowed)

Social media: 56 respondents (68%)

Time with family: 42 respondents (51%)

Reading books: 31 respondents (38%)

Cultural events: 17 respondents (21%)

Sports: 29 respondents (35%)

Detailed Explanation:

This question highlights the leisure activities that shape the social and cultural life of Turkish youth in Germany, revealing patterns that reflect their interests and socialization contexts. The dominant activity is social media (68%), underscoring the central role of digital connectivity in their daily lives. Social media platforms serve not only for entertainment but also as spaces for identity expression, cultural exchange, and maintaining transnational ties with friends and family in Turkey and Germany. Spending time with family (51%) remains a strong value, reflecting the importance of family cohesion

and traditional social structures in Turkish culture. This suggests that despite integration into German society, family remains a core source of support and cultural grounding. Reading books (38%) is a significant activity, especially considering earlier data on books available at home. It suggests a meaningful engagement with literature, which may support educational success and cultural literacy. Participation in cultural events (21%) and sports (35%) shows varying levels of engagement with organized social and physical activities. Cultural events may reinforce ethnic identity and community bonds, while sports could be a pathway for social integration and health. The combination of high social media and family time suggests a balance between virtual and real-life social worlds. Reading and cultural events, while less dominant, indicate sustained intellectual and cultural engagement beyond everyday entertainment. Sports participation can play a role in identity negotiation, bridging cultural divides and offering opportunities for social inclusion.

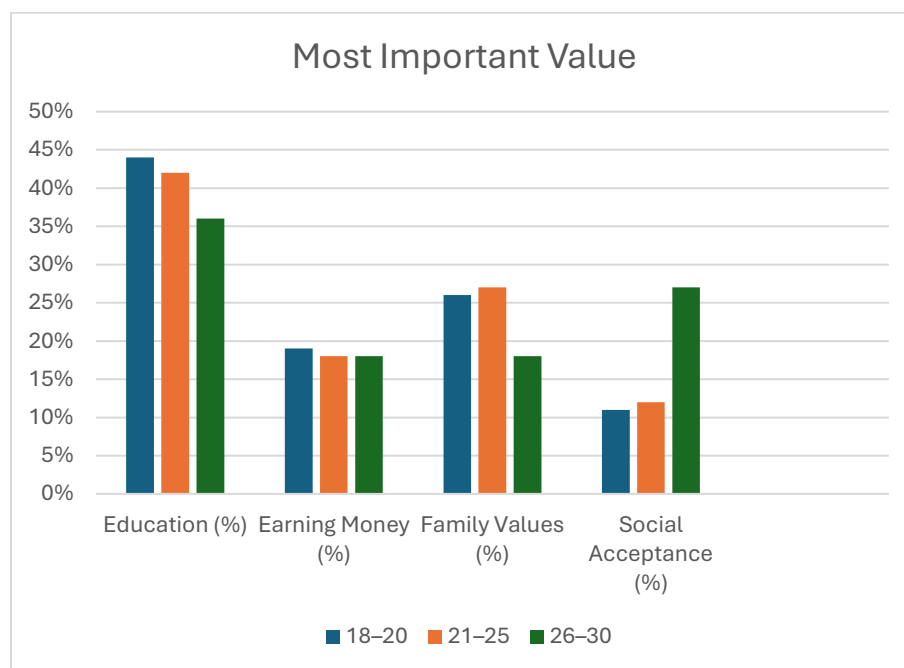


Figure 9 shows the statistics of values.

Question 9: What do you consider the most important value?

Education: 34 respondents (42%)

Earning money: 15 respondents (18%)

Family values: 20 respondents (24%)

Social acceptance: 13 respondents (16%)

Detailed Explanation:

This question explores the core values that guide the lives and motivations of Turkish youth in Germany, highlighting how they prioritize different aspects of life and identity. Education stands out as the most important value for 42% of respondents, reflecting a strong emphasis on academic

achievement and personal development. This prioritization is consistent with the aspirations of immigrant families who often see education as a key to upward mobility and successful integration into German society. Family values are also highly regarded (24%), underscoring the continuing importance of familial bonds, respect, and cultural traditions within the community. This suggests that, alongside personal advancement, maintaining close-knit family ties remains central to their worldview. Earning money, chosen by 18%, indicates a pragmatic focus on financial stability and independence. This group may be more concerned with immediate economic success or contributing to family welfare, reflecting practical considerations in their life planning. Social acceptance (16%) shows that a notable portion of youth values belonging and recognition in society, which is critical for their social integration and self-esteem. Experiencing acceptance or facing discrimination can deeply impact their identity and life choices. The dominance of education as a core value reveals how strongly the community values academic and professional success. The balance between family values and economic concerns shows the interplay of tradition and modern aspirations. Social acceptance's role highlights the ongoing challenges of integration and identity negotiation in a multicultural context.

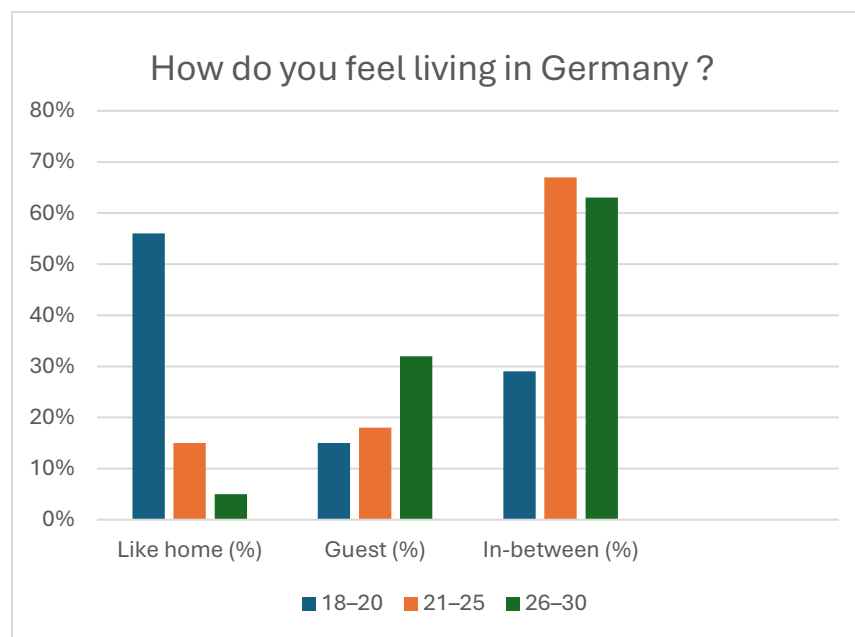


Figure 10 shows the feelings associated with living in Germany.

Question 10: How do you feel living in Germany?

Like at home: 21 respondents (26%)

Like a guest: 17 respondents (21%)

Caught between two cultures (In-between): 44 respondents (53%)

Detailed Explanation:

This question captures the complex feelings of belonging and identity among Turkish youth living in Germany. A majority, 53%, feel “caught between two cultures,” reflecting a common experience of

navigating dual cultural expectations and sometimes conflicting identities. This in-between status can create both opportunities and challenges: it allows youth to draw from both Turkish and German cultures but may also lead to feelings of uncertainty or alienation. Only 26% feel “like at home” in Germany, which suggests that while a significant minority have integrated comfortably, many still struggle with fully identifying Germany as their home country. This could be influenced by factors such as experiences of discrimination, language barriers, or strong ties to Turkish culture and family. About 21% feel “like a guest,” indicating a sense of temporary or marginal belonging. This group might see themselves as outsiders or visitors in German society, which could affect their long-term plans and social integration. The high proportion feeling “in-between” highlights the dual identity challenge for immigrant youth balancing heritage and host cultures. Feeling “like at home” correlates with greater cultural integration and possibly longer family history in Germany. The “guest” feeling reflects perceived social exclusion or a lack of full acceptance in society.

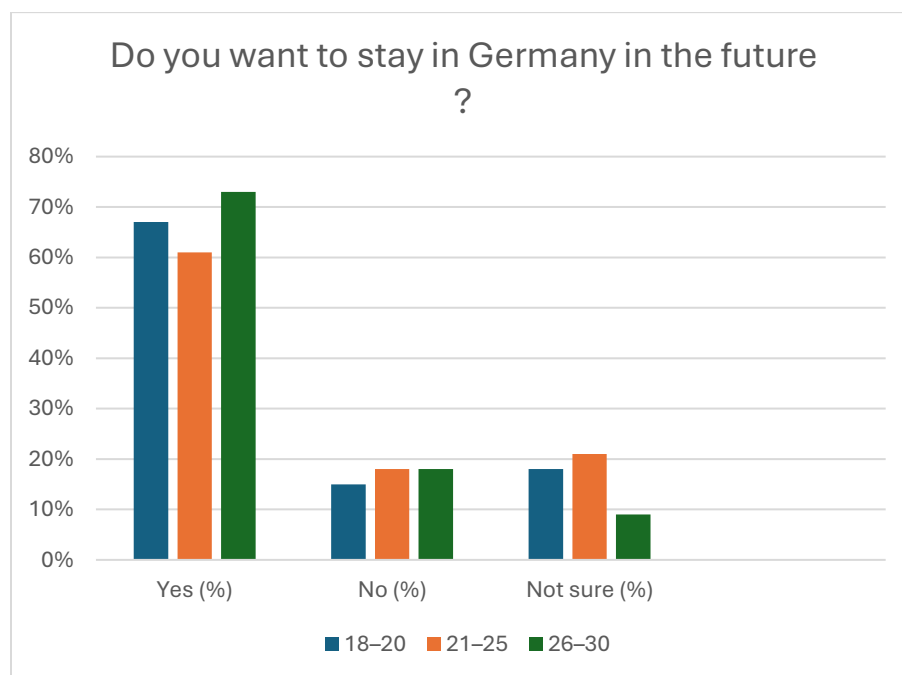


Figure 11 shows the statistics about living in Germany in the future.

Question 11: Do you want to stay in Germany in the future?

Yes: 54 respondents (66%)

No: 14 respondents (17%)

Not sure: 14 respondents (17%)

Detailed Explanation:

This question reveals the future aspirations and sense of belonging among Turkish youth regarding their residence in Germany. A clear majority (66%) express a desire to stay in Germany, indicating a strong inclination towards establishing long-term roots in the country. This likely reflects their

integration into German society through education, social networks, and cultural adaptation. The 17% who do not wish to stay may have various reasons, including stronger ties to Turkey, dissatisfaction with life in Germany, or perceived barriers such as discrimination or limited opportunities. This group might also include youth who view Germany as a temporary phase before moving elsewhere. Another 17% remain uncertain, reflecting the complexity of identity and life decisions at this stage. These respondents might still be weighing their options or experiencing ambivalence about their future prospects in Germany versus Turkey or other countries. The strong majority wanting to stay suggests a growing sense of belonging and investment in Germany as “home.” The “no” and “not sure” groups highlight ongoing challenges and identity negotiations faced by immigrant youth. These attitudes towards staying may be influenced by factors such as education, family situation, and experiences of inclusion or exclusion.

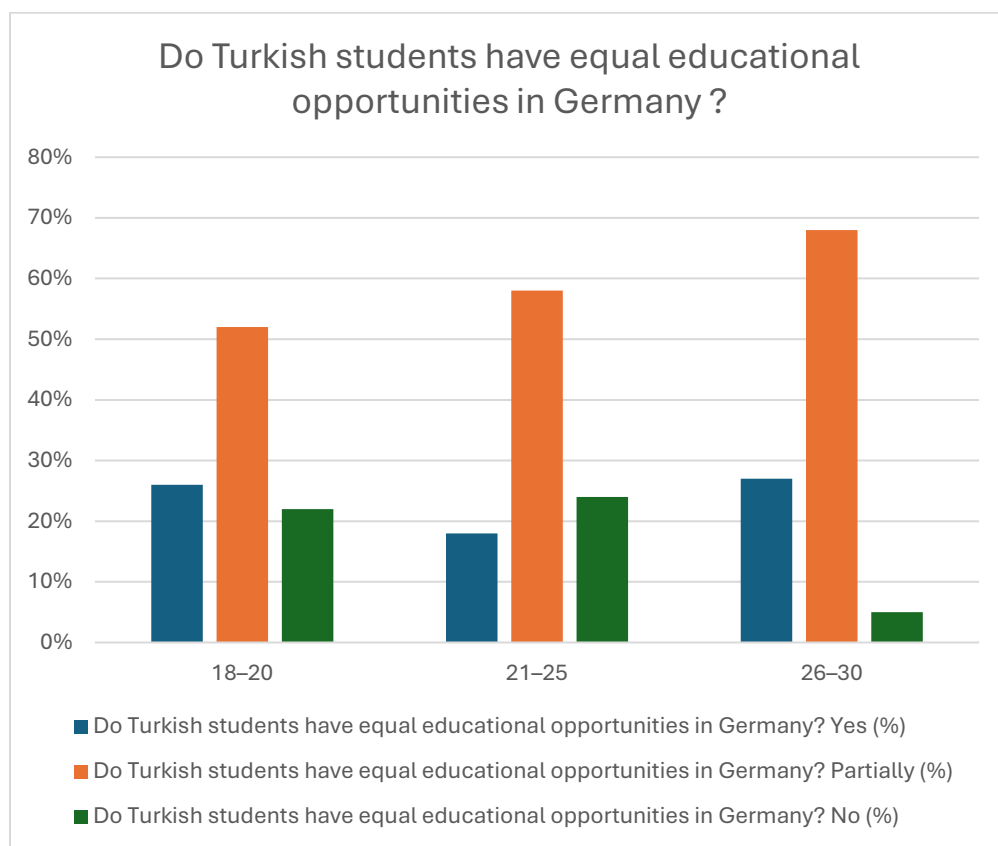


Figure 12 shows the statistics on whether students in Germany have equal opportunities.

Question 12: Do Turkish students have equal educational opportunities in Germany?

Data Recap:

Yes: 19 respondents (23%)

Partially: 48 respondents (58%)

No: 15 respondents (18%)

Detailed Explanation:

This question addresses perceptions of educational equity among Turkish youth in Germany. The majority (58%) believe that educational opportunities are only partially equal, reflecting a nuanced view that, while some progress has been made toward inclusion, significant disparities and barriers remain. The 23% who answered "Yes" suggest optimism or positive experiences with the education system, perhaps due to personal success stories or supportive schools and teachers. However, the 18% who responded "No" highlight concerns about systemic inequality, which could include issues like language barriers, cultural biases, tracking into vocational paths prematurely, or discrimination within schools. This split perception underscores the ongoing challenges faced by Turkish students navigating the German education system, where outcomes can be heavily influenced by social background, support networks, and institutional practices. The majority perceiving only partial equality suggests awareness of structural limitations despite official policies promoting equal opportunities. Positive responses may reflect localized successes or individual perseverance, but the notable minority viewing opportunities as unequal highlights persistent gaps. These perceptions can impact motivation, self-esteem, and educational attainment, influencing the future trajectories of Turkish youth in Germany.

CONCLUSION

This survey of 82 Turkish-origin youths aged 18 and above living in Germany reveals a complex picture of identity, cultural integration, and perceptions of opportunity. Across all ages, education is highly valued as a key to success, and most youths embrace both Turkish and German cultures, reflecting a bicultural identity. However, many perceive educational opportunities as only partially equal, highlighting ongoing structural challenges. Younger respondents often feel caught between two cultures and are less certain about their future in Germany, while older youths tend to feel more settled and committed to living there, showing a gradual process of integration and identity consolidation.

The fact that young people express such views reflects a certain flexibility in their thinking and, at the same time, a relatively weak personal barrier against external influences. This is primarily linked to the role of upbringing in shaping an individual's personality. In cases where strict discipline is instilled in the family, these internal barriers tend to be stronger. This suggests a notable difference in the social atmosphere between Turks living in Turkey and those living in Germany. Generally, when a person communicates in another language and adopts the values of the culture that speaks that language, over time, a shift in thinking aligned with that culture may occur. However, it must be emphasized that the only factor capable of preventing this transformation is the upbringing and discipline received at home.

There are both optimistic and pessimistic aspects in these findings. The pessimism comes from the persistent sense of inequality and the struggle to belong, especially among younger youths. Yet, there is optimism in their strong educational ambitions, cultural adaptability, and the majority's desire to stay and build their futures in Germany. Overall, these results suggest a community navigating challenges with resilience, hopeful for greater inclusion and equality ahead.

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