THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL GROUP PROGRAM
ON CONSTRAINING BELIEFS ABOUT MATE SELECTION AND ROMANTIC
BELIEFS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

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

BY

GÖKÇE SANCAK AYDIN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

APRIL 2016

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

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BELIEFS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

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April 2016, 190 pages

The aim of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs of graduate students. With this purpose, two experimental group studies called "the first group study" and "the second group study" were conducted with the same procedure but with different participants. Each group study involved an experimental and a control group. Pre-test, post-test, and follow up test were used for the groups. The sample of the first group study was composed of 28 graduate students (14 women, 14 men) and the sample of the second group study was composed of 28 graduate students (16 women, 12 men). While the experimental groups received 5-week cognitive behavioral group intervention, the control groups did not receive any intervention for both group studies. The Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Scale, Romantic Beliefs Scale, Group Evaluation Form were used in data collection. The results of nonparametric test analyses revealed the cognitive behavioral group program had a significant effect on decreasing constraining beliefs about mate selection of graduate students both for the first and second group studies. For romantic beliefs, there was not any significant difference among repeated measures of the experimental group for the first group study, but there was a significant difference among the repeated measures of the experimental group for the second group study. The findings of this study may contribute to researchers,

practitioners, and graduate students about the constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs.

ÖZ

BİLİŞSEL DAVRANIŞÇI BİR GRUP PROGRAMININ LİSANSÜSTÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN EŞ SEÇİMİNE DAİR SINIRLAYICI İNANÇLARI VE ROMANTİK İNANÇLARI ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, bilişsel davranışçı bir grup programının lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançları ve romantik inançları üzerine etkisini incelemektir. Bu amaçla, aynı işlem fakat farklı katılımcılarla "birinci grup çalışması" ve "ikinci grup çalışması" adı verilen iki deneysel grup çalışması yürütülmüştür. Her bir grup çalışması bir deney ve bir kontrol grubuna sahiptir. Gruplar için ön-test, son-test ve takip testleri kullanılmıştır. İlk grup çalışmasının örneklemi 28 lisansüstü öğrencisinden (14 kadın, 14 erkek) ve ikinci grup çalışmasının örneklemi 28 lisansüstü öğrencisinden (16 kadın, 12 erkek) oluşmuştur. Her iki çalışmada da deney grubuna 5 haftalık bilişsel davranışçı grup programı uygulanırken, kontrol grubuna herhangi bir müdahalede bulunulmamıştır. Veri toplamada, Romantizm ve Eş Seçimi Tutum Ölçeği, Romantik İnançlar Ölçeği ve Grup Değerlendirme Formu kullanılmıştır. Parametrik olmayan test analiz sonuçları bilişsel davranışçı grup programının lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançlarını hem birinci hem ikinci grup çalışmasında anlamlı biçimde azalttığını ortaya koymuştur. Romantik inançlar için ise, birinci grup çalışmasında deney grubunun tekrarlayan ölçümleri arasında fark olmadığı, ikinci grup çalışmasında ise deney grubunun tekrarlayan ölçümleri arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğu görülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inançlar ve romantik inançlarla ilgili, araştırmacılara, uygulayıcılara ve lisansüstü öğrencilerine katkı sağlayabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inançlar, romantik inançlar, bilişsel davranışçı grup programı, evlilik öncesi program, deneysel desen.

To my precious imagination

and

To my mother who is the architect of it

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express huge thanks to Prof. Dr. Glenn Geher, who supervised me as a visiting scholar in State University of New York New Paltz Psychology Department. I have always perceived the Geher family as my chosen family in United States. As a friend and also a professor, he will always enlighten me in my journey. And also, thanks to my dear friends Chris Farrington, Morgan Gleason and Renee Eastabrooks who gave gentle feedbacks on my dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Love must be learned,

And learned again and again;

There is no end to it

...

Katherina Anne Porter

1.1 Background to the Study

Love is one of the most essential and powerful emotions for people. Depending on the findings of a cross cultural research, both men and women want to love and somebody to love them in a genuine way in most cultures (Buss et al., 1990). According to a meta-analysis which focuses on life regrets, most cited regret areas are education, career, and romance in adults (Roese & Summerville, 2005). Considering the importance of romantic relationships in human life, they are worth being understood more.

A romantic relationship is described as an important interpersonal relationship which has many facets such as dating, marital, and cohabiting partnership (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). Having a good romantic relationship is an outstanding contributor to well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999, Dush & Amato, 2005), happiness (Demir, 2008; Stack & Eshleman, 1998), and life satisfaction (Soons, Liefbroer, & Kalmijn, 2009). In other words, forming and maintaining romantic relationships are described as essential components of health and happiness.

One of the most important forms of romantic relationships is marriage. Many young individuals dream about their future marriage with excessive expectations. However,

1

many people get off a bad start right from the beginning of marriage; some marriages are doomed even before they start (Larson, 2000). Considering the high rate of divorce in many Western countries and its high social, emotional, and financial costs to adults and children, professionals need to better understand the premarital factors and use them in premarital education and counseling (Larson & Holman, 1994).

Some factors before marriage are described as premarital factors for healthy marriage. Larson and Holman (1994) suggest a triangulation model based on their research on premarital predictors. They describe these predictors as linked with later marital quality and stability in marriage. This model categorizes the predictors as couple traits, social context or environment, and individual traits. Couple traits are explained with such characteristics between partners as communication, intimacy, or control/power. Social context or environment is described with characteristics that derive from social context of partners or relationship such as work stress, parental and friends' disapproval, and outside stressors. Lastly, individual traits are described with some characteristics like personality and dysfunctional beliefs (Larson, 2003).

Among individual traits in premarital factors, beliefs are pointed out as an important factor that affects attitudes toward relationship (Dattilio, 2009; Sprecher & Metts, 1999) and mate selection of individuals for marriage (Larson, 1992). Beliefs or expectations are the standards individuals use to evaluate their marriage, themselves, and their partner (Larson, 2003). Beliefs about relationships do not always serve as a rose-colored filter. While some of the relationship beliefs are described as functional, some of them are described as dysfunctional. While functional beliefs increase possibilities for solutions to problems, dysfunctional beliefs make problems continue and limit the options for other solutions to problems (Wright, Watson & Bell, 1996).

Many researchers have described relationship beliefs as one of the central topics of close relationship psychology due to the psychological effects of dysfunctional relationship beliefs (e.g., Honeycutt & Cantrill, 2001; Kayser & Himle, 2002). Dysfunctional relationship beliefs have been used as an umbrella term that encompasses irrational beliefs about romantic relationships. They have been viewed

as negative beliefs within mate selection (e.g., Cobb, Larson & Watson, 2003), and relationship maintenance (e.g., Dattilio, 2010; Kayser & Himle, 2002). A considerable body of literature is devoted to dysfunctional relationship beliefs and they showed that dysfunctional beliefs are negatively associated with relationship satisfaction (Stackert & Bursik, 2003), marital quality and stability (Larson & Holman, 1994), marriage satisfaction (Güven & Sevim, 2007; Haferkamp, 1994; Hamamcı, 2005b), but positively associated with marital conflict (Haferkamp, 1994; Hamamcı, 2005a), relationship maladjustment (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Ellis & Bernard, 1985), marital distress (Addis & Bernard, 2002; Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Baucom, Epstein, Kirby, & LaTaillade, 2010; Beck, 1988), relationship dissatisfaction (Cramer, 2004; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981), conflict (Haferkamp, 1994; Hamamcı, 2005a; Epstein, Baucom, & Rankin, 1993), marital dissatisfaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Haferkamp, 1994), marital dissolution (Kurdek, 1993), depression (Uebelacker & Whisman, 2005), violence (e.g., Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994), and abuse (Kaygusuz, 2013). For empowering marriage satisfaction, it is important to develop healthy beliefs about marriage before the marriage. From this point forth, dysfunctional relationship beliefs are needed to be studied to enhance the future marriage satisfaction of individuals.

Among dysfunctional relationship beliefs, constraining beliefs about mate selection and excessive romantic beliefs are very common forms of dysfunctional beliefs for young individuals. Constraining mate selection beliefs are the dysfunctional beliefs toward mate selection a) limit individuals' preferences due to who or when one marries, b) encourage extreme or minimal effort of people to find an proper mate, c) prevent thoughtful consideration of relational strengths and weaknesses and of premarital aspects that known to have an effect on marriage success, and d) perpetuate problems about mate selection and frustration and limit options for alternate solutions for problems (Cobb et al., 2003; Larson, 2000). Larson (1992) describes nine constraining beliefs about mate selection for marriage. These are; *the one and only* (in the world, there is just one and only right person for me to marry), *the perfect partner* (a perfect person should be found to get married); *the perfect self* (I should feel fully competent as a future marriage partner before the marriage

3

decision); *the perfect relationship* (the relationship should be proven before getting married); *try harder* (if someone works hard enough for their relationship, s/he can be happy with anyone s/he chooses to marry); *love is enough* (falling in love with someone is a sufficient reason to get married); *cohabitation* (if I live with my partner before marriage, our chance of having a happy marriage will be improved); *opposite compliments* (I should choose to get married to someone whose personal characteristics are totally different than mine); and *choosing should be easy* (the mate selection for marriage is just a matter of chance).

In addition to constraining beliefs about mate selection for marriage, romantic beliefs are the beliefs that show the individual orientation of a person toward love (Sprecher & Metts, 1989). These beliefs may function as a cognitive schema while organizing and assessing one's behavior and the behavior of a potential or actual partner (Sprecher & Metts, 1989). High romantic beliefs reflect unrealistic standards for a marital relationship (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Romantic beliefs are defined with five beliefs about love by Sprecher and Metts (1999) 1) *love finds a way*; all obstacles can be conquered by love; 2) *the one and only*, there is only one person I can truly love; 3) *idealization*; our love should be true and perfect one; 4) *love at first sight*; true love can strike without prior interaction. These beliefs that capture extreme romanticism include; love can overcome any barrier, there is only one ideal partner out there for each person (i.e., a soulmate), idealization of the relationship and partner; and love at first sight (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Proponents of these beliefs are inclined to feel disgrentled and disenchanted (Sharp & Ganong, 2000).

There are some differences between constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. Constraining beliefs are associated with mate selection for marriage (Cobb et al., 2003). On the other hand, romantic beliefs assess how much individuals believe that love overcomes all obstacles (Cobb et al., 2003). While most romantic belief scales do not explicitly state marriage mate as an end goal, constraining mate selection beliefs scale accurately focuses on the mate selection for marriage (Cobb et al., 2003). Constraining beliefs refer more to expectations about finding an ideal relationship or partner for the specific purpose of initiating a marital relationship

(Larson, 1992). Therefore, if constraining beliefs are present, they inhibit the mate selection process for marriage as being self-defeating, leading to disappointments and discouragement. Although some notions of constraining beliefs are associated with romantic beliefs (but different with the focus of the mate selection for marriage) such as "the love is enough for marriage" belief and "the one and only for marriage" belief, other constraining beliefs are definitely not related with romantic beliefs such as the "cohabitation for marriage" belief and "the try harder for marriage" belief (Cobb et al., 2003). However, both beliefs seem very important in terms of their potential influence on mate selection and future marriage (Cobb et al., 2003; Larson, 1992; Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Therefore, studying these beliefs before the marriage with the help of a program seems essential for healthy future marriages.

Marriage is worth saving, because it is one of the most important and fundamental human relationships and it is significant in rearing next generations (Stahman & Hiebert, 1987). It has recently been considered as a public health issue because of its effects on the behaviors that affect not only couples themselves but also their work, children and the community (Hunt, Hof, & DeMaria, 1998). Considering the importance of romantic relationships and marriages on psychological, physical well-being, and the society, the preventive based studies need to be developed more and to be tested to provide a support system for counseling services. Supporting this notion, Stanley (2001) points out that in order to develop clear courses in the policy of relationship education and designate the pressing social problems about divorce and relationship distress much information is needed to be known. Therefore, it is important to study on marriages before they start in a premarital manner.

People can change the nature and quality of their relationships before marriage (Renick, Blumberg, & Markman, 1992). If identified premarital factors such as dysfunctional beliefs are changed, this will make a difference in later marriage. Many studies have been conducted about premarital studies under the umbrella term of preventive perspective. Preventive perspective is described as the predictor factors that prevent the future potential problems (Coie et al., 1993). Markman, Floyd, and Dickson-Markman (1982) discuss three classification of prevention; primary,

secondary, and tertiary. Primary prevention refers to programs designed for individuals not currently in need of intervention and based on providing resources to prevent problems from developing in the future. Secondary prevention refers to programs offering the individuals at risk for difficulties as indicated by early assessment. Tertiary prevention refers to interventions designed for individuals who have already experienced problems. Viewed as a whole, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of a group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs. By this means, this study intends to provide a primary prevention for individuals in a premarital manner.

Some factors in relationships tend to be static, while some others are dynamic (Stanley & Markman, 1998). The dynamic factors have the potential to be shifted in preventive interventions such as education about relationship and marriage. By evaluating the premarital components, preventive counseling services can be offered to provide a satisfactory future marriage life (Saraç, Hamamcı, & Güçray, 2015). Considering their outstanding effects, premarital education and groups are the interest areas of close relationship research. The purpose of these kinds of trainings and programs is to prevent the common problems leading to lower relationship quality by providing information and strategies (Ersanlı & Kalkan, 2003). Researchers investigated the effect of many programs on relationship before the marriage and found that they were effective in decreasing some dysfunctional relationship beliefs (e.g., Bass, Drake & Linney, 2007; Sharp & Ganong, 2000) and enhancement of relationship (e.g., Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Giblin, Sprenkle, & Sheehan, 1985; Yalçın, 2010). With respect to some negative consequences of dysfunctional beliefs in marriage (e.g., Dattilio, 2010; Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Larson, 2000) and effectiveness of premarital education and programs, constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs might be worth studying in a premarital manner due to their bringing hope for future marriages and relationships.

Research shows the effectiveness of premarital training, relationship education and group programs (Carroll & Doherty; Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2008; Yılmaz & Kalkan, 2010). Indeed, the attitudes of young individuals toward

marriage and their expectations of marriage are mostly unrealistic (e.g., Silliman & Schumm, 2004). If dysfunctional relationship beliefs are generally harmful for the health and functioning of relationships, premarital intervention might have the potential to improve later relationship success by reducing levels of dysfunctional beliefs (e.g., Bass et al., 2007; Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Therefore, it can be said that there is a need to develop an educative program to help individuals for enhancing realistic romantic and mate selection expectations.

As similar with most Western countries, not only marriage age but also divorce rates are increasing in Turkey (TUİK, 2015). In order to support individuals in premarital process, an urgent public policy is needed to be developed by policy makers. According to research conducted in Turkey by Türkarslan and Süleymanov (1997), when asked male university students the most appropriate marriage age for them is 23-28, while female university students reported that it is 25-29. Similarly, TUİK (2015) reports the first marriage age of women as 23.9, while it was 27 for men in Turkey. Therefore, graduate students corresponding those ages are chosen as the sample of this study. In addition, the literature about premarital intervention for graduate students is lacking in Turkey as well.

University years form on an important period in an individual's life for identity and relationship development (Michel & Randick, 2013). Having romantic relationships is a major task pending the transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). According to Erikson (1968), romantic relationship is a psychosocial developmental issue that is encountered in the "intimacy versus isolation" stage which corresponds to the age of early to late twenties, even the thirties. "Intimacy versus isolation stage" is characterized with the significant relationships with friends and also romantic partners and making commitments. Starting a relationship and maintaining intimate relationships are described as a significant criterion for adult adjustment (Feldman, Gowen, & Fisher, 1998). In that period, individuals explore romantic relationships considering mate selection and judge them for marriage (Feldman et. al., 1998; Furman, 2002). Thus, marriage decision making that is one of the most important life decisions may occur during young adulthood. The steps in that period are crucial to

guide the future marital success and relationship satisfaction. Premarital interventions seem beneficial for contributing young individuals in both their current relationship and future marriages.

Individuals need education programs about relationship and marriage at some level. Tested premarital education programs may contribute both the individuals and professionals who provide psychological support. Romantic relationships play an important role for university students in everyday life (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004). To illustrate, one of the most common problems of individuals for seeking help at university counseling centers is close relationship problems (Creasey, Kershaw & Boston, 1999; Doğan, 2007; Erkan, Özbay, Cihangir-Çankaya & Terzi, 2012). Similarly, marriage distress is another reason for seeking help from mental health professionals in young adulthood (Veroff, Kulka, & Douvan, 1981). Thus, this program will be beneficial for not just young individuals at marriage decision stage but also for the married individuals of future considering its long term consequences. Thus, it will be helpful for psychological help providers to help young individuals.

By contrast with international premarital education programs in literature, the research on premarital education programs have been rare in Turkish literature though a growing interest has been noticed. The published research on group programs focusing on dysfunctional relationships has been limited. To meet the need for group programs before marriage, some premarital studies have been conducted (e.g., Yalçın, 2010; Yılmaz & Kalkan, 2010). These programs were conducted with couples to enhance relationship satisfaction. Most remarkably, no study has been specifically suggested a program like the present study utilizing cognitive behavioral group program for single individuals, not married or engaged, on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs in Turkish culture.

The fact remains that, although the importance of the group programs about dysfunctional beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs are appreciated in literature (Cobb et al., 2003; Sharp & Ganong, 2000), there have been very few empirical findings on their effectiveness in international board, and no study has

been seen in Turkey up to the knowledge of researcher conducting this study. Therefore, interventions for constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs of graduate students have not been studied and need to be developed. Taken this need into consideration, this study hopes to support individuals at university settings by changing their constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs before the marriage by the help of a comprehensive group program. Indeed, this program seems important for future directions for further research on dysfunctional relationship beliefs of graduate students in Turkey by suggesting a tested group program.

Group is described as a microcosm of the macro world (Yalom, 2002). In a group, support comes from the similarities, sharing the experiences, catharsis, identification, feedback and being accepted, which is as therapeutic factors (Yalom, 2002). Thus, this structured group program may contribute to provide a setting for participants to explore their constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. Furthermore, when the participants are given chances to express their dysfunctional relationship beliefs, they might alleviate their isolation with the help of interaction with other group members. Therefore, applying a group program would be beneficial for participants considering the advantages of the group counseling as mentioned by Koydemir (2012); the positive effect of the feedbacks of other participants, providing opportunity for learning and experiencing new behaviors, providing sense of not being alone, providing sense of trust and conformity, having a large application area, and helping more than one person at the same time. In addition to being a group program, theoretical framework of the current program is seen as a strength of the current study.

Koydemir (2012) indicates the importance of having a theoretical framework for empowering the productivity and efficiency of groups. In this study, Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) is chosen as the theoretical framework of the study. Cognitive behavioral approaches have three main propositions; cognitive activity affect behavior, cognitive activity may be altered and behavioral change may be affected through cognitive change (Dobson & Dozois, 2001). Respect to this

perspective, if dysfunctional relationship beliefs are changed, behaviors will be changed, as well. CBT describes dysfunctional relationship beliefs with selective attention (tendency to notice only certain aspects of events), attributions (inferences about the factors influenced a partner's actions), expectancies (predictions about the events in relationships), assumptions (beliefs about the characteristics of people and relationship), and standards (beliefs about the characteristics people and relationship should have) (Dattilio, 2010). Each of the constraining mate selection beliefs or romantic belief can be explained with CBT concepts. To illustrate, idealization is a set of standards, similarly, the perfect self, the perfect relationship and perfect partner belief for mate selection for marriage are the examples of assumptions. The choice of Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) as the theoretical framework of the current study has been used for two main reasons. First, the body of knowledge has been endorsed that CBT is described as an efficient theoretical framework while working on romantic relationships (e.g., Baucom et al., 2010; Dattilio, 2010; Ellis & Bernard, 1985; Dattilio, 2010; Epstein & Baucom, 1990; Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Epstein et al., 1993; Kayser & Himle, 2002). Second, most research has strongly suggested to use CBT or Rational Emotive Theory to use for interventions on dysfunctional relationship beliefs (e.g., Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Kayser & Himle, 2002) and also for programs for constraining mate selection beliefs and romanticism (Larson, 1992). Therefore, CBT has been chosen as the theoretical framework of the current group program.

In addition to its theoretical strength, this study provides strength with its design. This study contains two separate experimental group studies on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs conducted with the same procedure and the content but with different participants. Each group study enrolls both experimental and control group. The first group was called as "the first group study" and the second group was called as "the second group study" throughout the study. The purpose of having two separate group studies was to provide a strong support to findings of the study with a replication manner. Replication advocates that the same experiment can be repeated and the findings can be tested in same way (Zuber-Skerritt, 1994). Replication studies are strongly suggested to decrease the sampling

error and test the validity of findings of the main study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004; Schmidth, 2009; Westfall, Judd, & Kenny, 2015). To be able to generalize and achieve more general psychology, replication of experiments on different persons is required (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Replication studies enforce the external validity and generalizability of the study (Mackey, 2012) and control if the results are obtained by chance (Schmidth, 2009). Stated by Campbell and Stanley (1963), if experiments are successful, researchers need to replicate and cross-validate at other times before interpreting them with feeling scientifically confident. In social science, researchers have not tended to conduct replication studies because of more emphasis on developing novel approaches and methods instead of confirming previous studies (Spector, 2016). However, At the National Technology Leadership Summit (NTLS, 2014) meeting in Washington, DC, the essential role of replication studies in research was emphasized and a number of journal editors accepted to encourage replication research in their journals. Therefore, by appreciating the notion of replication studies in social science, in the present study, researcher led two group studies and reported the results of those two studies. Hereby, it was hoped to control the potential sampling error bias can be caused by personal characteristics of participants and it also enhances the generalizability of the findings with a replication.

To sum up, considering the negative associations of dysfunctional relationship beliefs with positive relationship outcomes, a cognitive behavioral group program based on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs seems worth developing to make precious contributions to young individuals, psychological support providers, and policy makers. This study is designed to understand the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs of graduate students.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The central focus of this research is to investigate the effect of a cognitive behavioral group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs of

graduate students. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to examine the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs through conducting two studies which called as "the first group study" and "the second group study" throughout the study.

1.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study aims to answer following questions;
Research questions:

1. Does the cognitive behavioral group program have a significant effect on constraining beliefs about mate selection of graduate students?

2. Does the cognitive behavioral group program have a significant effect on romantic beliefs of graduate students?

Research hypotheses:

1. The cognitive behavioral group program has a significant effect on constraining beliefs about mate selection of graduate students.

2. The cognitive behavioral group program has a significant effect on romantic beliefs of graduate students.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study has several precious aspects to add to the existing literature on dysfunctional relationship beliefs of graduate students and group programs for the relationship beliefs of single (not married or engaged) graduate students. The significance of the present study highlights those hopeful contributions to existing literature accordingly.

First, romantic relationships are one of the most outstanding components of young adult development. Romantic relationships have been associated with various positive and negative concepts which are related to psychological well-being. According to Furman and Shaffer (2003), romantic relationships are related to how individuals perceive themselves. Impett, Gordon and Strachman (2008) describe romantic relationships as one of the sources of life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Precisely, literature has generally indicated that individuals have pre-existing beliefs about romantic relationships affecting their expectations when they are in relationships (Baucom & Epstein, 1990, Baucom et al., 2010; Larson, 2002). Considering the crucial role of beliefs in romantic relationships and the important role of romantic relationship in development, this study has notable merits in terms of contributing to young individuals' development.

Second, many studies revealed the need for premarital group programs for university students. Hamamcı, Buğa, and Duran (2011) revealed that university students want to seek help for premarital education and join that education before they have not engaged in such a relationship. Similarly, Haskan Avcı (2014) investigated the problem areas in premarital relationships of university students, and the participants reported that they need to be educated on romanticism. Additionally, Saraç et al. (2015) suggested developing premarital group programs based on Rational Emotive Theory to change irrational relationship beliefs of university students. Furthermore, Hamamcı (2005a) pointed out that cognitive behavioral theory might be used not only with couples but also with university students for changing their constraining relationship beliefs. Furthermore, Cobb et al. (2003) suggested studying constraining beliefs of university students about mate selection and developing a group program to support these students. Similarly, Edmunson (2005) suggested that the programs specifically targeting marriage need to be available for college students, especially for those who have not married yet. Also, Nielsen et al. (2004) indicated that most of the marriage preparation classes are planned for students in high school or the individuals who have already decided to get married and mentioned the necessity of studying with individuals who have not decided to get married yet. Thus, the current study has got inspired from the aforementioned studies, and it hopes to address the

13

suggestions mentioned in the literature by providing a tested group program on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs of individuals who are not engaged or married yet.

Third, this study is significant because of its preventive contribution to university students both in graduate and undergraduate level. According to Nielsen (2004), prevention efforts targeting university students seem crucial because a) university students are expected to have more experience in dating than high school students and are exclusively closer to the challenges of selecting a marriage partner and building a committed relationship considering their developmental stage; b) open discussions about sexuality seem more suitable and are not affected by parental disquiets; c) marriage spouse selection has rarely occurred; and d) weddings are not looming, so dialogues on mate selection can be in a more searching manner. Furthermore, a study conducted with graduate university students in a state university in Turkey revealed that university students report they need a premarital program which is about unrealistic beliefs about mate selection (Sancak Aydın & Demir, 2016). The current program aims to provide an understanding for participants to alter their constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. With the help of realistic expectations, the participants can start mate selection process in a healthier fashion. These kinds of programs are hoped to enhance realistic expectations for marriage and romantic relationships.

Fourth, considering the sample, this study is important in terms of studying one of the problem areas of the young adults. There is a growing body of knowledge that recognizes the importance of the relationship problems of students at university setting (e.g., Demir & Koydemir, 2005; Güneri-Yerin, Aydın & Skovholt, 2003; Topyaka & Meydan, 2013). Indeed, Stahman and Salts (1993) point out the crucial role of premarital group counseling with respect to education of individuals about pre marriage topics. Given the studies conducted about romantic relationships of university students, it can be said that there is a need for studies that aim to provide support to individuals before the marriage. Considering the needs of university counseling centers and counseling centers working with young adults, there is a need

to develop premarital programs and this study hopes to contribute both to the students and professionals of counseling centers by suggesting a tested group program.

Fifth, along with the direct effects of premarital counseling to romantic relationships, it has also some potential affect for future marriage. There is a growing interest for prevention studies that are essential for romantic relationships considering their effects on development and well-being. Future marriage dissolution has some potential causes. Wright (1992) proposes four reasons in order to explain why marriages dissolve; a) failing to understand their individual development; b) feeling inadequate about their personal identity and security; c) coming to marriage with their unresolved problems between them and their parents; d) never being prepared for marriage because of their expectations which are fully unrealistic. Additionally, contemporary expectations for marriage are hard to fulfill (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000; Stanley, 2001). In this regard, this study hopes to provide an understanding about graduate students' unrealistic expectations about mate selection and romantic relationships by proposing a tested premarital program to enhance realistic mate selection and romantic beliefs.

The other significance of the study comes from its contributions to policy makers. Divorce rates are rapidly increasing; the divorce is not just affecting the couples; it also affects the physical and psychological well-being of children (Baucom, Hahlweg, Atkins, Engl & Thurmaie, 2006; Stanley, 2001). As a part of preventive perspective, the current study represents an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of a specific group program based on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. By doing so, this study intends to contribute to marriage preparation programs.

To be more specific, according to TUİK (2015) reports, in Turkey, divorce rates and marriage age have been increasing as in many other Western countries. The policy makers and professionals from the fields should develop intervention plans for those individuals. In Turkey, Prime Ministry Family and Social Research Director General

(2008) organized 5th Family Council and focused on the "Family Support Services". At that council, premarital counselling and education services were advocated with the suggestion of extending those services and having master programs on family counseling. Considering these suggestions, Higher Education Board Presidency (YÖK) sent a formal information letter to universities to inform about the suggestions which gained from the council. Similarly, 6th Family Council which would be organized by Prime Ministry Family and Social Research Director General (2014) focused on the preventive studies which will be organized by Family Counseling Centers. There is an appreciated effort of policy makers to improve family counseling in Turkey. Thus, the present study may provide a better understanding to policy makers while working on marriage preparation and divorce prevention studies in Turkey.

Depending on Turkish literature, various studies investigated the effectiveness of group programs which focus on the irrational beliefs of married individuals (Ersanlı & Kalkan, 2003; Sevim, 1996). Furthermore, the premarital programs which aimed to provide relationship enhancement were investigated (e.g., Yalçın, 2010; Yılmaz & Kalkan, 2010). However, a group program that has been designed for individuals at university and focused just on changing constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs has not been studied yet. Similarly, although cognitive behavioral programs are investigated for different variables in literature, specifically, a program which mentions constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs has not been reported yet. All in all, the current study will contribute to existing literature by providing a group program on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs.

Additionally, the body of knowledge has pointed out the differences in relationship beliefs and behaviors between different cultures (e.g., Contreas, Hendrick, & Heendrick, 1996; Gaines et al., 1999; Weaver & Ganong, 2004). This study is significant in terms of its application in Turkish culture. The social context of relationships has an influence on relationship expectations (Goodwin, 2013; Goodwin & Gaines, 2004). When the cultural effects are considered, it is important

to examine the effectiveness of a group program changing dysfunctional beliefs in Turkish culture called as less individualistic one (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2002). In the light of this information, the current group program deserves investigation.

The last significance of the current research comes from its contribution to the literature by developing and testing the effect of a group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs. The design of the study is experimental which gives a cause effect relationship (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004). Furthermore, the current study might be considered as the first experimental study that focuses on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs of individuals in Turkey. Additionally, the design of the study is another critical significance of the study. This study not only evaluates the effectiveness of a group program but also tests the results of the group program with a replication group. Replication group is important in terms of decreasing the sampling error and understanding whether the results chance by chance or not (Mackey, 2012; Schmidt, 2009). Generally, many social scientists do not replicate their studies due to not having a chance to publish the same results (Francis, 2012). Thus, this study can play an important role in studying validity of this group program with two studies.

1.5 Definition of the Terms

In the succeeding section, the definitions of the important terms of the study are presented.

Constraining beliefs about mate selection are defined as "The personal beliefs that may a) limit one's choices regarding who or when one marries, b) encourage exaggerated or minimal personal effort to find a suitable mate, c) inhibit thoughtful consideration of interpersonal strengths and weaknesses and of premarital factors that known to have an influence on the success of marriage, and/or d) perpetuate mate selection problems and frustration and restrict options for alternative solutions for problems" (Cobb, Larson, & Watson, 2003, p. 222).

17

Romantic beliefs are defined as beliefs toward love and categorized with "love finds a way" which means that all obstacles and problems in relationship can be solved; "the one and only" which means that real love survives forever; "idealization" which means that the all in relationship will be in a perfect manner and "love at the first sight" which means true love can strike without prior interaction (Sprecher & Metts, 1989).

Premarital program is defined as the program that is educational, healing, and preventive before the marriage (Hunt, Hof, & DeMaria, 1998).

Experimental design is defined as "a method to demonstrate a relatively unambiguous connection between cause and effect." (Coolican, 2009, p. 56).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provides a comprehensive look to understand the context of the current research. For that purpose, at first perspectives on mate selection were described. Second, dysfunctional relationship beliefs, dysfunctional mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs were presented. Third, the Cognitive Behavioral Theory that is the theoretical framework of the current study was presented. Fourth, the premarital programs were displayed. Last, research on dysfunctional relationship beliefs, premarital programs and courses were represented at the end of the chapter.

2.1 Perspectives on Mate Selection

"Who gets married with whom?" has been interested for a long time by marriage and family researchers (Kalkan, 2012). Many theories have tried to find an answer to that critical question; however, none of the perspectives is enough to explain this complicated process by just their point of view. The common frameworks that explain mate selection are described blow.

2.1.1 Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary theory based on the ideas of Darwin (2008). Evolutionary logic on mate choice focuses on the understanding the mate selection process of both nonhuman species and human species. The reason why evolutionary theory focused on non-human species in addition to human species because they believe there are similar patterns between human and non-human species.

The investment is a key term while understanding mate choice in Evolutionary Theory. Trivers (1972) described the parental investment is a crucial concept for

19

understanding the mate selection. According to Geary, Vigil, and Byrd-Craven (2004), there is a competition between sex that has lower investment (generally males) over the members whose parental investment is higher (generally females). High investing sex is choosy in mate selection. Buss (1994) indicates that mostly women invest more in parenting and with that reason; they are choosy in mate selection and marriage partner selection. Controlling age and attractiveness, studies show that women are choosy in selecting their marriage partners (Feingold, 1992; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1995). Regarding the investment of women, women are not just choosy in long term relationships but also in short term relationships (Geary et al., 2004). Women tend not to have short term relationships because of its potential costs (Geary et al., 2004). On the other hand, men prone to access multiple mates, however that does not mean they do not have any investments, they may invest to their children (Geary, 2000).

Evolutionary perspective points out that the best partner for a woman, is somebody who is a long-term partner having good genes and wants to invest in woman and her children by the help of the ability for being parent, and ability to provide social and resources to the kids (Geary et al., 2004). Respect to Evolutionary Theory, women prone to choose dominant males because of their potential to provide source. Miller (2000) indicates that some human abilities such as creativity, music, language, art, humor, and altruism evolved for selecting "good genes" for parenting regarding to the theory of mental fitness indicators. Men want physical attractiveness that is described as cues of fertility in their potential partners than women (Geher, 2013).

Evolutionary framework advocates that man focuses on some physical attributes such as youthful skin, waist to hip ratio that are signs of fertility (Buss, 1995) whilst the woman choice mates with the physical attributes such as broad shoulders, height and muscularity for reproductive success (Buss, 1994).

Given the lens of Evolutionary Theory, Buss (2006) described the qualities of marriage partner for women who are described as commonly choosy: a) ability to invest resources to the woman andkids; b) wanting to invest resources tothem; c)

display promise for being a good parent; d) protect her and her children physically; e) being able to strategic alignment to them (Buss, 2003). In a broad scale cross cultural study of Buss et al. (1990), it was investigated which qualities are looked for potential long term mating partners by individuals. The findings showed that women and men described their desired potential mates as having characteristics such as intelligence, kindness, understanding, dependability, healthy, (similar) religious beliefs, (similar) political view, and love universally. In addition, women reported they look the characteristics such as social status, industriousness, and ambition (Buss et al., 1990; Buss, 1994). Geary et al. (2004) reported that successfulness of a man is described by culture and women prefer men who are successful in cultural context. The study of Buss (1989) that contains 37 different cultures investigated mate choices of people and showed that women prefer financially good prospect in their mates more than men. In sum, Evolutionary perspective has broadly focused on the transferring the good genes to new generations in mate selection process. Another alternative perspective to mate selection is Social Role Theory.

2.1.2 Social Role Theory

Social Role Theory is mainly focused on the social attributions in mate selection process. It explains the differences between woman and man with respect to mate selection as considering the different roles in society across gender. Social Role Theory advocates that mate choices are shaped by cultural expectations (Valentine & Li, 2012). This theory derived from the need to understand the differences and similarities between men and women because of sex in social behavior (Eckes & Trautner, 2012). Gender roles are the expectations from the individuals because of the sex that is the socially determined (Eagly, 1987). Stated by Eckes and Trautner (2012), there are specific prescribed roles based on various factors such as family relationships (e.g., daughter, father), occupations (e.g., being a nurse or firefighter). While traditional roles are expected as richness, assertiveness, and power for men, women roles are described as physical attractiveness, emotional closeness, and caring.

According to Benokraitis (2014) women and men select their mates considering different vocational, family and gender roles. In many cultures, women are defined as less powerful socially and economically comparing to men and need to get married with a man who has better sources in order to have a better access to economic resources (Valentine & Li, 2012). On the other hand, men expect physical attractiveness for a potential mate considering socially prescribed roles. To sum, Social Role Theory focuses on the social attributions in mate selection. Next theories are Homogamy and Complementary Needs Theory for explaining mate selection.

2.1.3 Homogamy Theory and Complementary Needs Theory

The Homogamy Theory asserts that people are attracted by people who are parallel to themselves in terms of characteristics including age, social class, race, gender, religion, and status (Kalkan, 2012; Knox & Schacht, 2008). The most crucial homogamy variables in mate selection are described as physical appearance, age, race, religion, social class, personality, values, and propinquity (Benokraitis, 2014). Buss (1985) indicated that individuals tend to find similarities with regard to religion, socioeconomic level, ethnic background, and race in mate selection. From the homogamy point of view, people also look for similarity in mate selection in terms of attachment and personality. Larson and Holman (1994) reported that similarity in beliefs, attitudes, and values are associated with marital quality. Additionally, according to Luo and Klohnen (2005), people who have similar attachment levels report higher relationship satisfaction. In the same vein, couples who states that they have similar personality characteristics report higher subjective well-being and relationship satisfaction than ones who have different characteristics (Wilson & Cousins, 2005).

Contrary to Homogamy Theory, Complementary Needs Theory advocates that individuals tend to select partners whose needs are complementary to their own (Knox & Schacht, 2008; Schellenberg & Bee, 1960). In other words, it referred as "opposite attract". Articulated by Winch (1955), the needs can be opposite when spouses are different such as being dominant versus submissive or when the

individuals need the same things but at various intensity. Regarding to Complementary Needs Theory, different characteristics of spouses create higher satisfaction (Kalkan, 2012). Although having different characteristics may seem attractive in the beginning stage of the relationship, the opposites can be seen as a problem with the more realistic point of view by partners in the later stages of the relationship (Kalkan, 2012). As the last theory about mate selection perspective in this section, Social Exchange Theory is presented.

2.1.4 Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory is one of the most influential theories while explaining mate selection and marriage. According to Goode (1970), all systems on courtship are described as market or exchange systems. Social exchange perspective primarily lays emphasis on the exchange of the resources between or among individuals (Sprecher, 1998). Stated by Levinger (1976), one of the many aspects of the relationship is the reward that is perceived as rewarded by the individual such as sexuality, social status, and emotional security that are the attractions of the relationship. Another aspect of the relationship is the barriers to leave the relationship such as religion rules, social rules or financial costs. Further, one another aspect is the presence of the attractive alternatives such as other preferable alternative partner. In Social Exchange Theory, the highest rewards at the lowest cost are essential for the mate selection (Knox & Schacht, 2008). The main descriptions in the theory as it follows: *costs* are described as exchanges that result as punishment or loss (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959); *Rewards* are described as behaviors, words, services, and resources that your mate provides you that valued by you and make you decide to endure the relationship (Knox & Schacht, 2008), *Profit* means that there are higher rewards than costs. *Loss* means there are higher cost levels than rewards; *Alternative* means another individual who is available and offer higher profit.

Social exchange framework is based on the following main assumptions: a) social behavior is viewed as a series of exchanges; b) while people prone to maximize their rewards, they tend to minimize their costs; c) when people have rewards from others,

they tend to feel obligated to reciprocate (Sprecher, 1998). Kalkan (2012) points out that social exchange theory has some assumptions while explaining mate selection: a) increasing rewards and decreasing costs b) Relationships have their own dynamics. In other words, the rewards that seem satisfactory for partners in a period of time may seem less satisfactory later and may not seem as reward in another period of time, so the relationship has their own dynamics. c) Evaluations, they effect the relationship improvement. Evaluation is the cost benefit analysis of the partners to make a decision on whether they invest the relationship or not. If their rewards from the relationship are more than the costs of it, they invest to improve the relationship. d) Evaluations affect the relationship satisfaction. If the partners have a balance between their investments and their rewards in relationship, they satisfy with their relationships. e) Inequality may lead the problems. If partners have unequal relationship, they try to find a way to provide a balance in their relationships because of the upcoming potential problems of sense of inequality.

As seen many perspectives have tried to explain the complex nature of mate selection. None of them has been identified as adequate to explain the mate selection by solely itself. In addition to mate selection perspectives, the broad description of dysfunctional relationship beliefs that is an umbrella term was needed to explain in the following headline.

2.2 Dysfunctional Relationship Beliefs

While entering into a relationship, individuals hold pre-existing beliefs about relationship such as what relationships should be like, what dimensions make relationship satisfying and rewarding, what rules should be guided in relationships (Sprecher & Metts, 1999). Those beliefs are generally held by individuals before the marriage and the individuals bring them into the marriage where they lead problems for the relationship (Larson, 2000). While some beliefs about help a stable and satisfying marriage, some of them may lead to communication problemsand relationship dissatisfaction (Reis & Sprecher, 2009). Commonly, most of the people are not conscious of the disturbing influence of their dysfunctional beliefs on their

relationships. In the light of the framework of Cognitive Behavioral Theory, cultural and social characteristics might affect one's dysfunctional beliefs (Beck, 1979; Wallen, DiGiuseppe, & Dryden, 1992). The main source of the dysfunctional relationship beliefs seems unclear notably, though some researchers explain that with developmental angles in family system (Stackert & Bursik, 2003). Another explanation on relationship expectations is its probability to be mostly influenced by the social setting in the relationship happens (Goodwin, 2013). Additionally, social tools such as media are described as influencing factor that effect relationship beliefs (e.g., Holmes, 2007).

Articulated by Larson (2000), dysfunctional beliefs towards marriage or partner may cause frustrations for both partners. Larson (2000) described those dysfunctional beliefs as constraining means that they lead to continue of the problems and limit the alternatives to solve the problems. Larson (2000; 2003) categorized the dysfunctional beliefs as follows;

"Marriage will lead magical change": This belief results in the thinking of individuals that they will solve any problems that they have as both couple and individual. Also, individuals believe that their partner will change dramatically after the marriage.

"Disagreement is destructive": People who hold this belief commonly think disagreement in a marriage is a bad signal about the marriage and it will destroy the marriage. This belief provides to keep away the problems out of the relationship, also prevent to find effective problem solutions. Those beliefs will keep partners from directly facing with disagreements in the relationship (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Larson, 2003).

"Mind reading is expected": This belief contains thoughts such as "If he/she really loves me, he/she will know automatically what I want" or "A good partner should know my needs without expression". But the reality is not that. None of us are

capable of reading others' minds of other people. Rather, partners should rely on their partner's reports on what he or she wants (Larson, 2003).

"A partner cannot change": The individuals who have this belief commonly say "People never change" or "He or she will not change". Those beliefs lead the sense of discouragement and resentment. The reality about those beliefs is that people can change if they are motivated to change.

"Sexual perfection is possible": People who hold this belief generally think the way like there is just one right way to have sex in a perfectionist manner (Larson, 2000). The reality about that perfection is not necessary to enjoy sex in same manner.

"The sexes are completely different": This belief focuses on the assumption that women and men may never exactly understand each other. People who have such beliefs are discouraged from understanding and appreciating their partner (Larson, 2003).

According to Larson (2003), dysfunctional beliefs are the individual traits that predict marital dissatisfaction. Considering cognitive theories (Beck 1976; Ellis, 1962), five categories are explained as having a crucial role in the marital maladjustment (Baucom, Epstein, Sayers & Sher, 1989). While the one of these categories contains the perceptual process (selective attention), the other four categories contain the outcomes of the cognitive processes: attributions (about why events occur), expectancies (predictions on what events will occur in the future), assumptions (about the nature of the world and correlations between events and characteristics), and standards (about what "should" be) (Baucom et al., 1989). These five categories that are closely related to dysfunctional relationship beliefs will be explained in this chapter under "An Overlook to Beliefs that Have Potential to Shape Relationship Beliefs in CBT" headline.

Considering the nature of dysfunctional relationship beliefs, the more specific dysfunctional beliefs were identified as the dependent variables of the study;

dysfunctional mate selection beliefs (constraining mate selection beliefs) and romantic beliefs were presented in the following headlines.

2.3 Dysfunctional Mate Selection Beliefs

Satisfactory romantic relationships are described as difficult to establish for many people and people are selective in their long term relationships (Ellis & Bernard, 1985). While moving toward marriage, people tend to distort the sense of reality with fantasy and wistfulness (Wright, 1992). Dysfunctional mate selection beliefs are described with different names in the literature such as dysfunctional, constraining or myths but in general they are used to describe the same concept. To illustrate, Larson (2000) described the dysfunctional beliefs as myths toward marriage. He described these beliefs that are not true (Larson, 2000, 2003). Articulated by Larson (2000), myths have a crucial role in mate selection because myths may lead individual to excessively criticize or not criticize enough about self, partner, relationship or marriage decision. Also, constraining mate selection beliefs are described as the individual beliefs that may a) border choices of people with respect to who or when a person marries, b) encourage extreme or very minimal effort of persons to have an suitable mate, c) constrain considerate in respect to interpersonal assets and weaknesses and of premarital features that known to have an influence on the marriage success, and/or d) continue premarital mate selection difficulties and frustration and limit alternatives for alternate solutions for problems (Cobb, Larson & Watson, 2003). Larson (2000) advocated that if people alter these beliefs and start to think in a more realistic manner in preparation to marriage, the first step toward a healthier and satisfying relationship will be taken by them.

Larson (1992) conducted a meta-analysis study about mate selection and suggested nine myths about mate selection to premarital counseling literature; some of the myths are about one's self, some of them are about one's the partner and some of them focus on the relationship and some of them are about the selecting one to marry and marriage preparation. The beliefs that are described as constraining and myth are mentioned by Larson (1992) as followed;

27

The One and Only: This belief advocates that "in the world, there is just one and only right person for me to marry" that focuses on the passivity in mate selection process (Larson, 2000). People who have this belief may let viable potential marriage partners pass those by (Priest, Burnett, Thompson, Vogel, & Schvaneveldt, 2009). According to Larson (2000), this belief has some potential problems because the impossible nature to prove its validity. For instance, "How would you decide once you have found that particular right person?" or "Will you pass up the potential good marriage partners whilst waiting for that special feeling?" The reality is opposite to this. There are many people to whom one could have a happy marriage (Larson, 2000).

The Perfect Partner: The individual who has this belief suggests that for getting married, a perfect person should be found as a partner. That expectation is described as totally unrealistic by Larson (2000) because perfectionism reduces the ability of an individual to find solutions in problem situations. In addition, when those high expectations were not met, the indecision and anxiety in mate selection process would lead respectively (Holman et al., 1997). The individuals who have this belief frequently tend to have short term relationships with the purpose of evaluating the partner and they do not give enough time to figure their relationships (Priest et al., 2009). Moreover, this belief may cause to frustrations both for the evaluator and the one being evaluated (Priest et al., 2009). Individuals want to see their partner as better; more attractive, more gifted, and more intelligent than he or she really is (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). This attribution brings too much responsibility for humankind. Further, individuals who have this belief are tend to rate their partners prematurely instead of evaluating and generally, that belief brings the relationship dissolutions and disappointments (Larson, 2000). Stated by Parrott and Parrott (1995), in the beginning of marriage, the most dramatic loss is the idealized image of the partner. A human being can never satisfy his/her idealized person who is in his/her dreams (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). Individuals should select a mate by focusing on the qualities that are essential for themselves, and be able to compromise

once all their prerequisites are not met (Larson, 2000). The balance between the ideal partner and the actual partner is the essence of the mate selection process.

The Perfect Self: The person who has this belief claims that in order to get married, an individual should feel fully capable as a further marriage partner before the decision of marriage. According to Larson (2003), individual may prefer being single for a long time due to the tuff side of feeling totally perfect as a marriage partner. These people may date last much longer than they need (Priest et al., 2009). Because a healthy marriage needs the effort of both partners instead of a perfect one, "the perfect self belief" neglects the duality of relationships. This belief may be a reflection of the rationalization of a fear of the person for having close relationships or getting married (Larson, 2000). The reality is that a person may feel some anxiety that is natural for being a spouse, however feeling totally perfect is not possible (Larson, 2000).

The Perfect Relationship: The person who has that belief may imply that a relationship must be perfect to worth getting married. At the early stages of marriage, partners have a tendency to perceive everything in a positive bias and after some difficulties, these positive bias lead disappointments and frustrations which means that bias turn to negative ones (Beck, 1988). People who have this myth expect a perfect harmony and tend to think disagreements and problems in marriage are destructive (Larson, 2000). However, disagreements may provide opportunities for partners to understand each other but only when the disagreement is resolved successfully (Larson, 2000). The individuals who hold this belief may test their relationships to understand whether the relationship is strong or not (Priest et al., 2009). However, many things improve in marriage and every good marriage requires some necessary losses (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). The expectations for relationship are generally stricter in marriage than other relationships (Beck, 1988). The reality is that while the world is imperfect filled with imperfect individuals and relationships, we should not expect a perfect relationship in marriage (Larson, 2003).

Try Harder: The individual who has this belief may think if they try hard enough, they would be happy in any relationship (Priest et al., 2009). People who have this belief take the first step to marriage very immaturely. They might be too underestimating the mate selection and might not be spending enough time in the mental preparation process of marriage (Priest et al., 2009). This belief represents a very casual attitude toward mate selection (Larson, 2000). These people who hold this belief may think that they can fix the marriage after they get married (Priest et al., 2009). However, the reality is that marriage requires two mature people to work in marriage. Thus, individuals need to be selective in their mate choice (Larson, 2000).

Love is enough: The individual who has that belief may allege that love is an adequate motive to get married with someone. These individuals may underlie the other factors that are essential for a healthy marriage (Larson, 1992). Though love is a powerful feeling for a marriage, it is never enough by itself (Beck, 1988). The personal qualities and skills of each partner are essential for a happy relationship to grow it (Beck, 1988). Though romantic love has a positive effect on marital satisfaction in long term, individuals also need to become friends in marriage (Larson, 2003). Moreover, people may define love differently (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). Larson (2000) points out that "maintaining romantic love is the crucial for happiness in marriage" thought is a myth for marriage, however the reality is companionate and altruistic loves are essential to preserve marriage as well. As addition to love, communication skills, conflict resolution skills, intimacy, control or power sharing, and consensus are important factors as couple traits for marital satisfaction (Larson, 2000). Furthermore, some other factors that are crucial for healthy marriage are commitment, sensitivity, generosity, consideration, loyalty, responsibility and trustworthiness for marriage (Beck, 1988). The reality is that marriage takes companionate and altruistic love, too, to preserve marriage (Larson, 2003).

Cohabitation: Nowadays, individuals prefer to cohabitate as a preparation for marriage (Kalkan & Kaya, 2007). Cohabitation seems more visible than it was before

and may seem as a stage for marriage preparation, especially for middle class people (Sassler & Miller, 2011). This belief implies cohabitation is a stage to prove a relationship before the marriage (Priest et al., 2009). Most individuals believe that cohabitation is a good way to test their compatibility as partners (Larson, 2000). Distinctly, research indicated that lower marriage quality for individuals who cohabited before getting married than those who did not (Treas & Giesen, 2000) and less happy than married ones (Moore, McCabe & Brink, 2001). The responsibilities of the marriage and cohabitation are quite different than each other. Thus, cohabiting relationship is not equal to marriage relationship. The reality is that cohabitation may help couples to be able to know each other better, however it does not go up the chance of happinessin marriage (Larson, 2000).

Choosing should be easy: The person who has this belief advocates that choosing a mate is the manner of chance. These individuals describe themselves as irresponsible for the events in their relationships (Larson, 1992). According to Larson (2000), "choosing should be easy" belief also may discourage individuals from taking professional help in terms of marriage preparation programs. The reality about this constraining belief is that selecting a marriage mate is not easy; individuals ought to take the marriage decisions carefully (Larson, 2000).

Opposite complements: Individuals who have this belief claim that people who have opposite characteristics are more appropriate to marry with each other (Priest et al., 2009). This belief leads to look for individuals who have different characteristics than their own ones (for instance while one of the partners like taking too many responsibilities; the other partner is totally irresponsible). However, Kurdek (1993) indicated that couples who have important differences in their beliefs, values, and attitudes may experience more difficulties. Similarly, Kurdek (1991, 1993) indicated that similarity in age, education, income, valuing autonomy, and external motives for being married were linked to higher marital quality. While the similarities provide marital balance (Larson, 2000), discrepancies in attitudes, values, and beliefs are also found related to marital instability and low quality (Holman, Larson & Harmer, 1994; Larson, 2000; Kurdek, 1993). According to Larson (2000), getting married

31

with somebody who is exactly the opposite of one will cause dissatisfaction and conflict. The most important ten similarities that mentioned by Larson (2000) as the importance of marriage, gender role expectations, workforce participation, importance of material wealth, autonomy, importance of marital sex, family planning ideas, couple boundaries, importance of religion, and backgrounds. Stated by Lazarus (2001), individuals should choose a partner to marry whose characteristics congruent with one's own. In other words, the reality is that an individual should choose his/her partners to get married whose personal characteristics are familiar to his or her own ones (Larson, 2000).

2.4 Romantic Beliefs

Individuals have pre-existing beliefs about romantic relationship that affect their behaviors and expectations when they involve in a romantic relationship (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). Romantic love commonly has some strong factors such as idealization, high degree of attachment, sexual component, and obsession thoughts about these factors (Ellis & Bernard, 1985). Romantic ideology contains the elements such as "love conquers all obstacles", "love is the major basis for marriage", "true love lasts forever" and "love at first sight is possible" (Holland & Eisenhard, 1990). Furthermore, "there is just one true love for everyone", "true love always leads the happiness of individuals" and "there is nothing more essential than love" thoughts are proposed as the products of the Western culture on love (Weaver & Ganong, 2004). However, some of those beliefs may lead excessive expectations in romantic relationships. Unrealistic expectations of individuals can create problems between couples and may cause frustrations in relationship (Wright, 1992). Unrealistic expectations are based on romantic beliefs about relationships which focus on the dire requisite of intimacy in relationships, and unconditional "shoulds" and "musts" about it (Kayser & Himle, 2002).

According to Ellis and Bernard (1985), people are prone to put some rules based on those romantic myths in their relationship and they tell those rules to themselves with "shoulds" or "musts". Ellis and Bernard (1985) mention some common romantic

myths as; person can love solitary passionately, real love lasts ever, real love guarantees a constant marriage, sex that does not entail of romantic love is unsatisfying, romantic love can lead effortlessly improvement in a marriage, romantic love is superior to friendship love or unsexual love that is the other love types, if you lose somebody whom you have romantic love toward, you must grieve and feel intensely depressed, and it is essential to perceive love all the time to know that one loves you.

In addition, Sprecher and Metts (1999) classify romantic beliefs in four headlines. The first one is "love finds a way" which means that all the obstacles and problems in relationship can be solved. The second one is "the one and only" which means that real love survives forever. The third one is "idealization" which means that the whole lot in relationship will be in a perfect manner. The last one is "love at the first sight" which means that somebody who finds the true love will understand it at the first sight. Although, the factors that affect the romantic beliefs have not been described clearly enough yet, Reis and Sprecher (2009) mention the role of the culture on romantic ideal.

In addition to explanation about the dependent variables of the study, CBT that is the theoretical perspective of the group program was explained in the following headline.

2.5 Cognitive Behavioral Theory

Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) is an approach in counseling that has been empirically bolstered as effective in wide range area ranging from anxiety to depression, and personality to psychotic ailments (Beck & Weishaar, 2000). It was developed as short-term, present-oriented, structured approach to solve problems of individuals and alter dysfunctional thinking and behaviors (Beck, 1964). Beck (2011) describes CBT as a therapy that has been improved for clients with varied levels of education, income, different variety of cultures and ages. The most known cognitive behavioral approaches are CBT whose founder is Beck (2011) and Rational Emotive

Theory (RET) whose founder is Ellis (1973). CBT mainly focuses on importance of emotions and also behaviors; however it mostly emphasizes the important role of cognitions in mankind problems (Ellis & Bernard, 1985). CBT focuses on that when people learn to assess their thinking more realistically and in an adaptive way, they experience progress both in their emotional state and their behavior (Beck, 2011).

In CBT, thinking has a crucial role while understanding the human behavior. In cognitive therapies, scientific thinking is seen as a candle lightening the black (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007). Though CBT assumes that there is a reciprocator relationship between cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, the interventions of CBT that mainly focus on changing cognitions and behaviors that will lead the alteration in emotions (Baucom et al., 2010). According to CBT, how a person interprets and thinks about a situation is linked to the way that the person feels and behaves (Beck, 2011). CBT aims to increase awareness about how individuals reach their inferences, and it suggests them to think with alternative explanations (Beck, 1988).

RET focuses on ABC model while explaining the behavior. According to ABC model, people have a set of activating events. A is described as the activating events of life, B is described as beliefs that can be rational or irrational and C is described as consequences that the individual will experience. People always have innumerable beliefs and cognitions (Bs). These beliefs are strongly related to their emotional, behavioral, and cognitive consequences (Cs) (Ellis & Bernard, 1985).

According to Ellis and Bernard (1985), the RET aims to help people develop more rational thinking to feel better and act more efficiently for achieving their goals for living longer and happily. Stated by Ellis (1991), irrational beliefs are based on individuals' self-disturbing perspectives. They have two main characteristics; firstly, irrational beliefs are rigid, dogmatic, and powerful. Generally, irrational beliefs are used verbs with must, have to, ought to, and should. Secondly, irrational beliefs are derived of highly unrealistic attributions. On the other hand, rational thoughts are defined as the thoughts that endorse a longer and happier life for individuals by a) choosing certain happiness producing values, principles, or goals, b) using scientific, efficient ways to attain their goals and ideals by avoiding self-defeating results (Ellis

& Bernard, 1985). CBT suggests some particular principles to overcome individuals' problems.

Beck (2011) summarizes the basic principles of Cognitive Behavioral Theory as follows; CBT is built on an ever-evolving notation of clients' problems and an individual conceptualization of each client in cognitive terms, needs a complete therapeutic alliance, highlights cooperation and active participation, is goal oriented and problem focused, underlines the present, is educative, aims to show the client to be her own therapist, and highlights setback prevention, aims to be time limited, and sessions of CBT are structured.

The role of the counselor in CBT is being an expert and educator on cognitions, emotions and behaviors (Gladding, 2005). In regard to process and techniques, establishing client-counselor relationship is vital and also understanding events, recording thoughts, and encouraging thinking in new ways are very important in CBT (Gladding, 2005).

The most used techniques in CBT are summarized by Gladding (2005) as follow; *Identifying automatic thoughts*: One of the main points of CBT is to identify and also alter automatic thoughts; *Homework*: For working diverse thoughts at different settings, homework are used an essential tool. *Cognitive interventions:* Several processes occur in CBT interventions; to illustrate, labeling of distortions, challenging tunnel vision etc. *Cognitive rehearsals:* For fitting them in a perfect way, rehearsing healthy thoughts is important. *Scriptotherapy:* By writing, clients' progress in their thoughts in a healthier way by the way of articulating them properly; *Cognitive restructuring:* Clients identify, evaluate, and change irrational thoughts that have negative influence on their behaviors.

2.6 An Overlook to Beliefs that Have Potential to Shape Relationship Beliefs in CBT

Starting from childhood, individuals develop varied beliefs about themselves, others, and the world (Beck, 2011). Core beliefs are described as the most fundamental

beliefs of individuals (Beck, 2011). The person perceives these beliefs as absolute truths (Beck, 1987). Therefore, core beliefs are thoughts that are rigid, global, and overgeneralized (Beck, 2011). "Cognitive distortions" is one of the most important concept in CBT and is described as the consistent errors in thinking that lead negative bias in the cognitive process (Beck, 2011). Cognitive distortions are effective while interpreting yourself or the partner in the relationship or the relationship. Typical cognitive distortions are presented below;

All-or-none: These people see the world in a certain way as either black or white (Sochting, 2014)

Filtering: It is the problem of screening out both the positive and neutral information and just focusing on the negative ones (Sochting, 2014).

Tunnel Vision: These people may seize on a single detail for interpreting overall detail (Beck, 1988).

Selective abstraction: As related to tunnel vision, in selective abstraction, people take of a statement or event out of the context to understand it with an incorrect interpretation (Beck, 1988).

Arbitrary Inference: According to Beck (1988), sometimes an individual's bias may be so strong that individual may make an incorrect judgment although there is no proof for that.

Overgeneralization: Negative judgments lead into critical overgeneralizations (Beck, 1988).

Polarized Thinking: Thinking things in a polarized way to two thinking style as good or bad or all or nothing (Beck, 2011).

Magnification: In magnification, people are prone to exaggerate the good or bad qualities of other people (Beck, 1988).

Negative Labeling: This distortion stems from biased attributions. This leads labelling in a negative manner (Beck, 1988).

Personalization: People who make personalization believe the actions of other people are directed to them (Beck, 1988).

Mind reading: In mind reading, one can tell what the others are thinking (Beck, 1988).

In addition to cognitive distortions, Epstein and Baucom (2002) describe the broad relationship beliefs as assumptions and standards, while they describe the reactions to specific events in marriage with selective attention, attributions and expectancies. These key definitions are presented below.

Assumptions and Standards: Individuals develop long standing thoughts about the world both for the manner that they think the world actually is and the manner that they think the world should be that respectively labelled as assumptions and standards.

Assumptions are the beliefs about how other individuals and relationships function (Baucom et al., 2010). Some assumptions are about the characteristics of a person who will be her husband or his wife (Baucom et. al., 1989). Assumptions stand on past experiences that guide the present understanding of relationship of individual; however, inappropriate assumptions may lead dysfunctional responses for marital problems (Baucom et. al., 1989).

On the contrary of assumptions, standards consist of the characteristics of a person thinks a partner or relationship should have. A person may have extreme irrational standards which will never be satisfied in real life about inmate relationships. All standards are nonfunctional, even ethical and moral ones are quite functional for guiding relationships (Baucom et al., 1989).

Selective attention: Certain aspect of an event is perceived by neglecting the other aspects by individuals (Beck, 1979). Selective attention is what the individual notes about his/her mate or their relationship (Baucom et al., 2010). Selective attention by focusing on either negative or positive sides of the relationship may lead the distortions in perceiving partner, relationship, or oneself (Epstein & Baucom, 2002).

Attributions: Attributions are the explanations of people for the factors they think that make particular pleasant or unpleasant explanations to marital issues (Baucom et

al., 2010). In studies conducted with married couples, it was found that distressed couples are tend to see the negative behaviors of partner as stable and global than the no distressed ones (Epstein & Baucom, 2002).

Expectancies: Expectancies are the predictions with respect to the upcoming of the relationship (Baucom et al., 2010). Several learning experiences that are first hand or observation of others offer expectancies (Epstein & Baucom, 2002). People have predictions based on their learning and then behave in a particular manner. Bandura (1977) describes two kinds of expectancies as outcome expectancies and efficacy expectancies. In outcome expectancies, the person predicts that particular actions will be followed by particular outcomes. According to Epstein and Baucom (2002), people have several expectations based on "if-then" form. In efficacy expectancies, people predict probabilities that they will carry out particular actions leading the particular outcomes (Epstein & Baucom, 2002).

Those beliefs mentioned above may lead the dysfunctional relationship beliefs and are stated with "should" by individuals. The "shoulds" may go beyond just forcing somebody to fulfill with requirements of people (Beck, 1988). Articulated by Beck (1988), many people do not realize their shoulds and automatic thoughts that are the general rules of the people while interacting with world, themselves, and others (Gladding, 2005). In addition to the explanation of the beliefs that shape relationship beliefs, CBT point of view on romantic relationship and its effectiveness on romantic relationships were presented in the following headline as an evidence to illustrate the great match between theory and the intent of the current study.

2.7 Cognitive Behavioral Point of View on Intimate Relationships

CBT is reported as a highly effective not only for numerous psychological difficulties (e.g., anger, low self-esteem) (Sochting, 2014) but also it is reported as effective in romantic relationship problems. According to Ellis and Bernard (1985), RET is always concerned with the treatment of love problems. Similarly, CBT has been suggested to use for intimate relationships (Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Ellis &

Bernard, 1985). Articulated by Ellis & Bernard (1985), understanding the cognitive framework is the key issue while understanding the intimate relationships. As stated by Beck (1988), although partners may allege that they speak the same language, their sayings, and what their partners hear are quite different and that leads communication problems in marriage. When romantic relationships are coherent with the expectations, people experience positive emotions; when they are not coherent with the expectations, people experience negative emotions like sadness (Reis & Sprecher, 2009).

Majority of research indicated that there was a strong linkage of dysfunctional thoughts to marital satisfaction (e.g., Güven & Sevim, 2007; Stackert & Bursik, 2003). Most research has showed that couples' satisfaction level with the marriage is significantly linked to how they attribute to their partners' behaviors (Epstein & Baucom, 2002).

Principles and procedures of CBT are commonly used for the treatments of difficulties in close relationships by focusing on changing the dysfunctional patterns (Epstein & Baucom, 2002). Precisely, CBT techniques are effective while working with romantic and marital relationships (Dattilio, 2010; Schmailing, Fruzetti & Jacobson, 1989). Likewise, Dunn and Schwebel (1995) conducted a meta-analysis study for assessing the effectiveness of various theoretical frameworks while working in marital therapy and concluded that cognitive behavioral marital therapy enhanced change in relationship that is associated with behavior, emotion, cognition, and relationship assessment.

Addition to the theoretical perspective of this study, as the most relevant literature to the present group program, premarital programs and marriage preparation courses were presented in the following headline.

2.8 Premarital Programs and Marriage Preparation Courses

Prevalence of divorce rates makes obligate professionals to better understand the premarital issues that effect marital quality (Larson & Holman, 1994). Every year, more than 200.000 marriages end in their first year (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). Although divorce rates are a controversial issue whether they may seem quite neutral as the result of contemporary social norms or as an important problem (Doherty & Carrroll, 2002), divorce rates are described as problem by many researchers and politicy makers. As a struggle to decrease the growing rates of marital distress and divorce, scholars and educationalists have suggested premarital prevention programs (Markman, Floyd, Stanley & Storaasli, 1988). The benefits of healthy marriages are advantage not only for adults and children but also for communities (Waite & Gallagher, 2000).

Young individuals who get married without preparation are likely to have high expectations and when their expectations are not met, it leads more frustrations, conflict, and unhappiness (Martin, Martin & Martin, 2001). Premarital programs are a main area of interest within the field of family and relationship research. In recent years, focusing on younger adolescents and engaged/married couples have been used as preventive strategies (Nielsen et al., 2004). All of those premarital programs intend to teach relationship skills with the arrangements of didactic courses and also experiential activities (Nielsen et al., 2004). Schumm, Silliman and Bell (2000) stated two major benefits of premarital programs as preventing decline in marital quality and secondly, improving participants' awareness on risky signals in marriage and tending to seek professional help more than the individuals who did not take premarital counseling.

According to Parrott and Parrott (1995), marriage professionals have implicated some components of a happy marriage. Some characteristics of marriage that are listed below should be known before individuals marry (Parrott & Parrott, 1995); healthy marriage expectations, realistic concept of love, a positive attitude toward life, the capability to communicate with their feelings, an understanding and

acceptance of their gender differences, decisions making and settling arguments ability, and a mutual spiritual foundation and goal. These characteristics are consistent with the focus of the current study. Education is suggested to provide enhancing the happy marriage characteristics.

Education is the dimension that experts touch the partners at any phase with the information about how to make relationships successful (Hunt et al., 1998). The general purposes of premarital programs are helping couples to provide awareness about difficulties in relationships, and equipping them with the necessary skills that will avert possible hitches in marriage (Parker, 2007). Considering premarital group counseling contents, premarital counseling can be categorized with four main elements; knowledge and awareness, feedback, cognitive change, and skill training (Hamamcı, 2012).

Premarital programs have some purposes like making marriage transition process easier, enhancing marriage satisfaction, improving communication skills, growing commitment to relationship, and empowering friendship, solving problems about marriage roles, and economy of home, and refining decision making (Stahman, 2000). Relationship enhancement and divorce prevention programs with young adults have the gains such as; 1) increasing knowledge of parenting, money, and sexuality; 2) realistic expectations; 3) skills such as problem resolving and conflict solution; 4) practices for companionship; 5) better permanence and fulfillment in relationship than non-participating individuals (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Stanley, 2001). From the point of view of premarital counseling, for having a healthy marriage, firstly, individuals should be ready to marriage and should have the necessary knowledge that will be beneficial in marriage. According to Larson and Holman (1994), a) before marriage, partners can modulate the essence and quality of the relationship (Renick et al., 1992); b) the aspects which make alteration later in marriage can be identified (Renick et al., 1992); and c) marriage is the most vital relationship for rearing afterward generation. For those reasons, education before marriage and premarital counseling are essential for individuals with respect to its contributions to individuals.

To sum up, realistic expectations toward marriage is described as closely associated with future quality of marriage. At that point, premarital counseling and education before marriage have an essential role on developing healthy attitudes toward marriage and equipping the individuals with necessary knowledge and skills about marriage before it.

In the following headlines, research on dependent variables of the study was presented very briefly to show why those variables were precious to study, and the programs before the marriage that was the central aim of this study were displayed as the most relevant literature both in international and Turkish literature.

2.9 Research on Dysfunctional Relationship Beliefs

In the current literature, constraining beliefs for marriage mate selection of young and single adults have been too little known (Cobb et al., 2003). Literature has mostly focused on dysfunctional relationship beliefs and romantic beliefs rather than specifically focusing on constraining beliefs for marriage mate selection. Thus, considering constraining beliefs about mate selection as kind of dysfunctional relationship beliefs (Larson, 1992), as the most relevant literature to constraining beliefs, research on dysfunctional relationship beliefs and romantic beliefs will be presented in this section.

Existing research recognizes the critical role played by dysfunctional beliefs in romantic relationships. Literature on dysfunctional relationship beliefs exclusively includes the studies about both dysfunctional relationship beliefs and romantic beliefs in marriages and in romantic relationships. Dysfunctional relationship beliefs are one of the most vital variables which have been negatively related to marriage satisfaction (Beach, Fincham, & Katz, 1998; Epstein et al., 1993; Larson, 2000; Larson, 2003; Sullivan & Schwebel, 1995). Unrealistic expectations and dysfunctional beliefs toward relationship have been described as having major roles in intensifying depression (Bradbury & Fincham, 1993; Christian, O'Leary, & Vivian), distress levels (Kayser & Himle, 2002), negative conflict behavior

(Haferkamp, 1994), violence (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994), poor marital adjustment (Möller & Van Zyl, 1991), relationship maladjustment (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982), poor relationship quality, (Baucom et al., 1989; 1994; Ellis, 1981; 1986; Epstein, 1982; 1986), negative problem solving behaviors of individuals (Whisman & Allan, 1996) and have been emphasized as playing an important role on marital dissatisfaction and also instability (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Larson, 1988, 1992; Kurdek, 1993).

Flether and Simpson (2001) proposed the model of ideal standards about romantic relationships and indicated four key factor: 1) that people assess their romantic relationships and partners by comparing them with their ideal standards; 2) that important judgments and decisions about romantic relationship and partners may be influenced by the preexisting standards and ideals, 3) if the discrepancy between individuals' idelals and reality in romantic relationship is greater, they will less satisfy, 4) if people are flexible and willing to change their standars, this serves an outstanding moderator for relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, it was indicated that discrepancy between ideals about romantic relationships and reality of romantic relationships has been associated with lower relationship satisfaction and higher relationship distress (Fletcher et al., 1999).

Regarding romantic relationship beliefs, researchers indicated some negative consequences of the extreme beliefs such as marital dissatisfaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988), marital conflict, and disappointment (e.g., Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Ellis & Berdnard, 1985). In addition, some research claimed that the more individuals' beliefs about relationship was unrealistic, the more possibility to have problems in relationship (Whisman & Friedman, 1998; Möller et al., 2001). Weaver and Ganong (2004) pointed out that people who had romantic beliefs may tend to have dissatisfaction and they were less committed to tolerate disappointing relationships stay.

Some studies centered upon romantic beliefs revealed a much debated question, which asked whether romantic beliefs can be seen as functional or dysfunctional for

the relationship. The answer of this question has a blurred picture. Whether we can describe the romantic beliefs as negative or positive for its outcomes such as expectations and behaviors is controversial and not clear up till now (Jones & Cunningham, 1996). In some studies, romantic relationship beliefs were found significantly linked to relationship satisfaction, commitment, attachment, and trust (e.g., Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). In some studies, romantic beliefs were described as related to initiation and progress of romantic relationships (Holland & Eishenhard, 1990). However, some other research focused on the excessive and unrealistic relationship expectations created by romantic beliefs and described those excessive beliefs as dysfunctional (Ellis & Bernard, 1985; Holmes, 2007; Lazarus, 2001; Sharp & Ganong, 2002). Some important studies on dysfunctional relationship beliefs and romantic beliefs were presented below.

More specifically, Eidelson and Epstein (1982) conducted a study to investigate marital therapists' issues for seeking help by clients. Twenty marital therapists listed the most commonly seen unhelpful or maladaptive beliefs about relationship in their clients. The unrealistic beliefs such as "mindreading is expected", partners should not have to communicate for expressing their needs to their partner, because the partner who is a loving one will be able know each other's' needs, "disagreement is destructive" belief is the another belief which listed by therapists, every disagreement between partners was seen as signals an immediate end to the relationship, because from that framework loving partners never argue.

Metis and Cupach (1990) studied the role of dysfunctional relationship beliefs on problem-solving responses, and close relationships satisfaction with 322 college students who had a heterosexual intimate relationship. The results showed that dysfunctional relationship beliefs (disagreement is destructive and partners cannot change) had positive association with the destructive problem-solving responses (exit and neglect) and also had negative association with the constructive problem-solving response (voice). The findings also indicated that both dysfunctional beliefs and problem-solving responses of participants were significantly associated with relationship satisfaction.

Fitzpatrick and Sollie (1992) investigated the relationship between unrealistic beliefs about romantic relationships (unrealistic gender ones and relationship specific ones) and commitment and investment with 254 university students (91 men, 163 women). They found unrealistic beliefs were related with more alternatives, less match to ideal comparison levels, and less commitment for women, whereas gendered beliefs were associated with commitment or investment and relationship specific beliefs were associated with higher costs and alternatives for men.

Larson (1992) defined the nine constraining beliefs for selection of marriage mate considering a comprehensive review of premarital counseling and mate selection literature in his meta analysis study. He emphasized the lack of research on constraining mate selection beliefs. He suggested cognitive techniques such as reality testing, challenging to constraining beliefs, and creating alternative realistic beliefs to work with these unrealistic beliefs. The reports of this study were accepted as a foundation for why the current group program used CBT in the current study.

Möller and Van der Merwe (1997) studied the association between marital adjustment and irrational beliefs described by Ellis and found significant negative associations between marital adjustment and irrational beliefs. In a similar vein, Möller, Rabe, and Nortje (2001) conducted a research, which compare the irrational beliefs of healthy marriages (20 individuals) and distressed marriages (17 individuals). They used the articulated thoughts during simulated circumstances procedure and found that the distressed individuals had significantly more irrational cognitions than the non-distressed individuals. The results also showed that the non-distressed individuals indicated significantly more positive thoughts than negative ones for the combination of all the conflict scenes. Similarly, Addis and Bernard (2002) investigated the relationship between irrational beliefs and marital adjustment and showed that the irrational thinking such as self-downing and need for comfort strongly associated with marital dysfunction.

Knee (1998) investigated the destiny and growth beliefs in romantic relationships. Destiny beliefs described as which may have certain aspects of romanticism scales (Knee, 1998). According to these beliefs, people having destiny belief advocated soul mate belief implying happiness would be achieved with a perfect romantic partner. Contrary to destiny beliefs, growth beliefs advocaters believed that good relationships ar cultivated and grow with the effort of individuals. It was found that relationship destiny belief was related with more quickly ending a relationship when problems arise. Indeed, he found relationship destiny belief was associated with having shorter relationship if initial relationship satisfaction was low, and longer relationship when initial relationship satisfaction was high.

Knee, Nanayakkara, Vietor, Neighbors, and Patrick (2001) conducted two studies to investigate destiny and growth beliefs in romantic relationships and its link with relationship satisfaction. In the first study, they studied with 177 university students and showed that individual's partner was not close to one's ideal, this commonly related to lower satisfaction, except of the individuals who have growth belief. In the second study, they studied with 61 couples and displayed that a) perceiving one's partner favorably was linked with more satisfaction however it was less among individuals who had higher growth belief; and b) growth (cultivation) predicted higher positivity, while evaluation (low growth/ high destiny) predicted higher hostility while discussing distinctness in how individuals and their partners perceive the relationship.

Franiuk, Cohen, and Pomerantz (2002) examined romantic beliefs of 527 university students (251 men, 276 women). They compared the individuals who had the belief of soulmate which means that finding the right person had the central importance for relationship satisfaction and individuals who believe the effort was the most important element for a successful relationship. The findings revealed that individuals who think that one's partner was ideal feelings perceived higher the relationship satisfaction and relationship longevity than the individuals who had the effort was the most important belief orientation.

Stackert and Bursik (2003) studied irrational relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction with 118 female and male university students. They found relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction. Moreover, they did not find an overall significant gender differences in romantic beliefs but they revealed some noteworthy points. In their study, women had more irrational beliefs such as "the disagreement was destructive" and "partners in relationship cannot chance" than men, and men had more irrational beliefs on "sexual perfectionism" than women in relationships.

Edmunson (2005) conducted a study with 164 undergraduate university students (33% men, 67% women) who have never been married to investigate the romantic relationship beliefs and marriage myths considering gender, age, and family origin (divorced or intact families) differences. They also studied the influences of sociodemographic variables on students' marriage beliefs. They found that male participants had "sexual perfectionism" belief significantly more than females and also "sexes are different" belief is significantly higher in participants from intact families than those from separated or divorced families and Whites and non-Whites had significant differences in their beliefs.

As a clear inference from the literature review, there is a link between dysfunctional relationship beliefs and relationship dissatisfaction and distress. Taken together, developing a program that hopes to decrease some dysfunctional relationship beliefs might be seen as functional considering the crucial role of preventive studies in future marriage success.

2.10 Research Focused on Premarital Programs, Premarital Courses and Group Programs Based on Dysfunctional Relationship Beliefs

In the current literature, while the intervention programs mostly focused on helping the married couples, the efforts which focused on premarital programs and marriage preparation programs still does not have the worth that should have (Kalkan & Kaya,

2007). In the literature, the effectiveness of marriage preparation programs has been studied in relation to various variables.

The early research of Van Zoost (1973) investigated the effectiveness of a premarital program. The six couples participated in the study and most of the participants were university students. The group had five sessions that focused on communication skills. The findings of the study showed that the knowledge on communication and levels of opening themselves increased significantly when compared to ones who did not participate. Furthermore, Bagarozzi, Bagarozzi, Anderson, and Pollane (1984) studied with nine volunteered couples who attended pre marriage preparation program. It was seen that there was a decrease in irrational beliefs of couples about marriage after the program and also a significant decrease was seen in responsibility taking scores of participants. Besides, there was a decrease in participants' perception of external locus of control about divorce or break up, and an increase on reinforcement and reward behavior of couples. Two couples of those nine couples decided to not getting married after the program. While none of the couples reported negative sides of program, all of the couples reported the positive influence of program on them. In a parallel manner, Markman et al. (1988) studied the effectiveness of Preventive Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) on relationship satisfaction. The program had five sessions with 3 hours for each session and the topics covered by the program were communication, problem solving skills, marriage expectations, sexual education, and improving relationship. The results of the study revealed that there was not a significant difference between experimental and control group in terms of relationship satisfaction. However, follow up studies which conducted 1,5 and 3 years later showed a significant difference; the experimental group had increased relationship satisfaction.

Trathen (1995) investigated the effectiveness of two different premarital programs with respect to relationship quality, communication, confidence and program satisfaction. One of the programs was information based, the other one was skill based. Both of the programs were 6 weeks with 2 hours for each session. The program focused on communication, conflict solution, expectations, attachment, and

48

forgiveness. The number of the participating couples of the skill based group was 26 whilst it was 27 for the other group. In addition, there were 24 couples in each control group. The results of the study indicated that there was not a significant difference between both groups regarding relationship quality and communication. For both group, the confidence to relationship increased significantly.

Sullivan and Bradbury (1997) studied the degree of risk in terms of marriage problems among couples. They compared the couples who had taken a prevention program before marriage and couples who did not receive any prevention program. It was found that the couples who took prevention program reported as less risky than couples who did not take the program regarding marriage problems. While there was no significant difference between the women in control group and intervention group but, the men who joined the program showed less aggressiveness and neuroticism than the participants who did not join the group. In the follow up study which conducted 1,5 years later, it was seen that seven couples who did not receive prevention program and had low marriage adaptation got divorced.

Williams, Riley, Risch and Dyke (1999) investigated the perception of married couples about premarital programs. With this purpose, they studied with couples who were married for 1 to 8 years. While 66.2% of couples said that the premarital program was a very important experience, 87.5% of the participants who were at the first year of their marriage reported this importance more than others. The study documented that marriage preparation programs were perceived as helping to couples, giving chance to spend time with spouse and giving chance to know more about the future spouse. In addition to this, the participants reported that they took support about communication, responsibility taking, conflict solution, children, and religion. Distinctly, individuals who did not join premarital programs reported that they perceived these programs as less important than the participants who participated four or more sessions of those programs.

Valiente, Belanger and Estrada (2002) designed a study with 56 participants and asked two questions; (a) Write the three positive sides of premarital programs which you think will contribute to your relationship (b) Write the three negative sides which

you think will affect your relationship negatively. Participants reported 161 positive and 120 negative characteristics. Twenty-two percent of participants reported teaching communication skills and improving these skills, 16% of participants reported teaching problem solving skills, and 0.5% of the participants reported teaching parenting skills as positive sides of these programs. As negative sides of these programs, 26% of the participants reported revealing the secrets of couples, 15% reported using inappropriate technics, 11% reported increasing negative emotions of couples, and 2% reported the charge of therapy.

Carroll and Doherty (2003) reported a review, which focused on the outcomes of pre marriage education programs. They investigated 13 experimental and quasi experimental studies. While nine of the studies were from United States, one of them was in Australia (Halford, Standers, & Behrens, 2001), one of them was in Canada (Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willet, & Conway, 1980), one of them was in South Africa (Pretorius, Van Wyk, & Schepers, 1992), and one of them was in Germany (Hahlweg et al., 1998). Sample of the studies was exclusively young, European American, and middle-class couples. Sample size of the experimental and control groups varied to 7 to 139. Ten of those programs mentioned their theoretical framework explicitly, five of them were based on family development theory and other programs were based on behavioral/social learning theory (Ridley, Jorgensen, Morgan, & Avery, 1982), and pscho-educational perspectives (Parish, 1992). Regarding program curriculum, just one experimental study (Boike, 1977) did not contain communication training. None of the groups utilized the same teaching methods, and none of them used the same outcome measures. Different educational techniques were used such as group presentations, discussions, structured and unstructured group and experiences. They indicated that effect size of premarital programs was .80. An average participant in those programs had a 30% increase in outcome success and the individuals who participated to a premarital program were significantly better than who did not participate.

McGeorge and Carlson (2006) studied the effectiveness of a premarital program. The twenty-nine couples attended the programs which contained eight sessions. They

examined three kinds of group for couples; (a) a pre marriage education program as a group, (b) a pre marriage education as individual and couple, and (c) control group. Findings revealed that the participants who joined the program showed significantly higher scores in their last test scores comparing with control group respect to marriage readiness and marriage preparation scores.

Busby, Ivey, Harris, and Ates (2007) compared three different models related to pre marriage education programs. In the first model, participants helped themselves with the help of a guide book. The second one was the therapist based model, and the third one was the relationship enhancing program, which was also a therapist based model. Significant differences were found between three groups in the follow up process that was 6 months later. The results showed that pre marriage relationship enhancing program was significantly more effective than the other models in problematic parts of relationship. Regarding increasing communication skills and relationship satisfaction, premarital program model was found significantly more effective than the therapist based model.

More specifically, the research based on the premarital courses has not been clearly reported consistent findings yet. To illustrate, Laner and Russell (1994) carried out a study to test the effectiveness of a courtship and marriage course on marital expectations. The sample of the study enrolled 231 unmarried university students. Lecture and discussion format were used and the content of the program based on the sexuality, commitment, communication, cohabitation, violence, infidelity, rebounding, competitiveness, deception, trust, and dependency. Additionally, the course instructor encouraged participants to discuss gender stereotypes, traditionalism, equalitarianism, motivators for marriage or for being single, factors were linked to divorce, the complexity of relationships, myths about marriage, family life, dealing with relationship dissolution, and rejection by the help of presentations. The findings of the study showed that the problems-focused courtship and marriage course were not effective significantly on marital expectations.

Gardner, Giese and Parrot (2004) evaluated a marriage education program that was designed for high school marriage education program to teach students to develop

healthy relationships and future marriages. The efficiency of the program on knowledge, behavior indicators, attitudes toward marriage, and pregnancy prevention risk factors were investigated. The total sample of the study both for education group and control group consisted of 410 students who were White and Hispanic in urban setting and age range was 14 to 19. The curriculum of the study consisted of 15 one-hour lessons on personality, relationships, communication, and marriage units. The findings revealed that the program was effective in improving information and also using of violence to resolve conflict decreased significantly, while the communication with parents increased significantly, the findings indicated changes in the attitudes (marriage, marriage preparation, and marriage counseling) that would affect the future behavior of individuals. Although, the findings pointed out the relatively small effect size and it decreased risk factors for adolescent pregnancy.

Sharp and Ganong (2000) investigated the effectiveness of an integrative teaching method on unrealistic and romantic beliefs of university students. The sample of the study contained 165 undergraduate students (131 women, 33 men). They used pre-test post-test experimental design. The study was done in a marriage course. One course section was assigned as control group while the other group was assigned as to be taught with integrative teaching method (experiment group) with random sampling. The students in the control group took just course materials; on the other hand, students in integrative teaching method took the course lectures, discussions, and activities in the large and small groups. They took presentations on marriage beliefs and destructive effects of those beliefs on marriage relationship. It was found that while intervention group decreased their romantic beliefs from pre-test to post-test. Participants in the control group did not significantly change their romantic beliefs. But the relationship beliefs were not found related to the integrative program.

Hawkins, Carroll, Doherty, & Willoughby (2004) conducted a study to suggest a framework that provides help to marriage educators to think more systematically and creatively while conducting intervention programs for marriage preparation. They focused the educational dimensions of content, intensity, methods, timing, setting, target, and delivery, and the implications of those for marriage education. They

reported the critical role of content, timing, and target in pre marriage interventions. Also, they suggested adapting marriage education interventions for diverse institutional settings and different socioeconomic spectrum.

Nielsen et al. (2004) examined the effectiveness of a marriage course called "Marriage 101: Building Loving and Lasting Partnerships". The sample of the study included 150 participants. The course content was preparing undergraduate students to choose compatible partners, to face inevitable challenges, and to experience greater marital and relationship satisfaction. Self-discovery and experiential assignments were used as well as traditional methods for achieving the goals of the course. The course contained 11 weeks with 2.5 hours for each week. The study took four years. The findings of the study revealed participants were eager to learn about the topic, also gained insight about themselves and the possible challenges of romantic relationships.

Bass et al. (2007) conducted a study to evaluate the effects of human identity and intimate relationship course on college students' relationship beliefs. The sample of the study consisted of 198 participants (134 women, 64 men). The identity and relationship topics were integrated into the course during the semester. The course contained different methods such as traditional lecture, in class discussion, reaction papers (in class and out of class), and online discussion through a forum. The results of the study revealed that the course significantly increased the knowledge of students on communication, sexuality, and attraction. Furthermore, irrational relationship beliefs of students decreased, while the romantic beliefs of students remained stable.

Adler-Baeder, Kerpelman, Schramm, Higginbotham, and Paulk (2007) carried out a study to investigate the effectiveness of an adolescent-focused marriage education. As research design, a quasi-experimental design was used. That study examined the effectiveness of an adapted form of the curriculum entitled "Love U2: Increasing Your Relationship Smarts". The sample of the study enrolled 340 high school students with various economical, geographical, and racial backgrounds. The results

of the study revealed that participants improved in their knowledge about relationships, with their ability to recognize unhealthy relationship patterns. Additionally, participants were reported as having more realistic beliefs about relationships and marriages after the education program. In addition, researchers indicated that lower use of verbal aggression of experimental group participants at post program compared with the participants of control group. Additionally, the researchers stated that the findings were crosswise household income, family structure type, and race, with all participants utilizing the education in similar ways.

Johnson (2009) conducted her dissertation on evaluation the effectiveness of relationship education on optimism about relationships and attitudes toward marriage of undergraduate students. The sample of the study consisted of university students enrolled for experiment group in an Intimate and Family Relations class and students for control group enrolled in a comparison class at the University of Montana. The students took the course for a semester. Family of origin and marital attitude scales that are self-report scales were used to collect data and also as pre-test and post-test about attitudes and optimism towards marriage and intimate relationships. The results showed that relationship optimism and attitudes toward marriage did not significantly change considering pre-test and post-test scores of experiment group and the comparison between two groups.

In review of the studies, most of the research indicated the effectiveness of programs before marriage. Since the limited number of premarital studies based on dysfunctional relationship beliefs of individuals gives a promise for further research, it is hoped that the current study will expand the understanding on the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral group program on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs of individuals.

2.11 Research on Dysfunctional Relationship Beliefs in Turkey

There is a growing attention in dysfunctional relationship beliefs in Turkey. In this section, the crucial research on dysfunctional relationship beliefs and romantic beliefs in Turkey are introduced.

Kaygusuz (2013) conducted a study to understand whether irrational beliefs of university students were related to problem solving behaviors in their romantic relationships or not. The sample of the study comprised of 320 university students. The findings of the study indicated a positive linkage of helplessness to both physical and emotional abuse. In addition to this, a significant negative relationship was found between helplessness belief and problem solving and a positive association was found between being unlovable belief and both physical and emotional abuse, while a significant negative association was reported between being unlovable belief and problem solving. Furthermore, it was reported that helplessness belief significantly predicted emotional abuse with a positively correlation whilst it significantly predicted problem solving with a negative correlation. In a parallel manner, unlovable beliefs predicted physical abuse with a positive correlation.

Küçükarslan (2011) studied the association of romantic relationship beliefs with gender, grade level, and romantic relationship experience. The sample of the study consisted of 957 undergraduate students (559 women, 398 men). The findings of the study showed that men significantly have more irrational beliefs about "love finds a way", and "love at first sight" than women. Respecting to grade level, the study revealed that sophomore and freshman students were more likely to have "one and only" and "idealization" thoughts than the students who were senior. Also, romantic relationship status was a significant variable on some romantic beliefs. Individuals who did not experience a romantic relationship before but experiencing now, reported they had the beliefs on "one and only", "love finds a way" and "idealization" more than the other students.

Gizir (2013) conducted a study to understand the relationship beliefs in university students in terms of gender and dating status. The sample of the study was 712 students (434 women, 308 men) from a state university in Turkey. The findings of the study indicated that relationship beliefs significantly differ according to gender. Men significantly have greater tendency to have beliefs about "we should do everything together", "we should meet all of each other's needs" and "we should be able to change each other" than women. The study also revealed that the students who had a romantic relationship for the first time have greater proneness to have more irrational beliefs about relationship than the students who had romantic breakup and the single students.

Öztunç and Şener (2015) investigated the relationship between some of the factors that include gender, divorced parents, domestic violence, and attitude about mate selection for university students. The sample of the study was 236 (162 women, 74 men) university students. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant difference in "opposite complements", "cohabitation", and "ease of effort" sub dimensions of the scale for gender. While men tended to have "opposite complements" and "cohabitation" myths more than women, women tended to have "ease of effort" myth more than men. Furthermore, "one and only", "idealization", "complete trust", and "ease of effort" sub dimesions had a significant difference in terms of domestic violence.

Recently, Saraç et al. (2015) investigated the predictors of relationship satisfaction with 299 (60.2% women, 39.8% men) university students. They investigated the link between irrational beliefs in romantic relationships and relationship satisfaction. It was found that one of subscale of irrational beliefs in romantic relationships called "thinking differently", which means different thinking of partners in romantic relationship is destructive, was found negatively related to relationship satisfaction of university students. On the other hand, "excessive expectation" which was another subscale of irrational beliefs in romantic relationships and relationship satisfaction were found positively linked.

2.12 Research Focused on Premarital Programs and Group Programs on Dysfunctional Relationship Beliefs in Turkey

The number of research on premarital programs is very limited in Turkey. Particularly, educative programs before marriage for graduate students do not get adequate attention but it needs to be worth. Unfortunately, experimental research on the effectiveness of a group program focusing on constraining beliefs and romantic relationship beliefs is precisely scarce. On the other hand, some researchers strongly suggested developing such kind of programs and reported some findings on this necessity. In the Turkish literature, depending upon the theoretical framework of the current study, there have been some programs that aim to prevent marital problems and marital distress by focusing on dysfunctional relationship beliefs. These programs used CBT for dysfunctional beliefs and attitudes. These programs are presented considering as relevant to the current study. Additionally, the crucial studies conducted on programs before the marriage in Turkey are introduced below.

Ersanlı (2007) developed a cognitive behavioral marriage relationship enhancing program which had 9 sessions to investigate the effectiveness of a program on coping with irrational beliefs of married couples. Intervention and control groups of the study contained ten couples for each group. The findings of the study revealed that the program significantly increased coping skills of married individuals on helplessness and unlovable beliefs.

Kalkan and Ersanlı (2009) examined a group study which based on cognitive behavioral approach to investigate the effectiveness of marriage relationship enrichment program on dysfunctional attitudes of married individuals. Dysfunctional Attitude Scale was used to assess dysfunctional attitudes of married couples. Forty participants assigned randomly to intervention and control group. The education program had 9 sessions that were two and a half hours for each session. The program focused on automatic thoughts, ABC model, irrational beliefs, I language, anger management, relaxation, and homework. According to the results of covariance analysis, a significant difference between experiment and control group was found.

More specifically, the program significantly decreased the dysfunctional attitudes of couples.

Şen (2009) studied with 62 couples who applied to Ankara Çankaya Municipality to get married. The sixty-two participants took a premarital couple education. The small groups including 3-5 couples had intervention. The six-hour education program focused on communication, conflict prevention, problem solution methods, empathy, family life circle, and family planning methods. Most of the participants indicated that premarital education is necessary and they were positive about premarital couple education. Also, they suggested focusing on communication, marriage responsibilities, conflict prevention methods, problem solving methods, understanding partner, understanding themselves, marriage roles, and marriage life circle for further studies.

Yılmaz and Kalkan (2010) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of premarital relationship enhancement program on relationship satisfaction of couples. The study consisted of 20 participants for each experiment and control group. The program was a 7-week program that took 120 minute for each session. For assessing the relationship satisfaction, the relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships scale was used before and after the program application. The findings of the study revealed that the group program significantly improved the relationship satisfaction of couples.

Likewise, Yalçın (2010) evaluated the effectiveness of the relationship enhancement program on relationship satisfaction of university students and their partners in his dissertation. Experimental design with control group was used with random sampling. Both experimental and control group consisted 6 couples. For collecting data, the Relationship Assessment Scale, Relationship Stability Scale, and the focus group interviews were used. While the experimental group received relationship enhancement training for 7 weeks, the control group received no treatment. A significant difference between post-tests scores of the experimental and control group was found. In other words, Relationship Enhancement Program significantly

improved relationship satisfaction of the participants who were in the experimental group. However, the results did not indicate a significant difference between the post-test and follow-up scores of the experiment group which means that the positive effects of the training program on relationship satisfaction and their partners decreased over 2 months later. On the other hand, the qualitative findings of the research indicated that participants of the experimental group enhanced their interpersonal skills in their relationship.

Lastly, Haskan Avcı (2014) investigated the current problem areas of university students, and the potential problem areas they would have after getting married and the areas they would like to have education. The sample of the study included students from different universities in Ankara and contained 366 students (210 women, 156 men). For collecting data, the demographic information form and the semi structured interview form was used that was developed by the researcher. The data was evaluated with the content analysis. The problem areas of the students were presented as communication (34.05%), conflict solution (24.86%), accepting the differences (20%), romanticism-sexuality (11.90%), and social support (6.87%) respectively. The potential problem areas that students perceived that they would have problems when they got married were indicated as romanticism and sexuality (32.82%), accepting the differences (26.72%), communication (21.37%), conflict solution (12.22%), and social support (6.87%). The education areas that they needed to take information were mentioned as communication (38.51%), conflict solution (26.44%), accepting the differences (17.82%), romanticism-sexuality (10.34%) and social support (6.89%) respectively.

Sancak Aydın and Demir (2016) investigated a qualitative study with graduate students ($n = 24$) on the need assessment for a group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism and findings revealed that students strongly needed such a program on constraining beliefs for marriage mate selection and romanticism and described some characteristics (e.g., the number of sessions and participants, and method of treatment) for potential group program. The method of potential program was suggested as psychoeducational, discussion groups, homework, experiential etc. by the participants. They suggested the number of

participants as ranged from 8 to 20, and the number of sessions as ranged from 5 to 8.

In the light of Turkish literature on the programs before the marriage, it can be said that in Turkey these programs are in infancy and have been flourishing with a growing interest. Up to our knowledge, no published research study was found on the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral group program on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs of graduate students. Thus, conducting a research that test the effectiveness of such a program is quite important in order to understand the effectiveness of this particular group program. To sum up, there are inadequate findings in the literature on programs before marriage in Turkish culture. Thus, enriching literature by testing the effectiveness of this program would contribute to programs that conducted before marriage.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This chapter provides information about the methodological procedures followed in the study. In this chapter, first, research design is explained; second, the sampling procedure of the experimental and the control group and characteristics of the participants are presented both for the first and the second group study; third, information is provided about the data collection instruments and their psychometric properties, reliability, and validity studies; and finally, information is presented about group procedure, description of variables, data analyses, and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

In this study based on experimental design pre-test, post-test, and follow up tests are given both to experimental and control groups in two sets (the first group study and the second group study). Two experimental group studies were conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the cognitive behavioral group program (*see* Appendix A) on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs of graduate students. While the first intervention group was designed as the first group study, the second one was designed as the replication of the first study to see the generalizability of the findings. The replication group (the second group study) of the current study had the same intervention program with the same procedure and the same number of participants but with different participants.

Replication of the studies may play a vital role in science by enhancing belief in a result. Therefore, there is a growing interest with various projects to extend replication studies in educatiolal science (NTLS, 2014) and psychology (e.g., Pashler & Wagenmakers, 2012). According to Hunter (2001), scientific progress needs facts, and those facts can only be built on the replicated studies. Replications may

empower the external validity of the study and also generalizability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004). Direct replication study aims to verify the findings the main experimental results cannot be attributed to sampling error, reporting bias etc (Mackey, 2012; Schmidt, 2009). Considering the appreciated notion of replication studies in literature (Hunter, 2001; Mackey, 2012; Schmidt, 2009), the second group part of this study is designed as a direct replication of the main group intervention, with the aim to reproduce the methods and the findings of the original study in the second group study. In both the first and the second group studies, the same procedure was used; the pre-test, intervention, post-test, and follow up tests were applied respectively to both the experimental and the control group. The control groups did not receive any intervention both for the first and the second group studies. The follow up test was administered to both groups 6 weeks later from the last group sessions both for the first and second group study. While deciding the time of follow up, practical constraints were taken into consideration. The data were collected in spring, but follow up test would be at summer if the time of the follow up was longer than 6 weeks. In case students would not be at university setting, the final decision was to conduct follow up test 6 weeks later. Additionally, in experimental designs, implementation and mortality are important threats (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004). Moreover, instrumentation is another important threat for internal validity of the studies (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004). By collecting data in the same way and not using mail for collecting data (it may be a potential threat for mortality), the researcher and advisor tried to control potential threats (e.g., instrumentation and mortality). Therefore, they decided to conduct follow up 6 weeks later after intervention. Also, considering the follow up time of other research (e.g., Halperin, Nathan, Drummond, & Castle, 2000; Yalçın, 2010), a duration of 6 weeks was agreed on as an acceptable time for follow up by the researcher and advisor. Another potential threat in experimental studies is testing (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004). However, testing was not a threat for this study because of using two group design (experimental and control) (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004). Therefore, follow up test was administered to both groups 6 weeks later after intervention both for the first and second group study.

3.2 Sampling Procedure and Participants for the First and the Second Study

Data were collected in the spring semester of 2014-2015 academic year. Throughout the data collection procedures of the present study, Middle East Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee rules and requirements (*see* Appendix B) were taken into consideration. The criterion sampling method that is a kind of purposive sampling method referring to selecting participants that meet the predetermined criteria (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004) was used to reach to candidate participants. The sample of the study was graduate students that would be a closer sample to marriage considering TUİK (2015) reports for marriage age. The criteria for selection to this study were being a graduate student, being heterosexual, not having current psychological symptoms, not using any drugs, and not being engaged or married. To announce the study, firstly posters (*see* Appendix C) displaying the purpose of the study and the contact information were prepared. The posters read the following statements "Mate selection is hard. Constraining mate selection beliefs make the mate selection process harder. Would you like to describe, understand and overcome those constraining beliefs and want to change them with facilitator ones?" These posters were hung in places with easy access to graduate students such as dormitories, shopping center, restaurants on campus. In order to announce the standard information about the study and invite graduate students to participate, the researcher held meetings with the research assistants at different faculties. After the meetings, 43 students applied to join the group program. Since pre-interview is a crucial component by helping participants to constitute concrete goals while composing groups (Kağnıcı, 2012a), the researcher held half-hour pre-interviews with each person who applied to the study.

The purpose of the pre-interview was to understand whether the candidate participant is appropriate for the group or not. First, demographic information such as age, faculty, department and program of the candidate participant were gathered. Then, the pre-interview questions were asked to candidate participants for gathering information about relationship status, sexual orientation, drug addiction and psychological symptoms such as diagnosed depression or other symptoms which

causes some psychological difficulties for individual. Furthermore, in pre-interviews the purpose of the group, its time and the frequencies of sessions were shared with candidate participants. The participants who were married or engaged, homosexual or bisexual were excluded from the study in an effort to provide homogeneity of the group to provide for generalizability of the results. In addition, the participants who had depression, psychological disorders, and drug addiction were excluded from the study to control potential confounding variables. After conducting the pre-interviews with 43 candidate participants, 3 candidate participants were excluded from the study due to diagnosed depression and sexual orientation. Therefore, 40 participants were included in the study for random sampling.

For the first group study, individuals who were accepted to join the study were 40 graduate students and these students enrolled in 5 different faculties at a public university. Twenty-two (55%) were female, 18 (45%) were male of the 40 participants. The participants indicated their 18 (45%) of them master and 22 (55%) of them were doctoral students. The age range of the participants were from 24 to 33 with a mean of 28.08 ($SD = 2.73$). Two of 40 students (5%) reported they have a relationship. For assigning the participants to the experimental and the control group, firstly each participant was assigned a number for both gender and these papers which contain numbers were taken to a box for both gender. Then, random assignment to experimental and control groups was done considering gender. Seven women and seven men were randomly assigned to experimental and control group for the first study.

For the experimental group of the first study, 7 (50%) were female, 7 (50%) were male of the 14 participants. Seven (50%) of the participants were master, and 7 (50%) of them were doctoral students. One of the participants (7.14%) was from Faculty of Architecture, 4 (28.57%) were from Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 2 (14.28%) were from Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 6 (42.85%) were from Faculty of Education, 1 (7.14%), was from Faculty of Engineering. The age range of the participants were from 24 to 33 with a mean of 27.86 ($SD = 2.91$).

While 13 participants (92.9%) reported not having a romantic relationship, one of the participants (7.1%) reported having a romantic relationship.

For the control group of the first study, 7 (50%) were female, 7 (50%) were male of the 14 participants. Eight (57.14%) of the participants were master and 6 (42.85%) of them were doctoral students. One of the participants (7.14%) was from Faculty of Architecture, 4 (28.57%) were from Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 4 (28.57%) were from Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 5 (35.71%) were from Faculty of Education. The age range of the participants were from 25 to 33 with a mean of 28.29 (SD = 2.52). Whereas 13 participants (92.9%) of control group reported not having a romantic relationship, one of the participants (7.1%) reported having a romantic relationship.

For the second group study, data of the second study were collected in the spring semester of 2014-2015 academic year after the first group study. Criterion sampling that is a purposive sampling method was used for selecting candidate participants of the second group study. Same criteria with the first study were used for the sample. For announcing the study, similar procedures with the first one were followed by the researcher. The posters displaying the purpose of the study and contact information were prepared and these posters held in different places on campus. Also, to invite graduate students to the study, the researcher held meetings with research assistants at different faculties. After announcing the study, 16 students applied to join the groups. The researcher held half-hour pre- interviews with each person who applied to the study. As similar with the first group study, the aim of the pre-interview was to decide appropriateness of the candidate participant for the group. The pre-interview questions were covered the same information with the first group. Additionally, the purpose of the group, its time, and frequencies of the sessions were shared with candidate participants at pre-interviews. Then, considering the results of the pre-interviews, 2 participants were not included the study because they did not have enough time to join the group. Considering not having enough participant application for random sampling, the researcher interviewed with 14 participants who did not want to participate the group but wanted to be at control group of the second group

study. The researcher interviewed with the participants of the control group with the same procedure for the experimental group. Finally, 28 students were included the study with nonrandom sampling.

Among participants of the second study, 16 (57.14%) were female, 12 (42.86%) were male of the 28 participants. The participants indicated their degree levels as 10 (35.71%) master, 18 (64.29%) doctoral. Five of the participants (17.86%) were from Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 9 (32.14%) were from Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 12 (42.86%) were from Faculty of Education, 2 (7.14%), were from Faculty of Engineering. The age range of the participants were from 24 to 33 with a mean of 28.54 (SD = 2.53). One of 16 students (6.3%) reported having a romantic relationship. For assigning the participants to the experimental and the control groups, nonrandom assignment was done considering gender. Eight women and six men are assigned to experimental and control group.

For the experimental group of the second study, 8 (57.14%) were female, 6 (42.86%) were male of the 14 participants. The participants indicated their degree levels as 5 (35.71%) master, 9 (64.29%) doctoral. Three of the participants (21.43%) were from Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 5 (35.71%) were from Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 5 (35.71%) were from Faculty of Education, and 1 (7.14%), were from Faculty of Engineering. The age range of the participants were from 24 to 33 with a mean of 28.14 (SD = 2.74). While 13 participants (92.9%) reported not having a romantic relationship, one of the participants (7.1%) reported having a romantic relationship.

For the control group of the second study, 8 (57.14%) were female, 6 (42.86%) were male of the 14 participants. The participants indicated their degree levels as 5 (35.71%) master, 9 (64.29%) doctoral. Two of the participants (14.29%) were from Faculty of Arts and Sciences, 4 (28.57%) were from Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, 7 (50%) were from Faculty of Education, 1 (7.14%), were from Faculty of Engineering. The age range of the participants were from 25 to 33 with a mean of 28.93 (SD = 2.30). In the control group, 13 participants (92.9%)

reported not having a romantic relationship, one of the participants (7.1%) reported having a romantic relationship.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

A survey package which includes Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Scale (ARMS; Cobb, Larson & Watson, 2003), and Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS; Sprecher & Metts, 1989) were given to the participants respectively. Additionally, group evaluation form was given to the participants who took the intervention.

3.3.1 Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Scale

The Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Scale (ARMSS) was developed by Cobb, Larson and Watson (2003) assesses attitudes about romance and mate selection with 32 items. Each item is rated with a 7 point Likert-scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). It is used for unmarried individulas. ARMSS has eight factors which are referred to "One and Only" (e.g., there is a "one and only" right person in the world for me to marry), "Love is enough" (e.g., our feeling of love should be sufficient reason to get married), "Cohabitation" (e.g., living together before marriage will improve our chances of remaining happily married), "Complete Assurance" (e.g., I should wait until I feel completely prepared for marriage before I get married), "Idealization" (e.g., the person I marry needs to have all of the qualities I am looking for a mate), "Ease of effort" (e.g., finding the right person to marry is more about luck than effort), "Opposite Complements" (e.g., I should marry someone whose personal characteristics are opposite from my own). The eighth factor contains 4 distracting items (1, 9, 20, and 30). For validity of the ARMSS, the relationship between Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprecher & Metts, 1989) and ARMSS was investigated and it was found that there is a significant and positive correlation ($r = .45$, $p < .001$) between these two. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of ARMSS is reported as .88, Cronbach Alpha coefficients of dimensions are ranged .64 to .98. Test retest reliability of the ARMSS is indicated as .90 for total score of ARMSS, and ranged .59 to .92 for seven dimensions of ARMSS. The ARMSS is

adapted to Turkish by Güngör, Yılmaz and Balcı Çelik (2011) (*see* Appendix D). Turkish form of ARMSS composed of 32 items with 5 point Likert-scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). 10, 6, 29, 16, and 24. items are reversed items, while the 1, 9, 20, and 30. items are distracting items which are not computed for total score of ARMSS. The lowest score of Turkish form of ARMSS is 28, while the highest score is 140. Higher scores of ARMSS point out higher constraining beliefs about mate selection and romance, whereas the lower scores point the lower constraining beliefs about mate selection and romance. As similar with the original form of ARMSS, Turkish form of ARMSS has eight dimensions are called as "One and Only", "Love is enough", "Cohabitation", "Complete Assurance", "Idealization", "Ease of effort", "Opposite Complements". The eighth factor contains 4 distracting items (1, 9, 20, and 30). Also, the test retest reliability of the Turkish form of ARMSS is reported as $r = .61$. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the Turkish form of the ARMSS is found as $\alpha = .65$. For dimensions of Turkish form of ARMSS, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficients are ranged between .33 to .98.

3.3.2 Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS)

In order to assess romantic beliefs, the Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS) was developed by Sprecher and Metts (1989). The scale is a self-report scale which composed of 15 items with 5 Likert type (ranging from 1 is totally disagree to 5 is totally agree). The inventory has four dimensions which called "One and Only" (e.g., I believe to be truly in love is to be in love forever.), "Love finds a way" (e.g., I believe if another person and I love each other we can overcome any differences and problems that may arise.), "Idealizing" (e.g., The relationship I will have with my true love will be nearly perfect.) and "Love at first sight" (e.g., I am likely to fall in love almost immediately if I meet the right person.). Cronbach alpha value is reported as .87 for males and .88 for females. The Cronbach alpha level of the scale for the total score is .81 and test retest reliability of the scale is .75. The RBS translated into Turkish by Küçükarslan and Gizir (2014) (*see* Appendix E). Turkish form of RBS contains 13 items with 5 Likert type (ranging from 1 is totally disagree to 5 is totally agree) and has four dimensions as same with the original form of RBS. The lowest score of

Turkish form of RBS is 13, while the highest score is 65. In terms of validity, RBS is reported as having a significant positive correlation ($r = .76$, $p <. 001$) with Relationship Beliefs Inventory (Romans & DeBord, 1995) which adapted to Turkish by Gizir (2012). In terms of reliability of the RBS, Cronbach alpha coefficient is reported as .84 and test retest reliability is reported as .83. Moreover, Cronbach alpha values for "love finds a way" is .79, "one and only" is .69, "idealizing" is .50, "love at first sight" is .67. RBS Cronbach Alpha coefficient is reported as .85 for women while .82 for men.

3.3.3 Group Evaluation Form

For assessing the results of the premarital group programs, qualitative feedback from participants is described as an essential issue to understand how and why interventions of marriage preparation programs are effective (Silliman & Schumm, 2000). With that purpose, Hamamcı (2012) suggested to ask participants the most and the least effective aspects of the program, the contributions of the program to the individuals, and whether the participants of the program would recommend the group program to others or not. Therefore, considering the suggestions in literature, a short evaluation form was prepared by the researcher and her advisor to collect data on the qualitative evaluation of participants for group program. Before finalizing the last version of the form, two doctoral students from Psychological Counseling and Guidance and one doctoral student from Curriculum and Instruction Departments were asked to review the form and then, the last form was finalized with the feedbacks of professions and the advisor of researcher. The group evaluation form containing five questions aims to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the program, number of the sessions and participants, contributions of the program to participant, to what extent they suggest this program to others, and their general suggestions (*see* Appendix F).

3.4 Group Procedure

The cognitive behavioral group program used in the current study was developed by the researcher. The reasons why the group program was developed were clearly depicted in the significance of the study and the literature review sections. Briefly, the reasons may be listed as follows: (1) developmental tasks of college students (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968; Montgomery, 2005), (2) significant role of dysfunctional relationship beliefs on future marriage satisfaction (Beach et al., 1998; Epstein et al., 1993; Larson, 2000; Larson, 2003; Sullivan & Schwebel, 1995, (3) the importance of preventive studies before marriage (Caroll & Doherty, 2003; Hunt et al.,1998; Parrott & Parrott, 1995), (4) limited empirical studies on group programs about dysfunctional relationship beliefs. As previously stated, although the important role of intervention programs to dysfunctional relationship beliefs have been clearly stated in literature, little work has been done on the dysfunctional relationship beliefs of individuals. Those reasons motivated the researcher to develop a group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs.

From a more detailed perspective, motives for developing such kind of a program were triggered by some factors. First, the researcher was inspired by her observation. Researcher of the current study has observed that some constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs were widespread in a university setting. These beliefs seem to shape the perception and attitudes of individuals toward love and marriage. With the influence of constraining beliefs related with marriage mate selection and romantic beliefs, most of the individuals may feel inadequate themselves about romantic relationships and marriage due to the high standards built by irrational beliefs. These dysfunctional relationship beliefs not only have an influence on starting a romantic relationship but also maintaining it. Indeed, dysfunctional relationship beliefs may lead some problems in marriage decision making and handling this lifelong decision in a biased manner. Second, a thorough review of literature on constraining marriage mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs displayed the need for such a kind of program (Cobb et al., 2003; Larson, 2003; Larson, 2000; Saraç et al., 2015). More specifically, some studies strongly

emphasized the need for a group program which should focus on constraining mate selection beliefs and romanticism (Larson, 1992; Sancak Aydın & Demir, 2016). Therewith, these studies appeared to be a strong support to develop the current group program.

To be more precise, the study of Sancak Aydın and Demir (2016) that conducted with graduate students ($n = 24$) of a public university on the investigation of need assessment for a group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism of graduate students revealed findings that suggest future research on a group program about constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism. That study aimed to understand whether there was a need for a group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism and if yes, what kind of program, would university students like to join, how many participants should be in the group and how many sessions they would like to attend. Furthermore, that study aimed to understand what type of constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism were common in that particular sample and to what extent they existed in participants, and what the expression ways of those constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism were. The findings revealed that all the constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism were common among graduate students in varying degrees. In addition to that, all of the participants expressed that there was a need for such kind of a program.

By the participants, the teaching method of the program was suggested as with different characteristics such as psychoeducational, discussion groups, homework, experiential etc. In addition, when the participants were asked about the preferable number about the number of participants for potential group program, they suggested the range changing from 8 to 20. However, the most mentioned range was 10-15. The session number and the length of the potential group program were articulated with different numbers by the participants that ranged from 5 to 8. However, they specifically expressed that if the participation in each session was mandatory, the group program should be brief because their program was full and they were graduate students who had academic responsibilities and also most of them

mentioned that they had jobs taking long hours. Therefore, the logic behind the study and the details about the format of the study such as time, frequency, and the number of participants depended on the study of Sancak Aydın and Demir (2016). Viewed as a whole, considering all the reasons mentioned above it was decided to develop a group program on constraining beliefs and romantic beliefs of university students to be developed. After deciding to conduct this group program, the details of the program were planned by the researcher and her advisors. The group program development process consisted of the following steps; deciding the content of the group program, deciding the theoretical framework of the group program, deciding the type of the group program, deciding the session and participant number of the group program, deciding the setting and other details of the group program. These steps will be briefly explained below.

3.4.1 The content of the group program

The content of the program was formed depending on the relevant literature on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. First, the meta-analysis study of Larson (1992) was taken into consideration while categorizing the constraining mate selection beliefs as; the one and only, the perfect partner, the perfect self, perfect relationship, try harder, love is enough, cohabitation, choosing should be easy, and opposite complements. Indeed, in order to categorize the romantic beliefs as love finds a way, the one and only, idealization, and love at the first sight, the categorization of Sprecher and Metts (1999) was taken into consideration. Also, preparing the content the "Marriage myths" book of Lazarus (2001), "Love and its problems" chapter of the "Clinical applications of rational-emotive therapy" book of Ellis and Bernard (1985), and "Should we stay together? A scientifically proven method for evaluating your relationship and improving its chances for long-term success" book of Larson (2000) were taken into consideration. Taking into account to fact that this group was an intervention before the marriage, also premarital books such as "Saving your marriage before it starts" book of Parrott and Parrott (1995) and "Marriage enrichment: preparation, mentoring and outreach" book of Hunt et al. (1998) were taken into consideration while preparing the content

of the program. Keeping the literature about this topic in mind, the researcher wrote a draft handbook for the group program which explains the content of the program. The draft of the handbook was presented to the advisor of the researcher, who was an expert in group studies with numerous experiences and research on groups, and a writer of a group counseling book. Upon the discussions between the researcher and her advisor, the content of the program was finalized. Then, the next step was to decide the theoretical framework of the group program.

3.4.2 The theoretical framework of the group program

There is a huge variety in terms of the theoretical approaches to the groups. According to Corey (2012), some of those approaches may list as Psychoanalytic, Adlerian, Person-Centered, Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Reality, Solution Focused and CBT. In order to decide the theoretical framework of the study, the nature of the constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs were regarded first. "Dysfunctional beliefs" is an umbrella term that encompasses constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. Thus, the theoretical approaches that mentioned dysfunctional beliefs in various counseling theories books (e.g., Corey, 2012; Gladding, 2005; Prochaska & Norcross, 2007; Sharf, 2015) were investigated by the researcher. It was seen that the approach that mentioned the dysfunctional beliefs the most was CBT. Additionally, the literature supported the effectiveness of the CBT in relationship problems (e.g., Dattilio, 2010; Ellis & Bernard, 1985; Kalkan & Ersanlı, 2009; Kayser & Himle, 2002).

Coupling together, dysfunctional beliefs and CBT seems to build a perfect harmony while working on dysfunctional beliefs. This harmony is proved to be very efficient in practice, as well (e.g., Sochting, 2014, Baucom & Epstein, 2010). After considering the good match of the CBT while working with dysfunctional beliefs (Beck, 2011) and the suggestions of the literature on using CBT components in group programs that focus on dysfunctional relationship beliefs (e.g., Larson, 1992), the theoretical framework of this study was based on CBT group program. The activities in the program were prepared considering the books about CBT group

counseling (e.g., Corey, 2012; Kağnıcı, 2012b; Sochting, 2014) and the books based on CBT while working on dysfunctional beliefs in romantic relationships (e.g., Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Baucom et al., 2010; Dattilio, 2010; Ellis & Bernard, 1985; Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Kayser & Himle, 2002) . Then, the techniques such as modeling that referred to the fact that participants learn by observing the leader and other participants, doing homework, doing Socratic questioning, cognitive restructuring i.e, a person's cognitive processes for the change of behavior (Beck, 2011; Corey, 2012; Sochting, 2014) were decided on to be used in group processes. The draft handbook of the group program was overviewed by the researcher and the advisor considering the CBT framework and the activities and the homework of the group program were planned in the light of CBT. After deciding the theoretical framework of the study, the next step was deciding the group type.

3.4.3 The type of the group program

There are different types of group that have different functions respect to their goals, the participants involved, leader role, and techniques used. Corey and Corey (2006) classified the groups as task groups, psychoeducational groups, counseling groups, and psychotherapy groups. While the task groups are for organizational development and organization, the counseling groups aim to develop problem solving skills of the members. In addition to that, whereas psychotherapy groups aims to remediate the deep psychological problems, the psychoeducational groups aim to educate and prevent participants' problems (Corey & Corey, 2006). In other words, the psychoeducational groups aim to raise awareness by providing information and skills on a particular issue (Corey & Corey, 2006) and providing support considering the lack of knowledge and skills on a particular topic and enforcing personal development by the way of preventing problems (Çakır, 2012). Within this scope, the most appropriate group type which would serve to the aims of the group program was seen as the psychoeducational groups and the type of the group program was decided as psychoeducational group. The next step was deciding the number of sessions and the participants of group program.

3.4.4 Number of the sessions and the participants of group program

While deciding the number of sessions and the participants of group program, the format of CBT group programs, the format of psychoeducational group programs and the findings of Sancak Aydın and Demir (2016) on need assessment for a group program about constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism were taken into consideration. The members of psychoeducational groups are ranged from 5 to 50 (Brown, 2011). The group size is determined by considering the goals, expected outcomes, and the content of the group program (Brown, 2011; Corey & Corey, 2006). The length of the psychoeducational groups can be 1-2 hours (Brown, 2011). Generally psychoeducational groups have fewer sessions than self-help and skill training groups (Brown, 2011). The length of CBT interventions may vary, depending on the problems of individuals (Beck, 2011; Rector, 2010). In CBT, groups are cost effective in terms of providing support a large number of individuals in a short time (Bieling, McCabe & Antony, 2006; Sochting, 2014). CBT groups are indicated as significantly effective in 4 to 6 sessions in some cases, while for others may need more than 20 sessions (Rector, 2010). CBT is a time limited approach and described as effective even in depression and anxiety in 6 sessions (Beck, 2011). Many studies point to the effectiveness of CBT group programs in a very short time even in 5 to 7 sessions (e.g., Bieling et al., 2006; Uzun Özer, Demir & Ferrari, 2013). Commonly, CBT uses weekly sessions (Rector, 2010; Bieling et al., 2006) and also, according to Kağnıcı (2012b), CBT groups are most appropriate for individuals who do not have enough time to participate long group processes. In addition to that, research shows the effectiveness of short time premarital programs like 5-6 sessions (e.g., Markman et al., 1988; Trathen, 1995). All taken together, considering the content of the program, group was designed as 5 weeks, weekly sessions with maximum 120 minute for each session. Considering the most mentioned participant number (10-15) in the study of Sancak Aydın and Demir (2016) and not having a co-leader, the number of participants was decided as 14, not a large but also not a small one for giving opportunity for interaction and feeling of group sense. The researcher and advisor overviewed the program considering its session number and participant number. Lastly, the setting and the other details were planned.

3.4.5 Group setting and other details

Privacy is crucial in groups and thus place where the group meets should make participants feel comfortable (Corey & Corey, 2006). The place where the group program was held and the group met was a seminar class in Faculty of Education at a public university. It was a 46 m^2 class equipped with a circle table and chair setting. Its light and warmth were appropriate to have group meetings at that class. In addition to setting of the group meeting, some other details about the program were presented below.

To increase the reliability of the results, the groups both for first and second study were designed as experimental and control group. In the present study, while the experimental groups took the intervention, the control groups did not receive any intervention. Pre-tests of the groups were conducted a few days before starting the group program. The main purpose of conducting pre-test before the program was to control extreme scores which may lead the regression threat (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004) for the study. However, any extreme scores were not seen in the sample. The post-test of the groups was conducted after completing/ending the group program (at the last session of the program), and lastly, the follow up tests were conducted 6 weeks later after the group program. The pre-test, post-test and the follow up test were conducted at the same time both for experimental and control groups.

The leader of the groups (both first and second group studies) was the researcher of the current study. The leader had a 3-year psychological counseling experience and currently was a doctoral student and research assistant at Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department at a public university. There was not a co-leader in the group; however, the leader received professional help from the advisor.

In CBT groups, outcome will be a result of formal content presentation or/and same facilitators on the group process (Sochting, 2014). According to Bieling et al. (2006), some factors involved in the process of CBT groups such as a) group participant factors (e.g., the effects of participants' personality), b) therapeutic relationship (e.g.,

trust between the group members and leader), c) influence of personal variables (e.g., participant expectations, participant satisfaction), and (d) group mechanisms for change (e.g., the group processes of cohesiveness, inclusion, inspiration, and hope among group members). Some of those factors may be controlled by the researcher such as group content presentation that contains plans and activities for sessions, some of them that are related with group process is harder to control. Therefore, researcher decided to take supervision throughout the process by the advisor who is an expert about group studies both for first and second group.

For empowering the efficiency of the group and also for taking feedback about the group process throughout the group, researcher took voice records for each session with the permission of the participants and transcribed them. In that way, researcher took the supervision from the advisor to provide a comprehensive support for the participants for each session. With the help of supervision, researcher and advisor had the chance to control whether the exactly same procedure was used in both first and second group studies. Supervision process of this study provided a strong support for the reliability of the group program. Throughout the group process, while conducting the group practice, group leader applied the core group leadership skills such as active listening, clarifying, reflecting, summarizing, empathizing, facilitating, questioning, linking, modeling, and terminating mentioned by Corey and Corey (2006). Last of all, the same procedure, rationale, and plan were followed by the researcher for the second group study.

3.4.6 The Rationale and the Plan of the Structured Group on Constraining Beliefs about Mate Selection and Romantic Beliefs

Statement of the Purpose

The group is designed for graduate students who desire to develop more positive thoughts about mate selection and romantic relationships. The group design is founded on the assumption that constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs are changeable by interactions with other people and cognitive interventions. People are not born with either positive or negative beliefs about mate

selection and romantic relationships. They have the capacity to change their negative beliefs with the positive ones. Therefore, the purpose of this group is to change constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs of participants with facilitator ones by the help of group intervention and interaction.

General group procedures were presented from the beginning of intervention. These included the meaning and importance of confidentiality and the norm of individual responsibility. Participants were informed that the sessions would be 120 minutes over 5 weeks in a structured group on constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. Group was a closed group to enhance group cohesion. Each group session started with a review of the last session and ended with the summary of the present session. Group members were given some assignments between sessions that could reveal their personal belief systems in exploring and dealing with dysfunctional beliefs toward mate selection and romantic relationships. Throughout the sessions, the relationship between cognition, affection, and behavior was presented in the mate selection process and romantic relationships. The summary of the sessions that contained the content and activities was presented below:

Session 1: Discovery; the first session of the group starts with the procedure of forming the group. Members are informed about the time, frequency and duration of the group meetings, and the major rules of the group counting confidentiality and regular attendance. In discovery phase of the group program, the participants introduce themselves; the group follows by sharing participants' goals and expectations from the group experience. The leader gives information about the way of the group that will be conducted. The leader focuses on the CBT, briefly by explaining the relationship between thinking, feeling and acting. After informing participants about CBT, leader explains the mate selection process and gives information about this process. Then, the leader asks the participants the factors that might have influence on mate selection process. After the brain storming on the factors influencing on mate selection process, the leader summarizes the factors, then asks the mate selection criteria of the participants. Each of the participants explains their criteria about mate selection. Then, the leader focuses on the similarities and

78

differences in mate selection criteria of participants and explains where the criteria might derive from (such as childhood experiences, media, and gender role etc.). Participants talk about their awareness on factors and criteria that affect their mate selection process. At the end of the session, the leader explains that one of the most important factors in mate selection and romantic relationships is our own beliefs and shares a handout which contains a list of constraining mate selection beliefs and romanticism and wants participants to look this handout and think about whether they have these beliefs or not until next session, if they have, to what extent they agree on.

Session 2: Understanding the personal thoughts on mate selection and romanticism; in the second session, group members are encouraged to share the awareness that they gained from the previous session to understand their personal beliefs that affect their mate selection process and romantic relationships. Then, they are encouraged to share their constraining beliefs considering the list that was given at previous session. Each of the constraining beliefs about mate selection are started to be discussed by each participant why they agree or disagree this belief. They also identify typical thoughts and feelings associated with their constraining belief. Throughout the discussion, the leader focuses on the link between thinking, feeling, and acting.

Session 3: Focusing on irrational thoughts; in the third session, participants go on discussing their constraining mate selection beliefs and romanticism which has been presented in the list given at the first session. They explain why and in which ways they agree on the particular constraining belief or not. The purpose of discussing why they do not agree on the constraining belief is also to provide alternative points of views to participants and to enhance the facilitator thoughts on mate selection and romanticism. In this session, the leader wants participants to find examples which point out the connection between the thinking, feeling and behavior in their constraining beliefs. At the end of the session, the leader encourages participants to talk about the awareness of the participants on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism. Indeed, leader points out the significance of the questioning the validity of beliefs. The leader introduces the ways of questioning

79

irrational beliefs and gives homework that contains questions to criticize each of the constraining belief about mate selection and romanticism.

Session 4: Challenge to constraining beliefs and enhancing productive thinking; the fourth session starts by sharing the homework that has been given in the previous week. Each participant shares his notes and answers for thought questioning that aim to challenge and show the invalidity of the irrational beliefs. After sharing and discussing the homework throughout the session, participants share their awareness and their feelings lead by their awareness. Also, participants are encouraged to share which cognitive strategies that they find the most helpful in this activity, and which alternative thoughts are seemed close to them. The leader courage the participants to discuss in which ways they may adopt the functional beliefs and what will be the advantages of the having functional beliefs instead of constraining ones about mate selection and romanticism. Participants are informed their potential and their responsibility on altering their constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism.

Session 5: Commitment to change; the final session starts with providing the group members with an opportunity to summarize their progress during the group sessions and the benefits gained from the group. The leader encourages participants to reflect on their changes and insights. The participants discuss their tools to change their irrational beliefs about mate selection and romanticism. Also, the leader gives a list of positive thoughts that have been mentioned by participants throughout the process. Participants discuss about their previous thoughts and how they come to this point. Also, they discuss how they will use their strategy to enhance further chances. The leader informs participants about possible setbacks and difficulties and also suggests some ways to overcome the difficulties about the change. Before leaving the group, participants say good bye to each other with good wishes and the leader presents an attendance certificate (*see* Appendix G) to motivate participants to sustain their effort in changing constraining beliefs about mate selection and romanticism.

3.5 Description of Variables

Group: Group is a categorical variable with the categories of (1) experimental and (2) control.

Constraining beliefs about mate selection: The total scores of Attitudes toward Romanticism and Mate Selection Scale.

Romantic beliefs: The total scores of Romantic Beliefs Scale.

3.6 Data Analyses

Prior to analyses of the first group study and the second group study, the all entries to SPSS were checked to be sure whether there was a missing value and error, or not. The all hypotheses of the study were examined with nonparametric tests using SPSS 20. The logic behind the using nonparametric tests was that parametric tests have high criteria that based on relatively large sample size that were not possible to meet with a low sample size (Field, 2009). Therefore, nonparametric tests were used to compare the differences between groups and within groups in small sample sizes groups as suggested in literature (Büyüköztürk, 2014; Büyüköztürk, Çokluk, & Köklü, 2011; Field, 2009; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). Generally, alpha level is set as .05 in social sciences (Field, 2009). Thus, the alpha level of the study was set as .05 for the current study.

For analyzing data, four steps were taken; descriptive statistics, group comparison analyses, repeated measure analyses, and lastly the necessary post hoc analyses were conducted. First, the Man Whitney U nonparametric test was conducted for ARMSS and RBS scores of the groups. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), The Man Whitney U test is designed to evaluate the difference between two populations or treatments. This test was used both for preliminary and main analyses. Second, Friedman test was used for the repeated measures to understand the difference within a group in repeated measures. Friedman test was used to evaluate the difference between pre-test, post-test, and follow up test scores of the experimental group for the first group study. Emphasized by Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), Friedman test is

used to detect the differences in repeated measures design for nonparametric data. Last, for post hoc analyses, Wilcoxon test was used to understand where the difference derived from that pointed in Friedman test results. The Wilcoxon test was used to evaluate the difference between two treatments in a repeated measures experimental study (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). Lastly, to analyses the information that derived from open ended group evaluation form questions was analyzed with content analysis.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The current study has some limitations should be taken into consideration while interpreting the findings of the current study. One of the limitations of the study is about the sample. In this study, only the graduate students from a public university attended to the group program. This was a limitation for generalizing the results to the people who have different educational status and who are students in other universities. Thus, the results can be just generalized to the graduate students of a public university. Also, while the first group participants were assigned to groups randomly, the second group participants were not, which might be a threat to the representativeness of the sample. Furthermore, the present study may have the potential for Hawthorne effect because of not having an intervention to control group. Another limitation that needs to be considered is using self-report scales to assess constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs. The validity of the self-report scales can be seen as limited because somebody can never be sure that the participants gave honest responses. Another possible limitation might be that behavioral outcomes of this intervention were not measured. Additionally, the responses of participants can be affected by social desirability.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter contains the findings of the first group study and the second group study by both presenting the results of statistical analyses and the results of the evaluation form that is used after the group program. Firstly, preliminary analyses are presented including comparison of pre-test scores of the experimental and the control groups. Secondly, the results of the Mann-Whitney U test that compare the experimental and the control group, Friedman test that is conducted to compare pre-test, post-test, and follow up test scores of the groups, and the necessary post hoc analyses are presented. Lastly, the results of group evaluation form are presented by using content analysis both for the first study and the second group.

4.1 Preliminary Analyses for the First Group Study

Before analyzing the current data, whether the pre-test scores were different or not was first checked for the current data. For that purpose, Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test was conducted for ARMSS and RBS scores of the groups. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), The Mann-Whitney U test is designed to evaluate the difference between two populations or treatments. ARMSS pre-test scores of the experimental group (n = 14) had 83.36 mean value with 8.46 standard deviation. On the other hand, ARMSS pre-test scores of the control group (n = 14) had 84.79 mean value with 9.14 standard deviation. According to the results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test, the pre-test scores of the experimental and the control group were not significantly different from each other (U_{armss} = 85.50; z_{armss} = -.58, p > 0.05) for ARMSS scale.

RBS pre-test scores of the experimental group was 29.07 mean value with 7.24 standard deviation, while RBS pre-test scores of the control group was 33.36 mean

value with 9.82 standard deviation. According to the results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test, the pre-test scores of the experimental and the control group were not significantly different than each other (U_{rbs} = 72.00; z_{rbs} = -1.20, p > 0.05) for RBS.

4.2 Primary Analyses for the First Group Study

In order to test the hypotheses of the study, first, Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test was used to evaluate the difference between post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group for ARMSS and RBS scores of the groups. ARMSS post-test scores of the experimental group had 72.86 mean value with 8.56 standard deviation, while ARMSS post-test scores of the control group had 84.14 mean value with 8.93 standard deviation. Table 4.1 summarized the results of Mann-Whitney U test for comparison of the experimental group and control group post-test scores.

Table 4.1

The Results of Mann-Whitney U Test for Comparison of the Experimental Group and Control Group for Post-test Scores

Scale	Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	z	p
ARMSS	Experiment	14	10.00	140.00	35.00	-2.90	0.00*
	Control	14	19.00	266.00			
RBS	Experiment	14	9.82	137.50	32.50	-3.02	0.00*
	Control	14	19.18	268.50			

p < .05*

According to the results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test, the post-test scores of the experimental and the control group were significantly different from each other (U_{armss} = 35.00, p < 0.05; z_{armss} = -2.90, p < 0.05, r = -.55), which means that cognitive behavioral group program had a significant effect and large effect size on Romantic Attitudes and Mate Selection Beliefs of participants. While calculating the

effect size, formula of Rosenthal (1991) was taken into consideration that says effect size equals to division of Z to root square of N. Also, for categorizing effect size Cohen's criteria (1988) was used. According to Cohen (1988), .3 and .5 are used for medium and large effect, correspondingly.

RBS post-test scores of the experimental group had 25.00 mean value with 5.08 standard deviation, while RBS post-test scores of the control group had 32.71 mean value with 7.10 standard deviation. According to the results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test, the post-test scores of the experimental and the control group were significantly different than each other (U_{rbs} = 32.50; z_{rbs} = -3.02, $p < 0.05$, r = -.57) for RBS, which means that cognitive behavioral group program had a significant effect and large effect size on romantic beliefs of participants.

In addition to that, Friedman test was used to evaluate the difference among pre-test, post-test, and follow up test scores of the experimental group for the first group study. Articulated by Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), Friedman test is used to detect the differences in repeated measures design for nonparametric data. ARMSS pre-test scores of the experimental group had 83.36 mean value with 8.46 standard deviation, while ARMSS post-test scores of the experimental group had 72.86 mean value with 8.56 standard deviation and ARMSS follow up test scores of the experimental group had 74.36 mean value with 10.67 standard deviation. The results of Friedman test revealed a chi-square value of 18.14 ($p = 0.01$) for ARMSS, which was significant. RBS pre-test scores of the experimental group had 29.07 mean value with 7.24 standard deviation, while RBS post-test scores of the experimental group had 25.00 mean value with 5.08 standard deviation and RBS follow up test scores of the experimental group had 28.07 mean value with 7.58 standard deviation. Similarly, a nonparametric Friedman test was conducted for RBS scores and the results showed that a chi-square value was 3.64 ($p = 0.19$), which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). In other words, according to the results of Friedman test, there was not a significant difference between repeated measures for RBS scores.

For the control group of the first study, Friedman test was used to understand if there was any difference among repeated measures. ARMSS pre-test scores of the control group had 84.79 mean value with 9.14 standard deviation, while ARMSS post-test scores of the control group had 84.14 mean value with 8.93 standard deviation and ARMSS follow up test scores of the control group had 84.50 mean value with 7.63 standard deviation. The results of Friedman test showed a chi-square value of .17 (p = 0.72), which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). It means that there was not a significant difference among repeated measures for ARMSS. In a parallel manner, Friedman test was used to assess the difference among repeated measures for RBS scores of the control group. RBS pre-test scores of the control group had 33.36 mean value with 9.82 standard deviation, while RBS post-test scores of the control group had 32.71 mean value with 7.10 standard deviation and RBS follow up test scores of the control group had 33.50 mean value with 7.09 standard deviation. According to the results of Friedman test, the differences among repeated measures were examined and showed a chi-square value of .73 (p = 0.50), which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). In conclusion, the scores of the control group did not show a significicant difference among repeated measures.

Considering the results of Friedman test, a post hoc analysis was done to detect which measure was different for ARMSS scores of experimental group, while the post hoc analysis was not done for the RBS scores of experimental group because of the insignificant Friedman test results. Considering the insignificant results of repeated measures, the post hoc analyses were not used to understand which measure was significant for RBS. Therefore, Wilcoxon test was conducted as post hoc analysis for ARMSS but not for RBS. The Wilcoxon test was used to evaluate the difference between two treatments in a repeated measures experimental study (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009).

In order to prevent any wrong calculations in post hoc analysis, Bonferroni correction was used. As it was stated by Field (2009), Bonferroni correction was used to prevent type I error. Considering the Bonferroni correction, p value which

was .05 for the current study was divided to 3 and *p* value was calculated as 0.016, thus it was set as .02 with this correction.

With this correction, Wilcoxon test was used to compare the pre-test and post-test scores of ARMSS for experimental group. Table 4.2 showed the results of Wilcoxon test of the experimental group for comparison of pre-test and post-test for ARMSS.

Table 4.2

The Results of Wilcoxon Test of the Experimental Group for Pre-test-Post-test Comparison of ARMSS

Scale		*N*	*Mean Rank*	*Sum of Ranks*	*z*	*p*
ARMSS	Negative Ranks	14	7.50	105.00	-3.30	0.00*
	Positive Ranks	0	.00	.00		
	Ties	0				

p < .02*

Wilcoxon test was conducted for pre-test and post-test scores for the experimental group and it revealed that pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group were significantly different from each other (z_{armss} = -3.30, *p* < 0.02, *r* = -.62). In other words, the cognitive behavioral group program significantly decreased constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic attitudes of participants for the experimental group with a large effect size. In a similar vein, Wilcoxon test was used to compare post-test and follow up scores of experimental group for ARMSS. Table 4.3 summarized the results of Wilcoxon test for experimental group to compare post-test and follow up test for ARMSS.

Table 4.3

The Results of Wilcoxon Test of Experimental Group for Post-test-Follow up test Comparison for ARMSS

Scale		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z	p
ARMSS	Negative Ranks	7	6	42.00	-.66	0.51
	Positive Ranks	7	9	63.00		
	Ties	0				

ARMSS follow up test scores of experimental group had 74.36 mean value with 10.67 standard deviation. The results of Wilcoxon test showed that post-test and follow up test scores of experimental group were not significantly different than each other (z_{armss} = -.66, $p > 0.02$). In other words, group members did not have a negative change on their constraining beliefs, which shows the effectiveness of the group program on their attitudes from post-test to follow up test. Additionally, Wilcoxon test was used to compare pre-test and follow up test scores of experimental group for ARMSS. Table 4.4 summarized the results of Wilcoxon test.

Table 4.4

The Results of Wilcoxon Test of Experimental Group for Pre-test-Follow up test Comparison for ARMSS

Scale		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z	p
ARMSS	Negative Ranks	13	7.65	99.50	-2.95	0.00*
	Positive Ranks	1	5.50	5.50		
	Ties	0				

p < .02*

The results of Wilcoxon test showed that pre-test scores and follow up test scores of experimental group were significantly different from each other for ARMSS (z_{armss} = -2.95, $p < 0.02$, $r = -.56$). In other words, the cognitive behavioral group program

significantly decreased constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic attitudes of participants for the experimental group from pre-test to follow up test.

4.3 Preliminary Analyses for Second Group Study

Before analyzing the data, first of all, the pre-test scores of the groups were checked to understand whether the pre-test scores of the experimental and the control group were significantly different or not. For that purpose, Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test was used for comparing ARMSS and RBS scores of the groups. ARMSS pre-test scores of experimental group had 85.29 mean value with 7.21 standard deviation, while ARMSS pre-test scores of the control group had 84.43 mean value with 7.64 standard deviation. According to the results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test, the pre-test scores of the experimental and the control group were not significantly different than each other ($U_{armss} = 93.00$; $z_{armss} = -.23$, $p > 0.05$) for ARMSS scale.

RBS pre-test scores of experimental group had 32.36 mean value with 8.13 standard deviation, while RBS pre-test scores of the control group had 32.00 mean value with 9.46 standard deviation. The results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test indicated that the pre-test scores of the experimental and the control group were not significantly different than each other ($U_{rbs} = 92.00$; $z_{rbs} = -.28$, $p > 0.05$) for RBS. Therefore, the researcher went on to primary analyses.

4.4 Primary Analyses of the Second Group Study

The study hypotheses were examined with nonparametric tests using SPSS 20. For testing hypothesis of the study, Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test was used to evaluate the difference between post-test scores of the experimental group and the control group for ARMSS and RBS scores of the groups. ARMSS post-test scores of experimental group had 71.07 mean value with 11.22 standard deviation, while ARMSS post-test scores of the control group had 86.00 mean value with 8.92 standard deviation. Table 4.5 showed the results of Mann-Whitney U test for comparison of experimental group with control group for post-test scores.

Table 4.5

The Results of Mann-Whitney U Test for Comparison of Experimental Group and
Control Group for Post-test Scores for Second Study

Scale	Groups	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	z	p
ARMSS	Experiment	14	9.43	132.00	27.00	-3.26	0.00*
	Control	14	19.57	274.00			
RBS	Experiment	14	11.46	160.50	55.50	-1.96	0.04*
	Control	14	17.54	245.50			

*p < .05**

According the results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test, the post-test scores of experimental and control group were significantly different than each other (U_{armss} = 27.00, $p < 0.05$; z_{armss} = -3.26, $p < 0.05$, r = -.62). Cognitive behavioral group program had a significant effect with a large effect size on Romantic Attitudes and Mate Selection Beliefs of participants. RBS post-test scores of experimental group had 27.57 mean value with 7.29 standard deviation, while RBS post-test scores of the control group had 33.50 mean value with 7.13 standard deviation. According to the results of Mann-Whitney U nonparametric test, the post-test scores of the experimental and the control group were significantly different than each other (U_{rbs} = 55.50; z_{rbs} = -1.96, $p < 0.05$, r = -.37) for RBS. In other words, cognitive behavioral group program had a significant effect with a medium effect size on romantic beliefs of experimental group participants.

Friedman test was used to evaluate the difference among pre-test, post-test and follow up test scores of experimental group for the second group. ARMSS pre-test scores of experimental group had 85.29 mean value with 7.21 standard deviation, while ARMSS post-test scores of experimental group had 71.07 mean value with 11.22 standard deviation and ARMSS follow up test scores of experimental group had 71.50 mean value with 10.49 standard deviation. The results of Friedman test revealed a chi-square value of 17.82 ($p = 0.00$), which was significant ($p < 0.05$) which means there was a significant difference among repeated measures. RBS pre-

test scores of experimental group had 32.36 mean value with 8.13 standard deviation, while RBS post-test scores of experimental group had 27.57 mean value with 7.29 standard deviation and RBS follow up test scores of experimental group had 29.86 mean value with 7.73 standard deviation. Similarly, a nonparametric Friedman test was conducted for RBS scores and the results showed that a chi-square value of 6.78 ($p = 0.03$), which was significant ($p < 0.05$). In other words, according the results of Friedman test, there was a significant difference among repeated measures for RBS scores.

Considering the results of Friedman test, a post hoc analysis was done to detect which measure is different than other for ARMSS and RBS. Similar to the first study, the same procedure was followed and alpha was set as .02 because of Bonferroni correction. Then, to compare pre-test and post-test scores for ARMSS and RBS scores of experimental group of second group study, Wilcoxon test was used. Table 4.6 summarized the results of Wilcoxon test of experimental group for comparison of pre-test and post-test.

Table 4.6

The Results of Wilcoxon Test of Experimental Group for Pre-test-Post-test Comparison

Scale		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z	p
ARMSS	Negative Ranks	13	7	91	-3.18	0.00*
	Positive Ranks	0	0	0		
	Ties	1				
RBS	Negative Ranks	11	7.68	84.50	-2.73	0.00*
	Positive Ranks	2	3.25	6.50		
	Ties	1				

p < .02*

Wilcoxon test was used to evaluate the difference between pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group for second study. ARMSS pre-test scores of experimental group had 85.29 mean value with 7.21 standard deviation, while ARMSS post-test scores of experimental group had 71.07 mean value with 11.22 standard deviation. According the results of Wilcoxon test, pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group were significantly different than each other (z_{armss}= -3.18, $p < 0.02$, $r = -.60$) for ARMSS which means that the cognitive behavioral group program significantly decreased constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic attitudes of participants for the experimental group with a large effect size. RBS pre-test scores of experimental group had 32.36 mean value with 8.13 standard deviation, while RBS post-test scores of experimental group had 27.57 mean value with 7.29 standard deviation. According to the results of Wilcoxon test, pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group were significantly different than each other ($z_{rbs} = -2.73$, $p < 0.02$, $r = -.52$), which means that the cognitive behavioral group program significantly decreased romantic beliefs of participants who took intervention with a large effect size.

Similarly, for comparing the post-test and follow up test scores of experimental group of second group study, Wilcoxon test was used. Table 4.7 showed the results of Wilcoxon test of the experimental group.

Table 4.7

The Results of Wilcoxon Test of Experimental Group for Post-test-Follow up test Comparison for Second Study

Scale		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z	p
ARMSS	Negative Ranks	5	8.10	40.50	-.35	0.72
	Positive Ranks	8	6.31	50.50		
	Ties	1				
RBS	Negative Ranks	4	6.88	27.50	-1.26	0.21
	Positive Ranks	9	7.06	63.50		
	Ties	1				

ARMSS follow up test scores of experimental group for second study had 71.50 mean value with 10.49 standard deviation. Considering the results of Wilcoxon test, post-test and follow up test scores of experimental group were not significantly different than each other ($z_{armss} = -.35$, $p > 0.02$), which means that the group program did not significantly decrease constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic attitudes of participants from post-test to follow up test. RBS follow up scores of experimental group for second study had 29.86 mean value with 7.73 standard deviation. According to the results of Wilcoxon test, post-test and follow up test scores of experimental group were not significantly different than each other ($z_{rbs} = -1.26$, $p > 0.02$). In other words, the cognitive behavioral group program did not significantly decrease romantic relationship beliefs of participants for the experimental group from post-test to follow up test. Similarly, to compare the pre-test and follow up test scores of ARMSS and RBS, Wilcoxon test was used. Table 4.8 summarized the results of Wilcoxon test of experimental group.

Table 4.8

The Results of Wilcoxon Test of Experimental Group for Pre-test-Follow up test Comparison for Second Study

Scale		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	z	p
ARMSS	Negative Ranks	13	7.73	100.50	-3.02	0.00*
	Positive Ranks	1	4.50	4.50		
	Ties	0				
RBS	Negative Ranks	9	8.11	73	-1.29	0.19
	Positive Ranks	5	6.40	32		
	Ties	0				

p < .02*

The results showed that pre-test scores and follow up test scores of experimental group were significantly different than each other ($z_{armss} = -3.02$, $p < 0.02$, $r = -.57$) for ARMSS. In other words, the cognitive behavioral group program significantly decreased constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic attitudes of

participants for the experimental group of second study from pre-test to follow up test with a large effect size. The results of Wilcoxon test showed that pre-test and follow up test scores of experimental group were not significantly different than each other for RBS (z_{rbs} = -1.29, $p > 0.02$) which means that the cognitive behavioral group program did not significantly decrease romantic beliefs of participants for the experimental group from pre-test to follow up test.

For the control group of the second group study, Friedman test was used to understand whether there was any difference among repeated measures or not. ARMSS pre-test scores of the control group had 84.43 mean value with 7.64 standard deviation, while ARMSS post-test scores of the control group had 86.00 mean value with 8.92 standard deviation and ARMSS follow up test scores of the control group had 84.79 mean value with 8.57 standard deviation. The results of Friedman test showed a chi-square value of 3.64 ($p = 0.16$), which was not significant ($p > 0.05$) and which means there was not a significant difference among repeated measures. Similarly, Friedman test was used to assess whether there was any difference among repeated measures for RBS scores of control group or not. RBS pre-test scores of the control group had 32.00 mean value with 9.46 standard deviation, while RBS post-test scores of the control group had 33.50 mean value with 7.13 standard deviation and RBS follow up test scores of the control group had 32.21 mean value with 9.40 standard deviation. According to the results of Friedman test, the differences among repeated measures was examined and showed a chi-square value of 3.18 ($p = 0.20$) which was not significant ($p > 0.05$), which means there was not a significant difference among repeated measures. Considering the insignificant results of repeated measures, the post hoc analyses were not used.

To sum up, the findings of the analyses showed that the group program was significantly effective on ARMSS and RBS in comparison of experimental and control group for both the first and second group studies. Moreover, the group program was significantly effective among repeated measures of experimental group (pre-test to post-test and pre-test to follow up test) for ARMSS in both the first and the second group studies. Additionally, the group program was not significantly

effective among repeated measures of experimental group for RBS in the first group study, but it was significantly effective in the second group study (pre-test to post-test). Contrary, the repeated measures of control group was not significantly different than each other both for the first and the second group studies.

4.5 The Results of the Group Evaluation Form

The purpose of that section was to examine the perceptions of group participants related to the current cognitive behavioral group program. The data was gathered by the group evaluation form. The group evaluation form had five open ended questions. The form was developed by the researchers through considering the relevant literature. The questions of the form were organized by taking the research questions into account. These questions mainly focused on strengths and weaknesses of the group program, evaluation of the numbers of the session and participants, evaluation of the contributions of the group program to the participants, whether the participants recommend that program or not, and lastly, the suggestions. The questions of the form were developed to guide a qualitative research understanding by using open-ended questions and focused on process and meaning rather than cause and effect (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Thus, the form was prepared with regard to qualitative research philosophy.

The data which provided by the form was analyzed by using content analysis. According to Yıldırım and Şimsek (2005), for content analysis, firstly the data are coded and then data are arranged understandably. Last of all, themes to explain the data must be decided.

For content analysis of the current study, the forms have been read several times. The coding was done by researcher and two coders who are academic experts in Psychological Counseling and Guidance field. The purpose of using other raters was to provide interrater reliability. Researchers started to code the data when they thought they are familiar the forms. After coding was done for the form of each participant, commonalities between the coding of the other forms were determined.

Then, the themes from the coding were explored and code list was prepared both for the first and the second group study considering open ended survey results (*see* Appendix H). The same procedure was done by other coders, and then the researcher decided the codes which will be used considering the reported themes and codes of the other coders. Results of the study were bolstered with the quotations from the forms for enriching the results.

Considering results of the open-ended questions on survey, the following five themes were categorized based on open ended questions; (1) Strengths of the group program, (2) The areas that need to be strengthened, (3) Evaluation of the number of sessions and the participants of the group program, (4) The contributions the group program to the participant, (5) The explanation of whether the participant recommend that group program to others or not. The results will be presented for each theme with the first study and then the second study order, so with that way, commonalities between groups and differences will be seen, easily.

4.5.1 Strengths of the Group Program for the First Group Study

As perceived by the participants of the first study, in the fourteen forms, the strengths of the group were described as: encouraging individuals to learn from others, offering insight, providing a positive atmosphere, leader's skills, and the offered content and the format of the group.

First, encouraging learning from others was described as the nature of the group which fosters learning from the other participants in the group. Most of the participants pointed out that sharing an environment with different participants who have different ideas, was an important aspect of the group. Furthermore, interacting with others, articulating different ideas, and understanding others' perspectives were highlighted as strengths by most participants. Moreover, one of the participants indicated that having participants from different departments was the most outstanding strength of the program. Another participant asserted that:

96

"I realized that sharing different ideas about relationship is richness. Hearing the others' perspectives offered me to develop new perspectives about mate selection." Second, offering insight was described as encouraging individuals to understand their own ideas about mate selection, which, many believed, was as strength of the group program. One of the participants expressed that: "The group program endorsed my understanding about what I should pay attention for mate selection." Similarly, another participant highlighted that:"I think we have understood ourselves and our expectations about mate selection thanks to the group program."

Lastly, another participant similarly stated that:"The group program provided an opportunity to me to evaluate my thoughts on mate selection. Now I can distinguish my functional and dysfunctional thoughts, which was one of the strength of the group program."

Third, the leader's skills were described as the skills which were used by the group leader through the group process. Some of the participants indicated that the leader was good at the management of the sessions, primarily by summarizing the articulations of the participants and asking good questions. Fourth, providing a positive atmosphere was described as the positive communication through the group process. Some participants portrayed the group as offering a positive setting and mentioned that as strength of the group program. One of the participants articulated that: "There was a real respect in the group setting." Likewise, another participant indicated that: "Because of the positive setting we had, participants were actively engaged in the group discussions in which they felt free to express their true opinions." Furthermore, a few participants stated that participants were open to share themselves, which they found as strength of the group.

Lastly, participants mentioned the content and the format of the group program as strength. The content of the program basically involved theoretical background, topics, assignments, and exercises and regarding the format of the program, participants mainly pointed out the allocated time, the length of the program, and the methods that were used in the program. Accordingly, describing the main

constraining beliefs about mate selection, sharing theoretical information, and questioning those constraining mate selection beliefs from a scientific perspective were highlighted as the strengths. To illustrate, one of the participants stated that the group program was very well structured and another participant mentioned that:"The group program was well designed and that is the main element that enabled the participation of the participants to the group program."

4.5.2 Strengths of the Group Program for the Second Group Study

As perceived by the participants of the second study, in the fourteen forms, the strengths of the group were described as: encouraging individuals to learn from others, offering insight, providing a positive atmosphere, leader's skills, and the offered content and the format of the group program.

The strengths of the group were described as offering insight was described as developing an understanding by participant on his/her own ideas about mate selection. Some participants said that the group provided understanding ourselves linked to romantic relationships and mate selection and described that as the strength of the group program. One of the participants articulated with such words: "I questioned my own mate selection criteria and that provided a better understanding of me in terms of my beliefs in mate selection."

The offered content and the format of the group program were described as the content of the program that contains theory, topics, homework, and exercises in the program and the format of the program was described as time, length, and the methods that used in program. Most of the participants pointed out that as one of the strength of the group program was the offered content and the format of the program. Different participants focused on the different characteristics of the program in terms of the offered content and the format of the group program. To illustrate; while one of the participants described the topic as interesting, another participant underlined the guidance provided by the program for mate selection and romanticism, as strength of the group program. Supporting one of the goals of the group program

which is to foster change, one of the participants highlighted that: "Now I understand that the beliefs can change, which was the strength part of the group program for me."

Furthermore, providing theoretical information about mate selection and romanticism is described as strength. On the other hand, regarding the format, some of the participants described the group interaction as the strength of the program. Two participants pointed out that one other strength of the group program was being structured. Moreover, using discussion, involving both female and male participants, ensuring homogeneity in the group by selecting participants from the same educational level, encouraging the active participation of participants were mentioned as the strengths of the group program by the participants.

Encouraging learning from others was described as learning from the other participants in the group setting. The most of the participants advocated that listening different ideas were strength of the group program, especially understanding the thoughts of others on mate selection and romanticism (especially from the people who were from different departments) was very important. Leader's skill was described as the skills that used by the group leader through the group process. Four of the participants focused on the leader's skills as strength. One of the participants stated that with such words: "Her knowledge on the topic, the expertise and the interventions were impressive."

Lastly, providing a positive atmosphere was described as the positive communication through the group process. One of the participants explained his positive atmosphere impression with such words: "There was a very warm and professional setting that makes a real strength for the group."

As seen at that section, in second study the same codes were explored with the first study in terms of the strength of the group program.

4.5.3 The Areas That Need to Be Strengthened for the First Group Study

The areas that need to be strengthened were described as weak aspects of the program that needs to be developed which are listed by the participants as; challenge to you, challenged by others, the format and the content of the group program. One of the participants, for example, shared that: "Accepting different ideas and be confronted with myself were hard for me." Another participant indicated that: "The tendency of some participants to change others' perspectives by some participants was a weakness."

Moreover, some participants indicated some weaknesses related to the format and the content of the group program listed as; On the basis of the format; the time and length of the group was criticized. One of the participants expressed those words: "The time was limited; it should have more than 5 sessions." Two of the participants indicated that: "It started at 17.00 and sometimes it was hard for me after work."

Additionally, not having participants from different occupations, and having participants from the different occupations, and having single participants were described as weaknesses. Moreover, regarding content, not questioning the thoughts in real life situations, focusing on just some specific thoughts were mentioned as weaknesses by some participants.

4.5.4 The Areas That Need to Be Strengthened for the Second Group Study

The areas that need to be strengthened were described that were weak for the program and need to developed in future for the second group were listed as; the offered content and the format of the group program. The content of the program was described as the theory, topics, homework, and exercises in the program and the format of the program was described as time, length, and the methods that used in the program. On the basis of content, focusing just some specific thoughts and not having good models were described as weakness of the group. Also one of the

participants pointed that the content was abstract and articulated that with such words: "Some thoughts are not clear because unclearity between thoughts. For instance, perfectionism was not clear in terms of the difference from ideal."

On the other hand, regarding the format of the group program, the program was described as need to be strengthened by some participants considering time limited (numbers of sessions were not enough), not providing richness with respect to examples, and not having participants from different occupations. Also, considering the group format, one of the participants stated that: "Because of the nature of being in a group, you cannot tell everything."

As seen in second study the areas that need to be strength was seen just in group content and format while in the first study additionally the challenge to yourself and the challenged by others were mentioned.

4.5.5 The Evaluation of the Number of Sessions and Participants for the First Group Study

The number of sessions contained the response of the participants related to number of sessions. Two categories were appeared at that question. The first one was ideal which means that the number of sessions was "ideal" for that particular group program, and the second one was "the need to have more sessions" which points that the group program should have more session for the productivity of the group. While the most of the participants said the number of sessions was ideal, some of the participants indicated that it should have more sessions. The participants who advocated the group program should have more sessions primarily focused that there would be more time to discuss the topic. One of the participants specifically stated that: "It may have one or two more sessions."

In participant number, the participants evaluated the participant number for the group program. While most of the participants indicated that the participant number was ideal for interaction and richness of the ideas in the group, one of the participants

advocated that it need to have fewer participants with such words: "It should have fewer participants, to illustrate; participants should be 8-10 for a better interaction."

4.5.6 The Evaluation of the Number of Sessions and the Participants of the Group for the Second Group Study

The number of sessions was described as the answers of the participants related to number of sessions. Two categories were identified by participants. The first one was ideal which means that the number of sessions was "ideal" for the second group program; the second one was the need to have more sessions which points that the group program should have more session for the productivity of the group process. Similar with the results of the first study for that question, the most of the participants said the number of sessions was ideal, while the some of the participants indicated that it should have had more sessions. One of the participants specifically indicated that: "It may have 7-8 sessions." Another one suggested as 7. Lastly, one of the participants stated it should have had 8-12 sessions.

In participant number, the participants evaluated the number of participants considering the effectiveness of the group program. Majority of the participants indicated that the number of participants was ideal for group interaction. One of the participants asserted that: "It was ideal because it facilitated the feeling closeness to each other." Some of the participants indicated that the participant number should be fewer. One of the participants explained that with such words: "It should be seven to provide enough opportunity for the participants to talk more." The results of the second group were similar with the first group in terms of the codes of the open ended survey results.

4.5.7 The Contributions of the Group Program to the Participant for the First Group Study

The contributions of the group were described as the contributions that were gained by the participants due to participation to the group. These contributions are listed as;

learning from others, understanding one own, understanding mate selection process and romanticism, change and increasing awareness.

Learning from others was described as learning from the other participants. Most of the participants portrayed that learning from others was a big contribution to them. One of the participants told that with such words: "Even in the same environment like university, there are many different beliefs than each other on mate selection. I better realized the thoughts of others at here and have understood that the thoughts are unique."

While one of the participants indicated that understanding the different perspective was a contribution, another indicated that especially understanding what the opposite sex thinks was a big contribution of the group to her. Also sharing different experiences and meeting with new people were expressed as contributions of the group to participants.

Understanding one own was described as participants' understanding of their own thoughts about mate selection and romanticism. Understanding and evaluating their own thoughts about mate selection and romanticism were described as the contributions by many participants. One of the participants highlighted that: "It was a good start to explore myself, and I confronted with myself about mate selection." Furthermore, two of the participants stated that questioning their own constraining beliefs in relation to supporting and disproving evidences were outstanding contributions of the group program.

Understanding the mate selection process and romanticism was described as taking information and understanding more about the mate selection process and the romanticism in the group program. Some participants indicated that they understood more about the mate selection process due to participation of the group program. One of the participants stated that with such words: "I understand that mate selection is not an easy process. It is a comprehensive process."

Another participant underlined the basic importance of the beliefs in mate selection process with such words: "I understand the importance of cognitive flexibility in mate selection."

Change was described as the change about the mate selection beliefs and romanticism that was provided with the help of the group intervention. Some of the participants highlighted that group program may provide change in some prejudgments and ideas on that topic. Additionally, one of the participants indicated an increase in her empathy level and advocated that: "I think the group program enhanced my empathy level in romantic relationships."

The awareness was described as noticing and identifying the beliefs about mate selection and romantic relationships. Most of the participants advocated that the group program increased their awareness on mate selection. Some of the participants pointed out the characteristics of the group program endorsed constructive and critical point of view. One of the participants articulated his ideas with such words: "I realized that I generalize my experiences and I understand that this was not right, I questioned my own thoughts for more flexibility."

4.5.8 The Contributions of the Group Program to the Participant of the Second Group

These contributions are listed as; learning from others, universality, understanding one own, awareness, and change. Most of the participants stated that realizing others' perspectives and then learning from others were big contributions of the group program. Also, regarding universality as a characteristic of group programs, two of the participants pointed that noticing everyone is concerned about same issues was an important contribution of the group. One of the participants articulated his ideas with such words: "I realized that I am not alone about my concerns on mate selection and romanticism."

Additionally, most of the participants indicated that they had the chance to evaluate their thoughts about mate selection and romanticism. Similarly, majority of the participant portrayed that they gained awareness about mate selection and romantic relationships due to participating in the group program. One of the participants expressed her ideas with such words: "I was a person who did not have criteria about mate selection, but now, I understand which criteria are functional and which ones are not." Another participant indicated her awareness with such words: "I always thought that I am realistic but I realized actually after the group program, I was romantic." In a parallel manner, another participant highlighted that: "Before attending the group program, I always questioned whether I have extreme criteria or not, but now I know whether they are realistic or not."

One of the participants indicated the change as the contribution of the group program. The participant articulated that with such words: "It may provide change in my prejudgments and some of my beliefs about romantic relationships and mate selection." As seen in the second group the same codes were observed with the first group except for universality.

4.5.9 The Explanation of Whether Participants Suggest Group Program to Others or not for the First Group Study

The explanation of whether participants suggest the group program to others or not was described as whether the participants suggest the group program or not and the explanation linked to this question. All of the participants reported that they strongly suggested the group program. One of the participants explained that with such words: "Especially it provides the chance to understand the point of view of the opposite sex." Another one stated that: "The group program is important in terms of understanding the connection between causes and results in mate selection and romantic relationships." Another participant pointed out that: "The current group program is very important on the basis of increasing social skills and expressing yourself about mate selection."

One other participant explained the reason why she suggests this group with such words: "Especially people who have difficulties in romantic relationships will utilize the group a lot; the group will increase the awareness on mate selection and romantic relationships."

4.5.10 The Explanation of Whether Participants Suggest that Group Program to Others or not for the Second Group

The explanation of whether participants suggest the group program to others or not was described as whether the participants suggest the group program or not and the explanation related to that question. All of the participants reported that they strongly suggested the group program. One of the participants expressed why she suggests the group program as: "The group program provides the chance to evaluate your thoughts. I believe that it will prevent future relationship distress." Another participant pointed out in a sarcastic way that: "I wish my ex-boyfriend could have realized his constraining beliefs with this program."

Another participant focused on the reason why he suggests the program with such words: "It provides chance to focus on the issues in romantic relationships which we are not aware of in daily life." Another participant suggested the program by focusing on the preventive nature of the group with such words: "These kinds of group programs may decrease the divorce rates." Another participant focused on the awareness gained by the group program and described the group experience as a vital contribution in terms of awareness related to mate selection and romanticism. In both the first and the second groups, participants reported that they strongly suggested the group program.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed in the light of the relevant literature, limitations of the study are expressed and also, the implications provided by the results are presented both for practical purposes and future studies. The remaining part of the chapter contains four sections as follows; discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, the implications of the study, and the suggestions of the study.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

The principle aim of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of a cognitive behavioral group program on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs of graduate students. To accomplish that aim, two group studies were conducted with the same procedure and program but the different participants to empower the generalizability of the findings. First, the post-test scores of the experimental and control group were compared to understand the effectiveness of the program on the participants who took the intervention both for the first and second group studies. Then, the effectiveness of the group program was tested considering pre-test, post-test, and follow up test results of the experimental group both for the first and the second group studies. Additionally, the repeated measures of the control group that did not receive any intervention were examined to understand the difference was related with testing threat or not both for the first and second group studies. Finally, the study surveyed the thoughts of experimental group participants about the program in a qualitative form at the end of the program both for the first group and second group studies.

Overall, the findings provided strong support for the hypotheses of the current study. This study had two hypotheses on the effectiveness of the cognitive behavioral group program. The first hypothesis of the study claimed that the cognitive behavioral group program had a significant effect on constraining mate selection beliefs of participants. For questioning the validity of that particular hypothesis, first the experimental and the control group post-test scores were compared both for the first and second group studies. The results indicated that the cognitive behavioral group program significantly decreased constraining beliefs about mate selection of students for the experimental group. Then, the pre-test, post-test, and follow up test scores of the control group were compared both for the first and second group studies to understand whether the score difference of the control group was based on testing and/or maturity threat. Similarly, the study compared the pre-test, post-test, and follow up test results of the participants of intervention groups both for two group studies. The results showed that there was not a significant difference in constraining mate selection beliefs of the control group participants at repeated measures (pre-test, post-test, and follow up test). On the other hand, as consistent with the claim of the first hypothesis, the results revealed that the group program significantly decreased constraining mate selection beliefs of participants for experimental group from pre-test to post-test and pre-test to follow up test; however, a significant difference was not seen from post-test to follow up test.

To recall the existing literature for the findings of current study on this particular hypothesis, generally, findings are consistent with the results of the current study. In relation to premarital programs that are the most relevant studies to the current research, there are many studies showing their effectiveness on certain relationship variables. To illustrate, Carroll and Doherty (2003) investigated the outcomes of premarital education programs and reported a large effect size on some relationship variables. Similarly, Gardner et al. (2004) evaluated a marriage education program for high school students and found changes in marital attitudes of students. Moreover, Sharp and Ganong (2000) reported the effectiveness of an integrative teaching method on unrealistic and romantic beliefs of university students. In a parallel manner, the study of Bass et al. (2007) revealed that participation in a course

on relationships decreased the irrational relationship beliefs of students about romantic relationships. The research of Adler Beader et al. (2007) suggested that marriage education was effective in providing more realistic beliefs about relationships and marriages. Furthermore, McGeorge and Carlson (2003) studied the effectiveness of a premarital program and the findings revealed that the participants who joined the program significantly showed higher scores in their post-test compared with the control group with respect to marriage readiness and preparation for marriage. Parallel to the previous findings, the findings of Yılmaz and Kalkan (2010) and Yalçın (2010) displayed the effectiveness of premarital relationship enhancement program on relationship satisfaction of couples. On the other hand, as inconsistent with the finding of current research, Laner and Russell (1994) found that the problems-focused courtship and marriage course was not significantly effective on marital expectations. In a similar research, Johnson (2009) pointed out no significant effect of relationship education on optimism about relationships and attitudes toward marriage. Besides, considering the theoretical framework of the current study, the programs that were based on CBT seemed effective for working relationship issues (Dunn & Schwebel, 1995; Epstein & Baucom, 2002; Ellis & Bernard, 1985; Kayser & Himle, 2002; Schmailing et al., 1989). With a similar fashion, the study of Ersanlı (2007) found that CBT based marriage enrichment program was effective on decreasing some irrational beliefs of couples. Consistently, the study of Kalkan and Ersanlı (2009) that was based on CBT was found effective in decreasing couples' dysfunctional attitudes.

The second hypothesis of the current study was on the investigation of whether the cognitive behavioral group program had a significant effect on romantic beliefs of participants or not. For assessing the validity of this particular hypothesis, first, the romantic beliefs post-test scores of experimental and the control group were compared and followed by the pre-test, post-test and follow up test scores of the control group were statistically compared both for the first and second group studies to evaluate whether the score difference of the control group were based on testing and maturity effects or not. Additionally, the study compared difference among repeated measures for RBS scores of the intervention group participants both for the

109

first study and second group studies. The results of the study indicated confusing findings about the effectiveness of the cognitive behavioral group program on romantic beliefs. In the first study, while the findings revealed no significant difference among repeated measures of the experimental group, in the second study, it showed a significant difference for the experimental group. The findings of the second group study displayed a significant difference from the pre-test to the post-test results for experimental group, while there was not seen any significant difference in the pre-test to the follow up test and the post-test to the follow up test. However, a significant difference was seen between group comparisons of the experimental and the control group at both the first study and the second group studies. Moreover, the findings showed that there was not any significant difference in repeated measures of the control group at both the first group and the second group study, which means that the difference was not because of the testing or maturity threat.

At first glance, the findings on romantic relationship beliefs seem quite interesting in some sort. Why the results of the study complicated for romantic beliefs might be a kind of hard question to answer. Firstly, the finding of the first study that is insignificant in terms of the romantic relationship beliefs is consistent with the study of Bass et al. (2007). Their study also showed that although the participants took the relationship course intervention, their romantic beliefs remained the same. However, it is not consistent with the findings of the study of Sharp and Ganong (2000) that investigated the effectiveness of an integrative teaching method on unrealistic and romantic beliefs of university students. Sharp and Ganong's study showed that the integrative teaching method was effective on the unrealistic and romantic beliefs of participants. There are some potential explanations for those conflictive findings. Researcher has attempted to change romantic and idealized beliefs in romantic relationship; however, romantic beliefs may be reluctant to change in a short intervention time.

Regarding the results of romantic beliefs variable, first of the explanations might be related to the characteristics with young individuals. Articulated by Fowers,

Veingrad and Dominicis (2002), romantic idealism is normative in young individuals. Considering, the age and relationship status (not married) are important variables while explaining this finding. University students might be at the flirt stage and that stage involves the tendency to experience passionate love (Saraç et al., 2015).

Second potential explanation of this finding might be the effect of media on romanticism. Marriage descriptions that are idealized by media and do not prepare individuals to cope with disappointments and fictions (Beck, 1988). People are bombarded with the romantic images and messages that focus on unrealistic marriage expectations (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Culture, especially popular media, shapes one's expectations of reality, including what one can expect from their romantic relationships. Indeed, romantic love and perfect relationship idea are proposed by media (Ingoldsby, 2002). Ninety percent of youths watch movies and 94% to television for information about romance, whereas only 33% try to their mothers and 17% to their fathers for the same advice, suggesting the media may have an influence on romantic expectation comparable to parents (Bachen & Illouz, 1996). The media is described as a stimulus that is highly effective on shaping the perception of individuals about romantic beliefs (e.g., Lippman, Ward & Seabrook, 2014). Research has shown that among college students, beliefs known to be associated with decreased marital satisfaction, such as the belief in the "one perfect, predestined soul-mate" and the belief that mind-reading is to be expected in relationships, were found to be associated with consumption of romantic media (Holmes, 2007). Likewise, the study of Hefner (2015) revealed that the individuals who watch wedding reality TV and royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton found endorsement of romantic beliefs of individuals. Although the participants of the current study had an intervention that provided critical perspective toward romantic beliefs that are excessive, keeping out of romantic beliefs enforced by media was nearly impossible.

Third, some romantic beliefs may be seen as cultural. According to Ingoldsby (2002), most Americans seem apparently to look for an ideal "soul mate". The study

of Medora, Larson, Hortaçsu and Dave (2002) indicates that Americans indicate higher romanticism than Turks and Indians. However, the public university that is the sample of the study can be seen as a university that affected by American culture more than most of the other Turkish universities because of the education language is English. With a similar manner, Saraç et al. (2015) found a positive relationship between excessive expectations in relationship and relationship satisfaction in a study conducted in Turkish sample. Turkish culture is described as a culture that focuses on not only emotional dependency but also independence (Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005; Mayer, Trommsdorff, Kağıtçıbaşı & Mishra, 2012). That unique characteristic of Turkish culture might affect the romantic beliefs of individuals in this culture. Thus, future research is needed to understand romantic beliefs more in Turkish culture.

Fourth, although dysfunctional relationship beliefs might ultimately lead to disenchantment and disappointment for individuals involved in romantic relations, that does not mean that every unrealistic belief about intimate relationship are essentially dysfunctional. As Reis and Sprecher (2009) suggest, some relationship beliefs that are unrealistic can be valuable if they encourage efforts to bring relationship of a person as close as likely to the ideal. In other words, relationship beliefs might be used as an ideal standard or goal that couple agrees is value trying to achieve instead of using it as a standard that means unsuccess if not fully met. Articulated by Johnson (2009), perhaps the right question should be how it can be worked with inflated expectations about marriage in order to help enhancing healthy relationship without changing individuals' belief systems.

Last, the finding of the study on romantic relationship beliefs can be explained by lack of experience of the counselor because there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the second group study, while there was not a significant difference for the first group study that conducted before the second study. Furthermore, the findings of the study can be explained with the help of the group content. The current program content primarily focused on constraining beliefs about mate selection described by Larson (1992) that also covers the topics were

linked to romantic beliefs. Another alternative explanation can be about time. As mentioned by Sharp and Ganong (2000), expecting the important changes in the belief systems in students in a very short time for educators may not be realistic. Probably, the results of the study will reveal its effectiveness after a long time. To illustrate, the study of Larson (1988) shows that marriage course is effective after marriage for students. Given the findings of this study, more research is needed to answer the question whether the current program is effective on romantic beliefs of the students because of the inconsistent finding between the first and the second group studies.

To sum up the discussion of the general findings of this study, the results showed that the effectiveness of the current program is different for constraining mate selection beliefs and romantic beliefs. This difference may be explained by the nature of these two variables. While constraining mate selection beliefs mainly focus on how much individuals have ideal expectations for marriage mate before marriage, romantic beliefs show the current perception regarding the relationships (Cobb et al., 2003). In addition, Cobb et al. (2003) mentions just the four of nine constraining beliefs are conceptually related to romanticism and the association between these two variables are as moderate. Thus, the different effect of the program on these different variables might be seen understandable.

The current study also provided information based on open ended questions that reflect the evaluations of the participants for the group program. The qualitative findings of the study indicated some findings on strengths and weaknesses of the group program, contributions of the program to the participants, evaluation of time and length of the group program, and whether they suggest program to their friends or not. The findings showed that awareness was a key element that perceived as a contribution in the group program. In a parallel manner, according to Halford et al. (2003), awareness has an essential role in motivating individuals to work harder for their relationships. Furthermore, Hawkins et al. (2004) points out the importance of providing awareness and knowledge on marriage in premarital education. Similarly, premarital group counseling intends to raise awareness, provide insight, and develop

113

skills about relationships with the help of group interaction (Hamamcı, 2012). Moreover, one of the codes that emerged in qualitative data was awareness which was expressed with self-understanding. Consistently, self-understanding was mentioned as a learning domain in marriage courses (e.g., Nielsen et al. 2004). In a similar vein, Williams et al. (1999) mentioned the self-discovery as one of the most helpful element in marriage preparation programs.

Discussions are pointed as an important point while raising awareness in the current program. Discussion with other participants is indicated as an outstanding component of marriage preparation programs (Williams et al., 1999). Similarly, according to Hamamcı (2012), discussion can be used as a tool to raise awareness in premarital counseling. Worthington et al. (1989) indicated that group discussions improved the marital satisfaction of participants, and also their intimacy. Likewise, Bass et al., 2007 pointed at the effectiveness of the discussions in groups before marriage.In addition, Johnson (2009) mentioned that the talking relationship issues with other students, discussing relationship issues, and experiencing different learning opportunities were described as meaningful contributions to students. To Adler et al. (2007), it is suggested that instructors remain to implement programs that combine an engaging and active learning process with experiential activities with more experiential and practical ingredients.

Other important codes were universality and group interaction that emerged in qualitative data. Articulated by Yalom (2002), universality and group cohesion are the essential factors that make the groups effective. Similarly, Zimpfer (1988) stated that as another kind of relationship program, marital enrichment programs provide cohesiveness and understanding that they are not alone. Furthermore, the content of the program was mentioned as strength. Similarly, according to Williams et al. (1999), content of the program was a very crucial and helpful factor in marriage preparation programs. Additionally, Childs and Duncan (2012) stated the chief importance of content in marriage preparation programs. Furthermore, as similar with the findings of this study, written materials for study were reported as another outstanding element in marriage preparation programs and learning about marriage

was described as the help of marriage preparation programs by those program participants (Williams et al., 1999). Also, Hamamcı (2012) pointed out the important role of group characteristic and suggested highly educated individuals may tend to take more cognitive interventions. Furthermore, with consistent with the findings of the study on content and format, the importance of clearly stated goals and objectives were pointed as the key factor in effectiveness of marriage preparation programs (Childs & Duncan, 2012). Participants mentioned the content as strength of group program. According to Hawkins et al. (2004), an important need of young people is how to make good marriage and the partner preferences. Helping to develop clearer cognitive models for good marriages is an educational possibility (Hawkins et al., 2004). Also, articulated by Childs and Duncan (2012), a clearly defined theoretical foundation guides the development of a marriage preparation program. Furthermore, as a well-educated group, the most of the participants reported they liked the methods. Consistently, Hawkins et al. (2004) indicated that learning styles are mentioned as an outstanding factor; highly educated individuals are familiarized to more cognitive and didactic methods.

Furthermore, participants mentioned the learning from others in addition to understand themselves. Tuna (2012) suggested three main areas that affects the change of participants in the group process as intrapersonal space, interpersonal space, the group space which contains culture, gender etc. Considering the reports of the participants, it was seen that the group program enforced the areas especially interpersonal and intrapersonal space would lead the change as consistent with the areas that mentioned by Tuna (2012).

The findings of the current study revealed the importance of instructor as a factor. Williams et al. (1999) reported counselors as most effective help providers in relation to helpfulness of the marriage preparation programs. In the same vein, Hawkins et al. (2004) mentioned the instructor as a crucial factor in marriage education. Additionally, Hunt et al. (1998) advocated that the leader's ability to provide positive support and rapport with participants is a central factor in positive outcomes. In premarital programs, it is crucial to have a warm and trust relationship that is

emphatic between counselor and group clients and also among clients (Hamamcı, 2012). Therapies become more effective once three prerequisites are met; the bond between the client and counselor or the group process should be strong; the goals of the counseling must be clearly stated and agreed by both client and counselor, and the client must have a good understanding of which tasks will be the focused in the therapy (Sochting, 2014). Furthermore, the participants pointed out that the group leader guided well the group sessions. According to Bruhn and Hill (2004), counselor has a teacher and educator role that focus on providing skills and information to individuals in premarital groups as consistent with the applications in the present study.

In terms of time and length of the group program, while most of the participants stated the time and length of the program as ideal, some of the participants suggested having more sessions. As bolster evidence to that finding, the study of Williams et al. (1999) revealed that supporting participants who attended eight to nine marriage preparation program sessions reported higher perceived value than those who had participated fewer sessions than eight sessions. Another finding was that all participants of the group program reported they strongly suggest the program to their friends. Similarly, in study of Bagarozzi et al. (1984), all of the couples reported the positive influence of program on them. The findings of the study were consistent with the previous research findings that stress the need for education programs before the marriage (Hamamcı, 2011; Şen, 2009) and programs that specifically focus on dysfunctional beliefs and myths about relationship and marriage (Edmunson, 2005; Haskan Avcı, 2014; Honeycutt, 1991; Risch, Riley & Lawler, 2003; Sharp & Ganong, 2000).

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The reader should bear in mind that the study based on a particular sample. The current study focused exclusively upon a well-educated sample who is master and doctoral students of a very well-known university in Turkey that leads the very narrow generalizability to people who are from the other socio economic levels and

different educational levels. Also, due to the practical constraints, this research cannot provide a comprehensive review of all variables in romantic relationships. A full discussion of the effect of some variables such as gender, class level, relationship status, attachment styles, and relationship experience in constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs lies beyond the scope of this study. Because of the low sample size, this study did not investigate the dysfunctional beliefs regarding those variables. Those variables should be taken into consideration in further studies with higher sample sizes. Specifically, the effects of this program on relationship status were not investigated. Considering its possible effect to enhance or break up to relationships, future research should consider the relationship status as a variable. In addition, different constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs in Turkish culture were not investigated and any cultural adaptation was not done considering the culture in this study. In future studies, depending on the association between culture and beliefs, the additional relationship beliefs in Turkish culture should be considered. Also, this study does not give any information about behavioral change in mate selection or romantic relationships. Future research may investigate behavioral change of participants. The data of this study was obtained by self-report scales. In future studies, in addition to self-report scales, observation can be used to enhance the reliability of program. Also depending on the large age range of the sample of this study, there may be developmental differences between master and doctoral students. Future studies should use more homogeneous samples. Furthermore, the current study may have the potential for Hawthorne effect which means that individuals improve an aspect of their behavior because of their awareness of being observed (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2004). Further studies may prevent Hawthorne effect through using an intervention for control group. Despite those limitations, the findings of this study are notable in that it investigated a previously unexplored area and based on statistically some significant results. The results suggest areas of interest for future studies in premarital education and premarital programs.

5.3 Implications of the Study

There are several important areas in which this study makes original contributions to research on premarital interventions. First of all, these findings have outstanding implications for professionals working with young and single adults who are preparing or planning for marriage. A number of cultural aspects at a university campus enhance intellectual, social and personal development whilst the students also need to explore the development in adult intimate relationships (Michel & Randick, 2013). Corey (2012) states that university is a place not just that is academic but also self-nourishment, self-awareness and exploration providing. Thus, this study hopes to support university students in their self-exploration about mate selection and romantic beliefs with a tested program.

More specifically, this study is the first one focusing on constraining beliefs about mate selection and romantic beliefs up to our knowledge. Preventive marital health is hoped to achieve a deeper level significance in society (Hunt, Hof, & DeMaria, 1998). Appropriately, preparation for marriage is an essential step for increasing wellness and decreasing divorce and family problems (Hunt et al., 1998). Unrealistic expectations about marriage generate frustration and distress (Hamamcı, 2005a) and premarital preparation has been indicated as decreasing of family problems and divorce (e.g., Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993). Additionally, communication is described as a corner point in relationships (Bruhn & Hill, 2004). In this group program, group participants have chance to learn talk about their expectations and relationship beliefs in an open way. It is hoped that this communication way will enhance their future communication with their partner or their potential partners. As mentioned by Sharp and Ganong (2000), even the small changes can be seen as big contributions considering its future consequences to marriage. Articulated by Hunt, et al. (1998), no program may make major changes in brief time period such as one day, one week, however, individuals in such programs are able to change salient elements and achieve surprising changes. Moreover, preventive education targets less distress individuals (Hawkins et al., 2004), that program does not only hope to provide significant change in constraining beliefs of individuals, but also it hopes to

make the individuals closer to seek marital help in problem situations in their future marriage.

Theory based marriage preparation programs have been inadequately tested and underdeveloped (Silliman & Schumm, 2000). This study provides strong results in proposing a tested program with not only pre-test, post-test, follow up control group experimental design but also with a replication group study. Additionally, qualitative feedback from participants is important to understand how and why interventions of marriage preparation programs are effective (Silliman & Schumm, 2000). The current study also provides qualitative feedback through using open ended group evaluation form questions about the effectiveness of this group program. Furthermore, Carroll and Doherty (2003) state that in premarital studies, generally European American, middle class samples were used and there was not enough implication to understand whether these premarital interventions are effective with other groups and populations. Lastly, the current study can be seen as an implication for validity of the effectiveness of a specific premarital program in Turkish culture.

5.4 Suggestions of the Study

Along with precious implications of this study to the literature, the current study has some suggestions for professionals in practice and researchers. In terms of suggestions for professionals, first, the results of the study showed that cognitive behavioral group program is effective on diminishing constraining beliefs of participants about mate selection. Considering that result, University Counseling Centers may use that program to help students who have difficulties about mate selection. Second, community and Family Health Centers may use the group program to support single individuals in preventive and developmental counseling. Third, considering the importance of leader characteristics, leader training programs should be constituted to teach essential skills to leaders in premarital counseling. Fourth, governmental support is also essential for marriage education (Hawkins et al., 2004). Public policy should be developed to fund individuals and couples to participate in premarital counseling. Fifth, mass media public awareness campaigns

might be crucial to increase awareness of the public health benefits of premarital education programs. Last, parents tend not to discuss such grown-up concepts as romance, marriage, and sexuality with children and adolescents. That may lead children and adolescents to learn those concepts from media and literature. Programs should be developed that teach parents how to discuss issues of marriage and love with their children that may help them develop realistic expectations and contribute to their future well-being.

Along with practical suggestions, the present study has some suggestions for further research. First, it is the first group program that is specifically based on constraining mate selection beliefs of graduate students. These constraining beliefs are limited with the beliefs that mentioned by Larson (1992). In Turkish culture, there may be additional beliefs about mate selection and romantic relationships. The researchers should investigate those beliefs to provide a broader perspective. Moreover, this study is limited with pre-test, post-test, and follow up test. According to Hamamcı (2012), the effectiveness of premarital interventions may be seen as a long time later after intervention. For understanding the long-term effect of the program, new studies of a longitudinal nature should be conducted. Additionally, the relationship satisfaction or marriage satisfaction are not the variables of current study. For understanding the effect of this premarital program on marital satisfaction, longitudinal studies should be conducted. As aforementioned, this study contains single participants; couples can attain the program to understand whether it empowers or not with respect to the effectiveness of the program. Furthermore, further studies may focus more on skill practice (such as problem solving and communication) in addition to dysfunctional relationship beliefs with higher session numbers. Also, following studies should consider the leader variables such as warmth, genuineness, experience, and non-judgment due to the potential for having an effect on the final products of group program. In addition to that, it is important to confirm independently the findings of the current study from the perspective of alternative designs and also confirm by using different measurements. Considering the nature of beliefs that affects from the social and cultural components, focus groups with adults who are diverse educational and socio economical level could

help the determine the content of next programs that focuses on attitudes and beliefs about mate selection. Lastly, considering the web is a part of daily life, developing and investigating the effectiveness of web based marriage preparation courses can be investigated.

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Appendix A: Summary of the Cognitive Behavioral Group Program

Group Program

Session 1

In the first session, participants met with each other. Each participant talked about their name, age, relationship status, free time activities, their faculty and class. After meeting, the leader explained the purpose of the group program and informed participants about the frequency, time, and the place of the group program. Additionally, leader structure the group by explaining the rules (not having food, confidentiality etc.). Furthermore, the leader gave information about group procedure. The leader focused on the CBT, briefly. For explaining the CBT, she explained the relationship between thinking, feeling and acting. After informing participants about all those, she focused on the mate selection process and gave information about this process. She described the mate selection process as a complicated process and emphasized there might be factors which would have influence on mate selection and asked the participants "Which factors have an influence on your mate selection process?" All participants explained their factors about their mate selection process. The leader summarized all the factors. In addition to these factors, she told there were some criterias that in mate selection by built by ourselves because of our experinces and expectantions. Then, leader asked to participants "what are your mate selection criterias?" Each of the participants expressed their criterias about marriage mate selection. Then, leader focused on the similarities and differences in mate selection criterias of participants and depicted of where our criterias might derive from (some factors such as childhood experiences, media, gender role etc.). Furthermore, participants stated their awareness on factors and criterias for marriage mate selection. Leader informed the participants about the steps of mate selection. The first step was explained as discovering yourself (What do I look for in mate selection? What are the important criterias for me in mate

selection? What are my likes and dislikes for a romantic partner? Who do I get along well with?). The second step was described as describing the partner (What are the characteristics that I look for in a marriage mate? What are the characteristics that I can not tolerate in a marriage mate?). The third step was explained as deciding marriage partner considering your expectations and your partner criteria (Does my partner satisfy my expectations or not?). Lastly, the leader focused on the role of beliefs in all of these steps and informed about the importance of being aware of our beliefs about mate selection and romanticism. Before the termination, leader gave information about constraining beliefs about mate selection and she expressed what those beliefs are and she gave a hand out about those beliefs. She wanted participants to look to those beliefs and think about whether they had those beliefs or not and assessing which degree they agree on those beliefs.

Handout

Constraining Beliefs about Mate Selection

The One and Only: This belief advocates that in the world, there is just one and only right person for me to marry that focuses on the passivity in mate selection process.

The Perfect Self: The person who has this belief alleges that in order to get married, an individual should feel fully competent as a future marriage partner before the decision of marriage.

The Perfect Partner: The person who has this belief advocates that in order to get married, his or her partner should be fully perfect as a future marriage partner before the decision of marriage.

Perfect Relationship: The person who has that belief may imply that a relationship must be perfect to worth getting married.

Try Harder: The individual who has this belief may think if they try hard enough, they would be happy in any relationship.

Love is enough: The person who has this belief may claim that falling in love toward someone is an adequate reason to marry with that partner, and those individuals may underlie the other factors that are essential for a healthy marriage.

Cohabitation: This belief implies cohabitation is a stage to prove a relationship before the marriage.

Opposite Complement: Individuals who have this belief claim that people who have opposite characteristics are more appropriate to marry with each other.

Choosing should be easy: The person who has this belief advocates that choosing a mate is the manner of chance.

Session 2

In the second session, the leader asked what they have experienced while thinking on constraining beliefs about mate selection. The participants shared their experiences and awareness on their constraining beliefs about mate selection. Then the leader guided the participants to talk about each constraining belief one by one. Firstly, "The one and only" belief was discussed. Each participant expressed why they believe that belief or why they do not agree on this belief. In that way, participants had chance to see the alternative thinking ways. "The perfect partner", "The perfect self" and "The perfect relationship" beliefs were explained in the same ways. The group focused on the importance of realizing your partner rather than idealizing the partner as suggested by Parrott and Parrott (1995). Furthermore, the leader emphasized the information of being more realistic facilitates to move a deeper intimacy for couples (Parrott & Parrott, 1995). At the end of the session, leader summarized the discussions of the participants on "The one and only", "The perfect partner", "The perfect self" and "The perfect relationship" beliefs.

Session 3

In the third session, the leader asked the thoughts of participants on "Try harder", "Love is enough", "Cohabitating", "Opposite complements", and "Choosing should be easy" beliefs. The group went on to talk about these constraining beliefs. She invited participants to discuss their point of views on each belief to propose alternative thoughts on these dysfunctional beliefs. She aimed to enforce discussions for empowering learning from the other participants considering the discussions were as an adventage of group programs. At the end of the session, leader summarized all the ideas on "Try harder", "Love is enough", "Cohabitating", "Opposite complements", and "Choosing should be easy" beliefs. Then, she explained that there were some ways to look the validity of our beliefs thanks to some CBT techniques. Then, she shared the "Thought questioning form" that stemmed from the special CBT questions of Beck (2011). Lastly, she invited participants to fill in the blanks at that questioning form and she informed participants about those questions

156

would be discussed at the next session. Those questions were prepared for each of the nine constraining beliefs. A sample of it was presented below.

THOUGHT QUESTIONING

Thought: **The One and Only: This belief advocates that in the world, there is just one and only right person for me to marry that focuses on the passivity in mate selection process.**

1. What are the evidences that support my thought?	
2. What are evidences that disprove my thought?	
3. Is there any alternative thought to this thought?	
4. What is the effect of believing this thought for me?	
5. What can be the effect of changing this thought for me?	
6. What would I suggest if my friend had this thought?	

Session 4

In the fourth session, first, the leader invited the participants to share what they experienced while filling the thought questioning forms. Then, one by one, each of constraining beliefs are questioned for all participants. After sharing the answers of the participants to those questions, leader encouraged them to talk about participants what are their awareness on. The leader focused on which alternative answers they felt close to empower alternative thoughts on constraining beliefs and romanticism. Also she asked which ideas they would like to take with them. And she summarized the awareness of the participants and emphasized the importance of thinking in alternative ways in romantic relationships.

Session 5

In the last session, leader shared a paper which contains quotations from transcripts of the sessions that represented the functional alternative thinking ways about mate selection and romantic beliefs. With that way, leader assisted participants in reviewing the group experience Addition to that, participants evaluated the whole group process. They gave the feedback to each other. They talked about their awareness thanks to their group experience. Leader focused on that change was a process. Additionally, she stressed that for transferring these changes to different environments they should use the same techniques to develop alternative beliefs. Furthermore, leader gave information for dealing with possible setbacks and presented attendance certifications.

Appendix B: Middle East Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee Approval Letter

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

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13.04.2015

Gönderilen : Prof.Dr. Ayhan Demir
Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü

Gönderen : Prof. Dr. Canan Sümer
IAK Başkan Vekili

İlgi : Etik Onayı

Danışmanlığını yapmış olduğunuz Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü doktora öğrencisi Gökçe Sancak Aydın'ın "**Bilişsel Davranışçı bir Grup Programının Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Eş Seçimine Dair Sınırlayıcı İnançları ve Romantik İlişki İnançları Üzerine Etkisi**" isimli araştırması "İnsan Araştırmaları Komitesi" tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.
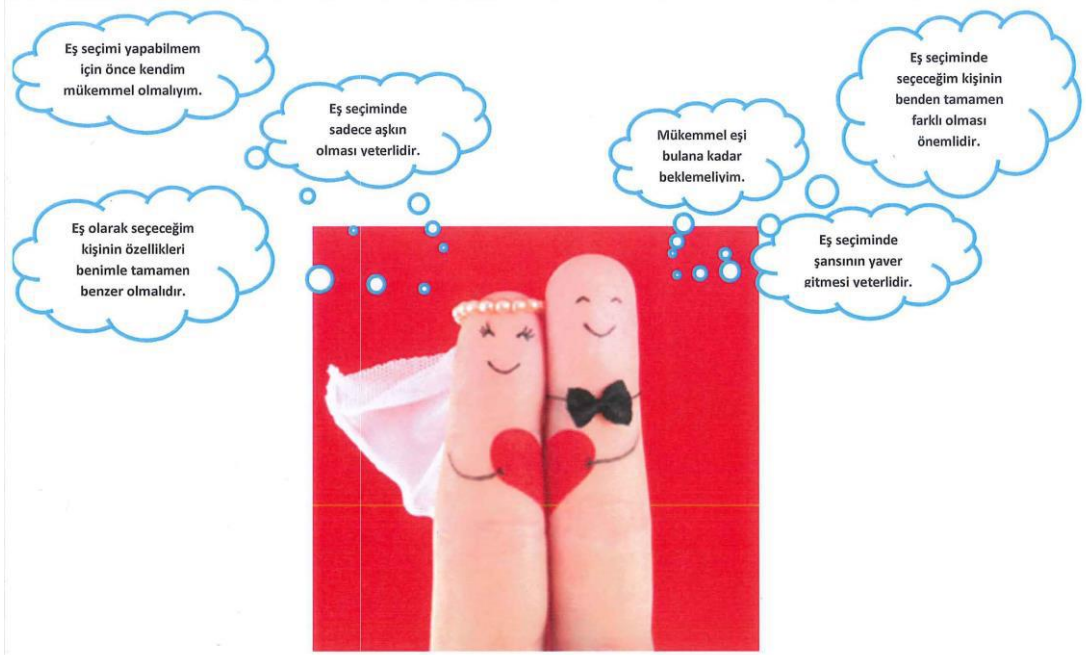
Etik Komite Onayı

Uygundur

13/04/2015

Prof.Dr. Canan Sümer
Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi
(UEAM) Başkan Vekili
ODTÜ 06531 ANKARA

159

REST Ölçeği

Sayın Katılımcı;

Bu ölçek, bireylerin eş seçimine yönelik inançlarını belirlemeye yöneliktir. Aşağıdaki ifadeleri okuduktan sonra, sizi en iyi yansıttığını düşündüğünüz ifadeyi ilgili paranteze (X) işareti koyarak belirtiniz. Bu bir test olmadığından cevaplar doğru ve yanlış olarak değerlendirilmeyecektir. Önemli olan vereceğiniz cevapların sizi doğru olarak yansıtmasıdır. Ölçekteki hiç bir maddeyi boş bırakmadan cevaplayınız. Burada ifade ettiğiniz bilgiler sadece bu çalışma için kullanılacak olup, başka bir amaçla kullanılmayacaktır.

Yardımlarınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Açıklama: Aşağıdaki ifadelerden her birini okuduktan sonra, bu ifadeye ne ölçüde katıldığınızı gösteren sütuna ait olan kutucuğun içini (**X**)şeklinde işaretleyiniz.	Hiç Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Tamamen Katılıyorum
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1 Çoğu yaşıtlarım gibi, ben de bir gün evleneceğimden eminim.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
6 Sevdiğim kişi benim için tamamıyla ideal olmasa bile onunla evlenebilirim.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
11 Birbirimize duyduğumuz aşk, mutlu bir evlilik yürütmek için yeterli olmalıdır.	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

Appendix E: Sample Items of Romantic Beliefs Scale

RİÖ

Aşağıda romantik ilişkilere yönelik bireylerin benimsedikleri bazı düşünceler bulunmaktadır. Lütfen her bir cümleyi dikkatle okuyup, bu düşüncelere ne kadar katıldığınızı belirleyiniz.

	Hiç Katılmıyorum	Biraz Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Çok Katılıyorum	Tamamen Katılıyorum
2. Birine aşık olursam, ailem ve arkadaşlarım bu ilişkiyi onaylamasa da kendimi ona adarım.					
4. Gerçek aşkın sonsuza dek süreceğine inanırım.					
9. Birine aşık olursam bu ilişkiye karşı çıkılmasına, aramızdaki fiziksel mesafeye ya da herhangi bir başka engele rağmen onunla birlikte olmanın bir yolunu bulurum.					
10. Benim için, sadece bir tek gerçek aşk olacaktır.					

Appendix F: The Group Evaluation Form

GRUP DEĞERLENDİRME FORMU

1. Sizce katıldığınız grup programının güçlü ve güçsüz yanları nelerdi?

2. Bu grup programını oturum sayısı ve gruba katılan üye açısından nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?

3. Katıldığınız grup programının size ne gibi katkıları olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

4. Böyle bir gruba katılmayı arkadaşlarınıza ne derece önerirsiniz?

Varsa yorum ve önerilerinizi lütfen paylaşınız

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix G: Participation Certificate

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ

KATILIM BELGESI

Sayın……………,

2015 yılında Psi. Dan. Gökçe Sancak Aydın tarafından düzenlenen "Eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı düşünceler ve romantik inançlar üzerine bir grup programı" isimli gruba katılımınızdan ötürü teşekkür ederiz.

Gökçe Sancak Aydın

Appendix H: The Codes of Qualitative Findings

Codes for the first group study

Code	Frequency
Strengths of the Group program	
Encouraging to learn from others	13
Offering insight	3
Leader's skills	3
Providing a positive atmosphere	8
Content of the group program	9
Weakneses of the group program	
Challenge to yourself	1
Challenged by others	1
Offered content and the format of the group program	9
Number of sessions	
Ideal	11
Should have more	3
Number of participant	
Ideal	13
Should have less	1
Contributions to the participants	
Learning from others	11
Understanding yourself	12
Understanding the mate selection process	2
Change	7
Awareness	5
Whether suggest or not	
Strongly Suggest	14

Codes for the second group study

Code	Frequency
Strengths of the Group program	
Encouraging to learn from others	14
Offering insight	2
Leader's skills	4
Positive atmosphere	1
Offered content of the group program	9
Format of the group program	10
Weaknesses of the group program	
The format of the group program	9
The content of the group program	3
Number of sessions	
Ideal	9
Should have more	5
Number of participant	
Ideal	9
Should have less	5
Contributions to the participants	
Learning from others	7
Understanding yourself	13
Understanding the mate selection process	1
Change	3
Awareness	11
Universality	2
Whether suggest or not	
Strongly Suggest	14

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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
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B.S.	Ege University, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, İzmir	2002 - 2006

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2006- 2007	KEV Bandırma İkköğretim Okulu	Pschological Counselor
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2009 – Present	Middle East Technical University	Research Assistant

RELATED TO PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Ünlü F., Sancak Aydın G., Mutlu T., Duru N., Çabuk S., Bahçekapılı T, METU, Ankara (2012, September). Web assisted psychological first aid training for preservice counselor. Paper was presented at International Applied Education Congress, 2012, Ankara, Turkey.

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TÜRKÇE ÖZET

**BİLİŞSEL DAVRANIŞÇI BİR GRUP PROGRAMININ LİSANSÜSTÜ
ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN EŞ SEÇİMİNE DAİR SINIRLAYICI İNANÇLARI
VE ROMANTİK İNANÇLARI ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ**

1. GİRİŞ

Romantik ilişki kurmak ve evlilik, genç yetişkinliğin en önemli gelişim ödevlerinden birisidir. Erikson (1968) bu dönemde, kişilerin yakın ilişki kurma ihtiyacı içerisinde olduklarını vurgular. Üniversite yılları bu ilişkilerin kurulması için büyük önem taşıyan bir dönemdir. Çalışmalar üniversite öğrencilerinin en çok psikolojik destek almak istedikleri alanlardan birinin romantik ilişkiler olduğunu göstermektedir (Creasey ve ark., 1999; Doğan, 2007; Erkan, ve ark., 2012). Bu dönemde yaşanan romantik ilişkiler ve geliştirilen inançların ileride yapılacak evlilikleri de etkileyeceği düşünülmektedir (Furman, 2002).

Evliliklerdeki mutsuzluğun artışı ve boşanmalar, başarısız evliliklerin nedenlerini incelemeyi gerekli hale getirmiştir (Larson ve Holman, 1994). Son yıllarda aile ile ilgili yapılan araştırmalar evlilik doyumu ve niteliğini etkileyen evlilik öncesi faktörlerin önemine dikkat çekmektedir (Larson ve Holman, 1994). Evlilik niteliğini etkileyen evlilik öncesi faktörlerden biri de inançlar olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Sharp ve Ganong, 2000). Gerçekçi olmayan ilişki inançları, çeşitli araştırmalarda ilişkiyi akılcı olmayan bir yolla ele alma eğilimi olarak tanımlamaktadır (örn., Kurdek, 1993). Gerçekçi olmayan inançlar, yanlış ve çarpıtılmış bilişsel şemalara dayanmaktadır (Kurdek, 1992). Bu inançların pek çoğu yaşantı içerisinde ebeveynler, çevre ve medya etkisi ile oluşmaktadır (Sharp ve Ganong, 2000). İşlevsel olmayan inançlar şemsiye bir kavram olarak kullanılmaktadır. Eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inançlar ve aşırı romantik inançları bu kapsamda değerlendirmek mümkündür.

Larson (1992) eş seçimi konusunda bireylerde görülen dokuz sınırlandırıcı inançtan bahsetmektedir. Bunlar; dünyada evlenebileceği tek ve yalnızca bir doğru kişi olduğu düşüncesini içeren "Yalnızca tek bir ideal eş vardır" inancı, evlenilecek mükemmel bir eş bulana kadar evlenmemeliyim düşüncesini içeren "Mükemmel eş" inancı, gelecekte iyi bir eş olarak kendimden kesinlikle emin olana kadar evlenmemeliyim biçiminde olan "Mükemmel ben" inancı, evlenmeden önce ilişkimizin devam edeceğini ispatlamalıyız şeklinde ifade edilen "Mükemmel ilişki' inancı, yeterince gayret sarf edersem evlenmek için seçtiğim kişiyle mutlu olabilirim düşüncesinin hakim olduğu "Daha fazla gayret etmeliyim" inancı, kişinin birisine aşık olmanın evlenmek için yeterli bir neden olduğunu düşündüğü "Sevgi yeterlidir'' inancı, kişinin evlenmeden önce evleneceği kişiyle birlikte yaşarsa, evlilikte mutlu olma şansını artırabileceğine inandığı "Birlikte yaşamak" inancı, kişinin kendisinden farklı olan birisini evlenmek için seçmelidir düşüncesine sahip olduğu "Zıt kutuplar'' inancı ve kişinin eş seçiminin tesadüfen ve şans eseri olduğuna inandığı "Seçim yapmak kolay olmalı" inancıdır.

Buna ek olarak benzer biçimde romantik inançların da ilişkilerin başlamasını ve ilişkinin ilerleyen aşamalarını büyük oranda etkilediği düşünülmektedir (Knee, 1998). Romantik inançların ilişkilerde yaşanan çatışmaları açıklayabileceği belirtilmektedir (örn. Sprecher ve Metts, 1999). Romantik inançlar, ilişkiye dair idealler, oluşturan algı ve beklentiler olarak değerlendirilmektedir (Eidelson ve Epstein, 1982). Sprecher ve Metts, (1999) romantik inançları *Aşk bir yol bulur, ilk ve tek aşk, idealleştirme* ve *ilk görüşte aşk olarak* dört boyut olarak ele almaktadır. *Aşk bir yol bulur,* kişinin tüm engel, farklılık ve sorunlara rağmen romantik ilişkisini yürütebileceğine dair inancıdır, *ilk ve tek aşk* ise kişinin gerçek aşkının sonsuza değin süreceğine ve gerçek aşkın sadece bir tek olacağına dair inançlarıdır. *İdealleştirme ise,* kişinin romantik ilişkisinde tüm şeylerin mükemmel olacağına ve aşık olduğu kişinin sevgili olarak mükemmel biri olacağına dair inançları içerir. Son olarak ise *ilk görüşte aşk,* kişinin gerçek aşkını bulduğunu ilk görüşte anlayacağına dair inançları kapsamaktadır.

Pek çok çalışma işlevsel olmayan ilişki inançlarını azaltmaya yönelik müdahale programları oluşturmuş ve bu programların etkililiğini incelemiştir (örn. Bass ve ark., 2002; Sharp ve Ganong, 2000). Fakat özellikle eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı düşünceleri azaltmaya yönelik

programlar güçlü bir biçimde önerilmesine rağmen (örn. Cobb ve ark., 2003, Larson, 1992) bu programlara henüz rastlanamamaktadır. Özellikle bu konuda geliştirilecek uygulamaların ise, bilişsel davranışçı kurama dayanabileceği belirtilmiştir (Larson, 1992).

Bilişsel Davranışçı Kuram (BDK), akılcı ve işlevsel olmayan inançların, işlevsel olmayan duygu ve davranışlara neden olduğunu savunmaktadır (Beck, 2011). Bu kurama göre, kişinin duygu ve davranışını değiştirmek için öncelikle olarak kişinin düşüncesini, inancını değiştirmek gereklidir (Beck, 2011). Yapılan araştırmalar BDK'ın romantik ilişkilerle ilgili çalışırken etkili bir yaklaşım olduğunu rapor etmektedir (örn. Epstein ve Baucom, 2001; Ellis ve Bernard, 1985). Bu noktadan hareketle, bu çalışmada da BDK kuramsal temel olarak benimsenmektedir. Ayrıca, grupla psikolojik danışmanın; diğer üyelerden geribildirim almayı sağlaması, kişiye yeni davranışları öğrenme ve deneyimleme fırsatı sunması, kişiye yalnız olmadığı hissini vermesi, rahatlık ve güven hissi sağlaması, geniş bir uygulama alanına sahip olması ve aynı anda birden çok kişiye yardım etme olanağı sağlaması gibi avantajları bulunmaktadır (Koydemir, 2012). Bu avantajlar göz önünde bulundurularak, bilişsel davranışçı yaklaşımıyla grupla psikolojik danışma kapsamında bir program geliştirilmesine karar verilmiştir. Bu çalışmada, lisansüstü üniversite öğrencilerinin eş seçimi ile ilgili sınırlayıcı düşünceleri ve romantik ilişki inançları üzerine geliştirilen bilişsel davranışçı bir grup programının etkililiği incelenmektedir.

Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı bilişsel davranışçı bir grup programının lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçimi ile ilgili sınırlayıcı düşünceleri ve romantik ilişki inançları üzerine etkisini incelemektir.

Çalışmanın Önemi

Bu çalışma, pek çok bakımdan alanyazına katkı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. İlk olarak, romantik ilişkiler, genç yetişkinlerin gelişiminde en önemli bileşenlerden birisidir. Strachman (2008) romantik ilişkileri yaşam doyumunun ve duygusal iyi oluşun en önemli kaynaklarından biri olarak tanımlamaktadır. Araştırmalar, bireylerin önceden

var olan inançlarının genellikle romantik ilişkiler üzerine beklentilerini ve ilişki içerisindeki tutumlarını etkilediğini göstermektedir (örn. Baucom ve Epstein, 1990). Romantik ilişkilerin bireylerin gelişimi ve iyi oluşları üzerindeki etkisi ve işlevsel olmayan ilişki inançlarının olumsuz etkileri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inançlar ve romantik inançlar için önleyici çalışmalar yapılmasının önemli olduğu görülmektedir. Gerçekçi olmayan ilişki inançlarının olumsuz sonuçları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, evlilik öncesi eğitim yoluyla gerçekçi olmayan inançları azaltarak ilişki başarısını arttırabilmektedir (Bass ve ark., 2007).

Ülkemizde eş seçimi ile ilgili yapılan çalışmada üniversite öğrencilerinin gelecek eşlerini idealize ettikleri bulunmuş (Güngör ve ark., 2011) ve öğrencilerin gerçekçi beklentiler geliştirmeleri için yapılacak grup çalışmalarına ihtiyaç belirtilmiştir (Saraç ve ark., 2015). Benzer biçimde, Hamamcı (2005) bilişsel temelli kuramsal yaklaşımların gerçekçi olmayan ilişki inançlarının değiştirilmesinde kullanılmasını önermiştir. Bu çalışma bilişsel davranışçı bir grup programı yardımıyla bireylerin gerçekçi beklentiler geliştirmelerine katkı sağlaması bakımından önemlidir.

Bu çalışmanın bir başka önemi toplumda hızla artan boşanma oranlarının azalması için atılacak adımlar konusunda önleyici bir katkı sağlamayı umut etmesidir. TÜİK (2015) raporlarına göre ülkemizde boşanma oranları hızla artmaktadır. Boşanmaların sadece kişiler üzerinde değil, çocuklar ve toplum üzerindeki etkileri de göz önünde bulundurulduğunda önleyici çalışmalar daha da önemli bir hal almaktadır. Evlilik öncesi ilişki zenginleştirme programlarının ilişki doyumunu artırmada etkili olduğu (örn. Yalçın, 2010; Yılmaz ve Kalkan, 2010) araştırılmış olmasına rağmen, eş seçecek bireyler için geliştirilmiş eş seçimi ile ilgili sınırlandırıcı inançları ve romantik inançları değiştirmeyi hedefleyen bir program henüz bulunmamaktadır.

Bu çalışma Türkiye' de lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançlar ve romantik inançları üzerine deneysel desenle çalışan ilk çalışma olma özelliği göstermektedir. Ayrıca bu grup programı lisansüstü öğrencilerinin gerçekçi olmayan ilişki inançlarını çalışırken alanda çalışan uzmanlara etkinliği araştırılmış bir

program önermeyi hedeflemektedir. Buna ek olarak, çalışmanın bir diğer önemli noktası çalışmanın deney grubun yanı sıra, bir tekrar grubu ile bulguları test etmesidir. Tekrar gruplarının amacı sonuçların katılımcı özelliklerinden daha az etkilenerek genellenebilmesinin sağlanmasıdır (Mackey, 2012; Schmidt, 2009). Sosyal bilimlerde çalışmaların genellenebilirliğinin artması için tekrar çalışmalarının yapılması güçlü bir biçimde önerilmektedir (NTLS, 2014). Bu çalışma aynı grup programının etkililiğini farklı katılımcılardan oluşan iki ayrı grup üzerinde incelemesi bakımından, sonuçların genellenebilirliği hakkında güçlü bulgular sunmaktadır.

Araştırma Hipotezleri:
1. Bilişsel davranışçı grup programı lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançları üzerinde anlamlı düzeyde etkilidir.
2. Bilişsel davranışçı grup programı lisansüstü öğrencilerinin romantik inançları üzerinde anlamlı düzeyde etkilidir.

2. YÖNTEM

Çalışmanın Deseni

Bu çalışma ön test, son test, takip testi kontrol gruplu deneysel desendir. Bilişsel davranışçı grup programının lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inanları ve romantik ilişki inançları üzerine etkisini sınamak amacıyla "birinci grup çalışması" ve "ikinci grup çalışması" ismi verilen iki grup çalışması düzenlenmiştir.

İlk ve İkinci Grup Çalışmasının Örneklem İşlemi ve Katılımcıları

Çalışmanın verileri 2014-2015 bahar döneminde toplanmıştır. İlk olarak Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu'ndan gerekli izinler alınmıştır. Çalışmada amaçlı örnekleme yolu kullanılmış, çalışmayı duyurmak için hazırlanan ve çalışma hakkında bilgi içeren posterler üniversitenin çeşitli yerlerine asılmıştır. Ayrıca, araştırmacı çalışmayı duyurmak üzere farklı fakültelerdeki araştırma görevlilerinden randevu

almış ve çalışmaya lisansüstü öğrencilerin davet edilmesini istemiştir. Çalışmanın duyurulmasından sonra, çalışmaya katılmak üzere 43 lisansüstü öğrencisi başvurmuştur. Çalışmaya katılmak için başvuran her bir kişi ile yaklaşık yarım saatlik ön görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ön görüşmelerde ilk olarak aday katılımcının yaşı, fakültesi ve kayıtlı olduğu program hakkında bilgi alınmıştır. Daha sonra bireyin ilişki durumu, cinsel yönelimi, madde kullanımı ve depresyon gibi tanılanmış psikolojik belirtileri hakkında bilgi edinmek amacıyla sorular sorulmuş ve grubun amacı, süresi ve sıklığı hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Evli, nişanlı, eşcinsel ya da biseksüel, madde kullanan ve psikiyatrik tanısı olan bireyler sonuçların genellenebilmesi için çalışmaya dahil edilmemiştir. Bu durumda, üniversitenin 5 farklı fakültesinden 40 katılımcı seçkisiz örneklem için çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Seçkisiz örneklem için cinsiyet göz önünde bulundurularak hem deney hem kontrol grubu için 14'er kişi atanmıştır. Deney ve kontrol grubundaki 14'er katılımcıyı 7 (% 50) kadın, 7 (% 50) erkek oluşturmaktadır.

İkinci grup çalışmasında birinci grup çalışmasıyla aynı süreçler takip edilmiş, çalışma 2014-2015 bahar döneminde üniversitede duyurulmuş ve grup aynı dönemde gerçekleştirilmiştir. İkinci grup çalışmasında yeterli katılımcı sayısına ulaşılamadığı için seçkisiz örneklem kullanılamamış, deney grubuna sadece gruba katılmaya istekli katılımcılar dahil edilmiştir. İkinci grup çalışmasının katılımcıları deney ve kontrol gruplarının her biri için 8 (% 57.14) kadın, 6 (% 42.86) erkektir.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Bu çalışmada veri toplamak için Romantizm ve Eş Seçimi Tutum Ölçeği (REST), Romantik İnançlar Ölçeği (RİÖ) ve Grup değerlendirme formu kullanılmıştır.

Romantizm ve Eş Seçimi Tutum Ölçeği

Romantizm ve Eş Seçimi Tutum (REST) Ölçeği; Cobb, Larson ve Watson (2003) tarafından geliştirilen ölçeğin, orijinal form için geçerliliği ve güvenirliği sağlanmıştır. Ölçek eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı düşünceleri ölçmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Ölçeğin Türk kültürüne uyarlaması Güngör, Yılmaz ve Çelik (2011) tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ölçek 32 maddeden oluşmaktadır ve 5'li Likert tipidir (1-Tamamen Katılmıyorum, 5-Tamamen Katılıyorum). REST ölçeği yedi alt boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Bunlar sırasıyla; yalnız ve tek doğru; aşk yeterli, beraber yaşama, tam güven, idealleştirme, çaba göstermeme ve zıt kutuplardır. REST Ölçeği'nin alt ölçeklerinin iç tutarlık katsayıları ise, .33 ile .98 aralığında değişmektedir. İki hafta ara ile yapılan test-tekrar test yöntemi sonucu Pearson korelasyon katsayısı .61 olarak bulunmuştur. Ölçeğin Cronbach Alfa iç tutarlık katsayısı .65 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

Romantik İnançlar Ölçeği

Romantik İnançlar Ölçeği; Küçükarslan ve Gizir (2013) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanmıştır. Ölçek, romantik ilişki inançlarını ölçmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu ölçek, "aşk bir yol bulur", "ilk ve tek", "idealleştirme", "ilk görüşte aşk" olmak üzere dört alt boyut içermektedir. Ölçek 13 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ölçeğin iç tutarlığına yönelik analiz sonucunda Cronbach Alfa değeri Faktör 1 için .79; Faktör 2 için .69; Faktör 3 için .50 ve Faktör 4 için ise .67' dir. Ölçeğin toplam puanı için Cronbach Alfa değeri ise .84' dir. Test-tekrar test güvenirlik katsayıları ise sırasıyla; Faktör 1 için .79; Faktör 2 için .83; Faktör 3 için .67 ve Faktör 4 için ise .70' dir. Ölçeğin bütününe ilişkin test-tekrar test güvenirlik katsayısı ise .83'tür.

Grup Değerlendirme Formu

Grup değerlendirme formu grubun güçlü ve zayıf yanları, grubun katılımcıya katkıları, katılımcı ve oturum sayısının değerlendirilmesi, katılımcının grup programını başkalarına önerip önermeyeceğine dair bu çalışmaya özel araştırmacı ve danışmanı tarafından geliştirilmiş, 5 açık uçlu soruyu içermektedir.

Veri Analizleri

Bu çalışmada, düşük katılımcı sayısı göz önünde bulundurularak, parametrik olmayan testler kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada grupları karşılaştırmak için Mann-Whitney U, tekrarlayan ölçümlerdeki farkları tespit etmek için Friedman Testi ve son olarak Friedman testi tarafından tespit edilen farkların nereden kaynaklandığını rapor etmek için Wilcoxon testi kullanılmıştır. Grup değerlendirme formunda yer alan açık uçlu soruları değerlendirmek için ise içerik analizi yöntemine başvurulmuştur.

Grup İşlemi

Bu çalışmada uygulanan grup programı bu tez kapsamında geliştirilmiştir. Böyle bir programı geliştirmeye duyulan ihtiyaç ve sebepleri alanyazın bölümünde belirtildiği gibi lisansüstü öğrencilerinin gelişim dönemleri, işlevsel olmayan ilişki inançlarının gelecekte evlilik doyumu üzerindeki önemli rolü ve önleyici çalışmaların önemi olarak özetlemek mümkündür. Böyle bir grup programı geliştirilmesine karar verilirken öncelikli olarak eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançların ve romantik inançların üniversite örnekleminde oldukça yaygın olduğu ve bu inançların romantik ilişki veya evliliğe dair tutumlar üzerinde olumsuz etkileri olduğu gözlemine dayanılmıştır. İkinci olarak, alanyazında bu tip programlara ihtiyaç olduğunu vurgulayan çalışmaların (Cobb ve ark., 2003; Larson, 2003; Larson, 2000; Saraç ve ark., 2015) yanı sıra, eş seçimi ve romantizme ilişkin grup programlarına duyulan ihtiyacı belirten çalışmalar (Larson, 1992; Sancak Aydın ve Demir, 2016) dikkate alınmıştır. Özellikle, Sancak Aydın ve Demir'in (2016) lisansüstü öğrencilerin eş seçimine dair sınırlandırıcı inançları, bu inançları azaltmayı isteyip istemedikleri, bu inançlara ilişkin bir grup programına olan ihtiyaçları ve grup programının özelliklerine ilişkin görüşlerine yönelik topladıkları bilgiler şu anki grup programının oluşmasına (grup programının içeriği, katılımcı sayısı ve oturum sayısı) ışık tutmuştur. Grup programı psikoeğitim grubu olarak belirlenmiş ve kuramsal yaklaşım olarak işlevsel olmayan inançlarla çalışmakta etkililiği göz önünde bulundurularak (Beck, 2011) Bilişsel Davranışçı Kuram seçilmiştir. Çalışma hem birinci grup hem de ikinci grup çalışması için deney ve kontrol grubu olan iki ayrı

grup biçiminde tasarlanmış, ilk ve ikinci deney gruplarına bilişsel davranışçı grup programı uygulanırken, ilk ve ikinci kontrol gruplarına herhangi bir müdahale uygulanmamıştır. Ön test, grup programı başlamadan önce, son test grup programından hemen sonra, takip testi ise grup programı bittikten 6 hafta sonra uygulanmıştır. İlk grup çalışması ve ikinci grup çalışması için aynı süreçler takip edilmiş ve aynı işlemler uygulanmıştır.

Grup programı başlamadan uzun bir süre önce alanyazın dikkate alarak bir grup programı el kitabı oluşturmuş ve grup programının üzerinde tartışmalar yapılmış ve ilgili değişiklikler yapılarak programa son hali vermiştir. Ayrıca, katılımcılara en uygun desteği sunmak amacıyla grup lideri katılımcıların izni ile ses kaydı alınmıştır. Bu kayıtları deşifre ederek değerlendirme yapılmıştır. Bu değerlendirme grubu daha etkili yönetebilmek ve hem ilk hem ikinci grupta aynı içerik ve süreci takip etmek için geri bildirim alınmasına ve bir sonraki oturumun etkinliğini arttırmaya yönelik kullanılmıştır. Grup oturumlarında uygulanan programın özeti aşağıda sunulmuştur.

Oturum 1. Keşif: Grubun ilk oturumuna grubu yapılandırarak başlanmıştır. Üyeler, grubun zamanı, sıklığı, süresi ve grubun gizlilik, katılım gibi ana kuralları üzerine bilgilendirilmiştir. Bu oturumda, üyeler kendilerini tanıtmış, amaçlarını ve grup deneyiminden beklentilerini paylaşmıştır. Lider grubun nasıl ilerleyeceği ile ilgili bilgi vermiştir. Daha sonra lider, düşünce, duygu ve davranış arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklayarak kısaca Bilişsel Davranışçı Kuram hakkında bilgi vermiştir. Daha sonra eş seçim süreci hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Lider, üyelere kendi eş seçim süreçlerini etkileyebilecek faktörleri sormuştur. Eş seçimini etkileyebilecek faktörler beyin fırtınası ile paylaşıldıktan sonra, lider katılımcıların paylaşımlarını özetlemiş ve katılımcılara eş seçim kriterlerini sormuştur. Her bir üye eş seçim kriterlerini açıklamıştır. Daha sonra lider üyelerin eş seçim kriterleri arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıklara odaklanmış ve bu kriterlerin nerden gelmiş olabileceğini açıklamıştır (çocukluk, medya vb.). Katılımcılar eş seçim süreçlerini etkileyen faktörler ve kriterlerle ile ilgili farkındalıklılarını paylaşmışlardır. Oturumun sonunda, eş seçimini etkileyen en önemli faktörlerden birinin inançlarımız olduğunu açıklanmıştır. Daha sonra eş seçimi ve romantizm ile ilgili sınırlayıcı inançları içeren bir liste

179

katılımcılara verilmiştir. Lider bir sonraki oturuma kadar, katılımcılardan bu düşüncelere sahip olup olmadıklarını, eğer sahiplerse ne düzeyde bu düşüncelere katıldıklarını düşünmelerini istemiştir.

Oturum 2. Eş Seçimi ve Romantizm Üzerine Kişisel Düşünceleri Anlamak: İkinci oturumda üyeler, bir önceki oturumda edindikleri farkındalıkları paylaşmaları için cesaretlendirilmişlerdir. Bir önceki oturumda verilen sınırlayıcı inançlarla ilgili listeyi göz önünde bulundurarak, üyelerden her bir sınırlayıcı inanca niçin katıldıkları ya da katılmadıklarını açıklamaları istenmiştir. Tartışmalar boyunca lider, düşünce, duygu ve davranış arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmıştır.

Oturum 3. Akılcı Olmayan Düşüncelere Odaklanmak: Üçüncü oturumda, ilk oturumun sonunda verilen listede sunulan eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançlar ve romantik inançlar katılımcılar tarafından tartışılmaya devam edilmiştir. Katılımcılar sınırlayıcı inançlara niçin ve hangi bakımlardan katıldıklarını ya da katılmadıklarını açıklamışlardır. Katılımcılara sınırlayıcı inançlara katılmıyorlarsa niçin katılmadıklarını açıklatmanın amacı, eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inançlara ve romantik inançlara alternatif bakış açısı sunarak kolaylaştırıcı inançları güçlendirmektir. Bu oturumda lider, katılımcılardan sınırlayıcı düşüncenin, duygu ve davranışla ilişkisini gösteren örnekler istemiştir. Oturumun sonunda, lider katılımcıları eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inançları ve romantizm hakkında konuşmaya davet etmiştir. Buna ek olarak, lider düşüncelerin geçerliliğini sorgulamanın önemini vurgulamış ve akılcı olmayan inançları sorgulama yollarını katılımcılara tanıtmıştır. Lider, eş seçiminde sınırlayıcı inançlar ve romantizm ile ilgili her bir düşünceyi sorgulamayı içeren ev ödevini katılımcılara vermiş ve bunu bir sonraki oturuma kadar doldurmalarını istemiştir.

Oturum 4. Sınırlayıcı İnançlara Meydan Okuma ve Üretken Düşünceyi Güçlendirme: Dördüncü oturum, katılımcıların önceki hafta verilen ödevleri paylaşmalarıyla başlamıştır. Her bir katılımcı sınırlayıcı düşüncenin geçerli olmadığını göstermeyi amaçlayan düşünce sorgulamasına verdikleri cevapları ve bu sorular için aldıkları notları grup ile paylaşmıştır. Katılımcılar oturum boyunca ödevlerini paylaşıp ödev

üzerine tartıştıktan sonra, farkındalıklarını ve bu farkındalığın yarattığı hissi grupla paylaşılmıştır. Ayrıca katılımcılar bu aktivitede en etkili buldukları bilişsel stratejiyi ve kendilerine en yakın buldukları alternatif düşünceleri paylaşmışlardır. Lider, katılımcıları eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançlar yerine işlevsel olan inançları edinme yollarını ve işlevsel inançlara sahip olmanın avantajlarını tartışmaya davet etmiştir. Katılımcılar eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı ve romantik inançlarını değiştirmek üzerine potansiyelleri ve bu konudaki sorumlulukları ile ilgili bilgilendirilmiştir.

Oturum 5. Değişime Bağlılık: Son oturuma, katılımcılara grup sürecindeki gelişimlerini ve gruptan edinimlerini paylaşma fırsatı verilerek başlanmıştır. Katılımcıları kendilerindeki değişimleri ve edindikleri iç görüyü paylaşmak için cesaretlendirilmiştir. Katılımcıların, eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı ve romantik inançları değiştirmeyi sağlayacak araçlarını tartışmışları istenmiştir. Daha sonra, lider katılımcılara, katılımcılar tarafından süreç boyunca ifade edilen olumlu düşüncelerin bir listesini sunmuştur. Katılımcılar, bu noktaya nasıl geldiklerini değişimi güçlendiren stratejilerinin neler olduğunu tartışmışlardır. Lider katılımcıları değişim sürecinde yaşayabilecekleri olası güçlükler hakkında bilgilendirmiş ve bu güçlüklerle baş etmek için bazı yollar önermiştir. Gruptan ayrılmadan önce, tüm üyeler birbiriyle vedalaşmış ve lider katılımcıların eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançlar ve romantizm ile ilgili değişim çabasını sürdürmek ve buna motive etmek için katılımcılara katılım belgelerini sunmuştur.

Çalışmanın Sınırlılıkları

Bu çalışma bazı güçlü yanlarının yanında bir takım sınırlılıklara da sahiptir. İlk olarak çalışmanın örneklemini bir devlet üniversitesinde eğitim görmekte olan lisansüstü öğrenciler oluşturmaktadır. Bu durum, bulguların farklı eğitim durumları ve diğer üniversitelerden olan öğrencilere genellemesini sınırlandırmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, birinci grup katılımcıları seçkisiz örneklemle atanmasına rağmen, ikinci grup çalışması katılımcıları, seçkisiz olmayan amaçlı örneklem yolu ile atanmıştır. Bunun yanında, hem birinci grup hem de ikinci grup çalışmasında kontrol grubu hiçbir müdahale almamıştır. Son olarak, çalışmada öz bildirim ölçekleri kullanılmış, bu

nedenle çalışma sonuçları sosyal beğenilirlik kontrol edilememiş ve elde edilen veriler katılımcıların güvenilirliği ile sınırlı olmuştur.

3. SONUÇLAR

Bu bölümde, birinci grup ve ikinci grup çalışması için yapılan istatistiksel analiz sonuçları sunulmuş daha sonra da açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan grup değerlendirme formunun bulguları genel hatlarıyla paylaşılmıştır.

İlk olarak, birinci grup çalışması ön analizi için, deney ve kontrol gruplarının ön test puanlarının farklı olup olmadığını belirlemek amacıyla grupların REST ve RİÖ ön test puanları için Mann-Whitney U testi uygulanmıştır. Test sonuçları deney ve kontrol gruplarının ön test REST ($U_{rest} = 85.50$; $z_{rest} = -.58$, $p > 0.05$) ve ön test RİÖ puanları için ($U_{riö} = 72.00$; $z_{riö} = -1.20$, $p > 0.05$) farkın anlamlı düzeyde olmadığını göstermiştir.

Çalışmanın hipotezlerini test etmek amacıyla ilk olarak deney ve kontrol gruplarının son test puanlarını karşılaştırmak için Mann-Whitney U testi uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar REST için gruplar arasında anlamlı düzeyde fark olduğunu ($U_{rest} = 35.00$, $p < 0.05$; $z_{rest} = -2.90$, $p < 0.05$), deney grubunun REST puanlarının anlamlı düzeyde daha düşük olduğunu göstermektedir. Benzer biçimde test sonuçları RİÖ için gruplar arasında anlamlı düzeyde fark olduğunu ($U_{riö} = 32.50$; $z_{riö} = -3.02$, $p < 0.05$), deney grubunun RİÖ puanlarının anlamlı düzeyde daha düşük olduğunu göstermektedir.

Deney grubundaki ölçümler arasındaki farkı belirlemek için ise katılımcıların hem REST hem de RİÖ puanları için Friedman testi kullanılmıştır. Bu testin sonuçları REST için ölçümler arasında anlamlı düzeyde fark olduğunu ortaya koymuştur ($\chi^2_{rest} = 18.14$, $p < 0.05$). Diğer taraftan Friedman test sonuçları RİÖ tekrarlayan ölçümler arasında anlamlı düzeyde bir fark olmadığını göstermiştir ($\chi^2_{riö} = 3.64$, $p > 0.05$). Benzer biçimde Friedman testi kontrol grubunun REST ve RİÖ ölçümleri için de uygulanmış fakat anlamlı bir sonuç bulunmamıştır ($\chi^2_{rest} = .17$, $p > 0.05$; $\chi^2_{riö} = .73$, $p > 0.05$). Tekrarlı ölçümlerde farkın anlamlı düzeyde olduğuna işaret eden Friedman

test sonuçlarına dayanarak, farkın hangi ölçümler arasında olduğu Wilcoxon işaretli sıralar testi yapılarak test edilmiştir. Bundan önce Tip I hatayı önlemek amacıyla alanyazında önerilen Bonferroni düzeltmesinden (Field, 2009) yararlanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, .05 olan alfa düzeyi üçe bölünerek alfa .02 olarak kabul edilmiştir. Wilcoxon işaretli sıralar testi, deney grubunun öntest ve son test romantik eş seçimi tutumu puanları arasındaki farkın anlamlı olduğunu (z_{rest} = -3.30, p < 0.02) göstermiştir. Benzer biçimde sonuçlar, romantik eş seçimi tutum puanlarının ön testten takip testine anlamlı düzeyde değiştiğini gösterirken (z_{rest} = -2.95, p < 0.02), REST son test puanları ile takip testi puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark olmadığını göstermektedir (z_{rest} = -.66, p > 0.02). Sonuç olarak, deney grubu katılımcılarının eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı inançları ön testten son teste ve ön testten takip testine anlamlı biçimde değişirken, son testten takip testine anlamlı düzeyde değişmemiştir.

İkinci grup çalışması için de birinci grup çalışması için yapılan işlemlerin aynısı yapılmıştır. İlk olarak deney ve kontrol grubunun REST ve RİÖ ön test puanları karşılaştırılmıştır. Mann-Whitney U test sonuçları deney ve kontrol gruplarında REST ölçeği için anlamlı düzeyde bir fark olmadığı (U_{rest} = 93.00; z_{rest} = -.23, p > 0.05) ve benzer biçimde RİÖ ölçeği için de anlamlı düzeyde bir fark olmadığını ($U_{riö}$ = 92.00; $z_{riö}$ = -.28, p > 0.05) göstermiştir.

Gruplar arasında anlamlı fark olmadığı için ana analizlere devam edilmiştir. İlk olarak deney ve kontrol gruplarının son test puanlarını karşılaştırmak için Mann-Whitney U testi uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar, REST için gruplar arasında anlamlı düzeyde fark olduğunu (U_{rest} = 27.00, p < 0.05; z_{rest} = -3.26, p < 0.05), deney grubunun REST puanlarının anlamlı düzeyde daha düşük olduğunu göstermektedir. Benzer biçimde test sonuçları RİÖ için gruplar arasında anlamlı düzeyde fark olduğunu ($U_{riö}$ = 55.50; $z_{riö}$ = -1.96, p < 0.05), deney grubunun RİÖ puanlarının anlamlı düzeyde daha düşük olduğunu göstermektedir. Deney grubundaki ölçümler arasındaki farkı belirlemek için ise katılımcıların REST ve RİÖ puanları için Friedman testi kullanılmıştır. Bu testin sonuçları, REST için ölçümler arasında anlamlı düzeyde fark olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (χ^2_{rest} = 17.82, p < 0.05). Benzer biçimde Friedman test sonuçları RİÖ tekrarlayan ölçümler arasında anlamlı düzeyde

bir fark olduğunu göstermiştir ($\chi^2_{riö}$ = 6.77, p < 0.05). Diğer taraftan, Friedman testi kontrol grubunun REST ve RİÖ ölçümleri için de uygulanmış fakat anlamlı bir fark olmadığı görülmüştür (χ^2_{rest} = 3.64, p > 0.05; $\chi^2_{riö}$ = 3.18, p > 0.05). Tekrarlı ölçümlerde deney grubu REST ve RİÖ puanlarında anlamlı düzeyde farka işaret eden Friedman test sonuçlarına dayanarak farkın hangi ölçümler arasında olduğunu saptamak amacıyla Wilcoxon işaretli sıralar testi yapılmış fakat bundan önce Tip I hatayı önlemek amacıyla literatürde önerilen Bonferroni düzeltmesinden (Field, 2009) yararlanılmış, .05 olan alfa düzeyi üçe bölünerek alfa .02 olarak kabul edilmiştir. Wilcoxon işaretli sıralar testi sonuçları deney grubunun REST puanları için öntest ve sontest sonuçları arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğunu (z_{rest}= -3.18, p < 0.02), benzer biçimde RİÖ puanları için ön test ve son test sonuçları arasında anlamlı bir fark olduğunu ($z_{riö}$ = -2.73, p < 0.02) gösterirken, son testten takip testine REST ve RİÖ puanları için anlamlı bir fark olmadığını göstermektedir (z_{rest} = -.35, p > 0.02; $z_{riö}$ = -1.26, p > 0.02). Diğer taraftan, ön testten takip testine REST için anlamlı düzeyde fark görülürken (z_{rest} = -3.02, p < 0.02), RİÖ için ön testten takip testine anlamlı bir fark görülmemiştir ($z_{riö}$ = -1.29, p > 0.02). Diğer bir deyişle, deney grubu katılımcılarının REST ve RİÖ puanları ön testten son teste anlamlı düzeyde azalırken, son testten takip testine anlamlı düzeyde değişmemiş, ön testten takip testine ise REST için anlamlı düzeyde azalmış fakat RİÖ için ön testten takip testine anlamlı düzeyde bir değişim olmamıştır.

Açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan grup değerlendirme formunda katılımcıların grubun güçlü ve zayıf yanları, grubun katılımcıya katkıları, katılımcı ve oturum sayısının değerlendirilmesi, katılımcının grup programını başkalarına önerip önermeyeceğine dair görüşleri alınmıştır. Grubun güçlü yanları katılımcılar tarafından ilk ve ikinci grup çalışmasında benzer biçimde; diğerlerinden öğrenmeye teşvik, farkındalığı besleme, lider becerileri, olumlu atmosfer, grup programının içeriği ve formatı olarak belirtilmiştir. Grup programında geliştirilmesi gereken alanlar ise birinci grup programı için kişinin kendine meydan okuması, kişiye başkaları tarafından meydan okunması, grubun format ve içeriği olarak belirtilirken, ikinci grup programı katılımcıları için sadece grubun format ve içeriği olarak belirtilmiştir. Grubun oturum ve katılımcı sayısı hem ilk hem de ikinci grup çalışması için bazı katılımcılar

tarafından ideal olarak tanımlanırken, bazı katılımcılar özellikle oturum sayısının daha fazla olabileceğini belirtmişlerdir. Katılımcıların sayısı ise genel olarak ideal olarak tanımlanmıştır. Grubun katılımcıya katkıları, birinci grup katılımcıları tarafından başkalarından öğrenme, kendini anlama, eş seçim sürecini anlama, değişim ve farkındalığı artırma olarak belirtilmiş, ikinci grup çalışmasında ise bunlara ek olarak evrensellik belirtilmiştir. Son olarak, katılımcıların grubu başkalarına tavsiye edip etmeyeceklerine dair soruya hem ilk hem de ikinci grup çalışması katılımcıları grubu güçlü biçimde tavsiye edecekleri şeklinde cevap vermişlerdir.

5. TARTIŞMA

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı bilişsel davranışçı bir grup programının lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı düşünceleri ve romantik ilişki inançları üzerine etkililiğini incelemektir.

Genel olarak bulgular çalışmanın hipotezine güçlü bir destek sunmaktadır. Çalışmanın ilk hipotezi bilişsel davranışçı grup programının lisansüstü öğrencilerinin eş seçimine dair sınırlayıcı düşünceleri üzerinde etkili olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Bu hipotezin geçerliliğini sorgulamak için ilk olarak hem birinci grup hem de ikinci grup çalışmasında deney ve kontrol grubu son test sonuçları karşılaştırılmış ve deney grubu lehine anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Daha sonra, hem birinci grup hem ikinci grup çalışmasında deney grubunun ön test, son test ve takip testi sonuçları karşılaştırılmış ve testler arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuş, sınırlayıcı ilişki inançlarının ön testten son teste ve takip testine anlamlı biçimde azaldığı görülmüştür. Benzer biçimde her iki grup çalışması için de kontrol grubunun ön test, son test ve takip testi sonuçları karşılaştırılmış ve bu testler arasında deney grubundaki değişimin olgunluk ve zamandan kaynaklı olabileceğini gösteren anlamlı bir fark olmadığı görülmüştür.

Literatürdeki çalışmalar bu çalışmanın sonuçları ile benzer olarak evlilik öncesi programların etkili olduğunu göstermektedir (Adler Beader ve ark. 2007; Bass ve

ark. 2007; Caroll ve Doherty, 2003; Gardner ve ark. 2004; McGeorge ve Carlson, 2003; Sharp ve Ganong, 2000; Yalçın, 2010; Yılmaz ve Kalkan, 2010). Ayrıca, bu çalışmanın Bilişsel Davranışçı Kurama dayandığı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Bilişsel Davranşçı Kuramın bu çalışmanın sonuçlarıyla tutarlı olarak ilişki değişkenleri üzerinde etkili bulunduğu birçok çalışmada rapor edilmiştir (Dunn ve Schwebel, 1995; Epstein ve Baucom, 2001; Ellis ve Bernard, 1985; Ersanlı, 2007; Kalkan ve Ersanlı, 2009; Schmailing ve ark., 1989).

Romantik ilişki inançları değişkeni için ise birinci grup çalışmasında tekrar testleri arasında anlamlı fark göstermezken, ikinci grup çalışmasında tekrar testleri arasında anlamlı fark olduğu görülmüştür. İlk grup çalışmasının bulguları, Bass ve arkadaşları (2007)' nın çalışmasıyla tutarlılık gösterirken, Sharp ve Ganong' un çalışmasıyla tutarlılık göstermemektedir. Romantik ilişki inançları için bu sonuçları birkaç faktörle açıklamak mümkün olabilir. İlk olarak, üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda flört aşamasında oldukları ve tutkulu aşkı deneyimlemeye daha yatkın oldukları söylenebilir (Saraç ve ark., 2015). İkinci olası açıklama, medyanın romantizm üzerindeki etkisi olabilir (Bachen ve Illouz, 1996; Beck, 1988; Hefner, 2015; Holmes, 2007; Ingoldsby, 2002; Lippman, Ward & Seabrook, 2014; Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Bireyler bu kadar güçlü bir biçimde romantik ilişki inançlarını güçlendirecek uyaranlara maruz kalırken, bu inançları kısa süreli bir programla değiştirmek güç olabilir. Buna ek olarak bazı romantik inançların kültürel olduğunu söylemek mümkündür (Ingoldsby, 2002; Medora, Larson, Hortaçsu ve Dave, 2002). Bu sonuçları ilişkisel benliğin kuvvetli olduğu Türk kültürünün (Kağıtçıbaşı ve Ataca, 2005; Mayer, Trommsdorff, Kağıtçıbaşı ve Mishra, 2012) özellikleriyle açıklamak mümkün olabilir. Bunun yanında, romantik ilişki inançlarının romantik ilişkiler üzerinde olumlu etkisi olduğuna dair çalışmalar bulunmaktadır (Reis ve Sprecher, 2009). Johnson (2009) bu noktadan hareketle sorulabilecek doğru sorunun belki de bu inançları değiştirmeksizin nasıl sağlıklı ilişkilerin güçlendirilebileceği olduğunu önermektedir. Son olarak, Sharp ve Ganong (2000) tarafından tekrarlandığı gibi öğrencilerin inançlarında kısa sürede eğitimle sağlanacak bir değişim beklemek gerçekçi olmayabilir.

Bu çalışma aynı zamanda öğrencilerin grup programı üzerine bakış açılarını yansıtan nitel veriler de sağlamıştır. Nitel veriler sonucunda literatürle tutarlı olarak farkındalık (Halford ve ark., 2003; Hamamcı, 2012; Hawkins ve ark., 2004) ve katılımcıların kendilerini anlamaları (Nielsen ve ark., 2004; Williams ve ark., 1999) katılımcılar tarafından grubun katkısı olarak algılandığını ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcılar grupta tartışma yönteminin kullanılmasının grupta farkındalık yarattığı belirtilmişlerdir. Benzer biçimde literatürde tartışmanın evlilik öncesi programlarda ve grup çalışmalarında etkili bir yöntem olduğuna dikkat çekilmektedir (Adler ve ark., 2007; Hamamcı, 2012; Johnson, 2009; Williams ve ark., 1999; Worthington ve ark., 1989). Buna ek olarak, evrensellik ve grup etkileşimi ortaya çıkan diğer kodlardır. Yalom (2002) evrenselliği grup sürecini etkili kılan ana bir faktör olarak tanımlamaktır. Benzer biçimde Zimpfer (1988) de ilişki programının katılımcıların birlikteliği ve yalnız olmadıkları hissini sağladığını belirtmektedir. Çalışmada programın içeriği alanyazınla uyumlu biçimde (Childs ve Duncan, 2012; Hamamcı, 2012; Wiliams ve ark., 1999) programın güçlü bir yanı olarak belirtilmiştir. Bunun yanında yine alınyazınla uyumlu olarak, eğitimcinin etkililiği de grubun güçlü yanı olarak belirtilmiştir (Bruhn ve Hill, 2004; Hamamcı, 2012; Hawkins ve ark., 2004; Hunt ve ark., 1998).

Çalışmada bazı katılımcılar için programın oturum sayısı ideal olarak görülürken bazı katılımcılar içinse programın daha uzun olabileceği önerilmiştir. Bu bulgu, Williams ve arkadaşlarının (1999) evliliğe hazırlık programlarında 8-9 oturuma katılanların daha az katılanlara göre programdan daha fazla yararlandıklarını düşündükleri bulgusuyla tutarlılık göstermektedir. Son olarak, tüm katılımcılar programı arkadaşlarına güçlü biçimde tavsiye edeceklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu bulgu evlilik öncesi programlara genç yetişkinlerin ihtiyaç duyduğunu rapor eden çalışmalarla tutarlılık göstermektedir (Edmunson, 2005; Haskan Avcı, 2014; Honeycutt, 1991; Risch, Riley ve Lawler, 2003; Sharp ve Ganong, 2000; Şen, 2009).

Bu çalışma, genç yetişkinler için hazırlanan evlilik öncesi müdahaleler konusunda pek çok önemli katkı sunmaktadır. Üniversite kampüs kültürü öğrencileri entelektüel, kişisel ve sosyal alanda zenginleştirirken, bunun yanında öğrenciler üniversitede

kendilerini yakın ilişkiler konusunda keşfetmeye ihtiyaç duymaktadır (Corey, 2012; Michel ve Randick, 2013). Bu bağlamda, çalışmanın öğrencileri ilişkilerine dair inançları konusunda bilgilendirerek üniversite öğrencilerine katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Evlilik öncesi programların toplumda artan bir önem kazanacağı umut edilmekte (Hunt, Hof, ve DeMaria, 1998) ve bireyin evliliğe uygun biçimde hazırlanmasının bireyin iyi oluşuna katkı sağlayarak, aile problemleri ile boşanmayı azaltmak için atılacak önemli bir adım olacağı belirtilmektedir (Hunt ve ark., 1998). Sharp ve Ganong (2000) tarafından belirtildiği gibi küçük değişimler bile evliliğe dair gelecekteki olumlu sonuçları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda büyük katkılar olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Alanyazına bakıldığında kuram odaklı evlilik öncesi programların yeterli düzeyde geliştirilmemiş ve test edilmemiş olduğu görülmektedir (Silliman ve Schumm, 2000). Bu çalışma sadece öntest, sontest ve takip testi kontrol grubu deseniyle değil aynı zamanda sunduğu ikinci bir grup çalışması ile tekrar grubu kullanarak evlilik öncesi bir programı test etmekte ve bu programın etkililiği ile ilgili güçlü kanıtlar sunmaktadır. Ayrıca, evliliğe hazırlık programlarında nitel geri bildirim almanın önemi üzerinde durulmakta (Silliman ve Schumm, 2000) ve bu çalışma grubun değerlendirilmesi üzerine nitel bulgularla bulgularını güçlendirmektedir. Bunun yanında, Carroll ve Doherty (2003) evlilik öncesi grup çalışmalarının Avrupalı Amerikan, orta sınıflarla yapıldığını ve bu programların etkililiğinin diğer gruplarda yeterince sınanmadığını belirtmektedir. Bu çalışma ülkemiz kültüründe evlilik öncesi yapılan bir grup programının etkililiğine dair bulgular sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmadan hareketle psikolojik destek hizmeti sağlayan uzmanlar, politika oluşturanlar ve araştırmacılar için öneriler aşağıdaki biçimde özetlenebilir.

Uzmanlar için bazı öneriler şunlar olabilir; bu programı, üniversite danışma merkezlerinde çalışan uzmanlar eş seçimine dair güçlük yaşayan bireylerle çalışırken kullanabilirler. Buna ek olarak, toplum ve aile sağlığı merkezleri bekar bireylere önleyici ve gelişimsel rehberlik kapsamında destek sunmak için kullanabilirler. Ayrıca, lider özelliklerinin önemi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda evlilik öncesi programlarda gerekli lider becerilerini öğretmek üzere lider eğitim programları

gerçekleştirilebilir. Evlilik öncesi psikolojik destek almak konusunda bireylere ve çiftlere gerekli kaynak toplum politikası gereği devletçe sağlanabilir. Bunun yanında, evlilik öncesi programlara dair toplumsal bilinci artırma kampanyalarında kitle iletişim araçları kullanılabilir. Evlilik ve aşk kavramlarını çocuklarıyla konuşmak ve onların gerçekçi beklentiler sağlamasına yardımcı olmak için aile eğitim programları düzenlenebilir.

Bu çalışmanın bulgularına dayanılarak, araştırmacılar için ise şu önerilerde bulunulabilir; Türk kültüründe eş seçimi ve romantizme dair bu çalışmada sıralanan inançların yanında daha farklı inançlar olabilir. Çalışmaların bu inançları araştırarak daha geniş bir bakış açısı sunması önerilmektedir. Bu çalışma sadece ön test, son test ve takip testi ile sınırlıdır. Bu tip çalışmaların uzun süreli etkilerinin görülmesi için boylamsal çalışmalar yapılması önerilmektedir. Benzer biçimde, çalışmalarda boylamsal çalışmalar yardımı ile bu programın ilişki doyumu üzerindeki etkisi sınanabilir. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışma sadece bekar bireyleri içermektedir. Çalışmalar çiftlerin bu programa katılımıyla programın etkililiğinin güçlenip güçlenmeyeceğini araştırabilir. Şu anki grup çalışmasının içeriğine ek olarak çalışmalar beceri eğitimine dayanabilir. Ayrıca, lider özellikleri bir değişken olarak ileriki çalışmalarda ele alınabilir. Diğer taraftan, alternatif araştırma desenleri ve başka ölçeklerle bu çalışmanın geçerliliği sınanabilir. İnançların sosyal ve kültürel bileşenleri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, ileride yapılacak grup programları için farklı eğitim ve sosyoekonomik düzeye sahip bireylerden oluşan odak grup çalışmaları yapılabilir. Son olarak, web' in gündelik hayatın bir parçası haline geldiği göz önünde bulundurularak, web tabanlı evliliğe hazırlık programları geliştirilebilir ve bu programların etkililiği sınanabilir.

APPENDIX K: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☒ (x)

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : SANCAK AYDIN
Adı : GÖKÇE
Bölümü : EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A COGNITIVE
BEHAVIORAL GROUP PROGRAM ON CONSTRAINING BELIEFS
ABOUT MATE SELECTION AND ROMANTIC BELIEFS OF
GRADUATE STUDENTS

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐   Doktora ☒ (X)

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 bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☒ (X)

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: