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## Affective and Cognitive Appraisals of Family Representations in Turkish Media

*Türk Medyasında Aile Temsillerinin Duygusal ve Bilişsel Değerlemesi*

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### Abstract

This study examines how the concept of family was affectively and cognitively represented in Turkish media throughout 2025. Integrating Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) with Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991), the research explores how emotional expressions surrounding the concept of *aile* (Eng. family) reflect deeper cognitive evaluations such as threat, control, responsibility, social well-being, and cultural values. The dataset comprises 165 family-related items from the 2025 online archives of three widely read national newspapers (*Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, and *Türkiye*), selected for their broad national reach and consistent coverage rather than for ideological positioning. Each item was qualitatively analysed in terms of affective orientation and five cognitive appraisal dimensions: *goal congruence*, *accountability*, *coping potential*, *novelty*, and *relevance*. The findings indicate that family is constructed through a dual emotional pattern rather than through a single dominant tone. On the one hand, many news items convey fear, grief, shock, and anger, particularly in reports involving violence, loss, uncertainty, and institutional failure. These emotions are closely associated with cognitive evaluations of threat, low control, and moral disruption. On the other hand, a substantial number of items foreground positive emotions such as hope, solidarity, pride, and reassurance, especially in stories focusing on recovery, everyday family life, social support, and family-oriented public policies. These representations are grounded in appraisals of high coping potential, goal alignment, and cultural responsibility toward the family. Overall, the study demonstrates that underlying cognitive evaluations systematically shape emotions in media discourse. By showing how affective meaning is linguistically realized through appraisal patterns, the study contributes to linguistics, media studies, social psychology, cultural studies, and communication research. It offers an analytical model for examining how social concepts are constructed through language in public discourse.

**Keywords:** Family, affect, cognitive appraisal, Turkish newspapers, media discourse.

### Öz

Bu çalışma, 2025 yılı boyunca Türk mediasında aile kavramının duygusal ve bilişsel düzeyde nasıl temsil edildiğini incelemektedir. Değerleme Kuramı (Martin & White, 2005) ile Bilişsel Değerleme Kuramı (Lazarus, 1991) bütünleştirilerek, *aile* sözcüğü bağlamında yer alan duygusal ifadelerin tehdit, kontrol, sorumluluk, toplumsal iyilik hâli ve kültürel değerler gibi daha derin bilişsel değerlemeleri nasıl yansıttığı çözümlenmiştir. Veri seti, *Hürriyet*, *Sabah* ve *Türkiye* gazetelerinin 2025 yılı çevrimiçi arşivlerinden derlenen toplam 165 aile odaklı haberden oluşmaktadır. Her haber, duygusal yönelim açısından ve beş temel bilişsel değerlendirme boyutu (amaç uygunluğu, sorumluluk atfetme, başa çıkma potansiyeli, yenilik/olağandışılık ve önemlilik) çerçevesinde nitel olarak incelenmiştir. Bulgular, ailenin tek bir baskın duygu çerçevesi içinde değil, çift yönlü bir duygusal örüntü aracılığıyla inşa

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edildiğini göstermektedir. Bir yandan şiddet, kayıp, belirsizlik ve kurumsal yetersizliklerle ilişkili haberlerde korku, keder, şok ve öfke gibi olumsuz duygular öne çıkmaktadır. Bu duygular, tehdit algısı, düşük kontrol düzeyi ve ahlaki sarsıntı gibi bilişsel değerlendirmelerle yakından ilişkilidir. Öte yandan, iyileşme, gündelik aile yaşamı, toplumsal destek ve aile odaklı kamu politikalarına odaklanan haberlerde umut, dayanışma, gurur ve güven duyguları dikkat çekmektedir. Bu temsiller, yüksek başa çıkma potansiyeli, amaç uyumu ve aileye yönelik kültürel sorumluluk gibi bilişsel değerlendirmelere dayanmaktadır. Genel olarak çalışma, medya söyleminde duyguların, altta yatan bilişsel değerlendirmeler tarafından sistematik biçimde şekillendirildiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Duygusal anlamın dilssel olarak değerlendirilmesi örüntüleri aracılığıyla nasıl kurulduğunu göstermesi bakımından bu çalışma; dilbilim, medya çalışmaları, sosyal psikoloji, kültürel çalışmalar ve iletişim araştırmalarına katkı sunmakta ve toplumsal kavramların kamusal söylemde dil yoluyla nasıl inşa edildiğini irdelemek için çözümlemeli bir model önermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Aile, duygu, bilişsel değerlendirme, Türkçe gazeteler, medya söylemi.

## Introduction

The concept of family has long been a central focus of sociological and linguistic research, serving as both a private domain and a symbolic institution that embodies moral order, national identity, and social cohesion (Durkheim, 1951; Finch, 2007; Parsons, 1955). In the Turkish context, the family is deeply intertwined with collectivist cultural values in which interdependence, respect, and protection define both individual identity and community life (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007; Sunar & Fişek, 2008). Beyond its social functions, the family also operates as an emotional and cognitive framework through which belonging, duty, and responsibility are interpreted. As one of the most enduring institutions in Turkish cultural life, the family is closely associated with unity and continuity and is widely perceived as a central source of moral stability across generations (Aydingün, 2018; Kaya, 2020).

This symbolic role was further reinforced in 2025, when Türkiye officially declared the year as the “Year of the Family,” a move that positioned family at the centre of political rhetoric, public campaigns, and media representation (Ministry of Family and Social Services, 2025). This national initiative elevated the family to a discursive focal point, shaping collective emotions and cultural reflections. The increased visibility of family-related issues in media narratives created a suitable context to examine how emotional and evaluative meanings were constructed through language. At the same time, this heightened visibility may contribute to a greater media focus on extraordinary or unexpected family-related events. From the perspective of news values, emotionally intense and salient occurrences are more likely to be selected and foregrounded in news discourse than routine or stable aspects of everyday family life (Bednarek & Caple, 2014; Harcup & O’Neill, 2017). In this sense, the designation of 2025 as the “Year of the Family” does not in itself determine specific modes of coverage; rather, it provides a thematic frame within which family-related events gain increased visibility and newsworthiness. When extraordinary cases arise, they are more readily elevated to headline status and emotionally intensified through established journalistic selection and framing practices. Consequently, heightened emotional intensity in media representations should be understood as a product of news values and framing conventions rather than as a reflection of everyday family life.

Media discourse plays a crucial role in shaping and reflecting public attitudes. As Fairclough (1995) notes, media texts do not simply mirror reality; they actively construct it through ideological and affective framing. Similarly, Van Dijk (1998) emphasizes that discourse functions as a social practice in which emotions, power relations, and cognition interact. In this light, Turkish media in 2025 not only reported family-related events but also shaped their interpretation through headlines, word choices, and recurring narrative structures. Consistent with earlier findings reported by Çalışkan (2021) and Özdemir

(2019), newspapers and online platforms framed the family as a moral symbol and emotional anchor, while simultaneously portraying it as vulnerable to social and cultural pressures.

Despite a growing body of literature examining the family in Türkiye, most studies have focused on sociological, political, or policy-oriented dimensions such as gender roles, domestic structures, and state-family relations (Arat, 2017; Kandiyoti, 2020). These works have made valuable insights but have paid limited attention to the emotional and cognitive mechanisms underlying linguistic representations. However, as Halliday (1994) and Martin and White (2005) point out, language does more than transmit information; it carries affective, attitudinal, and evaluative meanings through which individuals and societies make sense of reality. To account for this complexity, family discourse needs to be examined within a framework that brings together emotional expression and cognitive evaluation.

Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) provides a linguistic model for analysing evaluative meaning, particularly through the affect subsystem, which deals with emotions expressed in language. It helps reveal how feelings such as happiness, pride, or anxiety are embedded in discourse, shaping readers' affective engagement. Complementing the linguistic focus of Appraisal Theory, Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991) emphasizes that emotions emerge from evaluative processes concerning goals, responsibility, and perceived control. In this sense, emotional responses vary depending on whether situations are experienced as supportive or threatening.

Previous studies, both in international and Turkish literature, have consistently shown that affective expressions in media discourse are closely tied to specific cognitive appraisal dimensions, particularly those proposed by Lazarus (1991) and later refined by Scherer (2001) and Roseman (2013). Psychological and linguistic studies demonstrate that goal congruence is a primary determinant of positive affect: emotions such as joy, pride, and gratitude typically arise when events align with personal or collective goals and values (Gençöz, 2000; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). On the other hand, negative emotions such as fear, anger, or sadness emerge when events obstruct goals or threaten well-being, reflecting evaluations of goal incongruence, a pattern also observed in Turkish media analyses emphasizing societal threat and value erosion (Yüksel, 2016). Previous studies also point to the importance of accountability, showing that emotional tone varies depending on whether responsibility is attributed to individuals, institutions, or wider structural conditions (Roseman, 1991; Kadioğlu, 2018). In addition, both international studies (Nabi, 2003; Konijn, 2013) and Turkish communication research (Çakır & Karakaya, 2020) highlight the importance of coping potential, as the perceived capacity to manage or control a situation, in shaping emotional intensity. When coping potential is high, media framing tends to emphasize hope and resilience, whereas low coping potential is more often associated with helplessness or anxiety. The dimensions of novelty and relevance have also been shown to intensify emotional reactions, especially in news about crises or unexpected societal changes (Scherer, 2009; Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Ergin & Mutlu, 2019). Overall, these findings demonstrate that emotional expressions in media texts are closely related to how events are evaluated in terms of goals, control, responsibility, and perceived importance. This perspective provides the conceptual background for the present study, which examines how affective meanings surrounding *aille* (Eng. family) are shaped through cognitive appraisal in Turkish media discourse.

This study builds on Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) and Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991) to analyse how emotional expressions related to *aille* (Eng. family) in Turkish media are shaped by cognitive evaluations. More specifically, the

analysis focuses on how emotions and evaluations co-occur in media discourse. The researcher aims to answer the following research questions.

1. Which cognitive appraisal dimensions (goal congruence, accountability, coping potential, novelty, and relevance) are associated with these affective expressions?
2. How do positive and negative affective evaluations of “family” correspond to underlying cognitive appraisals?
3. In what ways do linguistic markers reveal the interaction between emotional and cognitive constructions of “family” in Turkish culture?

## 1. Methodology

### 1.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore how the concept of family was emotionally and cognitively represented in Turkish media discourse during 2025. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows for a deeper understanding of meanings and evaluations within social and linguistic contexts (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Two complementary theoretical frameworks guided the study: Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), which analyses linguistic expressions of evaluation and emotion, and Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991), which explains the mental evaluations that give rise to emotions. The integration of these perspectives enabled an interdisciplinary exploration of how emotional and cognitive meanings intersect in media representations of the family.

### 1.2. Dataset and Data Collection

The study population consists of all news texts, columns, and commentaries published in Turkish national newspapers in 2025 that included the word *aile* (Eng. family). While news texts, columns, and commentaries employ different rhetorical and structural strategies, they were analysed together to examine how affective representations of family circulate across journalistic genres in the public media sphere. Limiting the dataset to a single genre would have restricted the analysis to one discursive register and obscured broader patterns of ideological and emotional meaning-making.

To ensure that the sample captured representations from newspapers with the broadest public reach, December 2024 circulation statistics (*Medya Takip Merkezi* “Media Monitoring & Analysis”) were consulted. According to these data, the three newspapers with the highest circulation were *Sabah* (103,079 copies), *Hürriyet* (101,431 copies) and *Türkiye* (101,260 copies). Using purposive sampling, an approach that enables the selection of the most relevant cases for the research objective, 165 family-related news items were randomly selected from these newspapers (55 items from each) covering the period from January to November 2025. A corpus of 1,279 sentences containing the word *aile* (Eng. family) was compiled. Sentences were included only when the concept of family appeared as a central thematic element.

Data were collected directly from the publicly accessible websites of the selected newspapers. Adopting a corpus-based approach, relevant news items were identified through the search functions of the newspapers’ official websites using the keyword *aile* (Eng. family). Retrieved news items were manually reviewed, and only those that met the inclusion criteria were included in the dataset. Each selected sentence was entered into a database and annotated with its publication date, source newspaper, article type, and contextual notes to ensure traceability and contextual accuracy. These steps ensured that

data selection and coding were applied systematically and could be traced across the dataset.

### 1.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted in two complementary stages.

In the first stage, the affect subsystem of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) was applied to identify emotional expressions in the collected sentences. Each occurrence of *aile* (Eng. family) was coded according to its emotional valence, positive, negative, or neutral, based on its evaluative meaning within context. For example, *aile huzuru bozuldu* “family peace disrupted” was categorized as negative, while *güçlü aile yapısı* “strong family structure” was coded as positive. This stage revealed the affective patterns underlying how the family was represented in public discourse.

In the second stage, Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991) was employed to identify the mental evaluations underlying these emotional expressions. Each sentence was analysed according to five main appraisal dimensions:

1. *Goal congruence* concerns the extent to which an event is perceived as supporting, or threatening, family-related goals, values, and ideals.
2. *Accountability* focuses on who or what is perceived as responsible for the situation, including individuals, institutions, or external conditions.
3. *Coping potential* concerns the perceived capacity of the individual or community to manage, prevent, or adapt to the situation.
4. *Novelty* indicates the degree to which the event is unexpected, unusual, or represents a significant change from the norm.
5. *Relevance* describes the importance or significance of the event in relation to family well-being and broader social stability.

The analysis was carried out by two independent coders. Intercoder agreement reached 0.82, a level generally regarded as acceptable in qualitative content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). To avoid decontextualized interpretation, linguistic coding was checked against surrounding sentences and each article’s overall tone.

## 2. Findings and Discussions

This section reports the findings of the qualitative analysis of newspaper items published in *Hürriyet*, *Sabah*, and *Türkiye*, examining how family is affectively and cognitively constructed in Turkish media discourse during 2025. Before presenting individual examples, it is important to note that the emotional intensity observed in news discourse reflects the media’s structural tendency to prioritize dramatic, unexpected, and high-impact events. This tendency has been widely discussed in studies on news values and the structural organization of news, which show that negativity, conflict, crisis, and unexpectedness are systematically foregrounded in journalistic selection and presentation (Caple & Bednarek, 2013; Van Dijk, 1985). Research on crisis and disaster reporting further demonstrates that such events are typically framed through heightened emotional language, amplifying fear, shock, and moral concern in media narratives (Pantti, 2019). At the same time, the dataset of the present study also contains a wide range of uplifting, reassuring, and routine-based representations of family. Thus, emotionally charged negative events should not be interpreted as evidence of a decline in the social strength of the Turkish family, but rather as a consequence of journalistic news values and selection practices.

Drawing on Appraisal Theory and Cognitive Appraisal Theory, the discussion reveals four interrelated dimensions: (1) affective patterns, (2) cognitive evaluations, (3) systematic affect-appraisal correspondences, and (4) the linguistic mechanisms through which emotional and cognitive meanings co-construct the family as a cultural category.

### 2.1. Affective Representations of Family in Turkish Media

The affective landscape surrounding *aile* (Eng. family) in Turkish media throughout 2025 reveals a dual emotional structure in which scenes of violence, loss, uncertainty, and bureaucratic struggle coexist with portrayals of unity, joy, everyday intimacy, cultural reverence, and state-supported well-being. Many items convey strong negative emotions such as fear, shock, grief, anxiety, and indignation, while a similar number highlight positive feelings including happiness, relief, pride, solidarity, and gratitude. This shows that family representations in Turkish media are not one-sided. The contrast becomes especially clear in news reports dealing with sudden and lethal violence. For example:

- 1) *Diyarbakır'da aile cinayeti! Geçmiş katliamın işareti çıktı.* "Family murder in Diyarbakır: His past revealed signs of a massacre." (Türkiye, 20.11.2025)

In example (1), horror emerges as the dominant affect. Words such as *cinayet* "murder" and *katliam* "massacre" construct the family as a violently extinguished unit. The headline collapses the boundary between private and public space, positioning familial existence as fundamentally precarious. Similar emotional intensity appears in another reporting:

- 2) *Akraba iki aile arasında çıkan silahlı kavgada 2'si ağır 5 kişi yaralandı.* "Five people, two seriously, were injured in an armed fight between two related families." (Sabah, 16.11.2025)

The emotional tone combines shock with disappointment rooted in family relations. In these reports, harm is attributed to conflicts within the family, which intensifies perceptions of familial instability. Fear is also evident in accounts involving environmental or situational dangers. For example:

- 3) *Ailenin deniz sefası bir anda panik anına dönüştü.* "The family's day at sea suddenly turned into panic." (Hürriyet, 02.08.2025)

Example (3) shows how an ordinary family activity can suddenly be interrupted by panic, revealing the instability of everyday routines in the face of unforeseen events. A similar case appears earlier in the year:

- 4) *Pikniğe giden aile hayatının şokunu yaşadı; sular bir anda yükseldi.* "A family on a picnic experienced the shock of their lives; waters suddenly rose." (Türkiye, 08.08.2025)

In this instance, fear is coupled with surprise when an ordinary family activity is suddenly disrupted by an unexpected event. This abrupt shift highlights the vulnerability of families in everyday situations. Strong negative emotions are also evident in reports involving health-related crises. For example:

- 5) *Hastanede fenalaşan bebeği aile gözyaşları içinde bekledi.* "The family waited in tears as the baby deteriorated in the hospital." (Hürriyet, 15.04.2025)

In this news report, sadness and helplessness are linked to a period of waiting rather than to a sudden event. The expression *gözyaşları içinde beklemek* "to wait in tears" reflects emotional distress shaped by uncertainty and the lack of information. Such reports show that prolonged waiting itself becomes emotionally burdensome for families.

Similar patterns can also be found in other family-related news items. The following report illustrates this.

6) *Hacca giden yaşlı adamdan haber alınamıyor; ailesi perişan halde.* “No news has been received from the elderly pilgrim; his family is devastated.” (Türkiye, 25.08.2025)

In example (6), *perişan halde* “to be devastated” signals severe emotional distress linked to ongoing uncertainty rather than a single incident. A similar pattern appears in the following report:

7) *Aile kızlarının hayatından endişe ederken arama çalışmaları sürüyor.* “While the family fears for their daughter’s life, search operations continue.” (Sabah, 16.11.2025)

In this instance, fear and worry dominate the emotional tone, as the family remains caught in a prolonged sense of threat. Similar emotional heaviness is not limited to life-threatening situations; it also appears in non-lethal contexts, particularly in cases involving bureaucratic difficulties. For example:

8) *Bir yıldır çalmadık kapı bırakmayan aile kaydı düzelttirmemedi.* “The family, who has knocked on every door for a year, could not get their registration corrected.” (Sabah, 02.11.2026)

In extract (8), the emotional impact arises from prolonged exhaustion and helplessness rather than from sudden shock. The report centres on sustained efforts and repeated failure, presenting institutional procedures as a source of emotional strain for the family. Similar feelings of frustration and distress are also evident in cases involving legal disappointment. For example:

9) *Mahkemenin şüpheliye verdiği para cezası aileyi sarstı.* “The fine imposed on the suspect by the court shook the family.” (Türkiye, 24.08.2025)

This example includes the verb *sarsmak* “to shake,” which carries strong emotional force, suggesting the family is morally harmed. Such items depict families as subjects deeply affected by systemic decisions. Alongside these emotionally demanding cases, the dataset also includes many reports that reflect positive emotional experiences within the family, such as solidarity, resilience, intimacy, and harmony. One such restorative example is illustrated in the following report:

10) *Çift yeniden aile olmanın mutluluğunu yaşadı.* “The couple experienced the joy of becoming a family again.” (Hürriyet, 17.07.2025)

This news item focuses on the joy of becoming a family again. What stands out is the sense of reunion and continuity, sometimes taking shape in settings such as a hospital wedding room, which adds emotional weight to the experience. In this context, family appears as a space of renewed belonging and emotional fulfilment. Similar positive feelings also emerge in reports that describe ordinary family life, where spending time together and sharing simple activities contribute to a sense of comfort and calm. One such report describes:

11) *Benli kardeşlerin el emeğiyle yaptığı ahşap ev, aile bireylerinin boş vakitlerinde çay içip sohbet ederek, manzaranın keyfini çıkardığı bir mekân haline geldi.* “The wooden house built by the Benli brothers’ handiwork became a place where family members drink tea, chat, and enjoy the view in their spare time.” (Hürriyet, 19.11.2025)

In this report, the family is associated with warmth, calm, and togetherness. Rather than crisis or disruption, the focus is on a quiet moment in everyday life, where family members spend time together through simple activities such as drinking tea,

talking, and enjoying their surroundings. It could be clearly understood that happiness in this context does not arise from an exceptional event, but from routine and shared presence. Other positive reports similarly connect family life to a broader sense of well-being and satisfaction. For example:

12) *İnsanın hayattan zevk alabilmesi için öncelikleri ruh ve beden sağlığı, aile, sosyal çevre ile iş hayatında mutlu olabilmelidir. "For a person to enjoy life, they must first be happy in terms of mental and physical health, family, social environment, and work life." (Türkiye, 16.06.2025)*

This sentence presents the family as a central element of a satisfying and meaningful life, associated with a calm and reflective sense of well-being rather than dramatic joy. Positive emotional affects are also evident in reports that focus on women's entrepreneurship and local development:

13) *Kadın girişimcilerin kurduğu her işletme sadece bir ticari başarı değil, aynı zamanda ailelerin güçlenmesine, şehirlerin canlanmasına, yerel değerlerin korunmasına ve yeni fırsatların doğmasına hizmet eder. "Every enterprise established by women entrepreneurs is not only a commercial success, but also serves to strengthen families, revive cities, preserve local values, and create new opportunities." (Hürriyet, 31.07.2025)*

In the example above, pride, admiration, and optimism emerge from the way the family is linked to social and economic life. The family appears not only as someone who benefits from these processes but also as a contributor to them. Joy, in this context, grows out of strengthened family ties and a renewed sense of belonging. Similar forms of care-focused positivity can also be seen in reports from other newspapers. For example:

14) *Aile müessesesinin desteklenmesi, güçlendirilmesi, gençlerin sosyal risklere karşı korunması ve gelişimlerine destek sağlanmasına yönelik kaynağın oluşturulması amacıyla kurulan Aile ve Gençlik Fonu kapsamında Bakanlıkça Emlenecek Gençlerin Desteklenmesi Projesi hayata geçirildi. "Within the scope of the Family and Youth Fund, which was established to support and strengthen the institution of the family, to protect young people against social risks, and to support their development, the Project for Supporting Young People Who Are to Marry was launched by the Ministry." (Türkiye, 10.08.2025).*

The sentence emphasizes the active involvement of the state in supporting the family as a social institution. It treats family formation and youth well-being as shared concerns with long-term significance. Similar forms of support, grounded in cultural bonds and everyday practices of care, also appear in other news reports. For example:

15) *Geniş ve kalabalık aile üyeleri onu hiç yalnız bırakmıyor. "Her large extended family never leaves her alone." (Türkiye, 30.07.2025).*

In this example, the extended family is associated with warmth, belonging, and ongoing support, with an emphasis on staying together rather than leaving the individual alone. Positive emotional tones also appear in reports focusing on state-supported family well-being. For example:

16) *Ailelere çocuk yardımı ve doğum yardımı ödemeleri yapılacak. "Child benefit and birth assistance payments will be provided to families." (Hürriyet, 15.01.2025)*

These announcements convey reassurance and hope, treating the family as a socially protected institution. Similar tones appear in the following reports:

17) *Dar gelirli aileler için yeni sosyal destek programı! "A new social support programme for low-income families!" (Türkiye, 21.11.2025)*

18) *Önümüzdeki yıllarda aileyi güçlendirecek, ailelerin gerçek ihtiyaçlarına cevap verebilecek bir kurul. "A board that will strengthen families and respond to their real needs in the coming years." (Hürriyet, 14.01.2025).*

Items (17) and (18) construct emotional security through promises of structural support, as the family is represented not only as a private emotional space but also as a social institution sustained by long-term state policies. Consequently, emotional reassurance emerges from the implication that families are not expected to confront economic or social difficulties on their own, but rather are supported through institutional mechanisms. Cultural policy and media regulation also reflect this positive outlook. For example:

19) *RTÜK, aile ve çocuk dostu yapımları ödüllendirecek. "RTÜK will reward family- and child-friendly productions." (Hürriyet, 31.07.2025)*

This statement publicly values media content that supports children and family life, presenting such content as socially beneficial. Similar positive emotional tones appear in advice-based and lifestyle reporting that links family well-being to everyday practices:

20) *Bu yaklaşım, sağlıklı bir rutin oluştururken aile içi iletişimi de güçlendirir. "This approach strengthens intra-family communication while establishing a healthy routine." (Türkiye, 07.09.2025)*

These reports point to calm and balance by treating family harmony as part of everyday life rather than as an outcome of extraordinary situations. In other items, future-oriented narratives connect institutional support with family formation:

21) *Aile yılı olması dolayısıyla evlilik kredisi için gençlere destek sağlayan Bakanlık, başvuruları almaya devam ediyor. "Due to the Year of the Family, the Ministry continues to receive applications for marriage loans to support young people." (Hürriyet, 21.11.2025)*

In this example, happiness and hope are linked to the state's involvement in family life. Marriage and family formation are presented not only as personal decisions but as processes supported and encouraged by society. Through such accounts, the family appears both as an emotional centre and as a focus of public policy in Turkish society.

Across all these examples, affective representations form a dual emotional terrain: the family appears either as a unit facing violence, disaster, uncertainty, and injustice, or as a cherished emotional centre associated with unity, joy, pride, and cultural continuity. This affective bipolarity is consistent with Martin and White's (2005) argument that affect is mobilized by media discourse to position readers ideologically, shaping how social actors are emotionally evaluated. Research on the emotionalization of news and risk-oriented news selection (Altheide, 2002; Ungar, 2001; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019) suggests that contemporary journalism increasingly relies on emotional cues to shape public concerns and moral sensibilities. This tendency is visible in both directions: in stories that foreground fear, grief, and shock, and in those that foreground hope, admiration, and gratitude. Alongside strongly negative emotions, the family is also portrayed in affirmative terms, reflecting Giddens' (1992) understanding of family life as a source of intimacy and emotional security in late modern societies. What emerges, therefore, is a persistent tension between vulnerability and idealization. This tension closely resembles Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (2002) description of the family as both "fragile" and "indispensable," exposed to growing risks while being invested with increasing emotional significance. Seen from this perspective, Turkish media do more than simply report incidents involving families; they participate in shaping shared emotional orientations (Reddy, 2001), subtly guiding audiences in what to fear, value, and hold onto.

Overall, these patterns show that affective meaning is not incidental but central to how family is discursively produced in 2025, forming the emotional foundation for subsequent cognitive evaluations in the media.

## 2.2. Cognitive Appraisal Dimensions in Media Representations of Family

In the dataset as a whole, cognitive evaluations of events involving family reveal a systematic pattern in how Turkish media interprets threat, responsibility, control, predictability, and social significance. These evaluations, mapped through goal congruence, accountability, coping potential, novelty, and relevance, shape not only how emotions are expressed but also how the family is positioned within broader social realities. Overall, families are consistently portrayed as either exposed to forces that exceed their control or supported by structures that enhance their resilience, depending on the nature of the event.

Goal congruence emerges as the most decisive appraisal dimension, particularly in conflict- or tragedy-oriented reports where family goals, values, and expectations are directly violated. For instance:

22) *İki aile arasında kan aktı! Yürek burkan görüntüler ortaya çıktı. "Blood was shed between two families, heartbreaking scenes emerged."* (Türkiye, 06.08.2025)

This instance shows that the emotional impact of the event lies in its conflict with what is normally expected from family life. More specifically, notions of unity, safety, continuity, and trust are disrupted, and the distress arises from within relationships that are usually associated with care and protection. The strength of the emotional response therefore comes less from the event itself than from the way it unsettles these shared expectations. Similar disruptions of family-related expectations can also be observed in news reports dealing with sudden disasters involving families:

23) *Gebze'de çöken bina bir aileyi yok etti. "The collapsed building in Gebze wiped out a family."* (Türkiye, 20.11.2025)

In example (23), the family is lost completely, with no suggestion that the damage can be undone. What stands out is the sense of finality: the break in family life is permanent, and this makes the event especially heavy emotionally. Across the material, who is seen as responsible changes from one case to another, sometimes family members themselves, sometimes other individuals, institutions, or wider conditions, and these differences strongly shape how emotion is expressed. When conflict arises within the family, responsibility is most often placed on the relatives involved:

24) *Arnavutköy'de iki komşu aile arasında iddiaya göre gürültü yüzünden çıkan tartışma kısa sürede kaogaya dönüştü. "In Arnavutköy, an argument allegedly sparked by noise between two neighbouring families quickly turned into a fight."* (Türkiye, 19.11.2025)

In example (24), responsibility is attributed to neighbouring families, framing the harm as originating within local social relations. This contrasts with other reports in which accountability is linked to natural or environmental conditions, leaving families with less perceived control:

25) *Kastamonu'nun İnebolu ilçesinde topladıkları mantarı yedikten sonra rahatsızlanan aynı aileden 7 kişi, zehirlenme şüphesiyle hastaneye kaldırıldı. "Seven members of the same family in Kastamonu's İnebolu district were hospitalized on suspicion of poisoning after eating mushrooms they had collected."* (Sabah, 19.10.2025)

In example (25), the threat is unpredictable and impersonal, stemming from environmental conditions rather than human intent. This limit perceived control and heightens fear and helplessness. Therefore, coping potential becomes central in distinguishing between situations where families appear powerless and those where intervention is possible. Low coping potential is especially evident in acute health emergencies:

26) *Aile bebeği hemen hastaneye götürdü ve acil servisteyken kalp krizi geçirdi. "The family rushed the baby to the hospital, and the baby had a heart attack while in the emergency ward." (Hürriyet, 21.11.2025)*

When there is no possibility of altering the outcome, feelings of vulnerability and limited control come to the fore for families. By contrast, cases that involve social support, public policy, or institutional intervention tend to reflect higher coping capacity:

27) *Yeni sistemle birlikte, ailelerin çocuk sahibi olmaya teşvik edilmesi ve çocuklu ailelerin ekonomik olarak desteklenmesi amaçlanıyor. "With the new system, the aim is to encourage families to have children and to provide economic support to families with children." (Hürriyet, 31.04.2025)*

This example indicates a high level of coping potential, as institutional support is presented as consistent with family goals and as contributing to economic stability. The discussion then turns to novelty, which becomes particularly visible when events sharply diverge from everyday expectations, especially in cases where sudden disasters occur in ordinary family settings. Such events attract attention because they disrupt routines commonly associated with safety. For example:

28) *Antalya'da evi alevlere teslim olan Sarıdemir ailesinin sattıkları küçükbaş hayvanlardan kazandıkları 90 bin lira da küle döndü. "In Antalya, the Sarıdemir family's house was engulfed in flames, and the 90,000 TL they had earned from selling their small livestock also turned to ashes." (Türkiye, 30.07.2025)*

In this case, the sudden fire puts the family at serious risk by depriving them of both their home and their savings. At the same time, financial loss and emotional strain combine, making the situation feel especially threatening. Similar feelings arise when places usually associated with rest, such as holiday settings, unexpectedly turn dangerous:

29) *İstanbul Kağıthane'de yaşayan Yılmaz ailesi, Yalova'daki yazlıklarında dehşeti yaşadı. "The Yılmaz family, who live in Istanbul's Kağıthane district, experienced horror at their summer house in Yalova." (Sabah, 25.08.2025)*

The emotional tone highlights the sudden move from leisure to fear, showing how ordinary family routines and leisure spaces can be easily disrupted. Across the corpus, family-related events remain highly significant, and their social importance is consistently stressed. This is also evident in legal and financial disputes, which are presented as carrying clear emotional consequences:

30) *Aile; kazanın ardından sigorta şirketinin yatırdığı 1 milyon 850 bin lira tazminatın 1 milyon lirasını gönderen, kalan tutar için çeşitli masraf kalemleri gösteren avukat hakkında suç duyurusunda bulundu. "After the accident, the family filed a criminal complaint against the lawyer who transferred one million of the 1.85 million TL compensation paid by the insurance company and cited various expense items for the remaining amount." (Hürriyet, 13.07.2025)*

In example (30), no one is hurt or killed, but the issue is still very important for the family because it affects their money and their sense of fairness. The report shows how

problems in legal procedures can lead to ongoing financial difficulty as well as emotional stress. Similar importance is also seen in reports shaped by cultural and ideological concerns:

31) *Ailenin, Türk milletinin kökü, kültürünün taşıyıcısı ve medeniyetinin temeli olduğunu belirten Göktaş, aileyi korumak ve güçlendirmenin, bir sosyal politika olmanın ötesinde, tarihe, kültüre ve geleceğe karşı bir sorumluluk olduğunu vurguladı. "Göktaş stated that the family is the root of the Turkish nation, the bearer of its culture and the foundation of its civilization, and emphasized that protecting and strengthening the family is not only a social policy but a responsibility towards history, culture and the future."* (Hürriyet, 31.04.2025)

These statements describe the family as more than a private matter, emphasizing its moral and cultural importance in Turkish society. In this view, the family is closely tied to national identity and cultural continuity, and its protection is presented as a responsibility that extends beyond social policy.

Overall, Turkish media follow a clear pattern in how the family is presented. On the one hand, the family is shown as being under threat, facing uncertainty, and having limited control over unfolding events. On the other hand, it is depicted as strong and supported through unity, social and community support, and shared cultural values. This duality is consistent with Lazarus's (1991) argument that evaluations of threat, control, and accountability are central to emotional experience, influencing whether events are interpreted as manageable or distressing. Media reports marked by low coping potential and high uncertainty, especially in cases such as sudden disasters or unexplained disappearances, reflect a broader tendency in journalism to focus on risk and insecurity in public life (Altheide, 2002; Ungar, 2001). By contrast, news reports that focus on solidarity, care, or state support present the family as something people can depend on during difficult times. In these accounts, the family is shown as a source of stability rather than risk, which fits with Giddens's (1992) view of the family as an important moral support when society feels uncertain. In both negative and positive news stories, the family remains a central topic, showing that it continues to matter in public discussion. This reflects Entman's (1993) idea that the media draw attention to certain social groups, such as the family, to shape how events are understood and judged. From this point of view, Turkish media coverage of family brings wider social concerns to the surface. More precisely, the family is praised as a symbol of cultural continuity, but it is also shown as vulnerable, affected by social problems, institutional limits, and emotional pressure. Overall, these portrayals suggest that media reports do not simply describe family-related events; they also influence how people think about risk, responsibility, and the strength of family life in Turkish society.

### 2.3. Linking Affective Valence and Cognitive Evaluation

The interaction between affective valence and cognitive appraisal reveals that emotional expressions surrounding *aile* (Eng. family) in Turkish media are rarely isolated reactions. Instead, they are shaped by shared ways of evaluating events, such as whether an event is perceived as threatening, unfair, unexpected, or supportive. Across the corpus, a consistent pattern emerges: reports marked by fear, grief, or distress typically involve situations in which family-related expectations are disrupted, responsibility is high, and perceived control is limited. In contrast, positive emotional tones are more common in reports where families are shown as resilient, supported, and socially valued. This pattern suggests that emotional meaning in media discourse depends less on the events themselves than on how those events are understood in relation to shared ideas about family life. Strong negative emotions, especially shock, grief, and fear, appear most clearly

when these expectations are seriously disrupted, and families have little ability to respond or cope. For instance:

32) *İstanbul'da 4 kişilik ailenin zehirlenerek hayatını kaybetmesi infiale neden oldu.* "The death of a four-member family by poisoning in Istanbul caused public outrage." (Hürriyet, 19.11.2025)

In this report, the strong sense of shock and sadness comes from the fact that the loss cannot be undone, that responsibility lies outside the family, and that there was no real chance to change what happened. The emotional effect is especially powerful because the event takes place at home, during a shared meal, situations commonly linked with safety and care. This response suggests a wider feeling that everyday family spaces, usually seen as secure, can suddenly become dangerous. A similar pattern appears in news reports where harm takes place within the family itself, such as cases involving violence between family members:

33) *Çorum'da aile faciası! Oğlu tarafından tüfekle vurularak öldürüldü.* "Family tragedy in Çorum! He was shot and killed with a shotgun by his son." (Sabah, 20.10.2025)

In example (33), shock and disappointment come from the gap between the idea that family members should protect each other and the reality of deadly violence within the family. As the harm comes from a relationship usually linked with care and safety, the emotional response becomes stronger. In a similar way, negative feelings also appear in reports where families face uncertainty and have little control over what happens:

34) *Günlerdir aranıyorlardı... Mardin'de kaybolan aile 6 gün sonra bulundu.* "They had been missing for days... the family who disappeared in Mardin was found after six days." (Türkiye, 01.09.2025)

This report illustrates how the absence of information places families and their relatives in a prolonged state of uncertainty. When updates are unavailable and control over the situation is limited, coping capacity is substantially reduced. As uncertainty continues, emotional strain increases, and feelings of helplessness become more pronounced. Relief emerges only after the situation is resolved and the family is found. By contrast, anger and outrage tend to arise in reports where responsibility is clearly attributed to institutions or identifiable actors:

35) *5 yaşındaki çocuğa kreşte şiddet! Çıkan cezaya aile isyan etti.* "Violence against a 5-year-old at the kindergarten! The family protested the sentence." (Türkiye, 28.07.2025)

In this instance, negative emotion does not stem from an immediate physical threat but from a sense of unfairness in the institutional response. The mismatch here relates to moral expectations and trust rather than physical safety alone. Because judicial and administrative decisions directly affect how families judge fairness and protection, the issue carries high importance. Moreover, cognitive appraisal helps explain why some reports give rise to mixed emotional responses, in which grief may coexist with relief or sadness with recognition:

36) *Ailesinin uzun yıllar süren mücadelesi sonuç verdi; şehadet belgesi düzenlenen törenle teslim edildi.* "The long struggle of the family finally paid off; the martyrdom certificate was issued and delivered in a ceremony." (Sabah, 30.10.2025)

In example (36), the family is first presented within a context of loss and extended bureaucratic struggle. However, the formal recognition provided by the *şehadet belgesi* "martyrdom certificate" marks a turning point, bringing relief and a sense of moral

recognition. Although the loss itself cannot be undone, institutional acknowledgment helps restore a degree of justice and meaning. In this way, the emotional shift reflects a reassessment of the situation, in which grief remains present but is accompanied by relief. More generally, positive emotional responses tend to appear in reports that emphasize family unity, well-being, and the restoration of stability:

37) *Karavanla seyahat eden aileler, çocuklarıyla birlikte hem doğayla iç içe bir tatil yapıyor hem de bağlarını güçlendiriyor. "Families travelling by caravan spend a holiday in nature with their children and strengthen their bonds."* (Sabah, 09.08.2025)

Regarding this case, goal congruence is complete: the event reflects common family aims such as spending time together, relaxing, and being close to nature. Furthermore, coping potential is high, since the situation is freely chosen and remains under the family's control, while its relevance is both emotional and social, because strengthening family bonds is presented as a positive and valued way of life. Similarly, ideological and political narratives link positive affect to cultural and collective values:

38) *Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, 2025 Aile Yılı'nın ülkemiz, milletimiz ve tüm ailelerimiz için hayırlı uğurlu olmasını temenni etti.* ("President Erdoğan wished that the 2025 Year of the Family would be auspicious for the country, the nation, and all families.") (Hürriyet, 13.01.2025)

Although it is not linked to a specific event, this statement conveys a positive emotional tone, particularly hope and approval, because of its broader cultural importance. Rather than reacting to a concrete incident, it reflects shared values and collective expectations surrounding the family.

Overall, the interaction between affective valence and cognitive appraisal in Turkish media supports broader theoretical claims that emotions in discourse are not spontaneous reactions but the outcome of systematic evaluative processes (Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 2005). More specifically, negative affect appears when the family is depicted as facing violated goals, unpredictable dangers, moral breaches, or institutional failures, patterns consistent with research showing that emotional intensity increases when events are framed as both highly relevant and low in controllability (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). On the other hand, positive emotions tend to appear in narratives that highlight restored order, solidarity, state support, and respect for cultural values, reflecting situations in which family-related goals are met, and families are presented as able to cope (Martin & White, 2005). As a result, these patterns show that media representations of the family guide how the public makes sense of events by pointing to who is responsible, how serious the situation is, and which cultural values are supported or questioned (Entman, 1993; Van Dijk, 1998).

#### 2.4. Interaction of Emotional and Cognitive Constructions

The interaction between emotional and cognitive constructions in Turkish media reveals that family is never represented through affect alone; rather, emotion emerges as the product of underlying cognitive evaluations, while cognitive appraisals are simultaneously shaped by culturally embedded emotional expectations about what a family should be. Across the corpus, linguistic markers demonstrate that the emotional tone of each news item, whether fear, grief, outrage, admiration, hope, or solidarity, is deeply influenced by cognitive assessments of threat, responsibility, control, unexpectedness, and social importance. Furthermore, these evaluations are shaped by cultural views that see the family as a fundamental social institution, deeply valued and morally important, yet also open to harm. One of the clearest patterns in the data is that extreme negative emotions become stronger when events are evaluated as unpredictable

and beyond control, especially when they involve severe harm to the family itself. This pattern is illustrated in the following report:

39) *Acı üstüne acı... Aynı aile bir ayda iki oğlunu kaybetti. "Pain upon pain... The same family lost two sons in one month."* (Türkiye, 14.08.2025)

In this example, the phrase *acı üstüne acı* "pain upon pain" intensifies the emotional impact by emphasizing repetition and accumulation of loss. The grief expressed here is not only a response to tragedy but also reflects cognitive evaluations of very high importance, no realistic possibility of coping, and the irreversibility of the loss. Emotional suffering is therefore inseparable from the recognition that the family's future has been permanently altered. A different, though related, interaction between emotion and cognition appears in reports shaped by uncertainty rather than confirmed loss. This is evident in the following case:

40) *Küçük kızın kaybolduğunu fark eden aile, durumu 112 Acil Çağrı Merkezi'ne bildirdi. "The family reported their daughter's disappearance to emergency services."* (Türkiye, 24.08.2025)

In this instance, the sudden disappearance creates strong fear and anxiety, largely because of missing information. Reliance on emergency services highlights limited personal control and shifted responsibility, while the absence of clear outcomes prolongs emotional distress. In this case, emotional shock develops through cognitive evaluations of uncertainty and dependence on public authorities. On the other hand, positive emotional responses tend to emerge when cognitive evaluations correspond with cultural ideas of care, unity, and moral responsibility, as seen in the following report:

41) *Tek çocuk olarak büyüyen Özlem Çağlar, yıllar önce içinden geçen koruyucu aile olma hayalini, eşiyle birlikte gerçeğe dönüştürdü. "Having grown up as an only child, Özlem Çağlar realised her long-held dream of becoming a foster parent together with her husband."* (Sabah, 11.09.2025)

In this case, happiness and pride arise because the evaluations highlight goal fulfilment, personal choice, and positive responsibility, and the emotional meaning therefore supports a culturally shared view of caring for a child as a morally meaningful act. Similarly, comparable patterns can be seen in reports where perseverance and caregiving increase the family's perceived ability to cope:

42) *Aile, fizik tedavi ile Zümra'yı desteklerken, yardım çağrısını sürdürüyor. "While the family supports Zümra through physical therapy, they continue to call for help."* (Sabah, 7.10.2025)

This example shows that positive emotion is present, yet it is closely tied to concern. As the family continues to act and gradually gains greater capacity to cope, the situation is no longer described only in terms of threat; rather, the family is presented as moving beyond vulnerability toward a more active and resilient position. At a broader level, a different kind of interaction emerges when media texts relate family life to wider notions of well-being and life satisfaction:

43) *Ailelere kriter gözetmeksizin doğum yardımları verilecek. "Birth allowances will be provided to families without applying any eligibility criteria."* (Hürriyet, 14.01.2025)

Although not tied to a specific dramatic incident, this statement constructs family as a central object of institutional care and social protection. The positive emotional orientation (security, reassurance, and relief) is grounded in a cognitive evaluation that frames economic support as a means of strengthening family stability and future-oriented

well-being. Emotion here does not arise spontaneously but is produced through an appraisal of guaranteed support, reduced uncertainty, and collective responsibility assumed by public institutions.

At a broader level, the interaction between emotional and cognitive constructions shows that the media conceptualize family through a dual model. On the one hand, the family is portrayed as a fragile entity constantly exposed to sudden threats, where violence, uncertainty, loss, disasters, or institutional failures operate as external forces that endanger its stability. On the other hand, the family is represented as a moral ideal whose protection is a cultural priority, associated with values such as unity, solidarity, love, sacredness, and social cohesion. This two-sided portrayal shows that the media present the family as both a vulnerable social unit and a fundamental cultural value that must be safeguarded.

The interplay of affective and cognitive elements sustains this duality. Negative emotions dominate when cognitive appraisals identify threats that contradict the culturally cherished image of the family. Positive emotions arise when events restore or reinforce this image. Linguistic markers of cumulative loss (*acı üstüne acı* "pain upon pain"), uncertainty (*kaybolmak* "to be missing / to disappear"), institutional dependence (*112 Acil Çağrı Merkezi* "emergency services"), and solidarity and care (*koruyucu aile* "foster family", *yardım çağrısını sürdürmek* "to continue calling for help") encode both emotional tones and cognitive evaluations simultaneously, demonstrating that the two cannot be analytically separated.

Overall, the corpus shows that emotions emerge through cognitive frameworks rather than independent narrative choices, a relationship consistently highlighted in appraisal research (Clore & Ortony, 2013; Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003). Fear arises when cognition identifies an uncontrollable threat, aligning with Lazarus's (1991) model, which argues that perceived lack of agency is a primary trigger for fear responses. Grief appears when cognition marks an event as irreversible or involving permanent loss, a pattern also noted by Scherer (2009), who emphasizes "irrevocability" as a key appraisal component in sadness. Anger emerges when cognition assigns responsibility for injustice or moral violation, consistent with Smith and Ellsworth's (1985) finding that anger is inseparable from appraisals of blame and unfairness. Hope surfaces when cognition evaluates increased coping potential or identifies pathways toward a positive outcome, what Folkman (2010) terms "meaning-based coping." Finally, admiration arises when cognition frames the family as a cultural, moral, or ideological anchor, reflecting the culturally embedded value orientations described by Markus and Kitayama (1991) in their work on collective meaning-making.

It could be asserted that Turkish media discourse constructs family not simply as an emotional object but as a cognitively mediated cultural symbol whose meaning depends on how events are evaluated, responsibilities distributed, and relevance determined. This mirrors Martin and White's (2005) argument that affect and judgment are co-constitutive layers of evaluative discourse. The continuous interplay of affective and cognitive dimensions creates a socially shared understanding of the family as simultaneously threatened, resilient, morally central, and culturally indispensable, an evaluative duality commonly observed in culturally significant social institutions.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the representation of family in Turkish media during 2025 is shaped through a close interaction between emotional meanings and cognitive evaluations. Across three major newspapers, the family appears not only as an emotionally charged presence but also as a socially embedded institution whose value is

repeatedly emphasized through narrative patterns, evaluative language, and cultural references. The findings suggest that affect and appraisal function not as separate analytical layers, but as interconnected dimensions of a single discourse in which the family is portrayed at once as vulnerable, sacred, threatened, resilient, and socially indispensable.

The first research question showed that affective representations cover a wide range of emotions. On the one hand, strongly negative feelings such as fear, shock, grief, anxiety, and anger are often highlighted in reports dealing with violence, loss, uncertainty, bureaucratic difficulties, and institutional failure. In such cases, the family is typically portrayed as a fragile unit facing both personal conflict and wider structural problems. On the other hand, positive emotions, including happiness, unity, pride, and hope, also appear frequently, especially when news stories focus on recovery, solidarity, cultural belonging, and social support. As a result, these contrasting emotional frames present the family as both vulnerable and highly valued. For this reason, the prominence of crisis-focused reporting should not be read as a sign of declining family strength, but rather as a result of journalistic news values that favour dramatic and high-impact events, thereby intensifying emotional and evaluative framing.

The second research question examined how cognitive appraisal dimensions, such as goal congruence, accountability, coping potential, novelty, and relevance shape emotional meaning. The analysis indicates that negative emotions are expressed more strongly when events are presented as unexpected, beyond control, or out of step with core family values. This tendency is particularly clear in reports in which responsibility is attributed to institutional failure, environmental harm, or criminal acts. By contrast, positive emotions become more noticeable when media accounts emphasise recovery, support, and the availability of social or institutional assistance. In this respect, these findings suggest that cognitive appraisal functions as the main interpretive frame through which emotional responses are formed, heightened, or moderated.

The third research question focused on the relationship between affective valence and cognitive evaluation, and the findings indicate a close connection between the two. In particular, fear, grief, and anger tend to co-occur with evaluations of danger, injustice, and loss of control, whereas joy and hope are more often linked to processes of restoration, agency, and cultural affirmation. Moreover, cognitive framing frequently intensifies emotional response: loss appears more severe when irreversibility is stressed, uncertainty develops into distress when families are depicted as powerless, and joy gains symbolic strength when it echoes widely shared cultural values. In this sense, emotion is not merely reported in the news; rather, it is actively shaped through interpretive processes.

The fourth research question shows that linguistic choices play a key role in shaping how the family is understood. Through word choice, metaphors, and evaluative expressions, media texts simultaneously convey emotional weight and moral judgment, thereby signalling whether the family is presented as harmed, protected, threatened, or strengthened. Moreover, references to unity, solidarity, cultural continuity, and social cohesion draw on shared moral understandings and position the family not only as a social unit but also as a moral and cultural symbol. In this way, harm directed at families is framed as a form of collective suffering, while narratives that support or safeguard the family are represented as socially appropriate and culturally meaningful.

Several limitations should be acknowledged in reading these findings. The data are limited to 165 items from three nationally circulated newspapers published in 2025. In addition, the analysis relies on texts that explicitly include the word *aile* (Eng. family),

leaving aside implied and visual representations of family life. The study further focuses exclusively on language use and does not consider images, layout, video material, or audience response. Moreover, the present study does not distinguish systematically between news reports, opinion columns, and commentaries. Future research could extend the scope by comparing multiple years, conducting genre-specific and comparative analyses of these text types, and examining how readers interpret and negotiate family representations in everyday contexts, with particular attention to their distinct communicative functions and evaluative strategies.

Overall, this study shows that Turkish media discourse constructs the meaning of family through a highly integrated emotional and cognitive system. The family is presented as emotionally important because it is cognitively framed as socially foundational, and it is framed as foundational because it carries emotional weight. This mutual reinforcement produces a cultural narrative within which the family becomes a symbol of vulnerability, responsibility, and continuity. In this sense, the media do more than report events involving families; they participate in shaping how the family is imagined, valued, and emotionally experienced in Turkish society.

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