

ADJUSTMENT TO BREAKUP OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS:
INITIATOR STATUS, CERTAINTY ABOUT THE REASONS OF
BREAKUP, CURRENT RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND PERCEIVED
SOCIAL SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

ADJUSTMENT TO BREAKUP OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS: INITIATOR STATUS, CERTAINTY ABOUT THE REASONS OF BREAKUP, CURRENT RELATIONSHIP STATUS AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT

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The main purpose of the present study was to examine the possible factors that affect the adjustment to breakup of romantic relationships. Initiator status, certainty about the reasons of breakup, current relationship status, and perceived social support were examined in regard to adjustment to breakup.

The sample of the study consisted of 397 participants (192 (48.4%) female, 205 (51.6%) male). At the beginning, the invited sample consisted of 561 (276 female, 285 male) participants; 164 of the participants who had not broken off their romantic relationship within the past two years were excluded. Data collection instruments of the study were demographic information form, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and Fisher's Divorce Adjustment Scale.

One-way ANOVA and post-hoc test were conducted to determine the differences among initiator groups in terms of adjustment to breakup. Results showed that there were significant differences between the initiator and non-initiator groups and also between non-initiator and mutual decider groups. There wasn't significant difference between the

initiator and the mutual decider groups. The results of t-tests showed that there was a significant difference between the groups who were certain about the reasons of breakup and those who were not in regard to adjustment to breakup. There was also significant difference between the groups who had another romantic relationship after the breakup and those who did not have regarding the adjustment to breakup. Besides these, bivariate correlation analysis indicated a significant relationship between perceived social support and adjustment to breakup.

Key Words: Romantic Relationship, Breakup, Adjustment.

ÖZ

ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLERİN BİTİMİNDE YAŞANAN AYRILIĞA UYUM:
AYRILIĞA KARAR VERME DURUMU, AYRILIK NEDENLERİNİN
NETLİĞİ, ŞU ANDAKİ İLİŞKİ DURUMU, ALGILANAN SOSYAL DESTEK

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı romantik ilişkilerin bitiminde yaşanan ayrılığa uyumu etkileyen bazı etmenleri incelemektir. Bu çalışmada, ayrılığa kimin karar verdiği, ayrılık nedenlerinin net olup olmaması, ayrıldıktan sonra yaşanan duygusal bir ilişkinin varlığı ve algılanan sosyal destek ayrılığa uyumu etkileyen bazı etmenler olarak ele alınmıştır.

Araştırmanın örneklemini, 397 katılımcı (192 (48.4%) kadın, 205 (51.6%) erkek) oluşturmaktadır. Başlangıçta araştırmanın örneklem sayısı 561 (276 kadın, 285 erkek) iken son iki yıl içinde ayrılık deneyimi yaşamayan 164 kişi araştırmadan çıkarılmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan veri toplama araçları, demografik bilgi formu, Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği ve Fisher'ın Boşanmaya Uyum Ölçeği'dir.

Ayrılığa karar veren gruplar arasındaki farkı incelemek için tek yönlü varyans analizi ve Post-hoc testi yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, ayrılık kararını kendi alan grup ile ayrılık kararını kendi almayan grup arasında ve ayrılık kararını birlikte alan grup ile ayrılık kararını kendi almayan grup ortalamaları arasında anlamlı farklılıkların bulunduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrılık kararını birlikte alan grup ile ayrılık kararını kendi alan grup ortalamaları arasında ise anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. T- testi sonuçları, ayrılık nedenlerinden emin olan grup ile emin olmayan grup

ortalamaları arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğunu göstermiştir. Aynı zamanda ayrılıktan sonra yeni bir duygusal ilişkisi olan grup ile olmayan grup ortalamaları arasında da ayrılığa uyum bağlamında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Bunların yanı sıra iki değişkenli korelasyon analizi sonuçlarına göre algılanan sosyal destek ile ayrılığa uyum arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Romantik İlişki, Ayrılık, Uyum.

To My Family: **My mother,** Zeynep Barutçu;
 My father, Haydar Barutçu;
 My sisters, Zehra Aydın, Leyla Taylan,
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&

To the memory of Psychologist Dr. Gülçin Demir

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Since the existence of human, close relations are present (Leone & Hawkins, 2006). To be in a close relationship is one of the most basic human need and this need leads human to form and maintain important interpersonal relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Degenova, 2008; Knox & Schacht, 2008). Close relationships provide psychological assistance and create meaning in life (Harvey & Omarzu, 1999). People reported greater happiness and health when they engaged in satisfactory relationships (Hendrick, 2004). Besides, life satisfaction is influenced by failures or successes in relationships (Argyle, 1987).

Close relationships are necessary in order to fulfill the belongingness needs. Pleasant emotional interaction with people and stability of these interactions are important aspects of belongingness need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). People engage in relationships to fulfill their belongingness need; maintenance of the relationship is important as well as its formation; once they form social bonds, they do not want to break these bonds. Social bonds include emotional and cognitive processes and positive bonds yield positive results; whereas breakups of these bonds lead to negative outcomes (Hendrick, 2004).

As a type of close relationships, romantic relationships are ways of social connections and also very important for most people (Leone & Hawkins, 2006). Some researchers view romantic relationships as sources of joy in life (Gunderson & Ferrari, 2008; Hendrick, 2004). Social, psychological,

physical and cognitive factors influence the development of romantic relationships (Knox & Schacht, 2008). Researchers considered and examined factors for formation, maintenance and termination of the romantic relationship, in order to understand the effects of these factors on the relationships (e.g. Feldman, 1989; Degenova, 2008; Bower & Feiring; 1999, Hendrick, 2004; Barbara & Dion, 2001; Chung, Farmer, Grant, Newton, Payne, Perry, Saunders, Smith, & Stone, 2002; Davis, Shaver & Vernon, 2003; Mearns, 1991; Sprecher, 1994; Sprecher, Felmler, Metts, Fehr, & Vanni, 1998; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003).

For most adolescents and young adults, selecting a romantic partner is a developmental task (Medora, Larson, Hortaçsu, & Dave, 2002). Degenova (2008) listed several reasons of forming romantic relationship in adolescence. Romantic relationship is a form of recreation for adolescents; they relax, enjoy and entertain. They fulfill their love and affection needs. Besides these needs, they also gratify their sexual desires. They learn social skills and develop their intimate relationships through dating. Furthermore, romantic relationships contribute their self-concept; in their relationships they gain ideas about themselves and they learn gender roles through their relationships. Romantic partner provides feeling of security and worthiness. Moreover, romantic relationship is a way of selecting a spouse for their marriage or long term relationships. Adolescence romantic relationship is beneficial not only for spouse selection but also for developing understanding of each other in marital relationships.

As aforementioned, maintenance of relationship is as important as its formation. Maintenance of a healthy and satisfactory relationship is affected by different forces (Hendrick, 2004). Intimacy level, involvement, similarities between partners (age, education, intelligence), physical attractiveness are found as important factors among university students

for maintaining the relationship. High discrepancies between partners, little intimacy and little involvement increase the possibility of breakups (Hill, Rubin, & Peplau, 1976). High satisfaction, high investment, and poor alternatives are the predictors of relationship stability. As people stay in a relationship that characterized by high satisfaction and investment and poor alternatives, they develop commitment (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001). Decreases in satisfaction and investment and increases in quality of alternative predict relationship dissolution (Rusbult, 1983; cited in Simpson, 1987, p. 971).

Romantic relationships yield a unique set of challenges that includes the breakup experience (Alexander, 2008). Although relationships begin without expecting the breakup, many of them end (Feldman, 1989). As the beginning, breaking up a relationship is a common experience (Knox & Schacht, 2008). Robak and Weitzman (1998) stated that breakup is common especially in adolescence and young adulthood. It is a painful experience and following the breakup, emotional reactions differ from people to people (Perilloux & Buss, 2008), and often lead mental and psychological disorders (Hill, et al., 1976; Sprecher et al., 1998, Tashiro & Frazier, 2003).

Breakup is not a discrete event (Duck, 2007). It has 'before' and 'after' and this study focuses on the 'after' part. Following the breakup, people face with emotional, cognitive and behavioral imbalances. They try to rebalance those in an adjustment period. Fisher (1976) revealed that people experience emotional and social changes following the breakup. Researches showed that breakup brings a lot of negative outcomes such as unfulfillment of belongingness need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), distress (Simpson, 1987; Sorenson et al., 1993; Sprecher 1994; Barbara & Dion, 2000; Sbarra & Emery, 2005), a bunch of negative emotions (Hill, 1976; Simpson, 1987; Sprecher, 1994; Sprecher et al., 1998; McCarthy

et al., 1997), rumination (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007; Perilloux & Buss, 2008), self-discrepancy (Green et al., 2007), and grief (Fisher 1976, Robak & Weitzman, 1998). Besides its negative outcomes, some researchers focused on the positive sides of the breakup. For instance, Tashiro and Frazier (2003) examined the positive changes related to self, partner, relationship and the environment. Lewandowski and Bizzoco (2007) investigated the association between the quality of the relationship and growth following the breakup.

As it is understood with the previously mentioned researches, breakup adjustment is a broad complex concept. It is a multidimensional construct (Koenig Kellas & Masunov, 2003). In order to understand this construct, factors that may possibly have impact on this should be examined.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the possible factors that effect adjustment to breakup of romantic relationships. In the light of this purpose, initiator status (who ended the relationship), certainty about the reasons of breakup, current relationship status (whether there is a current romantic relationship or not) following the breakup and the perceived social support were examined regarding the adjustment to breakup. This study investigated whether these factors created significant differences in regard to adjustment to breakup. Four factors were examined separately; their interactive effects were not assessed.

1.3. Significance of the Study

To examine the factors that may effect adjustment to breakup of adolescence and young adulthood romantic relationships is important for several reasons.

First of all, romantic relationships have a great importance for adolescence. Emergence of the romantic relationship is one of the most important themes for the social development of adolescent (Lerner & Steinberg, 2009). To have a lasting romantic relationships have positive outcomes on both physiological health and well-being of people (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1996; Harvey & Wenzel, 2001). Adolescents who have a steady romantic relationship have higher level of self esteem and sex role identity when compared to the ones who do not have steady relationships (Samet & Kelly, 1987). Breaking up a romantic relationship can be one of the harrowing experiences in life (Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). To cope with the aftermath of romantic relationship dissolution was especially difficult for university students due to the fact that some of them are not with their families which are important sources of social support for them (Moller et al., 2003).

Secondly, the negative effects of breakup can be multidimensional for adolescence and young adults. Adolescents are more vulnerable to the loss because their ego is under construction and coping mechanisms do not developed adequately (Headington, 1981). The loss of a loved one was found as a significant factor for suicide among adolescents (Neiger & Hopkins, 1988). Breakup of romantic relationship was found as a risk factor for major depressive disorders in adolescence (Monroe, Rohde, Seeley, & Lewinsohn, 1999). Frazier and Schauben (1994) found that relationship breakup was one of the five most frequent stressors experienced by female university students. Moreover students who experience more stress report that they felt less power and control in their lives.

Thirdly, during the life course, many people have numerous romantic relationships and they experience breakup for several times (Tashiro &

Frazier, 2003). The breakup of romantic relationship is a common experience (Robak, & Weitzman, 1998; Lewandowski & Bizzoco, 2007; Knox & Schacht, 2008). Breakup is not a contemporary problem; it is a part of human history (Perilloux & Buss, 2008). Adolescence are asked to list the most depressing events that occur within the past year; out of eight categories, seven categories included relationship problems such as breakup, rejection and etc. (Harter, 1999). Gizir (2005) examined the most significant problems of Middle East Technical University students. 885 senior students from 34 different departments participated in the study and they reported the most significant problems that they faced in university. The result of the study showed that 32.2 % of the study participants haven't experienced problems in their heterosexual relationships, whereas 67.8 % of the participant had problems in their heterosexual relationships. In regard of the gender, 57.3 % of the female participant and 77.7 % of the male participant reported that they experienced problems in their heterosexual relationship. To sum up, knowledge that gained in this area serves for the well-being of a wide range of people.

Fourthly, breakup adjustment provides information for both current and the subsequent relationship. Meaningful relationship losses are crucial for young adults in understanding current interpersonal functioning and problem solving strategies probably used in future relationships (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007). Sorenson, Russell, Harkness, and Harvey (1993) asserted that college romance is a generous research field not only for examining dating relationship but also for early dynamics of long-term relationship. In addition, breakup of a romantic relationship may reflect in negative ways through subsequent relationships and it may impair the ability of selecting a new romantic relationship partner or maintaining the relationship (Monroe et al., 1999). The information related to effect of former relationship was important for repartnering in later life (Davidson &

Fennell, 2002). Furthermore, breakups have lasting effects on subsequent relationships and future depressions (Monroe et al., 1999). Adjustment to breakup is eased with the identification of the factors that influence adjustment to breakup. People who adjust the breakup in a healthy way increase the capability of identifying the errors both in the old relationships and in the breakup adjustment period, this awareness improve the quality of the subsequent romantic relationship. Adolescence gain experience in pre-marital romantic relationship and those experiences guide them in their marriage.

Fifthly, research on adolescent romantic relationship is limited in number (Shulman & Kipnis, 2001). Studies related to effects of dissolution focus primarily on the dissolution of marriage rather than cohabiting, dating or premarital relationships (Levinger, 1976; Simpson, 1987; Frazier & Cook, 1993; Noller & Feeney, 2006). Similarly, researchers most frequently examined divorce adjustment (Koenig Kellas & Masunov, 2003). Kaczmarek and Backlund (1991) claimed that importance of the loss of a loved one for adolescence was neglected in the professional literature that focused on adolescence issues. The studies related to breakup of non-marital romantic relationship conducted in Turkey are limited in number (e.g. Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987; Hortaçsu, 1989; Üzgel, 2004). This study provided insight to experiences of university students following a breakup.

1.4. Definitions of Terms

Breakup: End of romantic relationships (Felmlee, Sprecher & Bassin, 1990).

Initiator status: Whose decision it was to end the relationship (Waller, 2007).

- (1) initiator, as the person who decide to break up the relationship by herself/himself,
- (2) non-initiator, as the recipient of the breakup decision,
- (3) mutual deciders, as a shared decision of breakup.

Current relationship status: “Whether or not a person is in another relationship currently” (Koenig Kellas & Masunov, 2003; p. 292).

Certainty about the reasons of breakup: Being certain about the actual reasons of ending the relationship.

Perceived Social Support: “An individual’s perceptions of general support or specific supportive behaviors (available or enacted on) from people in their social network, which enhance functioning or may buffer them from adverse outcomes.” (Demaray & Malecki, 2002; p. 215).

Breakup Adjustment: The social and emotional changes that people go through as they separate from the former partner (Fisher, 1976).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review includes six sections: (1) breakup, (2) adjustment to breakup, (3) initiator status, (4) certainty about the reasons of breakup, (5) current relationship status, and (6) perceived social support. In the first section, romantic relationship breakup is briefly explained. Second section includes the definition of the breakup adjustment, emotional and cognitive reactions following the breakup, coping strategies, positive outcomes, and gender differences. In the third section, differences between the initiator status groups in terms of experiences following the breakup are explained. Fourth section emphasizes the importance of answering why the relationship is over and effect of account making on adjustment to breakup. In the fifth section, the impact of current relationship status on breakup adjustment was explicated, and in the sixth, final, section, social support and perceived social support are defined and psychological and physical effects are summarized with a broader perspective then specially its effects on breakup adjustment and gender differences are presented. In short, in the literature review chapter, major study variables are explained in detail.

2.1. Breakup

Breakup is defined as end of romantic relationship by Feilmelee, Sprecher and Bassin (1990). Single type of relationship theory cannot explain breakup completely (Feilmelee, Sprecher, & Bassin, 1990). Attachment theory is the one that was commonly preferred by researchers (e.g. Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Barbara & Dion, 2000; Davis, Shaver, & Vernon, 2003; Saffrey &

Ehrenberg, 2007). Hazan and Shaver (1987) adapted attachment theory to romantic relationships. This theory implied that with the formation of romantic relationship, romantic relationship partner becomes the attachment figure. People do not want to substitute the person whom they are attached. Attaching someone also brings the risk of pain, when the attached one is lost (Josselson, 1996).

Duck (2007) argued that breakup is a complex phenomenon; it is not a discrete event; rather it is a psychological process spans over time. He attempted to simplify the breakup with a breakdown model in which breakup process was explained with its phases including (1) intrapsychic, (2) dyadic, (3) social, (4) grave-dressing, and (5) resurrection phases.

Breakup process begins with a *breakdown*, when at least one of the partners realizes that the relationship is not going properly.

1) *Intrapsychic Phase*: In the first phase, unsatisfactory sides of relationship and/or partner are considered and those are voiced in social network but partners do not speak directly with each other about these unsatisfactory points.

2) *Dyadic Phase*: In the dyadic phase, participants speak directly to each other about their own experiences in the relationship and they discuss and confront unsatisfactory points. They evaluate their relationship and a decision for the future of the relationship is given. This decision can be one-sided or it can be taken mutually.

3) *Social Phase*: If the decision taken in the dyadic phase is not in the direction of repairing the relationship, the breakup decision is shared with the social network. With this sharing, comments, advices and opinions are revealed by the social network members. As it is expected, the responses of social network members are not objective; their responses tend to be supportive and confirmative.

4) *Grave-dressing Phase*: After the announcement of the death of a relationship (breakup), it should be buried. In this phase, an account of the relationship is made by considering how the relationship started and prolonged and why it is over. After creating the relationship account, it should be closed in a meaningful and acceptable way for both partners and social network members.

5) *Resurrection Phase*: In this phase, future relationships are thought by considering relational past and preparation for a new relationship is started.

2.2. Adjustment to Breakup

Koenig Kellas and Masunov (2003) stated that, as expected, adjustment was conceptualized as a construct that has multi-dimensions. Fisher (1976) defined adjustment as a process in which social and emotional changes are experienced by people who broke off their relationships. In order to create an operational definition of adjustment, he developed a scale which was called Fisher Divorced Adjustment Scale (FDAS) that was both used for divorced and non-married samples. In his operational definition, adjustment included six sub-dimensions: self-worth, grief, disentanglement from the relationship, social self-worth and anger. Kitson (1992) defined adjustment as the combination of non-existence of psychological disturbances, possessing a sense of self-esteem and detaching from the former partner.

Breakup is one of the most heavy and painful experiences in people's life (Simpson, 1987; La Saulle & Kagan, 2003; Hendrick, 2004). After the breakup one of the most frequent questions is "How long will it last to get over the breakup?" (Sbarra & Emery, 2005). Although initial phase of breakup adjustment is very difficult for many people; they have to move through this difficulty in order to reach a better adjustment (Saffrey &

Ehrenberg, 2007). Poor breakup adjustment was explained as continuity of high negative affect, high variability within the person or the union of these two factors (Emery, 1994; cited in Sbarra and Emery, 2005, p. 214). Sbarra and Emery (2005) asserted that as time passes after the breakup, it is expected that people adjust to breakup and effects of negative emotions reduce. In their study, adjusted people reported that they felt less stuck on their ex-partner and their positive affects increased.

Emotional experiences of the people who dissolve their relationships are associated with their general adjustment to breakup (Sbarra & Emery, 2005). Separation from the loved one is a stressful experience; the level of stress and emotional experiences vary among people who broke their relationships (Sbarra & Emery, 2005; Barbara & Dion, 2000; Sprecher, 1994). Every breakup has two sides (Hill et al., 1976; Sprecher, 1994). When breakup decision becomes apparent, both of the partner face with a number of emotional consequences (Hendrick, 2004). People who broke up their romantic relationship might feel helpless (Chung et al., 2002). The loss of a relationship can bring immense confusion and pain (Noller et al., 2006).

Sprecher (1994) examined the emotional reactions of 47 young adult couples as a part of her study. Participants were provided to rate both negative and positive emotions. Negative emotion options were depression, loneliness, guilt, anger, jealousy, hate, frustration, resentment, and hurt. Positive emotion options were love, relief, contentment, satisfaction, joy, and happiness. Reported negative emotions were more than the positive emotions and many participants reported distress following the breakup. Among the negative emotions, hurt, frustration, depression, loneliness, and anger were the most mentioned ones, respectively. In addition, love and relief were the

positive emotions mostly experienced by participants. In order to assess the association between the ex-partners' level of distress, emotional experiences of both partner in the same relationship was correlated. Significant negative correlations were found for three negative emotions which were guilt, resentment and loneliness. In other words, when the feeling of guilt, resentment and loneliness increased for one partner, those feelings decreased for the other partner. No significant correlations were found for the remaining emotions.

One of the studies related to emotional experiences following the breakup was conducted by McCarthy, Lambert and Brack (1997); in this study, 231 master students reported subsequent emotional responses to the breakup of romantic relationships. Students reported joy, relief, pride, and hope as positive emotions and they reported disgust, unfriendliness, anger, frustration, and contempt as negative emotions. Perilloux and Buss (2008) also examined the emotional reactions following the breakup. In their study, emotions reported by university students were sadness, anger, confusion, shock, vengeance, happiness, indifference, jealousy, scary, guilt, remorse and regret.

In regard to emotional reactions, distress following the breakup was examined by the researchers. Simpson (1987) carried out a longitudinal research among university students and examined the factors that predict the extent of emotional distress following the breakups. He examined factors under three headings: factors internal to a relationship (satisfaction, closeness, duration of the relationship, and sexual nature of the relationship), factors external to a relationship (possessing actual or imagined alternative romantic relationship partners, belief about finding a suitable partner and relationship exclusivity) and individual difference factors (self-monitoring styles and orientation to sexual relation). The

result indicated that only three factors were significant in predicting emotional distress; these were closeness, duration of the relationship and ease of finding another suitable romantic relationship partner. Participants who experienced more intense emotional distress for a longer time were the ones who were closer to their ex-partner, whose relationship lasted for a longer time, and who thought that finding another suitable romantic relationship partner was not easy for them.

Sorenson et al. (1993) examined the feeling of closure and control over recovery following the breakup with a university student sample. Results indicated that participants who felt that their relationships were psychologically over, felt better about the breakup than those who did not feel the relationship was over. Besides this, researchers found a significant positive correlation between feeling of closure and control over the recovery. Participants who felt that their relationship was psychologically over also felt that they had more control over the recovery process following the breakup.

Another study, with a university student sample, was conducted by Sorenson, Russell, Harkness and Harvey (1993). In this study, students were asked to list the physical and psychological symptoms following the breakup. Positive physical symptoms were not reported; reported negative physical symptoms were headaches, upset stomach, and sleepless. A relation was found between the number of physical symptoms and adjustment to breakup. Fewer number of physical symptoms indicated better breakup adjustment. In addition, negative psychological outcomes were reported as depression, loneliness, suicidal ideation, and positive psychological outcomes were reported as joy and relief.

Some researchers examined breakup from a cognitive perspective. Saffrey and Ehrenberg (2007) claimed that researchers focused on general factors such as commitment in examining distress following the breakup but there was a scarcity in research that examined cognitive experiences after breakup. According to them, attachment styles and rumination are important cognitive processes for breakup adjustment. Barbara and Dion (2000) examined the attachment styles and aspects of relationship breakup among 115 university students, in order to find an answer for the question of whether breakup of a relationship is harder for specific people. The result of their study showed that the participants who had preoccupied attachment styles were the ones who experienced difficulty in adaptation to breakup. Preoccupied attachment style characterized by having the idea that I am not lovable but others are so valuable (Stosny, 1995). Preoccupied lovers have positive thoughts about others but negative thoughts for themselves and also they have low self-confidence. They resisted accepting and adjusting to breakup. They got stuck in their ended relationship; kept their further demands related to this relationship and were least likely to be in a new relationship. In another study (Davis et al., 2003), it was found that strongly preoccupied lovers have difficulties in continuing their daily activities such as school and work.

In the study, administered by Saffrey and Ehrenberg (2007), the association between adjustment to breakup and rumination was examined in an attachment framework. They administered the research among 231 university students. Four types of attachment styles in their study were secure, preoccupied, fearful and dismissing attachment styles. Preoccupied and fearful individuals were distinguished from secure and dismissing individuals by possessing attachment anxiety which was defined as a fear of rejection and abandonment. In addition, rumination has both adaptive (reflection) and maladaptive (brooding,

preoccupation, and regret) forms in their study. People with high level of attachment anxiety (preoccupied and fearful individuals), tended to use maladaptive forms of rumination rather than adaptive forms and they experienced difficulties in adjusting to breakup. Results showed that reflection, which is an adaptive type of rumination, was associated with positive adjustment. This finding was evaluated as healthy adjustment was not cutting off thinking past relationships. On the contrary, thinking about the past relationship event was a way of meaning-making. When people did not have a closure of relationship in their mind and when they have hope for the continuity of the relationship after the breakup, they tended to excessively focus on the past events in the relationship and ex-partner. To sum up, maladaptive form of rumination is one of the reasons of poor breakup adjustment for the people who have high level of attachment anxiety.

As a part of cognitive sides of breakup, Green, Campbell and Davis (2007) found out a linkage between termination of romantic relationship and self-discrepancy. Thinking about the past relationship increases self-discrepancy. In other words, past relationships make them to view more differences between their ideal self and actual self. Kaczmarek and Backlund (1991) claimed that breakup does not mean only the loss of a partner for adolescents; at the same time, it means the loss of personal identity. Pietromonaco and Feldman (1997) stated that people with high attachment anxiety do not have certain views of themselves. For those people, breakup of their romantic relationship meant that they were devoid of access to self-affirmation which was provided by their romantic relationship partner. This situation increases their anxiety and, in order to cope with their anxiety, they excessively think about their past relationship and keep it alive in their mind (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007).

Lewandowski, Aron, Basis, and Kunak (2006) asserted that breakup of high quality relationships which provide greater self-expansion opportunities, resulted in greater loss of self. Less loss of self is associated with the greater growth following the breakup. The breakups of unsatisfying relationship probably yield less distress and less negative outcomes and also provide sense of relief (Lewandowski & Bizzoco, 2007).

Grief reactions also formed a part of adjustment to breakup (Fisher, 1976). Robak and Weitzman (1998) administered a study with a sample of 148 university students and they examined the reactions of students following the loss of a love relationship. Students reported considerable grief following the breakup. Intimacy, closeness, and seriousness of relationship influenced the intensity of grief. More intimate and thereby more close relationship yielded greater grief and in addition the more marriage had been discussed in the relationship, the greater grief was experienced. Discussion of marriage was seen as an indicator of the seriousness of the relationship and families might underestimate the dissolution of a dating relationship which was not perceives as a serious relationship and they disenfranchised the grief of young adolescents. Grief may lead negative health outcomes and decreases in academic success and may result in ignorance of employment and home responsibilities. Excessively thinking and fantasizing ex-partner, using drugs, and alcohol as a self-medicate strategy, and developing belief about never loving another person can be the possible reactions for young adolescent following the breakup of romantic relationships.

Catanzaro and Mearns (1990) argued that mood regulation expectancies are crucial for coping strategies after distressing events. Kirsch (1985) stated that one's mood is directly impacted by possessing the belief that one can control and order one's mood state. The study conducted by

Mearns (1991) supported these ideas; the study was administered among 583 undergraduate students and it revealed that students who expect that they can control and alleviate their negative moods following breakup, experienced less depression and they were more successful in developing coping strategies after breakup.

Perilloux and Buss (2008) examined costs and coping strategies for breakup. The list of breakup costs included depression, lower self-esteem, loss of concentration, loss of shared friends, loss of sexual access, loss of resources, loss of partner's skills, loss of emotional investment, personal information revealed, unable to acquire mate, appear unavailable, interference in relationships, stalking by ex-partner, loss of protection, and appearing less desirable. The strategies used by the university students following the breakup were discussing the breakup, remaining friends, increasing ex-partner's self esteem, revealing sadness, ruminating over the breakup, crying, pleading, threatening of suicide, drinking heavily, using drugs, spending money to attract, shopping, avoiding ex-partner, requesting sexual encounter with ex-partner, continuing sexual activity with ex-partner, increasing commitment, showing affection to another person, infidelity, interfering with ex-partner's lover, threatening ex-partner, and physical abuse.

Knox and colleagues (2000) examined the recovery from romantic relationship dissolution among 410 university students. In order to assess their difficulty levels in adjusting to breakup, students were asked to rate their difficulty levels. The result showed that students experienced medium difficulty in adjusting to breakup; in other words breakup was not traumatic for them. In this study, most helpful factors in adjusting to breakup were found as 'passage of time' and 'new romantic relationship partner' following the breakup. Men (34%) more than women (29%) found that having a new partner was more helpful in adjustment to

breakup. Women (34%) more than man (29%) found that passage of time was more helpful in adjustment to breakup. 13% of women and 10% of man reported 'moving to a new location'; 7% women and 5% of men reported 'recalling the thought of ex-partner lied to me'; 9% of men and 2% of women reported 'alcohol' as helpful factors in adjustment to breakup. Only 2% of women and 1% of men reported 'receiving therapy' as a helpful factor.

There was a scarcity in research related to positive changes (e.g. increased ability and satisfaction in the new relationship) following to the breakup (Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). The study administered by Tashiro and Frazier (2003) examined both distress (negative effects) and growth (positive changes) after the breakup among 92 university students. The researchers considered the stress-related growth theory which implied that stressful or traumatic events lead people to change in order to cope with them; consequently people grow as a response to those events. In this study, positive changes were presented in four categories; these were person positives (positive chance related to self), other positives (positive chance related to partner), relational positives (positive chance related to relationships), and environment positives (positive chances related to environment). Person positives were the most and the environmental positives were the least reported positive changes. As person positives, participants commonly reported feeling of power, independence, and self-confidence. Gaining relational wisdom was the most common reported relational positives. Having better friendships was the most common reported environment positives. Choosing different kind of partner was the most common reported other positives.

Lewandowski and Bizzoco (2007) also pointed out the paucity of researches in positive outcomes of romantic relationship breakup and they claimed that related literature generally focused on the distress

following the breakup but this only reflected the half of the picture. In their study, they examined growth following the breakup with a sample of 155 university students. The results of the study indicated that breakup of a low quality romantic relationship was associated with more growth and more positive emotions. In addition to this, people reported less loss of self following the low quality relationship dissolution.

Literature presented contradictory results for gender differences in reactions following the breakup. McCarthy, Lambert and Brack (1997) did not find evidence for gender differences in emotions following the breakup. Similarly, Simpson (1987) reported no difference in negative emotions and Tashiro and Frazier (2003) found same level of distress for both men and women after the breakup. Sprecher (1994) did not find difference between men and women in terms of negative emotions and overall distress following the breakup. In addition, no sex difference in perceived stress following the breakup was found by Moller and colleagues (2003). Robak and Weitzman (1998) noted that young men and women do not react to breakup totally different; necessary time for adjustment to breakup and reported feelings following the breakup were not significantly different for both gender.

Although some researches' findings pointed out no gender differences; some of them found more negative consequences for women. Mearns (1991) and Tashiro and Frazier (2003) asserted that women experience more depression. Following the breakup, women had more negative emotions than men; they generally reported more sadness, confusion and scary after the breakup (Perilloux & Buss, 2008). Furthermore, they reported more dismay, anger, hostility, somatization and feeling of loss of control (Robak & Weitzman, 1998). Moreover, women experienced more attachment anxiety and they reported high negative adjustment when compared to men (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007).

In contrast to these, some researchers claimed that women experience more positive emotions such as joy and relief and less distress (Choo, Levine, Hatfield, 1996; Hill et al., 1976; Sprecher et al., 1998). Sprecher (1994) also found significant gender difference in terms of experienced positive emotions following the breakup; women reported more happiness, contentment and satisfaction than men. The aftermath of breakup would be more for men than for women (Hill et al., 1976). In the study conducted by Knox and colleagues (2000), men reported more difficulty than women in adjusting to breakup. Students were also asked why men experience more difficulty in adjusting to breakup. One of the common explanations to this questions was stated as “men have such inflated ego's they can't believe that a woman would actually dump them” and the other was stated as “men are oblivious to what is happening in relationships and may not have a clue that it is heading toward an abrupt end. When it does end, they are in shock.” (Knox et al., 2000; p. 323).

Close relationships are more important for women's self-construal, because of this reason they pay more effort to evaluate the past relationships for the improvement of future relationships (Cross & Madsen, 1997). Tashiro and Frazier (2003) argued that women give more weight to the quality of close relationships; for this reason, they pay attention to the relationship-oriented information that foster their growth. Women are better in forecasting the breakup than men (Hill et al, 1976); therefore they start to prepare the breakup earlier; for instance they enhance their social networks (Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). Sorenson et al. (1993) revealed that as a means of recovery, females more than males preferred “confiding in good friends” whereas men were more likely than females started to date with others.

2.3. Initiator Status

One common characteristics of breakup is the initiator status (Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). Initiator status is used to identify the ones who decided to end the relationship (Waller, 2007). Identification of the initiator status is significant to understand the breakup process and reactions to breakup (Hill et al., 1976; Perilloux & Buss, 2008). In general, the decision of the breakup is taken by one of the partner; mutual decision of breakup is rare (Hill et. al, 1976). When the decision of a breakup is not taken mutually, it can be very painful (DeGenova, 2008). Non-initiators often want to maintain the relationship, whereas the situation is reversed for the initiators of the breakup (Perilloux & Buss, 2008). Breaking up a close relationship is not easy. If it is broken, one or both parties decide breaking up the relation is a better alternative rather than staying in the relation (Levinger, 1976). Breakup is not a one-way experience, both of the parties (initiators and non-initiators) experience the breakup and their experiences differ from each other. Both initiators and non-initiators of the breakup experience adaptive problems following the breakup and they select different strategies to cope with those adaptive problems (Hill et al., 1976).

The literature presented contradictory findings related to initiator status. Some studies showed greater negative outcomes for non-initiators (e.g. Hill et al., 1976; Robak & Weitzman, 1998; Sprecher et al., 1998; Perilloux & Buss, 2008; Green, Cample & Davis, 2007; Davis, Shaver, & Vernon, 2003; Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007; Ayduk, Downey, & Kim, 2001) and some studies revealed no difference between initiator status groups (e.g. Simpson, 1987; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003, Sbarra, 2006).

In the study administered by Hill and colleagues (1976), with a university student sample, being the initiator or the non-initiator of the breakup was

found as a considerable factor in regard to the emotional reactions. The participants who were the initiator of the breakup, regardless of the sex, reported less depression and loneliness but more freedom and happiness. Initiators also reported the feeling of guilt following the breakup. For the non-initiator, the decision of the breakup was not a desired outcome so they experienced difficulty in accepting this decision, whereas the situation was reversed for the initiator of the breakup.

Robak and Weitzman (1998) also examined the initiator status with a sample consisted of 148 university students. Feeling of loss was more intense for non-initiators of breakup and they showed more grief responses following the breakup. In addition, non-initiators reported more anger and greater loss of control. They had difficulties in adapting the reality of breakup and they ruminated more than the initiators of the breakup.

Sprecher, and colleagues (1998) administered a survey with a sample consist of 257 young adults who had a breakup experience within twelve months in order to identify the factors that influence the distress level following the breakup. Related to initiator status, they found that non-initiator of the breakup experience more distress than the initiator of the breakup.

In a more recent study, Perilloux and Buss (2008) examined the differences between the initiators and non-initiators regarding the aftermath of romantic relationship breakups with a sample consisted of 193 university students. The results indicated that initiators experience less distress. Before the breakup, initiators started to developed preemptive strategies to reduce the costs of the breakup. Non-initiators experience more distress; their self-esteem decreased and they ruminate more over the past relationship. It was claimed that non-initiators are

regarded as lower in mate value, when their partners take the breakup decision. Power balance is destructed in favor of the initiators. This situation leads non-initiators to attempt to regain their partners in order to overcome the imbalance. When emotional reactions of initiators and non initiators were compared, non-initiators reported more sadness, anger, confusion, shock, and jealousy, whereas initiators reported more happiness but more guilt following the breakup. Women initiators reported sadness, confusion, and scary more than men initiators. Men initiators reported indifference and happiness more than women after the breakup.

With the actualization of breakup, non-initiator received the message of being less desirable than the initiator. This message creates an adaptive problem for non-initiators. In order the solve this problem, non-initiators would firstly need to identify the reasons that cause the breakup, lay off the behaviors that contribute to the causes and make reevaluation about their value as a romantic relationship partner (Perilloux & Buss, 2008). Non-initiators ruminate over the breakup because rumination is a way to find why the relationship ended and why it was not successful (Horwitz & Wakefield, 2007).

Sprecher and her colleagues (1998) asserted that breakup experience has positive outcomes for initiators of breakup because breakup brought the feelings of relief, freedom and happiness for them. Sbarra and Emery (2005) claimed that initiators of breakup feel low level of sadness and longing and initiators have chance to prepare themselves emotionally to the breakup. Lewandowski and Bizzoco (2007) found that initiator of the breakup experienced more relief than non-initiators. For initiators, relief is in the form of rediscovery of the self and increase in positive emotions. Besides these, initiators feel less loss of self than non-initiators.

Sorenson et al. (1993) reported significance differences between initiator groups in terms of account making following the breakup. Mutual deciders and initiators were better at creating a complete account for breakup than non-initiators. In this regard, mutual deciders and initiators feel better following the breakup and they felt higher perceived control over the recovery process.

Hortaçsu and Karancı (1987) investigated the attributional dimensions of the breakup of premarital relationships between heterosexual partners. The sample of the study consisted of 135 Middle East Technical University students. The researchers asserted that when people attribute breakup to external factors such as partners or the conditions and when they were not the initiator of the breakup, they experienced negative emotional states. The result showed that being the initiator of the breakup was a significant variable in predicting emotional reactions following the breakup. The researcher explained this result as giving the decision of breakup provides control over the breakup.

Contrary to many research findings, Simpson (1987) found that initiator status was not associated with intensity and duration of the emotional distress experienced following the breakup. Another study conducted by Tashiro and Frazier (2003) resulted in non-significance of initiator status. They examined the initiator and non-initiator groups regarding both distress and growth following the breakup. They did not take into account the mutual decider group due to the small proportions of mutual breakups. Results indicated that there was no significance difference in distress between the initiators and non- initiators. Similarly, significant difference in levels of growth was not found between the two groups. Sbarra (2006) followed and reported the emotional state of 56 young adults on a daily basis for four month period. He examined the association between the initiator status and emotional recovery. Results

indicated that initiators and non-initiators of the breakup did not significantly differ in terms of anger or sadness onset or recovery. With a sample of 90 university students, Koenig Kellas and Masunov (2003) examined the relationship between adjustment to breakup and initiator status. They found no significant difference between the initiator, non-initiator and mutual decider groups in terms of overall adjustment to breakup.

In regard to the gender difference in initiator status, related literature, showed that generally women were the initiators of breakup. Knox and colleagues (2000) executed a study that examined college students' recovery from a previous love relationship. 410 freshmen and sophomores from a large southeastern university constituted the sample. The results showed that women were significantly more than man initiate to break up the relationships. This finding was similar with other researchers' findings that implied women initiated the breakup more often (e.g. Hill et al., 1976; Robak, & Weitzman, 1998; Sweeney, 2002). In contrast, Saffrey and Ehrenberg (2007) found no gender difference in initiator status.

2.4. Certainty about the Reasons of Breakup

According to the Duck's breakdown model, in the grave-dressing phase of the breakup, people enter in an attributional process; they think about their past relationship and create an acceptable explanation of breakup for both themselves and their social network members (Duck, 2007). After the dissolution of a relationship, people allocate time for understanding why the relationship has ended, this is an expected situation. However, some people spend excessive time in thinking past relationship and ex-partner and this kind of cognition interfere the adjustment period (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007).

Following a breakup, constructing an account is important because it clarifies who was responsible for what (Weiss, 1975). In addition, Tashiro and Frazier (2003) stated that when people do not identify the reasons of decline of a relationship, they can not learn from their past mistakes. In this regard, attributions that they make about why the relationship has ended have impact on their success in correcting problems that may possibly influence the next relationships.

Understanding and creating a meaningful explanation of breakup can be challenging (Koenig Kellas & Masunov, 2003). Weiss (1975) argued that when people cannot create a complete account, perplexity occurs and people cannot overcome the distress following the breakup. People who did not understand the breakup tend to think excessively about the breakup and they ruminate over the relationship (Collins & Clark, 1989). Sorenson et al. (1993) examined the account-making of university students following the breakup. The result indicated that participants who created a complete account about why the relationship ended, felt and accept that the relationship was really over. Furthermore, sense of closure was enhanced. Besides this, those participants had more control over their recovery process following the breakup and they were better at moving on their own life.

In account making process, attributional dimensions are important. In the study conducted by Hortaçsu and Karancı (1987), attributional dimensions of perceived reasons of breakup examined with a Turkish university student sample. Participants were asked to write the list of perceived reasons of the breakup from the most important ones to the least. By considering the participants' writings, twelve different categories of reasons of breakup were formed. These categories were: Incompatibility, living too far apart, partner's personality, lack of love, environmental and familial pressures, academic demands, monotony,

worries related to future, different backgrounds, subjects personality, subject's involvement with another, and partner's involvement with another. Incompatibility, living too far apart and partner's personality were the most common reasons of breakup among the university students in this sample.

Hill et al. (1976) examined the reasons of breakup among university students and the most frequent responses reported by participants were: becoming bored with the relationship, having different interests, woman's desire to be independent and man's desire to be independent. Other reasons were appeared as conflicting sexual attitudes, conflicting marriage ideas, woman's interest in someone else, living too far apart, man's interest in some else, pressure from woman's parents, difference in intelligence and pressure from man's parents.

Sorenson et al. (1993) administered a study with 40 university students and reported the reasons of breakup. Unequal investment in the relationship and desire to date or already dating with someone else were mentioned as breakup reasons by over the half of the sample. Dissimilarity in interests and attitudes were also reported by the half of the sample.

Another study administered by Knox, Gibson, Zusman and Gallmeier (1997) that identified the reasons of breakup of romantic relationships included 185 undergraduate students. With an open-ended question, students were wanted to mention the reasons of breakup; they were allowed to state more than one reason. According to students' responses, the major reason of breakups was someone else. Having differences and different values getting tired of each other, dishonesty, physical separation, disapproval from parents, violence and abuse, alcohol and drugs were the other reasons stated by university students.

When people who broke up their romantic relationship offload the reasons of breakup to external factors, the feeling of uncertainty, bashfulness and guilt may be reduced (Hill et al., 1976). People reported more growth following the breakup if they attributed the reasons of breakup to the environmental factors; in contrast people who attributed the reasons of breakup to themselves reported less growth. Environmental factors are perceived as more controllable (Tashiro & Frazier; 2003).

2.5. Current Relationship Status

When people's belongingness needs are fulfilled through satisfactory relationship, they are reluctant to form additional relationships but when they lose their relationship, they try to form a similar relationship because belongingness need is a strong motivator (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Current relationship status was found as a considerable factor in examining the reactions to breakup by some researchers (e.g. Simpson, 1987; Koenig Kellas & Masunov, 2003).

In the study conducted by Knox and colleagues (2000), one of the most helpful factors in adjusting to breakup was found as 'new romantic relationship partner' following the breakup. Men, more than women, reported that having a new partner was more helpful in adjustment to breakup. Likewise, Sorenson, Russell, Harkness and Harvey (1993) revealed that as a means of recovery, men were more likely than females started to date with others.

Tashiro and Frazier (2003) revealed that presence of a current romantic relationship partner following the breakup was related to less distress. Lewandowski and Bizzoco (2007) explored the impact of current relationship status upon the positive outcomes following the breakup.

Those who have another current romantic relationship partner following the breakup were reported more self-expansion and they were better at rediscovery of the self, thus they grew more. Perilloux and Buss (2008) claimed that in order to decrease the expenses of breakup, initiators develop strategies before the actual breakup. One of the strategies can be infidelity; in this way, they quickly replace their partner and after the anticipated breakup they have a new partner.

Current relationship status has important effect on self-reported loneliness. People who had another current romantic partner after the breakup felt less lonely than those who didn't have (Moller et al., 2003). People with high level of attachment anxiety were less likely to begin a new relationship following a breakup. People who had another current romantic relationship after breakup reported less preoccupation with past relationship and they adjust to breakup better when compared to those not engaged in a new relationship after the breakup (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007).

Contrary to these researches, the result of Simpson's (1987) study revealed that intensity and duration of emotional distress following the breakup were not reliably associated with current relationship status. In other words, presence of another romantic relationship partner following the breakup did not influence the emotional distress level and its duration. Similarly, Koenig Kellas and Masunov (2003) examined the current relationship status in regard to adjustment to relationship dissolution and results indicated no significant difference between the groups who had another current romantic relationship partner and those who did not have in terms of overall adjustment to breakup.

2.6. Perceived Social Support

Social support was defined in many different ways (Tardy, 1985; Kazarian & McCabe, 1991; Fuhrer & Stansfeld, 2002; Hogan, Linden, Najarian, 2002; Moller et al., 2003). In one definition (Cobb, 1976), social support was presented as information which conveys the message of being cared and loved, being esteemed and valued, and belonging to a social network. Sarason and Sarason (1982) stated that social support generally defined as an available assistance under stressful and difficult circumstances. From an interpersonal relationship point of view, support is defined as “an exchange between providers and recipients” (Hogan et al., 2002, p 382). According to the Schumaker and Brownell (1984) it is “an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient” (p.13). Specifically, perceived social support is defined as “an individual’s perceptions of general support or specific supportive behaviors (available or enacted on) from people in their social network, which enhance functioning or may buffer them from adverse outcomes” (Demaray & Malecki, 2002; p. 215). According to Zimet and colleagues (1988) social support was a construct which was multidimensional.

As it was the same for definition, social support was measured in different ways by the researchers (Tardy, 1985; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Zimet et al., 1988; Hendrick, 2004). Tardy (1985) argued that plenty of definitions and measures created multiple interpretation and this led misunderstandings and defective generalization. In order to purify the social support concept, he summarized the five aspects of social support. These aspects were direction, disposition, description/evaluation, content, and network. These aspects were explained briefly as follows:

1. *Direction*: Social support is reciprocal; it is given as well as it is received.
2. *Disposition*: Disposition refers to the availability or utilization of the social support. Availability is the access of available sources in terms of quantity and quality.
3. *Description/Evaluation*: Description is simply that how the meaning of social support was explained. Evaluation is to what degree people are satisfied with their social support system.
4. *Content*: Content refers the form of support but it may differ according to the situation. Within this variability, Tardy chose the types of social support proposed by House (1981, cited in Tardy, 1985, p.189) Emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal support constituted the content aspects.
5. *Network*: Network refers the people who both receive and give social support.

Cohen and Wills (1985) proposed two major models to identify the forms of social support. These two models are the direct effect model and stress-buffering model. The direct effect model defended the idea that abundant social resources have positive effects on people's health outcomes, regardless of whether or not there is a stressful event. Contrary to this, the stress buffering model claims that the amount and quality of the support have impact on health when people experience stress.

Relationships within the social context have recently recognized as a significant factor in the longitudinal course of psychological and psychiatric disturbances. For this reason in recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of studies related to social support (Kazarian and McCabe, 1991). There are a lot of researches that examined association between social support and psychological and

physical health (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Social support reduces job stress (Oginska, 2005; McCalister et. al., 2006); protects against insomnia (Nakata et al., 2004); provide better adjustment and help in coping against cancer (Koopman, Hermanson, Diamond, Angell, & Spiegel, 1998; Luszczynska, Mohamed, & Schwarzer, 2005); prevent negative health outcome (Oginska, 2005); increase job satisfaction (McCalister et al., 2006); influence both students school adjustment and academic achievement (Rosenfeld et al., 2000).

Cobb (1976) examined the effects of social support on health and concluded that social support has a protective role on human health from birth to death. Sinokki and his friends (2009) conducted a study among 3429 Finnish citizen in order to examine the association between social support and depression and anxiety disorders. An association was found between low social support and depression and anxiety disorders. The researchers proposed that people who do not get social support are in high risk of mental disorders. Social support has a leading role in coping with stress. Better coping can be achieved in the presence of more social support. Social support has *stress- buffering effect* which means that social support have positive outcomes on both on health and emotions in stressful times and buffers the negative influences of stressors (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007). Another study which supported the stress-buffering effect of social support was conducted by Cropley and Stephone (2005); they found that social support has moderating effect for the people who reported recent high stress. Dalgard, Bjork and Tambs (1995) also found that support protected individuals from the potentially negative influence of stressful events. Pengilly and Dowd (2000) found that social support moderates the relationship between stress and depression.

There is a tendency to ignore the effect of social environment on breakup of relationships but social environment was a considerable factor for breakups (Felmlee et al., 1990). Related literature pointed out an association between social support and relationship functioning. In addition, social support also linked with emotional functioning (Moller et al., 2003). Breaking off a romantic relationship is the loss of the significant relationship which takes part in social network. In this context, getting social support after the breakup is important and may help to personal growth (Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). Furthermore, in the breakup process, people may need advice and support from their social network (Noller & Feeney, 2006).

For many university students, their romantic relationships are their closest interpersonal relationships (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989). To cope with aftermath of romantic relationship dissolution was difficult especially for university students because they are far away from their family which was a major source of social support for them (Moller et al., 2003). Gilmarin (2005) conducted a study to examine the centrality and cost of romantic relationships with heterosexual partners among female university students. Female students reported that they give priority to their romantic relationships. They reported that they spend more time with their romantic partners than their friends; this decreased the intimacy with their friends. They put their romantic partner in the center and their peer groups surrounded this center. They consciously gave more importance to their romance, although this type of social network created problems for them. Some of the participants reported concerns about having anybody around in case of breakup.

A lot of research revealed that perceived social support ease coping (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007). In order to overcome the negative effects of breakup, Kaczmarek and Backlund (1991) suggest to adolescents to rely

on their social support network members who do not underestimate their pain and accept it. Lewandowski and Bizzoco (2007) argued that social support, as a kind of coping strategy, is more important in adjusting to high quality relationship breakup when compared to low- quality relationship dissolution. Social support has a lesser role for low-quality relationship dissolution.

In contrast to aforementioned studies that found association between social support and breakup, Moller and colleagues (2003) found different result. They examined how perceived social support contribute the psychological functioning of the university students who had experience a romantic relationship breakups within the past year. The result of the study showed that perceived social support did not predict the breakup adjustment but social connectedness was found as a predictive factor for breakup adjustment.

Literature also paid attention for gender differences in obtaining social support. The related literature showed that men received less social support than women (Lu, 1995). Women receive more social support both in their private life and work environment (Sinokki, et. al., 2000). Zimet et al. (1988) found that college women got more social support from their friends and significant others. Similarly, Sorenson et al. (1993) found that friends were the primary emotional social support sources for female university students in the recovery process, whereas males preferred to get social support from a new date partner. Duru (2007) examined the perceived social support of 340 Turkish university students and found that female students had higher perceived social support than male students. Women got more social support while coping with problems in a relationship than did men (Thornton, Pickus, & Aldric, 2005). To get social support women have more indirect strategies such as crying or complaining (Hendrick, 2004). In most cultures, men have

been taught that expression of feeling is not a masculine reaction. Rather than the expression of feeling they were expected to control their feeling with mastery. This expectation hindered them to ask for social support. When men decide to ask social support, their first choice is possibly their intimate partner (Hendrick, 2004). Another study (Fuhrer et al., 2002) had similar findings with Hendrick's study. In this study, women reported that they have more close persons around them and they got greater satisfaction in their personal relationship so they got more social support. Men reported less social support and they pointed out their spouse as the chief source of social support.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In this chapter, method of the present study is explained. The first section presents the overall design of the study. In the second section, research questions are stated. In the third section, operational definitions of both dependent and independent variables are presented. Fourth section explains the sampling method and the demographic information of the participants. In the fifth section, three data collection instruments including demographic data form (see Appendix A), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (see Appendix B) and Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS) (see Appendix C) are explained and also reliability and validity of the MSPSS and FDAS for the sample of the present study are presented. Sixth section explains the pathway followed in the data collection procedure briefly. Statistical analyses conducted in the present study are introduced in the seventh section and finally in the eighth section, limitations of the study are listed.

3.1. Research Design

The current study had a cross-sectional survey design. In cross-sectional survey, data are gathered from a sample that has been drawn from a predetermined population and also data are gathered at just one point in time, although all of the data collection may last from a day to a few weeks or more (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In the present study, data were gathered from students in different department of Middle East Technical University in four weeks.

3.2. Research Questions

The main question of the study is: “What are the possible factors that influence adjustment to breakup of non-marital romantic relationships?”

The sub-questions of the present study can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Is there a significant difference between the initiator of breakup groups in terms of adjustment to breakup?
- 2- Is there a significant difference between the groups who were certain about the reasons of breakup and those who were not in terms of adjustment to breakup?
- 3- Is there a significant difference between the groups who had another romantic relationship after the breakup and those who didn't in term of adjustment to breakup?
- 4- Is there a significant correlation between perceived social support and adjustment to breakup?

3.3. Description of Variables

Independent variables (initiator status, certainty about the reasons of breakup, current relationship status and perceived social support) and dependent variable (adjustment to breakup) of the study are explained in this section.

3.3.1. Independent Variables

Initiator Status: A categorical variable with categories of (1) initiator, (2) non-initiator, (3) mutual deciders,

Certainty about the Reason of Breakup: A categorical variable with categories of (1) certain and (2) not certain.

Current Relationship Status: A categorical variable with categories of (1) present and (2) absent.

Perceived Social Support: The mean total of scores as measured by the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Scale

3.3.2. Dependent Variable

Adjustment to Breakup: The mean total of scores as measured by the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale.

3.4. Data Sources

All university students in Turkey constituted the target population of the study. Accessible population was composed of Middle East Technical University (METU) students. Participants were recruited from different departments of Middle East Technical University by using convenience sampling method. University-age sample was purposefully selected. In early adolescence, romantic relationships are less intense, short in duration and casual (Feiring, 1996) but in university ages, individuals started to form meaningful (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007) and more mature relationship and their relationship contains more trust, support, and stability when compared with early adolescent relationships (Shulman & Kipnis, 2001). In late adulthood romantic relationships generally take the form of marriage which is not in the scope of the present research. For those reasons, university-aged sample was selected to investigate the adjustment to breakup of non-marital romantic relationships.

561 (276 female, 285 male) voluntary subjects who broke off a romantic relationship at least once participated in this study. Participants who have broken off their romantic relationship within the past two years were included in this study. One hundred sixty four of the participants were

excluded from the study and the final sample consisted of 397 participants; 192 (48.4%) female, 205 (51.6%) male who met the criterion. The age range of the participants varied between 18-31 ($M = 21.88$, $SD = 2.16$). Three hundred fifty one (88.4%) of the participants were undergraduate students, 32 (8.1%) of them were master students and 13 (3.3%) of them were doctorate students. One (0.2%) of them did not specify the education level. Participants were from 35 different departments. 170 (42.8%) of them were from Faculty of Engineering; 93 (23.4%) of them were from Faculty of Education; 60 (15.1%) of them were from Faculty of Arts and Sciences; 47 (11.8%) of the participants were from Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences; 3 (0.8%) of them were from Faculty of Architecture and 24 (6%) of them didn't specify their departments.

The average duration of the broken relationship was 13.78 weeks ($SD = 15.31$); an average of 9.16 weeks ($SD = 6.96$) had elapsed after breakup. Participants rated the current importance of the broken relationship on a 7 point scale in which (1) not important to (7) very important. The average importance of the broken relationship was found 4.59. The average participant had dated 3.2 partners. 386 (97.23%) of the participants specified their relationship status as girl/ boy friend; 10 (2.5%) of them were pre-engaged and one (0.3%) of them was engaged. 322 (81.1 % of the participants didn't have hope for the rebeginning of the ended relationship, whereas 74 (18.6%) of the participants had hope. One (0.3 %) of the participants didn't answer this question.

Participants were also asked to choose the reasons of t breakup from ten categories. Ten categories were: (1) personality, (2) presence of another person, (3) infidelity, (4) family reasons, (5) economical reasons, (6) physical distance, (7) sexual, (8) religious, (9) social status discrepancy, and (10) other reasons. Participants are allowed to choose more than

one answer. 246 participants specified only one reason; 94 participants specified two reasons, 38 participants specified three reasons, 19 participants specified more than three reasons. Among the participants who specified one reason, most frequent reasons were “personality” (n= 132), “physical distance” (n= 42), and “presence of another person” (n= 25). Among the participants who specified two reasons, frequent reason pair were “personality-social status discrepancy” (n= 21), and “personality- physical distance” (n= 19). Regardless of the number of the specified reasons, out of 397 participants, 247 of them specified “personality” as a breakup reason; 105 of them specified “physical distance”; and 58 of them specified “presence of another person” as a breakup reason.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

In this section, three different instruments used in this study to collect data are explained. The instruments are: Demographic Data Form (see Appendix A), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; see Appendix B), and Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS; see Appendix C). Features and contents of the instruments are explained and psychometric properties of the scales are presented.

3.5.1. Demographic Data Form

Demographic data form was designed by the researcher in order to collect information about gender, age, education level, department, duration of the relation, elapsed time after breakup, importance of the relationship for the participant, order of the relationship, status of the relationship, who the initiator of the breakup is, whether there is a hope for continuity of the relationship, certainty about the reason of breakup, reasons of breakup and current relationship status.

3.5.2. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988) was developed to measure the perception of the adequacy of social support. It is 12 item Likert-type scale. Items are in the form of statement. Participants rated each statement on a 7-point scale ranging from *absolutely no* to *absolutely yes*. Higher scores indicate higher perceived social support whereas lower scores indicate lower perceived social support. Scale has three subscales; support from family, support from friends, support from significant others. In this study, total score of the scale was used for measuring perceived social support.

For the original version, internal reliability for total score was found as .88; for family, friends and significant others subscale internal reliability were .87, .85, .91 respectively. The test-retest reliability of the scale was reported as .85 (Zimet et al., 1988). Kazarian and McCabe (1991) also examined the psychometric properties of the MSPSS. For the internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha value ranged from .87 to .94 for the subscale and it was found as .87 for the whole scale. In order to assess the concurrent validity, the scores of MSPSS and Social Support Behaviors Scale (SS-B) were correlated and correlation coefficients were found statistically significant. In order to assess the construct validity of MSPSS, its scores was correlated with Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI) and significant correlation was found between them.

Eker and Arkar (1995) adapted MSPSS into Turkish culture and they found similar results for the internal reliability of the scale. Internal reliability was estimated to be .89 for the total score and .85, .88, and .92 for the family, friends, and significant other subscales. Duru (2007) reexamined the psychometric characteristics of the MSPSS in a Turkish

sample and found that internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .87; for family subscale it was .85; for friends subscale it was .88 and for significant other subscale it was .90. The test-retest reliability for the whole scale was .88. The test-retest reliability for the family friends and significant other subscale was .80, .78, .88 respectively. In order to measure the concurrent validity, the researcher examined the correlation with the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Life Satisfaction Scale and he found that the total score of the MSPSS correlated significantly with those scales. Similarly, Başol (2008) also reported high internal reliability through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, with .92 for the whole scale and .97 for family subscale, .90 for the friends subscale and .92 for the significant other subscale. Başol (2008) examined the factor structure of the MSPSS through an Exploratory Factor Analysis by SPSS and a Confirmatory Factor Analysis by LISREL and found evidence for the validity of the MSPSS.

Related literature showed that MSPSS is a reliable and valid instrument. Besides its high validity and reliability, it is brief, easy to read and can be applied in a short time. These properties make MSPSS a good research instrument (Zimet et al., 1988; Eker & Arkar, 1995).

3.5.2.1. The Validity and Reliability of the MSPSS for the Sample of the Present Study

In the present study, factor structure of the MSPSS was examined through Exploratory Factor Analysis by SPSS 15.0 and three factors that explained the 78.64 % of the total variance of the scale were found. First factor was named as *perceived support from family* (e.g., "I can talk to my family (mother, father, siblings) about my problems"); second factor was named *perceived support from friends* (e.g., "I have friends whom I can share my happiness and sadness") and *perceived support from*

significant others (e.g., “Outside of my family and friends, there is a person (e.g. lover, relative, neighbor, doctor) who gives importance to my feelings”) as in original version. Each factor included four items. These results were parallel with the previous research findings, so MSPSS has construct validity for this study.

To test the internal reliability of the MSPSS for the present study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated; it was found as .88 for the whole scale. For the family, friends and significant others subscales, reliability coefficients were found as .86, .90 and .95 respectively. High internal reliability coefficients indicated the reliability of the MSPSS scores for the present sample of this study.

3.5.3. Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS)

Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale was developed to measure emotional/social adjustment to divorce and breakup by Fisher (1976). In the present study, it was used to measure general adjustment to breakup of non-marital romantic relationships. In order to prevent confusion, the scale was presented to participants as Fisher Breakup Adjustment Scale. The FDAS is 100 item Likert-type scale. Items are in the form of statement and statements are rated on a 5-point scale ranging from *almost always* (1) to *almost never* (5). A high score indicates poor breakup adjustment, whereas a low score indicates high breakup adjustment. For divorced sample, six subscales were identified; these were: (1) self-worth, (2) disentanglement from the relationship, (3) anger, (4) grief, (5) trust and intimacy, and (6) social self-worth (Buehler, 1990). For non-married student sample, Koenig Kellas and Masunov (2003) identified four sub-dimensions, these were: (1) emotional disentanglement, (2) grief work, (3) self-worth and (4) anger. In the present study, total score of the scale was used for measuring

emotional/social adjustment to breakup of non-marital romantic relationship.

In order to test the validity of the FDAS, it was correlated with Tennessee Self Concept Scale and Personality Orientation Inventory respectively and significant correlations between the measurements supported the validity of the FDAS. A Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficient of .92 has been calculated for the scale. Relevant analyses showed that original version of FDAS was a reliable and valid instrument (Fisher, 1976).

FDAS was adapted to Turkish culture by Yılmaz and Fışıloğlu (2006). The Cronbach's Alpha value for its Turkish version was found .97 for its reliability (Yılmaz & Fışıloğlu, 2006). Five subscales were identified in Turkish version of the scale in a divorced sample; these were (1) grief reaction, (2) disentanglement from relationship, (3) self-worth, (4) anger, and (5) trust and intimacy (Yılmaz & Fışıloğlu, 2006). For the whole scale Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .97. In order to assess concurrent validity, total scores of FDAS was correlated with Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), MSPSS and General Life Satisfaction (GLS) scores and significant correlations were found ($r = .72$, $r = -.47$, $r = -.59$, $p < .001$).

The evidences found in the related literature supported the reliability and validity of the FDAS. Besides its high reliability and validity, FDAS displays the multidimensional nature of breakup adjustment (Fisher, 1976) and can be applicable for non-married populations, (Hensley, 1996). These features of FDAS were found suitable for measuring the adjustment to breakup in the present sample.

3.5.3.1. The Validity and Reliability of the FDAS for the Sample of the Present Study

Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed in order to test the construct validity and factor structure of the scale. The results for FDAS revealed four factor structures for the present sample. In the present study, first factor was named grief (e.g. “I feel emptiness”; “I feel like crying because I feel so sad”) and included thirty-eight items; the second factor was named emotional disentanglement (e.g. “I become upset when I think about my love partner dating someone else”; “I have feelings of romantic love for my former love partner”) and included twenty-four items; the third factor was named self-worth (e.g., “People want to have a love relationship with me because I feel like a lovable person”; “I feel adequate as a love partner”), and included twenty-seven items; the fourth factor was named anger (e.g., I hope my former love partner is feeling as much or more emotional pain than I am”; I become angry at my former love partner easily”) and included eleven items. These four factors explained the 40.64 % of the total variance of the scale. Four factor structures were similar with Koenig Kellas and Masunov (2003) factor analysis which was conducted for the sample that included non-married student participants.

Internal reliability of the FDAS was assessed by measuring Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. For the whole scale score, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was .97. Internal reliability coefficients for the grief, emotional disentanglement, self-worth and anger sub-dimensions were found .93, .94, .90 and .97 respectively. These results supported the validity and reliability of the FDAS for the sample of the present study.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

In order to confirm ethic principles in conducting research, necessary forms were prepared for Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University. The committee member examined the study and confirmed that this study considered all ethical consideration. After taking the approval of the committee, the researcher took permission from the instructor of the each class and made a weekly data collection program. By following the program, all data were gathered by the researcher in four weeks. In each class, the purpose and the criterion of the study was explained before distributing the data gathering forms. Although the exact criterion was experiencing a breakup of romantic relationship with an opposite sex partner within two years, the criterion was expressed as having at least one experience of breakup of a romantic relationship with opposite sex partner in order to increase participation level to the study. The participation of the study was based on the willingness of students. In order to increase the comfort level of participants in answering the questions, anonymity was emphasized and informed consent (see Appendix D) forms were distributed. After gathering the informed consents, data gathering forms were administered to students during regular class hours. The researcher asked them to complete the items according to their most recent breakup and all questions were answered keeping the same relationship in mind. The administration took about 20-25 minutes.

3.7. Data Analysis

First of all, before conducting the main analysis, data collected from participants who did not meet the research criterion (experience a breakup within the past two years) were excluded; out of 561 data entries 164 of them were removed and 397 of them were taken into account in

the analysis process. Prior to analysis, data were controlled in order to identify the erroneous entries. Minimum and maximum values, frequencies of major variables (initiator status, certainty about the reasons of breakup, current relationship status, perceived social support and adjustment to breakup) were skimmed and scores which were not in the range of possible values were corrected. Missing values were computed and found that missing values were not greater than 5%. According to Tabachnick and Field (2007), 5% or less missing values do not lead serious errors and produce similar results. For this reason, missing value analysis was not performed. Secondly, Exploratory Factor Analyses were performed and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for both MSPSS and FDAS in order to assess the reliability and validity of these scales for the sample of the present study. Thirdly, assumption checks were done for each relevant analysis. Finally, in the main analysis, to determine group differences among initiator status (initiators, non-initiators and mutual decider) in regard to adjustment to breakup of a romantic relationship, One-way ANOVA was conducted. To determine the difference between the group who were certain about the reasons of breakup and those who were not regarding the adjustment to breakup, t-test analysis was performed. Similarly, t-test was conducted to determine the difference between the groups who had another love relationship after the breakup and those who did not have in regard to adjustment to breakup. Lastly, bivariate correlation was conducted in order to examine the relation between adjustment to breakup and perceived social support of participants. All of the analyses were performed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0. In order to protect against a Type 1 error that arised in repeated tests, Bonferroni correction to the significance level was applied and alpha level was determined as .017 (.05/3).

3.8. Limitations

One of the limitations of the present study is sample selection procedure. Participant recruited from Middle East Technical University by using convenient sampling method so the sample was not randomly selected. Therefore, generalization of the results was limited.

Secondly, in this study, only self-report measures were used. There are different kinds of ways in gaining knowledge about relationships. Self-report approaches, observational approaches, archival approaches can be used (Hendrick, 2004).

Finally, cross-sectional survey design can be one of the limitations of this study. In this study, data were collected at one point in time however; adjustment is a process that spans over time (Plummer & Koch-Hattem, 1986). Longitudinal studies may reveal more comprehensive information related to adjustment periods and also possible factors that influence adjustment to breakup.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, results of the study are presented in three sections. The first section includes descriptive statistics of major study variables. The second section explains assumption checks for statistical analyses. The third session presents the results of the main analyses.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics for the Major Study Variables

Out of 561 participants 397 (192 female, 205 male) of them who broke up their relationship within past two years were taken into account in statistical analyses. 164 of them who broke up their relationship more than two years were excluded from the study. 184 of the (46.3%) participants initiated the breakup by themselves. 115 (29%) of the participants initiated to breakup with their partners. 97 (24.4%) of the participants reported that their partner initiated to breakup. 1 (0.3%) of the participants did not answer the question related to initiator of the breakup. 270 (68%) of the participants were certain about the reasons of the breakup. 125 (31.5 %) of the participants were not certain about the reasons of the breakup. 2 (0.5%) of the participants did not answer the question related to certainty about the reasons of breakup. 149 (37.5%) of the participants had another current romantic relationship. 248 (62.5%) of the participants did not have another current romantic relationship. The mean value for Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support was 61.03 with a standard deviation of 14.51. Minimum and maximum score of the scale were 12 and 84 respectively. The mean for Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale was calculated as 212.79 ($SD = 56.53$) and this value represented adjustment to breakup variable. Minimum and maximum

score of the scale were 108 and 376 respectively. In the preliminary analysis, gender difference in terms of breakup adjustment was assessed with a sample consisted of 397 participants (192 female, 205 male). It was found that there was no significant difference between females ($M = 213.60$, $SD = 59.01$) and males ($M = 212.04$, $SD = 54.25$) in terms of adjustment to breakup. Therefore, in further analysis, gender was not considered.

4.2. Assumption Checks for the Statistical Analyses

In this section, assumptions of One-way ANOVA and assumptions of independent t-test were checked. According to the rule of thumb sample size was calculated as $N \geq 104 + m$ (where m represented the number of independent variables) for testing individual predictors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Green & Salkind, 2008). This study had 4 independent variables so the sample size should be as $N \geq 108$. In this study sample size was 397 and this was appropriate for both one-way ANOVA and independent t-test analyses.

4.2.1. Assumption Checks for One-way ANOVA

To determine group differences among initiator status (initiators, non-initiators and mutual deciders) in regard to adjustment to breakup of a romantic relationship, One-way ANOVA was conducted. Prior to the analysis, assumptions (independent observation, normality and homogeneity of variance) of One-way ANOVA were checked.

Independent Observation: The data gathering forms were administered to volunteer participants by the researcher in regular class hours and each participant filled the forms by their own. Therefore, it was assumed that independent observation assumption was not violated.

Normality: For normality assumptions, univariate normality was checked by histograms, skewness and kurtosis values. Histograms for the initiator groups appeared to be normally distributed (see Appendix E; Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2, & Figure 4.3).

Skewness values for mutually decided, initiator, and non-initiator groups were .38, .79, .43; kurtosis values were -.49, .28, -.54, respectively. As it was mentioned skewness values for the variables of initiator status were in the range of .38 to .79 and kurtosis values were in the range of -.54 to .28. So, both skewness and kurtosis values were in the range of -3 and + 3 and this is an indicator of normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Homogeneity of Variance: Homogeneity of variance assumption was checked by Test of Homogeneity of Variances. According to the Levene's test results p was found as .17 ($p > .017$) and it was a non-significant value. Therefore, homogeneity of equal variances assumption was not violated.

4.2.2 Assumption Checks for T-test

The first t-test was conducted in order to determine the difference between the group who were certain about the reasons of breakup and those who were not regarding the adjustment to breakup and second t-test was conducted to determine the difference between the groups who had another romantic relationship after the breakup and those who did not have in regard to adjustment to breakup. Independent observation and normality were the assumptions that were checked for independent t-tests.

Independent Observation: As it was explained in section 4.2.1, independent observation assumption was not violated.

Normality: Histograms, skewness and kurtosis values were examined in order to check the univariate normality. Histograms for the groups of certainty about the reasons of breakup (see Appendix E; Figure 4.4 & Figure 4.5) and histograms for the groups of current relationship status (see Appendix E; Figure 4.6 & Figure 4.7) distributed normally.

Skewness values for the group who were certain about the reasons of breakup .79 and it was .25 for who were not certain. For the group who had a current relationship following the breakup, skewness value was .67 and for those who did not have, it was .48. Kurtosis values for the groups who were certain and not certain about the reasons of breakup were .39 and -.62 respectively and for the groups who have current another current relationship and those who did not were -.44 and -.27, orderly. Skewness values for the variables of certainty about the reasons of breakup and current relationship status were in the range of .25 to .79. In addition, kurtosis values were in the range of -.62 to .39. To conclude, normality assumption was not violated; due to the fact that skewness and kurtosis values were in the range of -3 and +3 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

4.3. Results of the Statistical Analysis

In this section, results of the one-way ANOVA, independent t-test and correlation analyses were presented.

4.3.1. Results of One-way ANOVA

One-way ANOVA was performed to search for a difference between initiator status groups in terms of adjustment to breakup. In this analysis, initiator status was the independent variable with three levels (initiator,

non-initiator, mutually initiated). Adjustment to breakup was the dependent variable. The results of One-way ANOVA were summarized in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
One-way Analysis of Variance Summary for Initiator Status

| Source | <i>Df</i> | SS | <i>MS</i> | <i>F</i> |
|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|
| Between groups | 2 | 40688.07 | 20344.03 | 8,33* |
| Within groups | 393 | 959731.91 | 2442.06 | |
| Total | 395 | 1000419.99 | | |

* $p < .017$

As can be seen from Table 4.1, results showed that there was a significant difference between initiator of breakup groups in terms of adjustment to breakup, $F(2, 393) = 8.33, p < .017, \eta^2 = .20$. According to standard proposed by Cohen (1992), this was a small effect size. In order to examine the difference between initiator groups (initiator, non-initiator, mutually initiated), LSD post-hoc test was conducted. The test resulted in significant difference ($p < .017$) between the non-initiator group ($M = 232.68; SD = 61.25$) and initiator group ($M = 203.70; SD = 53.18$); the non-initiator group ($M = 232.68; SD = 61.25$) and mutually decided group ($M = 209.94; SD = 53.65$). In addition, there was a non significant difference ($p > .017$) between the mutually decided ($M = 209.94; SD = 53.65$) and initiator groups ($M = 203.70; SD = 53.18$).

4.3.2. Results of T-tests

In order to examine whether there was a difference between participants who were certain about the reason of breakup and those who were not in terms of adjustment to breakup, researcher performed independent samples t-tests. In this analysis, the dependent variable was adjustment to breakup and independent variable was certainty about the reason of breakup. In addition, independent variable had two levels as certain and not certain about the reason of breakup. Results indicated that there was a significant difference between participants who were certain about the reason of breakup ($M = 201.09$; $SD = 54.45$) and those who were not ($M = 238.07$; $SD = 57.35$) in terms of adjustment to breakup, $t(393) = -6.22$, $p < .017$, $\eta^2 = .14$. 14 % of variance in adjustment to breakup was explained by certainty about the reason of breakup and this indicated a small effect size (Cohen, 1992).

Another independent samples t-test analysis was conducted to find out difference between participants who had another current love relationship and those who didn't have in terms of adjustment to breakup. The dependent variable of the analysis was adjustment to breakup. Independent variable was current relationship status. Independent variable had two levels as present and absent. The t-test result showed that there was a significant difference between participants who had another current love relationship ($M = 192.28$; $SD = 47.58$) and those who didn't have ($M = 225.11$; $SD = 57.97$) in terms of adjustment to breakup, $t(395) = -5.90$, $p < .017$, $\eta^2 = .28$. This was a medium effect size according to Cohen's (1992) effect size criteria.

4.3.3. Result of Correlation

In order to examine the relation between adjustment to breakup and perceived social support of participants, bivariate correlation was conducted. The result indicated that there was a significant correlation ($r = -.31, p < .017$) between adjustment to breakup and perceived social support. Negative correlation meant that while adjustment to breakup score decreases, perceived social support score increases. Low adjustment to breakup score showed higher adjustment. Therefore there was a positive correlation between adjustment to breakup and perceived social support.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to identify the possible factors that affect adjustment to breakup of non-married young adults' romantic relationships. Initiator status, certainty about the reasons of breakup, current relationship status and perceived social support were examined regarding the adjustment to breakup with a sample of 397 Middle East Technical University students. This chapter includes three sections; in the first section, present research findings are summarized and discussed and in the second section implications of the study are listed and in the third section, recommendations for future researches are presented.

5.1. Discussion of the Results

In this section, the findings related to major study variables are summarized and discussed.

5.1.1. Initiator Status and Adjustment to Breakup

Results indicated that there were significant differences between the non-initiator and initiator groups; and also between non-initiator and mutually initiated groups. However, there was no significant difference between initiators and mutually initiated group. Mutually initiated group and initiator group adjusted to breakup better than the non-initiator group. Initiator group and mutually initiated group did not differ in terms of adjustment to breakup.

In contrast to some studies (Simpson, 1987; Simpson, 1990; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003; Sbarra, 2006) that did not find difference between the initiator and non-initiator groups in terms of aftermath of the breakup, there were a lot of studies (Hill et al., 1976; Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987; Sprecher, 1994; Robak & Weitzman, 1998; Sprecher et al., 1998; Ayduk et al., 2001; Davis et al., 2003; Sbarra & Emery, 2005; Green et al., 2007; Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007; Perilloux & Buss, 2008) that showed negative outcomes were greater for the non-initiators, so low adjustment level of the non-initiators was an expected outcome. The result of the present study was consistent with those studies.

Several reasons might lead the poor adjustment of the non initiators. First of all, the breakup decision did not take by the non-initiators, so breakup was not a desired outcome for them. Therefore, they have difficulties in accepting the breakup (Hillet al., 1976). Without accepting the breakup, adjustment process can not begin. Having a sense of control over the breakup is another dimension in adjustment to breakup (Waller, 2007). Due to the fact that the breakup decision was not taken by the non-initiators, they might feel loss of control over the breakup which may lead to poor adjustment. In addition, in a breakup, an important relationship dissolved and both sides of the breakup experience feeling of loss but feeling of loss was more intense for non-initiators and they showed more grief responses after the breakup (Robak & Weitzman, 1998). Adjustment to breakup was associated with grief responses; when grief responses increase, adjustment to breakup level decreases (Fisher, 1976). Lower adjustment of non-initiators might associate with their grief responses. Furthermore, self-worth, a part of breakup adjustment, of the non-initiators was destructed. Non-initiators become more depressive after the breakup because perceived message of rejection can lead the feeling of worthlessness (Ayduk et al., 2001); and their self-esteem

decreases (Perilloux & Buss, 2008). Decrease in self-worth was resulted in lower adjustment to breakup.

5.1.2. Certainty about the Reasons of Breakup and Adjustment to Breakup

Results indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups that were certain about the reasons of breakup and those who were not certain, in regard to breakup adjustment. Those who were certain about the reasons of breakup adjusted to breakup more than those who were not certain about the reasons of breakup.

More evidence is needed to support this finding because a study that directly examined the association between certainty about the reasons of breakup and adjustment to breakup was not found in the reviewed literature. Although there was not any empirical research related to this topic directly, some researchers proposed ideas that were parallel with the present finding. Tashiro and Frazier (2003) implied that when individuals failed to identify the reasons of the decline of the relationship, problems occurred. In addition, people who did not understand the reasons of the breakup tended to ruminate over the relationship (Collins & Clark, 1989). Saffrey and Ehrenberg (2007) proposed that hypothetical thinking about in what way things might have been different in the relationship do not allow people to adjust to the breakup.

Moreover, the importance of account-making was emphasized by researchers. (e.g. Weiss, 1975; Koenig Kellas & Masunov, 2003). In account making process answering why the relationship ended is necessary, without getting a clear answer, the account can not be completed. Incomplete accounts creates confusion and do not allow people to overcome distress (Weiss, 1975). In addition, incomplete

accounts following the breakup make people to feel that they have less control over their recovery process (Sorenson et al., 1993).

People who were not certain about the reasons of breakup did not have a clear picture of the breakup process in their mind. Without knowing the exact reasons, they might have difficulties in developing strategies to cope with the aftermath of the breakup. Furthermore, one of the reasons of poor adjustment of those who were not certain about the reasons of breakup might be the fact that uncertainty may take the form of "*unfinished business*". "Unfinished business includes unexpressed feelings -such as resentment, hate, pain, hurt, anxiety, guilt, and grief- and events and memories that linger in the background and clamor for completion" (Corey, 2000; p. 309). Unfinished business interfere the daily effective functioning (Corey, 2000). It may also block the adjustment to breakup.

5.1.3. Current Relationship Status and Adjustment to Breakup

Results revealed that there was a significant difference between those who had another romantic relationship following the breakup and those who did not have in regard to adjustment to breakup. Participants who did not have another romantic relationship partner following the breakup got higher scores from the adjustment to breakup scale which indicated lower adjustment. In other words, those who had another romantic relationship following the breakup showed greater adjustment to breakup.

This finding was in contrast with the Simpson's (1987) research findings which revealed no difference in emotional distress level between the ones who have another romantic relationship and those who did not have. Similarly, Koenig Kellas and Masunov (2003) found that adaptation to breakup did not differ according the current relationship status.

On the other hand, literature also provided a lot of supportive research findings which confirm the present research finding. One of the most helpful factors in adjusting to breakup was reported as 'new romantic relationship' in the study conducted by Knox and colleagues (2000). Similarly, Russell et al. (1993) found it as a means of recovery following the breakup. Presence of another romantic partner reduces the distress (Tashiro & Frazier, 2003); helps in enhancing positive outcomes such as self-expansion (Lewandowski & Bizzoco, 2007); decreases the feeling of loneliness (Moller et al., 2003); lessens the rumination over the past relationship (Saffrey & Ehrenberg, 2007).

The aforementioned studies showed that presence of another romantic relationship partner was a helpful factor in adjustment to breakup. It eases to overcome the negative effects of breakup. With the dissolution of a romantic relationship, fulfillment of the belongingness need is impeded (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Feeling of loss, emptiness and loneliness bother the people after the breakup. They might choose to construct a new relationship for both fulfilling belongingness need and overcome these negative feelings. Another reason might be that presence of another romantic partner enhances the perceived social support which was reduced with the dissolution of the relationship.

5.1.4. Perceived Social Support and Adjustment to Breakup

In the present study, correlation between the perceived social support and adjustment to breakup was examined and the analysis resulted in a significant correlation between the two variables. Adjustment to breakup was positively correlated with perceived social support. When perceived social support increased, participants' adjustment level also increased.

Although the number of studies related to social support start to increase (Kazarian & McCabe, 1991), the literature is not rich in terms of research related to social support in regard to adjustment to breakup of non-married romantic relationships. More direct evidence is needed to confirm the positive effects of social support on breakup adjustment among young adults. But still, literature presented researches that support the findings of the present study. Breakup is one of the most heavy and painful experience (Simpson, 1987; La Saule & Kagan, 2003; Hendrick, 2004). Depression (Sprecher, 1994), distress (Simpson, 1987) are the symptoms that are seen following the breakup. Social support reduces depression (Sinokki et al., 2009); helps to decrease distress level (Dalgard et al., 1995; Cropley & Stephone, 2005; Sinokki et al., 2009); eases coping (Schwarzer & Knoll, 2007).

In addition, people who feel that they are supported take the message of being cared, loved, valued and esteemed by others (Cobb, 1976). These messages contributed to the self-worth. Due to the fact that breakup adjustment has self-worth and social self-worth dimensions (Fisher, 1976), it is expected that social support enhance the breakup adjustment.

5.2. Implications of the Findings

The results of this study might be beneficial for professions in psychology field. University counselors, school counselors, psychologist, psychiatrists, couple counselors would benefit from receiving information on factors that influence breakup adjustment, when they have a client with difficulties in adjusting to breakup. In addition, the study might be beneficial for young adults who have problems in adjusting to breakup.

Therapeutic interventions can focus on the actual problem by ascertaining the factors that lead maladaptive behaviors (Ayduk et al.,

2001). In this regard, identifying the factors that complicated breakup adjustment is important in order to find out the actual problem. By identifying important factors, professionals might develop more effective therapeutic intervention and also they may provide early intervention before their client develops unhealthy coping strategies.

This study might have implication especially for counseling centers of universities. The members of counseling services in universities need to know both the stressors experienced by university students and the impact of those stressors on the students. Contrary to this need, there is limited information related to specific problems that were experienced by university students (Frazier & Schauben, 1994). University students' relationship difficulties and problems are most common reason of seeking help from the counseling services (McCarty et al., 1997); for this reason, the results of this study have beneficial implications for university counselors.

In addition, young adults developed strategies to cope with aftermath of breakup but some of them were unhealthy and injurious such as using alcohol and drug, excessive shopping etc. (Perilloux & Buss, 2008). If they are informed about the breakup adjustment, they may ask for help and developed more healthy coping strategies.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Researches

Recommendations for future researches are listed below:

- 1) This study can be replicated with different samples of young adults in Turkey for the sake of the generalizing results.
- 2) This study can be extended with a qualitative examination.
- 3) Because adjustment is a process that spans over time (Plummer & Koch-Hattem, 1986), longitudinal studies is recommended for

providing more comprehensive information related to breakup adjustment.

- 4) In this study, findings are only based on one side of the breakup. It is recommended to work with couples in order to combine the two sides of the breakup.
- 5) Although there are a lot of studies examined the association between social support and depression, stress, coping strategies and psychological disorders, there is a scarcity in researches that directly examined the breakup adjustment and social support. In this study, the association between the breakup and general perceived social support was examined. For further researches, it is recommended to examine the perceived social support from different sources such as family, friends and etc. in details.
- 6) The impact of uncertainty of breakup reasons on the breakup adjustment is an undiscovered area. This study only showed being certain about the reasons of breakup led to difference in terms of adaptation but what causes this uncertainty remained as a vague point. In this sense, factors such as type of reasons, personal traits of the both sides, environmental conditions in which breakup occur, suddenness of the breakup might be examined in regard to effects of uncertainty on breakup adjustment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAFİK VERİ FORMU

Sayın Katılımcı,

Duygusal ilişkiler başlar, belli bir süre devam eder ve bazıları da biter. Biten her duygusal ilişki kişinin dengesini değiştirir. Bireyler bu dengeyi tekrar bir uyum sürecinde sağlarlar. Bu araştırmanın amacı, karşı cinsle olan duygusal ilişkilerin bitiminden sonra yaşanan uyum sürecini etkileyebilecek faktörleri belirlemektir. Sizden istenen sorulara içten ve eksiksiz yanıtlar vermenizdir. Bilgi toplama formu 3 bölümden oluşup; birinci bölümde kişisel bilgilerinize, ikinci bölümde algıladığınız sosyal desteğe, üçüncü bölümde de ayrılık sonrası sürece ilişkin ifadeler içermektedir. Kişisel bilgileriniz kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır; kimliğinizi belirtecek bilgiler vermeniz istenmemektedir.

BÖLÜM I: KİŞİSEL BİLGİLER

1. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın Erkek
2. Yaşınız: ____
3. Eğitiminiz: Lisans Yüksek Lisans Doktora
4. Bölümünüz:
5. Biten ilişkinizin süresi _____ (Ay olarak belirtiniz.)
6. İlişkinizin bitiminden sonra geçen süre ____ (Ay olarak belirtiniz.)
7. Biten ilişkinizin sizin için önemi
Hiç önemli değil 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Çok
önemli
8. Biten ilişkinin kaçınıcı ilişkiniz olduğu _____
9. Biten ilişkinizin durumu
 Kız/erkek arkadaş Sözlü Nişanlı

10. Ayrılma kararını kimin verdiđi
 Birlikte Ben O
11. Biten ilişkinizin, yeniden başlayabileceđi umudu
 Var Yok
12. Biten ilişkinizin neden bittiđi konusunda net olmanız
 Net Net deđil
13. İlişkinin bitme nedeni (Birden fazla nedeni işaretleyebilirsiniz)
 Kişilik
 Başka birinin varlığı
 Aldatılma
 Ailevi
 Ekonomik
 Fiziksel uzaklık (Farklı şehirlerde ya da ülkelerde bulunma)
 Cinsel
 Dini
 Sosyal statü uyumsuzluğu
 Diğer (Belirtiniz) _____
14. Şu an başka biriyle yaşadığınız duygusal bir ilişki
 Var Yok

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM MULTIDIMENSIONAL SCALE OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT (MSPSS)

Aşağıda 12 cümle ve her bir cümlenin altında da cevaplarınızı işaretlemeniz için 1'den 7'ye kadar rakamlar verilmiştir. Her cümlede söylenenin **sizin için ne kadar çok doğru olduğunu veya olmadığını** belirtmek için cümlenin altındaki rakamlardan yalnız bir tanesini daire içine alarak işaretleyiniz. Bu şekilde **12 cümlenin her birine bir işaret** koyarak cevaplarınızı veriniz; **hiçbir cümleyi cevapsız bırakmayınız**. Sizce doğruya en yakın olan rakamı işaretleyiniz.

1. Ailem (örneğin annem, babam, kardeşlerim) bana gerçekten yardımcı olmaya çalışır.

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

3. Arkadaşlarım bana gerçekten yardımcı olmaya çalışırlar.

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

5. Ailem ve arkadaşlarım dışında olan ve ihtiyacım olduğunda yanımda olan bir insan (örneğin flört, nişanlı, sözlü, akraba, komşu, doktor) var.

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

7. Sorunlarımı ailemle (örneğin annemle, babamla, kardeşlerimle) konuşabilirim.

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

9. Ailem ve arkadaşlarım dışında olan ve duygularıma önem veren bir insan (örneğin flört, nişanlı, sözlü, akraba, komşu, doktor) var.

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE ITEMS FROM FISHER DIVORCE ADJUSTMENT SCALE

Aşağıdaki ifadeler, **karşı cinsle yaşanan duygusal ilişkilerinin bitiminde** sıklıkla ortaya çıkabilecek duygu, düşünce ve davranışları yansıtmaktadır. Bitirdiğiniz ilişkinizi düşünerek, her ifadeyi dikkatlice okuyunuz ve bu ifadenin ne sıklıkta sizin **şimdiki duygu, düşünce ve davranışlarınıza uygun olduğunu** yandaki bölmeye işaretleyiniz. Lütfen, her ifade için sadece bir seçeneği işaretlemeye özen gösteriniz.

Yanıtlarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendiriniz:

Bu ifadeler ne sıklıkta sizin şimdiki durumunuza uygun?

1) Her Zaman 2) Genellikle 3) Bazen 4) Nadiren 5) Hiçbir Zaman

3. Eski kız/erkek arkadaşımı düşündüğüm zaman çok üzülüyorum.

6. Kendim olmaktan hoşnudum.

7. Öyle üzgünüm ki kendimi ağlayacakmışım gibi hissediyorum.

19. Vücudumda değiştirmek istediğim pek çok şey var.

35. Derin ve anlamlı başka bir ilişki kurabileceğime inanıyorum.

37. Eski kız/erkek arkadaşıma çok kolay öfkeleniyorum.

46. Yeni bir ilişki kurmayı düşünmek bile beni rahatsız ediyor.

49. Eğer denersek ilişkimizi yeniden başlatabileceğime inanıyorum

50. İçimde bir boşluk hissediyorum.

53. Beni incittiği için eski kız/erkek arkadaşıyla ödeşmek istiyorum.

74. Başka birine duygusal olarak yakınlaşmaya korkuyorum.

76. İlişkimizin bittiğine inanmıyorum.

78. Kendime, yeteri kadar güveniyorum.

91. İlişkimizin neden yürümediğini anlıyorum.

93. Eski kız/erkek arkadaşımın yaptıklarına kızıyorum.

APPENDIX D

GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu çalışma, ODTÜ Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü öğretim üyesi Prof. Dr. Ayhan Demir danışmanlığında yüksek lisans öğrencisi K. Funda Barutçu tarafından yürütülmektedir. Çalışmanın amacı, duygusal ilişkilerin bitiminde yaşanan uyum sürecini etkileyebilecek faktörleri belirlemektir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamıyla gönüllülük temelindedir. Ankette, sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamen gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir; elde edilecek bilgiler bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılacaktır. Anket, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda anketi uygulayan kişiye, anketi tamamlamadığınızı söylemek yeterli olacaktır. Anket sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü öğretim üyelerinden Prof. Dr. Ayhan Demir (Tel: 210 xx xx; E-posta: xxxxxxx@metu.edu.tr) ya da Arş Gör. K. Funda Barutçu (Tel: 210 xx xx; E-posta: xxxxxxx@gmail.com) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Bu alıřmaya tamamen gnll olarak katılıyorum ve istediđim zaman yarıda kesip ıkabileceđimi biliyorum. Verdiđim bilgilerin bilimsel amalı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

Ad Soyad:

İmza:

APPENDIX E

HISTOGRAMS

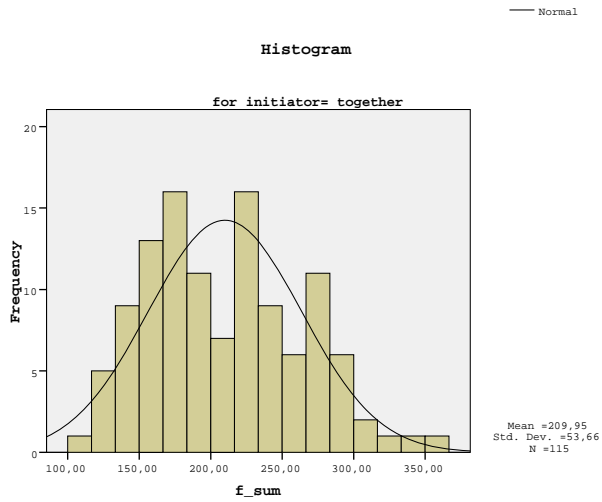


Figure 4.1 Histogram for the group who initiate the breakup together with their partner

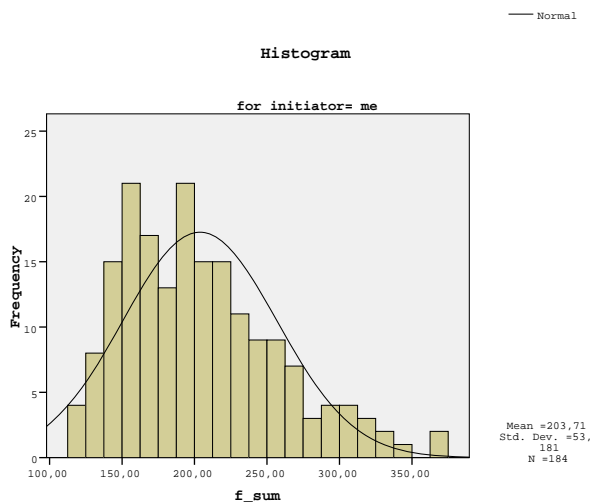


Figure 4.2 Histogram for the group who initiate the breakup by themselves

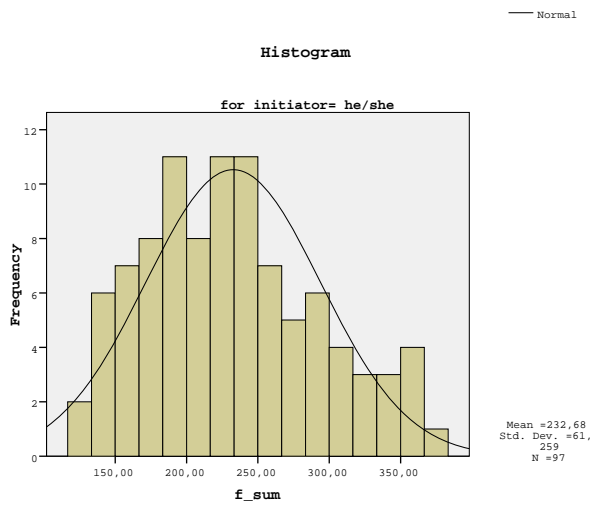


Figure 4.3 Histograms for the group whose partners initiate to breakup

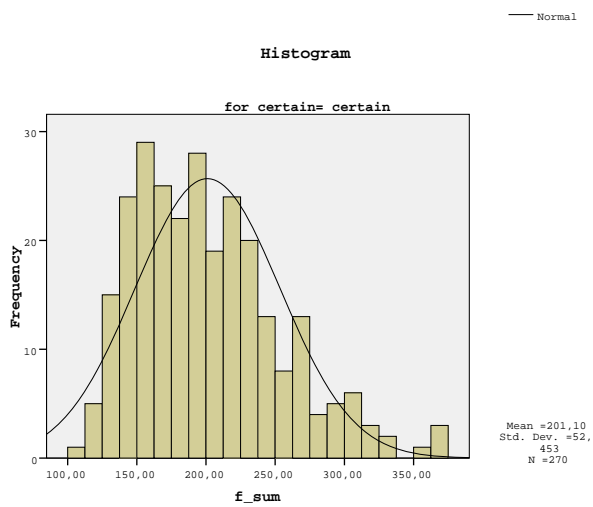


Figure 4.4 Histogram for the group who were certain about the reasons of breakup

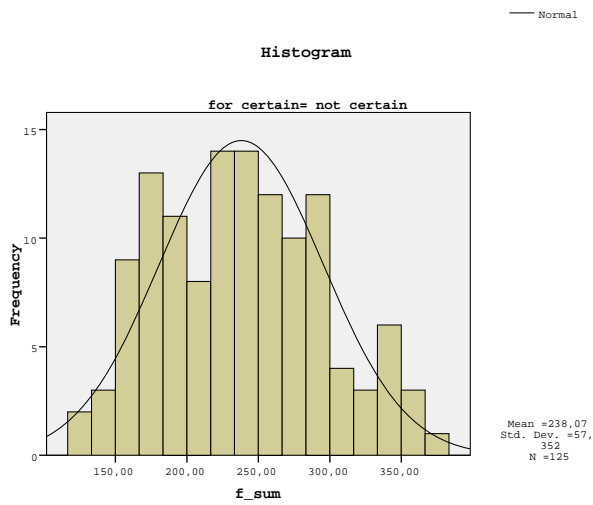


Figure 4.5 Histograms for the group who were not certain about the reasons of breakup

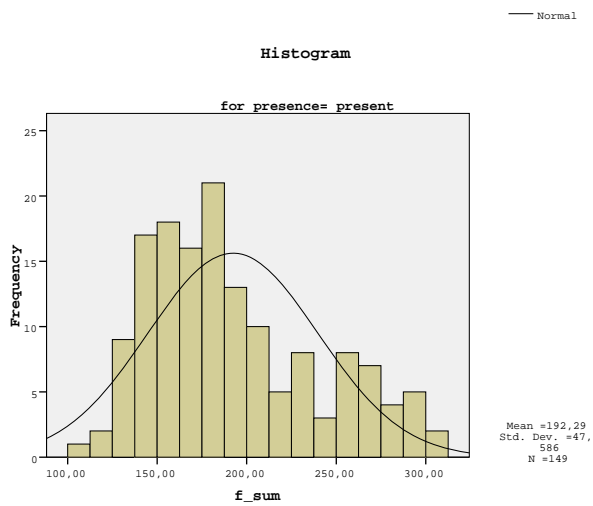


Figure 4.6 Histogram for the group who had another current love relationship

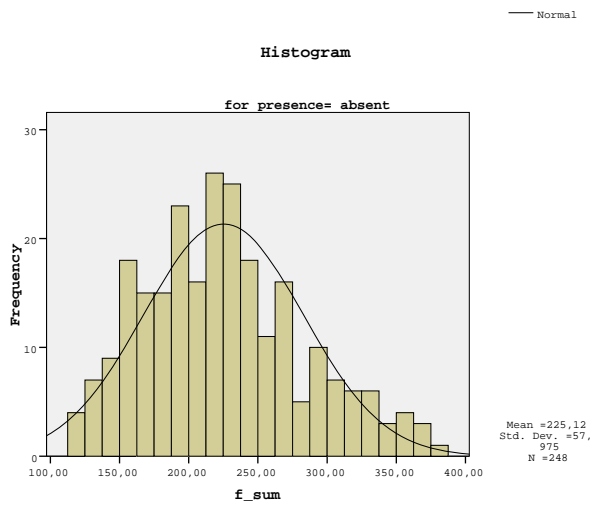


Figure 4.7 Histogram for the group who didn't had another current love relationship