

THE EFFECTS OF ATTACHMENT ON MARITAL ADJUSTMENT IN NEWLY
MARRIED INDIVIDUALS: TESTING THE MEDIATOR ROLE OF CONFLICT
RESOLUTION STYLES

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ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF ATTACHMENT ON MARITAL ADJUSTMENT IN NEWLY MARRIED INDIVIDUALS: TESTING THE MEDIATOR ROLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES

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The main purpose of the current study was to investigate the mediating role of conflict resolution styles in the relationship between attachment dimensions (i.e., attachment anxiety and avoidance) and marital adjustment in newlyweds who are in the new couple stage. 380 newly married individuals who had been married less than 5 years, had no children, and were in their first marriages completed measures of Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R), Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS). A multiple mediator model suggesting that the relationship of attachment dimensions to marital adjustment was mediated by the conflict resolution styles was tested by using mediational analysis with Bootstrapping sampling method. Overall, the results provided considerable support for some mediational mechanisms in the current sample of newlyweds. Analyses revealed that both positive and negative conflict resolution styles partially mediated the relationship between anxiety dimension of attachment and marital adjustment. Negative conflict resolution style also partially mediated the association between avoidance dimension of attachment and marital adjustment. Findings highlighted the importance of dysfunctional conflict resolution styles as an underlying mechanism through the relationship between attachment characteristics and satisfaction in newlywed marriage. The findings of the current study were discussed in the light of the related literature.

Keywords: Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance, Marital Adjustment, Conflict Resolution Styles, Newlywed Marriage.

ÖZ

YENİ EVLİ BİREYLERDE BAĞLANMA BOYUTLARININ EVLİLİK UYUMU ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ: ÇATIŞMA ÇÖZÜM STİLLERİNİN ARACI ROLÜ

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Bu araştırmanın amacı yeni evli bireylerde bağlanma boyutları (kaygı ve kaçınma) ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözme stillerinin aracı rolünü incelemektir. Evlilik süresi 5 yılı aşmamış, çocuk sahibi olmayan ve ilk evliliğinde olan 380 yeni evli bireye Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri II (YIYE-II), Çiftler Uyum Ölçeği (ÇUÖ) ve Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri Ölçeği (ÇÇSÖ) uygulanmıştır. Çatışma çözüm stillerinin bağlanma boyutları ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken rolü oynadığını öneren bir çoklu aracı değişken modeli bootstrapping yöntemi kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarının beklenen bazı aracı değişken mekanizmalarını desteklediği tespit edilmiştir. Bağlanmanın kaygı boyutu ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide olumlu ve olumsuz çatışma çözüm stillerinin kısmi aracı değişken rolü üstlendiği bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili bağlanmanın kaçınma boyutu ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide de kısmi aracı değişken rolü üstlenmektedir. Bulgular özellikle olumsuz çatışma çözüm stiline kişilerin bağlanma özellikleri ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide evliliğin ilk yıllarında önemli bir rol oynadığını vurgulamaktadır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular ilgili literatür ışığında tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kaygılı ve Kaçınmacı Bağlanma, Evlilik Uyumu, Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri, Yeni Evlilik.

To my safe haven, Ekin...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, firstly, background information on the topic of the current study will be presented. Secondly, purpose of the study will be identified. Thirdly, research questions and hypotheses of the study will be listed. Lastly, significance and implications of the study will be discussed.

1.1. Background Information on the Topic of the Study

Marital status has been found to be a significant predictor of physical health and psychological well-being (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). For instance, Williams (2003) proposed that married men and women report lower levels of depression and higher levels of life satisfaction than individuals who are never-married, divorced/separated or widowed. However, although benefits of marriage have been well-defined in some studies, it is not the case that all marriages do certainly provide these benefits. Indeed, staying in an unhappy marriage result in lower levels of overall happiness, life satisfaction and self-esteem than being divorced (Hawkins & Booth, 2005). Consequently, having a satisfying marriage gains importance to receive the benefits of marriage mentioned above. At this point, it is not surprising that marital satisfaction has captured a widespread attention of the researchers in 1990s and it has become a broadly investigated area (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000).

Although there has been a great deal of research investigating marital quality, the conceptualization of the term has been ambiguous due to the disagreement on the terminology. The researchers in the area have preferred different terms to study the concept of marital quality. The most frequently used terms employed in research related to marital quality are "marital satisfaction", "marital adjustment", and "marital happiness" (Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994). These terms were typically used interchangeably to refer marital quality. Lively (1969) was one of the first researchers that has called attention to this ambiguity in the terminology and proposed that although "success", "happiness", and "adjustment" were commonly used as synonyms, certain distinctions between the definitions of such basic terms ought to be

established. For example, Hoult (1969; as cited in Fıfılođlu & Demir, 2000) proposed that marital adjustment is a composite term consisting of numerous aspects such as spouses' amount of conflict and shared activities and these aspects are linked with the happiness or success of a given marriage. On the other hand, Lively (1969) contributed to the literature by making clear definitions of these three terms to establish a scientific base for the study related to marital interaction. Marital adjustment was defined by Lively (1969) as the ongoing progress of the relationship between husbands and wives. Nevertheless, although some researchers attempted to differentiate the conceptualizations of these three terms, Heyman et al. (1994) claimed that the commonly used measures of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment were very highly correlated. Hence, it can be proposed that these concepts have basically similar senses to refer marital quality.

Understanding about what contributes to marital quality has gained great importance in the field. Therefore, marital quality in connection to its individual and relationship correlates has been studied extensively in the literature. Those underlying individual factors that contribute to marital quality include gender (Feeney, 1994; Gabriel, Beach, & Bodenmann, 2010), gender roles (Faulkner, Davey, & Davey, 2005; Stanik & Bryant, 2012), presence-absence of children (Lawrence, Rothman, Cobb, Rothman, & Bradbury, 2008), personality traits (Gattis, Berns, Simpson, & Christensen, 2004; Sangeeta & Jayanti, 2014), religiosity (Sullivan, 2001), or similarity in religious beliefs (Hünler & Gençöz, 2005). Several studies have also been conducted to investigate marital quality in relation to relationship correlations such as marriage order (Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007; Bir-Akturk & Fisiloglu, 2009), length of marriage (Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007), communication (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005; Rehman & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2007), or sexual satisfaction (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005, Yeh et al., 2006).

Attachment has been identified as another major variable that accounts for individual variations in marital functioning (Bradbury et al., 2000). Attachment theory provides a capable theoretical basis for understanding adult romantic affairs including marital relationships. Bowlby (1969, p. 194), the pioneer of attachment theory, basically defined attachment as “a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings”. The basic assumption of attachment theory is that close proximity and

contact with an available and responsive caregiver is essential to develop a sense of security for an infant under stressful situations (Bowlby, 1969). In the 1980's, the original theory of attachment, explored mainly in relation to infant-parent relationship, was extended to adult romantic attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The suggestion that romantic love can also be theorized based on attachment patterns of lovers just as affectional bonds formed between infants and caregivers (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) reached a milestone in the research of adult attachment. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), adult romantic partners function as similar as primary caregivers to satisfy the basic attachment needs in close relationships such as the need for proximity, a secure base and a safe haven. Following these ideas, researchers have used attachment theory as a valuable framework for understanding adult romantic relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Feeney, Noller, & Callan, 1994; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004).

With its deep roots in the dynamics of relationship, attachment has been broadly investigated with several individual and relationship factors such as gender (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Shi, 2003), self-esteem (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1990), romantic jealousy (Karakurt, 2012; Marshall, Bejanyan, Di Castro, & Lee, 2013), love styles (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1990), conflict (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989; Pistole & Arricale, 2003), affect regulation (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005), perceptions of social support (Collins & Feeney, 2004), communication (Feeney, 1994; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Millwood & Waltz, 2008), sexual satisfaction (Butzer & Campbell, 2008; Clymer, Ray, Trepper, & Pierce, 2006), and relationship satisfaction (Tucker & Anders, 1999; Pistole, 1989; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004).

Since the publication of the groundbreaking study of Hazan and Shaver (1987), there have been numerous studies (Feeney, 1999b) investigating the link between attachment dimensions or styles and quality of dating and marital relationships. For instance, in one of the initial dyadic studies of adult attachment, Collins and Read (1990) found that individuals who feel more securely attached to their dating partners feel that their relationship is more satisfying and have partners who report more satisfied feelings. Specifically, women whose partners got lower scores in avoidance were more likely to be satisfied from their relationship, whereas men reported more

satisfaction when their partners were less anxious. Another study by Tucker and Anders (1999) revealed that for women, only attachment anxiety predicted relationship dissatisfaction, whereas for men, both anxiety and avoidance dimensions decreased satisfaction of their relationship. More recently, in a college sample of romantic couples, Sümer and Cozzarelli (2004) examined the mediating role of partner attributions in the relationship between attachment dimensions and relationship satisfaction at individual level. The findings of their study showed that attachment security has been associated with lower levels of negative attributions of partners, consequently, resulting in a higher relationship satisfaction.

Besides emotional bonds between dating romantic partners, marriage, the established and official form of couple bond, is an ideal example of attachment relationship in adulthood (Selcuk, Zayas, & Hazan, 2010). Therefore, in addition to studies investigating relationship satisfaction of dating couples, a great deal of research examined relationship quality of married couples from an attachment theory perspective. Beginning with the earliest studies conducted in this field, a significant positive relationship between secure attachment and marital adjustment has been consistently shown in several researches. In one of the leading studies, Kobak and Hazan (1991) found that attachment security of both wives and husbands were significantly and positively associated with reports of marital adjustment. Moreover, Feeney (1994) revealed that for both husbands and wives, anxiety dimension was significantly related with lower marital satisfaction. However, comfort with closeness (avoidance dimension) was a significant predictor for only wives, but not for husbands. Regarding partner attachment, there was a negative association between wives' anxiety and husbands' marital satisfaction. Another prominent study conducted by Senchak and Leonard (1992) reported that secure couples in which both partners were securely attached reported higher marital adjustment and intimacy than insecure couples in which at least one partner was identified as insecure. In a more recent study, Banse (2004) also suggested that for both husbands and wives, secure attachment was associated with both own and the partner's higher marital satisfaction.

In the light of this literature, it can be proposed that there exists extensive empirical support for the association between attachment dimensions and/or styles and marital functioning (Banse, 2004; Feeney, 1994; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Senchak &

Leonard, 1992). Therefore, a growing body of attachment literature have recently tried to examine the potential mediating and/or moderating variables of this well-established relationship between attachment and marital quality. According to the literature to date, this link may be mediated and/or moderated by communication patterns (Feeney, 1994), coping strategies of spouses (Lussier, Sabourin, & Turgeon, 1997), negative affectivity (Davila, Bradbury, & Fincham, 1998), emotional control (Feeney, 1999a), positive perceptions about partner's attachment security, social support (Cobb, Davila, & Bradbury, 2001), perceptions of positive and negative spouse behavior (Feeney, 2002), psychological distress, social support (Meyers & Landsberger, 2002), and the use of dyadic coping (Fuenfhausen & Cashwell, 2013).

Conflict resolution is also of particular interest to researchers interested in marital relationships due to its possible relation to marital quality (e.g., Gottman, 1993; Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Tallman & Hsiao, 2004). Conflict can be defined as an interactive social state that takes place when there is a disagreement between the behaviors, goals, needs, desires or values of one individual and those of another (Peterson, 1983) and is an inevitable part of all close relationships. Unsurprisingly, as one of the strongest close relationships, conflict is a natural part of marriage as well. Indeed, it plays a vital role when attempting to understand the dynamics of marital relationships (Fincham, 2003). Mackey, Diemer, and O'Brien (2000) made a clear definition of marital conflict by suggesting that it is "a state of reported disharmony in marital relationships that developed because of differences between spouses" (p. 135). Gottman (1993) stated that handling conflict is a crucial task to maintain a successful marriage. In order to manage conflict, the partners tend to engage in a patterned response including repeated use of actions, named as conflict resolution styles (Hocker & Wilmot, 1991).

Romantic relationships research has investigated conflict resolution styles with its numerous individual and relationship correlates such as gender (Shi, 2003), attachment styles (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Creasey, 2002; Pistole, 1989; Shi, 2003), forgiveness (Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2007), depressive symptoms (Marchand & Hock, 2000), neuroticism (Woszydlo & Segrin, 2013), relationship-oriented aspects of personality (Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002), emotional intelligence (Zeidner & Kloda, 2013), relationship satisfaction (Cramer, 2000), and marital

stability as well as the risk towards future marital dissolution/divorce (Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998).

A number of authors have argued that it is highly important to identify what specific conflict resolution styles are associated with marital adjustment or satisfaction (Kurdek, 1995). Managing regular marital problems effectively is very essential for spouses since if problems are not handled well, unsolved negative emotions starts to damage the positive features of the marital relationship (Markman, 1991b). The longitudinal study of Gottman and Levenson (1992) has provided important information on the contribution of conflict management of couples to their marital satisfaction. Using an observational data, it was found that nonregulated couples, whose conflict behaviors were more negative than positive, were more likely to display engagement in severe conflicts, stubbornness, withdrawal from interaction, and defensiveness. Furthermore, they were more likely to report lower marital satisfaction at both initial assessment and a 4-year follow-up; therefore, they had a greater risk for marital dissolution and divorce compared to regulated couples. In another prominent study relying on a longitudinal design, stable couples, who behave more positively in the manner of problem solving, were found to be more satisfied in their marriages and less likely to get divorced than unstable couples (Gottman, 1993). In a more recent longitudinal study, Tallman and Hsiao (2004) demonstrated that cooperative behaviors during one period has been significantly associated with marital satisfaction in the subsequent period. Moreover, couples who divorced or separated in the progress of the study got significantly lower scores in cooperative behaviors compared to the couples whose marriages sustained. Based on their results, the researchers proposed that the effective strategies including cooperation and compromise to resolve marital disagreements predicted marital satisfaction in the course of marriage.

Attachment security and conflict resolution styles of couples are not only separately related to relationship and/or marital satisfaction as discussed so far, but also jointly contribute it. A few studies investigated the mediator/moderator role of conflict resolution styles in the relationship between attachment and relationship and/or marital satisfaction. However, these studies have reported mixed findings. For instance, in a study conducted by Marchand (2004), the associations between attachment orientations, conflict resolution styles (attacking and compromising) and

marital quality of husbands and wives were investigated. The author found that conflict resolution styles played a significant mediator role in attachment-marital satisfaction relationship for wives only. Specifically, wives' attachment anxiety was associated with higher levels of attacking behaviors in conflict resolution, which was associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction. More recently, Saavedra, Chapman, and Rogge (2010) found some support for the hypothesis that hostile conflict behaviors would moderate the relationship between attachment anxiety and relationship satisfaction but the hypothesis regarding to attachment avoidance was not supported. That is, high levels of hostile conflict behaviors were most strongly linked with lower relationship satisfaction for only individuals with high levels of attachment anxiety, but not attachment avoidance. The authors argued that although the results supported a strong direct effect of attachment avoidance on relationship satisfaction, attachment avoidance seemed to be less affected by other factors, i.e. hostile conflict behaviors. In another study, Cann, Norman, Welbourne, and Calhoun (2008) tested a mediation model, in which four conflict resolution styles (avoiding, dominating, integrating, obliging) served as a mediator in the link between attachment dimensions and relationship satisfaction. Contrary to the findings of Marchand (2004) and Saavedra et al. (2010), the data gathered in this study suggested that conflict resolution styles mediated the relationship between both anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment and relationship satisfaction. Less avoidant participants reported greater tendency to use integrating and obliging, and lower tendency to use dominating conflict resolution styles, which subsequently contributed their higher relationship satisfaction. Additionally, less anxious respondents were more likely to use integrating, and were less likely to use dominating conflict styles, which in turn predicted higher relationship satisfaction.

Stage of the family life cycle can also be thought as a factor playing a role in the attachment change processes as well as conflict resolution pattern changes in the marriage. Of the stages of family life cycle, "the new couple" stage is a process during which two young adults form a marital system and expected to be committed to this new system by adapting spouse roles (Nichols, 2010). The data yielded by the study of Feeney (1994) provides evidence that attachment pattern is not strictly stable and prone to change throughout the family life cycle. Although the study used a very

simple criteria for defining life cycles of marriage (only length of marriage was considered) and therefore suffered from some methodological problems, the results are still important in the context of attachment change. Generally, Feeney (1994) found that the couples married for up to 10 years reported higher anxiety compared to those married for more than 20 years. Moreover, husbands married for up to 10 years showed higher avoidance than those who were in longer term marriages. On the basis of the findings, Feeney (1994) discussed that effects of attachment orientations may be more obvious in the early years of marriage during which couples deal with formation of a new relational system and challenge concerns about commitment to this new system. Similarly, Davila, Karney, and Bradbury (1999) claimed that early stages of marriage increase the chances of attachment change and investigated the attachment change processes in newlyweds in the first 2 years of their marriage. Davila et al. (1999) found evidence for increased attachment security of spouses over time. That is, newly married spouses tend to become both less anxious and less avoidant as their relationship develops. Crowell, Treboux and Waters (2002) also conducted a longitudinal study in which they tested stability of attachment at 3 months before the marriage and after 18 months of marriage. The data appeared to suggest that insecure individuals became more secure across the transition to marriage.

In addition to attachment change processes, family life cycle may play a role in the modification of conflict resolution behaviors as well. Carstensen, Gottman and Levenson (1995) revealed that couples who have been married longer displayed less emotional negativity and more affection during conflict resolution. Therefore, it can be proposed that as duration of marriage increases, levels of displayed negative emotions decrease. In line with this, Tallman and Hsiao (2004) claimed that early years of marriage maximize the opportunity to study conflict resolution because first years of marriage are more susceptible to frequent and severe disagreements. Much earlier, Navran (1967; as cited in Zeidner & Kloda, 2013) proposed that newlyweds deal with problems related to couple adjustment (e.g., budget management, building in-law relationships), which force them to use effective communication skills. Likewise, Nichols (2010) explains why newly married individuals are more prone to conflict by suggesting that families usually face difficulties at transitions in the life cycle because adjusting to a new stage brings also new roles and tasks to be adjusted. In conclusion,

the new couple stage provides a strong base for examining both effects of attachment dimensions and conflict resolution styles.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

Although a few studies (Cann et al., 2008; Marchand, 2004; Saavedra et al., 2010) have directly investigated the mediational/moderational relationship between conflict resolution behaviors, attachment orientations, and relationship and/or marital satisfaction, of those studies, only Marchand (2004) sampled married couples. However, this study suffered from some methodological problems related to sample characteristics. Karney and Bradbury (1995) suggested that failing to make a distinction between childless couples and parents in the sample causes possible confounding variables, as in the case of Marchand (2004) using parents. Since the transition to parenthood may affect marital satisfaction in many different ways (Hirschberger et al., 2009), using a homogeneous newlywed sample allows one to detect the determinants of marital dissatisfaction better (e.g. attachment orientations and conflict) by eliminating the confounding variables, such as the number of children and couples with different length of marriages or with different marriage orders.

For this reason, the current study sought to extend the previous work by using a more homogeneous newlywed sample that are in the new couple period, childless, and in their first-time marriages. Hence, the major goal of the present study was to assess the mediating role of conflict resolution styles in the relationship between attachment dimensions and marital adjustment in newlywed individuals (see Figure 1). In other words, it was aimed to investigate how insecurely attached newlywed individuals handle conflict in their marriages, and in turn, how these conflict handling behaviors have an effect on their marital adjustment. Attachment was assessed in terms of its two dimensions, namely anxiety and avoidance. With regard to conflict resolution styles, the current study used four approaches: positive conflict resolution, negative conflict resolution, subordination, and retreat.

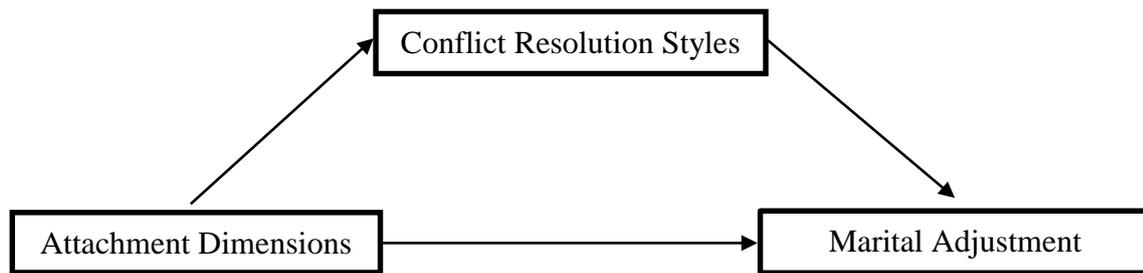


Figure 1. The Proposed Model for Mediational Role of Conflict Resolution Styles

1.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses of the Study

In the light of the regarding literature reviewed, the research questions of the current study were formulated as below:

RQ 1: What are the direct associations among the variables of attachment dimensions, conflict resolution styles, and marital adjustment in a sample of newlywed individuals that are in the new couple stage?

RQ 2: To what extent do conflict resolution styles mediate the relationship between attachment dimensions and marital adjustment in a sample of newlywed individuals that are in the new couple stage?

These research questions lead to the following hypotheses:

H 1: Attachment dimensions would be significantly associated with marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals who reported higher anxiety and avoidance would report lower marital adjustment.

H 2: Conflict resolution styles would be significantly associated with marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals who reported using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher retreat would report lower marital adjustment (Since evidence linking subordination and marital adjustment was inconsistent, no specific hypothesis with regard to subordination was set).

H 3: Attachment dimensions would be significantly associated with conflict resolution styles. Specifically, individuals who reported higher anxiety would report using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher subordination. Individuals who reported higher avoidance would report

using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher retreat.

Finally, the main mediational hypothesis of the current study was set as follow:

H 4: The relationship between attachment dimensions and marital adjustment would be mediated via conflict resolution styles.

1.4. Significance and Implications of the Study

To the best knowledge of the researcher, to date, only one study tested the mediational role of conflict resolution styles in the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction, which was conducted with a sample of parents (see Marchand, 2004). The current study is the first study testing the mediator role of conflict resolution styles in attachment-marital adjustment relationship in newly married individuals. That is, the main significance of this study is related to using a special subgroup of married individuals (i.e., being married for up to 5 years, childless, and in the first-time marriages) to detect better the effects of attachment orientations and conflict on marital adjustment.

Furthermore, in the Turkish literature, earlier studies investigating marital satisfaction usually focused separately on the aspects of attachment or conflict resolution behaviors (e.g., Özmen & Atik, 2010; Özen, 2006). Hence, a study examining the interrelationships between attachment dimensions, conflict-resolution styles, and marital satisfaction at the same time is absent in the literature in Turkey. The present study seeks to fill this gap in the Turkish literature by assessing marital adjustment with regard to adult attachment and conflict solution styles simultaneously.

In addition to its theoretical contribution, the current study will be also beneficial in the field of clinical practice. The hypothesized interrelationship between attachment dimensions, conflict resolution styles, and marital adjustment highlights the importance of attachment insecurities as an underlying factor which shapes partners' behavior of resolution in disagreements and consequently feelings of satisfaction in the marriage. Therefore, understanding the links between these variables will provide insight for clinical professionals, particularly for those working with couples.

In the light of the findings of this current study, while working with newlywed distressed couples seeking to enhance their marital quality, therapists may benefit from

the attachment information and its role in the conflict resolution patterns of the clients. Especially, since the results of the study are expected to provide additional insight to the dynamics of early marital relationships, clinicians may use findings yielded from the study to make an intervention related to conflict handling behaviors of newly married individuals. To achieve this, assessing the characteristics of anxiety and avoidance in the spouses and emphasizing how they affect conflict handling behaviors may help the therapist work on changing the destructive conflict behaviors into more constructive ones. By making the clients aware of their attachment insecurities as a key element in their destructive conflict behaviors, it is easier for clinicians to help the clients change these behaviors and enhance their marital satisfaction, which can be considered as the primary goal of the therapy.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following chapter will first provide a general literature review of attachment. Secondly, marriage literature will be discussed with its definition, the stages of family life cycle, and studies related to new couple stage. Then, an extensive literature review of marital adjustment and conflict resolution styles will be provided, respectively. Furthermore, researches in Turkey related to attachment, marital adjustment, and conflict resolution styles will be reviewed. Finally, the connection between the literature review and purpose of the study will be discussed.

2.1. Attachment

In this part, first, definition of the concept, a brief history of the attachment theory including basic aspects of attachment theoretical framework, and a discussion of measurement issues in attachment will be presented. Then, the empirical literature examining individual variables related to attachment will be summarized. Lastly, the literature on the relationship correlates related to attachment will be briefly reviewed.

2.1.1. Definition of Attachment and History of the Attachment Theory

As being one of the most leading theories used today in many different areas of contemporary psychology (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Berant, 2013), attachment theory provides a capable theoretical basis for understanding adult romantic affairs including marital relationships. Bowlby (1969, p. 194), the pioneer of attachment theory, basically defined attachment as “a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings”. Based on his observations of emotionally disturbed infants separated from their caregivers, Bowlby (1958) noticed the importance of infant-caregiver relationship in later psychological adjustment and developed attachment theory.

The basic assumption of attachment theory is that close proximity and contact with an available and responsive caregiver is essential to develop a sense of security for an infant in times of need (Bowlby, 1969). In parallel with this, the definition of attachment was extended to the emotional bond formed with an attachment figure

perceived as a secure base to satisfy the needs for proximity, security, comfort and reassurance (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1988). To attain the sense of attachment security for an infant, the attachment figure should serve three key characteristics defined by Bowlby (1982): “proximity maintenance” in times of need, providence of a “safe haven” that infants can return to for a source of support, reassurance, and care in the face of a threat, and lastly acting as a “secure base” from which the infant can safely and efficiently explore the surrounding environment and learn the world. Nevertheless, in the case of infants whose attachment figures have not been available, sensitive, and responsive enough, the sense of attachment security can not be achieved and therefore, individual differences in attachment security arise (Mikulincer et al., 2013).

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) expanded upon Bowlby’s initial theory by observing attachment behaviors of the children during the first year of life in a study called “strange situation”. In this study, the reactions of infants were observed in a setting in which they were firstly left alone and then reunited with their primary caregivers, who were usually their mothers. Based on these observations, researchers classified attachment behaviors into three main categories named as secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Infants in the secure category become troubled in the absence of their mothers but were easily reassured by the return of their mothers, and explored the unfamiliar environment safely in the presence of the mothers. In other words, secure infants were corresponded to Bowlby’s three main features of attachment: They sought proximity and contact with the caregiver, were easily returned to the caregiver as a safe haven for seeking support and comfort, and were able to use the caregiver as a secure base for active exploration. Mothers of secure infants were found to be consistently near, attentive, responsive to infant’s needs during home observations. Infants in the avoidant category, however, seemed not to be troubled by the absence of their mothers and avoided close contact with their mothers when they returned to the room. Mothers of avoidant infants were found to be consistently unresponsive, insensitive, and unavailable at home. Lastly, infants in the anxious/ambivalent category behaved extremely worried and frustrated when their mothers left the room, showed excessive protest behaviors when they reunited with the mothers, and were so preoccupied to their mothers that it prevented

them to explore the new environment. Mothers of anxious/ambivalent infants were inconsistently responsive to the infant's needs, that is, they were available sometimes and unresponsive or intrusive at other times (as cited in Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Caregiver responsiveness and quality of the infant-caregiver relationship play a central role in the attachment classification as mentioned above. These early experiences with primary caregivers contribute to a system of mental representations about the self and attachment figure over time, which was called "internal working models" by Bowlby (1969). Secure children gain a sense of confident self-image about themselves, and have positive beliefs about others as a consequence of consistent and sensitive care of the primary attachment figures. On the other hand, in response to inconsistent, insensitive, and neglectful care of attachment figures, insecure children acquire a sense of worthlessness, fear of abandonment in terms of the self, and develop mistrust about the intentions of others as well as fear of intimacy (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

According to Bowlby (1969), these internal working models of attachment shape thoughts, emotions, expectations, and behaviors in following close relationships throughout the life span. Indeed, Bowlby (1982) proposed that these internal working models or attachment processes are an inevitable part of human beings "from cradle to the grave" (p. 208). However, although attachment orientations were originally established through the relations with caregivers during infancy period, an individual's sense of attachment security may have changed by the quality of relationships with later attachment figures across the life (Bowlby, 1988). To put it another way, "attachment patterns set in infancy need not be fixed for life" (Hazan & Shaver, 1994, p.7). Indeed, a number of intimate relationship partners appear to serve as attachment figures beyond childhood, e.g. close friends, teachers, relatives, or romantic and sexual partners, whom Bowlby (1982) called "hierarchy of attachment figures." As opposed to parents during early childhood, an individual's most commonly attachment figure is his/her romantic or marital partner in adulthood (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Not surprisingly, in the 1980's, the original theory of attachment, explored mainly in relation to infant-parent relationship, was extended to adult romantic attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In their landmark study, Hazan and Shaver (1987) proposed that three categories of childhood attachment styles are translated later into

adult attachment styles in romantic relationships. In other words, the same three attachment styles defined by Ainsworth et al. (1978) were found to be later apparent in adult romantic love. Their research was based on the assumption that romantic love partners serve similar functions as the parents do during infancy in terms of satisfying the needs for proximity maintenance, having a safe haven, and a secure base. The results of their study found empirical support for the hypothesis that romantic love partners differ significantly in terms of three attachment styles. The adults that fell into secure category defined their most important love experience positively, e.g. trusting, friendly, intimate, happy, and enduring. The love relationships of adults in the avoidant category, however, were characterized by fear of intimacy, lack of trust, and avoidance of contact, especially in stressful times. Lastly, the love relationships of anxious/ambivalent adults were associated with an obsessive concern with the responsiveness of the partner, an excessive desire for sharing and union, emotional highs and lows, extreme sexual attraction, and being extremely jealousy. The researchers concluded that adults having different attachment styles “entertain different beliefs about the course of romantic love, the availability and trustworthiness of love partners, and their own love-worthiness” (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, p. 521).

The suggestion that romantic love can also be theorized based on attachment patterns of lovers just as affectional bonds formed between infants and caregivers (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) reached a milestone in the research of adult attachment. Following these ideas, researchers have used attachment theory as a valuable framework for understanding adult romantic relationships (e.g., Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Feeney, Noller, & Callan, 1994; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004). Researchers have been investigating the association between individual differences in attachment orientations and healthy functioning in romantic relationships for more than five decades. Further, a growing body of research was centered on the idea that “insecure attachment might be at the root of many dysfunctional behaviors contributing to relationship satisfaction and dissolution” (Hazan & Shaver, 1994, p. 16).

Since Hazan and Shaver (1987) has established the primary framework for the future studies of adult romantic attachment, there has been a debate over the method of measurement issues among researchers. Some researchers have preferred to assess

individual differences in attachment security in terms categorical measures, i. e., attachment styles or types (Feeney, 2002). Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first researchers who claimed attachment security can be assessed by the three attachment style categories (secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), then, noticed some differences among avoidant individuals and proposed that avoidant attachment can be categorized into two types: dismissing-avoidant and fearful-avoidant attachment. By this proposal, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) extended the previous three-category model to a new four-category model of adult attachment. However, more recently, other researchers have suggested to use a dimensional measure, which basically assesses two dimensions of attachment: attachment anxiety and avoidance (e.g., Brennan et al., 1998; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Indeed, recent findings revealed that dimensional measures based on attachment anxiety and avoidance appear to provide more accurate assessment rather than simple categorizations of individuals into one of the clear-cut attachment types. For instance, Sümer (2006) conducted a comparison analysis of the categorical and dimensional measures of attachment security in Turkish samples and found that attachment security is more precisely measured by continuous dimensions when compared to discrete categories.

As mentioned above, an individual's insecure attachment can be measured in terms of two dimensions, anxiety about rejection and avoidance of intimacy (Brennan et al., 1998). Attachment anxiety is based on a negative mental representation of the self, characterized by doubt about self-worthiness of love, fear of rejection, and beliefs on low likelihood of being sensitively cared by attachment figures (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). For instance, individuals who have high scores on anxiety have lower self-worth, lower social self-esteem, excessive worries about the availability of others when needed, and are more likely to have an obsessive/dependent love style (Collins & Read, 1990). Attachment avoidance is rooted in a negative model of others, characterized by fear of intimacy, distrust of others' goodwill, dislike of physical and emotional closeness, and extreme independence (Feeney, 2002). Avoidant individuals have a tendency to view others as less trustworthy, less dependable and perceive social world in a more negative way (Collins & Read, 1990). Indeed, Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) proposed that when the attachment system is activated, each adult attachment

style corresponds to a specific pattern of interpersonal behavior to deal with the relationship threats. Individuals with high attachment anxiety tend to use “hyperactivating strategies”, characterized by intensified proximity-seeking efforts to gain attention, support, care, and reassurance (i.e., frequently involving clingy, angry, intrusive, and controlling behaviors). Individuals with high attachment avoidance, however, do not trust their attachment figures to be available when needed and tend to use “deactivating strategies”, characterized by denial of intimacy needs, avoidance of emotional closeness, and an emphasis on excessive self-reliance and independence. Individuals differ in terms of degrees of anxiety and avoidance levels. People who are low on these two dimensions are considered as secure. Those secure individuals have generally positive view of self and others, believe that other are trustworthy and dependable, and they are able to seek support from others when their emotional resources are inadequate (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003).

2.1.2. Individual Variables Related to Attachment

The role of gender in the differences in attachment security has been widely researched and reported in the attachment literature. The data yielded by these studies revealed inconsistent results, however. In an earlier study using the three-category measure, no gender differences were found among anxious/ambivalent, avoidant and secure attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Similarly, Shi (2003) also failed to find gender differences among secure, fearful, dismissing and preoccupied attachment styles. In contrast, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) who developed the four-category model of adult attachment have found that men were more likely to be classified as dismissing-avoidant, while women were more likely to be identified as preoccupied. Further evidence supporting the findings of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) came from the study of Brennan et al. (1998). The researchers demonstrated that men reported higher scores of dismissing attachment than women. More recently, Wongpakaran, Wongpakaran and Wedding (2012) examined gender differences with regard to attachment anxiety and avoidance in a sample of Thai people. The results revealed that men reported higher scores of both attachment anxiety and avoidance than women in the Asian culture. Furthermore, Del Giudice (2011) conducted the first meta-analysis related to sex differences in attachment insecurities in the literature and

found that men showed higher levels of avoidance, but lower levels of anxiety than women.

Among other demographic variables, the association between age and attachment has been also investigated. However, the large body of this research has been limited to early childhood processes. The recent study of Chopik, Edelstein, and Fraley (2013) was an attempt to address the issue of whether attachment orientations differ by age across the life span. The study was conducted with a very large sample of internet respondents consisting 86555 people aged between 18 to 70 years. According to the results, dramatic age differences have been revealed in terms of attachment anxiety: highest levels of attachment anxiety were assessed among younger adults, whereas middle-aged and older individuals reported lowest levels of attachment anxiety. Attachment avoidance, however, displayed less dramatic changes with regard to age. Yet, it was highest among middle-aged group, whereas younger and older groups showed the lowest levels of avoidance.

In addition the demographic variables such as age and gender, attachment has been widely investigated with psychological correlates. For instance, attachment orientations have been found to be a predictor of self-esteem. Collins and Read (1990) have found that individuals with secure attachment style are more likely to have higher self-confidence, have a higher sense of self-worth and have a more positive view of themselves than the ones with either avoidant or anxious attachment type. Along similar lines, Feeney and Noller (1990) claimed that self-esteem is significantly associated with attachment patterns. As expected, securely attached respondents had the highest scores on self-esteem measures as compared to anxious-ambivalent and avoidant respondents.

Attachment is not only associated with self-esteem, but also with affect regulation. In fact, Mikulincer and Shaver (2005) proposed that attachment theory provides a strong theoretical basis for understanding the concept of affect regulation. In a recent study, Pascuzzo, Cyr, and Moss (2013) investigated the relationship between adult attachment styles and emotion regulation strategies in young adulthood. Results indicated that attachment insecurity was associated with heightened use of maladaptive emotion-regulation strategies. More specifically, higher attachment anxiety predicted greater use of emotion-oriented strategies, while higher attachment

avoidance predicted less support-seeking. In addition, research in clinical samples has found associations between attachment and affect regulation. For instance, Thorberg and Lyvers (2010) examined the potential association between attachment security and negative mood regulation expectancies in a sample of substance use disorder patients. Findings suggested that insecure attachment was a strong predictor of emotion regulation difficulties of substance users.

The relationship between psychological well-being and attachment is also another important area of research. Research to date has largely reported significant positive associations between attachment insecurity and psychological maladjustment. A recent study by Marganska, Gallagher, and Miranda (2013), for example, revealed that fearful-avoidant and preoccupied attachment styles, which were both characterized by attachment anxiety, have been significantly linked to both depression and generalized anxiety disorder symptoms. On the other hand, dismissive attachment, characterized by attachment avoidance, predicted only depression. Furthermore, Doron et al. (2012) compared three groups in terms of attachment insecurities: a group of patients clinically diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), another group diagnosed with other anxiety disorders (ADs), and a non-clinical control group. Results demonstrated that individuals with OCD showed significantly higher scores of attachment anxiety than two other groups. The groups did not differ in terms of attachment avoidance, however. In another recent study, Besharat and Shahidi (2014) examined the association between alexithymia and attachment styles and concluded that avoidant and ambivalent attachment styles were positively associated with alexithymia.

2.1.3. Relationship Variables Related to Attachment

Romantic jealousy has been investigated from an attachment perspective in some studies. For instance, Karakurt (2012) examined the associations between attachment styles, dependency, feelings of inadequacy, and romantic jealousy in a sample of Turkish college students who are in a committed romantic relationship. According to results, individuals with secure patterns showed lower levels of romantic jealousy than avoidant and anxious individuals. Moreover, this relationship between attachment insecurity and experience of romantic jealousy was mediated by dependency and feelings of inadequacy. The revealed association between attachment

and jealousy was consistent with the findings of the earliest studies investigating the effect of attachment on jealous responses in romantic relationships (e. g., Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). More interestingly, since social network websites have become very popular over the past few years, the concept of Facebook-related jealousy (i. e., frequently checking the current partner's Facebook page, spying the partner's online activities) has attracted attention of some researchers (e.g., Marshall, Bejanyan, Di Castro, & Lee, 2013). According to Marshall et al. (2013), individuals who are high in attachment anxiety were found to be more prone to Facebook jealousy and surveillance. Avoidant people, meanwhile, tend to be lower in Facebook jealousy. The data revealed also significant gender differences suggesting that women felt higher Facebook jealousy than men.

In addition to romantic jealousy, attachment has been found to be a significant predictor of love styles of romantic partners. People with a more anxious attachment style were more likely to display an obsessive/dependent love style, named as mania (Collins & Read, 1990). This finding supported the idea that anxiously-attached individuals have a strong desire for emotional and physical closeness with their partner and demand excessive support and care when needed (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Avoidant attachment, on the other hand, was found to be related to ludus love style, characterized by enjoyment of playing game of love, rapid recovers from romantic dissolutions, and denial of dependency to a romantic partner (Feeney & Noller, 1990).

Adult attachment research indicates that anxiety and avoidance play an important role in conflict resolution styles of partners. Attachment systems are most likely to be triggered in stressful circumstances such as discussions of conflict, when spouses seek psychological support and safety from their partners to feel secure (Kobak & Duemmler, 1994). Romantic partners who encountered conflict have a tendency to bring their internal working models into their current relationships and behave in certain patterns that their attachment style requires (Shi, 2003). Therefore, the link between attachment and conflict behaviors has captured the attention of researchers (e.g., Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989; Shi, 2003). A large body of evidence has shown that attachment security is positively associated with integrating and compromising conflict behaviors (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989), less hostility and more constructive arguing (Pistole & Arricale, 2003),

willingness to self-disclosure of emotions, active problem solving, less defensiveness (Shi, 2003), and less verbal aggressive behaviors such as using threats or blames (Senchak & Leonard, 1992). Adults with avoidant attachment pattern, meanwhile, have a tendency to avoid discussion and withdraw (Pistole & Arricale, 2003; Shi, 2003). Moreover, adults with anxious/preoccupied attachment pattern are more likely to feel threatened from arguing, have an excessive concern of proximity to their partners during conflict (Pistole & Arricale, 2003), and have a tendency to use verbal aggression (Clymer et al., 2006). They also tend to use conflict resolution behaviors of obliging to satisfy the needs of their partners and also use dominating, probably to be assured that their partners are available (Shi, 2003). In addition to research relied on self-report data, studies using observational methods of conflict management revealed that individuals who endorse secure attachment are more likely to display positive conflict dealing behaviors, whereas others with insecure attachment tend to engage in higher amounts of negative behaviors (Creasey, 2002).

Attachment has been also found to be a predictor of sexual satisfaction. In a sample of married couples, it was found that higher levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance were significantly associated with lower levels of sexual satisfaction (Butzer & Campbell, 2008). Results also revealed significant associations between partner avoidance and sexual satisfaction at the dyadic level. Specifically, individuals with avoidantly attached partners were less sexually satisfied in their marriage. On the other hand, Clymer et al. (2006) found that only anxious-ambivalent attachment style predicted lower sexual satisfaction. The authors argued that sexual satisfaction was not found to be predicted by attachment avoidance since avoidantly attached individuals tend to avoid facing problems related to their sexual life or they withdraw themselves from discussing about sex.

The association between attachment and relationship/marital satisfaction has been a broadly investigated area. A large body of empirical literature has confirmed that attachment security was associated with greater relationship satisfaction (e.g., Tucker & Anders, 1999; Pistole, 1989; Sümer & Cozzarelli, 2004). Collins and Read (1990) found that individuals who feel more securely attached to their partners feel that their relationship is more satisfying and have partners who report more satisfied feelings. Similar findings were reported by Tucker and Anders (1999) in a sample of

dating couples. In addition to studies investigating relationship satisfaction of individuals in a dating relationship, a great deal of research examined relationship quality of married couples from an attachment theory perspective. An extensive body of research has demonstrated a consistent positive association between secure attachment and marital adjustment (e.g., Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Feeney, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Barse, 2004). Moreover, since previous studies (e.g., Feeney, 1994) have been conducted with non-clinical samples, Mondor, Mcduff, Lussier, and Wright (2011) aimed to investigate the effects of attachment on marital satisfaction in a clinical sample of distressed couples seeking marital therapy in their recent study. Results revealed that insecure attachment, especially avoidance dimension, is positively associated with marital dissatisfaction. On the other hand, Selcuk et al. (2010) criticized current attachment perspective focusing traditionally on marital satisfaction to understand the whole marital functioning process. Rather, the authors argued that the nature of the attachment bond between spouses might be investigated independent of the marital satisfaction.

2.2. Marriage

In this part, firstly, definition of the marriage will be presented. Secondly, family life cycle stages will be briefly reviewed. Lastly, empirical literature related to new couple stage will be summarized.

2.2.1 Definition of Marriage

The institution of marriage is a socially recognized legal and stable sexual union of spouses that forms a set of rights and duties between them (Lantz & Snyder, 1969). Girgis, Anderson, and George (2012) recently proposed a more innovative and updating definition of marriage. According to Girgis et al. (2012), marriage is traditionally described as a union of a man and woman, who are long-lastingly committed themselves to each other, which is naturally characterized by rearing children together. However, the authors argued that this classic definition of marriage should be revised. They proposed that marriage is the union of two individual, who can be of the same or opposite sexes, in which they make a commitment to romantically love and care for each other, share both problems of life and advantages of domestic life.

2.2.2. The Stages of the Family Life Cycle

According to Nichols (2010), families progress in stages that demand change; however, this change is not a smooth and steady process, rather it consists of discontinuous developments. Duvall (1957) and Hill and Rogers (1964) developed a developmental framework in which family life is divided into discrete stages that includes specific tasks to be done in each stage (as cited in Nichols, 2010). This developmental framework has been labeled as “the stages of family life cycle”. Families usually face problems at transitions in the life cycle (Nichols, 2010).

Although there is no particular universal form of the family life cycle, Nichols (2010) claims that there has been usually six stages in which families progress. The first stage is called “leaving home: single young adults” in which young individuals gain emotional and financial independence and develop differentiation of self. Secondly, “the new couple” stage is defined as a process during which two young adults form a marital system and expected to be committed to this new system by adapting spouse roles. Thirdly, “families with young children” stage is characterized by adjusting to parental roles and making space for children in the marital system. Further, “families with adolescents” stage is a process that includes supporting children’s autonomy and focusing again on marital and financial issues. “Launching children and moving on” stage is characterized by reformulation of the marital system to a dyadic level and developing new relationships that involves in-laws and grandchildren. Lastly, “families in later life” stage is described as a process in which old couples explore new familial and social roles and make space in the marital system for wisdom.

2.2.3. Studies Related to New Couple Stage

A number of marital researchers (Davila et al., 1999; Crowell et al., 2002; Lopez, Riggs, Pollard, & Hook, 2011; Sullivan, 2001; Tallman & Hsiao, 2004) have investigated variables of concern in a newlywed sample that were in the new couple period. In these studies, only couples who met specific criteria (e.g., having no children, being married less than 5 years) were eligible.

Sullivan (2001) examined longitudinal effects of religiosity on marital satisfaction in newly married couples. The researcher criticized previous research on religiosity and marital satisfaction for using heterogenous married samples (e.g.,

couples married for different durations, couples with and without children, married for the first time or remarried) since using heterogenous samples may cause doubtful and mixed findings in the research area. For this reason, Sullivan (2001) used a newlywed sample that were married for the first time, had been married for less than six months, were childless and not expecting a child. Findings showed that for couples in which husbands were less neurotic, religiosity was positively associated with marital satisfaction of both partners; however, for couples in which husbands were more neurotic, religiosity and marital satisfaction was negatively correlated. In addition, the effect of religiosity was weaker in the first 4 years of marriage. Lopez et al. (2011) also sampled newlyweds that were in 1-5 years duration in their marriages and had no children. The researchers investigated the effects of religious commitment and attachment on marital adjustment and found that religious commitment moderated the association between insecure attachment and marital adjustment of new couples.

Davila et al. (1999) claimed that early stages of marriage increase the chances of attachment change and investigated the attachment change processes in newlyweds in the first 2 years of their marriage. To be able to participate in the study, the couples should have met criteria of having no children and being in the first marriages. Findings found evidence for increased attachment security of spouses over time. That is, newly married spouses tend to become both less anxious and less avoidant as their relationship develops. Crowell et al. (2002) also used a newlywed sample who had no children and have not been married before. The longitudinal study in which they tested stability of attachment at 3 months before the marriage and after 18 months of marriage appeared to suggest that insecure individuals became more secure across the transition to marriage.

In addition to attachment change processes (Davila et al., 1999; Crowell et al., 2002), family life cycle may play a role in the modification of conflict resolution behaviors as well. Tallman and Hsiao (2004) claimed that early years of marriage maximize the opportunity to study conflict resolution because first years of marriage are more susceptible to frequent and severe disagreements and used a newly married sample who had no previous marriage and had no children. Their results showed that couples who divorced or separated in the progress of the longitudinal study got

significantly lower scores in cooperative behaviors compared to the couples whose marriages sustained.

2.3. Marital Adjustment

In this part, firstly, definition of the concept will be presented. Secondly, the empirical literature examining individual variables related to marital adjustment will be summarized. Lastly, the literature on the relationship correlates related to marital adjustment will be briefly reviewed.

2.3.1. Definition of Marital Adjustment

Although there has been a great deal of research investigating marital quality, the conceptualization of the term has been ambiguous due to the disagreement on the terminology. The researchers in the area have preferred different terms to study the concept of marital quality. The most frequently used terms employed in research related to marital quality are "marital satisfaction", "marital adjustment", and "marital happiness" (Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994). These terms were typically used interchangeably to refer marital quality.

Lively (1969) was one of the first researchers that has called attention to this ambiguity in the terminology and proposed that although "success", "happiness", and "adjustment" were commonly used as synonyms, certain distinctions between the definitions of such basic terms ought to be established. For example, Hoult (1969; as cited in Fişiloğlu & Demir, 2000) proposed that marital adjustment is a composite term consisting of numerous aspects such as spouses' amount of conflict and shared activities and these aspects are linked with the happiness or success of a given marriage. On the other hand, Lively (1969) contributed to the literature by making clear definitions of these three terms to establish a scientific base for the study related to marital interaction. Marital adjustment was defined by Lively (1969) as the ongoing progress of the relationship between husbands and wives. The author also stated that the dynamic nature of the marriage is highlighted by the concept of marital adjustment.

Glenn (1990) reviewed the quantitative research literature on marital quality in the 1980s and concluded that as the literature about marital quality grew, both methodological problems and conceptual vagueness between the variables have started somewhat to diminish. For instance, while some researchers preferred to use marital

satisfaction or happiness with the idea that marital quality could be assessed by only the feelings of spouses about marriage, others favored to use marital adjustment, which is a more multidimensional term including relationship issues (e.g. communication and conflict) as well as feelings about marriage (Glenn, 1990). Nevertheless, although some researchers attempted to differentiate the conceptualizations of these three terms, Heyman et al. (1994) claimed that the commonly used measures of marital satisfaction and marital adjustment were very highly correlated. Hence, it can be proposed that these concepts have basically similar senses to refer marital quality.

2.3.2. Individual Variables Related to Marital Adjustment

Gender has been an important demographic variable related to marital satisfaction. Yet, the empirical literature yielded mixed results. For instance, Feeney (1994) found that men reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than did women. This finding was consistent with the findings of Guo and Huang (2005), Markman and Hahlweg (1993), and Rogers and Amato (2000). However, research by Levenson, Carstensen and Gottman (1993) found that husbands and wives did not differ significantly in terms of marital satisfaction and consideration of divorce. Nevertheless, Levenson et al. (1993) revealed gender differences with regard to health problems in dissatisfied marriages. According to results, wives suffered from more physical and psychological health problems than husbands in dissatisfied marriages. The study by Zeidner and Kloda (2013) also did not find any gender differences in marital satisfaction between husbands and wives. Recently, Jackson, Miller, Oka and Henry (2014) conducted a meta-analysis regarding to gender differences to test the commonly held hypothesis that men are more satisfied in their marriages than women. The results indicated that wives had slightly lower levels of marital satisfaction than husbands; however, this result appeared due to the addition of clinical samples in the data since women in the marital therapy were considerably less satisfied with their marriage than men. In addition, the overall results showed no significant gender difference between husbands and wives with regard to marital satisfaction in nonclinical samples.

In addition to gender, the relationship of age to marital adjustment as a demographic variable is also important. Studies in this area (e.g., Anderson, Russell, & Schumm, 1983) indicates a general picture of a curvilinear path in which couples

have high levels of marital satisfaction in the early years of marriage, then experience a decline after the birth of the children, and lastly have again an increase in their marital satisfaction when the children leave home. The results of the recent study by Orathinkal and Vansteenwegen (2007) was also consistent with the findings of Anderson et al. (1982). Middle-aged individuals had lower marital adjustment scores than young or elderly individuals (Orathinkal & Vansttenwegen, 2007). Likewise, it was found that older couples had higher levels of enjoyment from doing things together, talking about children or grandchildren, and having vacation than middle-aged couples (Levenson et al., 1993). The authors discussed that older couples have greater sources for getting pleasure of doing activities together.

Another significant demographic determinant of marital adjustment is presence-absence of children. According to White and Edward (1990), absence of children has been associated with higher levels of marital happiness. Moreover, a longitudinal study by Lawrence et al. (2008) investigated marital satisfaction in the period of transition to parenthood including a comparison group of voluntarily childless married couples. They found that parents had sharper declines in marital satisfaction after the birth of the first child relative to nonparents who were childless by choice. Similarly, the results of a meta-analysis by Twenge, Campbell, and Foster (2003) revealed that parents were less satisfied in their marriages than nonparents. Furthermore, the number of children was negatively correlated with the marital satisfaction of parents. However, Onyishi, Sorokowski, Sorokowska, and Pipitone (2012) discussed that these results' generalizability should be questioned since most of these studies were conducted with Western cultures. Conversely, in their study with a non-Western sample of Nigerian people, it was found that the number of children and marital satisfaction was positively correlated.

In addition to demographic variables, social correlates such as gender role dynamics have been also found to be a factor contributing to marital adjustment. In a longitudinal study, Faulkner et al. (2005) demonstrated that husbands who expressed more traditional gender role attitudes became more dissatisfied from their marriages over time. Recently, Stanik and Bryant (2012) investigated the relationship between gender role attitudes and marital quality in a sample of ethnic minority group, African American couples. Similar to Faulkner et al. (2005), their results indicated that couples

in which husbands held somewhat higher traditional gender role attitudes had lower marital quality as compared to couples in which husbands' gender role attitudes were more egalitarian.

Another social correlate explored with marital adjustment is religiosity. There have been numerous studies (e.g., Anthony, 1993; Wilson & Musick, 1996) that supported the hypothesis that more religious couples are more likely to be satisfied in their marriages than couples who are less religious. Further, Sullivan (2001) examined longitudinal effects of religiosity on marital satisfaction in newly married couples. Results showed that for couples in which husbands were less neurotic, religiosity was positively associated with marital satisfaction of both partners; however, for couples in which husbands were more neurotic, religiosity and marital satisfaction was negatively correlated. In addition, the effect of religiosity was weaker in the first 4 years of marriage. Another dimension explored with marital satisfaction is similarity in religious beliefs of couples (Hünler & Gençöz, 2005). The authors found that greater similarity in religious beliefs was positively linked with marital adjustment of couples.

Marital adjustment and its relation to psychological correlates have been also well researched. For instance, Gattis et al. (2004) examined the role of Big Five personality traits and positive expressivity on marital satisfaction, and found that individuals who are higher in neuroticism, lower in agreeableness, lower in conscientiousness, and lower in positive expressivity are more likely to be dissatisfied in their marriages. More recently, Sangeeta and Jayanti (2014) examined the effects of personality dimensions in Indian couples with good and poor marital quality. Results suggested that husbands who had poor marital quality were more neurotic and less extraverted compared to those with good marital quality. Wives with good and poor marital qualities, however, did not differ significantly in terms of personality dimensions.

2.3.3. Relationship Variables Related to Marital Adjustment

It has been suggested in some studies (Bir-Akturk & Fisiloglu, 2009; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007) that marriage order affects marital satisfaction. Yet, research in this area yielded mixed results. For instance, some researchers, such as Orathinkal and Vansteenwegen (2007), found that first-married individuals experienced lower levels of marital satisfaction relative to remarried individuals. On

the other hand, Bir-Akturk and Fisiloglu (2009) compared marital satisfaction scores of three different marital status groups (first-married, postdivorce remarried, and postbereavement remarried), and found no significant difference between these groups with regard to marital satisfaction. However, the data yielded significant marital satisfaction differences in remarried individuals in terms of presence-absence of stepchildren. Remarried individuals with nonresidential stepchildren or without stepchildren were more likely to be satisfied in their marriages than those living with residential stepchildren.

Length of marriage is also an important factor contributing to marital satisfaction. It was reported that individuals in the late years of marriage had lower levels of problems in both their marital relationship and daily-life adjustment, which could be interpreted also as an increase in marital adjustment (Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007). Another study conducted with an Asian culture in Malaysia found consistent findings (Zainah, Nasir, Ruzy, & Noraini, 2012). The results indicated that as the duration of the marriage increased, marital satisfaction of couples also increased.

Communication has also been a widely used variable in marital satisfaction studies. A number of studies have found a consistent association between communication skills and marital satisfaction. A review study by Noller and Fitzpatrick (1990) suggested that negative/destructive communication behaviors were significantly linked with poor marital functioning and marital distress. Burleson and Denton (1997) also found that couples who were lack of effective communication skills were more likely to experience marital dissatisfaction. Moreover, Litzinger and Gordon (2005) revealed that couples who have good communication skills have greater levels of marital satisfaction. Also, in an observational cross-cultural study, Rehman and Holtzworth-Munroe (2007) compared white American couples, Pakistani couples in Pakistan, and immigrant Pakistani couples in America in terms of communication skills and found that in all three cultural groups, positive communication skills were associated with greater marital satisfaction. The authors argued that previous findings from Western samples (e.g., Litzinger & Gordon, 2005) suggesting a robust association between communication skills and marital satisfaction can also be generalized to at least some non-Western cultures.

Another significant relationship predictor of marital satisfaction is sexual satisfaction. It was found that sexual satisfaction had both a main effect on marital satisfaction independently and had a moderator role in the relationship between communication and marital satisfaction (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005). That is, the results suggested that sexual satisfaction can compensate the negative effects of poor communication skills on marital satisfaction. In another study relied on longitudinal data by Yeh et al. (2006) showed that greater sexual satisfaction have been correlated with higher marital satisfaction. In addition to this, marital quality acted as a mediator in the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital instability.

2.4. Conflict Resolution Styles

In this part, firstly, definition of the concept will be presented. Secondly, the empirical literature examining individual variables related to conflict resolution styles will be summarized. Lastly, the literature on the relationship correlates related to conflict resolution styles will be briefly reviewed.

2.4.1. Definition of Conflict Resolution Styles

Conflict can be defined as an interactive social state that takes place when there is a disagreement between the behaviors, goals, needs, desires or values of one individual and those of another (Peterson, 1983) and is an inevitable part of all close relationships. Unsurprisingly, as one of the strongest close relationships, conflict is a natural part of marriage as well. Indeed, it plays a vital role when attempting to understand the dynamics of marital relationships (Fincham, 2003).

Mackey, Diemer, and O'Brien (2000) made a clear definition of marital conflict by suggesting that it is "a state of reported disharmony in marital relationships that developed because of differences between spouses" (p. 135). Fincham (2003) stated that marital conflicts may have been initiated by almost anything, e.g. financial issues, injustice in division of labor, personality characteristics as well as jealousy or extramarital relationships. However, Markman (1991a) proposed that the main point in predicting the future success of marriage is not the frequency or content of conflict, but the key is how the conflict is handled. In other words, handling conflict is a crucial task to maintain a successful marriage (Gottman, 1993).

In order to manage conflict, the partners tend to engage in a patterned response including repeated use of actions, named as “conflict resolution styles” (Hocker & Wilmot, 1991). To put it another way, conflict resolution styles refer to the interpersonal behaviors or patterns used to handle dilemmas in romantic relationships (Markman, 1991b). These conflict management patterns appear to be reasonably steady over time (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Thomas (1976), Rahim (1983), and Kurdek (1994) were among the prominent researchers who have greatly contributed to the literature related to conceptualization of conflict resolution styles. According to the structural model of Thomas (1976), people may engage in five conflict resolution behaviors: (1) competing, (2) accommodating, (3) avoiding, (4) compromising, and (5) collaborating. Competing is characterized by high concern for the goals of self and low concern for others. Individuals with competing style are more likely to be highly assertive and less likely to cooperate with others. The reversed pattern, low concern for the needs of self and high concern for others, is illustrated in accommodating. Individuals with accommodating style tend to sacrifice their own needs for the benefit of others. Avoiding is related to low concern for the needs of both self and others. Avoiding style is characterized by withdrawals from negotiations about the conflict issue. On the other hand, compromising shows reasonable concern for both self and the others. Individuals using compromising style usually suggest solutions at a midpoint for both self and the others. Lastly, collaborating is characterized by high levels of concern for both dimensions. Collaborating style is associated with trying to find a resolution that satisfies the needs of both self and the others at the maximum level. In general, whereas competing, avoiding, and accommodating can be classified as destructive conflict resolution styles, compromising and collaborating can be seen as effective patterns to resolve the disagreements (Thomas, 1976).

Rahim (1983) developed a classification parallel to the model of Thomas (1976). The researcher also defines five specific behaviors to manage interpersonal conflict: (1) dominating, (2) obliging, (3) avoiding, (4) compromising, and (5) integrating. In contrast to Thomas (1976) using cooperativeness and assertiveness, Rahim (1983) conceptualized these five styles on the combinations of two dimensions: concern for self and the other. However, although these five conflict resolution styles

are named differently by Thomas (1976) and Rahim (1983), the implications they have are mostly similar.

According to Kurdek (1994), individuals may involve in four conflict resolution styles to handle conflict: (1) positive problem solving, (2) conflict engagement, (3) withdrawal, and (4) compliance. Positive problem solving refers a constructive negotiation in which partners handle conflict effectively. Conflict engagement, in contrast, is associated with personal attacks including verbally or physically aggressive behaviors. Withdrawal is characterized by avoiding to discuss the conflict or stonewalling. Finally, compliance indicates unassertiveness and acceptance of partner's needs.

2.4.2. Individual Variables Related to Conflict Resolution Styles

One potentially important demographic component that might contribute to conflict resolution behaviors is gender. Using Rahim's (1983) model to study conflict resolution styles in their study, Corcoran and Mallinckrodt (2000) found that men were more likely to prefer obliging conflict style in handling conflict than women. The results of the study by Shi (2003) also revealed significant gender differences in terms of avoiding and integrating conflict styles. Men reported greater use of avoiding, while women reported higher use of integrative conflict behaviors. Consistent findings were reported in the study by Cann et al. (2008). It was found that men were more likely to favor obliging and avoiding, whereas women were more likely to prefer integrating conflict style. Also, another study with a college sample revealed that men showed higher use of avoiding and hostile conflict resolution styles compared to women (Baptist, Thompson, Norton, Hardy, & Link, 2012). Further, some studies (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Caughlin & Vangelisti, 2000) have reported gender differences in demand-withdraw pattern of marital conflict, in which one partner forces the other by means of being emotionally demanding, complaining, and nagging, while the other withdraws from interaction through defensiveness or avoiding. It was proposed that women were more likely to demand and men were more likely to withdraw in conflict resolution situations.

Age is another demographic factor contributing to conflict resolution styles of couples. Carstensen et al. (1995) investigated emotional behaviors displayed by middle aged and older aged couples throughout discussions of a marital conflict and

found that older couples expressed less emotional negativity and more affection during conflict resolution. Therefore, it can be proposed that as spouses get older, levels of displayed negative emotions during disagreements decrease.

In addition to demographic variables, conflict resolution styles have been found to be correlated with some psychological factors as well. For instance, employing a dyadic design, Fincham et al. (2007) suggested that there was a longitudinal association between forgiveness and patterns of conflict resolution. Specifically, for wives, forgiving the partner was found to be negatively associated with the use of ineffective conflict resolution strategies of their husbands later. More recently, emotional intelligence has been found to be a significant indicator of conflict resolution behaviors in marital relationships. According to the findings of Zeidner and Kloda (2013), individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence were more likely to use effective conflict resolution strategies and less likely to use dysfunctional strategies such as demand/withdrawal behavior or avoidance during management of conflict. Another psychological predictor of conflict resolution is a personality trait, neuroticism. Woszidlo and Segrin (2013) found that higher levels of neuroticism was significantly associated with lower levels of effective problem solving strategies for newlywed husbands and wives.

The relationship between conflict resolution strategies and psychological well-being of spouses has been also investigated. For example, Marchand and Hock (2000) conducted the first study that investigated the link between depressive symptoms and conflict management strategies in a married sample. The findings suggested that husbands and wives who scored higher in depressive symptoms were more prone to use avoidance and attacking conflict resolution behaviors. Moreover, similar patterns were reported in the study by Marchand (2004). Couples with higher depressive symptoms reported greater levels of attacking behaviors but fewer levels of compromising behaviors in conflict resolution.

2.4.3. Relationship Variables Related to Conflict Resolution Styles

A great deal of research has been dedicated to investigate the link between conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction. Spouses who scored high in marital satisfaction were less likely to use destructive conflict resolution patterns such as manipulating the partner, avoiding conflict, behaving coercively, or engaging in

demand–withdraw roles (Noller, Feeney, Bonnell, & Callan, 1994). In another study by Marchand and Hock (2000), more attacking and fewer compromising conflict resolution behaviors were shown to be associated with lower levels of marital satisfaction. Also, data generated by Russler-Chapin, Chapin, and Sattler (2001) appeared to suggest that assertive/directing conflict resolution style was associated with higher marital distress. In addition, longitudinal studies also revealed significant associations. For example, Gottman and Levenson (1992) found that nonregulated couples, who were more likely to display engagement in severe conflicts, stubbornness, withdrawal from interaction, and defensiveness, reported lower marital satisfaction at both initial assessment and a 4-year follow-up. In another prominent study relying on a longitudinal design, stable couples, who behave more positively in the manner of problem solving, were found to be more satisfied in their marriages (Gottman, 1993). In a more recent study, Tallman and Hsiao (2004) demonstrated that cooperative behaviors during one period has been significantly associated with marital satisfaction in the subsequent period. Based on their results, the researchers proposed that the effective strategies including cooperation and compromise to resolve marital disagreements predicted marital satisfaction in the course of marriage.

The relationship of conflict resolution styles to marital stability and the risk towards future marital dissolution/divorce has been also studied by many researchers. Gottman et al. (1998) found that conflict behaviors characterized by negative initiation by wife, the husband's rejecting his wife's needs, and a deficiency in physiological calming of the husband predicted divorce later. Moreover, Gottman and Levenson (1992) found that nonregulated couples, who were more likely to display engagement in severe conflicts, stubbornness, withdrawal, and defensiveness had a greater risk for marital dissolution and divorce compared to regulated couples. Similarly, in another study, stable couples, who behave more positively in the manner of problem solving, were found to be less likely to get divorced than unstable couples (Gottman, 1993). In a longitudinal study, it was found that couples who divorced or separated in the progress of the study got significantly lower scores in cooperative behaviors compared to the couples whose marriages sustained (Tallman & Hsiao, 2004).

Marriage order also affects conflict resolution patterns of couples. The studies revealed mixed findings, however. For instance, Mirecki, Brimhall, and Bramesfeld

(2013) revealed that individuals in their second marriages reported improved levels of constructive communication, lessened demand-withdraw pattern, and decreased avoidance and silencing behavior in their current remarriage compared to their previous marriage. On the other hand, in another study (Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000), it was found that spouses in remarriages were more likely to display dysfunctional communication patterns during conflict.

Empathy and intimacy are other correlates that have been studied with conflict resolution styles of couples. For instance, Schneewind and Gerhard (2002) investigated the link between relationship-oriented aspects of personality (general relationship competence, empathy, and relational vulnerability) and conflict resolution styles of newlywed couples. The researchers found that higher skills in relationship personality dimensions predicted more positive conflict resolution and less dysfunctional conflict resolution behaviors. Moreover, how couples attempt to solve disagreements in marriage accounted for significant variance in the differences of intimacy levels between partners. Christensen and Shenk (1991) indicated that the higher use of mutually constructive problem solving and direct conflict resolution styles predicted higher intimacy between partners.

2.5. Researches in Turkey Related to Attachment, Marital Adjustment, and Conflict Resolution Styles

In the Turkish literature, there is a growing body of research investigating significant correlates of attachment, marital adjustment, and conflict resolution styles; however, researchers have usually studied these variables separately. For instance, attachment has been broadly investigated with several factors such as romantic jealousy (Karakurt, 2012), experience and expression of emotions in marital conflict (Özen, 2012), relationship satisfaction (Ertan, 2002), emotional well-being (Amado, 2005), shame, guilt, and loneliness (Akbağ & İmamoğlu, 2010), coping and regulation strategies on bereavement (Ayaz, 2011), differences in the family, peers, and romantic relationships context (İmamoğlu & İmamoğlu, 2006), psychopathology symptoms (Sümer, Ünal, & Selçuk et al., 2009; Çalışır, 2009; Dağ & Gülüm, 2013), and alexithymia (Şenkal, 2013).

Moreover, marital adjustment has been examined with its various predictors such as loneliness (Demir & Fışıloğlu, 1999), similarity in religious beliefs (Hünler &

Gençöz, 2005), spouse support and sexual satisfaction (Çağ & Yıldırım, 2013), education level (Fıfıloğlu, 1992; Çağ & Yıldırım, 2013), domestic violence against women (Tuncay-Senlet, 2012), causal and responsibility attributions (Tutarel-Kışlak, 1997), attachment (Özmen & Atik, 2010), communication styles (Malkoç, 2001), conflict management styles (Uğurlu, 2003), quality of sexual life (Kısa, Zeyneloğlu, Yılmaz, & Güner, 2014), dysfunctional relationship beliefs (Hamamcı, 2005), perfectionism (Koydemir, Sun-Selişik, & Tezer, 2005), alexithymic characteristics (Epözdemir, 2012), and forgiveness (Taysı, 2010).

In addition, conflict resolution styles have also been investigated with a number of factors such as attachment (Bahadır, 2006; Pancaroğlu, 2007), value similarities of couples and marital adjustment (Özen, 2006), marital adjustment (Koydemir, Sun-Selişik, & Tezer, 2008), effects of couple communication training program (Karahan, 2009), relationship satisfaction (Tezer, 1986), differences in conflict management behaviors toward spouses and supervisors (Tezer, 1996), and popularity (Tezer, 2001).

As can be seen from a brief literature review in Turkish literature, attachment, marital adjustment, and conflict resolution styles have been examined with a variety of topics in Turkey. Rather than mentioning all of these studies, it is better to report findings of the studies in detail which were closely related to variables of the current study. For example, Pancaroğlu (2006) aimed to study the associations between attachment styles and conflict behaviors in male and female Turkish university students and found that males were more likely to use accommodating behavior than females. Also, anxiously and securely attached individuals had a higher tendency to engage in compromising behavior compared to avoidantly attached individuals. Furthermore, Bahadır (2006) examined attachment styles and conflict behaviors in university students who were in a committed romantic relationship. According to results, attachment anxiety has been found to be correlated with forcing, avoiding, accommodating and collaborating conflict resolution strategies, whereas attachment avoidance was associated with avoiding, accommodating and compromising conflict resolution styles.

Özen (2006) investigated the effects of value similarity and conflict resolution styles on marital adjustment in Turkish married couples. In terms of conflict resolution styles, the results revealed that negative conflict resolution styles of wives and

husbands were negatively associated with marital adjustment of couples. In addition, it was found that spouses who were more likely to use positive conflict resolution style and less likely to use negative conflict resolution style had higher levels on marital adjustment than spouses who were less likely to use positive conflict resolution style and more likely to use negative conflict resolution style. Malkoç (2001) studied effects of communication styles on marital adjustment and found that couples who had lower scores in marital adjustment were more likely to use destructive communication styles than couples who were higher in marital adjustment. Moreover, Uğurlu (2003) investigated the relationship between sexism, conflict management styles, and marital adjustment. It was found that wives were more likely to prefer positive-active conflict resolution styles than husbands in discussions of conflict. In another study, conflict resolution behaviors of couples for themselves and for their spouses were investigated in terms of gender and marital adjustment (Koydemir et al., 2008). The findings revealed that high adjustment wives used more accommodating behavior for their spouses than for themselves, while low adjustment wives preferred more compromising behavior for themselves than for their spouses.

2.6. Connection between the Literature Review and Purpose of the Study

An extensive literature review on variables of attachment, marital adjustment, and conflict resolution styles suggested that attachment security has been associated with both marital adjustment (Banse, 2004; Feeney, 1994; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Senchak & Leonard, 1992) and conflict resolution styles of couples (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989; Pistole & Arricale, 2003; Shi, 2003). Further, previous evidence (e.g., Marchand & Hock, 2000) suggested that conflict resolution styles may contribute to satisfaction in a marriage. However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, only one study to date (Marchand, 2004) has directly investigated the mediational role of conflict resolution behaviors in the relationship between attachment and marital adjustment, which was conducted with a sample of parents. The current study further tested the mediator role of conflict resolution styles in attachment-marital adjustment relationship in a homogeneous newlywed sample who were married for the first time, had been married for less than five years, and had no children.

Furthermore, the literature review in Turkey showed that previous studies investigating marital adjustment usually focused separately on the aspects of attachment or conflict resolution behaviors (e.g., Özmen & Atik, 2010; Özen, 2006). Hence, a study examining the interrelationships between attachment dimensions, conflict-resolution styles, and marital adjustment at the same time is absent in the literature in Turkey. In view of shortcomings of prior research, another goal of the present study was to fill this gap in the Turkish literature by assessing marital adjustment with regard to adult attachment and conflict solution styles simultaneously.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this section, firstly, sample characteristics will be presented. Secondly, the content and psychometric features of the instruments used in the current study will be given. Thirdly, data collection procedure will be briefly described. Finally, a brief framework of data analysis will be provided.

3.1. Participants

394 newly married individuals (261 women, 133 men) who met the criteria for participation initially responded to an online survey. Data screening and cleaning process made the number of the participants decrease to 380. Hence, the data from a total of 380 newly married individuals consisting of 253 women (66.6%) and 127 men (33.4%) were used for the analyses. In order to reach the goal of developing an understanding of a homogeneous and newlywed sample, purposive sampling method was employed (Kerlinger, 1986). Individuals were eligible for the study if they had been married less than 5 years, had no children, and were in their first marriages. The data from these participants who meet the inclusion criterion were recruited by the use of the snowball sampling method (Kumar, 1996). Age of the participants ranged from 20 to 48 years, with a mean of 28.53 years ($SD = 3.06$). The length of the marriages of the participants ranged from 1 month to 5 years; 41.3% of them had been married for less than 1 year, 43.4% had been married for 1-3 years, and 15.3% had been married for 3-5 years. On average, participants had been married for 20.27 months ($SD = 15.02$). All of the participants were in their first marriage, and they were childless at the time of recruitment. Education levels were as follows: 3.4% had high school degree, 5.8% had vocational school degree, 48.4% had university degree, and 42.4% had master's/doctoral degree. Regarding place of growth, 66.6% of the participants had grown up in metropolis, 22.1% in city, 8.9% in town and 2.4% had grown up in village. Participants were also asked their frequency of conflict with their spouses using a 6-point Likert-type scale. The mean of the reported frequency of conflict was

2.85 ($SD = .94$), ranged from 1 to 6. The summary of the descriptive characteristics of the sample was represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variables		N	%
Gender	Female	253	66.6
	Male	127	33.4
Age ($M = 28.53, SD = 3.06$ years)	20 to 24	10	2.6
	25 to 34	354	93.3
	35 to 48	16	4.1
Length of Marriage ($M = 20.27, SD = 15.02$ months)	Less than 1 year	157	41.3
	1-3 years	165	43.4
	3-5 years	58	15.3
Education Level	High school	13	3.4
	Vocational school	22	5.8
	University	184	48.4
	Master's / PhD	161	42.4
Place of Growth	Village	9	2.4
	Town	34	8.9
	City	84	22.1
	Metropolis	253	66.6
Frequency of Conflict ($M = 2.85, SD = .94$)	Never	7	1.8
	Rarely	161	42.4
	Sometimes	111	29.2
	Often	86	22.6
	Very often	13	3.4
	Always	2	.5

3.2. Instruments

Participants completed an electronic survey containing three scales, namely, Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R), Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS), and a demographic form. In the

following sections, detailed information regarding the scales and the demographic form will be presented.

3.2.1. Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R)

In the present study, adult attachment in marital relationships was measured by Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), a 36-item self-report questionnaire containing two 18-item subscales. Brennan et al. (1998) initially proposed to use a dimensional measure to assess adult attachment and factor analyzed the most frequently used attachment scales, which resulted in the development of ECR consisting of 36 items, 18 items for each subscales (i.e., attachment related anxiety and avoidance). Then, Fraley et al. (2000) revised some of the items in the ECR and developed ECR-Revised using the same 18 item structure for both subscales. The first subscale assesses the anxiety dimension of attachment, consisting of items such as “It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner”. The second subscale measures the avoidance dimension of attachment. Sample items include “I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners”. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Items 4, 8, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 30, 32, 34 and 36 were reversely coded. Mean total scores of each subscale were calculated for each participant. Higher mean scores in attachment anxiety and avoidance subscales correspond to greater anxiety and avoidance, respectively.

The ECR-R had a high level of internal consistency with coefficient alphas of .91 and .94 for the anxiety and avoidance subscales, respectively. Validation studies have shown that ECR-R had better psychometric properties than did other self-report adult attachment measures (Fraley et al., 2000). Also, studies (Sümer, 2006; Conradi, Gerlsma, van Duijn, & de Jonge, 2006; Wang & Mallinckrodt) have provided evidence that ECR-R has demonstrated strong cross-cultural validity (as cited in Karakurt, Kafescioğlu, & Keiley, 2010).

The ECR-R was adapted into Turkish by Selcuk, Gunaydin, Sumer, and Uysal (2005) and the reliability analyses yielded high internal consistency coefficients (alphas) of .86 and .90 for the anxiety and avoidance subscales, respectively. Also, test-retest reliability coefficients were reported as .82 for the anxiety and .81 for the avoidance subscales. Moreover, the term “romantic partner” in the items were replaced

with “spouse” in order to assess dimensions of attachment to the marital spouse in the current study (see Appendix A).

3.2.2. Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) was used to assess marital quality. The DAS was originally developed by Spanier (1976) to measure relationship quality of married or cohabiting couples. This 32-item measure assesses four components of the relationship between couples, namely, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression. The items are mostly in 5-point, 6-point, or 7-point Likert-type response formats, ranging from either always agree to always disagree or all the time to never. The scale also consists two dichotomous items that are answered either yes or no. The DAS is mostly used with a total score to evaluate the overall relationship quality of the couples. The total score is computed by summing of the all items, which ranges between 0 and 151. Higher scores show a higher perception of the quality of the relationship.

Spanier (1976) reported that the DAS has shown evidence of strong internal reliability, with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .73 to .94 for the subscales, and .96 for the entire scale. Content validity was assured with the evaluation of the items by three judges and it was concluded that the DAS has a good content validity. Regarding criterion validity, the DAS has been shown to be highly correlated with another well-established dyadic adjustment measure, Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test ($r = .86$).

The adaptation of DAS into Turkish and its reliability and validity studies were conducted by Fıfılođlu and Demir (2000). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the DAS was reported as .92, indicating a high internal reliability. The split-half reliability coefficient was also computed as .86. The criterion validity was assessed by the correlation between DAS and translated Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test, which was reported as .82. These results demonstrated that the Turkish version of DAS offers a reliable and valid measure of dyadic adjustment for a Turkish sample (Fıfılođlu & Demir, 2000). The sample items of the Turkish version of the DAS were given in Appendix B.

3.2.3. Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS)

The conflict resolution styles of participants were measured by using 25-item Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS; Özen, 2006). CRSS was developed by Özen (2006) to measure the conflict resolution styles of the partners in a romantic or marital relationship. This scale was primarily designed to measure the following four styles in conflict resolution: positive conflict resolution, negative conflict resolution, subordination, and retreat. 87 items were initially generated by five social psychologists based on an extensive literature review and interviews with individuals in romantic or marital relationships regarding their conflict handling behaviors. When the author factor analyzed these 87 items, results supported the expected four-factor structure of the scale. Consequently, factor analysis resulted in the development of CRSS consisting of 25 items with a 4-factor structure.

Positive conflict resolution style subscale consists of 6 items assessing the extent to which individuals engage in a constructive negotiation and handle conflict effectively (e.g., “When a conflict arises, I try to put myself in my partner’s shoes and try to understand his/her feelings and thoughts”). Negative conflict resolution subscale contains 7 items assessing the extent to which partners engage in destructive conflict handling behaviors including verbally or physically aggressive behaviors. Sample items include “I threaten to leave my partner”. Subordination subscale includes 6 items measuring the extent to which individuals accept the needs of their partners and behave unassertively (e.g., “I sacrifice my needs in order to prevent any conflict in my relationship”). Retreat subscale contains 6 items assessing the extent to which partners avoid to discuss the conflict. Sample items include “When I get mad at my partner, I postpone to discuss the conflict”. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “totally disagree” to “totally agree”. Scoring depends on the total scores of subscales.

Özen (2006) reported that the CRSS has shown evidence of high construct validity using exploratory factor analysis. The criterion validity was assessed by the correlation between the subscales of CRSS and translated Kurdek’s Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI), which were reported as .75, .61, .45, and .39 for negative conflict resolution, positive conflict resolution style, retreat and subordination and corresponded subscales of CRSI, respectively. CRSS also had strong internal

reliability, with Cronbach's alphas .80, .82, .74, and .73 for the subscales positive, negative, retreat, and subordination, respectively. These results revealed that the CRSS provides a reliable and valid measure of conflict resolution styles of couples for a Turkish sample (Özen, 2006). Regarding scoring, mean total scores of the subscales were computed in the current study. Moreover, the term "romantic partner" in the items were replaced with "spouse" in order to assess conflict resolution styles of married individuals (see Appendix C).

3.2.4. Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form created by the researcher was used in order to collect demographic data of the participants, including personal (i.e., gender, age, educational level, occupation, and place of growth,) and relational information (i.e., length of marriage and frequency of conflict). As a precaution, marriage-order and having children or not also added to the relational questions in order to eliminate participants who initiated to fill the questionnaire but did not meet the criteria to be a participant (see Appendix D).

3.3. Procedure

The measures of the current study were initially submitted to the Middle East Technical University, Human Participants Ethics Committee to get the permission to conduct the study. After the permission was obtained, data were collected through the website www.surveymonkey.com, which is a powerful online survey platform. Firstly, an online survey was created including all the measures of the study. The survey also included an online informed consent form in which participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of confidentiality. Appendix E contains a copy of the informed consent form given to participants online. The participants who confirmed their consent online to participate in the study were given the scales. A general outline of instructions were also given before the completion of the main measures of the study (see Appendix F). The participants were called attention to the importance of completing all scales on the survey and filling out the survey alone and without their partners. ECR-R, DAS, and CRSS had their own instructions. It took approximately 15-20 minutes to fill out the complete survey. Participants who reported that they had been married more than 5 years, had children, or were not in their first

marriages in demographic form were excluded before proceeding into the survey. Finally, participants were thanked for their participation.

Participants were also asked for their friends or relatives to participate in the study so that further participants could be reached through a snowball sampling method (Kumar, 1996). Data collection continued for four months between March 2014 and June 2014.

3.4. Data Analysis

Prior to analyses, mean total scores of each subscales of ECR-R and CRSS were computed. For scoring DAS, the total score of the whole scale was calculated by summing up all items. Then, data set was examined through using a variety of SPSS tools for the assumptions of multivariate statistics. All analyses in the current study were conducted using SPSS version 20.0 for Windows.

In order to investigate possible influences of demographic variables (gender, age, length of marriage, and education level) on the main variables of the study, separate one-way ANOVAs and Pearson correlations were performed. Bivariate correlations among study variables were also computed. Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were tested by using Pearson correlations. Hypothesis 4, the main hypothesis of the current study, was tested by mediation with Bootstrapping sampling method (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The following chapter will firstly provide data screening process before the analysis. Secondly, preliminary analyses including descriptive statistics of the main variables, influence of demographics, and bivariate correlations among all study variables will be presented. Lastly, primary analyses tested specific hypotheses of the study will be given.

4.1. Data Screening Prior to Analysis

Prior to analysis, firstly, it was assured that the data were accurate and there were no missing values. 11 univariate outliers were identified using z-scores larger than ± 3.29 and 3 respondents were found to be multivariate outliers using the Mahalanobis distance method ($p < .001$). After excluding these total 14 outliers from the study, data from the remaining 380 participants were used for the main analysis. Following detecting and dealing with outliers, the data set was examined through using a variety of SPSS tools for the assumptions of multivariate statistics, specifically for normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. Univariate normality assumption was assessed by skewness and kurtosis values of each variable, ranged from -1.02 to 1.37 and from -.49 to 1.76, respectively (see Table 1). Each of the univariate distributions had values of skewness and kurtosis within a reasonable range ($|\text{Skewness}| < 2.0$, $|\text{Kurtosis}| < 7.0$) as outlined by Curran et al. (1996). Assumption of linearity was checked using pairwise simple scatterplots for all the binary combinations of all variables. Further, multicollinearity was assessed by tolerance/VIF values of each variable in a linear regression model. The tolerance/VIF values for all variables were within an acceptable range, indicating that there was no multicollinearity among main variables of the study. Finally, it was concluded that the data met the multivariate assumptions required by the analysis.

4.2. Preliminary Analyses

In this section, preliminary analyses were run with respect to descriptive statistics of the main variables, influence of demographics, and bivariate correlations among all study variables.

4.2.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Main Variables

Means, standard deviations, and minimum-maximum scores for the main variables of the study were calculated (see Table 2). In order to see normality characteristics of the variables, skewness and kurtosis values were also presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Information of Main Continuous Variables

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Attachment							
Anxiety	380	2.61	.75	1.00	5.11	.52	.01
Avoidance	380	1.83	.73	1.00	4.44	1.37	1.76
CRS							
Positive CRS	380	4.55	.83	2.17	6.00	-.43	-.30
Negative CRS	380	2.48	.90	1.00	5.29	.49	-.21
Subordination	380	3.60	.99	1.00	6.00	-.13	-.38
Retreat	380	3.52	1.09	1.00	6.00	-.15	-.49
Marital Adj.	380	120.81	16.16	60.00	151.00	-1.02	1.49

Note. Attachment anxiety-avoidance and conflict resolution styles scores were computed by taking the mean total scores of each subscale. Meanwhile, marital adjustment scores were computed by summing up the scores all items.

When the mean scores of attachment subscales were examined, participants were generally more likely to be anxiously-attached ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .75$) than being avoidantly-attached ($M = 1.83$, $SD = .73$) to their partners. In terms of conflict resolution styles, positive conflict resolution style had the highest mean score ($M = 4.55$, $SD = .83$). Among other subscales of conflict resolution, the one with the lowest mean score was negative conflict resolution ($M = 2.48$, $SD = .90$). Subordination and retreat mean scores were 3.60 ($SD = .99$) and 3.52 ($SD = 1.09$) respectively. Moreover,

participants in the current study were relatively happy in their marriages with a reasonably high mean marital adjustment score of 120.81 ($SD = 16.16$).

4.2.2. Influences of Demographic Variables on Main Variables of the Study

In order to investigate possible influences of demographic variables (gender, age, length of marriage, and education level) on the main variables of the study, separate one-way ANOVAs and Pearson correlations were employed. The results of ANOVAs with gender as an independent variable were given in Table 3. A one-way ANOVA was used to examine gender differences in attachment anxiety and avoidance. Results revealed that there was a significant difference between men and women in terms of avoidance only [$F(1, 378) = 4.00, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$]. Men ($M = 1.93$) reported higher scores of avoidance than women ($M = 1.77$). Another one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the main effects of gender on conflict resolution styles. A significant gender difference was found in positive conflict resolution style [$F(1,378) = 10.75, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$]. Accordingly, women ($M = 4.65$) were more likely to prefer positive conflict resolution style than men ($M = 4.35$). Moreover, gender revealed a significant difference in subordination [$F(1, 378) = 43.30, p < .001, \eta^2 = .10$] as well. Men ($M = 4.05$) showed significantly higher tendency to use subordination than women ($M = 3.38$). Another one-way ANOVA investigating gender differences in marital adjustment; however, revealed that men and women did not significantly differ in terms of marital adjustment scores. Notably, an examination of Eta-squared values (effect size measures for group mean differences) showed that the strength of the main effect of gender in avoidance and positive conflict resolution style was significant but quite weak. The strongest effect size of gender was observed in subordination and it was moderately significant (see Table 3).

Table 3. Gender Differences in Main Study Variables

	Women (N=253)		Men (N=127)		F	η^2
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Attachment						
Anxiety	2.66	.76	2.51	.72	3.57	.00
Avoidance	1.77	.73	1.93	.75	4.00*	.01
CRS						
Positive CRS	4.65	.81	4.35	.84	10.75**	.02
Negative CRS	2.54	.95	2.37	.78	3.27	.00
Subordination	3.38	.95	4.05	.91	43.30***	.10
Retreat	3.49	1.11	3.60	1.05	.85	.00
Marital Adj.	120.28	16.57	121.87	15.32	.81	.00

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Pearson correlations were run in order to examine the relationships between the demographic variables of age, length of marriage, and education level and main variables of the study. As can be seen in Table 4, investigation of correlations revealed that there was a modest positive association between age and avoidance ($r = .11, p < .05$), meaning that older participants tended to be more avoidant. Regarding conflict resolution styles, age was also found to be modestly strongly and negatively correlated with negative conflict resolution style ($r = -.13, p < .01$), indicating that younger participants were more likely to use negative conflict resolution. Neither of the main variables was significantly correlated with length of marriage. On the other hand, education level revealed significant negative associations with avoidance ($r = -.14, p < .01$), subordination ($r = -.16, p < .01$), and retreat ($r = -.15, p < .01$), meaning that participants with higher education reported lower levels of avoidance and they were also less likely to use subordination and retreat, which were destructive patterns in conflict resolution. Preliminary results indicated that the outcome variable of marital adjustment was not associated with any demographic variables.

4.2.3. Bivariate Correlations among Variables of the Study

In order to examine relationships among all continuous variables of the study (age, length of marriage, education level, frequency of conflict, attachment anxiety-avoidance, positive conflict resolution style, negative conflict resolution style, subordination, retreat, and marital adjustment), Pearson correlations were calculated. The results were summarized in Table 4.

The significant correlations among demographics and main variables were reported in the previous section. Apart from that, frequency of conflict was positively correlated with both anxiety ($r = .31, p < .01$) and avoidance ($r = .35, p < .01$). Also, frequency of conflict revealed significant positive correlations with negative conflict resolution ($r = .38, p < .01$) and retreat ($r = .10, p < .05$), while it was negatively correlated with positive conflict resolution style ($r = -.14, p < .01$). Moreover, there was a moderately significant negative association between frequency of conflict and marital adjustment of newlyweds ($r = -.54, p < .01$). These significant correlations indicated that newlyweds who engage in conflict more frequently had higher scores on both anxiety and avoidance. They were also more likely to use negative conflict resolution style and retreat, whereas they were less likely to use positive conflict resolution style. In addition, they were less satisfied in their marriages.

Furthermore, correlations among main variables revealed that attachment anxiety and avoidance were positively correlated ($r = .48, p < .01$). In addition, attachment anxiety was negatively associated with positive conflict resolution style ($r = -.15, p < .01$) and marital adjustment ($r = -.47, p < .01$), whereas it revealed positive associations with negative conflict resolution ($r = .39, p < .01$) and retreat ($r = .13, p < .05$). In parallel with this, attachment avoidance was also negatively correlated with positive conflict resolution style ($r = -.33, p < .01$) and marital adjustment ($r = -.66, p < .01$), whereas it revealed positive associations with negative conflict resolution ($r = .29, p < .01$) and retreat ($r = .18, p < .01$). In contrast to anxiety, attachment avoidance also revealed significant positive association with subordination ($r = .10, p < .05$). These associations demonstrated that newlyweds who reported higher anxiety and avoidance scores tended to use less positive conflict resolution style, more negative conflict resolution style, and retreat, and they also got lower levels of marital

adjustment. In addition, individuals with higher attachment avoidance were more likely to prefer subordination in conflict resolution situations.

Results also yielded that marital adjustment was found to be negatively correlated with the use of negative conflict resolution style ($r = -.40, p < .01$) and retreat ($r = -.12, p < .05$), which indicated that newlyweds who showed higher use of negative conflict resolution style and retreat were less satisfied in their marriages. Moreover, there was a positive association between newlyweds' marital adjustment and their use of positive conflict resolution style ($r = .24, p < .01$).

Considering strength of these correlations, it was observed that the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment ($r = -.66, p < .01$) was stronger than the attachment anxiety-marital adjustment correlation ($r = -.47, p < .01$). Moreover, negative conflict resolution style had the highest correlation coefficient with marital adjustment ($r = -.40, p < .01$) among other conflict resolution styles.

Table 4. Pearson Correlations among Variables of the Study

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.Age	1										
2.Length of marriage	.30**	1									
3.Education level	.07	-.13**	1								
4.Frequency of conflict	-.01	.04	-.14**	1							
5.Anxiety	-.07	-.00	-.07	.31**	1						
6.Avoidance	.11*	.02	-.14**	.35**	.48**	1					
7.Positive CRS	-.04	.00	.01	-.14**	-.15**	-.33**	1				
8.Negative CRS	-.13**	.01	-.07	.38**	.39**	.29**	-.29**	1			
9.Subordination	.07	-.00	-.16**	.01	.09	.10*	-.03	-.20**	1		
10.Retreat	.03	-.00	-.15**	.10*	.13*	.18**	-.27**	.04	.34**	1	
11.Marital Adj.	.03	-.00	.09	-.54**	-.47**	-.66**	.24**	-.40**	.01	-.12*	1

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

4.3. Primary Analyses

In this section, primary analyses were run in order to test hypotheses of the current study. Firstly, Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated in order to test Hypothesis 1, 2, and 3. Secondly, following recent statistical approach to assess mediation recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004), Bootstrap sampling method was conducted in order to test Hypothesis 4. As mentioned earlier in preliminary analyses section, since neither of the demographics was significantly correlated with outcome variable of marital adjustment, primary analyses were run without controlling for demographic variables.

4.3.1. Testing the Relationship between Attachment Dimensions and Marital Adjustment (Hypothesis 1)

H 1: Attachment dimensions would be significantly associated with marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals who reported higher anxiety and avoidance would report lower marital adjustment.

As can be seen in Table 3, both attachment anxiety ($r = -.47, p < .01$) and attachment avoidance ($r = -.66, p < .01$) were negatively associated with marital adjustment. Accordingly, Hypothesis 1 was fully supported. Individuals with higher levels of anxiety and avoidance reported lower scores on marital adjustment.

4.3.2. Testing the Relationship between Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Adjustment (Hypothesis 2)

H 2: Conflict resolution styles would be significantly associated with marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals who reported using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher retreat would report lower marital adjustment (Since evidence linking subordination and marital adjustment was inconsistent, no specific hypothesis with regard to subordination was set).

All of the hypothesized links between conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment was confirmed. As shown in Table 3, Pearson correlations yielded that marital adjustment was found to be positively correlated with positive conflict resolution style ($r = .24, p < .01$), whereas it was negatively associated with the use of negative conflict resolution style ($r = -.40, p < .01$) and retreat ($r = -.12, p < .05$). The

relationship between subordination and marital adjustment was not significant. Accordingly, Hypothesis 2 was also fully supported. These results indicated that newlyweds who showed fewer use of positive conflict resolution style and higher use of negative conflict resolution style and retreat were less satisfied in their marriages.

4.3.3. Testing the Relationship between Attachment Dimensions and Conflict Resolution Styles (Hypothesis 3)

H 3: Attachment dimensions would be significantly associated with conflict resolution styles. Specifically, individuals who reported higher anxiety would report using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher subordination. Individuals who reported higher avoidance would report using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher retreat.

Pearson correlation results also found extensive support for the hypothesized links between attachment dimensions (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) and conflict resolution styles. In general, of the 6 possible correlations between attachment dimensions and conflict resolution styles, 5 were found to be statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level. Table 3 showed that attachment anxiety was negatively associated with positive conflict resolution style ($r = -.15, p < .01$), whereas it was positively associated with negative conflict resolution ($r = .39, p < .01$), as predicted. As opposed to predictions, attachment anxiety was also found to be positively correlated with retreat ($r = .13, p < .05$). The link between subordination and attachment anxiety was not significant, however.

Additionally, Pearson correlations confirmed all the predictions regarding attachment avoidance. Similar to attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance was negatively correlated with positive conflict resolution style ($r = -.33, p < .01$), whereas it showed a positive association with negative conflict resolution ($r = .29, p < .01$). As predicted, attachment avoidance was also positively correlated with retreat ($r = .18, p < .01$). However, as opposed to predictions, attachment avoidance was also positively associated with subordination ($r = .10, p < .05$). Overall, these associations demonstrated that newlyweds who reported higher anxiety and avoidance scores tended to use less positive conflict resolution style, more negative conflict resolution

style, and retreat. In addition, individuals with higher attachment avoidance were more likely to prefer subordination in conflict resolution situations.

4.3.4. Testing the Mediator Role of Conflict Resolution Styles in the Relationship between Attachment Dimensions and Marital Adjustment (Hypothesis 4)

H 4: The relationship between attachment dimensions and marital adjustment would be mediated via conflict resolution styles.

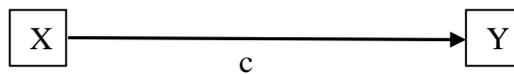
Considering Hypothesis 4, a mediational model in which conflict resolution styles mediate the relationship between attachment dimensions (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) and marital adjustment was tested. Following recent statistical approach to assess mediation recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2004), mediation analysis with Bootstrap sampling method was conducted. Beyond the traditional mediational method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986), Preacher and Hayes (2004) suggested an alternative method to assess the statistical significance of indirect (mediated) effects with bootstrapping. Indirect effects were assessed with a bootstrapped sampling distribution, in which a large number of resamples (e. g., 5000) were generated from the original data set. Bootstrap confidence intervals (CIs) were then calculated to determine statistical significance of the indirect effects. A significant mediational effect was revealed when a value of zero did not fall within the range of the CI in the output. Bootstrap analysis is known to generate more accurate and powerful statistical estimates than the conventional method for testing mediating effects (Hayes, 2009). In addition, it allows to estimate models with multiple mediators regardless of the complexity of the model. To conduct analysis, SPSS macros developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) enable estimation of the indirect effects. Electronic copies of these macros are available on www.afhayes.com.

A multiple mediational model is represented in the diagrams shown in Figure 2. The effect of X (predictor) on Y (criterion) is called the “total effect” (path c). Path c, shown in Model A, can be described as the unmediated model. The effect of X on Y may be processed by some intervening variables, called mediators (M_1 and M_2). Model B represents a multiple mediator model. In this model, a_1 is the coefficient for X that predicts M_1 from X, and b_1 is the coefficient predicting Y from M_1 . Path c' is the “direct effect” of X on Y. The product of path coefficients (a_1*b_1) is the “indirect effect” of X on Y through M_1 . Bootstrapping analysis allows the investigation of both

the direct effect of X on Y and the indirect effects of the X on Y through the paths of each mediator (Hayes, 2009).

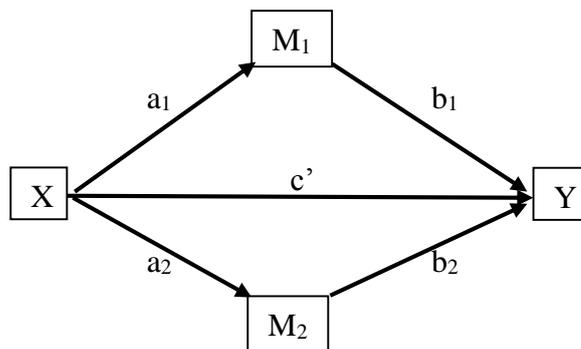
Since a multiple mediation model was tested in the current study, Indirect Custom Dialog (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) was preferred and installed into SPSS. Indirect effects were assessed for the two dimensions of attachment (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) separately. In this multiple mediational model, marital adjustment was the criterion, attachment dimensions (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) were predictors, and the four conflict resolution styles (i.e., positive conflict resolution style, negative conflict resolution style, subordination, and retreat) were examined as potential mediators. 95% confidence interval based on 5000 bootstrap resamples was used for testing the significance of indirect effects.

Model A



Total effect of X on Y (path c)

Model B



A direct effect of X on Y (c') and indirect effects of X on Y through M_1 and M_2

Figure 2. Total Effect of X on Y (Model A), Multiple Mediator Model (Model B)

4.3.4.1. Testing the Mediator Role of Conflict Resolution Styles in the Relationship between Attachment Anxiety and Marital Adjustment

Indirect Custom Dialog was run in SPSS in order to investigate the indirect effects of attachment anxiety on marital adjustment through four conflict resolution styles in the proposed multiple mediational model. The bootstrap analysis indicated that total effect of attachment anxiety on marital adjustment (path c) ($B = -10.060$, $SE = .972$, $p < .001$) was significant. Considering paths from anxiety to mediators, attachment anxiety was found to be a significant predictor of positive conflict resolution style (path a₁) ($B = -.174$, $SE = .056$, $p < .01$), negative conflict resolution style (path a₂) ($B = .477$, $SE = .056$, $p < .001$), and retreat (path a₄) ($B = .188$, $SE = .073$, $p < .05$) but the relationship between attachment anxiety and subordination (path a₃) ($B = .125$, $SE = .067$, $p = .063$) was not significant. In addition, considering direct effects of mediators on marital adjustment, while direct effects of positive conflict resolution style (path b₁) ($B = 2.049$, $SE = .917$, $p < .05$) and negative conflict resolution style (path b₂) ($B = -4.046$, $SE = .910$, $p < .001$) on marital adjustment were significant, those of subordination (path b₃) ($B = .373$, $SE = .782$, $p = .633$) and retreat (path b₄) ($B = -.635$, $SE = .716$, $p = .376$) on marital adjustment were not significant.

Considering indirect (mediated) effects, the bootstrap analysis confirmed the mediator roles of positive conflict resolution style ($B = -.358$, $SE = .194$; CI = $-.863$ to $-.067$) and negative conflict resolution style ($B = -1.933$, $SE = .506$; CI = -3.029 to -1.035) in the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment since zero did not fall within the range of the CIs. However, subordination ($B = .047$, $SE = .107$; CI = $-.100$ to $.366$) and retreat ($B = -.108$, $SE = .151$; CI = $-.527$ to $.110$) did not emerge as significant mediators since confidence intervals included zero. The results of the bootstrap analysis also indicated a significant direct effect of attachment anxiety on marital adjustment (path c') ($B = -7.698$, $SE = 1.037$, $p < .001$), indicating that the use of both positive and negative conflict resolution styles only partially accounted for the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals with higher anxiety were less likely to use positive conflict resolution style and more likely to use negative conflict resolution style, which then predicted lower marital adjustment. The model explained 28.2% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2 = .282$,

$F(5,374) = 30.84, p < .001$). Figure 3 displayed the unstandardized regression coefficients in a path diagram.

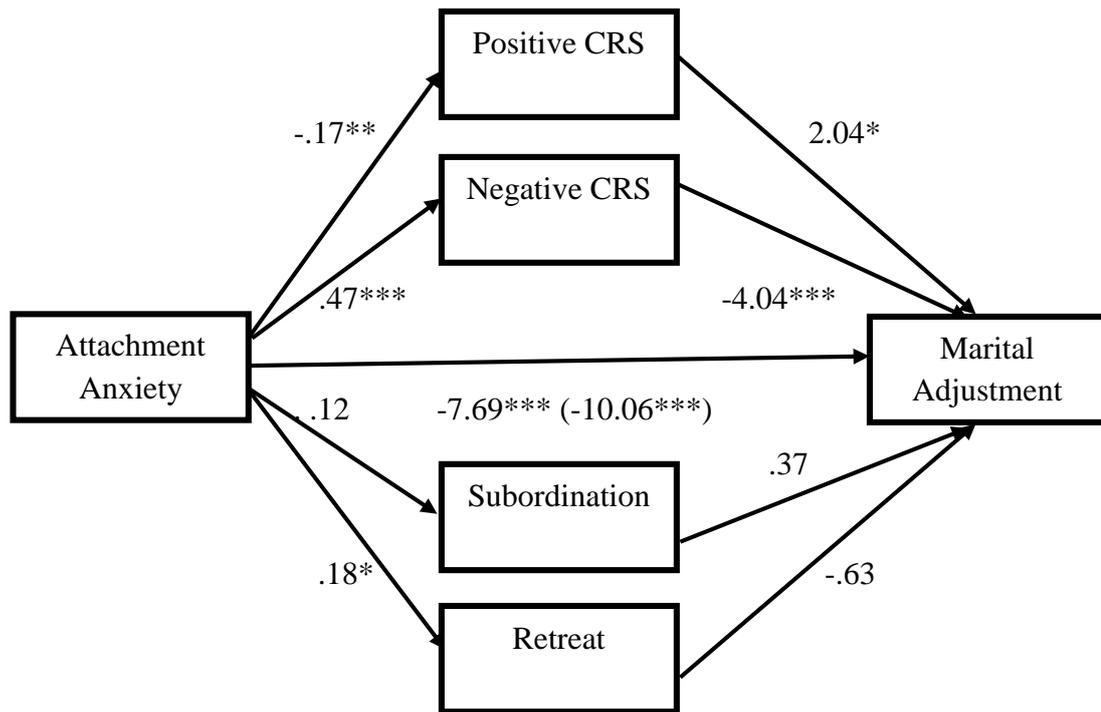


Figure 3. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Relationship between Attachment Anxiety and Marital Adjustment as Mediated by Conflict Resolution Styles

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

4.3.4.2. Testing the Mediator Role of Conflict Resolution Styles in the Relationship between Attachment Avoidance and Marital Adjustment

Indirect Custom Dialog was run in SPSS in order to investigate the indirect effects of attachment avoidance on marital adjustment through four conflict resolution styles in the proposed multiple mediational model. The bootstrap analysis indicated that total effect of attachment avoidance on marital adjustment (path c) ($B = -14.527, SE = .839, p < .001$) was significant. All paths from avoidance to mediators were also

significant; namely, attachment avoidance was found to be a significant predictor of positive conflict resolution style (path a_1) ($B = -.373$, $SE = .054$, $p < .001$), negative conflict resolution style (path a_2) ($B = .357$, $SE = .060$, $p < .001$), subordination (path a_3) ($B = .138$, $SE = .068$, $p < .05$), and retreat (path a_4) ($B = .267$, $SE = .074$, $p < .001$). In addition, considering direct effects of mediators on marital adjustment, only direct effect of negative conflict resolution style on marital adjustment (path b_2) ($B = -4.114$, $SE = .726$, $p < .001$) was significant. Direct effects of positive conflict resolution style (path b_1) ($B = -.664$, $SE = .797$, $p = .405$), subordination (path b_3) ($B = .636$, $SE = .658$, $p = .333$) and retreat (path b_4) ($B = -.344$, $SE = .606$, $p = .570$), however, were not significant.

Considering indirect (mediated) effects, the bootstrap analysis confirmed only the mediator role of negative conflict resolution style ($B = -1.466$, $SE = .357$; $CI = -2.303$ to $-.872$) in the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment since zero did not fall within the range of the CI . However, positive conflict resolution style ($B = .247$, $SE = .305$; $CI = -.317$ to $.896$), subordination ($B = .089$, $SE = .108$; $CI = -.044$ to $.423$) and retreat ($B = -.085$, $SE = .169$; $CI = -.496$ to $.195$) did not emerge as significant mediators since confidence intervals included zero. The results of the bootstrap analysis also indicated a significant direct effect of attachment avoidance on marital adjustment (path c') ($B = -13.298$, $SE = .884$, $p < .001$), indicating that the use of negative conflict resolution style only partially accounted for the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals with higher avoidance were more likely to use negative conflict resolution style, which then predicted lower marital adjustment. The model explained 48.6% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2 = .486$, $F(5,374) = 72.92$, $p < .001$). Figure 4 displayed the unstandardized regression coefficients in a path diagram.

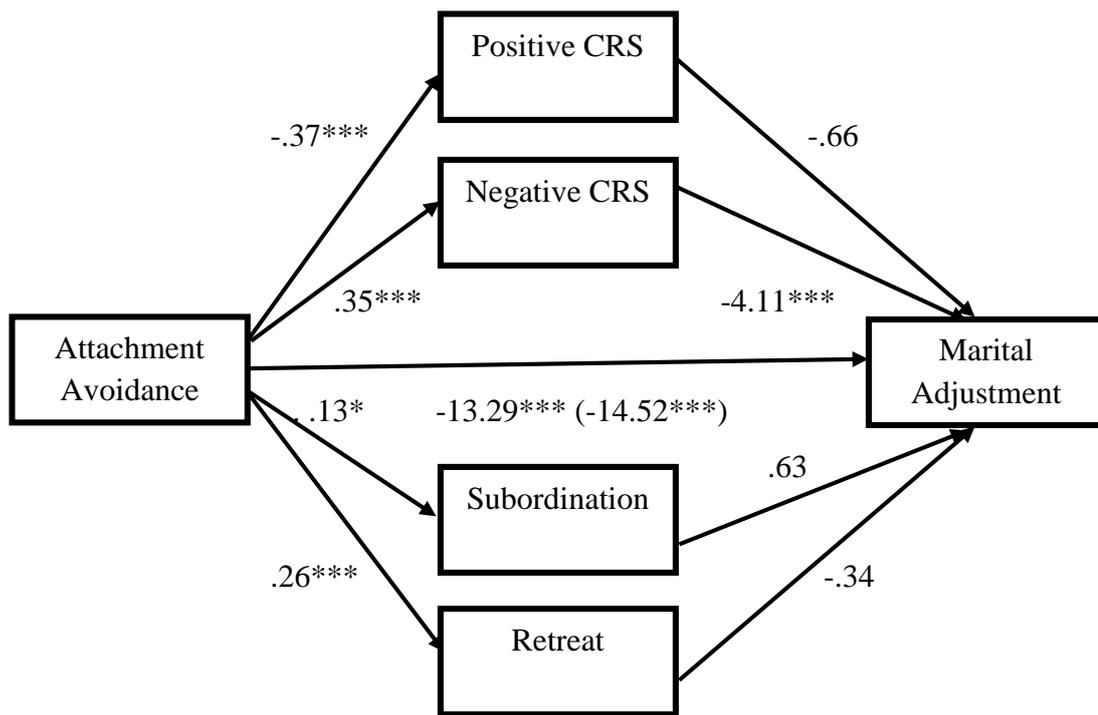


Figure 4. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Relationship between Attachment Avoidance and Marital Adjustment as Mediated by Conflict Resolution Styles

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

To sum, the results of the bootstrapping method indicated that both positive and negative conflict resolution style mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment. For the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment, significant indirect effect was found for only negative conflict resolution style. The results were summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of Indirect Effects for Attachment Dimensions and Marital Adjustment

Predictor	Mediator	Criterion	B	95% CI	Sig.
Anxiety	Positive CRS	Mar. Adj.	-.358	-.863, -.067	$p < .05$
Anxiety	Negative CRS	Mar. Adj.	-1.933	-3.029, -1.035	$p < .05$
Avoidance	Negative CRS	Mar. Adj.	-1.466	-2.303, -.872	$p < .05$

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter will firstly address discussion of the preliminary analyses, followed by a broader discussion of the findings for the main hypotheses in the light of the related literature. Afterwards, some limitations of the study and recommendations for future research will be presented. Then, implications of the current findings will be addressed. Finally, a brief conclusion of the main issues of the study will be stated.

5.1. Evaluation of Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses regarding gender differences on main variables indicated significant differences between men and women in terms of attachment dimensions and conflict resolution styles subscales. Findings with respect to attachment dimensions revealed that men reported higher scores of avoidance than women in the current sample. Although this finding seems inconsistent with some studies (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shi, 2003) showing no sex differences in attachment patterns, the majority of prior research (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan et al., 1998; Wongpakaran et al., 2012; Del Giudice, 2011) suggested that men showed higher levels of avoidance or avoidant attachment pattern, so the result of the current study supports the general consensus in the literature. It seems that men show higher avoidance than women across cultures (Del Giudice, 2011). A possible explanation to gender differences in attachment avoidance comes from researchers who are in support of evolutionary psychology approach. For instance, Jackson and Kirkpatrick (2007) proposed that attachment avoidance could be linked with a tendency to short-term mating pattern, a predisposition that men possess from an evolutionary perspective, whereas secure attachment could be more associated with long-term, committed mating pattern, which mostly belongs to women. Another potential explanation for this difference may lie in the origin of attachment theory that primarily focuses on the parent-child relationships. From a clinical based perspective, it can be argued that men could experience a more inconsistent, insensitive, or neglectful care of attachment

figures compared to women in their childhood, so that behaving physically and emotionally distant to their romantic partners in adulthood has become the way they handle the belief that they do not deserve to be cared and loved sensitively.

Results of the study also revealed gender differences in terms of some subscales of conflict resolution style. Accordingly, women were more likely to prefer positive conflict resolution style than men, whereas men showed higher tendency to use subordination (i.e., obliging or accommodating). Consistent with the current findings, previous studies (Shi, 2003; Cann et al., 2008) found that women showed higher use of integrative conflict behaviors. Studies conducted with Turkish samples (Özen, 2006; Uğurlu, 2003) also provided support for the difference between wives and husbands in terms of positive conflict resolution style. In addition, past studies from both Western cultures and Turkish culture (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Cann et al., 2008; Pancaroğlu, 2007) indicated that men were more likely to prefer obliging or accommodating conflict style, which refers to subordination in the current study. It appears that women have a higher tendency to be open to self-disclosure, understand the needs of the other, handle conflict effectively until the problem is solved and try to find a solution at a midpoint, whereas men are more inclined to accept the demands of the partner and behave unassertively when handling conflict. A possible factor that may cause this difference is that men and women get socialized through different gender roles and stereotypes. Women are raised from birth in a manner that being relationship oriented, expressive, empathic, and sensitive is reinforced, while being tough, independent, and emotionally distant is encouraged for men. For these reasons, men are more likely to accept their partner's demands to prevent any conflict in their relationships so that they can avoid emotional disclosure and psychological effort in managing conflict. However, women endorse higher positive and constructive conflict resolution skills. It is essential to note that the strength of the main effect of gender in positive conflict resolution style was significant but quite weak but the strongest effect size was observed in subordination, which means that the difference in the use of subordination according to gender is more obvious in this sample.

Moreover, the current study revealed no gender differences in terms of marital adjustment as opposed to a large body of previous evidence (Feeney, 1994; Guo & Huang, 2005; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993; Rogers & Amato, 2000) suggesting that

men reported higher levels of marital satisfaction than did women. On the other hand, Jackson et al. (2014) conducted a meta-analysis regarding to gender differences to test the commonly held hypothesis that men are more satisfied in their marriages than women and revealed that men and women do not actually differ significantly with regard to marital satisfaction in nonclinical samples. The study by Zeidner and Kloda (2013) also did not find any gender differences in marital satisfaction between husbands and wives. So, the current finding gives some support not only to the recent studies conducted abroad but also to some studies conducted in Turkey (Demir & Fırsılođlu, 1999; Uđurlu, 2003; Őzen, 2006).

Furthermore, preliminary analyses of the current study regarding age differences revealed that older participants tended to be more avoidant. This result was consistent with the findings of Chopik et al. (2013). They found that avoidance was highest among middle-aged individuals, whereas younger and older groups showed the lowest levels of avoidance. When the age of the current participants (ranged between 20 to 48 years) was taken into consideration, this pattern may be related to differences in central tasks required by different psychosocial development stages. According to Erikson (1956), people in young adulthood stage are more capable of forming intimate and sensitive relationships, and therefore they are more willing to engage in long-term committed relationships such as marriage, which may result in lower levels of attachment avoidance. On the other hand, if people in middle adulthood stage can not achieve tasks of their developmental stage, i.e., raising a family or developing a sense of unity with romantic partners, they experience a feeling of stagnation and dissatisfaction. Given that older participants in the current study are newlyweds in their first marriages and do not have any children, it can be said that they did not achieve the tasks related to their developmental stage, and therefore they may report more avoidance than younger participants who actually achieved their tasks.

Moreover, age was also found to be negatively correlated with negative conflict resolution style indicating that older participants were less likely to use negative conflict resolution. There is some prior evidence (Carstensen et al., 1995) that older couples express less emotional negativity and more affection when faced with disagreements in their marriage. Therefore, it can be proposed that as spouses get

older, levels of displayed negative emotions as well as use of negative conflict resolution style during disagreements decrease.

Neither of the main variables was significantly associated with length of marriage. Although some prior research (e.g., Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007; Zainah et al., 2012) showed that there was a significant positive association between length of the marriage and marital satisfaction, no support was found for this finding in the current study. Failure to find such a relationship may be due to characteristics of the current sample since the data of this study has relied on a homogeneous sample with a narrow range of length of marriage (1 month to 5 years), which may prevent significant results to occur.

5.2. Evaluation of Primary Analyses

In this section, the findings of primary analyses were discussed. Results related to Hypothesis 1, 2, 3 were discussed together, whereas findings related to Hypothesis 4 were discussed separately in the following sections.

5.2.1. Evaluation of Hypothesis 1, 2, 3

The first research question of the current study was “What are the direct associations among the variables of attachment dimensions, conflict resolution styles, and marital adjustment in a sample of newlywed individuals that are in the new couple stage?” Accordingly, three hypotheses were set.

Firstly, it was hypothesized that attachment dimensions would be significantly associated with marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals who reported higher anxiety and avoidance would report lower marital adjustment. The zero-order correlations fully supported this prediction. Results revealed that individuals with higher levels of anxiety and avoidance reported lower scores on marital adjustment. The association between insecure attachment and marital adjustment found in this study is consistent with the extensive body of previous research (e.g., Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Feeney, 1994; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Banse, 2004; Mondor et al., 2011) demonstrating that insecurely attached individuals had lower marital adjustment. Overall, the current study provided additional support to the consistent and well-established association between secure attachment and marital quality in adult attachment research. Indeed, compared with results reported in the past literature, zero-

order correlations between attachment dimensions and marital adjustment were reasonably large, $-.66$ and $-.47$ for attachment avoidance and anxiety, respectively. Although directions of the associations for both attachment dimensions are similar, the possible explanations for the avoidance dimension basically differ from the explanations for the anxiety dimension; therefore, these two aspects of attachment will be discussed separately in the following: It appears to be the case for anxious individuals that excessive worry about abandonment or the belief that their partners will not be available or responsive to their needs when needed (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003) influence their satisfaction in marriage in a detrimental way. For avoidant individuals, however, rather than concerns about abandonment or rejection, discomfort about being emotionally close and intimate to their spouses and extreme tendency to independency (Feeney, 2002) may be related to the dissatisfaction in their marriages.

Secondly, it was hypothesized conflict resolution styles would be significantly associated with marital adjustment. Specifically, individuals who reported using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher retreat would report lower marital adjustment. Since evidence linking subordination and marital adjustment was inconsistent in the literature, no specific hypothesis with regard to subordination was set. In general, the pattern of zero-order correlations conformed all of the expected links between conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment. Marital adjustment of newlyweds was found to be positively correlated with positive conflict resolution style, whereas it was negatively associated with the use of negative conflict resolution style and retreat. Indeed, the strongest relationship was observed between negative conflict resolution style and marital adjustment. These results indicated that newlyweds who were less likely to use positive conflict resolution style and more likely to use of negative conflict resolution style and retreat were less satisfied in their marriages. The observed relationships between positive and negative conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment were consistent with the extensive marital conflict literature (e.g., Gottman, 1993; Marchand, 2004; Marchand & Hock, 2000; Noller et al., 1994; Russler-Chapin et al., 2001; Tallman & Hsiao, 2004). In line with current findings, using retreat or avoidance in handling conflict has also been previously shown to be negatively associated with marital satisfaction (Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Noller et al., 1994). These findings seem to be

potentially important in the literature of marital satisfaction. It appears that managing conflict effectively plays a fundamental role in maintaining a successful marriage, especially in the early years of marriage in which couples are more prone to disagreements due to problems related to adjusting to a new stage in family life. Given that the strongest relationship was observed between negative conflict resolution style and marital adjustment ($r = -.40, p < .01$), these findings suggest that especially destructive patterns to deal with such disagreements (i.e., manipulating the partner, showing aggressive behaviors, or using threats or blames) may be a key element in marital dissatisfaction of newlyweds. While these findings make sense in the context of the related literature, it was also revealed that there was no significant relationship between subordination and marital adjustment. This result was in line with the finding of Kurdek (1994) suggesting that conflict resolution style of compliance was not significantly associated with relationship satisfaction. This nonsignificant finding may reflect the possibility that for those who use subordination as a conflict management style, marriage is still satisfying. The reason why they are satisfied with their marriages may be that subordination requires accepting the partner's demands and this pattern of management is more likely to result in preventing any conflict or at least preventing controversial issue from evolving into a bigger problem.

Thirdly, it was hypothesized that attachment dimensions would be significantly associated with conflict resolution styles. Specifically, individuals who reported higher anxiety would report using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher subordination. In addition, individuals who reported higher avoidance would report using fewer positive conflict resolution style, higher negative conflict resolution style, and higher retreat. The data yielded considerable support for the hypothesized links between attachment dimensions (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) and conflict resolution styles. These two aspects of attachment and their links between conflict resolution styles will be discussed independently in the following: As predicted, attachment anxiety was negatively associated with positive conflict resolution style, whereas it revealed positive associations with negative conflict resolution. Indeed, the strongest association revealed between attachment anxiety and negative conflict resolution ($r = .39, p < .01$). Consistent with these findings, previous studies have shown that higher anxiety was associated with

less use of integrating and compromising conflict behaviors (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989), more hostility and less constructive arguing (Pistole & Arricale, 2003), higher use of dominating style (Shi, 2003), and more verbal aggressive behaviors such as using threats or blames (Senchak & Leonard, 1992). The current results are also theoretically consistent with the characteristics of attachment anxiety. Individuals with an anxious attachment pattern doubt about self-worthiness of love, have a strong fear of rejection and abandonment, and excessive worries about the availability of others when needed (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). These fears may result in a higher concern about the availability of their partners in a discussion of conflict, where attachment systems are most likely to be triggered (Kobak & Duemmler, 1994). Therefore, anxiously attached individuals tend to overreact to conflicts and display negative conflict solving strategies (i.e., aggressive and demanding behaviors) to feel sure that their partners are still available. Although these results confirm general consensus in the literature, one interesting finding that emerged in the present research was that anxiously attached individuals reported using more retreat as opposed to subordination. A possible explanation may lie in the context of the marital relationship for this association. Since marriage requires a strong, well-established emotional bond between partners, even anxious individuals might feel relatively secure and believe that this safe relationship will last under any circumstances. Thus, they might use withdrawal as a conflict resolution style since avoiding decreases distress of conflict.

Additionally, hypothesis with regard to attachment avoidance was fully supported. In line with the expectations, attachment avoidance revealed a negative association with positive conflict resolution style and positive associations with negative conflict resolution and retreat. A similar picture emerges from the previous research indicating that attachment avoidance was negatively associated with integrating and compromising conflict behaviors (Corcoran & Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989; Shi, 2003), while it was positively associated with more withdrawals from interaction, less willingness to self-disclosure of emotions, and more defensiveness (Shi, 2003; Pistole & Arricale, 2003), and higher amounts of negative behaviors (Creasey, 2002). Although both attachment anxiety and avoidance were found to be correlated with same conflict resolution behaviors in the same direction,

the underlying mechanisms are highly distinct from each other. As opposed to anxious individuals, those with an avoidant pattern have serious difficulties in trusting others and develop fear of intimacy mostly due to experiencing an inconsistent and unresponsive caregiving of primary attachment figures in childhood (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Thus, they tend to avoid from the attachment figure in adulthood when distressed in order to overcome the deep, hidden fear of rejection they feel inside (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Consequently, by avoiding an interaction that involves intimate self-disclosure, using empathy, or active problem solving, they sustain their shield against vulnerability referring the possibility that attachment figures will not be responsive and sensitive to their needs.

In addition, the present study yielded another unexpected finding. Interestingly, the association between attachment insecurity and subordination produced a significant pattern in the current study. Rather than being positively associated with attachment anxiety as demonstrated by previous studies (Pistole, 1989; Shi, 2003), subordination (i.e., tendency to sacrifice one's own needs to satisfy the needs of the partner) was found to be positively associated with attachment avoidance. This result contradicts prior research findings which indicated that individuals higher in anxiety were more likely to prefer obliging, which refers to subordination in the current study. Pistole (1989) proposed that preoccupied/anxious individuals may be more likely to use subordination or obliging behavior in order not to lose their partners by satisfying their needs or pleasing them. The current pattern yielded from this study may be related to the characteristics of avoidant attachment in this case. A common finding in the literature is that individuals with avoidant pattern are more likely to withdraw from conflict. By accepting the partner's demands and needs, they also have a higher chance to end the conflict or at least avoid from engaging in discussion or prevent escalation of the conflict.

5.2.2. Evaluation of Hypothesis 4

The second and main research question posed in the current study was "To what extent do conflict resolution styles mediate the relationship between attachment dimensions and marital adjustment in a sample of newlywed individuals that are in the new couple stage?" Accordingly, it was hypothesized that the relationship between attachment dimensions and marital adjustment would be mediated via conflict

resolution styles. The results of bootstrapping method provided considerable support for some mediational mechanisms in the current sample of newlyweds.

When mediational analysis was performed in order to further investigate the links between attachment dimensions, conflict resolution styles, and marital adjustment of newlyweds, the results indicated that both positive and negative conflict resolution styles partially mediated the relationship between anxiety dimension of attachment and marital adjustment. Specifically, newlyweds who were less anxious were more likely to use positive style of conflict resolution and were less likely to use negative style of conflict resolution, both of which then led to greater marital adjustment. Negative conflict resolution style also partially mediated the association between avoidance and marital adjustment. That is, newlyweds who were less avoidant were less likely to use negative conflict resolution, which subsequently predicted greater marital adjustment.

Given that only negative conflict resolution style acted as a partial mediator between both components of attachment (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) and marital adjustment, it can be proposed that the connection between attachment insecurities and marital satisfaction can be explained, at least in part, by negative conflict resolution style. More specifically, higher anxiety and avoidance is predictive of a greater likelihood to behave in a destructive way in conflict situations, which in turn led to lower marital adjustment. This finding suggest that especially displaying hostility, aggressive and demanding behaviors when faced with disagreements plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between attachment insecurities and marital satisfaction. Overall, these findings are consistent with an earlier study (Cann et al., 2008) suggesting that integrating and dominating styles mediated the relationship between both anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment and relationship satisfaction. However, contrary to the findings of current study, Marchand (2004) found that attacking behaviors mediated the relationship between only anxiety dimension of attachment and marital satisfaction. In the sample of Marchand (2004), it seemed that avoidance had a more direct relationship with marital adjustment. Perhaps this is because the author used a more heterogeneous sample, including couples having children and being in their second marriages. These confounding variables may have affected the results. The findings of the current study may provide

a clearer picture of how attachment insecurities are related to deficits in conflict resolution, and how these deficits influence marital satisfaction. The mediator role of conflict resolution styles in the association between avoidance and marital adjustment may also be unique to newlywed marriage.

One interesting finding of this analysis was the inconsistency of results in two models of attachment. Although positive conflict resolution style acted as a mediator in anxiety-marital adjustment association, it is less clear why it did not emerge as a significant mediator in the relationship between avoidance and marital adjustment. In fact, avoidance dimension of attachment predicted positive conflict resolution but this positive conflict resolution style did not mediate the avoidance-marital adjustment relationship. This may be interpreted as indicating that although avoidantly attached individuals are less likely to use functional conflict solving behaviors, the decrease in these functional behaviors did not have an effect on their marital satisfaction. For anxiously attached individuals, however, this decrease predicted lower levels of marital satisfaction. This may be due to the differences in characteristics of anxious and avoidant individuals. While anxiously attached individuals are more susceptible to feel threatened that conflict can damage their sense of security in the relationship, marital satisfaction of avoidant individuals may be less likely to be affected by those factors.

The overall results seem to suggest that attachment insecurities determine the way how newly married individuals handle conflict, and in turn these conflict resolution patterns predict their satisfaction in marriage. Specifically, the findings highlighted the importance of dysfunctional conflict resolution styles as an underlying mechanism through the relationship between attachment characteristics and satisfaction in newlywed marriage. Still, it is important to note that in both models, results indicated that conflict resolution styles only partially accounted for the association between attachment insecurities and marital adjustment. That is, insecure attachment patterns continued to predict marital adjustment after conflict resolution styles accounted for. This may suggest that attachment security may have a more direct association with marital satisfaction than predicted or additional mediators may play a greater role in this relationship.

5.3. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

Although findings gave considerable support for the proposed mediational model, they should be evaluated in the light of some limitations of the current study. First limitation of the current study was that the results were relied on individual-level data. Assessing associations between attachment patterns, conflict resolution styles, and marital adjustment by using a dyadic approach may provide a more precise picture of these relationships. In addition, in this way, two separate mediational analyses for husbands and wives could be conducted. Therefore, future researchers could add depth to the information obtained in the current study by using dyadic-level data collected from both spouses to understand the dynamics of couples and to reveal the differences in the patterns of husbands and wives.

In addition, the present study used an electronic survey to collect data, which may result in a higher risk of common method bias. That is, using an electronic survey may influence the responses in a different way for participants who might be unfamiliar with an electronic survey platform and for those who are familiar. In future research, it could be valuable to include additional methods of data collection, such as using observational data of couple interactions in conflict, observations of attachment patterns in marital interactions, or interviews to collect more unbiased data.

Another limitation of the current study was related to using a cross-sectional design. This type of design employed in the study can not provide any information about change over time. The study only assessed current levels of attachment patterns, conflict resolution behaviors, and marital adjustment. Therefore, future studies would employ a longitudinal design to see how the effects of study variables on marital adjustment change over time in newlyweds.

Moreover, sampling a homogeneous group of newly married individuals can be both an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time. Although recruit of newlyweds who met specific criteria is an important addition to prior research by eliminating possible confounding variables, it also limits generalizability of the current findings to other married populations. Thus, another potential recommendation for future research would be to sample other specific subgroup of couples (i.e., couples in different stages of family life cycle) to see whether any differences would be revealed in the obtained patterns of the current study.

5.4. Implications of the Study

The findings of the current study provide some valuable implications for the field of clinical practice of marriage and family therapy. It seems that there is a growing interest in attachment issues in clinical practice (Werner-Wilson & Davenport, 2003). The current study may provide additional information to this increasing interest. First of all, the current findings add to the growing body of adult attachment literature suggesting that attachment insecurities play a significant role in marital distress in early years of marriage. More importantly, results suggested that especially dysfunctional conflict resolution patterns (i.e., manipulating the partner, showing aggressive and demanding behaviors, or using threats or blames) may be a key element in marital dissatisfaction of insecurely attached newlyweds.

As many couples seek professional help because they are unable to solve conflicts effectively, the findings of this study may provide insight for family or couple therapists. Especially, since early years of marriage are more susceptible to frequent and severe disagreements due to the problems related to couple adjustment and this study was relied on early marital relationships, clinicians may use findings to make clinical interventions when working with newlyweds. Although most of the problems couples present to their therapists are about deficits in conflict resolution skills, the problems are in fact complaints about dissatisfied attachment needs (Solomon, 2009). These dissatisfied attachment needs turn into anger, dominance, or complete avoidance in conflict situations. Therefore, it may be beneficial for the therapists to assess attachment patterns of spouses and their role in the conflict resolution behaviors. Specifically, a therapist may work on making the clients aware of their attachment insecurities as a key factor in their destructive conflict behaviors. In addition, they may help their clients to become secure bases for each other when conflict arises. Spouses may be encouraged to express their needs and negative emotions during conflict resolution so that they can choose not to behave in a demanding, manipulative, or defensive way. Consequently, it may be easier for clinicians to help the clients change their dysfunctional behaviors into more adaptive ones and enhance their marital satisfaction, which can be considered as the primary goal of the therapy.

5.5. Conclusion

The current study is the first testing the mediator role of conflict resolution styles in attachment-marital adjustment relationship in newly married individuals. A special subgroup of married individuals (i.e., being married for up to 5 years, childless, and in the first-time marriages) was used in order to detect better the effects of attachment orientations and conflict on marital adjustment by eliminating confounding variables. In this way, the current study sought to extend the previous work by providing a clearer picture of the relationships between attachment, conflict resolution styles, and marital adjustment in a homogeneous sample. It was found that negative conflict resolution style partially mediated the relationship between both dimensions of attachment (i.e., anxiety and avoidance) and marital adjustment. Overall, findings highlighted the importance of dysfunctional conflict resolution styles as an underlying mechanism through the relationship between attachment insecurity and marital dissatisfaction in newlywed marriage.

In addition, it is the first study in Turkey examining the interrelationships between attachment dimensions, conflict resolution styles, and marital satisfaction simultaneously. Hence, the present study does contribute to the Turkish literature by providing important information about the role of attachment insecurities and conflict resolution styles in marital satisfaction in Turkish culture.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R)

(Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri II)

Aşağıdaki maddeler eşinizle ilişkinizde hissettiğiniz duygularla ilgilidir. Bu araştırmada sizin yalnızca şu anda değil, genel olarak **eşinizle** neler yaşadığınızla ilgilenmekteyiz. Her bir maddenin evliliğinizdeki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi ne oranda yansıttığını karşılardaki 7 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde ilgili rakamı yuvarlak içine alarak belirtiniz.

	1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----	6-----	7
Hiç katılmıyorum							Tamamen katılıyorum
1. Eşimin sevgisini kaybetmekten korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Gerçekte ne hissettiğimi eşime göstermemeyi tercih ederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Sıklıkla, eşimin artık benimle olmak istemeyeceği korkusuna kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Özel duygu ve düşüncelerimi eşimle paylaşmak konusunda kendimi rahat hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Sıklıkla, eşimin beni gerçekten sevmediği kaygısına kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Eşime güvenip inanmak konusunda kendimi rahat bırakmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Eşimin beni, benim onu önemseydiğim kadar önemsemediğinden endişe duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Eşime yakın olma konusunda çok rahatımdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Sıklıkla, eşimin bana duyduğu hislerin benim ona duyduğum hisler kadar güçlü olmasını isterim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Eşime açılma konusunda kendimi rahat hissetmem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. İlişkilerimi kafama çok takarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Eşime fazla yakın olmamayı tercih ederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Benden uzakta olduğunda, eşimin başka birine ilgi duyabileceği korkusuna kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Eşim benimle çok yakın olmak istediğinde rahatsızlık duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15.Eşime duygularımı gösterdiğimde, onun benim için aynı şeyleri hissetmeyeceğinden korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.Eşimle kolayca yakınlaşabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.Eşimin beni terk edeceğinden pek endişe duymam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.Eşimle yakınlaşmak bana zor gelmez.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.Eşim kendimden şüphe etmeme neden olur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.Genellikle, eşimle sorunlarımı ve kaygılarımı tartışırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.Terk edilmekten pek korkmam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.Zor zamanlarımda, eşimden yardım istemek bana iyi gelir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.Eşimin, bana benim istediğim kadar yakınlaşmak istemediğini düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.Eşime hemen hemen her şeyi anlatırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.Eşimin bazen bana olan duygularını sebepsiz yere değiştirdiğini hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.Başımdan geçenleri eşimle konuşurum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.Çok yakın olma arzum bazen insanları korkutup uzaklaştırır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.Eşim benimle çok yakınlaştığında gergin hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29.Eşim beni yakından tanıdıkça, “gerçek ben”i sevmeyeceğinden korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.Eşime güvenip inanma konusunda rahatımdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31.Eşimden ihtiyaç duyduğum şefkat ve desteği görememek beni öfkelerdir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32.Eşime güvenip dayanmak benim için kolaydır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33.Başka insanlara denk olamamaktan endişe duyarım	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34.Eşime şefkat göstermek benim için kolaydır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35.Eşim beni sadece kızgın olduğumda önemser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36.Eşim beni ve ihtiyaçlarımı gerçekten anlar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX B. Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)
(Çiftler Uyum Ölçeği)

Sample Items:

23. Eşinizi öper misiniz?

Her gün Hemen hemen Ara sıra Nadiren Hiçbir zaman
her gün

--	--	--	--	--

24. Siz ve eşiniz ev dışı etkinliklerinizin ne kadarına birlikte katılırsınız?

Hepsine Çoğuna Bazılarına Çok azına Hiçbirine

--	--	--	--	--

Yazışma Adresi:

Prof. Dr. Hürol Fışiloğlu, ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü, Ankara

APPENDIX C. Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS)
(Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri Ölçeği)

Aşağıda, evlilik ilişkilerinde yaşanan sorunların genel olarak nasıl çözümlendiği ile ilgili ifadeler yer almaktadır. Lütfen **eşinizle** ilişkinizi göz önüne alarak, aşağıdaki ifadelerden her birine ne derece katıldığınızı belirtiniz. Her bir ifadenin önündeki boşluğa aşağıdaki sayılardan uygun olanı yazınız.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiç	Oldukça	Birazcık	Birazcık	Oldukça	Çok
Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum

- ___ 1) Tartışma esnasında konuyla ilgisiz de olsa zayıflıklarımı yüzüne vururum.
- ___ 2) Kavganın büyümemesi için onun istediği şeyleri yaparım.
- ___ 3) Çok sinirlenmişsem konuşmayı ertelerim.
- ___ 4) Sorun durumunda pek çok şeyi içime atabilirim.
- ___ 5) Sorunun uzamadan çözülebilmesi için kaynağını bulmaya çalışırım.
- ___ 6) Sinirlendiğimde kırıncı şeyler söylerim.
- ___ 7) Problemi büyütmemek için onu sakinleştirmeye çalışırım.
- ___ 8) Sesimi yükselterek beni dinlemesini sağlamaya çalışırım.
- ___ 9) Tartışmada ortak bir çözüm noktası bulmaya çalışırım.
- ___ 10) Çok büyük sorunlar yaşadığımızda ondan uzak durmaya çalışırım.
- ___ 11) Sorun çözümlenmeden tartışmayı sonlandırmam.
- ___ 12) Bağırıp çağırarak istediğimi yaptırırım.
- ___ 13) Sorunun tüm yönlerini tartışma sırasında konuşmak isterim.
- ___ 14) Eşimi ilişkiyi bitirmekle tehdit ederim.
- ___ 15) Bana bağırduğunda onun olmadığı bir odaya geçerim.
- ___ 16) Kavgalarımız sırasındaki kızgınlığımı fiziksel olarak gösteririm.
- ___ 17) İlişkide sorun yaşanmaması için kendimden ödün veririm.
- ___ 18) Sorun yaşadığımızda eşimin yanından uzaklaşırım.
- ___ 19) Sorunun çözülmesine yardımcı olacağına inanırsam durumu alttan alırım.
- ___ 20) Onun olumsuz tepkilerine karşılık vermeyerek problemin büyümemesini sağlamaya çalışırım.

- ___ 21) Çok gergin olduğumuzda susarım.
- ___ 22) Bir problem yaşandığında, konuyla ilgili düşündüğüm her şeyi açıklarım.
- ___ 23) Eğer çok sinirlenmişsem, sinirim geçene kadar konuşmayı reddederim.
- ___ 24) Bir problem yaşandığında, kendimi eşimin yerine koyarak onun ne düşündüğünü anlamaya çalışırım.
- ___ 25) Sürekli imalarda bulunurum.

Yazışma Adresi:
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ayça Özen, TOBB ETÜ Psikoloji Bölümü, Ankara

Appendix D. Demographic Information Form

(Demografik Bilgi Formu)

- 1) Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın () Erkek ()
- 2) Yaşınız: _____
- 3) Yaşamınızın büyük kısmını geçirdiğiniz yer:
Köy ()
İlçe ()
Şehir ()
Büyükşehir ()
- 4) Eğitim düzeyiniz nedir?
İlkokul ()
Ortaokul ()
Lise ()
2 yıllık yüksekokul ()
Üniversite ()
Yüksek lisans veya doktora ()
- 5) Mesleğiniz: _____
- 6) Ne kadar süredir evlisiniz? (Yıl ve ay olarak belirtiniz)
_____ yıl _____ ay
- 7) Eşinizle ne sıklıkla sorun (çatışma) yaşadığınızı aşağıdaki 6 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde ilgili rakamı yuvarlak içine alarak belirtiniz.
1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6
Hiçbir Nadiren Ara sıra Zaman zaman Hemen hemen Her zaman
zaman her zaman
- 8) Bu sizin ilk evliliğiniz mi? Evet () Hayır ()
- 9) Çocuğunuz var mı? Evet () Hayır ()

Appendix E. Informed Consent Form

(Gönüllü Katılım Formu)

Değerli Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencisi Sedef Tulum tarafından Prof. Dr. Hürol Fışıloğlu danışmanlığında yürütülen bir tez çalışmasıdır. Çalışmanın amacı, yeni evli bireylerin evlilik ilişkisindeki bağlanma örüntüleri, çatışma çözüm stilleri ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamıyla gönüllülüğe dayanmaktadır ve sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacı tarafından toplu olarak değerlendirilecek; elde edilecek bulgular sadece tez kapsamındaki bilimsel çalışmada kullanılacaktır. Araştırma sonuçlarından sağlıklı bilgiler edinilebilmesi için soruların sizin doğruluğunuzu yansıtacak şekilde doldurulması ve boş bırakılmaması oldukça önemlidir. Her bölümdeki ölçeğin nasıl cevaplanacağı konusunda ilgili bölümün başında bilgi verilmiştir. Anketin cevaplanması yaklaşık 20 dakika sürmekte olup herhangi bir süre kısıtlaması bulunmamaktadır.

Anket, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz anketi doldurmayı yarıda bırakabilirsiniz. Anket sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili oluşabilecek olası sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Çalışma hakkında oluşabilecek sorularınızla ilgili olarak Psk. Sedef Tulum (E-posta: sedeftulm@yahoo.com) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden çok teşekkür ederiz.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda bırakabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

() *Evet*

() *Hayır*

APPENDIX F. General Instructions
(Genel Yönerge)

Değerli Katılımcı,

Öncelikle çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz için çok teşekkür ederiz. Ankette evlilik hayatınızla ilgili sorular yer almaktadır. Lütfen ölçeklerin başlarındaki yönergeleri **dikkatlice okuyunuz** ve değerlendirmelerinizi buna göre yapınız. Soruları cevaplarırken acele etmeyiniz ve size en uygun olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Lütfen **soru atlamayınız**, araştırmanın analizi için tüm soruların yanıtlanmış olması çok önemlidir.

Lütfen tüm sorulara **sizin doğruluğunuzu yansıtacak şekilde** yanıt veriniz. Ölçekleri doldururken adınızı belirtmeniz gerekmemektedir, bu nedenle verilen yanıtların kime ait olduğu hiçbir şekilde anlaşılmayacaktır. Soruları yanıtlarken dürüst olmanız yürüttüğümüz bilimsel çalışmanın bulgularının doğruluğu açısından çok önemlidir.

Lütfen tüm soruları **tek başınıza ve eşinizle paylaşmadan** cevaplayınız. Ölçekleri eşinizle beraber doldurmak vereceğiniz yanıtların doğruluğunu olumsuz anlamda etkileyecektir.

Değerli katkınız ve zamanınızı ayırdığınız için tekrar teşekkür ederiz.

Sedef Tulum

Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi
ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü

APPENDIX G. Turkish Summary

TEZİN TÜRKÇE ÖZETİ

Medeni durum hem fiziksel hem de psikolojik sağlığı etkileyen önemli bir faktör olarak ele alınmaktadır (Waite ve Gallagher, 2000). Örneğin, Williams (2003) evli kadın ve erkeklerin, hiç evlenmemiş, ayrılmış/boşanmış ya da dul kişilere göre daha düşük düzeyde depresyon belirtileri ve daha yüksek düzeyde yaşam doyumu bildirdiklerini bulmuştur. Öte yandan, evliliğin yararları bazı çalışmalarda kanıtlanmış olmasına rağmen bu durum her evliliğin bu yararları sağladığı anlamına gelmemektedir. Hatta, mutsuz bir evliliği sürdüren bireylerin, boşanmış olan bireylere göre daha düşük seviyede mutluluk, yaşam doyumu ve özgüvene sahip oldukları bulunmuştur (Hawkins ve Booth, 2005). Bu nedenle, evliliğin sağladığı yararlardan faydalanabilmek için mutlu bir evliliğe sahip olmanın önemi vurgulanmaktadır. Bu durum da literatürde evlilikten alınan doyumun araştırmacıların oldukça ilgisini çeken bir konu olmasına sebep olmuştur ve evlilik doyumu 1990'lardan beri üzerinde birçok araştırma yapılan bir konu haline gelmiştir (Bradbury, Fincham ve Beach, 2000).

Bağlanma örüntüleri, evlilik doyumundaki bireysel değişiklikleri belirleyen en önemli faktörlerden biridir (Bradbury ve ark., 2000). Bağlanma kuramı evlilik ilişkilerindeki dinamiklere dair kapsamlı bir teorik açıklama getirmektedir. Bağlanma kuramının kurucusu olan Bowlby'e (1969) göre her çocuğun stresli durumlarda kendini güvende hissetmesi için ulaşılabilir, ihtiyaçlarına duyarlılık gösteren ve ilgili bir bağlanma figürüne ihtiyacı vardır. Buna göre bağlanma, güvenli üs olarak algılanan bir bağlanma figürüyle (genellikle anne) yakınlık, güvenlik ve rahatlık ihtiyaçlarının doyurulması için kurulan duygusal bağ olarak tanımlanabilir (Ainsworth ve Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1988). Bağlanma kuramına göre, temel bakım veren kişiyle kurulan bağlanma ilişkisinin kalitesi zamanla çocuğun kendisi ve başkalarıyla ilgili "içsel çalışan modeller" olarak adlandırılan zihinsel tasarımlar geliştirmesine neden olur (Bowlby, 1988). Bağlanma figürüyle geliştirilen duyarlı ve tutarlı bir ilişki sonucunda güvenli bağlanma stili geliştiren çocuklar kendilerinin sevmeye değer bireyler olduklarını düşünür ve başkalarının genellikle destekleyici ve güvenilir olduklarına inanırlar. Öte yandan, bağlanma figürünün duyarsız, ilgisiz ve tutarsız bakımı sonucu güvensiz bağlanma stili geliştiren çocuklar düşük kendilik değerine sahiptirler,

reddedilmekten/terk edilmekten çok korkarlar ve başkalarını güvenilmez olarak algılamalarından dolayı yakın ilişki kurmaktan kaçınırlar (Mikulincer ve Shaver, 2007). Bowlby'e (1982) göre, içsel çalışan modeller ve bağlanma süreçleri insan hayatının "beşikten mezara kadar" kaçınılmaz bir parçasıdır (s. 208). Ancak, her ne kadar bağlanma örüntülerinin/stillerinin temeli çocuklukta bakım veren kişiyle oluşturulan ilişkinin kalitesine dayansa da, bir bireyin bağlanma güvenliği yaşamının ileriki yıllarında diğer bağlanma figürleriyle (örn. yakın arkadaşlar, öğretmenler, akrabalar veya romantik partnerler) kurduğu ilişkilerin kalitesine bağlı olarak değişebilir (Bowlby, 1988). Çocukluktaki bağlanma figürleri genellikle ebeveynler iken, yetişkinlikte onların yerini romantik partner/eş alır (Hazan ve Shaver, 1994).

İlk olarak çocuk-ebeveyn ilişkisi temel alınarak geliştirilmiş olan bağlanma teorisi 1980'li yıllarda yetişkin romantik bağlanmasını da kapsayacak şekilde genişletilmiştir (Hazan ve Shaver, 1987). Hazan ve Shaver (1987) yetişkin bağlanma alanında bir dönüm noktası olan çalışmalarında çocukluk bağlanma stillerinin ilerleyen yıllarda yetişkin romantik ilişkilerinde de aynı şekilde kategorize edildiğini bulmuşlardır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, güvenli bağlanma stiline sahip yetişkinler yaşadıkları romantik ilişkileri güvenli, yakın, sıcak ve mutlu olarak tanımlamışlardır. Bu bireyler eşlerine kolaylıkla yaklaşabilirler ve genellikle uzun süreli ilişkilere sahiptirler. Kaçınmacı bağlanma stiline sahip yetişkinler ise bağlanma gereksinimlerini reddederler ve başka kişileri güvenilmez bulurlar (Feeney, 2002). Bunun sonucunda da yakınlık kurmaktan ve duygusal temastan kaçınma, bağımsızlığa aşırı önem verme ve diğerlerinin iyiniyetli olduğuna dair duyulan güvensizlik ile karakterize edilen romantik ilişkiler kurarlar. Kaygılı bağlanma stiline sahip yetişkinler kendilerinin sevmeye değer bireyler olduklarına inanmazlar ve romantik ilişkilerinde partnerlerinin ulaşılabilirliğine dair yoğun bir kaygı yaşarlar (Mikulincer ve Shaver, 2003). Ayrıca, güvenli bağlanan bireylere göre partnerleriyle çok daha fazla birlikte vakit geçirme ve paylaşma isteği duyarlar. Romantik ilişkileri duygusal iniş-çıkışlar, fazla düzeyde kıskançlık ve yoğun cinsel çekimle karakterize edilmiştir (Hazan ve Shaver, 1987). Hazan ve Shaver'ın (1987) yürüttüğü bu çalışmanın bulguları yetişkin romantik bağlanma çalışmaları alanında temel bir dayanak oluşturmuş ve araştırmacılar bağlanma teorisini romantik ilişkileri anlamak için

değerli bir çerçeve olarak kullanmaya başlamışlardır (örn., Collins ve Read, 1990; Hazan ve Shaver, 1994; Feeney, Noller ve Callan, 1994; Sümer ve Cozzarelli, 2004). Partnerler arasındaki duygusal bağın resmi ve sağlam bir formu olan evlilik ilişkisi, yetişkinlikteki bağlanma ilişkilerine ideal bir örnek teşkil eder (Selcuk, Zayas ve Hazan, 2010). Bu nedenle, birçok araştırma (Kobak ve Hazan, 1991; Feeney, 1994; Senchak ve Leonard, 1992; Bpanse, 2004) evlilik kalitesini bağlanma teorisi perspektifinden incelemiştir. Bu araştırmalar incelendiğinde güvenli bağlanma ile evlilik uyumu/doyumu arasında anlamlı ve pozitif yönde tutarlı bir ilişki bulunduğu görülmektedir.

Çatışma çözümü de evlilik kalitesiyle olan olası ilişkisinden dolayı evlilik konusunda çalışan araştırmacıların oldukça ilgisini çeken bir konu olmuştur (örn., Gottman, 1993; Gottman ve Levenson, 1992; Tallman ve Hsiao, 2004). Evlilik ilişkisindeki çatışma, eşler arasındaki farklılıklardan doğan bir tür anlaşmazlık veya uyuşmazlık durumu olarak tanımlanabilir (Mackey, Diemer ve O'Brien, 2000). Eşlerin ilişkilerinde yaşadıkları bu uyuşmazlıkları çözmek için belirli bir örüntüye göre sergiledikleri davranışlara “çatışma çözüm stilleri” denir (Hocker ve Wilmot, 1991). Tüm diğer yakın ilişkilerde olduğu gibi, en güçlü yakın ilişkilerden biri olan evlilikte de çatışma kaçınılmazdır ve ilişkinin doğal bir parçasıdır (Fincham, 2003). Ancak, bir evliliğin sağlıklı ve başarılı olarak yürütülebilmesini belirleyen temel şey çatışmanın sıklığı ya da içeriği değil, çatışmanın eşler tarafından nasıl ele alındığıdır (Markman, 1991). Bir başka deyişle, çatışmanın nasıl çözüldüğü başarılı bir evlilik sürdürmenin en temel taşlarından biridir (Gottman, 1993). Literatürde, çatışma çözüm stillerinin evlilik doyumu veya kalitesiyle güçlü derecede ilişkili olduğu pek çok araştırma ile de ortaya konulmuştur (Kurdek, 1995). Örneğin, Noller, Feeney, Bonnell ve Callan (1994) evlilik doyumu yüksek olan eşlerin, ilişkilerinden doyum alamayan eşlere göre partnerini manipüle etme veya çatışmadan kaçınma gibi yıkıcı çatışma yönetme şekillerini kullanmaya daha az yatkın olduklarını bulmuşlardır. Gottman ve Levenson (1992) tarafından yürütülen boylamsal bir çalışmada ise çatışma anlarında inatçılık, çatışmadan kaçınma ve savunmacı davranışlar sergileyen çiftlerin hem çalışmanın başlangıcında hem de dört yıl sonraki ölçümlerde daha düşük seviyede evlilik doyumuna sahip oldukları bulunmuştur. Buna ek olarak, bu çiftlerin çatışma çözüm anlarında olumlu davranışlar sergileyen çiftlere göre daha yüksek oranda boşanma

riskine sahip oldukları gösterilmiştir. Daha yakın zamanda yapılan bir başka boylamsal çalışmada da (Tallman ve Hsiao, 2004) yapıcı çatışma çözüm stilleri olarak değerlendirilen işbirliği ve uzlaşmanın evlilik doyumunu anlamlı olarak yordadığı bulunmuştur. Diğer pek çok araştırma (örn., Marchand ve Hock, 2000; Russler-Chapin, Chapin ve Sattler, 2001) çatışma anlarında baş etme stili olarak zorlama ya da kendi fikrinde ısrar etmeyi kullanmanın daha düşük seviyede evlilik doyumu ve daha yüksek derecede evlilik stresi ile ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir.

Yetişkin bağlanma literatürü incelendiğinde, bağlanma boyutlarının (kaygı ve kaçınma) eşlerin çatışma çözüm stratejilerinin en önemli yordayıcılarından biri olduğu görülmektedir. Bağlanma sistemlerinin en çok çatışma anları gibi kişilerin stresli oldukları ve kendilerini güvende hissetmek için partnerlerinden duygusal desteğe en çok ihtiyaç duydukları anlarda etkinleştiği düşünülmektedir (Kobak ve Dummler, 1994). Bu nedenle, bağlanma ve çatışma çözümü arasındaki ilişki birçok araştırmacının ilgisini çekmiştir. İlgili literatüre bakıldığında, güvenli bağlanmanın işbirliği yapma ve uzlaşma (Corcoran ve Mallinckrodt, 2000), kendini açma ve daha az savunmacı davranma (Shi, 2003), daha az sözel saldırganlık (örn. tehdit, suçlama) ve daha yapıcı tartışma şekli (Senchak ve Leonard, 1992; Pistole ve Arricale, 2003) ile pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğu görülmektedir. Kaçınan bağlanma stili geliştirmiş bireylerin ise çatışma anında en çok kaçınma ve geri çekilme davranışına yatkın oldukları bulunmuştur (Pistole ve Arricale, 2003, Shi, 2003). Kaygılı bağlanmanın ise sözel saldırganlık (Clymer ve ark., 2006) ve zorlama/baskılama (Shi, 2003) ile pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğu gösterilmiştir.

Aile yaşam döngüsü evrelerinin evliliklerde hem bağlanma süreçleri hem de çatışma çözümü stillerindeki değişimlerde önemli bir rol oynadığı düşünülmektedir. Aile yaşam döngüsü evrelerinden “yeni çift” evresi iki genç yetişkinin eş rollerine adapte olarak evlilik sistemini oluşturdukları dönem olarak kabul edilir (Nichols, 2010). Feeney (1994) tarafından yürütülen araştırmanın bulgularına göre evlilik süresi arttıkça eşlerin kaygı ve kaçınma seviyelerinde önemli bir düşüş gözlenmektedir. Erken evlilik dönemindeki bağlanma güvenliği değişimini inceleyen bir diğer çalışmada da, Davila ve arkadaşları (1999) eşlerin ilişkileri ilerledikçe daha az kaygılı ve kaçınan hale geldikleri görüşünü destekleyen bulgular elde etmişlerdir. Feeney’e (1994) göre bağlanma örüntülerinin evlilik kalitesine etkisi erken evlilik

yıllarında daha belirgindir çünkü eşler yeni bir ilişki sistemine uyum sağlamanın zorluklarını yaşamaktadırlar. Erken evlilik yılları aynı zamanda yeni bir sisteme alışmanın yarattığı zorluklardan dolayı (örn. aile bütçesi, kayınpeder/kayınvalide ilişkileri) eşlerin sık ve şiddetli tartışmalara girmelerinin olası olduğu bir evredir (Tallman ve Hsiao, 2004). Sonuç olarak, yeni çift evresinin hem bağlanma örüntülerinin hem de çatışma çözme stillerinin çalışılması için güçlü bir zemin oluşturduğu düşünülmektedir.

Çalışmanın Amacı, Araştırma Soruları ve Hipotezler

Bağlanma, çatışma çözüm şekilleri ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkileri inceleyen kapsamlı literatür ışığında, bağlanma güvenliğinin hem evlilik uyumu (Banse, 2004; Feeney, 1994; Kobak ve Hazan, 1991; Senchak ve Leonard, 1992) hem de çatışma çözüm şekilleri (Corcoran ve Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989; Pistole ve Arricale, 2003; Shi, 2003) ile ilişkili olduğu söylenebilir. Buna ek olarak, çatışma çözüm stratejilerinin de evlilik uyumuna etki ettiği bilinmektedir (örn., Marchand ve Hock, 2000). Ancak, araştırmacının bilgisine göre, literatürde sadece bir çalışma (Marchand, 2004) çatışma çözüm stillerinin bağlanma ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkideki aracı değişken rolünü incelemiştir ve bu çalışmanın da bazı metodolojik problemlere sahip olduğu söylenebilir. Marchand'ın (2004) çalışmasının örneklemini anne-babalar oluşturmaktadır ve Karney ve Bradbury'nin (1995) de belirttiği gibi örnekleme çocuksuz çiftler ve anne-babalar arasında ayırım yapmamak bazı karıştırıcı etkilere sebep olmaktadır. Ebeveynliğe geçiş, evlilikten alınan doyumu birçok açıdan olumsuz yönde etkilediğinden (Hirschberger ve ark., 2009), yeni evlilerden oluşan homojen bir çalışma grubu kullanmak bazı karıştırıcı değişkenlerin etkisini (örn., çocuk sayısı, farklı sürelerdeki evlilikler) elimine ederek evlilik doyumunun yordayıcılarını daha iyi ayırt etmeyi sağlayabilir.

Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, yeni çift evresinde olan, çocuksuz ve ilk evliliklerinde olan daha homojen bir örneklem kullanarak geçmişte bu alanda yapılan çalışmalarını iletmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Özet olarak, bu çalışmanın temel amacı yeni evli bireylerde (evlilik süresi beş yılı aşmamış, çocuksuz ve ilk evliliğinde olan) bağlanma örüntüleri ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözüm stillerinin aracı değişken rolünü incelemektir. Bağlanma, kaygı ve kaçınma olarak iki boyutta ele alınırken

çatışma çözüm stilleri olumlu çatışma çözme, olumsuz çatışma çözme, uyma ve kaçınma olarak dört boyutta incelenmiştir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı ışığında aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmıştır:

1. Yeni evli bireylerde bağlanma boyutları, çatışma çözüm stilleri ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkiler nelerdir?
2. Yeni evli bireylerde bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözüm stillerinin aracı değişken rolü var mıdır?

Bu araştırma soruları kapsamında oluşturulmuş olan hipotezler şunlardır:

H 1: Bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilidir.

H 2: Çatışma çözüm stilleri ve evlilik uyumu anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilidir.

H 3: Bağlanma boyutları ve çatışma çözüm stilleri anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilidir.

H 4: Bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözüm stilleri aracı değişken rolü oynamaktadır.

Yöntem

Katılımcılar

Başlangıçta araştırmanın örneklemini, çalışmaya katılma kriterlerini sağlayan 394 (261 kadın, 133 erkek) yeni evli katılımcıdan oluşmaktadır. Uç değer analizlerinden sonra ana analizler 380 (253 kadın, 127 erkek) katılımcının verisi üzerinden yürütülmüştür. Hedeflenen homojen yeni evli örnekleme ulaşabilmek için amaçsal örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır (Kerlinger, 1986). Buna göre, evlilik süresi beş yılı aşmamış, çocuksuz ve ilk evliliğinde olan bireyler çalışmaya katılmak için uygun bulunmuştur. Katılımcıların evlilik süreleri 1 ay ile 5 yıl arasında değişmektedir ve ortalama evlilik süresi 20.27 aydır (SS = 15.02). Katılımcıların yaş aralıkları ise 20 ve 48 arasında değişmektedir ve yaş ortalaması 28.53'tür (SS = 3.06). Tüm katılımcılar ilk evliliğindedir ve çocuksuzdur.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Araştırmada veri toplama araçları olarak, Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri-II (YIYE-II), Çiftler Uyum Ölçeği (ÇUÖ), Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri Ölçeği (ÇÇSÖ) ve araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan Kişisel Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Bağlanmanın kaygı ve kaçınma boyutlarını ölçmek için kullanılan Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri-II (Fraley, Waller ve Brennan, 2000) 7'li Likert tipi üzerinden

yanıtlanan 36 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Çiftler Uyum Ölçeği (Spanier, 1976) katılımcıların evlilik uyumunu ölçmek için kullanılmıştır ve 32 maddeden oluşan bir ölçümdür. Katılımcıların çatışma çözüm şekillerini ölçmek amacıyla kullanılan Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri Ölçeği (Özen, 2006) ise 6'lı Likert tipi üzerinden yanıtlanmakta olup 25 maddeden oluşmaktadır.

İşlem

Ölçekler ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu'nu içeren elektronik bir anket, güçlü ve güvenilir bir elektronik anket yazılımı olan www.surveymonkey.com üzerinde hazırlanmış ve anket katılımcılara internet yoluyla uygulanmıştır. Anketin doldurulması yaklaşık 15-20 dakika sürmektedir. Daha fazla katılımcıya ulaşabilmek amacıyla kartopu örneklem yöntemi kullanılmıştır (Kumar, 1996).

Veri Analizleri

Araştırmadan elde edilen verilerin analizi için SPSS 20.0 paket programı kullanılmıştır. İlk olarak, demografik değişkenlerin ana değişkenlere etkisini ölçmek amacıyla tek yönlü ANOVA ve Pearson korelasyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. Daha sonra, birinci araştırma sorusunu yanıtlamak için çalışmanın ana değişkenlerinin birbirleriyle ilişkilerinin araştırıldığı Pearson korelasyon analizleri kullanılmıştır. Son olarak, çalışmanın ikinci ve en önemli araştırma sorusunu yanıtlamak için çatışma çözüm stillerinin bağlanma boyutları ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken rolü oynadığını öneren bir çoklu aracı değişken modeli bootstrapping yöntemi (Preacher ve Hayes, 2004) kullanılarak test edilmiştir.

Bulgular

Hipotez 1, 2 ve 3'ün Test Edilmesi

Çalışma değişkenlerinin (bağlanma, çatışma çözüm stilleri, evlilik uyumu) birbirleriyle ilişkilerinin öngörüldüğü hipotez 1, 2 ve 3'ü test etmek amacıyla Pearson korelasyon katsayıları hesaplanmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, bağlanmanın hem kaygı ($r = -.47, p < .01$) hem de kaçınma boyutu ($r = -.66, p < .01$) evlilik uyumu ile negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilidir. Yani, kaygı ve kaçınma düzeyi daha yüksek bireylerin evlilik uyumlarının daha düşük olduğu bulunmuştur. Buna göre,

“H1: Bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilidir” şeklinde tanımlanan hipotez tamamen doğrulanmıştır.

Çatışma çözüm stilleri ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişki test edildiğinde, evlilik uyumunun olumlu çatışma çözme stiliyle pozitif yönde ($r = .24, p < .01$), olumsuz çatışma çözme ($r = -.40, p < .01$) ve kaçınma ($r = -.12, p < .05$) ile ise negatif yönde anlamlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Evlilik uyumu ve uyma davranışı arasındaki ilişki ise anlamlı değildir. Yani, çatışma anlarında daha yüksek düzeyde olumlu çatışma çözme stili ve daha düşük düzeyde olumsuz çatışma çözme ve kaçınma kullanan yeni evli bireylerin evlilik uyumları daha yüksektir. Elde edilen bu bulgulara göre, “H2: Çatışma çözüm stilleri ve evlilik uyumu anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilidir” şeklinde tanımlanan hipotez doğrulanmıştır.

Bağlanma boyutları ve çatışma çözme stilleri arasındaki ilişki test edildiğinde ise, bağlanmanın kaygı boyutunun olumlu çatışma çözüm stili ile negatif yönde ilişkiliyken ($r = -.15, p < .01$), olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili ($r = .39, p < .01$) ve kaçınma ile ($r = .13, p < .05$) pozitif yönde anlamlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Bağlanmanın kaygı boyutu ve uyma arasındaki ilişki ise anlamlı değildir. Bu bulgulara ek olarak, bağlanmanın kaçınma boyutunun olumlu çatışma çözüm stili ile negatif yönde ilişkiliyken ($r = -.33, p < .01$), olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili ($r = .29, p < .01$), kaçınma ($r = .18, p < .01$) ve uyma ile ($r = .10, p < .05$) pozitif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde ilişki olduğu görülmektedir. Tüm bu sonuçlar göz önüne alındığında, kaygı ve kaçınma düzeyleri daha yüksek olan yeni evli bireylerin daha az olumlu çatışma çözüm stili, ancak daha yüksek düzeyde olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili ve kaçınma kullandıkları söylenebilir. Kaçınma düzeyi yüksek olan bireyler, ayrıca, çatışma anlarında daha yüksek düzeyde uyma davranışı sergilemeyi tercih etmektedirler. Buna göre, “H3: Bağlanma boyutları ve çatışma çözüm stilleri anlamlı düzeyde ilişkilidir” şeklinde tanımlanan hipotez de doğrulanmıştır.

Hipotez 4’ün Test Edilmesi

Çalışmanın ana hipotezi olan ve bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözüm stillerinin aracı değişken rolü oynadığını öne süren hipotezi test etmek amacıyla bir çoklu aracı değişken modeli bootstrapping yöntemi (Preacher ve Hayes, 2004) kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Bootstrap analizinin, Baron ve Kenny (1986) tarafından önerilen geleneksel aracı değişken modeline göre daha

güvenilir ve güçlü istatistiksel tahminler yaptığı öne sürülmektedir (Hayes, 2009). Analizi yürütebilmek için, Preacher ve Hayes (2004, 2008) tarafından geliştirilen ve aracı etkilerin ölçümünü sağlayan SPSS makroları kullanılmıştır. Test edilen çoklu aracı değişken modellerinde, kaygı ve kaçınma değişkenleri bağımsız değişken, çatışma çözüm stilleri (olumlu çatışma çözüm stili, olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili, uyma ve kaçınma) aracı değişkenler ve evlilik uyumu ise bağımlı değişken olarak kullanılmıştır.

Aracı etkilerin incelendiği bootstrap analizi sonuçlarına göre, bağlanmanın kaygı boyutu ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide olumlu çatışma çözüm stili ($B = -.358$, $SE = .194$; $CI = -.863$ to $-.067$) ve olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili ($B = -1.933$, $SE = .506$; $CI = -3.029$ to -1.035) kısmi aracı değişken rolü üstlenmektedirler çünkü rapor edilen güven aralıklarında 0 bulunmamaktadır. Bağlanmanın kaçınma boyutu ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide ise sadece olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili ($B = -1.466$, $SE = .357$; $CI = -2.303$ to $-.872$) kısmi aracı değişken rolü üstlenmektedir ve rapor edilen güven aralığında 0 bulunmamaktadır. Bu bulgulara göre, “H4: Bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözüm stilleri aracı değişken rolü oynamaktadır” şeklinde tanımlanan hipotez desteklenmiştir.

Tartışma

Bu araştırmada yeni evli bireylerin bağlanma boyutları (kaygı ve kaçınma), çatışma çözüm şekilleri ve evlilik uyumları arasındaki ilişkiler ve bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözüm şekillerinin aracı rolü incelenmiştir. Pearson korelasyon analizlerinden elde edilen bulgulara göre, bağlanmanın hem kaygı hem de kaçınma boyutunun evlilik uyumu ile negatif yönde ve anlamlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu bulgu, literatürde güvensiz bağlanma ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki anlamlı ilişkiyi destekleyen çok sayıda geçmiş araştırma ile tutarlıdır (örn., Kobak ve Hazan, 1991; Feeney, 1994; Senchak ve Leonard, 1992; Banse, 2004; Mondor ve ark., 2011). Altında yatan dinamikler farklı olsa da, bağlanmanın hem kaygı hem de kaçınma boyutunun evlilik doyumunu olumsuz etkilediği görülmektedir. Kaygılı bağlanma örüntüsüne sahip bireylerin, terk edilmeye dair aşırı düzeyde olan endişeleri ve partnerlerinin ulaşılabilir olduklarına dair kaygıları (Mikulincer ve Shaver, 2003) evlilikten aldıkları doyumunu olumsuz

şekilde etkilediği söylenebilir. Kaçınmacı bağlanma stili geliştirmiş bireylerin ise duygusal yakınlıktan duydukları rahatsızlık ve bağımsızlığa olan yatkınlıkları nedeniyle (Feeney, 2002) evlilik ilişkilerinde daha az mutlu oldukları söylenebilir.

Çatışma çözüm stilleri ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişki incelendiğinde ise, evlilik uyumunun olumlu çatışma çözüm stili ile pozitif, olumsuz çatışma çözümü ve kaçınma ile ise negatif yönde anlamlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğu görülmüştür. Hatta, en güçlü ilişki olumsuz çatışma çözüm stili ve evlilik uyumu arasında bulunmuştur. Benzer şekilde literatürde, olumsuz çatışma çözme stratejilerinin (partnerini manipüle etme, sözel veya fiziksel saldırgan davranışlar sergileme) evlilikten alınan doyum azalttığı bulunmuştur (örn., Gottman, 1993; Marchand, 2004; Marchand ve Hock, 2000; Noller ve ark., 1994; Russler-Chapin ve ark., 2001; Tallman ve Hsiao, 2004). Bu bulgular ışığında, çatışma anında yıkıcı davranışlar sergilemenin yeni evli bireylerin evliliklerindeki mutsuzlukta çok önemli bir rol oynadığı söylenebilir. İlgili literatür göz önüne alındığında bu sonuçlar beklenebilir iken, çatışma çözüm stili olarak uyma davranışı ve evlilik uyumu arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunamamıştır. Bu bulgu, Kurdek'in (1994) yaptığı çalışmadaki uyum sağlamanın evlilik uyumu ile anlamlı bir ilişki göstermemesi bulgusuyla tutarlıdır. Bu durum, çatışma anlarında uyma davranışını seçen bireyler için evliliğin hala doyum verici olması ihtimaliyle açıklanabilir çünkü uyma davranışını seçen kişiler, partnerlerinin isteklerini kabul ettikleri için ya çatışmanın o anda son bulmasını sağlarlar ya da çatışmanın daha büyük bir mesele haline gelmesini engellerler.

Bağlanma boyutları ve çatışma çözüm stilleri arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen analizler ise bağlanma kaygısının olumlu çatışma çözme ile negatif, olumsuz çatışma çözme ve uyma davranışı ile ise pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. En güçlü ilişki ise bağlanmanın kaygı boyutu ve olumsuz çatışma çözme stili arasında bulunmuştur. Bu bulguyla tutarlı olarak diğer pek çok çalışma da kaygılı bağlanmanın daha az işbirliği ve uzlaşma davranışları (Corcoran ve Mallinckrodt, 2000; Pistole, 1989), daha çok düşmanca tavırlar (Pistole ve Arricale, 2003), daha yüksek düzeyde zorlama/baskılama davranışları (Shi, 2003) ve daha çok sözel saldırganlık (Senchak ve Leonard, 1992) ile ilişkili olduğunu bulmuştur. Kaygılı bağlanmanın özellikleri düşünüldüğünde bu bulguların teorik olarak anlamlı olduğu düşünülebilir. Kaygılı bağlanma stili geliştirmiş olan bireylerin, aslında partnerlerinin çatışma anlarında hala

ulařılabilir olup olmadıklarını test etmek ve kendilerini güvende hissetmek için çatıřmaya ařırı tepki verdikleri ve talepkar davranıřlar sergiledikleri söylenebilir. Bu sonuçlar literatürdeki genel kaniya uysa da, baęlanmanın kaygı boyutu ile çatıřma çözüm stili olarak kaçınma davranıřı arasında anlamlı bir iliřki bulunması beklenmeyen ilginç bir bulgudur. Bu sonuca dair olası bir açıklama evlilik iliřkisinin doęası ile iliřkili olabilir. Evlilik, güçlü ve kalıcı bir duygusal baę içeren bir iliřki formu olduęundan kaygılı baęlanma örüntüsüne sahip bireyler bile kendilerini evlilik iliřkisi içerisinde görece daha güvenli hissedebilir ve bu da çatıřmanın stresini azaltmak için kaçınmayı tercih etmelerini saęlamıř olabilir.

Analiz sonuçlarına göre, baęlanmanın kaçınma boyutu ise olumlu çatıřma çözüm stili ile negatif, olumsuz çatıřma çözüm stili ve kaçınma ile ise pozitif yönde anlamlı düzeyde iliřkilidir. Benzer bir tablo, kaçınmacı baęlanmanın çatıřma anında uzaklařma/kaçınma, duygularını açmaya dair isteksizlik ve yüksek düzeyde savunmacılık (Shi, 2003; Pistole ve Arricale, 2003) ile iliřkili bulunduęu çalışmalarda gösterilmiřtir. Kaçınmacı baęlanma stiline sahip bireylerin bu davranıřları, içten içe reddedilmeye karřı duydukları hassaslık ve bastırılmıř korku ile ilgili olabilir (Mikulincer ve Shaver, 2003). Bu yüzden de çatıřma anında empati kurma, kendini açma, yakınlařma gibi davranıřları içeren yapıcı etkileřimlerden uzak durarak baęlanma figürleri tarafından reddedilmeye karřı geliřtirdikleri kalkanlarını kullanmaya devam etmektedirler. Bunların yanında baęlanmanın kaçınma boyutu beklenmeyen bir şekilde uyma davranıřı ile de iliřkili bulunmuřtur. Literatürdeki, uyum saęlama davranıřının genellikle baęlanmanın kaygı boyutu ile iliřkili bulunduęunun gösterildięi çalışmalara raęmen (Pistole, 1989; Shi, 2003), bu çalışmada uyma davranıřı kaçınma boyutu ile iliřki bulunmuřtur. Bu bulgu önceki çalışmalarla çeliřse de, bu sonucun temelinde de kaçınmacı baęlanmanın özellikleri yatıyor olabilir. Partnerinin isteklerini kabul etmeyi gerektiren uyma davranıřı da aslında tartıřmaktan kaçınmanın ya da en azından tartıřmayı engellemenin bir yolu olabilir. Bu nedenle, kaçınmacı baęlanan bireyler de uyma davranıřını yüksek oranda sergiliyor olabilirler.

Aracı deęiřken analizlerinin sonuçları göz önüne alındığında, sadece olumsuz çatıřma çözüm stilinin baęlanmanın hem kaygı hem de kaçınma boyutu ile evlilik uyumu arasındaki iliřkisinde aracı deęiřken rolü üstlendięi görülmektedir. Yani, kaygı

ve kaçınma düzeyleri yüksek olan bireyler çatışma anlarında yıkıcı davranışlar sergilemeye daha yatkındırlar, bu durum da evlilik uyumlarının daha düşük seviyede olmasına sebep olmaktadır. Bu bulgu, Cann ve arkadaşlarının (2008) çalışmasındaki bağlanma boyutları ve ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkide uzlaşma ve baskılama/zorlama davranışlarının aracı değişken rolü üstlendiği bulgusuyla tutarlıdır. Özetle, bu bulgular güvensiz bağlanma örüntülerinin yeni evli bireylerin evliliklerinde çatışmaları nasıl ele aldıklarını etkilediğini, bu durumun da evlilik uyumu düzeylerine etki ettiğini göstermektedir. Bulgular, olumsuz/yıkıcı çatışma yönetme şekillerinin evliliğin ilk yıllarında bireylerin bağlanma örüntüleri ve evlilik uyumları arasındaki ilişkide altta yatan önemli bir mekanizma olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bu çalışma genel olarak öne sürdüğü hipotezleri doğrulasa da bazı kısıtlılıklar da içermektedir. Öncelikle, çalışmanın verileri bireysel bazda toplanmıştır. Ancak, gelecek çalışmalarda her iki eşten de veri toplanarak yapılacak analizler çalışmanın değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkilere dair daha kapsamlı ve detaylı bilgiler verecektir. Buna ek olarak, kadınlar ve erkekler için iki ayrı aracı değişken modeli analizi yapılabilir. Bir diğer sınırlılık ise, verilerin elektronik anket yoluyla toplanmasından doğabilecek olan ölçüm yanlılığıdır. Bazı katılımcılar elektronik ortamda anket doldurmaya alışkın iken bazı katılımcılar buna yabancı olabilir. Bu durum sorulara verdikleri yanıtları etkilemiş olabilir. İleriki çalışmaların daha az yanlı veriler elde edebilmek için farklı veri toplama araçlarını (örn., çiftlerin çatışma çözme anlarının gözlemsel veri yoluyla değerlendirilmesi) kullanmaları daha yararlı olabilir. Araştırma deseninin boylamsal olmaması ve araştırma sonuçlarının yalnızca ilişkisellik sınırları içinde değerlendirilmesi bu çalışmayla ilgili bir diğer sınırlılık olarak görülebilir. Bu alanda yapılacak gelecek çalışmalarda boylamsal desenin kullanılması ve yeni evlilerde çalışma değişkenlerinin evlilik uyumuna etkisinin zaman içerisinde nasıl değiştiğinin incelenmesi önerilmektedir. Son olarak, çalışma grubu olarak yeni evlilerden oluşan homojen bir örneklemin kullanılması aynı zamanda hem bir avantaj hem de dezavantajdır. Yeni çift evresinde olan homojen bir örneklemin seçilmesi, olası karıştırıcı değişkenlerin etkisini azaltmak açısından literatüre önemli bir katkı sağlarken, aynı zamanda bu bulguların diğer aile yaşam evrelerinde olan bireylere genellenebilmesini kısıtlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu alanda yapılacak yeni çalışmalara

bir başka olası öneri ise aile yaşam döngüsünün farklı evrelerinde olan evli grupların incelenmesi ve bu gruplar arasındaki farkların araştırılmasıdır.

Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde, partnerlerine güvensiz bağlanan yeni evli bireylerin evlilik uyumlarının düşük olmasında çatışma anlarında olumsuz çözüm davranışları sergilemenin çok önemli bir rol oynadığı görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla, evlilik alanında uzman olan klinisyenlerin yeni evli bireylerle çalışırken özellikle çatışma çözüm stillerinin ilişkilerine nasıl etki ettiğini göz önünde bulundurmaları önemlidir. Çiftler genellikle terapiye başvuru sebepleri arasında çatışma çözüm becerilerindeki noksanlıkları belirtiyor olsalar da, aslında bu şikayetlerin doyurulmamış bağlanma ihtiyaçları olduğu düşünülmektedir (Solomon, 2009). Bu doyurulmamış ihtiyaçlar, çatışma anında öfke, baskılama/zorlama, saldırganlık ya da kaçınmaya dönüşmektedir. Bu nedenle, çiftlerde bu çatışma çözüm stillerini tercih etmelerinin nedeni olarak temelde bağlanma örüntülerindeki güvensizliğin yatıyor olduğu konusunda farkındalık yaratmak terapötik açıdan oldukça yararlı olabilir. Evlilik terapisindeki genel amacın evlilik doyumunu artırmak olduğu düşünülürse, evlilik alanında uzman klinisyenler için bu çalışmanın bulgularını klinik alanda kullanmak çiftlerin olumsuz çatışma çözüm stillerini olumluya dönüştürmek ve böylece evlilik doyumlarını artırmak açısından yararlı olacaktır.

Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma bağlanma boyutları ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkide çatışma çözüm stillerinin aracı etkisini yeni evli bireylerde inceleyen ilk araştırma olması açısından literatüre önemli bir katkı sağlamaktadır. Evliliği beş yılı aşmamış, çocuksuz ve ilk evliliğinde olan homojen bir çalışma grubu seçilerek çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkilere dair daha sağlıklı sonuçlar edildiği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma Türkçe literatürde bağlanma, çatışma çözüm stilleri ve evlilik uyumunu aynı anda inceleyen ilk çalışmadır ve Türk kültüründe bağlanma güvenliğinin ve çatışma çözüm stratejilerinin evlilikten alınan doyuma etkisi hakkında önemli çıkarımlar yapılmasına olanak sağlamıştır.

APPENDIX H. Thesis Photocopying Permission Form

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

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

YAZARIN

Soyadı : TULUM
Adı : SEDEF
Bölümü : Psikoloji

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : THE EFFECTS OF ATTACHMENT ON
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT IN NEWLY MARRIED INDIVIDUALS:
TESTING THE MEDIATOR ROLE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION
STYLES

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

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