

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN EMERGING ADULTHOOD:
THE ROLE OF SELF CONCEPT CLARITY AND PERSONAL AGENCY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

EDA ÇÜRÜKVELİOĞLU

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

SEPTEMBER 2012

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN EMERGING ADULthood: THE ROLE OF SELF CONCEPT CLARITY AND PERSONAL AGENCY

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September 2012, 79 pages

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity and personal agency in predicting romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults. Participants were consisted of 344 (70.3% female, 29.7% male) volunteered undergraduate students from one of the state universities in Central Anatolia. Age of the participants ranged from 18 to 25 with the mean of 20.85 ($SD = 1.65$). The data was gathered using four instruments namely, Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), Self Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS),

Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale- Short Form (MAPSSF), and personal information form. In order to analyze the data, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. Results revealed that gender, age and duration of relationship were not significant predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction; whereas self concept clarity and purpose in life dimension of personal agency were significant predictors which explained the 12% of the total variance in romantic relationship satisfaction scores of emerging adults. Results of the study are discussed in the light of the relevant literature. Finally implications of the study and recommendations for further research are presented.

Keywords: Romantic Relationship Satisfaction, Emerging Adulthood, Self Concept Clarity, Personal Agency

ÖZ

BELİREN YETİŞKİNLİK DÖNEMİNDE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ DOYUMU: BENLİK BELİRGİNLİĞİ VE KİŞİSEL EYLEMLİLİĞİN ROLÜ

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Eylül 2012, 79 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı beliren yetişkinlerin romantik ilişki doyumunu yordamada cinsiyet, yaş, ilişki süresi, benlik belirginliği ve kişisel eylemliliğin rolünü incelemektir. Çalışmanın katılımcılarını, İç Anadolu Bölgesindeki bir devlet üniversitesinin 344 (%70.3 kadın, %29.7 erkek) gönüllü lisans öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıların yaşları 18 ile 25 arasında değişmekte olup, ortalaması 20.85'tir ($SS = 1.65$). Veriler İlişki Doyum Ölçeği, Benlik Belirginliği Ölçeği, Çok-Yönlü Eylemli Kişilik Ölçeği- Kısa Formu ve kişisel bilgi formu olmak üzere dört

ölçme aracının kullanılması ile elde edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular beliren yetişkinlerin romantik ilişki doyumlarını yordamada cinsiyet, yaş ve ilişki süresinin anlamlı yordayıcı değişkenler olmadıklarını, benlik belirginliği ve kişisel eylemliliğin yaşam amaçları alt boyutunun ise anlamlı birer yordayıcı değişken olduklarını ve toplam varyansın %12'sini açıkladıklarını göstermiştir. Elde edilen bulgular ilgili alan yazın çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır. Son olarak, uygulamaya ve ileride yapılacak olan çalışmalara yönelik önerilere yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Romantik İlişki Doyumu, Beliren Yetişkinlik, Benlik Belirginliği, Kişisel Eylemlilik

To my lovely family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis that contributed to me a lot of things was a very tiring, stressful and exciting process for me. In this period, many people provide me feel better with their support. Therefore, I want to present my thanks to them.

First of all, I owe my special thanks to my supervisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Hatipođlu Sumer, for letting me study with her. This study would not have been possible without her invaluable contributions, detailed feedbacks, patient guidance and understanding during this challenging process. I learned many things from her, not only in my thesis process, but also during my master education. I wish I would develop an academic personality like her in my career.

I would like to present my thanks to my examining committee members. Thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Oya Yerin Gneri for her helpful comments and suggestions. Also, thanks to Assist. Prof. Dr. Hasan Atak for his constant encouragement and suggestions. He was always so generous even while answering my countless questions.

I am grateful to Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevda Aslan for her helpfulness and being with me whenever I need her. She always empowered me throughout my study.

I want to thank to Assist. Prof. Dr. Nuray Tařtan for her understanding and support in my difficult times.

I wish to present my thanks to the participants for their willingness to be in the study.

I owe my thanks to TÜBİTAK for their scholarship which provided me to have a successful academic life and complete this study.

I want to thank to all my classmates especially, Duygu Yumurtacı and Gökçen Aydın, who are in the same period with me, for their emotional support and sharing my excitements and fears in the process.

I also want to thank to my friend, Derya Çakıcı Eser, who is my roommate at work, for her helpful comments on my study and especially listening my problems about my thesis.

I would like to present my thanks to my dear friends Elif Tuğçe Karaca and Merve Şentürk for being with me every step of this thesis. Their invaluable support, great suggestions and cheerfulness empowered me to cope with these challenging times. Girls, I owe lots of things to you.

I wish to present my special thanks to my dear friend, Pınar Kaya. During my master education (beginning from the applying time to the program), she always encouraged and helped me. I owe a special thank to her. Thank you Pınar for everything you made for me. I am so lucky having a friend like you.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to my family members who caring me every time. I want to thank to my parents Emine Çürükvelioğlu and Engin Çürükvelioğlu for their support and unconditional love. Also, I want to thank to my sisters, Ela Çürükvelioğlu and Elif Çürükvelioğlu for their optimism, encouragement, understanding and especially belief in my abilities.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

People are in a circulation of changing and development. Recent studies have indicated that these changes and developments are focused in the emerging adulthood period (Arnett, 2001). Emerging adulthood is defined as “a new conception of the development from the late teens through the twenties, with a focus age 18-25” (Arnett, 2000, p.1). It is a period with special characteristics such as new freedoms, new fears, both excitement and uncertainty and confusion (Arnett, 2004) and also is an important developmental stage that is a distinct from adolescence and young adulthood (Fincham & Cui, 2011).

It has been a decade since emerging adulthood is addressed as a new life stage between adolescence and adulthood in industrialized and developing countries. In these countries, most of the young people make choices that affect their life. Caspi (2002) emphasized and defined that emerging adulthood is a period where individuals are faced to transitions and have to make decisions at any other periods of their lives (as cited in Shulman & Nurmi, 2010). These are consisted of transition from education to work, starting a career, starting a family, joining a social group, having a ideological worldview and starting a close relationship (Arnett, 2000;

Fincham & Cui, 2011; Shulman & Nurmi, 2010). According to Arnett (2004), emerging adulthood period has five basic features. These features are consisted of *identity explorations, instability, self-focused, feeling in between, and possibilities.*

Until Arnett's (2000) study, identity formation has been mostly connected with adolescence. Erikson (1968) has stated that identity versus role confusion is the main crisis in this period of life. Erikson has also proposed "prolonged adolescence" and "psychosocial moratorium" experiences in industrialized societies.

Nevertheless, Arnett's (2000) study found that identity formation continues in emerging adulthood period as well. In emerging adulthood period, individuals have chance to try out many options for self-exploration especially in love and work. Thus, the process of trying outs provide emerging adults to develop their self-understanding in the period of identity formation (Arnett, 2000, 2004; Fincham & Cui, 2011).

In the age of instability period, emerging adults always have plans. To deeper understanding, giving an example seems beneficial. For instance, they attend a college, choose a major and when realize this major is not suitable for them, they rethink about their plan. While rethinking about plans, they discover something related to them which provide to develop their identities (Arnett, 2000, 2004; Fincham & Cui, 2011).

Emerging adulthood is a self-focused age that emerging adults usually have to decide on their own whether the subject are easy ones or not. Moreover, focusing on self is very normal and healthy in this period (Arnett, 2000, 2007; Fincham & Cui, 2011).

The exploration and instability of emerging adulthood give the feeling in between characteristic to the emerging adulthood. In this period, individuals do not accept adult responsibilities fully. Therefore, they can be defined as neither adolescences nor adults (Arnett, 2004; Fincham & Cui, 2011).

Emerging adulthood is a period where high expectations and hopes from life have taken place. In this age of possibilities, emerging adults have opportunities to explore their options (Arnett, 2004; Fincham & Cui, 2011).

Aforementioned, emerging adulthood has its own characteristics and one of them is romantic love. In emerging adulthood, explorations in romantic relationships become more serious, intimate and last longer than adolescence (Arnett, 2000). Therefore, although the main question to start a romantic relationship in adolescence is “Who would I enjoy being with, here and now?”, in emerging adulthood the question changes to “What kind of person do I wish to have as a partner through life?” (Arnett, 2000, p.473). Thus, it is suggested by Arnett (2004) that emerging adulthood is a time for people to gain experience romance and love and to determine what kind of person they would like to marry. In the same vein, Fincham and Cui (2011) have mentioned the three reasons of importance of romantic relationships in emerging adulthood. First, the maintenance of the romantic relationships is very critical developmental tasks in emerging adults’ lives. Therefore, they have a long term effect on their late life. Second, when we consider youths’ well being and behavioral adjustment, romantic relationships are effective on them. Third, the relationships in emerging adulthoods could be predictive for their later life and marriage in adulthood.

Furthermore, most of the university students have reported that their current romantic relationships are the closest relationships they ever had (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989). In the literature, importance of romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults has also been highlighted (Demir, 2008; Çelen-Demirtaş, 2010). Since the 18-25 age period overlaps with the university period, it can be said that in emerging adulthood, romantic relationships take an important role of an emerging adult's life. The relationship between gender, duration of relationship and romantic relationship satisfaction in emerging adulthood have also been examined and except one study (Berg, Trost, Schneider, & Allison, 2001) empirical studies suggest that gender does not affect romantic relationship satisfaction (Beştav, 2007; Troy, 2000; Wongpakaran, Wongpakaran, & Wedding, 2011). Furthermore, though scarcely investigated, literature indicates no significant association between duration of relationship and romantic relationship satisfaction (Lewandowski & Schrage, 2010; Troy, 2000; Wongpakaran et al., 2011).

Regarding the emerging adulthood period, empirical studies on romantic relationship satisfaction have mostly focused on some variables such as self-disclosure (Billeter, 2002; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004), sexual satisfaction and sexual conflict (Lewandowski & Schrage, 2010), personality (Aydoğdu, 2010; White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004), and attachment styles (Butzer & Campbell, 2008; Li & Chan, 2012; Steuber, 2005). However, in a recent research conducted by Lewandowski, Nardone and Raines (2010), romantic relationship satisfaction has been linked to self concept clarity which is one of the predictor variables of the present study. In their study, the relationship between self concept clarity and romantic relationship satisfaction was examined by the mediator role of the self-

esteem. Results revealed that higher level of self concept clarity was positively associated with higher romantic relationship satisfaction. Additionally, in emerging adulthood period, self concept is an important core of the personality. Zhang and Li (2010) stated that difficult situations can affect different behavior and feelings, thereby important changes have taken place during this period. As a result of this process, self concept clarity becomes stable. Therefore, it appears important to determine the role of self concept clarity in romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults.

In the literature, studies have also indicated that university life gives to individuals an atmosphere to demonstrate more agentic behaviors in their life (Arnett, 2007; Emirbayer & Miche, 1998). Agency refers to a sense of responsibility for one's life course, the belief that one is in control of one's decisions and is responsible for their outcomes, and the confidence that one will be able to overcome obstacles that impede one's progress along one's chosen life course (Côté & Levine, 2002). In other words, it represents "the taking of autonomous action/behaving on one's own" (Atak & Taştan, 2012, p.98). During the university life period, people are usually on their own in most of the time (Arnett, 2004). They have to do many activities on their own such as cooking, deciding etc. They have to manage their life, so in emerging adulthood period personal agency is gained with these activities (Arnett, 2007).

Personal agency is consisted of four dimensions namely, self-esteem, self-efficacy, purpose in life, and internal locus of control. In the literature, there are several studies that linked self esteem (Cramer, 2003; Sciangula & Morry, 2009) to the romantic relationship satisfaction. The findings of these studies are not

consistent. According to Sciangula and Morry (2009), self-esteem is positively associated with romantic relationship satisfaction, whereas, Cramer (2003) indicated no significant relationship between self-esteem and romantic relationship satisfaction. Therefore, with regard to self-esteem literature, it seems that it is important to determine the role of self-esteem in romantic relationship satisfaction. Moreover, another dimension of personal agency, self-efficacy, is also studied with romantic relationship satisfaction (Riggio et al., 2011; Lopez, Morua, & Rice, 2007), and in these studies, the importance of efficacy beliefs in relationships were emphasized. On the other hand, personal agency has not been studied with romantic relationship satisfaction directly. Hence, this study aims to determine the role of personal agency in romantic relationship satisfaction via studying its dimensions concomitantly.

Furthermore, until now in the available literature, self-concept clarity has not been linked to relationship satisfaction largely (Lewandowski et al. 2010). Former research has established a link between self-concept clarity and self-esteem (Baumgardner, 1990), and self-esteem with relationship quality (Hansson, Jones, & Carpenter, 1984). Since self esteem is one of the dimensions of personal agency, in the present study it was hypothesized that self-concept clarity and personal agency would positively associate with romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults. With regard to these arguments, it seems worth examining the predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction among this population.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The present study aims to examine the role of gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity and personal agency in predicting romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults.

1.3. Research Questions

The main research question of the present study is presented below:

What extent do gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity and personal agency predict romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults?

1.4. Definition of the Terms

The definitions of the terms in this study are as follows:

Emerging Adulthood: It is a period with special characteristics such as new freedoms, new fears, both excitement and uncertainty and confusion contains 18-25 age period (Arnett, 2000).

Personal Agency: It refers to a sense of responsibility for one's life course, the belief that one is in control of one's decisions and is responsible for their outcomes, and the confidence that one will be able to overcome obstacles that impede one's progress along one's chosen life course (Côté & Levine, 2002).

Self Concept Clarity: It refers to “the extents to which the contents of an individual's self-concept (e.g., perceived personal attributes) are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent and temporally stable” (Campbell et al., 1996, p.141).

Relationship Satisfaction: It refers to feelings, thoughts, or behaviors within a relationship (Hendrick, 1988).

1.5. Significance of the Study

Romantic relationships are important parts of our lives. Establishing social and romantic relationships is one of the significant developmental tasks during transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). In addition, while romantic relationships during adolescence are mostly intended to have fun and companionship, during emerging adulthood (i.e. during university life), relationships become more serious, intimate, and committed (Arnett, 2000). Therefore, in emerging adulthood romantic relationships take a different place than one's life.

Most of the emerging adults have romantic relationships (Collins & Madson, 2006, as cited in Barry, Madsen, Nelson, Carroll, & Badger, 2009) and the quality of this relationship has associated with happiness (Demir, 2008) and subjective well-being (Çelen-Demirtaş, 2010). Thus, it seems important to determine the factors that make people happy in their romantic relationships. Additionally, with regard to self concept clarity and personal agency, in the literature there is not any study yet to investigate these variables concomitantly. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the predictor role of self concept clarity and personal agency on romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults.

Fincham, Stanley and Rhoades (2011) stated that relationship education is preventive and gives opportunity to experience relationship challenges before they become problems. In the light of the results of the present study, university counseling centers, family and marriage counseling centers could prepare a

relationship education program to improve romantic relationship satisfaction of students. This program may consist of teaching certain skills, improving knowledge about relationships, and facilitating participants to develop appropriate expectations and attitudes towards romantic relationships. In order to help couples and individuals experience successful and stable romantic relationships, the significant predictors of the study could also be included in this program.

Furthermore, in individual and group counseling process, personal agency could be a source for better understanding emerging adults' life. Emerging adults are on their own in university life period, so they have to make choices in their life. Since these choices affect their life, it takes an importance in their self concept. Thus, having knowledge about outcomes of personal agency could be an important variable to design applications to them.

All in all, the results of the study are thought to contribute to the understanding of the significance of personal agency and self concept clarity providing evidence of their roles on relationship satisfaction of university students.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the definitions and factors related to romantic relationships and studies in the literature regarding, romantic relationship satisfaction in emerging adulthood, self concept clarity and personal agency.

2.1. Definitions and Factors Related to Romantic Relationships in Emerging Adulthood

In the past two decades, studies on relationships which are important for individuals' life have been increasing. Meanwhile, literature provides several criteria to consider a relationship as romantic. For instance, Sternberg (1988, 1997) defines the romantic relationship is a close relationship that consisted of three elements: intimacy, passion and commitment. Intimacy means the feelings of closeness, connectedness and bondedness in romantic relationships. In addition, passion includes the drives which lead to romance, physical attraction and sexual relationship. Moreover, commitment refers to individual's decision to stay in that relationship in long-term.

Moss and Schwebel (1993) indicated that romantic relationships include five dimensions. First one is *commitment* which is a willingness to continue the relationship as a result of experiences during the relationships. *Emotional intimacy*,

the second dimension, contains sharing the deepest feeling of partners and being aware of their emotional worlds. The third dimension is *cognitive intimacy*. Cognitive intimacy is awareness of changing emerged in individuals' cognitive levels. The fourth dimension, *physical intimacy* is related to physical interaction. Lastly, fifth dimension, *mutuality* refers to interactions and efforts that the couple performs in order to maintain the relationship.

According to Hatfield (1988), romantic relationship is a process of where individuals aim to explore the similarities and dissimilarities of how they think, feel and behave. Hatfield (1988) also stated that individuals show special characteristics in relationships. These are *cognitive*, *emotional* and *behavioral* characteristics. Cognitive characteristics represent the willingness to self-disclosure. In other words, individuals feel free to reveal information about themselves in relationships. Emotional characteristics refer to deepest feelings of partners to each other and caring one another so much. In addition, behavioral characteristics include the physical interactions and touch which partners feel happy when they stand close to one another.

Kağıtçıbaşı (1998, 2010) stated that human behaviors are affected by cultural influences, therefore, it is expected that romantic relationships can be shaped in the light of cultural influences. According to a study conducted in Turkey, in order to define a relationship as a romantic relationship, the main criterion was found as partners' mutual protection of each others' interest and desire to make each other happy. Voluntariness and mutuality can be regarded as the essentials of romantic relationships in Turkish culture (Erden- İmamoğlu, 2009). In a similar vein, Eryılmaz and Atak (2009) stated five markers of starting romantic relationships in Turkish

culture. The first marker is *behavioral intimacy*, reflects the spending time with or getting the telephone number from the person whom interested in. The second marker is called as *affective and cognitive intimacy*. This includes the depth of cognitive and emotional awareness of individuals. *Romantic verbalization*, which is the third marker, contains writing poetry or saying meaningful words to person whom interested in. *Self perception* is the fourth marker of starting romantic relationships and reflects to judgments of personal competence such as intelligence, geniality and charm. The fifth marker is called as *self knowledge* which reflects to honesty, trust and respect to others' feelings and thoughts.

Individuals interact with many people throughout their lives, find many people attractive, however, they establish a romantic relationship with a few of them. The available literature indicates studies that examined several factors affecting relationships. For instance, Snell, Schicke and Arbeiter (2002) identified some psychological factors related to romantic relationship and stated that these factors have an effect on relationships. The first one is relational-esteem which means that positive evaluations of one self in establishing a romantic relationship with another person. The other factor is relational preoccupation which is a situation where individuals thinks about relationships all time and wants to absorb in. Internal relational control which means the belief that one's own behaviors are determinants of one's relationships is the third factor. Another factor is relational consciousness where a person perceives the positive and negative parts of a relationship. Relational motivation, the fifth factor, contains the desire to be involved in a romantic relationship. Relational anxiety is the other effective factor where a person has a tendency to feel discomfort and anxiety in relationships. The next factor is relational

assertiveness which means behaving assertive in the romantic relationships.

Relational depression, the other factor, reflects a person's tendency to feel disappointed and unhappy in relationships. External relational control is a factor where a person believes that relationships are controlled by outside factors such as chance. The other factor is relational-monitoring means the tendency to be aware of public image that one's relationship makes on others. The next factor is fear of intimate relationships. Fear of intimate relationships means the fear of being engaged with another person. The last factor is relational satisfaction which reflects happiness and positive evaluations of a romantic relationship.

Self-disclosure is another factor that influences romantic relationships in terms of its honesty and maintenance. Individuals who disclose themselves in a relationship are defined as the closest individuals to a good relationship (Burger, 2006).

Aforementioned, romantic relationship satisfaction refers to feelings, thoughts or behaviors within a relationship (Hendrick, 1988). The importance of romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults has been emphasized by scholars (Arnett, 2000; Demir, 2008; Erikson, 1968). Moreover, Fincham and Cui (2011) stated that romantic relationships predict the emerging adults' later life or marriages. In other words, romantic relationship satisfaction has a long term effect on their life (Olderbak & Figueredo, 2009). Furthermore, it is stated that romantic relationships are effective on youths' well-being. Thus, having a healthy and satisfactory relationship is an important factor of an emerging adult's life (Çelen-Demirtaş, 2010; Fincham & Cui, 2011).

In the literature, romantic relationship satisfaction has been studied with a variety of subjects. One of these subjects is sexuality. Lewandowski and Schrage (2010) examined the relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction and sexual conflict by comparing the short-term and long-term relationships. It was hypothesized that individuals in long-term relationships would report higher relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction and less sexual conflict than individuals in short-term relationships. Eighty-one university students participated in the study. According to results, there was no statistically significant difference between short-term and long-term relationships in terms of relationship satisfaction, sexual satisfaction and sexual conflict. Moreover, it was found that sexual conflict correlated negatively with relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. In the same vein, Peck, Shaffer and Williamson (2005) examined sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction with 189 undergraduate students. Favorability of sexual exchange and relationship communality subjects were also investigated. Results revealed that when relationship communality is low in relationships, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction increase.

Romantic relationship satisfaction has also been studied with conflict and communication styles. Cann, Norman, Welbourne and Calhoun (2008) investigated the relationships among attachment styles, conflict styles, humour styles and relationship satisfaction. The sample was consisted of 437 undergraduate students. It was tested that whether the relationship of attachment style to relationship satisfaction was partially mediated by conflict and humor style or not. It was found that conflict styles and humour styles were mediators of the association of attachment style with relationship satisfaction. In another study, Cramer (2004a)

investigated the contributions of partner conflict and support to relationship satisfaction. The researcher also tried to determine the indirect role of support by reducing the conflict and depression. The study sample was consisted of 76 female and 35 male college students. Results showed that relationship satisfaction was only explained directly by support. In addition to this finding, support also found indirectly associated with relationship satisfaction by reducing the depression. Moreover, Egeci and Gençöz (2006) studied the communication skills and relationship satisfaction with 142 students. Participants were consisted of both individuals who have a current relationship or who had a romantic relationship in the past. The hierarchical regression analysis results yielded that communication skills were associated with relationship satisfaction.

In the literature, another variable that has been linked to romantic relationship satisfaction is attitudes to love. Franiuk, Cohen and Pomerantz (2002) examined the implicit theories in romantic relationship satisfaction. People who give importance to finding right person is the most important factor for a relationship satisfaction, in other words who believes soulmate theory, were compared to people holding work-it-out theory who gives importance to effort is the most important factor for a satisfactory relationship. The study was conducted with 527 college students. Results showed that finding the right person predicted romantic relationship satisfaction and relationship longevity greater than work-it-out theory. Moreover, Beştav (2007) investigated the relationship between romantic relationship satisfaction and gender, attachment styles, irrational beliefs, love attitudes and the place of birth. Five hundred-eighty six (322 female and 264 male) university students from different universities participated in the study. Results yielded that with regard to relationship

satisfaction there is no significant difference according to gender and place of birth. Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive power of attachment styles, love types and irrational relationship beliefs on relationship satisfaction and results demonstrated that “passionate love” made the largest contribution.

Romantic relationship satisfaction has also been associated with some internal factors. Halford, Keefer and Osgarby (2002) studied the relationship between relationship satisfaction and negative hindsight biases in memory of relationship interaction. Sixty couples were required to keep a diary of their relationships day by day for a week. In this study, hindsight bias refers to the rate of positive and negative comments about the relationship as recorded in their diary. Results yielded that as hypothesized, low relationship satisfaction was associated with negative hindsight memory bias. In another study, the association between emotion work balance and relationship satisfaction was examined by Holm, Werner-Wilson, Cook and Berger (2001). The participants were 63 couples. Dyads were separated as: (a) balanced, (b) participant performs more emotion work or (c) partner performs more emotion work. Results demonstrated that when levels of emotion worked are approximately equal, couples are more satisfied in their relationships.

In the literature, there are several studies conducted on romantic relationship satisfaction with various variables. For example, Gullede, Gullede and Stahmann (2003) investigated the romantic physical affection types and relationship satisfaction. 295 participants were asked to indicate their preferences of romantic physical affection types regarding seven types: backrubs/massages, caressing/stroking, cuddling/holding, holding hands, hugging, kissing on the lips, and

kissing on the face (not lips). Results yielded that romantic physical affection types were highly correlated with relationships satisfaction and partner satisfaction.

In a study conducted by Çelen-Demirtaş (2010) the role of the gender, relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction and commitment to career choices on subjective well being were investigated. The sample of the study consisted of 400 students. According to multiple regression analysis, gender and romantic relationship predicted life satisfaction of the senior university students. In addition, it was found that romantic relationship satisfaction negatively and significantly predicted the students negative affects scores. Students, who have lower level of romantic relationship satisfaction tended to have higher level of negative affects.

Zeigler-Hill, Fulton and McLemore (2011) studied the role of unstable self esteem in the appraisal of romantic relationships with 125 undergraduate students. The results showed that men with unstable high self-esteem indicated more positive views of their relationships when it is compared with other individuals.

In a recent study, Aydoğdu (2010) examined the romantic relationships with regard to personality traits. Participants were consisted of 382 (270 girls, 112 boys) students from a state metropolitan university. Results revealed that personality traits did not predict the romantic relationship satisfaction significantly, but positive relationship was found between romantic relationships satisfaction and extraversion. According to this finding, the researcher concluded that individuals who have higher extraversion scores may have higher relationship satisfaction.

Öner (2000) examined the relationship satisfaction and future time orientation with 244 undergraduate students. According to the results, when there is a high concern future commitment in romantic relationship, its negative effect on reported relationship satisfaction was observed.

Berg, Trost, Schneider and Allison (2001) investigated the effect of leisure time, leisure satisfaction and gender to relationship satisfaction. Results indicated moderate participant leisure satisfaction and a near-significant relationship between gender and relationship satisfaction.

In summary, the literature emphasizes the positive role of romantic relationship satisfaction in emerging adulthood period. It is also suggested that via romantic relationship satisfaction, the later lives of emerging adults can be determined. By this way, prevention studies can be planned to improve romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults. Empirical studies also demonstrated that romantic relationship satisfaction is related to various types of variables. For instance, sexual conflict was negatively associated with romantic relationship satisfaction; whereas life satisfaction was positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction. In addition, personality has been found to be correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction.

2.2. Self Concept Structure and Self Concept Clarity

The self concept, like many psychological terms, has different definitions. For example, Shavelson and Webb (1991) defined self concept as an individual's perception and judgments of himself or herself. On the other hand, Pangrazi (1982) defined self concept as a system of thoughts, values, attitudes and commitments that

generate person's inner world. Generally self concept is related with how you feel about yourself most of the time (Erdem, 1999).

Self concept is an important element of individuals' personality such that the concept of self affects our acts and behaviors (Özgeylani, 1993). Also it is a dynamic complex of attitudes where positive self concept demonstrates the positive self evaluation, self-esteem, self acceptance when negative self concept includes the negative self evaluation, inferiority and self-hatred (Burns, 1982). Therefore, with regard to psychological concept, it is important to understand the individuals self concept to determine their future orientation and behaviors.

In contemporary theory and research, there has been a distinction between the contents of self concept and the structure of self concept (Altrocchi, 1999; Campbell, Assanand & Di Paula, 2003). The contents of self concept contain the self-knowledge including the perceived personal attributes and the evaluation of this information including self-beliefs and global self-esteem. There are example sentences to contents of self concept: "Who am I" and "How do I feel about myself". On the other hand, structure of self concept refers to in which way the components of self concept contents are organized and integrated. In order to get a better understanding of this construct, the structure of the self concept has been divided into two dimensions: differentiation and integration (Campbell et al., 2003). Differentiation means the dimensionality or pluralism in self structure, whereas integration refers to the degree of the unity in the self concept.

Self concept clarity, a structural dimension of self concept, is defined "as the extent to which the contents of an individuals' self concept are clearly and

confidently defined, internally consistent and temporally stable” (Campbell et al., 1996, p.141). To a better understanding, a person who has a high level of self concept clarity presents more confident behaviors in various dimensions of her self concept, while another person who is low on self concept clarity shows the less certain behaviors in his self concept (Butzer & Kuiper, 2006).

In the literature, self concept clarity has mostly been studied with well-being. Huckers, Mussaps and Marita (2010) examined the relationship between women’s sexual well-being and self concept clarity among 261 women aged 18 and over. After the series of multiple mediation analyses, the results yielded that self-concept clarity was found to be positively associated with three sexual well-being related measures: sexual self-efficacy, sexual self-esteem, and sexual satisfaction. It was also found that the relationship between self concept clarity and sexual well being is mediated by two dimensions of sexual identity: commitment and synthesis/integration.

In order to determine the mediator role of self concept clarity between stress and subjective well-being, Ritchie, Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt and Gidron (2011) conducted three studies. Subjective well-being was assessed with life satisfaction. In study 1 which was conducted with 292 participants, the results showed that self concept clarity fully mediated the relationship between stress and subjective well-being. Additionally, stress and neuroticism were negatively correlated with self concept clarity whereas life satisfaction was positively correlated with self concept clarity. In study 2 which was conducted with 127 participants, meaninglessness was examined. According to results, it can be said that self concept clarity was a significant mediator between meaninglessness and life satisfaction. Meaninglessness

was positively correlated with neuroticism and was negatively related with self concept clarity and life satisfaction. In study 3 which was conducted with 78 participants, self concept clarity partially mediated the relationship between self discontinuity and life satisfaction. Self- discontinuity was negatively related to self- concept clarity and life satisfaction, and was positively related to neuroticism.

Self concept clarity literature has also focused on studying anxiety and conflict variables. Bechtoldt, De Dreu, Nijstad and Zapf (2010) examined the relationship between self concept clarity and conflict management in four studies. It was found that individuals with higher self concept clarity demonstrated more cooperative behaviors in conflict management and were more active in general. The other result of the study was related with dyad members and indicated that dyad members with higher self concept clarity engaged in problem solving while with lower self concept clarity members did not. Moreover, Campbell et al. (1996) examined the relations between the self-report measure of clarity and five measures of adjustment—self-esteem, neuroticism, negative affectivity, anxiety, and depression with 471 undergraduates students. Results indicated that self-concept clarity was positively correlated with self- esteem and negatively correlated with neuroticism, negative affectivity, anxiety, and depression.

In another study conducted by Demidenko, Tasca, Kennedy and Bissada (2010) the mediator role of self-concept between attachment anxiety or avoidance and identity (differentiation of self) was examined. The sample consisted of 330 women with eating disorders. According to results, higher attachment avoidance was associated with lower identity differentiation indirectly through poorer self-concept. Moreover, higher attachment anxiety was directly related to lower differentiation of

self, and higher attachment anxiety was also indirectly associated with lower identity differentiation through poorer self- concept.

In sum, research on self concept clarity has mostly conducted with personality and well-being variables. According to results of these studies, higher level of self concept clarity contributes to individuals' well-being.

2. 3. Personal Agency

Personal agency refers to a sense of responsibility for one's life course, the belief that one is in control of one's decisions and is responsible for their outcomes, and the confidence that one will be able to overcome obstacles that impede one's progress along one's chosen life course (Côté & Levine, 2002). In other words, it is operationalized as "the taking of autonomous action/behaving on one's own" (Atak & Taştan, 2012, p.98). Personal agency is a psychological construct that consists of self-efficacy, self-esteem, internal locus of control and purpose in life (Côté & Levine, 2002; Schwartz, Cote, & Arnett, 2005).

Self efficacy, more recently, is one of the variables that commonly used in research in various disciplines. Self efficacy refers to "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1995, p.2). Moreover, self-efficacy is related with individuals' judgments about their actions in terms of how well they can do when it is needed to cope with possible situations (Bandura, 1982; 2000). In this context, individuals' perceptions regarding the expectations of competence, in other words self-efficacy, may affect their ability to behave in an agentic way and deal with problems (Atak, 2010). According to Bandura (2000), while humans shaping themselves, they are not

passive and the events are not taken place out of their control, their own action is shaping themselves by organizing and evaluating the options. In order to determine the goals of an individual and to take the environment under control, self efficacy beliefs serve as a tool.

Sharp, Pocklington and Weindling (2002) emphasizes that self efficacy beliefs form the basis of the human motivation, well-being and personal success. Eaton and Dembo (1997) indicated cultural and ethnic variables as factors influencing the individuals self efficacy beliefs. According to Bandura (1982) self efficacy beliefs are especially effective on emotional intensity and in social conditions play a regulatory role. According to Schunk (1990), the satisfaction of reaching a goal, doubles the self efficacy beliefs and then individual sets more challenging targets. Bandura (1995) stated that self efficacy starts from childhood and occurs throughout life and affects individuals' family and educational roles and adaptation to multicultural environment.

Self efficacy beliefs also affect people's thinking patterns and emotional reactions. Individuals with a high level of self-efficacy may be more convenient and efficient when they faced with difficult works. On the other hand, individuals with low self-efficacy beliefs believe that their studies are more difficult than actually it is. This type of thought increases the anxiety and stress and also narrows the alternative perspectives to solve the problem in a best way (Pajares, 2003).

According to Schunk (1990), self efficacy beliefs are the most important predictor of human behavior. If individuals believe that they have the presence of talent and the power of control, they become more willing to choose this task and decisive (Eaton & Dembo, 1997; Sharp, Pocklington, & Weindling, 2002). Compared to individuals

who have a doubt about their learning capacity and abilities, individuals who have a high level of self efficacy, adapt more easily, work more harder, look for more challenging learning experiences while learning a skill or a topic. Furthermore when they faced with the difficulties they show more resistance and success (Pajares, 2003, Schunk, 1990).

Bandura (1989, 1995) explained four major sources of self efficacy which are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and psychological responses. Mastery experiences strengthens our sense of self-efficacy, fail to perform one successfully deteriorate it while performing a task successfully. Moreover, vicarious experiences which can be explained that people witnessed from the people who are similar to them while performing a task, is also important. In addition, social persuasion which is another way of firming the self-efficacy provides people more belief to be successful, it increases their effort to do the task and it helps people to develop their skills. Psychological responses such as mood, emotional state, physical reactions, and stress level affect the ability to do a task (Bandura, 1995).

As it is mentioned before, Cote (1997) proposed that personal agency consists of four dimensions namely self-esteem, purpose in life, self-efficacy and internal locus of control. Considering self efficacy as a dimension of personal agency, Cote (1997) suggested that self efficacy increases the capacity of personal agency. Self efficacy defined as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1995, p.2). Likewise, agency is defined as a sense of responsibility about the direction of one’s life, to take the responsibility for the life; the belief of a person’s ability to control decisions related to life and take responsibility for these decisions and the confidence

of the way of dealing with obstacles in the life and the direction of the life (Cote & Levine, 2002). The common point of these definitions is individuals' 'self' beliefs (Atak, 2010). This belief is important for an agentic person for giving direction to himself and the life (Cote, 1997). According to these definitions, an agentic person believes that he can control himself and his life; likewise, a person with high level of self efficacy believes the capacity of his/her own power. Higher level of self efficacy provides a person more agency (Cote, 1997, 2002).

According to Rosenberg (1965, p.30), self-esteem is "the individual's overall level of self-acceptance or self-rejection." Rosenberg (1965) stated two aspects of self esteem, high and low self-esteem. Feeling worthy, respectable and not being supercilious are the properties of the individuals with high self-esteem; on the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem do not satisfy themselves, and reject their selves.

Considering self esteem as a dimension of personal agency, Cote (1997) suggested in his multi-faced approach that, self esteem is one of the four variables that increase agentic behaviors. Individuals with high level of self-esteem, have a high level of self acceptance, feel worthy and are satisfied from themselves (Rosenberg, 1965). In the same vein, a person who has an agentic personality also have self-acceptance, self-efficacy and feel worthy. These features act a key role for agentic person when giving direction to life (Cote, 1997). An agentic person feels themselves worthy and plays an active role in society. In this context, high level of self- esteem provides people to be more efficient, secure and active in their relationships with environment.

For behavioral scientists, one of the most accentuated topics is personality. When the literature has been examined it can be observed that locus of control has also been studied as a personality trait and defined in a various ways (Atak, 2010; Özmen, 2006). The concept of locus of control, which focuses on the individuals' belief system, was proposed by Rotter (1966). According to Rotter (1966), locus of control occurs based on the individuals' past reinforcing experiences by connecting the results of their behaviors linking to their own controls or out of their control such as luck and fate. Locus of control has two dimensions, internal locus of control and external locus of control.

Cote (1997) stated that internal locus of control is one of the four variables that increases agentic behaviors. Individuals with an internal locus of control, by giving importance to their work regarding its talent and effort aspects, connect their achievements to their own behaviors. According to Mueller and Thomas (2001), individuals who have internal locus of control are more successful, more agent in social events, and more compatible and have more independent structure when compared to individuals with external locus of control. Furthermore, individuals who have internal locus of control show strong reaction when their personal freedom is limited. They have a high level of self esteem and self confidence. Individuals with internal locus of control see themselves as the causes of their behaviors. Likewise, a person who has an agentic personality takes the responsibility of himself.

Ryff (1989) explained psychological well-being in his study and stated that psychological well-being is composed of six elements and one of them is purpose in life. Psychological well-being involves identifying meaningful targets in life and reaching them, dealing in life, and growth and development. Yalom (1980) stated

that lack of purposes in life is related with psychopathology. According to Lyubomirsky (2001) positive events in people's lives, positively contributes to their life purposes. It was found that one of these positive aspects of individuals' live is religion and/or spirituality (Francis, Jewell & Robbins, 2010; Gerwood, LeBlanc & Piazza, 1998). At this point, being in positive relationships with family and friends, and success experiences are important factors affecting purposes in life.

Considering purpose in life as a dimension of personal agency (Cote, 1997), the concept of purpose in life indicates short and long term goals of an individual's life. In the same vein, a person who has an agentic personality has some features such as understanding and controlling their lives, implementing decisions taken, setting targets and taking action to achieve them. In this context, a person who has life purposes is more agent and effective in life and relationships.

In the following paragraphs, general studies regarding personal agency are presented because there has been no study in the literature that directly examines the association between relationship satisfaction and personal agency variables.

Considering the literature it can be said that studies regarding personal agency were mostly focused on identity and attachment variables. Cote (1997) studied the relationship between personal agency and gender, age and socio economic status variables among 120 university students. According to the results, personal agency was not associated with gender, age and socio economic status. In another study, Schwartz, Cote and Arnett (2005) explored the relationship between personal agency and identity formation process. Three hundred and thirty two emerging adults participated in the study. Results showed that personal agency is a significant

predictor of the identity formation. Furthermore, structural equation modeling analyses indicated that higher levels of agency were positively related to exploration and flexible commitment, unrelated to conformity, and negatively related to avoidance. Atak (2010) also studied personal agency with attachment styles and identity formation variables. The sample of the study consisted of 700 emerging adults. According to results, it was found that personal agency positively associated with secure attachment, and negatively associated with insecure/anxious and insecure/ambivalent attachment styles.

Although personal agency mostly explored with identity and attachment variables, there are several recent studies that examine personal agency with different variables. For instance, Weigold and Robitscheck (2011) argued that agentic personality characteristics and coping are important in decreasing and/or protecting against anxiety. The agentic personality characteristics were hardiness, personal growth initiative, and coping self-efficacy. The forms of dispositional coping were problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant. Results suggested that agentic personality characteristics differentially related to forms of coping and trait anxiety. Furthermore, it was found that coping mediated the relations of personality characteristics to anxiety.

In order to examine whether nicknames come from classical mythology has an effect on clients' personal agency, Maxfield, Connor and Doll (2009) investigated personal agency in narrative therapy. In this study, narrative letter writing was used as a tool to help clients to realize their own agency in change process. With this aim, therapists select nicknames from classical mythology to improve client's drive.

Findings revealed that matching a god or goddess to a client was found to be a therapeutic tool in narrative therapy.

To sum up, romantic relationship satisfaction takes an active role in individuals' life especially in emerging adulthood period. The results of the relevant studies have highlighted the positive contribution and effectiveness of romantic relationship satisfaction on youth's well-being. Moreover, studies on self concept clarity and personal agency revealed that these variables could be a source of romantic relationship satisfaction. Parallel to these findings, studies conducted in Turkey regarding romantic relationship satisfaction have demonstrated that having a satisfactory relationship is an important factor for subjective well-being of emerging adults. In addition, self concept clarity and personal agency have not been studied with romantic relationship satisfaction in Turkey. Indeed, there is no research that concomitantly study these variables both in Turkey and abroad. Therefore, it seems significant to determine the role of self concept clarity and personal agency in romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter presents the information about methodological procedures followed throughout the study. The first section presents the overall design of the study. The second section introduces the population and sampling. The data collection instruments are introduced in the third section. The procedure followed in the study is explained in the fourth section. In the fifth section, variables of the study are presented. In the sixth section, data analyses procedures employed to the data are explained. Finally, in the last section the limitations of the study are given.

3.1. Overall Design of the Study

The overall design of the present study is correlational. In the correlational research, the relationships between two or more variables are examined without any manipulation. Also, in line with the aim of the present study, correlational study aims to make predictions about a variable which is called criterion or dependent variable by considering its relationships with other variables which are called predictor or independent variables (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

The purpose of the present study is to examine how well gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity, and personal agency predict the relationship satisfaction of emerging adults.

A personal information form, Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale Short Form (MAPSSF; Cote, 2007 as cited in Özdikmenli-Demir, 2009), Self Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS; Campbell et al., 1996) and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988) were administered to 1324 emerging adults aged between 18 and 25 ($M = 20.85$ and $SD = 1.65$). Descriptive statistics and hierarchical regression analysis were applied to analyze the data.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The target population of the study is university students in Turkey, whereas accessible population of the study is students enrolled at one of the state universities in Central Anatolia. The participants were selected from one of the state universities in Central Anatolia by using convenience sampling procedure.

Firstly, the researcher collected the data set from 1324 students in spring semester in the academic year of 2011-2012. Since the main focus of the research was on romantic relationship satisfaction, 406 participants who have a current romantic relationship were included in the study. Then, 62 participants who did not fill out at least one question were excluded from the study. Finally, after the data cleaning procedure, 344 participants constituted the sample of the present study. Of the 344 participants, 242 (70.3%) were female and 102 (29.7%) were male. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 25 with a mean of 20.85 ($SD = 1.65$). Also, the duration of the relationship of participants ranged from 1 months to 99 months with a mean of 21.15 months ($SD = 20.17$ months).

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

In order to obtain the data, four instruments were used: Personal Information Form, Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale Short Form (Cote, 2007 as cited in Özdikmenli-Demir, 2009), Self Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS; Campbell et al., 1996) and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988). The psychometric characteristics of the instruments are presented below.

3.3.1. Personal Information Form

In personal information form which is developed by the researcher, participants were asked to define their age, gender and duration of their relationship (see Appendix A).

3.3.2. Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale Short Form

Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale was developed by Cote (1997) to predict identity capital acquisition in terms of formulating stronger sense of adult identity and contains 74 items. In the present study, Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale Short Form (MAPSSF; Cote, 2007 as cited in Özdikmenli-Demir, 2009) was used (see Appendix B). MAPSSF includes 20 items with a 5 point Likert type rating scale. It is measured on a scale of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). It consists of four subscales. These subscales are as follows: self esteem (5 items; item 1 thru 5), purpose in life (5 items; item 6 thru 10), internal locus of control (5 items; item 11 thru 15), and self efficacy (5 items; item 16 thru 20).

The Turkish adaptation of the short form of the scale was carried out by two researchers in two different studies. In the first study, psychometric properties of the

scale was tested with 985 university students (Özdikmenli- Demir, 2009). Results of the factor analysis indicated that 46% of the total variance was explained by the scale. For the internal consistency of the scale, alpha coefficients were computed and found .75 for purpose in life, .64 for self esteem, .62 for internal locus of control, .65 for self efficacy subscales, and .77 for the total scale.

In the second study, MAPSSF was adapted to Turkish by Atak (2010) with 410 participants. Results of the factor analysis yielded that 57.43% of the total variance was explained by the scale. For the internal consistency of the study, alpha coefficients were calculated and found .72 for purpose in life, .76 for self esteem, .74 for internal locus of control, .73 for self efficacy subscales, and .81 for the total scale.

In the current study, the Turkish version of MAPSSF which was adapted by Atak (2010) was used.

3.3.2.1. The Validity and Reliability of the MAPSSF for the Sample of the Present Study

The validity evidence of the MAPSSF was obtained by the confirmatory factor analysis and the reliability of the MAPSSF was tested by computing Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient scores for the scale. The analyses were conducted with the participants of the current study which is consisted of 344 emerging adults.

Confirmatory factor analysis is used to test whether the data fit a hypothesized measurement model (Şimşek, 2007). For the present study, in order to test whether the four-factor model fit to the data or not, confirmatory factor analysis was performed.

In the first order of the analysis, considering the factor loadings of the items it was seen that factor loadings of five items were below .30 (item 3, item 4, item 10, item 14 and item 15). Therefore, these items were excluded from the subsequent analyses. Then, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted again to test the four factor model with remaining items. The results of the hypothesized four-factor model yielded a good fit to the data with fifteen items.

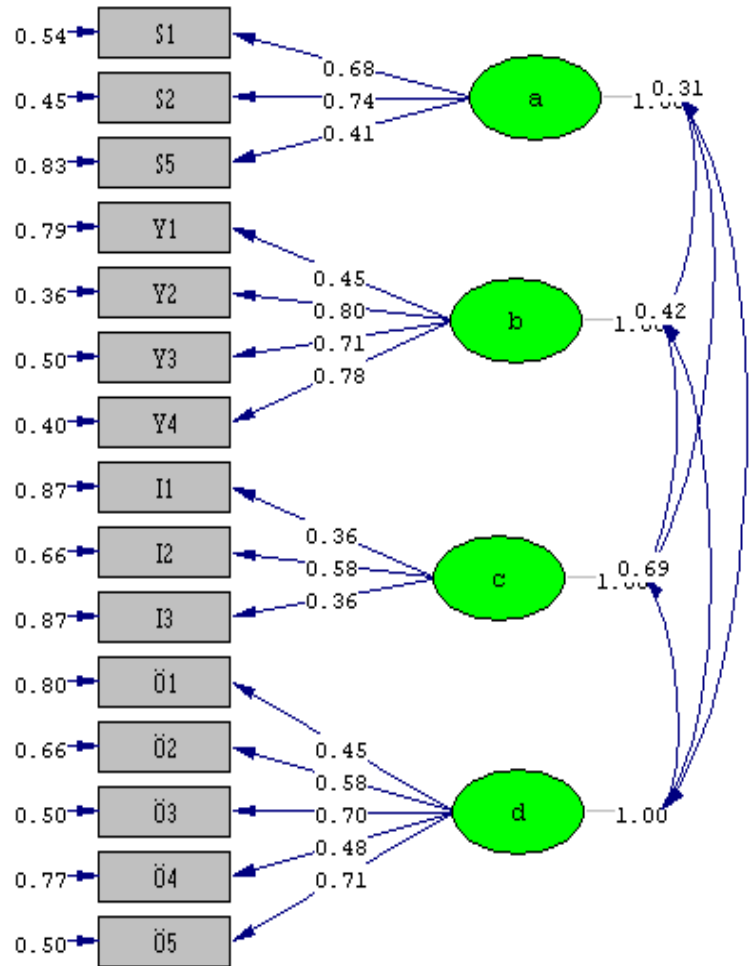
As it can be seen from the Table 3.1., goodness of fit statistics presented acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 / df=2,53$; GFI = .91; CFI = .90; NFI = .91 RMSEA = .061), and confirmed the four-factor model of the MAPSSF.

Table 3.1

Summary of the fit Indices from measurement models of MAPSSF

| Indexes | Measurement Model for MAPSSF | Criteria (Bollen, 1989; Kline,2005; Yılmaz & Çelik, 2009) |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|
| χ^2 , df | 212.15; 84 | |
| χ^2 / df | 2.53 | $\chi^2 / df < 3$ |
| GFI | .91 | GFI > .90 |
| CFI | .90 | CFI > .90 |
| NFI | .91 | NFI > .90 |
| RMSEA | .061 | RMSEA < .08 |

According to the confirmatory factor analysis, factor loadings of the items ranged between .36 and .78, and these values are in acceptable values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The factor loadings of the items are presented in Figure 3.1.



Chi-Square=212.15, df=84, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.061

Note. a= Self-esteem subscale; b= Purpose in life subscale; c= Internal locus of control subscale; d= Self-efficacy subscale

Figure 3.1 Factor Loadings of the MAPSSF

For the present study, the internal consistency of the MAPSSF was assessed by means of Cronbach Alpha coefficient. The Cronbach Alpha values of the MAPSSF were .77 (total scale), .61 (Self-esteem Subscale), .77 (Purpose in life Subscale), .45 (Internal locus of control Subscale), and .72 (Self-efficacy Subscale). Because the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the self-esteem and internal locus of control subscales were below .70, it can be said that these subscales have low internal consistencies (Kline, 2000). Hence, they were not included in the further analyses.

3.3.3. Self Concept Clarity Scale

Self Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS) was developed to measure the clarity and the consistency of self beliefs by Campbell et al. (1996) and adapted to Turkish by Sümer and Güngör (1999) with a 7 point Likert type rating scale. It includes 12 items with .89 Cronbach's alpha value and 10 of items were reverse coded. Güngör (2000) employed self concept clarity scale in her study with a 4 point response set and reliability analysis yielded a .80 Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In the current study, 4 point Likert type rating was applied (1 - strongly disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - agree; 4 - strongly agree) and the scale showed adequate internal consistency with .84 Cronbach's alpha value (Kline, 2000). Higher scores indicate higher level of self concept clarity. The self concept clarity scale is presented in Appendix C.

3.3.3.1. The Validity and Reliability of the SCCS for the Sample of the Present Study

In this step of the study, the validity evidence of the SCCS was obtained by confirmatory factor analysis and in order to assess the reliability of the scale Cronbach Alpha coefficient was computed.

For the present study, to test whether the uni-dimensional model fit to the data obtained from 344 emerging adults, confirmatory factor analysis was performed.

As it can be seen from the Table 3.2, goodness of fit statistics presented acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 / df = 2.91$; GFI = .94; CFI = .96; NFI = .93 RMSEA = .069) and confirmed the uni-dimensional model of the SCCS.

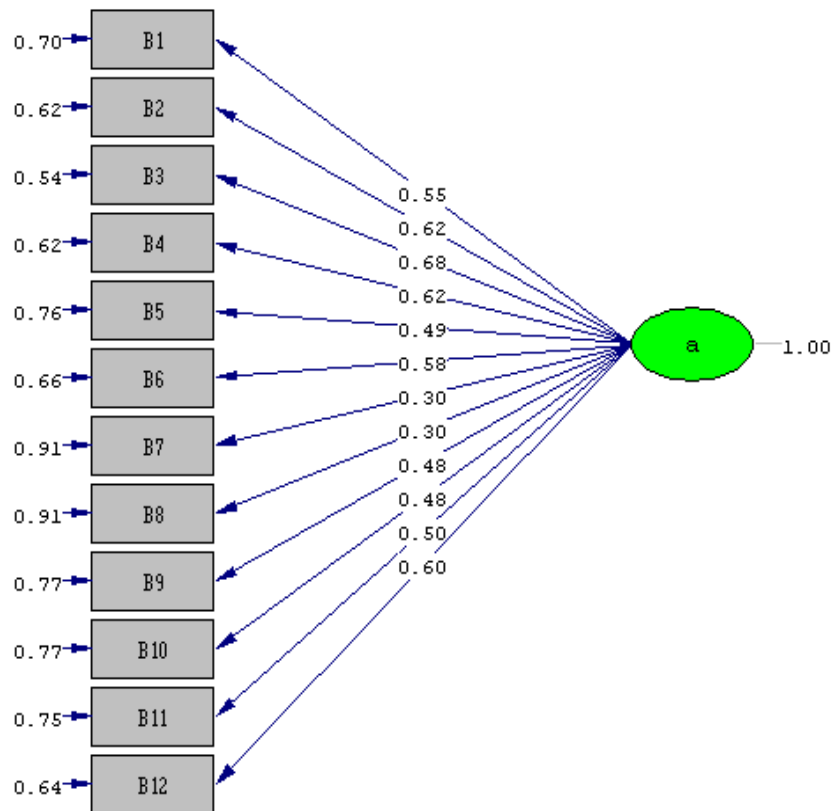
Table 3.2

Summary of the fit Indices from measurement models of SCCS

| Indexes | Measurement Model for SCCS | Criteria (Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2005; Yılmaz & Çelik, 2009) |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| χ^2, df | 157.13; 54 | |
| χ^2 / df | 2.91 | $\chi^2 / df < 3$ |
| GFI | .94 | GFI > .90 |
| CFI | .96 | CFI > .90 |
| NFI | .93 | NFI > .90 |
| RMSEA | .069 | RMSEA < .08 |

According to the confirmatory factor analysis results, factor loadings of the items ranged between .30 and .68 and these values are in acceptable values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The factor loadings of the items are presented in Figure 3.2.

The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .84 for the present study which indicates high internal consistency among items (Kline, 2000).



Chi-Square=157.13, df=54, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.069

Note. a= Self concept clarity

Figure 3.2 Factor Loadings of the SCCS

3.3.4. Relationship Assessment Scale

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) was developed by Hendrick (1988) to assess general satisfaction in relationship and high scores obtained from the scale show positive thoughts about the relationship (see Appendix D). RAS consists of 7 items with a 7 point Likert-type scale and measures one dimension. The Cronbach alpha value was found as .89. There are two reverse items. These are Item 4 (How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?) and item 7 (How many problems are there in your relationship?). Results of factor analysis showed that RAS is a uni-dimensional scale and explains the 46% of the total variance.

RAS was adapted to Turkish by Curun (2001) with 140 university students. The alpha coefficient was found .86. According to factor analysis results, it is a uni-dimensional scale and 52% of the total variance was explained by RAS.

3.3.4.1. The Validity and Reliability of the RAS for the Sample of the Present Study

In order to obtain validity evidence of the RAS, confirmatory factor analysis was performed. The reliability of the scale was also checked by computing Cronbach Alpha coefficient.

For the present study, to test whether the uni-dimensional model fit to the data obtained from 344 emerging adults, confirmatory factor analysis was performed.

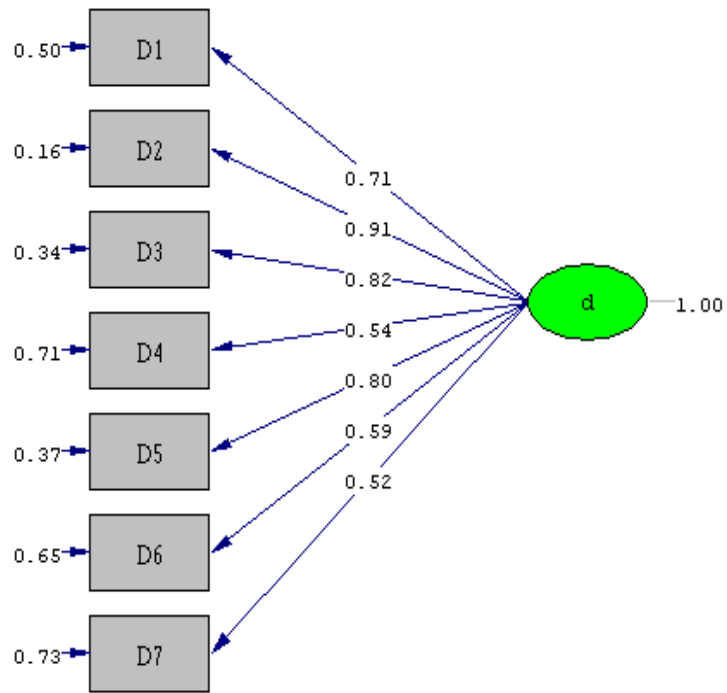
As it can be seen from the Table 3.3, goodness of fit statistics presented acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 / df = 2.51$; GFI = .95; CFI = .99; NFI = .98 RMSEA = .061) and confirmed the uni-dimensional model of the RAS.

Table 3.3

Summary of the fit Indices from measurement models of RAS

| Indexes | Measurement Model for RAS | Criteria (Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2005; Yılmaz & Çelik, 2009) |
|---------------|---------------------------|---|
| χ^2 , df | 35.11; 14 | |
| χ^2/df | 2.51 | $\chi^2/df < 3$ |
| GFI | .95 | GFI > .90 |
| CFI | .99 | CFI > .90 |
| NFI | .98 | NFI > .90 |
| RMSEA | .061 | RMSEA < .08 |

According to the confirmatory factor analysis, factor loadings of the items ranged between .52 and .91 and these values are in acceptable limits (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The factor loadings of the items are presented in Figure 3.3.



Chi-Square=35.11, df=14, P-value=0.00142, RMSEA=0.061

Note. d= Romantic relationship satisfaction

Figure 3.3 Factor Loadings of the RAS

The reliability of the RAS was assessed by Cronbach Alpha coefficient. For the present study, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found .88 which indicates high internal consistency for the scale (Kline, 2000).

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Firstly, the researcher applied to the Middle East Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee to get permission to conduct the study. After granting the permission, the researcher started to collect data from faculties of a state university of Central Anatolia in spring semester of 2011-2012 academic year. These faculties are as follows: Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of

Science and Literature, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, and Faculty of Law. Before collecting the data, the purpose and significance of the study were explained to students. Then, students were asked to read and sign the informed consent forms which include the purpose of the study, the significance of giving sincere answers to the questions, contact information for further information and right to give up filling the scales at any time. Then, Personal Information Form, Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale- Short Form, Self Concept Clarity Scale, and Relationship Assessment Scale were administered to the volunteer students in classroom settings. Students who were not in a current romantic relationship were ordered to fill out the RAS by considering ex-girlfriends/ex-boyfriends. Participants completed the scales approximately in 20 minutes.

3.5. Variables

Romantic Relationship Satisfaction: The mean total of scores as measured by the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS).

Self Concept Clarity: The mean total of scores as measured by Self Concept Clarity Scale (SCCS).

Purpose in life: The mean total of scores as measured by the purpose in life subscale of Multi Measure Agentic Personality Scale- Short Form (MAPSSF).

Self-efficacy: The mean total of scores as measured by the self-efficacy subscale of Multi Measure Agentic Personality Scale- Short Form (MAPSSF).

Age: A continuous variable that was measured by a question on the personal information form.

Gender: A dichotomous variable with categories of (1) female and (2) male. For hierarchical regression analysis, gender was dummy coded as 1 for females and 0 for males.

Duration of relationship: A continuous variable which was measured by a question on the personal information form.

3.6. Data Analyses Procedure

Several steps were followed in order to analyze the obtained data. First of all, data cleaning procedure was completed to identify missing values. Then, descriptive statistics was carried out in order to describe and summarize the data. Finally, in order to examine the role of gender, age, duration of the relationship, self concept clarity and personal agency in predicting relationship satisfaction scores (RAS) of participants, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted.

As a criterion for statistical significance; alpha level was chosen .05 for all the analyses in this study.

3.7. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations in terms of its generalizability and interpretation of findings.

First of all, all data were collected from students enrolled in a state university in Central Anatolia by using convenience sampling procedure; therefore generalizability of the study is limited with those students.

Second, this study also delimited with the expressions of Multi-Measure Agentic Personality Scale, Self Concept Clarity Scale and Relationship Assessment Scale.

Third, as it is mentioned above, only two dimensions of the personal agency (purpose in life and self-efficacy) were used in the data analysis. Self- esteem and internal locus of control dimensions were excluded because of their internal consistency results. Cronbach alpha values found as .45 for internal locus of control dimension and .62 for self-esteem dimension. Hence, personal agency scores are limited only two dimensions of the scale.

Finally, since this study was not a longitudinal study, possible change in variables could not be measured in the long term. Therefore, result of this study is limited with this particular time.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study and consists of five main sections. In the first section, the preliminary analyses performed are presented. In the second section, descriptive statistics of study variables including means and standard deviations of the criterion and predictor variables are given. In the third section, assumption checks of the hierarchical regression analysis are introduced. In the fourth section, correlations between criterion and predictor variables are presented. In the last section, results of hierarchical regression analysis are reported.

4.1. Preliminary Analyses of the Study

Prior to conducting the main analyses, the data were checked with regard to possible mistakes made when entering the data. With this aim, minimum and maximum values and frequencies of the variables (gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity, personal agency and romantic relationship satisfaction) were controlled in order to determine the scores that are not within the range of possible values.

In order to identify possible influential cases, firstly leverage statistics was checked by the formula of $3(k+1) / n$. According to Stevens (2002), the cases with higher value than the result of this formula, has risk for violation of leverage

statistics. In this study only three cases had a higher value (0.0623, 0.0627, 0.0749) than 0.061 [$3(6+1) / 344$], and violated the assumption; however these scores were close to the value of 0.061 so that continuing with other assumption check procedures is the best way to decide whether this assumption will be violated or not.

When considering standardized DFBeta which means the difference between a parameter estimated using all cases and estimated when one case is excluded was controlled. The maximum value of DFBeta was not higher than the cutoff value of 1 so this assumption was not violated. With the aim of controlling Mahalanobis Distances, critical χ^2 with $\alpha=.001$ and $df=6$ (number of predictors) was checked. The critical χ^2 had a value of 22.46 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and only one case had a greater value (25.71) than critical χ^2 . With regard to Cook's Distances, according to Cook and Weisberg (1982), values higher than 1 may be cause for concern, in this study, there was no problematic value which was greater than 1. For that reason Cook's distance assumption was met. As a result, according to diagnostic procedures performed there was no problem to continue with the main statistical analyses since no cases were identified as influential cases.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Before conducting the main statistical analysis, descriptive characteristics of the sample were investigated. Since the percentages for gender variable is given in method part, means, standard deviations, possible and actual range scores for other predictor variables and the criterion variable are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables (N=344)

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Possible Range</i> | <i>Actual Range</i> |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Criterion Variable | | | | |
| Romantic Relationship Satisfaction | 39.70 | 7.17 | 7-49 | 13-49 |
| Predictor Variables | | | | |
| Self Concept Clarity | 3.00 | .50 | 1-4 | 1-4 |
| Purpose in Life* | 13.83 | 3.07 | 4-20 | 4-20 |
| Self-efficacy* | 17.41 | 3.56 | 5-25 | 7-25 |
| Age | 20.85 | 1.65 | 18-25 | 18-25 |
| Duration of Relationship** | 21.15** | 20.17** | | 1-99** |

Note. * = Subscales of MAPSSF; ** = Months

According to descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.1, the sample reported moderate levels of purpose in life ($M = 13.83$, $SD = 3.07$); high levels of romantic relationship satisfaction ($M = 39.70$, $SD = 7.17$), self concept clarity ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .50$) and self-efficacy ($M = 17.41$, $SD = 3.56$) when compared with the possible range scores.

4.3. Assumption Checks of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

In order to be sure about accuracy of the data for hierarchical regression, assumptions of the hierarchical regression were controlled. The main assumptions of the hierarchical regression analysis are as follows: variable types (variables should be

quantitative or categorical with two levels), normality of residuals, independence of errors, no perfect multicollinearity, influential observation, homoscedasticity and independent observations (Field, 2009).

To begin with, five of the predictor variables (age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity, purpose in life and self-efficacy) and the criterion variable (romantic relationship satisfaction) were quantitative. Gender was dummy coded and then entered to the model as predictor variable. This information indicated no violation with regard to assumption of variable types (Field, 2009).

To test the normality of residuals, histogram and normal P-P plot were controlled and results yielded almost normal distribution which met the assumption (Field, 2009).

For checking the assumption of interdependence of errors, Durbin Watson statistic was used. The value should be between 1.5 and 2.5 not to violate the assumption (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In the present study, Durbin Watson value is 1.87 indicating no violation of the assumption.

With regard to homoscedasticity assumption, the scatter plots of the regression were checked. There was no apparent pattern as an evidence of homoscedasticity in the scatter plot (Field, 2009), therefore homoscedasticity assumption was met.

To check the multicollinearity assumption, firstly correlations between the predictors were controlled. There was not any relationship higher than .90 which was an evidence of no perfect multicollinearity (Field, 2009). The correlation matrix revealed no multicollinearity among predictor variables (see Table 4.2).

Additionally, Tolerance and VIF values were checked. As all of the Tolerance values were higher than .20 and all of the VIF values were smaller than 4, multicollinearity assumption was met (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

To conclude since the main assumptions of the multiple regression analysis were met, there was no problem to conduct the further analysis.

4.4. Bivariate Correlation Matrices of the Variables

Correlations between the predictor variables and criterion variable are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Correlation Matrix of the Variables

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
| 1. Romantic Relationship Satisfaction | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| 2. Gender | -.005 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| 3. Age | 0.5 | .12* | 1.00 | | | | |
| 4. Duration of Relationship | 0.7 | -.18** | .28** | 1.00 | | | |
| 5. Self Concept Clarity | .29** | .03 | .08 | -.02 | 1.00 | | |
| 6. Purpose in Life | .26** | -.01 | .01 | -.03 | .35** | 1.00 | |
| 7. Self-efficacy | .16 ** | .17 ** | -.03 | -.07 | .34** | .33** | 1.00 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As can be seen from the Table 4.2.criterion variable (romantic relationship satisfaction) was significantly and positively correlated with self concept clarity ($r =$

.29, $p < .01$), purpose in life ($r = .26, p < .01$) and self-efficacy ($r = .16, p < .01$).

Duration of relationship was significantly and negatively correlated with gender ($r = -.18, p < .01$) and positively correlated with age ($r = .28, p < .01$). Moreover, self concept clarity was found positively correlated with purpose in life ($r = .35, p < .01$) and self-efficacy ($r = .34, p < .01$). Lastly, purpose in life was positively correlated with self-efficacy ($r = .33, p < .01$).

4.5. Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

For the main research question, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in order to examine how well gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity and personal agency (namely, purpose in life and self-efficacy) predicted the romantic relationship satisfaction. In hierarchical regression analysis, the researcher decides in which order to enter variables into to the model based on the past research (Field, 2009). In the current study, gender, age and duration of relationship variables were entered into the analysis as model 1 predictors in order to examine their effects on other variables. Since the relationship between self concept clarity and romantic relationship satisfaction has been emphasized (Lewandowski, 2010), self concept clarity was entered into the analysis in the second model. Lastly, dimensions of personal agency (purpose in life and self-efficacy) were entered to the analysis as model 3 predictors. Summary of hierarchical regression analysis results is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary for Variables Predicting Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>t</i> |
|--------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|
| <i>Model 1</i> | | | | |
| Constant | 36.64 | 5.03 | | 7.29 |
| Gender | .03 | .88 | .00 | .04 |
| Age | .12 | .25 | .03 | .49 |
| Duration of Relationship | .02 | .02 | .06 | 1.05 |
| <i>Model 2</i> | | | | |
| Constant | 26.51 | 5.17 | | 5.13 |
| Gender | -.04 | .84 | -.00 | -.05 |
| Age | .02 | .24 | .00 | .07 |
| Duration of Relationship | .03 | .02 | .07 | 1.31 |
| Self Concept Clarity | 4.12 | .75 | .29 | 5.51** |
| <i>Model 3</i> | | | | |
| Constant | 22.47 | 5.30 | | 4.24 |
| Gender | -.03 | .84 | -.00 | -.04 |
| Age | .02 | .24 | .00 | .10 |
| Duration of Relationship | .03 | .02 | .08 | 1.47 |
| Self Concept Clarity | 3.04 | .82 | .21 | 3.73** |
| Purpose in Life | .41 | .13 | .18 | 3.13* |
| Self-efficacy | .08 | .12 | .04 | .69 |

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

According to the results, explained variances were examined by R Square values because sample size was quite enough by providing the formula of “ $N > 50 + 8$ IVs” according to Green (1991). 2% of the variance in romantic relationship satisfaction was explained by model 1 which contains predictors of gender, age and duration of relationship. For Model 1, the results of F-test indicated a non-significant F value, $F(3, 340) = .61, p > .05$. Also, as it is seen from the Table 4.3, model 1 predictors (gender, age, duration of the relationship) did not predict the romantic relationship satisfaction significantly.

After accounting the model 1 predictors, self concept clarity was added to the model 2. Self concept clarity predicted the romantic relationship satisfaction significantly ($R^2 = .09, F(4, 339) = 8.07, p = .000$) In order to determine explained variance in each step, R Square Change values were used, in model 2 in addition to first model. 8% of variance was explained by adding the predictor of self concept clarity.

In model 3, in addition to previous predictors (gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity), purpose in life and self-efficacy were added to the model. After controlling the model 2 predictors, model 3 indicated a significant F value $F(6, 337) = 7.54, p < .05$. Purpose in life predicted the romantic relationship satisfaction significantly $R^2 = .12, F(6, 337) = 8.07, p < .05$ whereas self-efficacy did not $R^2 = .12, F(6, 337) = 8.07, p > .05$. In order to define the unique variance of purpose in life, the square of Part value was calculated. Of 3% of the variance in romantic relationship satisfaction was explained uniquely by purpose in life. Overall, 12% of the variance in romantic relationship satisfaction was explained by model 3. In the last and third model, there were two variables which predicted the romantic

relationships significantly: self concept clarity and purpose in life. When self concept clarity and purpose in life were compared in terms of their contributions to the criterion variable, self concept clarity made the largest contributions ($\beta = .21$) to the romantic relationship satisfaction.

To conclude, in this chapter findings of the analyses were presented. According to hierarchical regression analysis it was seen that only self concept clarity and purpose in life dimension of personal agency significantly predicted the romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, results of the present study are discussed in line with the relevant literature. Afterwards, implications about the findings of the study are presented. Lastly, recommendations for further research are suggested.

5.1. Discussion of the Results

The main purpose of the current study was to investigate the predictive role of gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity and personal agency in romantic relationship satisfaction among emerging adults. Self-esteem, purpose in life, internal locus of control and self-efficacy are the dimensions of the personal agency. Since the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the self-esteem and the internal locus of control dimensions were found below .70, these dimensions were not included in the further analyses and so do discussion part.

In order to examine the how well five predictors namely gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity, purpose in life and self-efficacy predicted the romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults, a hierarchical regression analysis with three model was performed. Since there is no research based on the

current knowledge of the researcher examining the relationship between personal agency and romantic relationship satisfaction, the results of the study with respect to personal agency are discussed in light of the empirical studies conducted with its dimensions. Moreover, literature on the relationships between each predictor and romantic relationship satisfaction will be presented as an indirect support for the current findings.

Gender, age and duration of the relationship were variables which were included in to the analysis as model 1 predictors. According to hierarchical regression analysis, gender was not a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the relevant literature. There are several studies found the same results (Beştav, 2007; Troy, 2000; Wongpakaran et al., 2011). According to Beştav (2007) this finding can be explained by the mean of the duration of relationship that provides to make an interpretation of the stage of a relationship. In her study, duration of relationship ranged from 12 to 36 months, and this finding was concluded as the participants were in the beginning of their relationships. Therefore, it was expected that they have a tendency to report higher relationship satisfaction which leads not to observe the differences caused by gender. Considering this information, since the mean value of duration of the relationship was 21 months of the current study, this result seems not surprising.

Age was another predictor variable of the study. In the current study, age range was 18 - 25 where 18 and 25 represents the beginning of the emerging adulthood and the end of the emerging adulthood respectively. It is thought that this range could predict the romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults but like gender, age was not a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction. One

possible explanation of this particular finding may be that the participants of the current study are all in the same life stage. In other words, the participants of the present study were consisted of individuals who are in emerging adulthood period and experiences the similar feelings, thoughts and confusions in their lives. As it is mentioned in introduction part, emerging adulthood period have its own characteristics especially in romantic relationships. Arnett (2000) explained these characteristics of emerging adulthood by emphasizing their seriousness, intimacy and longevity. Moreover, some questions gain importance in this period like “What kind of person do I wish to have as a partner through life?” (Arnett, 2000, p.473; Fincham & Cui, 2011). Consequently, as the participants of the current study were in the same period it can be speculated that the main question regarding the romantic relationships seems to be the same notwithstanding individual is 18 or 25.

Duration of the relationship was another predictor variable of the study. Like other model 1 predictors, duration of relationship was not a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction. There is a recent study in the literature that supports this finding. Wongpakaran et al. (2011) indicated that length of a relationship did not correlate with relationship satisfaction. In addition to this study, Troy (2000) stated that length of the relationship was not significantly associated with romantic relationship satisfaction. These findings give importance to the unstudied factors which can be related with duration of relationship. Previous studies showed that several factors mediates the duration of relationship, such as emotional control (Feeney, 1999), sexual arousal, sexual intimacy, attachment (Birnbaum, 2007) and physical appeal (Furman & Winkles, 2010).

There is another finding about duration of relationship to discuss. According to correlation analysis, duration of relationship was found significantly and positively correlated with age in the present study ($r = .28, p < .01$). This finding is parallel to the literature (Wilson & Cousins, 2003). In other words, duration of relationship increases with age and based on the emerging adulthood literature, it can be said that this finding is not surprising. Emerging adulthood is the age of identity explorations and emerging adults are supported to try out different possibilities in love (Arnett, 2004). In Turkey, emerging adulthood period overlaps with the university life period. Since during the university life period, emerging adults are more individualistic, have social freedoms and start to investigate the relationships both with the same sex and the opposite sex, university environment gives this trying out opportunities to the emerging adults (Reischl & Hirsch, 1989). It can be assumed that when emerging adults get older, they gain more relationship experiences. Thereby, they may have a chance to clarify their expectations from a romantic relationship in the course of time. By this way, they can stay in relationships longer than before.

Another variable of the study was self concept clarity which was included in to the analysis in model 2. Results indicated that self concept clarity was a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction. Studies investigating the relationship between self concept clarity and romantic relationship satisfaction are sparse. Therefore, general studies will be presented that might have been related to the study variables. However, one study found that self concept clarity was positively associated with romantic relationship satisfaction parallel to the result of the current study (Lewandowski et al., 2010). On the other hand, this finding of the present study is contrast to the previous studies such as Campbell and Di Paula (2002) found

in a longitudinal study that individuals who have high level of self concept clarity were more likely to be perfectionists. According to Hewitt and Flett (1993), perfectionist individuals are more like to have stress, depression, and unrealistically high self-standards when one of the goals is not accomplished. Considering the negative characteristics of perfectionism, Flett, Hewitt, Shapiro and Rayman (2001) linked perfectionism to less romantic relationship satisfaction. In the same vein, dyadic perfectionism is also found negatively associated with romantic relationship satisfaction and long-term commitment as expected (Stoeber, in press).

Self concept clarity was found positively correlated with sexual well-being (Huckers et al., 2010), subjective well-being (Ritchie et al. 2011), and conflict management (Bechtoldt et al. 2010) and these variables were found to be positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction (Bechtoldt et al. 2010; Çelen-Demirtaş, 2010; Troy, 2000). According to Bechtoldt et al. (2010), individuals with higher self- concept clarity were generally more active and showed more cooperative problem-solving behavior than people with low self-concept clarity. Therefore, dyad members with higher self concept clarity were good at problem solving which leads to more relationship satisfaction while members with lower self concept clarity were not. Considering information stated above, predictor role of the self concept clarity on romantic relationship satisfaction seems not surprising and becomes more meaningful.

Purpose in life and self-efficacy are other predictors of the study which constitute the model 3 predictors. According to results of the current study, purpose in life was found to be a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction.

Considering the available literature, there is no study contains relationship satisfaction and purpose in life directly. Thus, this finding will be supported with regard to purpose in life literature. According to Whitty (2003), purpose in life was positively associated with mature defense mechanisms and coping strategies. Since the positive coping strategies were positively associated with romantic relationship satisfaction (Bowman, 1990), it can be assumed for the present study that purpose in life might have predicted romantic relationship satisfaction via coping strategies.

Another predictor variable of the study was self-efficacy which was not a statistically significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction. In the available literature, there is no study directly related to self-efficacy and romantic relationship satisfaction. Thus, making a comparison with previous studies is not possible. Therefore, findings of the current study will be discussed with the self-efficacy literature. Nevertheless, this finding is not consistent with the results of a previous study (Lopez et al., 2007). In that study, the positive role of the self-efficacy in romantic relationships was emphasized. When considering the information above, this particular result seems unexpected. Hence, for the current study, it can be argued that there may be some other possible factors that affected the participants' self-efficacy beliefs such as past experiences, emotional mood (psychological responses) and stress level.

In summary, in order to examine the predictive power of the gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity, purpose in life and self-efficacy, a hierarchical regression analysis with three model was conducted and it was found that 12% of the variance in romantic relationship satisfaction was explained by model 3. As it is mentioned in the beginning of the discussion part, this study takes a

role of a pioneer study in the literature focusing on the predictor roles of self concept clarity and personal agency on romantic relationship satisfaction. Therefore, this result can not be discussed or compared with the previous studies regarding their predictive powers. On the other hand, several studies linked romantic relationship satisfaction with some variables such as self-disclosure (Billeter, 2002), communication skills (Eğeci & Gençöz, 2006), personality (Aydoğdu, 2010; White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004), emotional support (Cramer, 2004b), attachment styles (Butzer & Campbell, 2008; Li & Chan, 2012; Steuber, 2005), perceived empathy (Cramer & Jowett, 2010) and relationship costs and rewards (Rusbult, 1980). Hence, it can be speculated for the current study that, relationship satisfaction of the participants might have been affected from the other variables mentioned above.

5.2. Implications of the Findings

Considering the findings of the present study, several implications for practice can be drawn.

To begin with, in the present study, there are two significant predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults. First one is purpose in life dimension of personal agency. According to Frankl (1988), daily activities, experiencing things or encountering people and dealing with suffering are factors that affect one's purpose in life (as cited in DeWitz, 2004). Therefore, counselors may try to gain information about clients' life with regard to these factors to understand their life purposes. Moreover, counselors in university counseling centers can conduct an orientation program to the university students in order to organize the environment to become more available to experience new things and encounter

people. Additionally, counselors may organize seminars to university students in order to support and encourage their daily activities. These daily activities can be consisted of joining a student club, sport team or doing hobbies etc.

Furthermore, a counselor both in schools or university counseling centers may prepare some videos to show students or utilize cinematherapy including factors affecting a healthy relationship such as conflict management, relationship self-efficacy beliefs and commitment etc.

Additionally, Beheshtifar and Rahimi-Nezhad (2012) indicated that self concept is a construct that no one is born with it, it can be learned. It gradually develops and is shaped and reshaped through repeated perceived experiences, especially with significant others. Since, romantic partners are the significant others for the emerging adults (Demir, 2010), their communication styles and feedbacks take importance for a consistent self concept clarity. Thus, a counselor may give information about importance of partners' feedbacks in individual or couple therapies to whom applied for romantic relationship problems. At this time, training some skills may be useful for this aim such as teaching 'I language'. Also, university counseling centers could prepare a relationship education or relationship enrichment programs including these concepts and it may be helpful to improve romantic relationship satisfaction via increasing self concept clarity and purpose in life.

Lastly, in order to attract attention to explain the importance of romantic relationships in an emerging adult's life, using media could be beneficial for counselors to reach more significant others (family members, best friends, romantic partners, if any). By this way, a counselor can give information about the role of self

concept clarity and purpose in life in romantic relationship satisfaction and hence, levels of self concept clarity and purpose in life may be increased indirectly.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Research

The first recommendation for future researchers is that more empirical studies can be performed about romantic relationship satisfaction considering the self concept clarity and personal agency variables both in the forms of quantitative and qualitative.

Second, the present study is correlational in nature and as a result of it, the cause effect relations can not be observed between the variables. Hence, in future studies, in order to figure out the cause effect relations between romantic relationship satisfaction and predictor variables of the study, experimental studies can be conducted. For instance, effects of an enrichment program on life purposes can be tested with experimental design to provide a better understanding about its effect.

Third, this study is limited with the participants consist of university students who are in emerging adulthood period. Conducting new studies including different age groups and different backgrounds such as participants who are not attending a university can be beneficial to understand factors associated with romantic relationship satisfaction in different samples.

Fourth, in the present study, 5 items were excluded from the MAPSSF as a result of factor analyses. Therefore, personal agency scale may be further examined with larger sample sizes and alternative scales should be used or developed to provide different perspectives to the literature.

Fifth, in the present study, sample was selected from a medium level rural university by using convenience sampling. Hence, in order to improve the generalizability of the current results, rather than convenient sampling, random sampling can be used. In addition, larger samples including participants from different regions of Turkey should be involved in the future studies.

Sixth, the main purpose of the current study was to determine the predictor role of the gender, age, duration of relationship, self concept clarity, purpose in life and self-efficacy on romantic relationship satisfaction. However, as it is stated in literature and discussion parts, there may be other variables such as attachment styles (Butzer & Campbell, 2008; Li & Chan, 2012; Steuber, 2005), personality traits based on big five theory (Aydoğdu, 2010; White, Hendrick, S., & Hendrick, C., 2004), irrational beliefs (Sarı, 2008), love attitudes (Beştav, 2007), consensus change (Cramer, 2001) and commitment (Madey & Rodgers, 2009; Ng & Cheng, 2010) that associate or mediate with relationship satisfaction. Therefore future research may focus on these variables. Moreover, available literature pointed out the association between religion and/or spirituality and purpose in life (Francis, Jewell & Robbins, 2010; Gerwood, LeBlanc & Piazza, 1998). Since purpose in life was found to be a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction in the present study, the mediator role of religion and/or spirituality could be examined in further studies.

Lastly, performing longitudinal studies including different life stages may be efficacious in order to examine the change in romantic relationship satisfaction of individuals.

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APPENDIX A

PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

Değerli katılımcı,

Aşağıdaki ölçekler üniversite öğrencilerinin kişilik özelliklerini ve romantik ilişki doyumlarını belirlemek amacı ile hazırlanmıştır. Verdiğiniz yanıtlar gizli tutulacak ve elde edilen sonuçlar sadece akademik çalışma amacı ile kullanılacaktır. Doğru ya da yanlış cevap yoktur. Soruları içtenlikle yanıtlamanız araştırmanın sonuçları açısından önemlidir. Katkılarınız için teşekkür ederim.

Arş. Gör. Eda Çürükvelioğlu

Kırıkkale Üniversitesi

Psikolojik Danışmanlık ve Rehberlik Anabilim Dalı

Kişisel Bilgiler

1. Cinsiyetiniz : Kadın () Erkek ()
2. Yaşınız: _____
3. Kaçınıcı sınıfta okumaktasınız:
4. Daha önce hiç kız arkadaşınız/erkek arkadaşınız oldu mu? Evet () Hayır ()
5. Şu an devam eden bir romantik ilişkiniz var mı? Evet () Hayır ()
6. Ne kadar süredir ilişkinize devam etmektesiniz (Yıl ve ay olarak): _____

APPENDIX B

ÇOK YÖNLÜ EYLEMLİ KİŞİLİK ÖLÇEĞİ- KISA FORMU

(Sample Items)

Aşağıda sizin kendinizi tanımlamanıza ilişkin 20 ifade bulunmaktadır. Lütfen her bir ifadenin sizi ne kadar tanımladığını, ifadenin yanında verilen kutucuğu işaretleyerek belirtiniz. Her ifade için yalnızca bir kutucuğu işaretleyiniz.

| | | Tamamen yanlış | Yanlış | Kısmen doğru, Kısmen yanlış | Doğru | Tamamen Doğru |
|----|--|----------------|--------|--------------------------------|-------|------------------|
| 1 | İnsanlar benimle birlikteyken eğlenirler. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | Çoğu insan kadar sevilen biri değilim. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | Ben sorumluluk sahibi bir insanım. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | Başarı, çok çalışma meselesidir. Şansın başarıda hiçbir etkisi yoktur ya da çok azdır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | Ne kadar çalıştığım, aldığım notlar arasında doğrudan bir ilişki vardır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | Birçok insana göre, dikkat dağınıcı durumlarda dikkatimi daha iyi toplarım. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX C

BENLİK BELİRGİNLİĞİ ÖLÇEĞİ

(Sample Items)

Açıklama: Aşağıdaki her bir ifadenin sizi ne ölçüde tanımladığını karşılarındaki ifadeye göre değerlendiriniz. Hiç katılmıyorsanız (1)'i, katılmıyorsanız (2)'yi, katılıyorsunuz (3)'ü ve tamamen katılıyorsunuz (4)'ü işaretleyiniz.

| | | Hiç katılmıyorum | Katılmıyorum | Katılıyorum | Tamamen katılıyorum |
|----|---|------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Kendime ilişkin inançlarım sıklıkla birbiriyle çatışır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2 | Kendim hakkında bir gün bir görüş, başka bir gün ise farklı bir görüşüm olabilir. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | Bazen, başkalarını kendimi tanıdığımdan daha iyi tanıdığımı düşünüyorum. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12 | Benim için bir konu hakkında karara varmak oldukça güç, çünkü ne istediğimi gerçekten bilmiyorum. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

APPENDIX D

İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ÖLÇEĞİ

(Sample Items)

Açıklama: Aşağıda ilişkinizi değerlendirmenize ilişkin 7 ifade bulunmaktadır. Lütfen her bir ifadenin size uygunluğunu 7 dereceli ölçek üzerinde değerlendirip ifadenin üzerine işaretleyiniz.

1. Sevgiliniz ihtiyaçlarınızı ne kadar iyi karşılıyor?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Hiç Çok iyi
karşılıyor karşılıyor

2. Genel olarak ilişkinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Hiç memnun Çok
değilim memnunuz

3. Diğerleri ile karşılaştırıldığında ilişkiniz ne kadar iyi?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Çok daha Çok daha
kötü iyi

ENSTİTÜ

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü
- Enformatik Enstitüsü
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Çürükvelioğlu
Adı : Eda
Bölümü : Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Romantic Relationship Satisfaction in Emerging Adulthood: The Role of Self Concept Clarity and Personal Agency

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası

Tarih