

NUCLEAR FAMILY EMOTIONAL PROCESS AND MARITAL
SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATOR ROLES OF INTERRELATIONAL AND
SELF-DEVELOPMENTAL ORIENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

NUCLEAR FAMILY EMOTIONAL PROCESSES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATOR ROLES OF INTERRELATIONAL AND SELF-DEVELOPMENTAL ORIENTATIONS

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The primary purpose of the current study was to examine the mediating role of self-construals (interrelational and self-developmental orientations) in the relationship between nuclear family emotional processes (i.e., symptoms in spouses, focus on the child, marital conflict, emotional cutoff) and marital satisfaction. The current sample composed of married individuals; six hundred and eighteen participants completed the measures of Family Genogram Interview (FGI), Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), Balanced Integration Differentiation Scale, and Demographic Information Form. A pilot study was conducted ($n = 402$) to adapt the Family Genogram Interview into Turkish, and the results revealed that FGI has adequate psychometric characteristics in a Turkish sample. Results of the SEM analysis with the Bootstrapping sampling method revealed that nuclear family emotional processes and self-construals variables explained 84% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Among the variables, emotional contact (marital conflict + emotional cutoff) was the strongest

predictor of marital satisfaction. Regarding the result of indirect effects, the interrelational orientation partially mediated the relationship between emotional contact, symptom in the spouse, and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, self-developmental orientation fully mediated the relationship between the focus on child and marital satisfaction—the findings of the current study were delineated in light of the relevant literature.

Keywords: marital satisfaction, self-construal, nuclear family emotional processes, differentiation of self

ÖZ

ÇEKİRDEK AİLEDE DUYGUSAL SÜREÇLER VE EVLİLİK DOYUMU: İLİŞKİ VE ÖZ-GELİŞİMSEL YÖNELİMLERİN ARACI ROLÜ

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Çalışmanın amacı, evliliklerinin farklı aşamalarında olan bireylerin evlilik doyumları ile çekirdek ailelerindeki duygusal süreçler (eşler arası semptomlar, çocuk odaklılık, evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma) arasındaki ilişkinin benlik kurgularının (ilişkisel ve öz-gelişim yönelim) aracı rolü ile araştırılmasıdır. 618 katılımcı, Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formu, İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği, Dengeli Bütünleşme-Ayrışma Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formunu doldurmuşlardır. Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formunun Türkçeye uyarlanması amacıyla bir pilot çalışma (n = 402) gerçekleştirilmiş olup bulgular ölçeğin psikometrik özelliklerinin Türk örnekleme için uygun olduğunu göstermiştir. YEM analizi sonuçları, ailede duygusal süreçlerin ve benlik kurgularının, evlilik doyumunun % 84'ünü açıkladığını ortaya koymuştur. Değişkenler arasında, duygusal temas arayışı (evlilik çatışması + duygusal kopma), evlilik doyumunu açıklayan en güçlü değişkendir. Dolaylı etkiler incelendiğinde ise, ilişkisel yönelimin duygusal temas arayışı, çocuk odaklılık ile evlilik doyumunu arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık ettiği görülmüştür. Ayrıca, öz-gelişimsel yönelimin çocuk odaklılık ve evlilik doyumunu

arasındaki ilişkide tam aracılık rolü olduđu bulunmuştur. Çalışma bulguları ilgili alanyazın ışığında tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: evlilik doyumu, benlik kurguları, çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler, benlik ayrımlaşması

Bulut'uma

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*“In all cultures, the family imprints its members with selfhood.
Human experience of identity has two elements;
a sense of belonging and a sense of being separate.
The laboratory in which these ingredients are mixed
and dispensed is the family, the matrix of identity.”*
-Salvador Minuchin, *Families & Family Therapy* (1974, p. 47)

1.1 Background to the Study

In human life, intimacy in (committed) relationships maintained the individuals' motivation to stay in contact with others. This motivation is universally rooted in individuals' natural needs to be in a relationship with others. The need originated in the bodily interaction between mother and unborn offspring (fetus) that will further become a model to all later intimate relationships (Buber, 1970). Thus, even if individuals left their families and established new romantic relationships, they might still tend to perpetuate “influential aspects of the relationship process that existed in the original family” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 167). Nevertheless, the most paradoxical concept in such close relationships, ‘intimacy’ bears many underlying dilemmas and demands. One of the distinct conflicts was the inherent contradiction between being emotionally free and self-determined with significant others while maintaining joint lives of emotions, philosophy, rituals, memories, places, and materials (Minuchin,

1974; Williamson, 1991). The family was a specific context that individuals experienced such dilemmas and demands to some degree that presented in all families. Besides, the family could become an emotionally compelling context that overall symptoms (i.e., pathological, social, behavioral) were rooted in this emotional climate (Kerr & Bowen, 1988), owing to the paradoxical intimacy. Thus, the family's emotional process were the main concern in this thesis- to focus on the context of marital satisfaction.

As an “emotional unit” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p.6), the family governed its members’ complex interactions, behaviors, affections, decisions and how to reacted to others’ expectations and needs. For instance, chronic anxiety was defined as one of the two driven forces (with differentiation of the self) that formed family members’ interactions in that emotional unit. The lower the self-differentiation (DoS) in the family unit, the level of chronic anxiety made stressful situations (i.e., crisis, conflicts) more unbearable (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Marriages explained the situation best, when spouses felt more anxious in stressful periods, ironically, a tendency for more togetherness brought a greater need for separateness with itself. This was an indicator of the conflictual relationship atmosphere in marriages “like an exhausting, draining, and strangely invigorating roller coaster ride” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 187). At the cost of binding chronic anxiety, the relationship inevitably became less tolerant for spouses to be what they are and more emotionally reactive to get others to change. In highly conflictual marriages, spouses focused on what is wrong with one another. The unique reality that does not change in such a relationship was disequilibrium between individuality and togetherness, whereas patterns of conflicts eventually change (Bowen, 1978). It would not be a mistake to assume that the emotional force of chronic anxiety resulted in conflictual relationship patterns that affected the satisfaction levels of couples about their marriage. The conflict-related issues (i.e., conflict styles, interaction patterns to resolve a high-conflict) were the well-defined topics to marital satisfaction in the literature. The research mostly focused on the conflict resolution and management styles of the couples (Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000; Kurdek, 1995; Madden & Janoff-Bulman, 1981). Marital conflict resolution patterns impacted a vital role in

marital satisfaction, depending on whether these patterns were functional or not (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989).

Marital satisfaction was however broadly defined from several perspectives, and specific components indicated “an individual ‘s overall subjective evaluation of the nature of his or her marriage, including the degree to which the person ‘s needs, expectations, and desires are being met in the marriage” (Gelles, 1995, p. 232). In addition to marital conflict, many contributing factors to satisfying marriages have been highlighted and reviewed by researchers such as communication, expression of affection, empathy, sexual satisfaction, doing things together, stress, neuroticism, childbirth, intimacy, depression, and spousal similarity (Hyun & Shin, 2012; Kenny & Alonso, 2012). The effects of marriage have also been mentioned as critical on the psychological and physical health of adults (Choi & Marks, 2008; Whisman, 2007), where marital conflict caused a higher level of depression and functional impairment. Spouses’ negative behaviors were related to greater physical health impairment (Bookwala, 2005). Unhappy marriages, in the long term, produced a damaging impact on overall well-being. Additionally, unhappy marriages were more detrimental in comparison to divorced or remarried marital status since dysfunctional marriages produced a low level of happiness (Hawkins & Booth, 2005). On the other hand, the impact or benefits of happy marriages on several indicators such as life satisfaction (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007), and well-being (Glenn & Weaver, 1981) have also been cited in empirical studies. These findings inspired researcher that investigating marital satisfaction levels of spouses, as the dependent variable, could enable in-depth knowledge about the emotional forces in nuclear families through relationship mechanisms (dysfunctional) and emotional dysregulations.

Gender was another distinct variable that scholars have regularly noted in marital satisfaction. Notwithstanding, the findings on marital satisfaction were contradictory. Especially considering the meta-analysis studies, for instance, gender differences were found very small, indicating that men were more satisfied than women; however, the significant results were due to the inclusion of clinical samples (Jackson, Miller, Oka & Henry, 2014). There were no gender differences in terms of the emotional benefits

of marriage, whereas wives and husbands reacted with different emotional problems to marital transitions (Simon, 2002). In another perspective, however, husbands in a marriage gained enormous favor of benefits and marital satisfaction in comparison to women (Fowers, 1991).

On the other hand, in terms of spousal interaction patterns in marital conflict, wives reacted with the conflict engagement, whereas husbands used withdrawal (Kurdek, 1995). Health-related findings in marital satisfaction revealed that when both spouses were satisfied equivalently with their marriages, both wives' and husbands' health levels were equivalent as well. However, when unhappy marriages were observed, wives reported a higher level of physical and mental health problems (Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman, 1993). Additionally, when husbands have assumed a traditional gender role attitude, they reported decreasing in their marital satisfaction over time. In the present study, marital satisfaction was examined through the nuclear family emotional systems (NFEP), and in the light of literature, the researcher conducted a multi-group analysis to clarify the role of gender in the hypothesized model- that was presented in the following pages.

The theoretical framework of the current study based on the Bowenian Family System Theory (BFST). The approach -instead of defining what the satisfied marriage was, mainly focused on underlying mechanisms that dysfunctional families and marriages produced symptoms. Bowen (1978) considered the conflicts as the emotional processes and the obstacles to healthy, functional, and satisfying relationships in the family context. Barriers to healthy, pleasing, and functional marriages were also considered as a result of these emotional processes, in other saying, symptoms.

According to Bowen (1978), a satisfying marriage depended on two significant factors; spouses' levels of self-differentiation developed in their families of origin and spouses' lifestyle patterns. Marriage was a critical point for most couples because they committed themselves to each other permanently. However, emotional fusion became more intense with marriage and during the developmental crisis (i.e., childbirth) as if the spouses maintained a lower level of self-differentiation. With this, one of the

spouses (more differentiated) becomes more dominant, decision-maker, and fewer complaints. On the other hand, one (less differentiated) might assume a more adaptive and less functioning and pushed another to be more dominant and functioning position. Bowen (1978) defined the second (less differentiated) as “borrowing and trading of self in a close relationship” (p. 377). If both spouses acted to get a dominant position, the process resulted in conflicts, or when both become adaptive decision-making problems/symptoms have emerged. As these patterns indicated more emotional fusion in the marriage, the following emotion revealed in the relationship as (chronic) anxiety. Therefore, Bowen (1978) defined four universal mechanisms that spouses involved in dealing with the anxiety; symptoms in spouses, focus on the child, marital conflict, and emotional cutoff. The current study included all these components to the proposed model regarding the predictive role of nuclear family emotional systems (NFEP). As the reasons will be described in the following method chapter, however, these components were renamed under a different factor structure: symptoms in spouses (ss-significance), symptoms in spouses (ss-occurrence), focus on the child and emotional contact (emotional cutoff + marital conflict).

DoS is the skeleton concept of Bowen's (1978) 'Intergenerational Family Systems Theory (IFST). The present-day configuration of the DoS consists of two dimensions: intrapsychic and interpersonal levels (Jankowski & Hooper, 2012; Skowron, Holmes, & Sabatelli, 2003; Titelman, 2015): Intrapsychic level refers to self-efficacy and an ability to distinguish the individual's feelings and cognitive processes. The interpersonal level refers to an ability that individuals take his or her own decisions, maintains an "I" position while keeping intimacy in close relationships. DoS also reflects a capacity for emotional self-regulation in significant relationships with others. In sum, indicators of the DoS are twofold: the first one is maintaining autonomy and intimacy in significant relationships (interpersonal), and the second one is the ability to keep a balance between cognitive and emotional functioning (intrapsychic).

Furthermore, the Bowenian concepts still remain popular in the relevant literature and attract researchers' interest, provide strong explanations for the psychological functioning, adjustment, and relationship problems. For instance, very recent studies

have examined the DoS (and other Bowenian concepts) from the perspective of a wide variety of variables such as leisure time balance in romantic relationships, anxiety problems, adjustment to college life, and intimate partner violence (Lampis, Cataudella, Speziale & Elat, 2020; Moon & Kim, 2020; Stapley & Murdock, 2020; Walsh, Slesnick & Wong, 2020). Although the Bowenian approach has been structurally based on a theoretical tradition, it is still up-to-date and is thought to provide a strong infrastructure for the current study.

In a decade review of marriage in the new millennium, Fincham and Beach (2010) emphasized the critical role of context -overarching theme in marital research- in investigating marital issues of outcomes, impacts, and strength of marriage. Accordingly, the self, which was defined in the family system, provided an essential framework for researchers in consideration of the context in marital research. Considerable scholarly attention in the examination of the contributors to marital satisfaction has been devoted to investigating self-related topics like differentiation of self (DoS). When partners in a marital context feel a great immaturity, which was fed by lack of a well-defined self (Klever, 2009), it could produce symptomatic indicators of criticism, emotional or physical withdrawal, attempts to change the partner, as examples of antecedents of marital dissatisfaction. Thus, DoS played a crucial role in long-term -healthy- intimate close relationships and marriages (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Titelman, 1998).

As indicated above, the term ‘intimacy’ included a paradoxical meaning in close and significant relationships (Williamson, 1991). The marriage/relationship itself involved a psychological meaning and two people’s commitment to a lifetime together, whereas intimacy still challenges. Because, through childhood’s painful experiences (i.e., abandonment), conscious and unconscious fears have been shaping the adult’s approaches to the current intimate relationships (Ehrlich, 2014). Conversely, a healthy and functional, stable love relationship provided individuals to establish the separation-individuation process and “a sense of self-independent of the family of origin” (Ehrlich, 2014, p.4).

A marriage might have been compensating three psychological functions: "A counterpoint to difficult childhood experience," "separation from the family of origin," and "each partner with important self-object" (Ehrlich, 2014, p.3). However, in a marital conflict, these processes could also be manifested in reverse. For instance, acquired individuality from the family of origin might have gone into the dissolution process during a nodal event (i.e., crisis, conflicts, birth, child-rearing). Reason for dissolution of individuality or self-differentiation (DoS)- mostly related to the identification of the self within the marriage context. The fused (or pseudo-self) which had been defined by marriage could be destroyed, and the loss of self become the leading source of dysfunctionality, stress, and even pathology (Haber, 1990). On the other hand, DoS was one of the underlying factors related to marital adjustment, which has been received little attention (Peleg, 2008) from psychological researchers.

The antithesis of the DoS seemed to be pseudo-self (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) where rooted in one's family-of-origin. Under emotional stress, individuals potentially used to learn (in family-of-origin), how to act in a particular manner and embrace typical roles to maintain the emotional equilibrium of family (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The main effect of pseudo-self in a dyadic relationship was, spouses were unwittingly deprived himself/herself to maintain relationship stability or demanding on their spouses to change (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The imbalance of these emotional forces in family relationships had the potential to produce psychopathology (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The anxiety and tension were more intense in the relationship that partners act more emotionally reactive. One of the critical indicators of a healthy relationship was maintaining self-regulation in the face of anxious and stressful times. However, in the case that individuals developed chronic anxiety, the relationship was more influenced and resulted in emotional, physical, and behavioral dysfunctioning (Papero, 2014). Individuals with low-level DoS were more prone to experience problems (i.e., conflicts, distress) in their marital relationships (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973).

Related to DoS, nuclear family emotional process (NFEP) was another salient concept in Bowen's (1978) theory referring to maladaptive coping ways in an emotional

context. DoS levels of each spouse played a significant role in a family's level of functioning (Klever, 2001). Depending on the DoS levels, tension, or stress decrease, increase, or prolonged. In the case of increase or prolonged tension, these four relationship patterns (they are 'symptoms' meanwhile) of NFEP were mostly activated. NFEP relationship patterns originally consisted of (a) marital conflict, (b) emotional cutoff, (c) symptom in spouses, and (d) focus on the child (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). *Marital conflict* referred to the increase in family tension and anxiety among spouses which appeared with symptomatic indications of trying to control each other or focusing on what was wrong with the other, criticism, or sarcasm. *Emotional cut-off* referred to the intensity of the intimacy in the relationship that has become excessively or insufficiently close and appeared with symptomatic indications of physical, emotional avoidance, and withdrawal that leads to the stabilization of relations by reducing anxiety. *Symptoms in spouses* were related to the harmony in the relationship, one spouse has gone more subordinated to decrease marital tension at the cost of sacrificing his/her individuality. As a result, the anxiety level of a subordinate spouse increases, emotional pressure on mental health, and social dysfunctionality might have been developed. *Focus on the child* indicated the circulation of tension in the family; parents projected their anxieties on children. The excessive focus of parents on the functioning of the child produces more vulnerability to have social, mental, and even physical symptoms in the child (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Regarding the literature and theoretical explanations, using a family systems approach as a guiding framework was appropriate (for the current study) for understanding the factors that affect marital satisfaction.

The dissolved individuality -as indicated above- was mostly related to the identification of self within the marriage context (Haber, 1990). Hence, the focus on the 'self' provided a broad background to marital issues. In addition to the contribution of basic human orientations of individuation and togetherness processes, self-construals might have been inevitably considered as a salient variable to be examined in intimate relationships, which has been generally neglected by the researchers. Based on the dictionary means of 'construe,' the term of "self-construal referred to how individuals define and make meaning of the self" (Cross, Hardin & Gercek-Swing,

2011, p.143). Psychological researchers have tried to elaborate on the definitions of different self-types, but Markus and Kitayama's (1991) prominent self-view of independent and interdependent self-construals reached a broad audience. Even though Markus and Kitayama (1991) have noticed that there may be other possible self-construals, their definition of self-construal was mostly understood as individuals' self-view regarding how they relate to others.

How self-construal shape interpersonal behavior? Cross et al. (2011) assumed that though there was no specific description of Markus and Kitayama, many obvious applications regarding social interactions could be observed. For instance, European-American cultures referred to independent cultural views, while its members seek more independence and autonomy; Asian cultures referred to interdependent cultural views, and members seek more group harmony and maintain connectedness (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

What if the question above be asked again in a more detailed manner: how self-construal influences romantic relationships? In response, the recent study of Day and Impett (2018) could illustrate the concept in a romantic relationship context. The authors mentioned that self-construals were significant variables to be considered. Despite the high costs of altruism, highly interdependent individuals were more prone to sacrifice in a romantic relationship and even felt more satisfied and authentic. In two separate studies, Sinclair and Fehr (2005) investigated the active versus passive handling strategies in a romantic relationship dissatisfaction through self-construal types. In two separate studies, independent self-construal was related to an active and constructive voicing of dissatisfaction with the intent of improving the relationship. In contrast, interdependent self-construal was related to passive and an attitude of the loyalty of optimistically waiting for conditions to improve. In the literature, similar findings based on the relationship between self-construal and marital issues could be expandable in the direction of a significant interaction. Therefore, the researcher assumed that investigating the relationship between NFEP and marital satisfaction through self-construals (mediator variables) invigorated the hypothesized model. More precisely, alongside NFEP variables (symptoms in spouses-significance, symptoms in

spouses-occurrence, focus on the child, emotional contact), two things had an impact on marital satisfaction in terms of reflecting the self-construals: interrelational and self-developmental orientations.

In Turkish literature, Imamoğlu's Balanced Integration and Differentiation (BID) Model was one of the major approaches to explaining the -above-mentioned- self-construal types. The model had a similar emphasis on Bowen's DoS concept since both referred to an inherent need in humans to be related to others while differentiated (without being emotionally withdrawn), and these both processes should be achieved simultaneously (Bowen, 1978; İmamoğlu, 1998). Furthermore, İmamoğlu (1998) extended this balanced and integrated differentiation from familial context to the societal background concerning the self-realization of individuals without a normative pattern of social expectations. The BID model suggested two main self-orientation dimensions of interrelational and self-development regarding the self-construal concept (mediators).

In sum, close inspection of the available literature on marital satisfaction has indicated that the contribution of basic human orientations of relatedness and individuation is notable. Marriage constitutes one primary type of close relationship; relatedness and individuation processes together have the potential to shape individuals' basic pattern of psychological functioning in a marriage. These basic human orientations of relatedness and individuation theoretically best correspond to self-differentiation. However, such an assumption (between marital satisfaction and DoS) is much more complicated than it appears since these orientations (or DoS) are shaped within the cultural context. Thus, the researcher assumed that DoS studies could best be understood through how individuals define themselves (i.e., self-construals) in a particular cultural context. At first glance, both variables (DoS and marriage) are formed continuously and changed their structures in different cultural practices. The only way of examining these variables to get the best cultural-sensitive results in the current study seems to use self-construals (as instruments) that reflect Turkish participants' cultural structure. Therefore, the researcher preferred to define the associations between these variables, in a structural model (see Figure 1) that was

proposed in the light of family systems and self-construals. Consequently, the present study aimed to investigate the model that describes the relationship between variables of NFEP (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on the child, and emotional contact), and self-construal types (interrelational and self-developmental orientations) in explanation of marital satisfaction. A balanced, integrated differentiation model and intergenerational family system theory were used as background theoretical approaches to the current research.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was examining the model that previously discussed. Specifically, the current study aimed to examine the mediating role of self-construals (interrelational and self-developmental orientations) in the relationship between nuclear family emotional processes (i.e., symptoms in spouses, focus on the child, marital conflict, emotional cutoff) and marital satisfaction. It was expected that inclusion of the self-construal variables (mediators) to the model would consolidate the relationships between the NFEP variables and the marital satisfaction. Figure 1 illustrated the conceptual structure of the hypothesized model, and the followings were the research questions configured for the model.

1.3 Research Questions

RQ1. Is Family Genogram Interview (FGI) valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture?

RQ2. How do married individuals' self-reported nuclear family emotional process (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on the child, and emotional contact), interrelational, self-developmental orientations scores relate to marital satisfaction?

Below-mentioned research questions were designed based on the proposed model (see Figure 1)

RQ2.1. How do self-reported nuclear family emotional processes (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on the child, and emotional contact) relate to marital satisfaction?

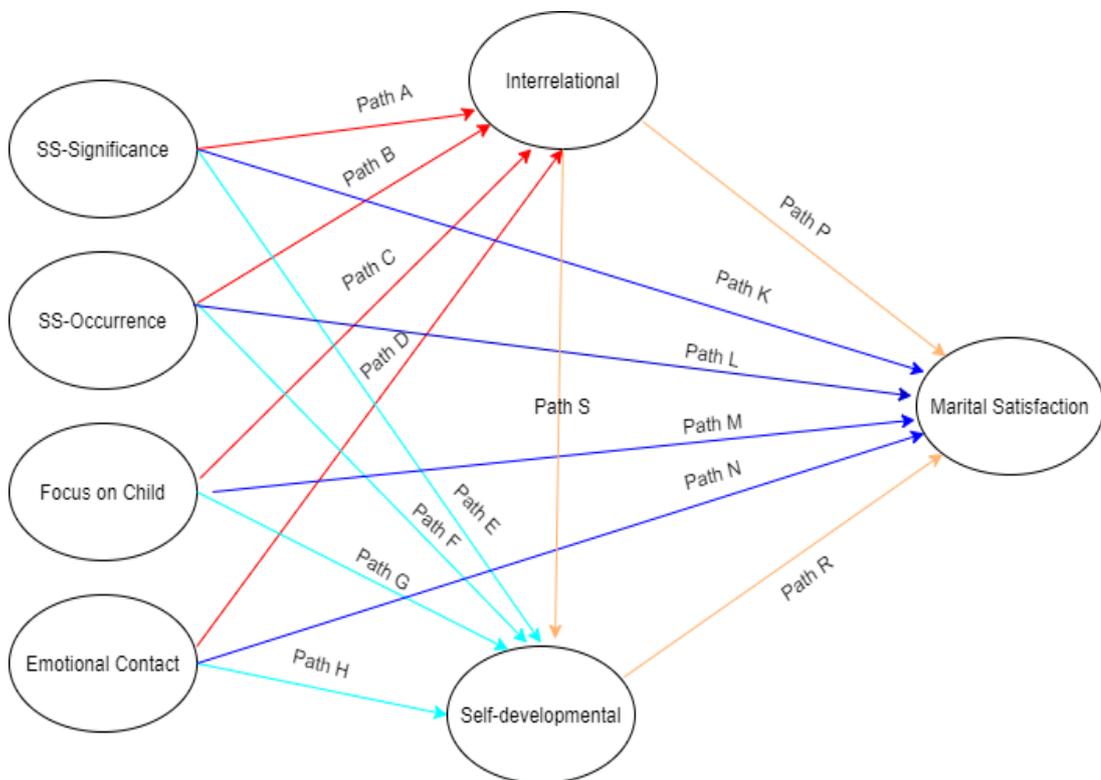


Figure 1.1 The conceptual diagram of the hypothesized model

RQ2.2. How do interrelational and self-developmental orientations relate to marital satisfaction?

RQ2.3. How does interrelational orientation relate to self-developmental orientation?

RQ2.4. How do interrelational and self-developmental orientations indirectly relate to the potential effects of self-reported nuclear family emotional processes (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on the child, and emotional contact) on marital satisfaction?

RQ3. Do the hypothesized relationships in the model differ concerning gender?

1.4 Hypotheses

In light of the research questions, the following hypotheses were involved:

Hypothesis 1. FGI is a valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture.

1.4.1 Hypotheses for the Direct Effects in the Model

Hypothesis 2. A statistically significant amount of variance in marital satisfaction is explained by the NFEP and self-construal variables among married individuals.

Regarding hypothesis 2, the following sub-hypotheses are formed to investigate the direct paths in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 2.1. There will be a significant positive relationship between symptoms in spouses-significance and interrelational orientation (Path A). In other words, married individuals who involve more in physical, emotional, social, and working life dysfunctionality will have more interrelational orientation.

Hypothesis 2.2. There will be a significant positive relationship between symptoms in spouses-occurrence and interrelational orientation (Path B). In other words, married individuals who involve more dysfunctionality in medical and pathological situations will have more interrelational self-orientation.

Hypothesis 2.3. There will be a significant positive relationship between the focus on the child and interrelational orientation (Path C). In other words, married individuals who involve more in overprotection, psychological dependence in the parent-child relationship, and conflicts in child-rearing practices will have more interrelational self-orientation.

Hypothesis 2.4. There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional contact (marital conflict+emotional contact) and interrelational orientation (Path D). In other words, married individuals who involve more in emotional dysregulations will have less interrelational self-orientation.

Hypothesis 2.5. There will be a significant negative relationship between symptoms in spouses-significance and self-developmental orientation (Path E). In other words, married individuals who involve more in physical, emotional, social, and working life dysfunctionality will have a less self-developmental orientation.

Hypothesis 2.6. There will be a significant negative relationship between symptoms in spouses-occurrence and self-developmental orientation (Path F). In other words, married individuals who involve more dysfunctionality in medical and pathological situations will have a less self-developmental orientation.

Hypothesis 2.7. There will be a significant negative relationship between the focus on the child and self-developmental orientation (Path G). In other words, married individuals who involve more in overprotection, psychological dependence in the parent-child relationship, and conflicts in child-rearing practices will have a less self-developmental orientation.

Hypothesis 2.8. There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional contact (marital conflict+emotional contact) and self-developmental orientation (Path H). In other words, married individuals who involve more in emotional dysregulations will have a less self-developmental orientation.

Hypothesis 2.9. There will be a significant negative relationship between symptoms in spouses-significance and marital satisfaction (Path K). In other words, married individuals who involve more in physical, emotional, social, and working life dysfunctionality will have less marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2.10. There will be a significant negative relationship between symptoms in spouses-occurrence and marital satisfaction (Path L). In other words, married individuals who involve more dysfunctionality in medical and pathological situations will have less marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2.11. There will be a significant negative relationship between the focus on the child and marital satisfaction (Path M). In other words, married individuals who involve more in overprotection, psychological dependence in the parent-child relationship, and conflicts in child-rearing practices will have less marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2.12. There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional contact (marital conflict+emotional contact) and marital satisfaction (Path N). In other words, married individuals who involve more in emotional dysregulations will have less marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2.13. There will be a significant positive relationship between interrelational self-orientation and marital satisfaction (Path P). In other words, married individuals who have more interrelational self-orientation will have a lower level of marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2.14. There will be a significant positive relationship between self-developmental orientation and marital satisfaction (Path R). In other words, married individuals who have more self-developmental orientation will have a higher level of marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2.15. There will be a significant positive relationship between interrelational and self-developmental orientation (Path S). In other words, these constructs are complementary, married individuals who reported a higher interrelational orientation feel higher self-growth and self-intrigue as well.

1.4.2 Hypotheses for the Indirect Effects in the Model

Hypothesis 3. The relationship between NFEP variables (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on the child, and emotional contact) and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational and self-developmental orientations.

Regarding hypothesis 3, eight sub-hypotheses were presented:

Hypothesis 3.1. The relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path A+Path P). In other words, married individuals who involve more in ss-significance will have more interrelational orientation, which in turn, increases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.2. The relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path E+Path R). In other words, married individuals who involve more in ss-significance will have less self-developmental orientation, which in turn, decreases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.3. The relationship between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path B+Path P). In other words, married individuals who involve more in ss-occurrence will have more interrelational orientation, which in turn, increases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.4. The relationship between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path F+Path R). In other words, married individuals who involve more in ss-occurrence will have less self-developmental orientation, which in turn, decreases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.5. The relationship between the focus on the child and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path C+Path P). In other words,

married individuals who involve more in focus on the child will have more interrelational orientation, which in turn, decreases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.6. The relationship between the focus on child and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path G+Path R). In other words, married individuals who involve more in focus on the child will have less self-developmental orientation, which in turn, decreases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.7. The relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path D+Path P). In other words, married individuals who involve more in emotional contact will have more interrelational orientation, which in turn, decreases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3.8. The relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path H+Path R). In other words, married individuals who involve more in emotional contact will have less self-developmental orientation, which in turn, decreases their marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4. The inclusion of the self-developmental orientation (mediator) to the paths that previously examined the indirect effect of interrelational orientation (mediator) on the relationship between NFEP variables and marital satisfaction change the direction of the association.

Regarding hypothesis 4, four sub-hypotheses were presented:

Hypothesis 4.1. Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction (Path A+Path S+Path R).

Hypothesis 4.2. Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction (Path B+Path S+Path R).

Hypothesis 4.3. Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between the focus on the child and marital satisfaction (Path C+Path S+Path R).

Hypothesis 4.4. Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction (Path D+Path S+Path R).

1.5 Significance of the Study

The current study aimed to understand marital satisfaction from the perspectives of NFEP variables and self-construal types in a proposed model. This study was mainly not aiming to examine the applicability of Bowen's concepts to Turkish culture. However, associations among both approaches' variables and their contribution to the variance in the examination of the marital satisfaction might indirectly provide more valuable insight to understand NFEP concepts within the Turkish culture. In this respect, the researcher assumed that the current study was not only valuable for marital satisfaction literature. Moreover, Turkish practitioners from the field of psychological counseling could benefit from the findings especially those who work with families and married individuals—considering that most participants were in a period where they in the life cycle of families with children (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999) vulnerable to experience emotional intensity producing symptoms in the family members' functionality (Bowen, 1978). Therefore, families that successfully maintained this period with a higher self-differentiation experience more likely fewer discrepancies in the functioning of family members. The emotional process that was essential for healthy familial relationships and the degree of the effect of these emotional functioning processes on satisfying marriage could be revealed in this study. Thereby, the present study was significant because it examined the relationships between NFEP variables and satisfying marriages (in a structural model) during one of the high-pressure family life cycle period for the participants.

Furthermore, the most remarkable part of the study was the inclusion of the self-construals to the NFEP variables in the examination of satisfying marital relationships. In substance, Bowen's theory assumed that marriage brings two spouses together as "architects" of their family "emotional atmosphere" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p.225) that children joined the family as a second generation. However, with internal (self-differentiation level) and external (expected/unexpected pressures) factors, this atmosphere begins to produce some level of chronic anxiety which binding mechanisms (i.e. dysfunctioning of spouses, children, conflicts, emotional dysregulations) were taken in place. The amount of chronic anxiety circulating in the family system and how family members responded to this emotional intensity with differentiation determined each child's degree of emotional separation (emotional autonomy or differentiation) from the family. Kerr and Bowen (1988) ascribed great importance to this formulation, in which the family evaluation was theoretically a well-defined process. In addition to this evaluation process, defining architects' (spouses) self-construals that what kind of orientations were related to those symptoms could also be revealed in this study. Such a determination could provide additional information for researchers and practitioners who effort in the formulation of problems related to family dysfunctioning patterns. Thus, the present study was critical because it tried to understand the NFEP variables in the light of spouses' self-construal orientations to satisfying marriages.

Bowen's concepts reflected the western individualistic cultural background, whereas Imamoğlu's Model mirrored Turkey's both individualistic and collectivist characteristics. DoS and self-construals presented great theoretical conjunctions, as they were not identical and had salient distinctions. Bowen (1978) claimed that his concepts, especially DoS had a universal nature, but Erdem and Safi (2018) assumed that "DoS evolves differently in family models of independence, interdependence, and psychological interdependence as a function of different self-construals" (p. 478). A healthy differentiation process was more probably achievable if the cultural factors on both societal and family levels were considered. DoS was a variant and dynamic factor that shaped by cultural norms and demands, including the value of children and child-rearing practices in which self-construal suited "a reflection of DoS" (Erdem & Safi,

2018, p.479) in this context. From this perspective, a direct investigation of NFEP (when DoS is low in the family system) through the lenses of the self-construal definition of BID in a proposed model could provide additional evidence to the literature regarding cultural orientations of Bowen's concepts. The determinants of chronic anxiety were the focus of Bowenian therapy and concomitantly emerged within the family of origin and culture. A considerable discordance between cultural norms and family emotional atmosphere could produce higher chronic anxiety (Erdem & Safi, 2018). Thus, studying the family of origin concepts, which rooted in the emotional processes, becomes more critical considering the self-construals, as cultural elements.

This current study proposed two determinants in the nuclear family emotional atmosphere: being aware of the symptoms in an ongoing marital relationship and improve self-differentiation levels of spouses by defining the barriers to achieve it. The researchers assumed that it was precious to determine married individuals' coping mechanisms with chronic anxiety that existed in all relationships to some degree. Thus, it could be possible to formulate and take preventive actions for the dysfunctional relationship patterns among Turkish married individuals. In this respect, the outcomes of the current study might contribute to the practitioners and policymakers in designing or developing new intervention programs for couples/partners regarding the NFEP variables. For instance, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP) conducted supervision training for employees of mental health practitioners to improve the skills of the family, couple, and divorce counseling. Suggestions based on the unique outcomes obtained in this study would provide implications to make these programs more efficient by targeting specific aspects of family-of-origin variables and NFEP.

As indicated before, gender differences were another contributing factor in understanding marital satisfaction that scholars have frequently noted. In other words, the contributing factors to marital satisfaction were examined to clarify if there was a gender difference in the hypothesized model. Therefore, an advanced statistical analysis -multi-group analysis was conducted to investigate the gender differences in the hypothesized model. Besides increasing statistical power, multi-group analysis

mainly refined the gender difference on the proposed model that contributed to the significance of the study. Lastly, the current study aimed (the first attempt) to adapt the NFEP measures into Turkish by examining the psychometric properties of the Family Genogram Interview (FGI). FGI provided a standardized genogram interview protocol for researchers who would like to investigate the NFEP and for practitioners to understand and measure the concept in their non-clinical practice with couples.

1.6 Definition of the Terms

Marital Satisfaction is concomitant maintenance of a long term intimacy and individuality in a marriage that is originated in DoS (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Symptoms in Spouse refers to a mechanism of “dominant-subordinate or over-functioning-under-functioning reciprocity” to stabilize the anxiety in a dyadic relationship “to the point that one person’s functioning is so impaired that symptoms develop” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; p.172).

Focus on Child refers to the inclusion of the children -is usually a least differentiated family member- in a conflictual dyadic relationship as a third party. The tension/anxiety between spouse is reduced with the involvement of children where the process make children more vulnerable to internalize or act out the tension/anxiety (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Marital Conflict refers to a dissatisfied and conflictual dyadic relationship, Kerr and Bowen (1988) explain with a metaphor of a scary roller coaster experience, nevertheless “people threaten never to buy another ticket, but they usually do” (p.187).

Emotional Cutoff refers to the low DoS level when husband and wife experience anxiety/tension/emotional intensity; they usually act out with a physical and/or

emotional withdraw to overcome, but the situation becomes worsened with the risk of being isolated (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Interrelational Orientation refers to the maintenance of being attached to significant others while not feeling disconnected and indicates the frame of reference whom approval in social and familial relationships becomes significant (İmamoğlu, 1998).

Self-developmental Orientation refers to one's self-growth and self-intrigue, where the frame of reference is one's self-potential (İmamoğlu, 1998).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter included three main sections. In the first section, definitions and some of the contemporary approaches to marital satisfaction were summarized. Later, Bowen's Nuclear Family Emotional Processes components (Symptoms in Spouse, Focus on Child, Marital Conflict and Emotional Cut-off) and the DoS were presented in light of the relevant literature. Two distinct examples of self-construals: İmamoğlu's interrelational and self-developmental approach were also introduced. Afterward, in the second section, marital satisfaction and its relation to the NFEP/DoS and self-construals concepts were discussed and represented. In the final section, a summary of the literature review presented.

2.1 Marital Satisfaction

The definitions of marriage and marital satisfaction were legions. Some definitions have emphasized the function of social unity in marriage such as "a legally recognized union between a man and woman in which they are united sexually, cooperate economically, and may give birth to, adopt, or rear children" (Strong, DeVault & Cohen, 2005; p. 7). From a more functional/social perspective, marriage was defined as a social unit rather than an intimate romantic relationship: "Marriage is what lovers do when they want to bring their love out of the merely private, internal realm of emotion and make it a social fact, something visible to and acknowledged by everybody from parents to bank clerks" (Waite & Gallagher, 2000; p.187).

Nevertheless, view of people on marriage has eventually evolved from a “must-fulfilled obligation” to “more voluntary in nature and symbolizes the couple’s love and desire to be together” (Li & Fung, 2011; p. 246), and marital satisfaction has considered as a salient, influential factor in this context (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). On the other hand, a growing number of people refused and opted the cohabitation, singlehood, childlessness instead of traditional marriages (Weiten, Dunn & Hammer, 2014), but for most people, marriage still maintains priority. Despite significant changes in traditional marriage models, most people still preferred to get married, albeit in a period of their lives. In understanding marriage preferences, results of the Relationships Indicators Survey in Australia has provided a good example. The survey indicated that individuals’ reasons for getting married on top were love, companionship, lifelong commitment, children’s future/security, religious, and family pressure, respectively. On the other hand, most of the reasons for not getting married on top were previous noxious experience, avoidance of commitment, and strong commitment does not a need in marriage (Healey, 2016).

Similarly, which factors contributed to marital satisfaction was attracted by researchers’ intense attention. For instance, five factors that contributed to marital satisfaction: Communication, expression of affection, empathy, sexual satisfaction, and doing things together (Hyun & Shin, 2012). Notwithstanding, the most challenging aspect of marriage-related (i.e., marital satisfaction, marital quality) variables for the researchers were the complexity and multidimensionality of the topic. Several variables have been considered as predictors of marital satisfaction in previous empirical studies, such as problem-solving skills, personality, background, social attitudes, sexual attitudes, sexual behavior, self-disclosure, attachment, caregiving, cost-infliction, agreement, understanding, realization, and feeling understood (Allen & Thompson, 1984; Eysenck & Wakefield, 1981; Faulkner, Davey & Davey, 2005; Feeney, 1996; Hendrick, 1981; Johnson et al., 2005; Shackelford & Buss, 2000).

With close inspection of the related literature, it seemed possible to categorize the studies under three main headings to marital satisfaction: the first one was personal variables such as personality characteristics, physical, mental health, and demographic

variables. The second one was interrelational variables such as conflict resolution, communication patterns, spouse support, division of responsibilities, and labor. The third heading was contextual variables of childbirth, religion, culture, situational, and developmental crisis (Berscheid & Regan, 2005; Regan, 2011). Regarding demographic and contextual variables, for instance, the first married individuals reported higher marital satisfaction than remarried couples (Jose & Alfons, 2007; Rogers & Amato, 1997). Including gender, Jose and Alfons (2007) conducted a study to examine the relationship between several demographic variables and marital satisfaction. Findings emphasized in line with the well-known assumption that men reported higher marital satisfaction than women. Similar results have been revealed in the literature (Gagnon, Hersen, Kabacoff, & Van Hasselt, 1999; Ng, Loy, Gudmunson & Cheong, 2009) as well. Education level was also another significant variable on marital adjustment as both groups of first-marriages and remarriages indicated lower marital adjustment problems as the educational level increased (Jose & Alfons, 2007). The positive relationship between educational level and marital satisfaction was another finding that when spouses hold a science profession and graduation (doctoral degree rather than a bachelor degree), they reported higher marital adjustment (Fıfılođlu, 1992).

The number of children, on the other hand, influenced the wives' marital satisfaction and sexual adjustment scores negatively. Marital satisfaction was the lowest in the middle period of marriage compared to the early and late marriage period also confirmed in one study (Jose & Alfons, 2007). However, findings in the number of children can be contradictory. For instance, contrary to previous findings on the relationship between the number of children and marital satisfaction, Onyishi, Sorokowski, Sorokowska and Pipitone (2012) indicated a significant positive relationship between two variables, whereas the number of children was not a strong predictor of marital satisfaction. Regarding gender, wives' life satisfaction level was a more reliable predictor of marital satisfaction, in which a positive relationship exists when it was compared to husbands' satisfaction levels (Freudiger, 1983). In terms of gender, additionally, it seemed that both spouses' marital satisfaction tended to increase after the children leave home. However, before this transitional stage, wives

experienced less marital satisfaction and higher negative feelings than husbands about their marital relationship during the childrearing phase (Rollins & Feldman, 1970). Interpersonal and personality factors were commonly studied in identifying which variables most important to marital satisfaction. For instance, Patrick, Sells, Giordano, and Tollerud (2007) integrated intimacy and differentiation in addition to several demographic variables (i.e., length of the marriage, children, age, income). One of the remarkable findings of the study showed that intimacy and satisfaction grouped on factor analysis, Patrick et al. (2007) concluded that spouses perceived intimacy as synonymous with satisfaction; a supported intimacy and spousal support were the strong predictors of marital satisfaction. In terms of personality, individuals reported higher level satisfaction with their marriages as their spouses having personal traits of agreeableness, open-mindedness, and emotional stability more (Botwin, Buss & Shackelford, 1997). It seemed that conflict resolution strategies have an essential place in marriages. These strategies in the early periods (during the 1st year of marriage) potentially became habituated in the late period of marriage (Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002).

Marital satisfaction was also highly related to the degree that culturally specified norms and expectations were fulfilled besides individual expectations. Moreover, these norms and expectations might vary among societies, primarily exhibiting self-related values of individualistic and collectivist cultures were both hold similarities and differences to marital satisfaction. Findings in predicting marital satisfaction in a Chinese sample revealed similarities with previous Western research on the personality dimension. The cultural differences were mainly appeared in the wives' and husbands' value dimension due to cultural context. It was suggested that this difference based on China's collectivistic context in which love was solely not the predictor of spouses' feelings about their marriages; opinions and feelings of others (i.e., extended family, relatives, friends) especially the approval of son or daughter-in-law maintained a key role in prospective spouses' feelings on marriage (Luo et al., 2008). On the other hand, Lucas et al. (2008) presented the invariance of love (as components of marital satisfaction) and partnership across different cultures (US, UK, Turkey, and China). The results revealed that "evolutionary explanations of marital

satisfaction are at least plausible according to spousal invariance, a lack of full cultural invariance in the present study also suggests that marital satisfaction criteria may be determined by culture” (p. 118). Another cross-cultural difference in determinants of marital satisfaction could be observed in childrearing practices. It seemed that the number of children was considered as a source of stress in some cultures, while in others, it was not. A cross-cultural study in three countries (US, Britain, and Turkey) with more than two thousand couples -a path model showed that as the number of children increased, the US and British couples reported less marital satisfaction while this decline among Turkish couples was minimal and statistically not significant (Wendorf, Lucas, Imamoğlu, Weisfeld & Weisfeld, 2011).

Marital satisfaction has been studied from different theoretical perspectives in various contexts and communities to explain what makes the difference between a satisfied and dissatisfied marriage. For that purpose, an ongoing global effort among researchers is still in progress. In one of the contemporary approaches, the four key elements of the dynamic goal theory of marital satisfaction were introduced. The first element assumed that individuals have multiple goals to be accomplished in their marriages. The goals were illustrated such as companionship goals (i.e., married individuals’ seeking in belonging and relatedness), personal growth goals (i.e., married individuals’ desire to realize their self-potential), and instrumental goals (sharing tasks and responsibilities in marriage). Second, the precedence of these goals progressively was changed across adulthood. That is, for instance, the importance of companionship goals (belonging and relatedness) increased in late adulthood rather than in early adulthood (Li & Fung, 2011).

On the other hand, the importance of instrumental goals was most prior in middle adulthood rather than early and late adulthood. The third assumed that each marital goals have no equally impacted on marital satisfaction, as some of them gained more importance/priority during a certain period of marriage. For instance, regarding the severity of multiple marital goals, the middle adulthood period was the most demanding one, Li and Fung (2011) claimed that this might be the main reason in understanding why marital satisfaction levels were lower in middle adulthood in

comparison to early and late adulthood. The fourth was defined as “other factors can also affect marital satisfaction by either changing the priority of different marital goals or by facilitating the achievement of the prioritized marital goals” (Li & Fung, 2011; p. 247). These influential factors were categorized into two categories; at the micro-level such as age, childbirth, stressors, transitions in life. At the macro-level such as historical and cultural (i.e., beliefs about marriage) factors where they eventually and dynamically changed and affected the priority of marital goals. Lastly, there were also some other well-defined factors in the achievement of marital goals, such as communication patterns, problem-solving strategies, and attribution.

Gottman's method was one of the well-known contemporary approaches and often attracted intense attention to marital satisfaction. Gottman and Silver (2015) assumed several risk factors of a harsh start-up in discussions, the four horsemen (criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling), flooding with emotional intensity/withdrawal, body language, and failed repair attempts. Furthermore, they suggested seven principles for making marriage more satisfied. These seven principles were (1) enhancing the love map of the marriage (i.e., being intimately acquainted with spouses such as preferences, desires, and interests), (2) nurturing fondness and admiration, against contempts, (3) turning toward each other against getting away (i.e., connection, attention, chatting), (4) letting spouses influence each other (i.e., learning from each other, considering the spouse's point of view), (5) handling solvable problems, (6) overcoming gridlock (i.e., efforting and persisting on solving problems), and (7) creating sharing meaning (i.e., perspectives on the values, goals, self-realize).

Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) included the first psychological task of a good marriage, as the separation from the family of origin without being estrangement and emotional cutoff. The second task was building togetherness and creating autonomy, which converged with the construct of DoS. In line with the explanations in the introduction part, the current study focused on the variables of interrelational and self-developmental orientations, which have been given the primary attention in investigating the relationship between nuclear family emotional systems and marital satisfaction. Therefore, each study variable regarding marital satisfaction was

delineated based on the review of available research. First, how the DoS and nuclear emotional family system have been conceptualized was explained in detail. Secondly, the self-construal perspective of İmamoğlu's BID Model that the current study was grounded on explained along with the referral to interrelational and self-developmental orientations. Thirdly, a literature review on the associations between DoS, nuclear family emotional process (symptoms in the spouse, focus on the child, marital conflict, and emotional cutoff) and marital satisfaction in the light of several studies' findings was described.

In sum, though preferences evolve currently, marriage still maintains its importance to many individuals. The research described many underlying factors in getting and avoiding marriage preferences emphasizing personal, interpersonal, and contextual factors. Variables related to child-rearing practices and self-construal were mainly in the focus of contextual factors. DoS and individuation were also among suggested psychological tasks for a good marriage proposed by modern approaches.

2.2 Bowen's Nuclear Family Emotional Process (NFEP)

Intergenerational Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978) was a well-known approach in the field of family therapy with Bowen's great emphasis on family of origin issues. In the Bowenian approach, the family was defined "as an emotional unit" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p.6). The approach was mainly based on eight constructs. These were 'differentiation of self', 'nuclear family emotional process', 'triangles', 'family projection process', 'multigenerational transmission process', 'emotional cutoff', 'sibling position' and 'societal emotional process'. However, differentiation of self (DoS) was the umbrella term, it functioned as an indicator for other concepts, as emotional processes were regulated by it. For instance, greater the DoS; triangles, emotional cutoff, emotional fusion, marital conflicts, symptoms in spouses less likely were experienced in the family context. The focus on the therapeutic process mainly aimed to increase family members' DoS levels.

DoS emerged as a result of two primary biological life forces of separateness and togetherness. This struggle remained in social, familial, and intimate relationships (interrelationship), and meanwhile, in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (intrapsychic) dimensions in daily functioning. However, the most threatening factor in this struggle and equilibrium was periods of anxiety. The anxiety mostly emerged with nodal events (i.e., crisis, marriage, death, separations), dysfunctional patterns (i.e., triangles, emotional cutoff, fusion) in relationships become more visible and disturb the equilibrium in the family system (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). To DoS, two underlying traits of intrapsychic and interpsychic were assigned (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988): intrapsychic referred to the ability to differentiate cognitions and thoughts to be guided by one's own decision. The most salient characteristic of well-differentiated one was equally high-functioning on both logical and emotional levels. High-functioning was the case, especially during the stressful/crises in which individuals maintained their intimate relationships without compromising on personal autonomy. In poorly differentiated patterns, however, emotional reactivity immediately appeared, logical reasoning and emotions tended to be fused, and individuals felt obliged to share emotional involvement excessively toward stressful conditions. Hence, DoS dimensions of emotional reactivity and I-position involved in intrapsychic traits (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

On the other hand, interpersonal traits referred to the ability to maintain harmony between intimacy in relationships while remaining individuated. Individuals with greater DoS can take an I-position even they were pressured by others to do otherwise. Nevertheless, the individuated sense of self was not an obstacle to maintain intimate relationships. Otherwise, fusion and emotional cutoff were involved in interpersonal traits (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The most important predictors of DoS were levels of emotional reactivity, 'I' position, emotional cutoff, and fusion (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Skowron & Schmidh, 2003). Emotional reactivity referred to individuals' internalized reactions given to the intense pressure of one's significant relationships with others. On the other hand, 'I' position implied a capability of individuals that they can utterly think, feel or act for themselves, as an indicator of the high DoS level (Bowen, 1978). Emotional cutoff referred to the emotional distance

and withdrawal, while fusion produced unclear boundaries with people of similar emotional patterns as an indicator of the low level of DoS (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). One of the eight concepts in the Bowenian approach was the nuclear family emotional process (NFEP) based on a presumptive perspective that symptoms or clinical problems emerge with a chronic or heightened family stressor(s). Depending on how family members reacted to the stressor(s), the anxiety becomes handled, otherwise, the four (dysfunctional) mechanisms in the family system were uncovered. These characteristic patterns mask the problems and tension; they function as a response to binding the anxiety within the family system. However, if the tension was not handled and tended to increase, particular family member(s) become solely focused and absorb the anxiety in the system while the other family members struggle less. These dysfunctional patterns which underlie the problems in the family included four relationship mechanisms (Kerr & Bowen, 1988):

(a) With a low-of level DoS, psychological, physical, and/or social symptoms in a spouse(s) were triggered as a result of poor emotional functioning (i.e., chronic anxiety, conflicts, emotional distance, emotionally isolated). Thus, in a dyadic relationship, spouses become vulnerable to develop symptoms (i.e., psychological, social, physical, or daily functioning). These can take forms of acute or chronic symptoms to the short or long-term disturbances in the family system. When spouses failed to maintain an autonomous/independent self in their dyadic relationship, they mainly become dependent on one another where the relationship pattern becomes an obstacle for making spouses' own decisions, being in harmony and tolerating differences, as an indicator of interpersonal fusion (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003). However, such a pattern usually ends with one partner's over-functioning (i.e., psychological, social, physical) whereas another spouse takes an under-functioning position. This new maladaptive functioning might benefit the relationship -as symptoms bind the chronic anxiety.

(b) focus on the child was the typical example of another anxiety binding mechanism; focusing on a third part stabilize the chronic anxiety within the family system. The children (least undifferentiated family member) becomes more vulnerable to develop

symptoms -as dysfunctional patterns mainly were taken forms of overprotection, psychological dependence in the parent-child relationship, inhibiting the child(ren) from developing a sense of his/her autonomy, and conflicts in child-rearing practices between parents. Once anxiety binding role of children evolved to the keeping the dyadic relationship stable (overtime), family triangulation patterns (i.e., holding mediator, coalition, scapegoating) might have been also emerged (Bell, Bell, & Nakata, 2001).

(c) marital conflict referred to the low DoS level and greater need for togetherness in the relationship over individuation needs. An intense emotional reactivity was initiated, which leads to chronic marital conflict, however, it does not mean that well-differentiated couples will not have conflict problems. They will probably be more able to react with less emotional reactivity to their conflicts, less extended, unresolved, and greater emotional stability without attacking or criticizing one another. As in the previous mechanisms, marital conflict was also a maladaptive functioning of binding the anxiety within a dyadic relationship.

(d) emotional cutoff also referred to as the low DoS, spouse(s) experienced difficulty handling anxiety/emotional intensity in their marriage and preferred a physical and/or emotional withdraw. The purpose was mainly avoiding potential conflicts (emotional intensity) in marital problems. As a behavioral manifestation of low-level DoS, emotional cutoff might have been related to the unresolved family of origin attachments that repeated itself within new/prospective intimate relationships.

In sum, one of the most distinct constructs in the Bowenian approach was NFEP variables referring to low-level DoS in the family system. The NFEP variables were defined as chronic anxiety binding mechanisms resulted in the dysfunctionality of family members. This tension that characterized by chronic anxiety was originated in symptoms in spouses, overprotection, and psychological dependence in the parent-child relationship, inhibiting the child(ren) from developing a sense of his/her autonomy, conflicts in child-rearing practices between parents, and unresolved conflicts or emotional distance between spouses.

2.3 Self-Construals

The self was an abstract and obscure construct to realize (understand) for a great many. An inductive topology of self-related concepts (e.g., self-esteem, self-image, self-awareness, self-perception) eventually represented cumulative aspects of the construct. The reciprocal relationship between self and culture offered a distinctive emerging concept of self-construal in this crucial area of psychology. In their well-known delicate categorization (individualism-collectivism-IC; Markus & Kitayama, 1991) of the self, two aspects of the self -universal and divergent- were worth mentioning. The universal aspect of the self referred to an inner and private experience of emotions and thoughts which were not shared with others. On the contrary, divergent aspects referred to “the exact content and structure of the inner self may differ considerably by culture” (p.226). This was the distinction between self and other/inner attributes of an individual, and a sense of social belonging. More specifically, separateness and togetherness implied characteristics of the self in different cultures; Markus and Kitayama (1991) preferred to entitle as ‘individualism and collectivism.’

Main differences between independent (similar definitions; e.g., egocentric, individualist, autonomous, idiocentric) and interdependent (e.g., socio-centric, collectivist, holistic, relational) self-construals were assigned to some specific cultural features (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Independent self-construal described individuals more in Western culture and defined a separateness from social context. This does not mean that individuals with independent self-construal socially were not minded. Moreover, the reference point of social awareness was the “inner core of self” (p.226) rather than the social appraisal. The boundaries between self and others were more strict and non-permeable. Emotions, thoughts, and abilities were primary resources that referred to internal and private experiences, as a reference point. Tasks were being considered individually, manifesting the self, achieving internal attributes, and own goals. The reflected appraisal was preferred for the self-evaluations, and the self-esteem stemmed from expressing the self and self-acceptance of internal attributes

(Markus & Kitayama, 1991). On the other hand, interdependent self-construal described more individuals in non-Western cultures and defined a togetherness within the social context. Statutes, roles, and relationships were primary resources that referred to external and public experiences, as a reference point. Tasks were considered as being belonged to the social context and contributing the others' goals. The boundaries between self and others were more flexible and permeable. Self was defined within the context of relationship characteristics with others, and the self-esteem stemmed from adapting the self to the social context and restraining the self in favor of social harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Despite Markus and Kitayama's (1991) enormous influence on research, the occurrence of contradictory views did not take long. The main reference point of objections was the dual manner structure of the I-C. This dualistic perspective assumed the individualistic and group orientations with two different ends of a single construct (Triandis, 1988). Social/economic conditions were changing; family dynamics/cultures also changing around the world. Hence, the adaptability of this dualistic thinking to different cultural heritages (Chung & Gale, 2009) became likely questionable. Both orientations could be compatible in one (İmamoğlu, 1987; Kağıtçıbaşı & Berry, 1989; Sinha & Tripathi, 1994) and a "categorize cultures as if they exist in uniformity" (Erdem & Safi, 2018, p. 474) was misleading conception. Instead, it might be more appropriate thinking that the features of both self-construals could exist along with a particular cultural domain. Chung and Gale (2009) assumed, "that is, a family in an individualistic culture may encourage its members to develop autonomy to a greater extent while also supporting the achievement of relatedness to a lesser extent. In contrast, a typical family in a collectivistic culture may function oppositely" (p. 20).

However, a very similar perspective was already theorized by Kağıtçıbaşı (1996) in Family Change Theory (FCT). In her approach, Kağıtçıbaşı (1996) introduced the relatedness and autonomy concepts as two basic needs of human beings, underlie the self-construe in the cultural context. Kağıtçıbaşı's (1982a, 1982b) perspective was mainly based on the Value of Children (VoC) studies and proposed different self-

construal types regarding different family functioning models. VoC studies indicated for parents to have different child-rearing practices. These preferences, however, were taken in their forms depending on families' cultural context and socioeconomic status. The children who were raised in families that hold instrumental (potential caregivers with parents' aging) and economic utility (especially in underdeveloped or developing countries), interdependent values were promoted, especially in rural areas and socioeconomically low-income families. On the other hand, the children who were raised in families that hold psychological utility (especially in developed countries), despite children's increasing economic cost, independent values such as autonomy and individualism were promoted, especially in urban areas and socioeconomically high-income families. Nevertheless, the point was that the changing characteristics of socioeconomic conditions were also creating a shift in child-rearing practices and self-construal types in some countries – such as Turkey, with both independent and interdependent characteristics (Kağıtçıbaşı & Ataca, 2005).

Afterward, Kağıtçıbaşı (2007) defined several self-construal types/family models that each corresponded to a specific cultural context: (1) The autonomous-separate self referred to a family context and child-rearing practices, in which engendered a high-level autonomy and low-level relatedness were promoted. On the contrary, (2) heteronomous-related self referred to a family context and child-rearing practices, which engendered a high level of relatedness/obedience and low-level independence/autonomy was promoted. However, (3) autonomous-related self was a synthesis of previous ones, and Kağıtçıbaşı (2007) assumed that it was the most psychologically healthy option in the approach. In this type of self, children experienced both psychological needs of separateness and togetherness in balance with significant others. Interestingly, in this type of self-construal, the intergenerational hierarchy was not considered as a threat to children's autonomous-related self.

From a similar perspective to FCT, İmamoğlu (1987) constituted a Balanced Differentiation and Integration Model (BDIM). The approach mainly emphasized, “the natural order involves a balanced system resulting from the interdependent integration of differentiated components” (İmamoğlu, 2003, p. 371). It referred to the equilibrium

between natural tendencies (e.g., differentiation and integrative-interrelational orientation), and this balance was essential for optimal self-development. The point of origin for developing the model was that the unbalanced emphasis of societies on I-C was put on one or the other (İmamoğlu, 2003), for instance, in the majority of Western societies, individuation sounded as if the construct merely requires separateness. On the other hand, in non-Western countries, integration was considered and valued over differentiation. The two-ends of needs (differentiation and integration) were not opposite, but distinct poles that were the core assumption of the model. Furthermore, differentiation referred to the intrapersonal dimension that indicated individuals' predispositions to realize their self-development, potency, and functionality (i.e., psychologically, socially, daily life). Two ends of the differentiation -in a continuum were individuation and normative patterning. Normative patterning was "becoming patterned by extrinsic referents, such as normative expectations and social control" (İmamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004, p.280). Integration orientation, on the other hand, referred to the interpersonal dimension where emphasized individuals' predispositions to be connected and related to others. Two ends of the integration in a continuum were relatedness and separateness (İmamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004). Based on the intrapersonal differentiation and interpersonal integration, İmamoğlu (2003) configured four types of family context and related self-construal types for the development of the BID Model:

(1) In differentiative family contexts (separated-individuation), the family members were promoted to higher personal autonomy and differentiation. Nevertheless, interrelational problems might have emerged as the integrative needs were ignored to a great extent. Therefore, individuals might also be felt disappointed (i.e., distant affectivity to the family members) in their endeavor toward individuation.

(2) In integrative family context (related patterning), differentiative needs were considered as a risk to the group harmony, and integration (cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally) robustly emphasized over differentiative needs of family members. Individuals in this context might have developed an external locus of control as they experience conditional love, respect, and support from parents. Although integrative

needs seemed to be satisfied with a pseudo-harmony in relationships, lack of internal control locus prompted the individuals to seek social approval, orientation in maintaining group/social harmony. Thus, as one's differentiative needs genuinely become not resolved, integrative and relational dissatisfactions might emerge.

(3) *An unbalanced family context (separated patterning)* was defined as the worst type of family model and self-orientation to psychological functioning. The main characteristic of the context was suitable for the meeting of neither differentiative nor integrative needs, therefore, individuals in this context might "...tend to be emotionally detached but cognitively bonded or patterned; hence, they might be expected to be characterized by both negative affectivity and stereotyped thinking" (İmamoğlu, 2003, p. 375).

(4) *Balanced family context (related-individuated)* was described as the most functional type of family model and self-orientation, as "...they tend to individuate not from others but with others" (p. 375). Both differentiative and integrative needs of family members were satisfied by less restrictive authoritarian control; parents provided unconditional love, respect, and support, in turn, children had an excellent opportunity to develop an internal locus of control, constituted secure attachments and satisfaction in their relationships.

In the development of the Balanced Integrated Differentiation Scale (BIDS), the model revealed two-superordinate factors: (1) Self-developmental orientation referred to one's self-growth and self-intrigue without a normative frame of reference. On the contrary, (2) Interrelational Orientation referred to the normative frame of reference whose approval in social and familial relationships becomes vital (İmamoğlu, 1998).

The BID model suggested an equilibrium in the family context through secure attachment and individuation. When both differentiative and integrative needs were satisfied, well-being and psychological functioning were the most anticipated variables to be associated (İmamoğlu, 2003). Indeed, the well being and psychological functioning (Aygün-Karakitapoğlu, 2002; Beydoğan, 2008; Güler-Edwards, 2008;

İmamoğlu & Beydoğan, 2011; İmamoğlu & Selçuk, 2018; Kantaş, 2013; Yeniçeri, 2013) concerning the BID model have been repetitively studied in the literature. The results have consistently revealed the role of self-construals in explanation of well-being in several life domains. For instance, İmamoğlu and Beydoğan (2011) reported a study with 383 public and private sector employees to investigate the relationship between employees' self-construal types, basic need satisfaction at work, and well-being in general. Results mainly proved the predictor role of self-construal on employees' well-being directly. Moreover, self-construal also predicted the well-being indirectly through the mediation of need satisfaction and perceived supportiveness. Yeniçeri (2013) also indicated the relationship between self-construal types of BID model and psychological (PWB) and subjective well-being (SWB) with 737 Turkish adults. Concerning the first aim of the study, results demonstrated that interrelational orientation predicted both PWB and SWB, whereas self-developmental orientation predicted only PWB, directly.

In sum, the concept of self-construal was a product of the reciprocal relationship between self and culture. The definition of individualism and collectivism particularized characteristics of the self in different cultures. Moreover, independent self-construal portrayed individuals more in Western culture, which does not mean socially being not minded; their reference point was more internal and private experiences. On the other hand, interdependent self-construal characterized non-Western culture and emphasized togetherness within the social context. Kağıtçıbaşı (1996) and İmamoğlu (1998) developed self-construal approaches based on Turkish culture. In her Family Change Theory (FCT), Kağıtçıbaşı (1996) defined three self-construal types within the family context: The autonomous-separate self, heteronomous-related self, and autonomous-related self. Furthermore, İmamoğlu (1998) constituted four self-construal types in her Balanced Integrated Differentiation Model: separated-individuation, related patterning, separated patterning, and related-individuated.

2.4 Differentiation of Self and Self-Construal

The Bowenian constructs have been commonly studied across several cultures (i.e., Spain, Italy, South Korea, China, Japan, Philippines, Turkey) to validate the Bowenian approach. However, no-validation findings were mainly attributed to psychometric characteristics of the Differentiation of Self-Inventory (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998); or incompatible of research methodology. Furtherly, Erdem and Safi (2018) criticized that there should be another underlying perspective like some culture-specific issues in explaining inconsistent findings on constructs in the direction that the Bowenian approach proposed initially.

In a comparison of Bowenian approach and Kağıtçıbaşı's Family Change Theory (FCT), Erdem and Safi (2018) discussed that connectedness and separateness dimensions were common premises for both approaches. On the other hand, there was a distinct difference between the ways that Kerr and Bowen (1988) defined the separateness to DoS; and the way that being autonomous was conceptualized in FCT. The perspective of Kerr and Bowen (1988) assumed that in the cultures where togetherness/dependency/compliance was emphasized over separateness, individuals required to sacrifice their individuality in favor of maintaining togetherness.

However, Kağıtçıbaşı (2007) refused this default unidimensionality of the self within the context of categorized cultures since there should be other intersecting and more complex parameters (i.e., parenting styles, childrearing practices, the value of children, family practices, socioeconomic background) to be considered in the definition of self. Furthermore, Kağıtçıbaşı (2007) assumed that in cultures where togetherness was emphasized over separateness, individuals were not solely required to sacrifice their sense of self in favor of collectivistic norms. In line with FCT, for instance, the intergenerational hierarchy was not considered as a threat to autonomy. Because togetherness and separateness might have not been solid and strictly separated constructs even in the psychologically interdependent cultures.

Hence, why Bowenian assumptions were empirically well-understood in US urban samples (White, middle-class, non-Hispanic) that autonomous-separate self-construal highly promoted becomes more clarified. Inconsistent findings in application of these concepts to other cultures (African-American and Asian samples) were mostly produced in “those cultures are characterized by a family model of psychological interdependence with autonomous-related self-construals such that loyalty to one’s family-of-origin refers to high relatedness only. In other words, those individuals have high agency (acting with one’s willing without being emotionally pressured) and high relatedness, but that agency refers to autonomy rather than separateness” (Erdem & Safi, 2018; p. 477).

İmamoğlu (2003) defined differentiation and integration as basic psychological human needs. The difference between differentiation and individualism was “on one’s uniqueness and reliance on internal referents” without being isolated. On the other hand, the integration part referred to “being related with others and valuing affectionate ties with family and significant others” without being emotionally fused or group obedience (İmamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004; p. 280). One of the most salient assumptions of the BID model was that interrelational and self-developmental orientations were distinct (uncorrelated), but complementary constructs (İmamoğlu, 1998, 2003; İmamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004; İmamoğlu & İmamoğlu, 2007); has also been examined in the current study.

The research, based on the relationship between Bowenian constructs and self-construal was limited, and solely involved the unidimensional bipolarity conceptualization of dependent and interdependent self-construals. In one of the few exceptional studies, Ross and Murdock (2014) reported the moderator role of self-construals in the relationship between DoS and well-being in a US young adult sample. Results revealed that higher-level DoS associated with a higher level of independent and less interdependent self-construal. In brief, Kağıtçıbaşı (2005) refused a strict distinction that neither togetherness nor separateness was superior over another. Individuals in interdependent cultures were not solely sacrificing their sense of self in favor of collectivistic norms. The research also indicated that togetherness and

separateness were not strictly differentiated constructs, and even individuals in more individualistic cultures were not solely insensitive to collectivistic norms. In her definition of self-construal, İmamoğlu (1998) indicated that though interrelational and self-developmental orientations were distinct, they eventually complementary constructs as well.

2.5. Marital Satisfaction and its Relations to Nuclear Family Emotional Process, Differentiation of Self and Self Construals

The relationship between marital satisfaction, NFEP variables and self-construals have empirically and theoretically been investigated in the literature. The available research in each following section presented study variables' contributing roles in understanding marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, the current study was aimed to investigate marital satisfaction; studies focused on the romantic relationship samples (i.e., dating, engaged) were also described to study variables.

On the other hand, specific research based on the NFEP constructs was so limited in the literature. Besides, these constructs strictly referred to the undifferentiated relationship patterns in the family system, and for instance, focus on child theoretically converged with the family triangulation concept. DoS was also defined as one of the main influencing factors on marital functioning, along with anxiety, triangulation, and multigenerational family transmission (Klever, 1998).

Thus, the researchers preferred to focus on the DoS, fusion, emotional cutoff mainly, and family triangulation since these concepts provided a more broad perspective in the light of literature to be reviewed. However, some other variables (i.e., self-concealment, emotional withdrawal) in literature were found theoretically related to NFEP variables, which also delineated consecutively.

2.5.1. Nuclear Family Emotional Process (Differentiation of Self)

Family of origin variables (i.e., DoS) -were not given due consideration to understand marital satisfaction, as these variables have more explanatory power than most variables in counseling practice (Peleg, 2008). For instance, Lampis, Cataudella, Busonera and Skowron (2017) reported the codependency in close relationships (i.e., married, cohabiting, stable relationship without marriage or cohabiting) within a nonclinical sample of 318 participants. To explain codependent behaviors, results of the study indicated that DoS dimensions (fusion, emotional reactivity, I-position, emotional cutoff) were more critical than dyadic adjustment dimensions (affective expression, dyadic satisfaction, cohesion, consensus).

Rather than summarizing the predictive power of the Bowenian approach on marital satisfaction, in line with the discussion in the previous section (See, 4.2. Differentiation of self and self-construal), the literature has been delineated as the research within the US- European (most were Caucasian) and non-US-European samples. The aim was to link empirical review of the Bowenian approach in understanding marital satisfaction from cross-cultural lenses. Such a categorization was a consistent attempt with Bowen's (1978) assumption of the universal applicability of DoS (Kerr & Bowen, 1988); however, it became a question of debate along with cultural issues, and cross-cultural studies revealed inconsistent results (Baer, Prince, & Velez, 2004; Chung & Gale, 2006; Skowron & Fiendler, 1998; Tuason & Friedlander, 2000). Thus, it was expected that the relationship between marital satisfaction and DoS from the perspective of Bowen's theory brings out contradictory findings.

Bowenian research on marital satisfaction with the US and European samples (more separateness prompted). In line with theoretical assumptions of DoS, Gubbins, Perosa, and Bartle-Haring (2010) proposed the relationship between Bowenian constructs (emotional reactivity, triangulation) and Gottman's (1999) model of marital interaction (emotional flooding) with 338 married individuals. Bowen's concepts seemed to work with other models in explaining marital satisfaction. The most distinct finding on two

separate (for wives and husbands) canonical correlation analysis showed that both spouses' level of DoS from their family of origins predicted the degree of emotional floodings in their conflicts and arguments and marital satisfaction levels. Moreover, the total amount of variance accounted for each gender was almost equal (51% for men and 53% for women).

In the examination of the relationship between DoS and marital satisfaction, Skowron (2000) also conducted a study with both spouses in a 39 heterosexual married couples sample. Results indicated that couples with low levels of DoS (much more reactive, cutoff, and fused) reported less marital satisfaction, and higher levels of DoS produced the greatest levels of marital satisfaction, as expected. In the interest of explanatory power, the results of the study produced a substantial variance of 74 % in husband and 61 % of the variance in wife marital adjustment scores. Bohlander (1999) assumed the relationship between DoS, perceived need fulfillment (Interactional-Emotional and Sexual Needs), and well-being within the context of marital satisfaction based on self-reports of 95 married men from the US. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that all three predictors explained the 27% of the total variance in well-being, which DoS was one of the strongest predictors in the model indicated that positive mental health was related to higher perceived need fulfillment and DoS.

Notwithstanding, some previous research revealed contrary findings. For instance, Lampis, Busonera, Cataudella, Tommasi, and Skowron (2017) evidenced the psychometric properties of the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) in Italian context with 671 participants age 19-69 years. However, after a series of EFA and CFA, they concluded that the Italian version of DSI-R was a psychometrically sound measure of DoS; nevertheless, the poorest functioning items have belonged to the fusion dimension (5 items). This detail in the study was consistent with the assertion of Erdem and Safi (2018) that the most questionable construct of the Bowenian approach was the fusion in cross-cultural research. In a similar vein, it was argued that whereas Italian culture considered with more individualistic characteristics, a family of origin bonds currently maintained its importance, including strong emotional and physical ties (Hank, 2007; Luciano et al., 2012).

When studying Bowen's concepts in a particular population, the question of 'What aspects of the theory applicable?' was probably the most important and delicate question to be answered. Rodriguez-Gonzalez, Skowron, Cagigal de Gregorio and San Roque (2016) showed the relationship between DoS, marital satisfaction, and mate selection in a Spanish sample with 118 heterosexual couples. However, analyses indicated different results; a higher level of DoS and similarity in couples' DoS levels predicted higher marital adjustment, whereas no link was observed between DoS and mate selection.

Furthermore, even in the lands where Bowen's theory was born, studies produced contrary findings to the relationship between DoS and marital issues. For instance, Timm and Keiley (2011) assumed a path analysis to understand a model among variables of DoS, adult attachment, sexual communication, sexual satisfaction, and marital satisfaction. Results indicated that despite the significant correlation between sexual communication, DoS had no direct effect neither on marital nor sexual satisfaction within 205 nonclinical married individuals in the midwest part of the US. Regarding the full model in the study, DoS and attachment together explain 25% of the variance in sexual communication. Similarly, Patrick, Sells, Giordano, and Tollerud (2007) also reported the role of DoS and intimacy in explaining the variance on marital satisfaction with 124 heterosexual married couples. Factor and multiple regression analyses showed that there was no (significant) relationship between DoS and marital satisfaction despite variables of supported intimacy and spousal support strongly predicts marital satisfaction.

Some researchers also preferred to investigate how couples' family of origin experiences and couples' DoS levels -emerged in the context of extended families (i.e., parents, siblings) affected their current romantic relationship quality. For instance, Holman and Busby (2011) described this assumption with a large sample of couples (N = 1,839) in a structural model path analysis. Findings mainly supported the hypothesis -as mentioned above- that Bowenian constructs might provide an applicative understanding of marital quality as DoS patterns transmitted along with generations.

Research on non-US and European samples (more togetherness prompted). Although they studied in Spain; Rodriguez-Gonzalez, Skowron, Cagigal de Gregorio and San Roque (2016) reported that their sample of 118 heterosexual married couples reflected the collectivist part of the Spanish culture. In line with the correlation analyses, they concluded that their findings were consistent with US samples, significant relationships between DoS, relationship health, and satisfaction found, but the couples' mate selection with same-level DoS assumption revealed no support. A supporting study with a similar conclusion came from Israel. Peleg (2008) disclosed the relationship between DoS and marital satisfaction with 121 Israeli married men and women. Hierarchical regression analysis suggested a positive correlation between DoS and marital satisfaction.

On the other hand, Lohan and Gupta (2016) studied with 52 Indian couples to examine the relationship between DoS and marital adjustment. Even though results indicated a significant relationship ($r = .33$, $p < .05$) between DoS and marital adjustment, DoS dimensions explained only 16.9% variance in marital adjustment. The authors discussed the cultural inherent of Indian society and attributed the results of low variance to the cultural factors. However, it looks like the topic was so culture-sensitive as above-mentioned since DoS studies not in only individualistic cultures varied, collectivistic cultural backgrounds have similarly produced inconsistent results as well.

Javadi, Abadi, Lashgari, and Ahangrkani (2015) conducted a study to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, DoS, and marital satisfaction in a sample of 170 married Iranian women samples. Results of the multiple regression analysis indicated that including DoS dimensions and emotional intelligence, the total model explained 70% of the variance in marital satisfaction. In line with the accordance of Bowenian constructs in collectivistic cultures, Yousefi et al. (2009) also investigated the structural relationship between DoS, mental health, and well-being in 1024, heterosexual married couples. Based on the structural modeling, couples who reported a higher level of DoS experienced higher marital satisfaction and well-being as well. However, this finding was remarkable since Iranian culture preferably emphasizes the

togetherness and dependence over the independence of individuals. Regarding how Bowenian concepts were manifested to marital issues (i.e., satisfaction, quality, conflict) in the context of Turkish culture; as it holds both individualistic and collectivistic characteristics (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005), the available empirical evidence has been limited. One of the few studies, Kalkan (2018) reported the relationship between marital relationship quality, DoS, and authenticity in relations with 603 married individuals in the age range of 18-63 years. The results of hierarchical regression analysis indicated that the dimension of emotional cutoff was a more reliable predictor of marital satisfaction among other DoS dimensions, whereas emotional reactivity and fusion produced nonsignificance. Polat and İlhan (2018) also reported a study in an examination of the relationship between DoS, dyadic adjustment, and several psychological symptoms (stress, depression, anxiety) in a Turkish sample ($n= 362$). The series of multiple regression analyses indicated that emotional cutoff was the most strong predictor of dyadic adjustment and stress, depression, anxiety in the context of dyadic adjustment. Ulu-Yalçınkaya (2019) conducted a study to explore the relationships between perceived stress, intra-dyadic stress, and life and dyadic satisfaction through DoS variables (I position, emotional reactivity, fusion, and emotional cutoff) in a Turkish sample of married individuals ($n= 825$). Results indicated that among all DoS variables, 'I position' was the strongest predictor of life and dyadic satisfaction.

One of the variables of the current study was marital conflict. It seemed that Bowenian Therapy might have been an effective method to reduce the marital conflict in collectivist cultures. Yektatalab, Seddigh Oskouee, and Sodani (2017) described a randomized controlled trial with 42 Iranian couples and significant differences were found between intervention and control groups. The Bowenian approach was considered a practical therapeutic approach to reduce conflicts in marital relationships.

Indirect variables regarding Bowenian concepts. The examination of some other indirect variables (to the DoS and NFEP dimensions) in the marital context might provide valuable information anyway. For instance, the self-concealment converged with emotional cutoff since both hold common points in practice and theoretical

meaning. The term referred to individuals' tendency to keep away some uncomfortable personal thoughts, emotions, and information from others' awareness, which potentially were considered as stressful and painful (Larson & Chastain, 1990). Uysal, Lin, Knee, and Bush (2012) investigated the self-concealment in a romantic relationship context from the perspective of autonomy, competence, and relatedness; as needs fulfillment in close relationships. The findings of the two separate studies, the cross-sectional data indicated a significant negative relationship between self-concealment and relationship well-being and this relationship was mediated by need fulfillment in their relationships which similar research was found in the literature that supported the evidence (Patrick, Knee, Canevello, & Lonsbary, 2007). In a similar perspective, Uysal, Lin, and Bush (2012) showed the reciprocal cycle of self-concealment in a romantic relationship context within two separate studies. The findings of the multilevel analysis indicated a reciprocal cycle in the relationship context. The self-concealment increased the probability of more self-concealment amongst partners, which in turn decreased the relationship trust in each other, and the relationship well-being became worsened.

Regarding spouses' chronic pains (symptoms in the spouses), Uysal, Ascigil, and Turunc (2017) explained the relationship between spousal autonomy support, need satisfaction, and well-being longitudinally with 102 married individuals who suffered from chronic pain. Spousal autonomy referred to understanding others' decisions with minimal pressure and giving the chance to make choices on the options (Deci & Ryan, 2002). The results of structural path analysis supported the hypothesis that spousal autonomy improved the spouses' need fulfillment and their well-being (regardless of pain intensity) in the marital context.

According to Kerr and Bowen (1988), subordinated behavior to maintain a dyadic relationship (stable) was one of the main reasons for symptoms development in spouses and marital conflict, which both were examined in the current study. Hünler and Gençöz (2003) also outlined the role of problem-solving abilities and the effects of submissive behaviors amongst spouses on marital satisfaction with 92 married couples. The results of hierarchical regression analysis indicated that; as submissive

acts increased, perceived problem-solving abilities decreased, and spouses' marital satisfaction levels also decreased. Lastly, as to indicate before, focus on the child dimension in NFEP involves being overprotective, excessively focus, and conflicts on children and converged with family triangulation. Although the focus was not on marital satisfaction, a qualitative study provided some insightful evidence to be considered. Sağkal and Türnüklü (2017) delineated their study with 40 children ($M=12.80$, $SD=.16$) through semi-structured interviews. The results of the content analysis supported some NFEP constructs in the context that one of the central conflict reasons amongst Turkish spouses was children-related topics. The children-focused conflicts between the spouses affected the children-parent relationships, and finally, spouses tended to project the conflicts in their dyadic relationship onto children that theoretically associated with family triangulation. Akar (2019) also depicted the associations between attachment anxiety and DoS with 173 married individuals. The findings of the study mainly indicated that DoS and attachment anxiety had a significant indirect effect between the family of origin functioning and relationship quality.

2.5.2. Self-Construals

Since cultural issues play an essential role in the understanding of marriages from the DoS and individuation perspective, the variable of self-construal could also make a significant contribution to the topic. However, the amount and scope of previous studies were very limited in investigating the associations between self-construals and satisfaction in relationships. As indicated before, Kağıtçıbaşı's (2005) and İmamoğlu's (2003) self-construal models entirely reflected on the Turkish cultural domains. The perspective on marital satisfaction from these perspectives could be expanded to other self-construal types, such as independent and interdependent orientations. Interrelational orientation in the BID model converged with an interdependent/collectivist approach, whereas self-developmental orientation holds commonalities in an independent/individualistic manner.

Gündoğdu (2007) represented a study to examine the role of İmamoğlu's Balanced Integration and Differentiation model on marital quality (the composition of marital satisfaction and dyadic adjustment) with 292 couples. Structural model results indicated that among BID dimensions, only interrelational orientation was a positive direct significant predictor of marital quality, nevertheless, self-developmental orientation only produced an indirect effect on marital quality. The author concluded that such a finding was possibly expected as interrelational and self-developmental orientations were distinct and complementary orientations, and one (participant) can produce low or high scores on both.

Celenk, Van de Vijver and Goodwin (2011) replicated the relationship satisfaction in a cross-cultural study (British adults N= 150, Turkish adults N= 170) from three theoretical perspectives of attachment, gender roles and Kağıtçıbaşı's (2005) model of related/autonomous self-construals. The structural path analysis indicated that autonomous/related self mediated the relationship between culture and relationship satisfaction along with avoidance, relatedness, and masculinity. Rather than agency dimension, the interpersonal distance dimension was more critical in understanding the relationship satisfaction in both groups, whereas the combination of these construals (autonomous/relatedness) produced a weak statistical effect. In comparison to both groups, Turkish individuals reported a lower level of autonomy and relationship satisfaction than British individuals, as hypothesized.

2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

In the last few decades, the research has been focused on marital satisfaction to get a better understanding of the marital problems on married individuals' experiences. Therefore, determinants in understanding the factors affecting marital satisfaction became one of the leading research engagements in counseling psychology, and a growing number of approaches have presented their theoretical perspectives in solution-seeking for the systemic problems in families. Among these, the Bowenian approach, which emphasized the importance of emotional processes in the family

system, appeared as one of the salient theoretical backgrounds in understanding marital satisfaction. Specifically, the Bowenian approach explained marital satisfaction from several lenses: DoS, triangulations, and nuclear family emotional processes (symptoms in spouses, focus on the child, marital conflict, and emotional cut off). However, it seemed that DoS was often at the center of research on focusing on marital satisfaction due to its significant effects on marital issues. There might be other variables that facilitate the relationship between NFEP and marital satisfaction; these additional variables (i.e., DoS, self-concealment, family triangulation) including self-construals were reviewed in detail.

Empirical findings indicated that emotional cut off was a salient and robust predictor of marital satisfaction among Bowenian constructs. Although there was evidence of a direct association between DoS and marital satisfaction/quality, studies investigating the mediating role of self-construals were very sparsely and limited both in national and international studies. Hence, examining the associations among the current study variables in the hypothesized model and identifying the unique contributions of the factors were critical for understanding the satisfaction phenomenon in the marriages. The examination of the Bowenian constructs -especially DoS- along with cross-cultural factors was vital and contribute to the topics in marital issues. While the ongoing discussion on the general applicability of the Bowenian constructs to other cultures (i.e., collectivist, emotionally interdependent) still keeps its importance, it appears that marital-related topics (i.e., mate selection, marital satisfaction) will not be free from this leading debates. For instance, various research supported the assumption that (Bartle-Haring, 1993; Lim & Jennings, 1996; Rovers et al., 2007; Tuason & Friedlander, 2000) individuals tended to select their mates with similar DoS level; nevertheless, some other studies claimed the opposite (Rodriguez-Gonzalez et al., 2016; Skowron, 2000).

Similarly, the relationship between DoS and marital satisfaction revealed contrary findings due to cultural differences. It was expected that research in the US strongly supported the significant relationship between DoS and satisfied marriages, but even in the lands where Bowen's theory was born, studies yielded contrary findings.

Interestingly, despite the research that mainly produced findings in opposite to Bowenian assumptions, there was also a significant number of studies that supported the applicability of these constructs to collectivist or emotionally interdependent cultures on marital satisfaction. In sum, further studies, which might lead to the point out the consistency at clarifying the relationship between DoS and marital satisfaction needed.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter presented the methodological issues of the current study in the following order: Overall design of the study, characteristics of the participants of the main and pilot studies, and data collection instruments were briefly described. Afterward, psychometric properties of the questionnaires, data collection procedures for the pilot and main studies were explained. Lastly, the description of variables, data analysis methods, and the limitations of the study were introduced.

3.1 Overall Design of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationships among nuclear family emotional processes (NFEP; symptoms in the spouse, focus on the child, marital conflict and emotional-cutoff), self-construals (interrelational and developmental orientations), and their effects on marital satisfaction in a sample of married individuals with children. The correlational design best reflects overall design of the current study which aims to investigate relationships between several variables as “the degree to which two or more quantitative variables are related, and it does so by using a correlation coefficient” (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, p. 331). However, these studies may require additional sophisticated correlational techniques (e.g., structural equation modeling) to examine the associations between predictor and outcome variables, as in the current study. Family Genogram Interview, Balanced Integration-Differentiation Scale, Relationship Assessment Scale, and the demographic information form were employed in the current study. Furthermore,

analyses included Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in the investigation of the mediator roles of interrelational and developmental orientations on the relationship between NFEP variables and marital satisfaction.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The data of the main study were gathered from voluntary married individuals with child(ren). Purposive sampling, which is a non-random sampling method, was used in the current study. The main participation criteria were being (or used to being) a part of two-parents, heterosexual nuclear families with at least one child without considering the number of marriages that participants reported. However, the child(ren) should have been born in their current marriages. This criterion referred to the Carter and McGoldrick's (1999) life cycle stage of 'families with young children' had an additional background to the Bowen theory. The NFEP constructs and anxiety/stress have been more intensified in heterosexual, married couples with the young offsprings' joining the family (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). With these sample selection criteria, in the development of the original FGI, Platt and Skowron (2013) aimed to maximize variance among three constructs of Focus on a Child (FC), Symptoms in Spouse (SS), and Marital Conflict (MC). Platt and Skowron's (2013) study included only the mothers, and the researcher (in the current study) considered this criterion as a limitation by ignoring male individuals' self-reports of nuclear family experiences. For that reason, the sample selection criterion to participate in the study was applied as being married women or men from a heterosexual family with at least one child. In data gathering, only the online survey method was followed. The main reason was to increase reliability and validity outcomes in general. It was expected that self-reported marital and familial experiences and associated cognitions of participants were best reflected when they reported anonymously.

The data were only collected via an online survey. Using an online survey link, 647 married individuals living in different cities in Turkey participated in the study. The dataset of the main study was detected, 29 cases who did not meet the inclusion criteria

of having children in the current marriage were omitted, and the total sample size comprised of 618 cases. Most of the participants were living in Ordu (19.6%), Denizli (16%), Ankara (13.3%), İstanbul (7.3%), İzmir (6.0%), Van (3.6%), Antalya (2.8%), Gaziantep (2.3%), Kayseri (2.3%), Konya (2.1%) and the rest were from several other cities (e.g., Kocaeli, Adana, Sakarya, Adana, Bursa, Mersin, and Giresun). The sample of the main study comprised of married individuals (407 females, 65.9% and 211 males, 34.1%). The mean age for the overall main study was 37.90 years ($SD = 7.27$), ranging from 23 to 69 years. However, the percentage of the above 50 years was 0.06%. One individual did not report the age. The mean age for the women was 36.50 years ($SD = 6.42$) and men 40.62 years ($SD = 8.02$). The sample in the main study represented a highly educated profile. Majority of the participants reported a graduation from a vocational higher education ($n = 60$, 9.7%), university ($n = 297$, 48.1%), or master/Ph.D degrees ($n = 115$, 18.6%). The demographic characteristics of the main study participants were presented in Table 3.1.

The marital relationship characteristics of the participants were also presented in Table 3.2. In terms of marriage lengths, most of the participants reported a duration of 6 to 10 ($n = 199$, 32.2%), 11 to 15 ($n = 156$, 25.2%) and 16+ years ($n = 150$, 24.3%). Participants reported that the majority of them were in their first marriage ($n = 586$, 94.8%). Twenty-two (3.6%) participants reported that this was their second marriage, and four (0.6%) participants' spouses were in their second marriage. However, they did not have the child(ren) from their previous marriages. Most of the participants reported that they have two children ($n = 281$, 45.5%), and one child ($n = 242$, 39.2%). Only 15.4% of participants reported that they had 3 to 4 or more than four children. The age of the firstborn was ranged from less than one year to 44 years ($n = 397$) with the mean age of 9.90 ($SD = 7.83$).

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

Two separate data collection process was conducted for the current study. The first was for the pilot and latter for the main study. In both studies, the data were gathered

in 2019, consecutively, following the same procedure. As mentioned before, the main participation criteria in both studies were being a part of two-parent, heterosexual

Table 3.1
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants of the Main Study (N = 618)

| Variables | <i>f</i> | % |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 407 | 65.9 |
| Male | 211 | 34.1 |
| Education Level | | |
| Primary School | 11 | 1.8 |
| Secondary School | 33 | 5.3 |
| High School | 101 | 16.3 |
| Vocational Higher Education | 60 | 9.7 |
| Bachelor | 297 | 48.1 |
| Graduate | 115 | 18.6 |
| Missing | 1 | 0.2 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Married | 604 | 97.7 |
| Divorced | 13 | 2.1 |
| Widowed | 1 | 0.2 |

Table 3.2

Relationship Characteristics of the Participants of the Main Study (N = 618)

| Variables | <i>f</i> | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Number of marriages | | |
| First marriage (both of us) | 586 | 94.8 |
| Mine first, my spouse's second or more | 22 | 3.6 |
| My spouse's first, mine second or more | 4 | 0.6 |
| Second or more marriages (both of us) | 6 | 1.0 |
| Marital length (first marriages) | | |
| Less than one year | 3 | 0.5 |
| 1 to 5 years | 94 | 15.2 |
| 6 to 10 years | 199 | 32.2 |
| 11 to 15 years | 156 | 25.2 |
| 16 + years | 150 | 24.3 |
| Missing | 16 | 2.6 |
| Number of children | | |
| 1 | 242 | 39.2 |
| 2 | 281 | 45.4 |
| 3 | 77 | 12.5 |
| 4+ | 18 | 2.9 |

nuclear families with at least one child without considering the number of marriages that participants reported. However, the child(ren) should have been born in their current marriages. Participation was based on voluntariness, and no identifying information (name/surname, email address, phone number) was required. First of all, ethical permission was granted from the Middle East Technical University (METU) Human Subjects Ethics Committee (see Appendix A) to conduct the study.

Secondly, researcher expected that self-reporting through online assessment could encourage prospective participants to participate in the study who preferred online methods rather than the paper-pencil survey. Thirdly, the researcher expected to reach married individuals who could not be touched in person. On the first page of the online survey form, participants were provided an informed consent form and were asked to declare their voluntariness. A 'google form' was designed by the researcher and announced in social media accounts (Facebook, WhatsApp) via a link of the study and an image (poster) that explained the purpose and participation criteria of the study. However, during the main study, only individuals were invited to study those who did not participate in the pilot study.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

In the present study, a survey package comprised of demographic information form (Appendix B), Family Genogram Interview (Appendix C), Relationship Assessment Scale (Appendix D), and Balanced Integration-Differentiation Scale (Appendix E), was administered to gather information about the demographic, familial and marital relationship characteristics of the participants. Moreover, a pilot study was conducted to adapt the Family Genogram Interview (FGI) to Turkish as well as to examine overall instruments' psychometric properties. Hence, the following sections presented the procedures of the translation and adaptation of the FGI, participants' characteristics of the pilot study, validity, and reliability of the Turkish FGI, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), criterion and discriminant validity of the Turkish FGI.

3.4.1 Family Genogram Interview Scale (FGI)

The scale was originally developed by Platt and Skowron (2013) to have a standardized 75 minutes genogram interview in the assessment of emotional processes in families. In line with this purpose, the authors used both family evaluation diagram (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) and the traditional genogram format (McGoldrick, Gerson, & Petry, 2008). More specifically, FGI contained 84 qualitative and 68 quantitative items to evaluate four NFEP variables of symptoms in the spouses (SS), focus on the child (FC), marital conflict (MC), and emotional cutoff (EC) to assess the indicators of the DoS levels in a family system. The scale was initially developed with two versions: Nuclear Family (NF) and Family of Origin (FO). In the original study, Platt and Skowron (2013) used only closed-ended Likert type questions to examine the psychometric properties of the scale. Afterward, they combined subscales of the SS, FC, and MC from the nuclear family version, and EC from the family of origin version. The FC was excluded due to low reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.51$), and the final version comprised of SS (12 items, $\alpha = .81$), EC (11 items, $\alpha = .82$) and MC (6 items, $\alpha = .86$). Theoretically, the MC and EC dimensions focused on the dyadic relationship, while SS and FC were the dimensions that a chronic marital tension diverted to other members in a family (Józefczyk, 2017).

Symptoms in the Spouses referred to the items that assess physical, social, and psychological dysfunctionality and symptom development of spouse(s). FGI-SS was comprised of items to measure both spouses' physical, emotional, and social functionality. Some of the item examples indicated: "How would you rate your emotional health?," "How would you rate your partner or spouse's emotional health?"

Focus on the Child referred to the involvement of the child(ren) in a marital dyad to reduce the tension since the pattern becomes an opportunity for couples to project the anxiety that arouses in the relationship. Some of the item examples indicated: "How much would you say your relationship with your children affects your marriage?" and

“How often do you have conflict about doing the fair share of the work in raising the children?”

Marital Conflicts were the indicators of chronic anxiety in the marital dyad. As a result of low DoS (a need for togetherness and individuality), emotional reactivity becomes more salient, and spouses concentrated on what was wrong with the other. Some of the item examples indicated: “How much /often do you and your partner-spouse have disagreement or conflict?” and “How often do you feel the conflict gets resolved in a way that is mutually satisfying?”

Emotional Cutoff also referred to anxiety and undifferentiation, and one becomes emotionally or physically isolated with significant others. In a marital dyad, spouse(s) might have preferred to become withdrawn in handling the anxiety or emotional intensity in the relationship (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Titelman, 1998). Some of the item examples indicated: “How often do you feel you avoid talking about problems you and your partner-spouse are having?” and “How often do you feel like not talking about your feelings and thoughts with your partner-spouse?” In the original study of FGI; neither exploratory factor analyses (EFA) nor confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to examine the factorial structure of the scale.

The FGI was recently adapted to Polish by Józefczyk (2017) with 300 married women participants. Three different models were tested throughout the study. The first model was confirmed via a CFA based on the EFA structure. However, findings of the EFA had revealed a four-factor structure: SS split into two dimensions (SS-occurrence; physical, emotional, social functioning and SS-significance; effects and encountered difficulties). The FC remained; EC and MC formed under a single factor.

The second tested model (with CFA) was based on the recommended original factor structure of the scale: SS, FC, MC, and EC. The third model, however, composed of 8 parceled items based on the correlations of error residues between these items. Results revealed that among the three tested models, model 3 and model 2 had much better fit indices. In the EFA, the author kept several items instead of excluding; with the intent

of maintaining theoretical assumptions of the scale despite these items had low standardized β coefficient values. Thus, two items of FC were not omitted and kept on the scale as they provided the respondents to assess their spouses' attitudes to their child(ren) (Józefczyk, 2017). Cronbach alpha coefficients were found as mediocre ($\alpha = .78$ to $.91$). Józefczyk (2017) assumed that splitting the SS into two dimensions (SS-Occurrence and SS-Significance) made the subscale stronger in the assessment of the symptoms between spouses. Besides, the EC and MC were theoretically two distinct constructs since both focus on emotional processes in a marital dyad. However, a high intercorrelation between these constructs ($r = .75$, $p < 0.01$) were found in the Polish version. Józefczyk (2017) pointed out a two-tailed continuum line; marital conflicts functioned as a pursuit of emotional contact needs between spouses even if these conflicts were taken dysfunctional forms of resolution (i.e., getting out a hand, raising voices, yelling, shouting) in one tail. On the other end, the dissatisfaction of these emotional needs might lead to a feeling of emotional distance that functioned as an avoidance preference between spouses.

In the current study, before conducting the pilot study analysis, the researcher found Platt and Skowron's (2013) suggestions reasonable. They mentioned that FGI was an initial step to assess the emotional processes in families and needs improvement and further examination regarding its psychometric properties. The entire factor structure was not verified initially, and the FC dimension was removed due to low reliability despite its significant theoretical position. On the other hand, in the Polish version, the same dimension produced a sufficient Cronbach alpha ($\alpha = .78$) score. Moreover, in the Polish adaptation study, model 3 (parceled items of correlations of error residues) resulted in better fit indices as error residues were parceled.

Józefczyk's (2017) explanation was also convincing to keep the items (with low standardized β coefficient values) in the scale instead of omitting them on behalf of maintaining the theoretical background of the scale. Therefore, when the researchers were taken all of these explanations into account, the item parceling method was emerged as a better option than item-level analysis in CFA and following SEM analysis. The method was widely suggested by structural equation modeling (SEM)

researchers; it provides better normality and model fit indices (Bandalos, 2002; Nasser & Takahashi, 2003), and reliability with a less crowded data set (Kline, 2011). The researchers expected that the increased correlated error will be possibly become more manageable (Floyd & Widaman, 1995).

The first step in the parceling procedure was deciding on the dimensionality (unidimensional or multidimensional) of the items to be parceled should have been priorly considered and examined via exploratory factor analysis (Little, Cunningham, Shahar & Widaman, 2002), if the unidimensionality is not well-known. The main reason for such a prescreen was determining the appropriate techniques to be figured out the parcels. The unidimensionality of the dimensions was pre-described from existing validation studies (i.e., the Polish version), nevertheless, the researcher conducted EFA. The principal component analysis was employed as the extraction method, and the eigenvalue greater than one criterion was considered to determine unidimensionality for the FGI dimensions. The EFA results indicated that all dimensions were unidimensional. The researchers formed three parcels for each dimension as Little et al. (2002) recommended as a minimum. On the other hand, the number of items per parcels varied relying on the item numbers of the dimensions (two to five items per parcel), and parcels were created by a random assignment technique (Little et al., 2002), based on mean values from the highest to lowest, each item was assigned to parcels.

The researcher chose to examine the psychometric properties of the FGI within two models. The first (was conducted with item parceling method), reflected the Józefczyk's (2017) model, which was emerged in EFA, as she confirmed this factor structure in her study. As indicated before, this model consisted of a four-factor structure: SS-occurrence (6 items), SS-significance (6 items), Focus on the Child (8 items), and Emotional Contact (Marital Conflict + Emotional Cutoff; 13 items). In this model, Józefczyk (2017) preferred to label this newly emerged combination factors of MC+EC; as 'marital relationship'. Similarly, the EFA results indicated that EC and MC were factors that emerged in the unique dimension, and also revealed a high intercorrelation ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$), in the current study. However, since these factors

reflected a dysfunctional mechanism of emotional contact between spouses, the researchers named the dimensions as emotional contact (EC; EC + MC). The second model based on item-level (without item parceling); attempting to compare item-parceling and item-level findings of the pilot study. This model consisted of a five-factor structure: SS-occurrence (6 items), SS-significance (6 items), Focus on the Child (8 items), Marital Conflict (7 items), and Emotional Cutoff (6 items). As in the original scale, only closed-ended Likert type items were used in the current pilot study. The FGI comprised of 33 items where the researchers extracted from the manual that was obtained from the FGI's corresponded author. The lowest score for FC was 8, and for MC 7. The lowest scores for both SS-Significance and SS-Occurrence, and EC were 6. On the other hand, the highest scores possible for SS-Significance and SS-Occurrence and EC were 30. The highest score for FC was 40, and the MC was 35.

3.4.1.1 Translation and Adaptation Process of Turkish FGI

Firstly, permission to adapt and modify the scale to Turkish was obtained from the corresponding author of the FGI. In line with the effective adaptation process, the following steps were applied: forward translation, consistency (i.e., conceptualization, meaning) in items by using content validity index, expert opinions in English and Turkish, and cognitive interviewing. The FGI was first translated into Turkish by three graduate students (psychological counseling and guidance) who are experts in both English and Turkish. Then, a lecturer with a Ph.D. in the department of English language and literature controlled the translations and gave feedback in terms of consistency. Next, the researcher and thesis supervisor reviewed and picked out the best-fitted translation options.

After that, both Turkish and English versions of the items were sent to ten experts (with MSc and Ph.D. degrees in psychological counseling and guidance) who were experts in both English and Turkish to evaluate the consistency of the two versions. Experts were asked to evaluate the consistency in a four-point continuum (1 = not relevant, 2 = somewhat relevant, 3 = quite relevant, 4 = highly relevant) on versions,

based on the Davis's (1992) scaling suggestion. After the evaluation process completed, the content validity index (S-CVI) was computed for the scale. The number of experts' rates (either 3 or 4) were divided by the number of experts (ten experts), and .80 or higher accepted for S-CVI (Davis, 1992). In the current study, S-CVI ranged from .90 to 1.00. Afterward, a Turkish language teacher with an MSc degree ensured the grammar, fluency, punctuation, and incomprehensibility of the Turkish version of the items. In the last step, a cognitive interview process was followed by eight individuals who met the participating criteria. These participants gave feedback on the Turkish version of the FGI, where few problems in wording, fluency were reported. The Turkish FGI was finalized after these wording problems were corrected, and a few dichotomous items were transformed into Likert-type with corresponded author's permission.

3.4.1.2 Sample Characteristics of the Pilot Study (FGI)

The sample of the pilot study consisted of 402 married individuals in total and included 301 females (74.9%), and 101 males (25.1%). Similar to the main study, the data were collected through an online survey. The mean age for the overall pilot study was 37.28 years ($SD = 6.77$), ranging from 23 to 65 years. Fifteen individuals (3.7%) did not report their ages. The pilot sample represented a highly educated profile. Majority of the participants reported a graduation from a college ($n = 41, 10.2\%$), university ($n = 209, 52\%$), or master/Ph.D degrees ($n = 91, 22.6\%$). The demographic characteristics of the pilot study participants were presented in Table 3.3.

The marital relationship characteristics of the participants were also presented in Table 3.4. In terms of length of the marriage, most of the participants reported a duration of 6 to 10 ($n = 147, 37.1\%$), 11 to 15 ($n = 87, 21.9\%$) and 16+ years ($n = 85, 21.4\%$). Participants reported that the majority of them were in their first marriage ($n = 389, 96.8\%$). Seven (1.7%) participants reported that this was their second marriage. Most of the participants reported one child ($n = 192, 47.8\%$), and two children ($n = 169, 42\%$). Only 10.2% of participants reported 3 to 4 or more than 4 children. The age of

the firstborn was ranged from less than 1 year to 39 years ($n = 397$) with the mean age of 9.12 ($SD = 7.58$).

Table 3.3
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants of the Pilot Study (N = 402)

| Variables | <i>f</i> | % |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| Gender | | |
| Female | 301 | 74.9 |
| Male | 101 | 25.1 |
| Education Level | | |
| Primary School | 3 | 0.7 |
| Secondary School | 5 | 1.3 |
| High School | 53 | 13.2 |
| Vocational Higher Education | 41 | 10.2 |
| Bachelor | 209 | 52 |
| Graduate | 91 | 22.6 |
| Marital Status | | |
| Married | 394 | 98 |
| Divorced | 6 | 1.5 |
| Widowed | 2 | 0.5 |

3.4.1.3 Preliminary Analysis of the Pilot Data

The data of the pilot study were gathered from voluntary married individuals with child(ren). As indicated before, the participation criteria were being a part of two-parents, heterosexual nuclear families with at least one child without considering the number of marriages that participants reported. However, the child(ren) should have been born in their current marriages. In data gathering, only the online survey method was preferred, and only entries with all questions answered were accepted. Using an online survey link, 402 married individuals living in different cities in Turkey participated in the study. Before examining the psychometric characteristics of the Turkish FGI, the pilot data were primarily screened to ensure the accuracy of the data entry; no incorrect entry was found. Afterward, assumptions of the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were checked before the analysis. Assumptions of missing values and sample size, univariate and multivariate normality and outliers, linearity, and multicollinearity (Kline, 2011; Ullman, 2013) were examined.

3.4.1.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Procedure

After all the assumptions were examined, a series of CFAs were conducted to test the factorial structure of Turkish FGI via AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012) and JASP Team (2019). In the assessment of the factorial structure of Turkish FGI, the selected fit indices from three categories (incremental, absolute, and parsimony-adjusted) (Kline, 2011) were reported. These fit indices were the group of incremental fit indices: Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Non-Normed-Fit Index (NNFI, also known as the Tucker-Lewis index, TLI). The group of absolute fit indices was Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and the Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square (Satorra-Bentler χ^2), Satorra-Bentler χ^2 /degrees of freedom (df) ratio. The group of parsimony-adjusted fit indices was Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011) with the confidence intervals (CI) (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). The fit indices with cutoff-values were presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.4

Relationship Characteristics of the Participants of the Pilot Study (N = 402)

| Variables | <i>f</i> | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Number of marriages | | |
| First marriage (both of us) | 389 | 96.8 |
| Mine first, my spouse's second or more | 7 | 1.7 |
| My spouse's first, mine second or more | 4 | 1.0 |
| Second or more marriages (both of us) | 2 | 0.5 |
| Marital length (first marriages) | | |
| Less than one year | 1 | 0.3 |
| 1 to 5 years | 77 | 19.3 |
| 6 to 10 years | 147 | 37.1 |
| 11 to 15 years | 87 | 21.9 |
| 16 + years | 85 | 21.4 |
| Number of children | | |
| 1 | 192 | 47.8 |
| 2 | 169 | 42.0 |
| 3 | 35 | 8.7 |
| 4+ | 6 | 1.5 |

3.4.1.5 Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the Turkish FGI (Model 1)

Assumptions were examined via SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013), and CFA's were conducted via AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012) and JASP Team (2019). The amount of missingness, and whether the missing data pattern is ignorable (missing completely at random, MCAR) or non-ignorable (not missing at random, NMAR) was controlled. The missingness was less than 1%; Little's MCAR test was non-significant $\chi^2 = 169$ ($df = 2$; $p = .92$), and the data was accepted as MCAR. As the amount of missingness was less than 5% in data and produced the MCAR, the expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm was applied (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The sample size ($n = 402$) was suited -as suggested by about 200 cases to obtain enough power to conduct CFA (Hoelter, 1983; Kline, 2011). Subsequently, univariate normality assumptions were controlled by using statistical indices of skewness and kurtosis based on Kline's (2011) the suggestion that values greater than three were considered non-normal. Both the skewness (highest value was .95) and kurtosis (highest value was 1.67) values were found lower than 3, where the distribution could be defined as normal. Mardia's (1985) coefficient with multivariate kurtosis was applied to test the multivariate normality assumption. Mardia's coefficient (217.29, $p < .01$) revealed that the multivariate normality assumption was not met.

However, critical ratio values smaller than 5.00 also indicate normal distribution and multivariate normality (Bentler, 2005). When critical ratio values were examined in AMOS output, it was observed that only SS2-P1 parcel (consist of item12) exceeded the 5.00 with 6.70. In case, the researchers preferred to use (in the assessment of model fit) the Bollen-Stine Bootstrapping method instead of Maximum Likelihood (ML) (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999). Afterward, univariate outliers were examined based on the standardized z scores exceeding the 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed test) as (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) suggested. Six of 12 parcels were not met the assumption of univariate outliers; however, not severely produced exceeding values of 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed test), it ranged between 3.33 and 4.36. Regarding the multivariate outliers, Mahalanobis distances were figured out, and 1 case was found indicating multivariate outliers as the critical value was 18.47 for $df = 4$, $p < .001$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

However, researchers preferred to keep the outliers in the data rather than excluding them as Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) asserted that “Mahalanobis distance can either “mask” a real outlier or “swamp” a normal case” (p. 108). Hence, two different datasets (with and without outliers) were formed to use in CFA. The multicollinearity assumption was checked with tolerance values (should be more than .20), and variance influence factor (VIF; should be less than 4) as based on Menard’s (2002) suggestions. The correlations (should be less than .90) between dimensions were also examined (Field, 2009). Multicollinearity assumption was met as correlations among the FGI (Model 1) dimensions were not higher than .46 (between SS-Occurrence and Emotional Contact), the highest VIF value was 1.48, and tolerance values were all higher than .20 (ranged from .66 to .78). Linearity assumption was also examined through bivariate scatter plots, and no violation was observed. After the assumption checking process, a CFA was run to investigate the four-factor structure of the FGI (Model 1), including datasets with and without outliers. However, the results of the dataset with outliers (N = 402) were only presented below since the data produced a better model-fit than the dataset without outliers.

CFA results of Model 1 indicated an acceptable model fit. Chi-Square fit statistic was significant χ^2 (48, N = 402) = 172.35, $p = .00$ and the normed chi-square value ($\chi^2/\text{df-ratio} = 3.59$) was higher than the suggested (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) value of 5. CFI = .95 was higher than the recommended value of $\text{CFI} \geq .90$ (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). NNFI = .93 was also produced a model-fit of $\text{NNFI} \geq .93$ (Byrne, 1994). SRMR produced .06, and it was accepted (Brown & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). RMSEA = .08 was also an indicator of a mediocre fit (MacCallum et al., 1996). The fit indices results indicated that the model provided a mediocre factor structure, as in the Polish version.

3.4.1.6 Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the Turkish FGI (Model 2)

Model 2 aimed to examine the factor-structure of FGI at item-level. The assumption checking was completed, and CFA was conducted for the second time (Model 2). Both

the skewness (highest value was 1.05) and kurtosis (highest value was 2.92) values were found lower than three where the distribution -except item 12- could be defined as normal. However, item 12 (Have there been any social difficulties in the nuclear family such as alcohol, drugs, legal problems, etc. in the past or present?) revealed the highest skewness (5.34) and kurtosis values. As the item was open to outliers, the researchers considered the exceeding skewness-kurtosis values due to the item's content that examines unusual situations for most participants. Five items have not met the assumption of univariate outliers; however, not severely produced exceeding values of 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed test). It ranged between 3.67 and 4.90. However, item 12 was severely produced, exceeding values with 9.46 due to the potential reasons described above.

The Mardia kurtosis statistic (1435.06, $p < .01$) revealed that the multivariate normality assumption was not met. In case, the researchers preferred to use (in the assessment of model fit) the Bollen-Stine Bootstrapping method instead of Maximum Likelihood (ML) (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999). Multicollinearity assumption was met as correlations among dimensions were not higher than .72 (between MC and EC dimensions), the highest VIF value was 2.37, and tolerance values were all higher than .20 (ranged from .42 to .77). For the linearity assumption, no violation was also observed. Mahalanobis distances have appeared with 2 cases as the critical value was 20.52 for $df = 5$, $p < .001$ (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). Before carrying out the CFA, the researchers preferred to pair off the spouses' items within the SS (items 1+2, 3+4, 5+6, 8+9) and FC (items 19+20) dimensions to control the correlations of error residues between these items. After the assumption checking process, a CFA was run to investigate the five-factor structure of the FGI (Model 3), including datasets with outliers ($n = 402$). The results were presented below. Few modifications were implemented by removing items 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 20, 27, 33 due to low factor loadings, and drawing two error covariances, new values of Model 2 indicated acceptable model fit. Chi-Square fit statistic was significant $\chi^2 (177, N = 402) = 411.99$, $p = .00$ and the normed chi-square value (χ^2/df -ratio = 2.33) was lower than the suggested (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) value of 5. CFI = .95 was higher than the recommended value of $CFI \geq .90$ (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). NNFI = .94 was also

Table 3.5

Fit Indices and Acceptable Cutoff-Values

| Model fit indices | Suggested cutoff values |
|---------------------------|--|
| χ^2/df -ratio | $\chi^2/\text{df} < 3$ (Kline, 1998; Ullman, 2001). $\chi^2/\text{df} < 5$ (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). |
| SRMR | SRMR $< .08$ (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR close to .09 (or .10) with a cut-off value close to .95 for NNFI (or CFI) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR $\leq .08$ with CFI above .92 when $N > 250$ and $12 < m < 30$ (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). |
| NNFI | NNFI $\geq .93$ (Byrne, 1994). NNFI $\geq .95$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). |
| CFI | CFI $\geq .90$ (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). CFI $\geq .93$ (Byrne, 1994). CFI $\geq .95$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). |
| RMSEA | Close fit: RMSEA $< .05$; Mediocre fit: $.05 < \text{RMSEA} < .10$; Poor fit: RMSEA $> .10$ (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Mediocre fit: $.08 < \text{RMSEA} < .10$ (MacCallum et al., 1996). Good fit: RMSEA $< .06$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Close fit: $.05 < \text{RMSEA} < .08$ (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). |

Note. m = number of variables and N = sample size

produced a model-fit of NNFI $\geq .93$ (Byrne, 1994). Since SRMR produced .06, it was acceptable (Brown & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). RMSEA = .06 was also an indicator of a mediocre fit (MacCallum et al., 1996).

The removed items have mainly belonged to the FC dimension, which was initially the weakest factor of the FGI. However, it was worth mentioning that removed items due to the low standardized regression weights were mainly related to the attitudes of the spouses to be too focused on children (items 15 and 16) and overprotective (items 19 and 20).

Table 3.6
Model Fit Indices in CFA models

| | χ^2/df -ratio | CFI | NNFI | SRMR | RMSEA |
|---------|--------------------|-----|------|------|-------|
| Model 1 | 3.59 | .95 | .93 | .06 | .08 |
| Model 2 | 2.33 | .95 | .94 | .06 | .06 |

3.4.1.7 Reliability Evidence

For the internal consistency of the subscales of the FGI, Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega coefficients were computed in both pilot and main studies. As presented in Table 3.7, results demonstrated an adequate to strong coefficients except for the FC dimension. In the original study (Platt & Skowron, 2013), the FC dimension was not produced by adequate reliability evidence. In the current study, the FC produced relatively mediocre evidence considering McDonald's Omega coefficients. The same dimension had revealed adequate reliability evidence in the Polish version; the researchers preferred to keep and reexamine its reliability evidence either in the main data. However, results demonstrated better coefficients (adequate to strong coefficients) in the main study in comparison to the pilot study.

3.4.1.8 Convergent Validity

In line with obtaining additional evidence for the validity of the FGI during the pilot study, correlational analyses were conducted to validate associations between FGI

dimensions and Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II) in the assessment of experiential avoidance, Negative Self Subscale of Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) and Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSD). Therefore, firstly, as they were playing a part for further validity evidence for FGI, these instruments briefly described. The results of the correlational analysis between FGI and instruments were reported.

Table 3.7
Reliability Evidence of FGI in Models

| | | Cronbach alpha | | Omega | |
|---------|-------------------|----------------|------|-------|------|
| | | Pilot | Main | Pilot | Main |
| Model 1 | SS-Significance | .81 | .84 | .83 | .84 |
| | SS-Occurrence | .71 | .74 | .73 | .74 |
| | Focus on Child | .69 | .71 | .70 | .74 |
| | Emotional Contact | .94 | .93 | .94 | .94 |
| Model 2 | SS-Significance | .80 | | .81 | |
| | SS-Occurrence | .74 | | .74 | |
| | Focus on Child | .72 | | .76 | |
| | Marital Conflict | .92 | | .92 | |
| | Emotional Cutoff | .85 | | .86 | |

3.4.1.9 Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II)

The scale was originally developed by Bond et al., (2011) to assess the psychological inflexibility and adapted to Turkish by Yavuz et al., (2016). Turkish version of the measure comprised of 7 items with 7-point Likert type scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found .84 and supported with .85 test-retest reliability. Higher scores referred to a higher level of experiential avoidance (EA); therefore, less psychological flexibility. The correlation between the total scores of FGI dimensions and experiential avoidance total score were examined, and a positive correlation was expected.

3.4.1.10 Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Negative Self Subscale)

The scale was originally developed by Derogatis (1992) and adapted to Turkish by (Şahin & Durak, 1994) consists of 53 items with a 5-point Likert type scale. EFA results indicated the five-factor structure of anxiety, depression, somatization, negative self, and hostility. In the current study, only the ‘negative self’ subscale was used to assess participants’ negative self-levels. Higher scores referred to a higher level of negative self-level. The correlation between the total scores of FGI dimensions and negative self subscale total score were examined, and a positive correlation was expected.

3.4.1.11 Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS)

The scale was originally developed by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) in assessing social desirability. The short version of the scale was adapted in Turkish by Ural and Özbirecikli (2006). This short-form comprised of 7 items with 6-point Likert type scale (1-strongly disagree to 6-strongly agree) and revealed the Cronbach alpha .78. Higher scores referred to a higher level of social desirability. MCSDS was performed to examine discriminant validity evidence for the FGI. The correlation between the total scores of FGI dimensions and MCDS total score were examined, and no significant correlation was expected.

3.4.1.12 Results of Correlation Analyses

As presented in Table 3.8; emotional contact ($r = .44, p < .01$), ss-occurrence ($r = .42, p < .01$), and focus on child ($r = .27, p < .01$) were positively correlated with experiential avoidance. It means that as the participants’ level of emotional contact (marital conflict + emotional cutoff), effects of encountered symptoms, and projection of marital problems on children increase, psychological inflexibility increases as well. Similarly, emotional contact ($r = .32, p < .01$), ss-occurrence ($r = .36, p < .01$), and focus on child

($r = .23$, $p < .01$) were positively correlated with negative-self. Contrary to expectations, ss-significance was negatively correlated with experiential avoidance ($r = -.32$, $p < .01$) and negative self ($r = -.29$, $p < .01$). In terms of social desirability, emotional contact ($r = -.04$) and focus on the child ($r = -.04$) were not significantly correlated with MCDS total score, as expected. However, ss-symptoms ($r = .16$, $p < .01$) were positively and ss-occurrence ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$) negatively correlated with MCDS total score. Hence, it can be assumed that FGI is relatively free from social desirability.

Table 3.8
Convergent Validity of the FGI

| | | Ex.Av. | N. Self | Soc. Des. |
|---------|------|--------|---------|-----------|
| Model 1 | SS-S | -.32** | -.29** | .16** |
| | SS-O | .41** | .36** | -.11* |
| | FC | .27** | .23** | -.04 |
| | EC | .44** | .32** | -.04 |
| Model 2 | SS-S | -.32** | -.29** | .16** |
| | SS-O | .42** | .37** | -.10 |
| | FC | .28** | .20** | .00 |
| | MC | .40** | .29** | -.06 |
| | EC | .40** | .30** | -.02 |

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

3.4.2 Balanced Integration-Differentiation Scale (BIDS)

The scale was originally developed by İmamoğlu (1998, 2003). The BIDS consists of 29 items that were rated with 5 points Likert type scale range from 1-not at all to 5-very. The BIDS assessed the balanced integration and differentiation levels of individuals. The first dimension of the scale was an interrelational orientation, which included 16 items. Higher scores in this dimension referred to higher relatedness levels. In other words, individuals were more prone to feelings of interrelatedness to their family and others.

The second dimension of the scale was a self-developmental orientation that consisted of 13 items. Higher scores in this dimension referred to higher individuation levels, which indicated individuals' propensity to actualize their unique potentials/self-development. By using median scores -as the cutting point in these two main factors; the scale can be split into four self-types with the combination of high and low-end points on each dimension: separated-patterned, separated-individuated, related-patterned, and related-individuated. In a sample of university students, Cronbach's alpha values of the scale varied between .91 for the interrelationship orientation dimension, .74 for self-developmental orientation dimension and .83 for the whole scale (İmamoğlu, 1998). In one of few studies where the BIDS was used in a married sample (292 couples), Gündoğdu (2007) found Cronbach's alpha scores .84 for the interrelational, .70 for self-developmental orientation subscales, and .79 for the total scale. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega scores for the scale were examined in the main study. The Cronbach's alpha value was .73, and McDonald's Omega score found .74 for the self-developmental orientation. Moreover, interrelational orientation produced .86 for both Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega. In the current study, the scale was used in the main study to assess participants' self-construal types/orientations. For the whole Cronbach's alpha produced .77, and McDonald's Omega was .78.

3.4.3 Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

The scale was originally developed on the Marital Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ) by Hendrick (1981) to assess marital satisfaction, and later the focus extended to all kinds of romantic relationships (Hendrick, 1988). In the extended version, the author replaced the word 'mate' with 'partner' and the word 'marriage' with 'relationship' and examined the psychometric properties. The scale is a 5-point Likert type and consists of 7 items with two reverse coded items of 4 and 7. The scores of the RAS vary from 7 to 35. Higher scores indicate higher relationship satisfaction. The RAS has a one-factor solution, with 57% of the variance, and the internal consistency coefficient was found .86 in the second part of Hendrick's (1988) study. In the adaptation study to Turkish (Curun, 2001), the one-factor solution of the original study was repeated with 52% of the variance, and the internal consistency coefficient was found .86. In the current study, the scale was used in the main study to assess participants' marital satisfaction levels. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega scores for the scale were examined in the main study. The scale produced .93 for both Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's Omega.

3.4.4 Demographic Information Form

Participants' demographic and marital relationship characteristics, a demographic information form was developed by the researchers. This form was applied in both studies (pilot and main) and comprised of demographic (e.g., gender, age, marital status, education level) and marital information (e.g., former marriage/s, marital length, number of children, the ages of children, whether children born in their current marriage) questions.

3.5 Description of Variables

3.5.1 Exogenous Variables

Nuclear Family Emotional Processes: In the current study, nuclear family emotional processes of ss-symptoms, ss-occurrence, focus on the child, and emotional contact (marital conflict+ emotional cutoff) were selected as exogenous variables. Self-reported use of nuclear family emotional processes was measured through the total scores of the ss-symptoms, ss-occurrence, focus on the child and emotional contact subscales of the FGI-NF.

3.5.2 Mediator Variables

Interrelationship Orientation: Total scores of interrelationship orientation subscale in the Balanced Integration-Differentiation Scale (BIDS) was used to assess married individuals' perceptions of being attached to their own family and higher relatedness.

Self-developmental Orientation: Total scores of self-developmental orientation subscale in the Balanced Integration-Differentiation Scale (BIDS) were used to assess married individuals' perceptions of keeping a tendency to realize their potentials.

3.5.3 Endogenous Variable

Marital Satisfaction: Total scores of Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) was used to assess married individuals' perceptions of their marital satisfaction levels.

3.6 Data Analyses

The purpose of the present study was to examine a model that investigates the relationships between NFEP variables, self-construals (interrelationship and self-developmental orientations) and their impact on marital satisfaction. Hence, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted to test the hypothesized model to investigate the mediator roles of interrelational and developmental orientations on the relationship between NFEP variables and marital satisfaction. Before SEM analyses were conducted, the assumptions were checked, descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations were examined via SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013). The measurement and structural models were conducted via AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012).

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations in the current study were mentioned since the results should be carefully considered in light of these limitations. The cross-sectional design was a limitation to the current study. The conclusions on the relationships between NFEP and marital satisfaction could become more weakened if the changes in individuals' experiences and perceptions were not considered on the predictor variables. These variables (i.e. NFEP, satisfaction) were dynamic and unstable constructs to be changed over time that cross-sectional studies might fail to address these facts at any one point in time. Hence, inferences about causality between these variables cannot be possible. On the other hand, longitudinal designs could provide to see temporal relationships among these variables to predict and conclude about marital satisfaction.

The self-report structure of the instruments in the current study was also a limitation in the measurement method. The results might have not been pictured by the married individuals' accurate perceptions, traits, and behaviors in their nuclear family experiences. Notwithstanding, an accurate assessment of DoS (and related constructs) was much more possible with cross-generational interviews to widen the individuals'

historical data (Kerr, 1981). The FGI was developed precisely for this purpose to provide particular information about the one's nuclear and family of origin's emotional processes quantitatively and qualitatively. However, the researcher had to focus on only participants' nuclear family emotional processes quantitatively due to the psychometric properties of the FGI-family of origin version that not verified in the current study. Thus, the current study was mainly built on retrospective self-report data. Additionally, the current study aimed to examine the nuclear family emotional processes in a marital dyad; however, only one spouse of a dyad was participated in, and their spouses' perceptions were not assessed. Finally, since the non-random sampling was applied, sample characteristics of the demographic variables were not equally represented. The distribution of gender ratio was generally unbalanced as male participants' reluctance to participate in such self-report studies as the researcher observed during the data collection procedure. In addition to the gender ratio, the participants have also presented commonalities in many characteristics (i.e., high-educated middle-class profile). The marriage characteristics were also similar in terms of marriage duration and the number of children. The findings might have revealed different patterns with different sample selections, and the generalizability of the results should have taken into consideration in the conclusion of the current results.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the main study were presented under two sections. The first section included preliminary analyses (i.e., data screening, assumption checks, descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations) based on model 2. Regarding SEM assumptions; missing data, sample size, influential outliers, linearity, homoscedasticity, and normality were examined. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations were also presented within the scope of gender. In the second section, primary analyses including findings of the measurement and structural models were consecutively presented.

4.1 Preliminary Analyses

Before assumption checking, minimum and maximum values in the frequency table were detected for each item. Moreover, the dataset was screened in terms of misentries and ensured that there were no false or unusual values. Next, reverse items in the RAS and the BIDS were recoded by using SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013). The item parcels were formed based on the Model 2 (SS-S, SS-O, FC, and EN), and processed (as described in the pilot study) for further analysis with these parcels. The EFA results indicated that all the dimensions were unidimensional in the main study. The researchers formed three to four parcels for each dimension as Little et al. (2002) recommended three as a minimum. The parcels consisted of minimum the two items and were created by a random assignment technique (Little et al., 2002), based on mean values from the highest to lowest, each item was assigned to parcels.

4.1.1. Assumptions of SEM

To examine the assumptions, the researchers checked the pre-SEM analysis of missing data, sample size, univariate/multivariate normality, influential outliers, homoscedasticity, linearity, and multicollinearity, respectively.

4.1.1.1. Missing Data and Sample Size

The data for the main study was not manually entered as it was an online survey and downloaded from google forms. Besides, responding to all items in the survey was mandatory; otherwise, responses were not saved in the online repository unless answered thoroughly. Therefore, there was no missingness in the main data. Concerning sample size (comprised of 618 participants), the researchers considered that the dataset was sufficient to conduct SEM, based on $N > 200$ criteria (Kline, 2011). There were some other available approaches to define the minimum sample size. For instance, to assess the power of the model for SEM, different fit indices of RMSEA and AGFI were suggested by Kim (2005) and MacCallum, Browne and Sugawara (1996). The power level and alpha level were chosen as .80 and .05, respectively. With degrees of freedom (as 232), the estimated sample size for given power (.80) was 103 based on Kim's (2005) and 135 on McCallum et al.'s (1996) suggestions, in which the current sample size (618) was above the minimum required.

4.1.1.2. Normality

Univariate normality was assessed through skewness and kurtosis values with the cutoff values of ± 3 (Kline, 2011). Both the skewness (highest value was -1.09) and kurtosis (highest value was 1.88) values were found lower than 3; the distribution could be defined as normal. However, multivariate normality was not met since the Mardia kurtosis statistic (693.61, $p < .01$) was significant; indicated non-normal

patterns for all study variables. The researchers decided to continue with Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) in AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012), as it was robust to nonnormality to test measurement and structural models.

4.1.1.3. Influential Outliers

To specify univariate outliers, standardized z scores were examined. Few items have not met the assumption of univariate outliers; however, they were not severely produced, exceeding values of 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed test)(Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). They ranged between 3.32 and 4.62. Despite several univariate outliers, the researchers decided to keep them (19 of cases) in the data as Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) indicated that few univariate outliers could potentially exist in large samples. Potential outliers were found in the sub-constructs of the FGI (SS-S, SS-O) and constructs of self-construal (interrelational and self-developmental).

Mahalanobis distances (observations farthest from the centroid) were detected in the evaluation of multivariate outliers -via AMOS 21; and 15 cases exceeded the critical value of $\chi^2(231) = 883.699$, ($p < .001$). Afterward, rather than omitting the cases, the researchers preferred to repeat the analyses with and without the multivariate outliers. However, omitting multivariate outliers produced new outliers and no difference observed in terms of the model fit indices. Hence, the researcher decided to proceed with multivariate outliers.

4.1.1.4. Linearity and Homoscedasticity

Further evidence for multivariate normality was assessed with linearity (the straight-line relationship between variables) and homoscedasticity (similar amount of variance between dependent and independent variables) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Partial regression plots/bivariate scatterplots were conducted through regression analyses and examined visually in SPSS 22. No violation was observed since the visual inspection

indicated that variances among variables were homogeneously partitioned, and bivariate scatterplots formed in linear associations.

4.1.1.5. Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity assumption was met as intercorrelations among study variables were not higher than the cutoff value of .90 ($r = .84$ max.) (Kline, 2011). Besides, the highest VIF value was 1.84, far below the standard cutoff value 5. Tolerance values were all higher than .20 and ranged from .54 to .93. In sum, no violation was observed.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were examined among the study variables on gender, as it was presented in Table 4.1. It can be interpreted that the sample reported higher level of interrelational orientation ($M = 63.72$, $SD = 10.41$), self-developmental orientation ($M = 45.66$, $SD = 7.61$), marital satisfaction ($M = 37.19$, $SD = 9.93$) and emotional contact ($M = 30.82$, $SD = 10.68$) compared to possible range scores. The highest gender mean differences were in interrelational (female $M = 64.80$, $SD = 10.78$; male $M = 61.64$, $SD = 9.35$), and self-developmental orientations (female $M = 46.99$, $SD = 7.56$; male $M = 43.08$, $SD = 7.02$).

Marital satisfaction (female $M = 36.51$, $SD = 10.18$; male $M = 38.48$, $SD = 9.30$), and emotional contact (female $M = 31.28$, $SD = 10.92$; male $M = 29.94$, $SD = 10.18$) were produced higher gender mean differences. That is women in the current study reported higher interrelational, self-developmental orientations, emotional contact and less marital satisfaction. Any possible effect of gender on marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) was investigated through an independent sample t-test. The results revealed that gender was a significant variable for marital satisfaction [$t(616) = 1,045$, $p < .05$]. More specifically, as indicated above, male participants reported a significantly higher level of marital satisfaction than female participants.

Table 4.1

Means and Standard Deviations for the Study Variables

| Variables | Total (n=618) | | Female (n=407) | | Male (n=211) | | Range |
|----------------------|------------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | |
| SS-significance | 22.77 | 3.21 | 22.56 | 3.21 | 23.18 | 3.20 | 10-30 |
| SS-occurrence | 12.35 | 3.28 | 12.56 | 3.41 | 11.94 | 2.98 | 6-26 |
| Focus on child | 21.34 | 5.17 | 21.51 | 5.25 | 21.01 | 5.00 | 8-36 |
| Emotional contact | 30.82 | 10.68 | 31.28 | 10.92 | 29.94 | 10.18 | 13-65 |
| Interrelational | 63.72 | 10.41 | 64.80 | 10.78 | 61.64 | 9.35 | 24-80 |
| Self-developmental | 45.66 | 7.61 | 46.99 | 7.56 | 43.08 | 7.02 | 28-65 |
| Marital satisfaction | 37.19 | 9.93 | 36.51 | 10.18 | 38.48 | 9.30 | 9-49 |

4.3 Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables

Bivariate correlations among study variables were examined for both men and women separately through Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, as it was presented in Table 4.2. The results were interpreted based on the Cohen's guideline (Cohen, 1988): The correlations between .10 to .29 (small/weak), .30 to .49 (medium/moderate) and .50 to 1.00 (large/strong) are respectively considered. Inspection of correlation matrix indicated that the majority of the correlations among variables were significant except one between marital satisfaction and self-developmental orientation for both female ($r = -.01, p > .05$) and male ($r = -.09, p > .05$). However, it seems that marital satisfaction was not only the variable that had no significant relationship with self-developmental orientation. The self-developmental orientation neither produced significant correlations with NFEP variables for both

genders. On the contrary, interrelational orientation had a significant correlation with all variables in the study ranged between the small ($r = -.15, p < .05$) and medium ($r = .51, p < .01$) correlations. Interestingly, the relationship between the interrelational and self-developmental orientations was only significant on the females ($r = .22, p < .01$). The interrelational orientation also had a significant correlation with marital satisfaction for both females ($r = .51, p < .01$), and males ($r = .48, p < .01$). On the other hand, the variable of marital satisfaction produced significant correlations with the rest of the variables in the study. The strongest (negative) correlation of marital satisfaction was with the emotional contact for females ($r = -.83, p < .01$), and males ($r = -.85, p < .01$).

Secondly, the variable of marital satisfaction had a strong correlation with symptoms in spouses-significance for females ($r = .55, p < .01$) for females ($r = .51, p < .01$). The variable of marital satisfaction produced a significant negative correlation with symptoms in spouses-occurrence for females ($r = -.49, p < .01$) and males ($r = -.47, p < .01$) where the variable indicates the impact of symptoms on daily functioning and a marital relationship. Finally, the relationship between the focus on child and SS-significance variable was only significant on females ($r = -.25, p < .01$), where the symptoms on daily functioning and marital relationship increase for married women as they more focus on their children.

4.4 Model Testing

4.4.1. Measurement Invariance

The purpose of the examination of the measurement invariance was to investigate the potential gender differences in the hypothesized model (RQ3. Do the hypothesized relationships in the model differ concerning gender?). Four-phase common models were respectively implemented, as suggested by Milfont and Fischer (2010) in the software program of the JASP Team (2019). These were configural (the basic structural model is the same across groups), metric (factor loadings is the same across

the groups), scalar (intercepts of items is the same across the groups) and error variance invariance (measurement error for each item across the groups are constrained to be equal). However, researcher broadly preferred not to examine the last step (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016) as the residuals were not parts of the latent factor(s) in a model, and invariance in this step (item residuals) based on the latent mean differences (Vandenberg & Lance, 2000). As the researcher concerned the invariance of factor measurement and variance-covariance structures; they merely decided not to consider the step 4 (error variance invariance) in the examination of measurement invariance.

Table 4.2
Correlation Matrix of the Study Variables

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1.SS-Significance | - | -.51** | -.25 | -.50** | .41** | .06 | .55** |
| 2.SS-Occurrence | -.40** | - | .37** | .51** | -.33** | -.02 | -.49** |
| 3.Focus on Child | -.07 | .44** | - | .35** | -.23** | .01 | .35** |
| 4.Emotional Contact | -.46** | .55** | .41** | - | -.51** | .01 | -.85** |
| 5.Interrelational Orientation | .34** | -.23** | -.15* | -.45** | - | .22** | .51** |
| 6.Self-Developmental | .06 | -.01 | .03 | -.00 | .13 | - | -.01 |
| 7.Marital Satisfaction | .51** | -.47** | -.31** | -.83** | .48** | -.09 | - |

Note. ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$ level (two-tailed). Intercorrelations for female participants (N = 407) are presented above the diagonal, and intercorrelations for male participants (N = 211) are presented below the diagonal

Among goodness of the fit statistics, changes in chi-square ($\Delta\chi^2/\text{df-ratio}$), alternative fit indices (ΔAFI), including the Tucker-Lewis Index (ΔTLI), Comparative Fit Indexes (ΔCFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (ΔRMSEA), and information-theoretic indices of Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) were reported. Individually, the differences in CFI and TLI were considered between -0.01 and 0.01 (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). However, for the change in AIC, there is no rule of thumb. The model with the lowest AIC value indicates the best option between model complexity and model fit (Van de Schoot, Lugtig & Hox, 2012).

As a result, the changes in TLI and CFI scores were produced smaller changes than .01, which means that the measurement invariance across groups (women/men) was satisfied. Changes in RMSEA and $\chi^2/\text{df-ratio}$ were also minimal among configural, metric, and scalar model comparisons. AIC's lowest value pointed to the metric model, whereas the BIC value produced the lowest value to the scalar model, as it was presented in Table 4.3. Taking into account all fit indices, the model did not vary regarding gender. Thus, a single-sample structural model testing can be applied to hypothesized structural models.

4.4.2. Measurement Model

In addition to measurement invariance, the measurement model was examined to ascertain the relationships between the latent and observed variables before conducting SEM (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). In line with the research questions, the relationships among the latent variables of NFEP, self-construals (interrelational and self-developmental), and marital satisfaction were investigated in the AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012). Results of the CFA for this model showed a sufficient fit $\chi^2 (231) = 883.699, p = .00; \chi^2/\text{df-ratio} = 3.83, \text{CFI} = .93, \text{NNFI} = .92, \text{SRMR} = .05, \text{and RMSEA} = .068 (90\% \text{ CI} = .062, .073)$. All the standardized estimates were significant and ranged between .13 and .95, and all t values for each indicator were greater than 1.96. Squared multiple correlations, standardized and unstandardized regression weights

were presented in Table 4.4. Figure 4.1 was also presented the measurement model with standardized estimates and latent factor correlations.

Table 4.3
Measurement invariance (N=618)

| | χ^2 /df-ratio | CFI | TLI | RMSEA (90% CI) | AIC | BIC | Δ CFI | Δ TLI |
|------------|--------------------|------|------|-----------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Configural | 2.42 | .935 | .920 | 0.068 [.064- .071] | 56361.0 | 57188.8 | | |
| Metric | 2.39 | .933 | .922 | 0.067 [.064-. 070] | 56356.3 | 57082.3 | .002 | -.002 |
| Scalar | 2.42 | .928 | .920 | 0.068 [.064-.071] | 56378.4 | 57002.6 | .005 | .002 |

4.4.3. Structural Model

Via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables were examined. The structural model was tested by using AMOS 21 with Maximum Likelihood estimation. The researcher were bootstrapping rather than Satorra-Bentler scaling-corrected test statistic to adjust the inflated chi-square statistic; as Bootstrapping produces better results (Fouladi, 1998; Nevitt & Hancock, 1998). The researcher preferred previously used model fit indices (χ^2 /df-ratio, CFI, NNFI, SRMR, and RMSEA) to interpret the results of the structural model. The hypothesized model examined the direct and indirect associations of the latent variables of NFEP variables, interrelational, and self-developmental orientations in explaining marital satisfaction. The direct associations between the symptoms in

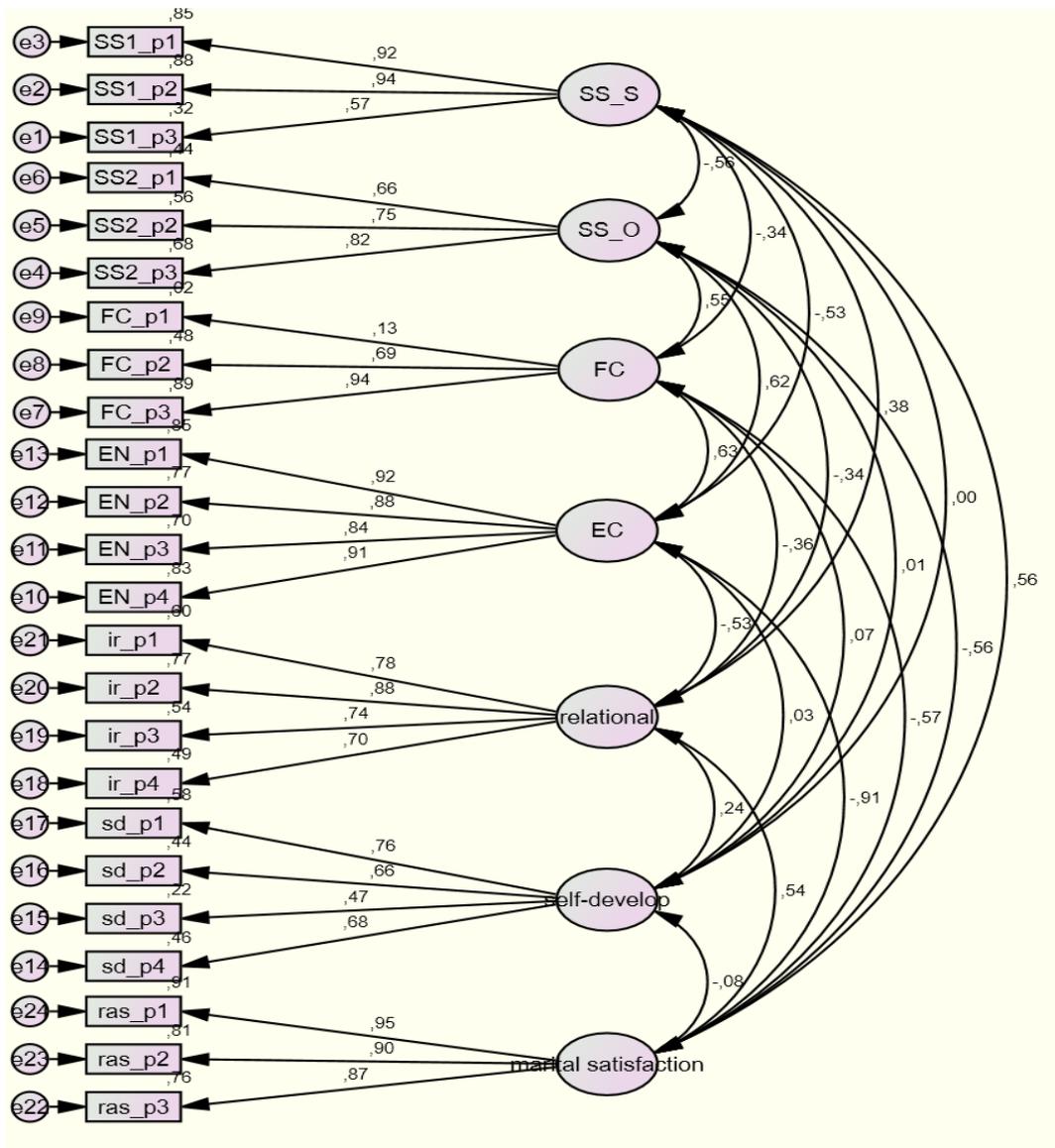


Figure 4.1 Measurement model with standardized estimates and latent factor correlations.

spouse-significance, symptoms in spouse-occurrence, focus on child and emotional contact (exogenous variables), and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) were tested. Secondly, the direct associations between self-construals of interrelational and self-developmental orientations (mediator variables) and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) were tested.

Table 4.4
Standardized Regression Weights (SRW) and Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC)
for the Measurement Model

| | SMC | SRW |
|-------------------|-----|-----|
| SS_Symptoms | | |
| SS1_p1 | .85 | .92 |
| SS1_p2 | .88 | .94 |
| SS1_p3 | .32 | .56 |
| SS_Occurrence | | |
| SS2_p1 | .44 | .66 |
| SS2_p2 | .56 | .75 |
| SS2_p3 | .68 | .83 |
| Focus on Child | | |
| FC_p1 | .02 | .13 |
| FC_p2 | .48 | .69 |
| FC_p3 | .89 | .94 |
| Emotional Contact | | |
| EN_p1 | .85 | .92 |
| EN_p2 | .77 | .88 |
| EN_p3 | .70 | .84 |
| EN_p4 | .83 | .91 |
| interrelational | | |
| ir_p1 | .60 | .78 |
| ir_p2 | .77 | .88 |
| ir_p3 | .54 | .74 |

Table 4.4 (continued)

| | SMC | SRW |
|----------------------|-----|-----|
| ir_p4 | .50 | .70 |
| self-developmental | | |
| sd_p1 | .58 | .76 |
| sd_p2 | .44 | .66 |
| sd_p3 | .22 | .47 |
| sd_p4 | .46 | .68 |
| marital satisfaction | | |
| ras_p1 | .91 | .95 |
| ras_p2 | .81 | .90 |
| ras_p3 | .76 | .87 |

The direct effect of interrelational, on self-developmental orientation, was also tested. Moreover, the indirect relationships between the symptoms in spouse-significance, symptoms in spouse-occurrence, focus on the child and emotional contact (exogenous variables), and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) were tested via the indirect roles of interrelational and self-developmental orientations. Results of the structural model revealed mediocre fit, $\chi^2 (232) = 884.92, p = .00; \chi^2 / df\text{-ratio} = 3.81, CFI = .93, NNFI = .92, SRMR = .05, \text{ and } RMSEA = .068 (90\% \text{ CI} = .063, .073)$ that all of the factor loadings were significant and ranged between .13 and .95. The latent variables were presented in Figure 4.2 for the hypothesized model. The structural model indicated that seven paths out of 15 direct paths -from the exogenous variables (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on child and emotional contact) to mediators (interrelational and self-developmental orientations), from the exogenous variables to the endogenous variable (marital satisfaction), from the mediators to endogenous variable and between mediators- were found statistically significant.

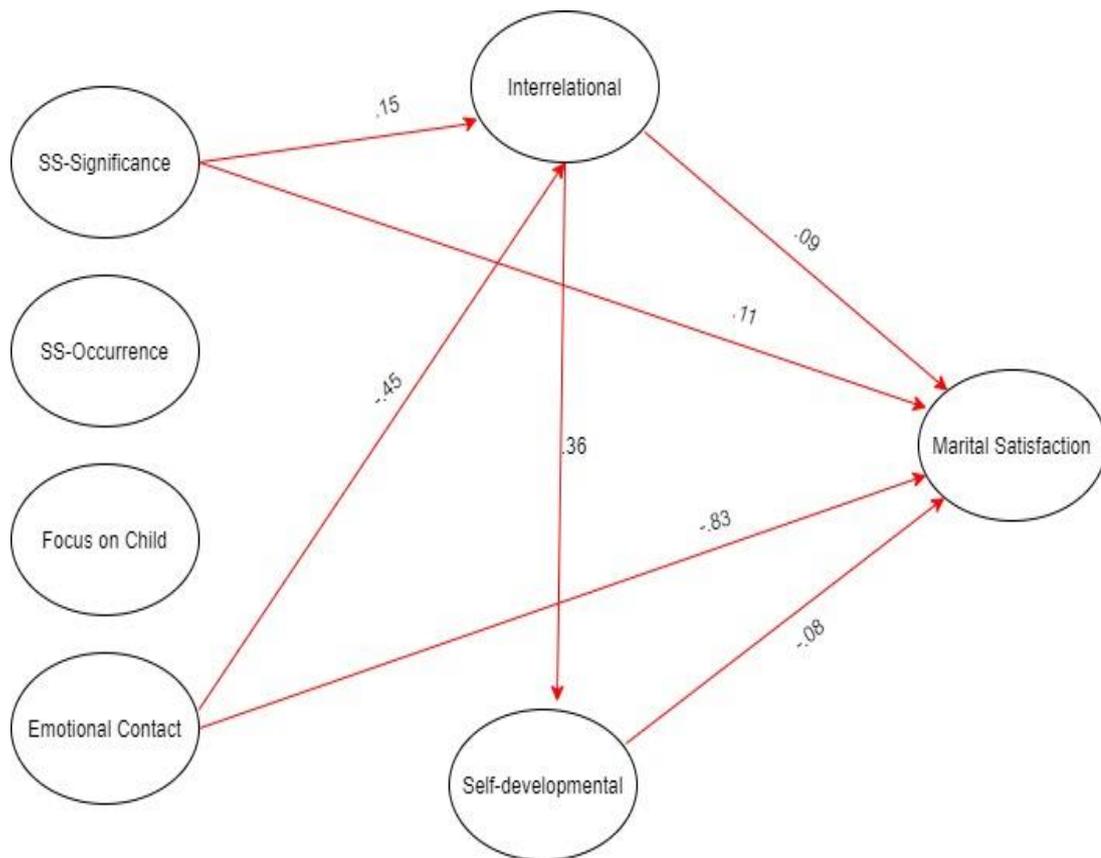


Figure 4.2 Tested model with standardized estimates, significant paths

The significant direct paths were firstly from exogenous variables (ss-significance and emotional contact) to the mediators (interrelational orientation) (2 paths). Secondly, direct effects were from exogenous variables (ss-significance and emotional contact) to the endogenous variable (marital satisfaction) (2 paths). Thirdly, direct effects were from both mediators to the endogenous variable (2 paths). Finally, the direct effect was from interrelational to self-developmental orientation (1 path); as presented in Figure 4.2 with values of the standardized parameter estimates. Besides, the squared multiple correlation coefficients (R^2) were examined to investigate the variance that was explained by the latent variables in the structural model. NFEP variables (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on child and emotional contact) explained that 1% of the variance in self-developmental orientation and 30% of the variance in interrelational orientation. Overall, NFEP variables and self-construals of interrelational and self-developmental orientations explained 84% of the variance in marital satisfaction, as presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Squared Multiple Correlations for the Hypothesized Structural Model

| | <i>R</i> ² |
|--|-----------------------|
| Self-developmental orientation (mediator) | .01 |
| Interrelational orientation (mediator) | .30 |
| Marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) | .84 |

4.4.3.1. Direct Effects for the Structural Model

The relationships between the exogenous variables (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, focus on child and emotional contact) and mediators (interrelational and self-developmental orientations) were presented in more detail. Only, ss-significance ($\beta = .15, p < .01$), and emotional contact ($\beta = -.45, p < .01$) had significant direct paths on the interrelational orientation. In contrast to hypothesized structural model, the direct paths of symptoms in spouses-occurrence ($\beta = .05, p > .05$), and focus on child ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$) to interrelational orientation were not significant. Moreover, self-developmental orientation was interestingly produced no significant direct paths with none of the exogenous variables of ss-significance ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$), ss -occurrence ($\beta = -.06, p > .05$), focus on child ($\beta = .12, p > .05$) and emotional contact ($\beta = .16, p > .05$).

Furthermore, the direct effect of the mediator variable of interrelational orientation on the another mediator variable of self-developmental orientation was significant ($\beta = .36, p < .01$). The self-developmental orientation ($\beta = -.08, p < .01$) had negative and interrelational orientation ($\beta = .09, p < .01$) had positive significant direct paths on marital satisfaction. The direct paths between exogenous variables ss-significance ($\beta = .11, p < .01$), emotional contact ($\beta = -.83, p < .01$) and marital satisfaction were significant. However, the direct paths between the ss-occurrence ($\beta = .04, p > .05$), focus on child ($\beta = .01, p > .05$) and marital satisfaction were not significant.

4.4.3.2. Total Indirect Effects for the Structural Model

The total indirect effects of the NFEF variables of focus on the child ($\beta = -.01, p < .05$) and emotional contact ($\beta = -.04, p > .05$) were found significant on marital satisfaction through the interrelational and self-developmental orientations. Overall, interrelational and self-developmental orientations indirectly affected the relationships between the focus on the child, emotional contact, and marital satisfaction. However, the total indirect effects of ss-significance ($\beta = .01, p > .05$) and ss-occurrence ($\beta = .01, p > .05$) were not significant on marital satisfaction through the interrelational or self-developmental orientations.

4.4.3.3. Specific Indirect Effects for the Structural Model

Only four indirect paths out of 12 were found significant in the model. The indirect effects of the ss-significance ($\beta = .08, p < .05$) and emotional contact ($\beta = -.07, p < .01$) were significant on marital satisfaction through the interrelational orientation. Overall, interrelational orientation indirectly affected the relationships between ss-significance, emotional contact, and marital satisfaction. The rest indirect effects of the exogenous variables of ss-occurrence ($\beta = .02, p > .05$) and focus on child ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$) were not significant in explaining marital satisfaction through the interrelational orientation.

Interestingly, whereas self-developmental orientation produced no significant results with none of the exogenous variables in the direct effects, the indirect effects of the focus on the child ($\beta = -.02, p < .05$) were significant on marital satisfaction through the self-developmental orientation. The rest indirect effects of the exogenous variables of ss-occurrence ($\beta = .02, p > .05$), focus on child ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$) and emotional contact ($\beta = -.02, p > .05$) were found non-significant in explaining marital satisfaction through the self-developmental orientation. Finally, the relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction was found significant and positive through the indirect roles (together) of interrelational and self-developmental orientations ($\beta = .02, p < .05$).

In sum, the indirect effects of exogenous variables on marital satisfaction were presented in two pathways: (1) through the interrelational orientation and (2) through the interrelational and self-developmental orientation; as all direct, indirect, and total effects were described below in Table 4.6. It can be concluded that the direct effects seemed to be stronger than the indirect effects.

Table 4.6
Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of the Hypothesized Structural Model

| Direct Effects | β |
|--|---------------------------|
| Symptoms in spouse-significance→interrelation orientation | .15** |
| Symptoms in spouse-occurrence→interrelation orientation | .05 |
| Focus on child→interrelation orientation | -.05 |
| Emotional contact→interrelation orientation | -.45** |
| Symptoms in spouse-significance→self-developmental orientation | -.05 |
| Symptoms in spouse-occurrence→self-developmental orientation | -.06 |
| Focus on child→self-developmental orientation | .12 |
| Emotional contact→self-developmental orientation | .16 |
| Symptoms in spouse-significance→marital satisfaction | .11** |
| Symptoms in spouse-occurrence→marital satisfaction | .04 |
| Focus on child→marital satisfaction | .01 |
| Emotional contact→marital satisfaction | -.83** |
| Self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | -.08** |
| Interrelation orientation→marital satisfaction | .09** |
| Interrelation orientation→self-developmental orientation | .36** |

Table 4.6 (continued)

| Specific Indirect Effects | <i>β</i> |
|---|-----------------|
| Symptoms in spouse-significance→interrelation orientation→marital satisfaction | .08* |
| Symptoms in spouse-significance→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | .02 |
| Symptoms in spouse-occurrence→interrelation orientation→marital satisfaction | .02 |
| Symptoms in spouse-occurrence→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | .02 |
| Focus on child→interrelation orientation→marital satisfaction | -.01 |
| Focus on child→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | -.02* |
| Emotional contact→interrelation orientation→marital satisfaction | -.07** |
| Emotional contact→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | -.02 |
| Symptoms in spouse-significance→interrelation orientation→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | -.02 |
| Symptoms in spouse-occurrence→interrelation orientation→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | -.01 |
| Focus on child→interrelation orientation→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | .00 |
| Emotional contact→interrelation orientation→self-developmental orientation→marital satisfaction | .02* |
| Total Indirect Effects | <i>β</i> |
| Symptoms in spouse-significance→marital satisfaction | .01 |
| Symptoms in spouse-occurrence→marital satisfaction | .01 |

Table 4.6 (continued)

| Total Indirect Effects | β |
|--|---------------------------|
| Focus on child→marital satisfaction | -.01* |
| Emotional contact→marital satisfaction | -.04* |

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

4.4.3.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses delineated in the introduction chapter were presented in the following results:

Hypothesis 1. FGI is a valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture. This hypothesis was confirmed.

Hypothesis for the Direct Effects

Hypothesis 2. A statistically significant amount of variance in marital satisfaction is explained by the NFEP and self-construal variables among married individuals.

Regarding hypothesis 2, the following sub-hypotheses were formed to investigate the direct paths in Figure 1.

Hypothesis 2.1. (SS-Significance to Interrelational Orientation). There will be a significant positive relationship between ss-significance and interrelational self-orientation (Path A). The hypothesis was confirmed, $\beta = .15$, $p < .05$, [CI .05, .24].

Hypothesis 2.2. (SS-Occurrence to Interrelational Orientation). There will be a significant positive relationship between ss-occurrence and interrelational self-orientation (Path B). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .05$, $p > .05$, [CI-.07, .17].

Hypothesis 2.3. (Focus on the Child to Interrelational Orientation). There will be a significant positive relationship between the focus on child and interrelational self-orientation (Path C). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = -.05$, $p > .05$, [CI-.15, .06].

Hypothesis 2.4. (Emotional Contact to Interrelational Orientation). There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional contact (marital conflict+emotional contact) and interrelational self-orientation (Path D). The hypothesis was confirmed, $\beta = -.45$, $p < .05$, [CI-.55,-.36].

Hypothesis 2.5. (SS-Significance to Self-Developmental Orientation). There will be a significant negative relationship between ss-significance and self-developmental orientation (Path E). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = -.05$, $p > .05$, [CI-.16, .07].

Hypothesis 2.6. (SS-Occurrence to Self-Developmental Orientation). There will be a significant negative relationship between ss-occurrence and self-developmental orientation (Path F). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = -.06$, $p > .05$, [CI-.21, .10].

Hypothesis 2.7. (Focus on the Child to Self-Developmental Orientation). There will be a significant negative relationship between the focus on the child and self-developmental orientation (Path G). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .12$, $p > .05$, [CI .01, .26].

Hypothesis 2.8. (Emotional Contact to Self-Developmental Orientation). There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional contact (marital conflict+emotional contact) and self-developmental orientation (Path H). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .16$, $p > .05$, [CI-.00, .28].

Hypothesis 2.9. (SS-Significance to Marital Satisfaction). There will be a significant negative relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction (Path K). The relationship was significant, but the hypothesis was rejected as the relationship was positive, $\beta = .11$, $p < .05$, [CI .06, .17].

Hypothesis 2.10. (SS-Occurrence to Marital Satisfaction). There will be a significant negative relationship between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction (Path L). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .04, p > .05, [CI-.03, .10]$.

Hypothesis 2.11. (Focus on the Child to Marital Satisfaction). There will be a significant negative relationship between the focus on child and marital satisfaction (Path M). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .01, p > .05, [CI-.05, .07]$.

Hypothesis 2.12. (Emotional Contact to Marital Satisfaction). There will be a significant negative relationship between emotional contact (marital conflict+emotional contact) and marital satisfaction (Path N). The hypothesis was confirmed, $\beta = -.83, p < .05, [CI-.89, -.75]$.

Hypothesis 2.13. (Interrelational Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). There will be a significant positive relationship between interrelational self-orientation and marital satisfaction (Path P). The hypothesis was confirmed, $\beta = .09, p < .05, [CI .03, .15]$.

Hypothesis 2.14. (Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). There will be a significant positive relationship between self-developmental orientation and marital satisfaction (see Path R). The relationship was significant, but the hypothesis was rejected as the relationship was negative, $\beta = -.08, p < .05, [CI-.13, -.03]$.

Hypothesis 2.15. (Interrelational Orientation to Self-Developmental Orientation). There will be a significant positive relationship between interrelational and self-developmental orientation (see Path S). The hypothesis was confirmed, $\beta = .36, p < .05, [CI .25, .47]$.

Hypothesis for the Indirect Effects

Hypothesis 3. The relationship between NFEP variables (ss-significance, ss-occurrence, marital conflict, emotional contact) and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational and self-developmental orientations.

Regarding hypothesis 3, eight sub-hypotheses were presented:

Hypothesis 3.1. (SS-Significance to Interrelational Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path A+Path P). The hypothesis was confirmed. The indirect effect of ss-significance on marital satisfaction via interrelational orientation was significant and mediation was partial, $\beta = .08, p < .05, [CI .01, .17]$.

Hypothesis 3.2. (SS-Significance to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path E+Path R). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .02, p > .05, [CI-.02, .10]$.

Hypothesis 3.3. (SS-Occurrence to Interrelational Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path B+Path P). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .02, p > .05, [CI-.02, .07]$.

Hypothesis 3.4. (SS-Occurrence to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path F+Path R). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .02, p > .05, [CI-.02, .09]$.

Hypothesis 3.5. (Focus on the Child to Interrelational Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between the focus on the child and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path C+Path P). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = -.01, p > .05, [CI-.04, .01]$.

Hypothesis 3.6. (Focus on the Child to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between the focus on the child and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path G+Path R). The hypothesis was confirmed. The indirect effect of the focus on the child on marital

satisfaction via self-developmental orientation was significant and mediation was full, $\beta = -.02, p < .05, [CI-.07, -.00]$.

Hypothesis 3.7. (Emotional Contact to Interrelational Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction will be mediated through interrelational orientation (Path D+Path P). The hypothesis was confirmed. The indirect effect of the emotional contact on marital satisfaction via interrelational orientation was significant and mediation was partial, $\beta = -.07, p < .05, [CI-.14, -.02]$.

Hypothesis 3.8. (Emotional Contact to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). The relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction will be mediated through self-developmental orientation (Path H+Path R). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = -.02, p > .05, [CI-.05, .00]$.

Hypothesis 4. The inclusion of the self-developmental orientation (mediator) to the paths that previously examined the indirect effect of interrelational orientation (mediator) on the relationship between NFEP variables and marital satisfaction change the direction in a positive way.

Regarding hypothesis 4, four sub-hypotheses were presented:

Hypothesis 4.1. (SS-Significance to Interrelational Orientation to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction (Path A+Path S+Path R). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = -.02, p > .05, [CI-.05, .00]$.

Hypothesis 4.2. (SS-Occurrence to Interrelational Orientation to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship

between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction (Path B+Path S+Path R). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = -.01, p > .05, [CI-.02, .01]$.

Hypothesis 4.3. (Focus on the Child to Interrelational Orientation to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between the focus on the child and marital satisfaction (Path C+Path S+Path R). This hypothesis was rejected, $\beta = .00, p > .05, [CI-.00, .01]$.

Hypothesis 4.4. (Emotional Contact to Interrelational Orientation to Self-Developmental Orientation to Marital Satisfaction). Self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction (Path D+Path S+Path R). The hypothesis was confirmed. The indirect effect of the emotional contact on marital satisfaction via self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation was significant and mediation was partial, $\beta = .02, p < .05, [CI .01, .04]$.

4.5. Summary of the Results

Results of the descriptive analyses revealed that the participants reported a high level of interrelational orientation, marital satisfaction, and a moderate level of emotional contact -compared to possible range scores. Bivariate correlations among the study variables were majorly significant. In contrary to expectations, the self-developmental orientation produced no significant correlation coefficients with none of the NFEP variables in the model. The gender difference on marital satisfaction was found significant. Furthermore, a multi-group structural equation modeling was performed to examine the gender difference in the model. The results revealed that the hypothesized model supported the measurement invariance, and the structural model analyses were conducted within a single sample. Moreover, the measurement model results revealed mediocre fit to the data. The examination of the hypothesized model via the SEM was conducted, and findings revealed that the self-developmental

orientation has appeared as a full mediator (focus on the child to self-developmental orientation to marital satisfaction) in the model. The interrelational orientation partially mediated the relationships between ss-occurrence, emotional contact and marital satisfaction in the model. Among the variables in the model, emotional contact was the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction. Interrelational orientation partially mediates the relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction. The overall hypothesized model explained 84% of the variance in marital satisfaction scores. However, many of the other correlations in the current study regarding indirect effects were of marginal significance ($p < .05$). Thus, they should be interpreted with extreme caution.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This final chapter presents three main sections: The first section includes the discussion on the current results (i.e., direct, specific indirect effects) in light of the literature. In the second section; implications for practice, theory, and research were presented. In the final section, recommendations for future studies were discussed.

5.1. Discussion of the Findings

The current study mainly aimed to investigate how married individuals' NFEP experiences and self-construals related to their marital satisfaction levels. Therefore, structural equation model analyses were performed to examine the model and the findings discussed in the following sections.

5.1.1 Is Family Genogram Interview (FGI) Valid and Reliable Measure to Use in Turkish Culture? (RQ1)

The Family Genogram Interview (FGI) was developed by Platt and Skowron (2013) and adapted to Turkish. Results of the pilot and main study revealed that FGI was a valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture. However, pilot study results indicated that the factor structure of the scale was different from the original and very similar to the Polish version of the FGI. The researcher conducted two different models

to examine the best-fitting factor structure, as delineated before (see 3.4.14). According to findings, the subscale of emotional contact (emotional cutoff+marital conflict) produced greater factor loadings and reliability scores among all subscales. Moreover, the researcher concluded that EC and MC dimensions reflect better under the unique dimension (emotional contact); as MC and EC dimensions revealed a high intercorrelation (with .72) in the current study. Results indicated that Turkish participants might have perceived the EC and MC dimensions in a continuum line - similar to Polish participants- where these two constructs have been semantically sounded identical. Both constructs were theoretically distinct, in the pursuit of emotional contact. However, participants might have been used to seek arguments and conflicts in their marriages, and emotional-cutoff functioned as a dysfunctional mechanism (giving-up on the relationship) to their close relationship (Józefczyk, 2017).

As indicated before, the most questionable/weakest dimension of the scale was the FC. In model 2 (item-level), excluded items due to the low standardized regression weights were mainly related to the attitudes of the spouses to be too focused on children (items 15 and 16) and overprotective (items 19 and 20). One possible explanation of this structure of FC can be related to the cultural background and worldviews of the participants. Regarding childrearing practices, participants might not have been perceived these (excluded) items symptomatic or dysfunctional as expected. Remaining items were mostly indicated children-related topics that become a conflict reason in the marital relationship. Notwithstanding, remaining conflict-related items would also be a reason for the moderate correlation of .53 between FC and MC -in the pilot study. This new structure of FC was also consistent with the literature. Kağıtçıbaşı (1982a, 1982b) assumed that -in comparison to late childhood and adolescence- Turkish parents' child-rearing practices reflect more overprotective attitudes in early childhood. However, these protective attitudes evolve into more authoritarian practices during late childhood and adolescence. It seems that Turkish parents prefer more parental control than other cultures, such as the US (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007; Taylor & Oskay, 1995), as cross-cultural studies indicate.

An unexpected finding was noted in convergent validity analyses of the Turkish FGI. The direction of the relationship between ss-significance, experiential avoidance (EA), and negative self was unexpected. The reason might be based on the theoretical background of the scales. As indicated before, first (ss- significance) refers to the observed symptomology in a daily functioning and marital dyad. Another (ss-occurrence) indicates the impact of these symptoms on daily functioning and a marital relationship. Hayes, Wilson, Gifford, Follette and Strosahl (1996) assumed that EA is a natural part of human functioning and a typical pattern in psychopathology. It reflects a phenomenon that individuals are generally avoid getting exposed to undesired private experiences such as memories, thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and attempt to control the events that elicit these undesired private experiences. The worst thing in this pattern is that the immediate effect of EA is generally perceived positively by avoiders. Whereas a short term relief is misleading, in a vicious cycle, the problem becomes more resistant to change (Hayes, et al., 2004). SS-occurrence, however, might promise that individuals have already been exposed reluctantly to those unwilling private experiences despite their control efforts (i.e., frequency, context, occurrence). This exposition might have resulted in a decrease in their psychological flexibility. Herein, during the ss-symptoms process, individuals might still use these avoidance strategies as much as possible even in their daily lives or dyadic relationships; they can maintain with pseudo-psychological flexibility. More specifically, ss-significance might be pointing out the short-term relief with avoidant patterns in physical, emotional, and social, as reported by the current sample. Therefore, a negative relationship between experiential avoidance and ss-significance becomes more predictable.

A similar pattern can also be valid for negative self; as EA and negative self were referential evaluations that both hold a functional relation (Hayes, et al., 2004). Almost all items in the negative-self subscale of BSI compromise negative self-referential evaluations, and both scales (EA and negative self) produced a strong correlation in the current study as well. In terms of social desirability, emotional contact and focus on the child were not significantly correlated with MCDS total score, as expected. However, ss-significance positively and ss-occurrence negatively correlated with

MCDS total score. Hence, it can be assumed that FGI is relatively free from social desirability.

5.1.2 Discussion of the Direct Effects

Based on the research questions and hypotheses, the direct effects between NFEP variables and marital satisfaction were initially discussed. Before moving on the discussion of direct effects, the relationship between differentiation of self (DoS) and marital satisfaction was delineated, whereas the DoS was not included in the study directly. As was indicated before, the DoS is an 'umbrella construct' of Bowen's approach, and all patterns in NFEP mainly refer to undifferentiated relationship patterns in the familial context that clinical problems or symptoms were developed with prolonged family tension. Thus, examining the current findings in light of the DoS-related literature can be additionally helpful. The DoS and marital satisfaction indicated a lasting positive relationship (Ferreira, Narciso, Novo & Pereira, 2014; Haber, 1984; Mohammadi, Alibakhshi & Sedighi, 2019; Peleg, 2008; Rodriguez-Gonzalez, Skowron, Cagigal de Gregorio & San Roque, 2016; Yousefi et al., 2009). It means that well-differentiated married individuals experienced an authentic emotional intimacy rather than pseudo-intimacy without sacrificing their basic self (Bowen, 1978).

Overall, emotional contact (emotional cutoff+marital conflict) was the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction/adjustment both in the present study and in the literature (Kalkan, 2018; Peleg, 2008; Polat & İlhan, 2018; Rodríguez-González, Lampis, Murdock, Schweer-Collins & Lyons, 2020; Skowron, 2000). As the research on marital satisfaction revealed similar results in the literature, the current finding (emotional contact as the strongest predictor) on marital satisfaction was not surprising. According to the results, NFEP variables, interrelational, and self-developmental orientations explained 84% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Based on the predictive power of the variables, it can be concluded that there was still

an unidentified portion to explaining marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, these specific results cannot be directly referred to the literature since no study was conducted with these variables in a model. Considering theoretically, however, if chronic anxiety (Bowen, 1978) was included in the current study, the predictive power of the variables would probably increase. Because -as indicated before- all of the NFEP variables were defined as anxiety binding mechanisms in the family system (Bowen, 1978). Polat and İlhan's (2018) study might provide a better understanding of this conclusion, as it was conducted in the same cultural context (to the current study). In this study, the authors investigated the predictive power of DoS on dyadic adjustment, depression, anxiety, and stress among married individuals. Hence, results indicated that emotional cutoff was the most robust sub variable in explaining anxiety, stress, and depression.

The ss-significance and marital satisfaction (RQ.2.1). The variables of ss-significance and ss-occurrence were utilized separately in the current study, whereas they initially reflected the converging constructs. As indicated before, the construct of symptoms in spouses (SS) was theoretically considered as a consequence of the efforts to compensate for the anxiety produced by undifferentiated relationship patterns in a dyadic relationship (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). In the current study, the SS subscale was used with two smaller versions of SS-significance and SS-occurrence, as in the Polish version. Such use of the subscale produced much better model fit results in the CFA. The ss-significance (indicates self-reported assessment of physical, emotional, social, and working life functionality of participants and their spouses) and ss-occurrence (indicates effects of the physical/medical, emotional, and social functionality of participants, spouses, and their children) were theoretically associated and mutually reinforcing. More clearly, while ss-significance included a general emphasis on functionality, ss-occurrence had a strong emphasis on medical and pathological situations wherein five of six questions assessed the effect of these symptoms (i.e., medical, pathological) on the nuclear family members' functionality.

The findings of the current study concerning SS dimensions (significance and occurrence) were contradictory with each other. The ss-significance had a significant direct effect (positively) on marital satisfaction as well as the interrelational orientation

(mediator) in the SEM analyses. On the other hand, the ss-occurrence had no significant direct effect on neither marital satisfaction nor both mediators. The results suggested that when observed symptoms on functionality increased on spouses, marital satisfaction increased as well.

The finding was theoretically expected, considering the literature and Bowen's approach. As assumed by Kerr and Bowen (1988), such processes (significance and occurrence) of SS reflect a fused pattern in a dyadic relationship where both spouses were equally undifferentiated and maintained to preserve the harmony at the cost of putting a partner in more dependent, dysfunctional, vulnerable or over-functioning position. One's chronic subordination and over-functioning (to tolerate of other spouse's dysfunctionality), in turn, might develop physical, emotional, and social symptoms. From the analytic perspective, Kerr and Bowen (1988) defined the process as 'the reciprocal side of each spouse's transference' (p. 170). Both spouses tried to maintain marital harmony, but one has subordination invariably due to keeping the interaction stable lasted to the point he/she can tolerate anxiety within the relationship. This pattern was indicated by other pioneers of the family therapy field as well. For instance, Haley (2017) regarded the function of symptoms in a dyadic relationship was to ignore marital problems. The situation might also characterize such a fused relationship pattern with 'pseudo-self' (Bowen, 1976). The term was developed initially in the family of origin, and gradually generalized to intimate relationships where spouses prefer to sacrifice their personalities in their intimate relationships or demand on the other partner to change (Bowen, 1978). Likewise, 'pseudo-intimacy' (Orlofsky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973) indicated a failure in committing herself/himself to the relationship in depth. In a pseudo-intimacy, spouses preferred to stay in the marriage for various reasons, although senses of the authentic and confiding relationship were lacking (Waring, 2016). The lack of intimacy in a marital relationship was a perpetuating factor in patients with chronic physical symptoms of obscure etiology, though they perceive relationships satisfied and free of conflict (Waring, 1983). Spouses might be feeling a pseudo-intimacy where physical, social, and daily functioning symptoms indicated severe emotional illness, namely a coping manner in their marriages with confronted problems.

The couples experience many relational problems during their marriages; however, it seemed that the main point was their acting preferences to overcome these problems. Thus, such a positive relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction becomes more apparent when the function of symptoms in a dyadic relationship was well-understood. Flor, Turk and Scholz (1987) compared the chronic pain patients, their spouses, and a control sample to investigate the effects of chronic illness on marital relationships and the spouses' functioning. Results indicated that there was a positive relationship between marital adjustment and overall pain levels. Furthermore, these patients reported more pain symptoms of higher levels of depressive moods. The findings were considered that pain symptoms became a coping manner for patients and spouses (in their dyadic relationship) against the problems.

The emotional contact and marital satisfaction (RQ.2.1). Emotional contact (emotional cutoff + marital conflict) was the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction in the current study, which was worth comparing with previous findings. Emotional contact was significantly and negatively related to marital satisfaction. That is to say; married individuals reported higher marital satisfaction when they experienced less engagement in the dysfunctional pattern of emotional contact. This finding mainly addressed similarities with the previous studies in which emotional contact (emotional cutoff + marital conflict) was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. For instance, Peleg (2008) found a negative relationship between emotional cutoff and marital satisfaction among 121 Israeli men and women at various stages of their marriages. Similarly, married individuals with less emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff expectedly reported a higher level of DoS and experienced a greater relationship satisfaction (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

When considering the literature from different theoretical perspectives such as microanalytic observation of behavior research on marital satisfaction, findings also indirectly supported the relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction. For instance, Gottman and Krokoff (1989) found that conflict patterns of defensiveness, stubbornness, and withdrawal -theoretically converge with the emotional cutoff and marital conflict- were longitudinally dysfunctional patterns on

relationship satisfaction (particularly on the part of husbands). In an extreme form (in the light of current findings), it was possible to speculate that spouses might have been habitually avoiding the conflicts (and resolutions) in their relationships. Nevertheless, these (dysfunctional) patterns of conflict gradually evolved into emotional cutoff. From the Bowenian perspective, emotional contact similarly reflected two ends of a continuum in the pursuit of intimacy where the chronic anxiety intensively feeds both sides of the conflict and emotional distance. Therefore, in the pursuit of emotional contact, marital conflict and emotional cutoff became distinct and complementary constructs. Spouses should have been efforting on underlying relational conflicts - specific to their relationships- rather than avoiding. Otherwise, they were at risk of a decrease in their marital satisfaction.

The nonsignificance between FC and marital satisfaction (RQ,2.1). The researcher concluded that there might be two explanations for this result. The first was the measurement effect. The various items of FC failed to capture the concept as a whole (in the original study) since it was one of the most challenging concepts in Bowen's theory to be defined operationally and measured (Platt & Skowron, 2013). The FC was the only mechanism that refers to the involvement of a third person in the marital relationship. The FC items were initially being developed to point out three problematic mechanisms: being overprotective and too focused on children, and children-related topics resulted in marital conflicts. However, current CFA results in item-level (Model 2) indicated that only the items in 'children-related topics resulted in marital conflicts' dimension alone produced the substantial factor loadings in the current study.

Similarly, items in 'child-related topics resulted in marital conflicts' dimension alone produced higher reliability scores for FC in model 2 ($\alpha = .76$) than model 1 ($\alpha = .70$). It was clear that the inclusion of the other two mechanisms (being overprotective and too focused) decreased the reliability score. Moreover, though there was no direct effect between FC (8 items) and marital satisfaction in SEM analysis, the bivariate correlation was also significant ($r = -.31$). Interestingly, when the researcher reexamined the bivariate correlation between FC (model 2-marital conflict-related

items) and marital satisfaction, the relationship was higher ($r = -.46$). Taken together, it was clear that the FC best reflects itself with marital conflict-related items in the current sample. In other words, participants in the current study were not prone to perceive their attitudes (i.e., being overprotective or too focused) as dysfunctional mechanisms. The researcher kept all items of the FC in the current study regarding theoretical maintenance, as in the Polish version. Furthermore, reexamining the direct effect between FC and marital satisfaction with only including marital conflict-related items and Platt and Skowron's (2013) suggestions of several modifications (i.e., an increasing number of items) might produce a significant direct effect than it was forecasted for the current study.

Secondly, one can conclude that the cultural background and the worldview of the participants in the current study that produced these results. The reason of why the FC best reflects itself with marital-related items might be hidden in the culture-sensitive topics such as childrearing practices. For instance, the family was primarily conceptualized as a child-centered system in today's Turkey. Thus, most of the relationship patterns, both in marriages and families, were experienced within the children-based social relationships (Prime Ministry General Directorate of Family and Social Research [BASAGM], 2010). Depending on the differences in social and cultural circumstances, childrearing practices may vary in several cultural backgrounds. The values and perceptions attributed to the child can also vary significantly between different social groups within the same society (Yavuz & Güllüođınar, 2019). Complex and culture-sensitive concepts such as FC might need further cultural explanations in understanding the relationship between childrearing practices and marital satisfaction. Hence, rather than investigating a direct effect between child-related topics and marital issues, an indirect examination through several mediator variables can contribute to findings. Married individuals' self-definition within a cultural background and family/marital context (self-construals) can be more useful in this manner. In sum, FC may have more than a direct effect on marital satisfaction.

The nonsignificance between ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction (RQ,2.1). As was indicated before, ss-significance and ss-occurrence were initially converging constructs. However, separating them into the two smaller subscales (as in the Polish version) produced much better fit results in the pilot and main studies. The ss-significance emphasized dysfunctionality, and ss-occurrence was an indicator of medical and pathological situations. However, the finding of the current study concerning ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction was not consistent with the study's hypothesis (Hypothesis 1.10) and literature.

The researcher concluded that the primary explanation for the nonsignificant direct effect was specific to this sample that might be related to the characteristics of the sample. Both dimensions (significance-occurrence) contained the same number of items (6 each), and the minimum and maximum scores (6 to 30) were identical. However, the means of the sample for ss-occurrence were reduced almost by half comparing with ss-significance. The mean score of the men for ss-significance was 23.18. Women also reported a similar mean score for ss-significance was 22.56. On the other hand, the mean score of the women for the ss-occurrence was 12.56. Men also reported a similar mean score for ss-significance was 11.94. It was concluded that the sample represented a higher ss-significance than ss-occurrence. More clearly, the married individuals in the current study reported less medical and pathological situations on spouse dysfunctionality.

The self-construal variables on marital satisfaction (RQ,2.2). Before moving on the indirect effects, the discussion was extended by the direct effects of each mediator variable (interrelational and self-developmental orientations) on marital satisfaction. It should be reminded that in the BID model, interrelational orientation referred to the familial relationships as the frame of reference, whereas the self-developmental orientation indicated the self-growth and individuation (İmamoğlu, 1998). The current results showed that married individuals were highly satisfied in their marriages when they were highly interrelational oriented. On the other hand, married individuals reported less marital satisfaction when they were realizing their potential more and felt individuated.

Nevertheless, the negative association between marital satisfaction and self-developmental orientation was confiding since a positive relationship hypothesized. The relationship between self-construals and marital satisfaction/adjustment neglected by contemporary researchers in Turkey as the relationship retains its ambiguity. Therefore, it was challenging to discuss the findings as it has been noticed that such studies in Turkey were sparsely conducted and produced inconsistent results. For instance, in one of the very few studies of the BID model concerning marriage in Turkey, Gündoğdu (2007) examined the marital quality which was the composition of marital satisfaction and dyadic adjustment to several variables and the BID model. Findings revealed that among both self-construal types, interrelational orientation directly and positively predicted the marital quality, which was also consistent with the findings of the current study.

Nevertheless, self-developmental orientation produced an indirect effect on marital quality. Contrary to the current findings, there was no significant correlation between self-construal types (interrelational and self-developmental orientations). Gündoğdu (2007) assumed that both self-construal types were distinct and complementary constructs. Thus, an individual can hold low or high scores on both dimensions concomitantly (İmamoğlu, 1998, 2003; İmamoğlu & Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, 2004; İmamoğlu & İmamoğlu, 2007); however, these constructs were produced a significant correlation in the current sample.

On the other hand, Kuşcu (2019) found that there was no relationship between marital adjustment and none of the self-construal types (i.e., autonomous, related, autonomous-related). This finding was not consistent with Gündoğdu's (2007) above-mentioned study. Furthermore, Aydoğan and Özbay's (2018) study was not intended to examine the self-construals directly. The variable of the relational authenticity in their study referred to many overlapping common points with a related-individuated (balanced) self-type in the BID model. Similar to related-individuated (balanced) self, relational authenticity does not require (in a relationship-based self) sacrifice of the person's interests, wishes, and needs over prioritizing their partner's preferences. Their

findings were confirmed that marital satisfaction, relational authenticity, and satisfaction with sacrifice associated positively. In light of the literature, it can be assumed that the interrelational (i.e., marriage, family) context plays a vital role in the triangulated relationship between marital satisfaction, interrelational, and self-developmental orientations. Based on the findings of the current study and literature, it was possible to interpret that when married individuals in the current sample defined themselves in a familial/relational context more, they became more satisfied with their marriages. This conclusion was more meaningful when the current finding considered that married individuals reported a higher level of interrelational orientation than self-developmental orientation. However, it seemed that marital harmony was not anymore maintained when spouses tend to act in a more individualized manner. Such a tendency of self-development (more individuation) might be perceived as a risk for the interrelational context in the family system.

Such a tendency towards self-development was theoretically expected to uncover constructive relationship patterns and psychological needs in marriages. Conversely, in cases where these conditions have not met, several destructive patterns (trying to control each other or make dependent) might have been encountered in marriages. If one of the two dimensions (fusion or individuation) used to hold priority, it was in the direction that marriage satisfaction will be adversely affected (Yazıcı, 2019). It was clear that in dissatisfied marriages spouses began to accuse each other being distant, less reliable, more controlling, and dependent (Taycan & Kuruoğlu, 2014); as their attachment styles have appeared with more avoidance and anxiety.

The culture was a salient dimension, Hyun (2004) indicated a similar conclusion within a Korean sample. Independent self-construal (holds common points with self-developmental orientation) predicted marital satisfaction negatively, and the interdependent self-construal explained it positively. It seemed that when interrelational familial context became more dominant, a tendency toward more individualization was not welcomed. Hsu (1981) indicated that westernized marriage composition constructs (i.e., romantic love, mate selection) did not apply to Chinese society since wishes/expectations of other people -mainly family members'- should be

strictly taken into consideration in this cultural context. Thus, many individualistic concepts (i.e., disregard of others' opinions) can be disruptive and dysfunctional in such traditional societies. Furthermore, in collectivistic countries such as China, emotional intimacy, and psychological well-being with the family of origin maintained its priority over the relationship with a spouse (Hsu, 1985). In Turkish culture, the interrelational factors have also been used to maintain its priority that intimacy was generally balanced with authority that interconnectedness remained (Sunar, 2002). Child-rearing was one of the domains that the effects of family-of-origin interventions on marital problems were substantially perceived in Turkish families (Kızmaz & Altuğ, 2019). Taken together, the findings of the relationship between marital satisfaction and mediators indicated that the current sample reported higher interrelational orientation than self-developmental orientation. Married individuals' efforts to be more individuated were not welcomed in the current study, as Turkish cultural values played a vital role in this result. This conclusion was also consistent with the literature indicating that a negative relationship was found between collectivist values (regarding marriage) and autonomous type. Married individuals' (with autonomous type) characteristics indicated that they were less dependent on the spouse and reported more individuality (Tekin Çatal & Kalkan, 2019).

5.1.3 Discussion of the Indirect Effects

The indirect effects of interrelational (IR) and self-developmental (SD) orientations in understanding the role of each NFEP variables on marital satisfaction were delineated. In consideration of the indirect effects in the model, the researchers examined the indirect effects through each mediator (e.g., interrelational or self-developmental orientations) or via both mediators in series (e.g., interrelational and self-developmental orientations). Herein, in series, refers to self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation. The individual indirect effect of the interrelational, self-developmental, and indirect effects of both orientations together (which resulted from interrelational orientation) were significant in the relationship

between NFEP variables except ss-occurrence and marital satisfaction. The significant indirect effects were positive between marital satisfaction and the ss-significance while negative between marital satisfaction and focus on child and emotional cutoff via mediator variables. Furthermore, married individuals who seek the relationship mechanism of emotional contact (emotional cutoff + marital conflict) tend to define themselves in the context of familial relationships more. It seems that achievement in the equilibrium (between interrelational and self-developmental) increased the self-developmental orientation of married individuals who were more susceptible to realize their self-potentials, and thus they experienced higher marital satisfaction. On the other hand, the indirect effects through the interrelational orientation were not significant in explaining the relations between ss-occurrence, focus on the child, and marital satisfaction.

Self-developmental orientation between focus on the child and marital satisfaction.

(RQ.2.4). One of the remarkable results of the present study was on the significant indirect effect of self-developmental orientation between the focus on the child (FC) and marital satisfaction (full mediation). The FC included attitudes of being 'overprotective', 'too focused on children', and 'child-related topics become the reasons for conflicts'. However, these patterns theoretically converge on the family triangulation concept that children involved in the conflicts. The relationship between parenting attitudes and childhood problems were positively associated and stated in the literature (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz & Montgomery, 2013; Segrin, Givertz, Swaitkowski & Montgomery, 2015). The findings of the current study similarly revealed that when the focus on child patterns were less experienced within the family context, married individuals felt a higher sense of self that defines himself/herself more satisfied in their marriages. Before moving on the discussion, it should be reminded that the FC dimension has initially been the most problematic dimension of the FGI. Therefore, the authors -in the original study- finally removed this dimension from the scale due to low reliability. On the other hand, the dimension produced more stable results in Polish and Turkish samples. Furthermore, items of 13 (How much would you say your relationship with your children affects your marriage?), 17 (When you and your spouse have conversations, how often is the discussion about the children?),

and 18 (How often do you and your spouse have disagreements about the children?) reflected the 'child-related topics. These items indicated the reasons for conflicts between spouses and revealed the highest factor loadings than other 'overprotective' and 'too-focused' items on the scale. The difference regarding factor loadings among conflict-related items and others (i.e., overparenting and too-focused) was greater means that participants perceived the dimension (FC) more to marital issues (i.e., childrearing practices may cause marital conflict) rather than parenting attitudes (i.e., overparenting, being too focused). Therefore, this finding should be more understandable in the context of the Turkish family structure and childrearing practices of Turkish couples.

Sunar (2002) assumed that there were still some common factors among traditional and modern urban middle-class Turkish families in three generations, whereas distinct differences still exist. One of the most remarkable trends was the individualizing trend in the family context that children were encouraged more to be independent while a greater emphasis on the importance of the family over the individualism continued (Sunar, 2002). This situation seemed contrary to findings indicating that urban Turkish adolescents reported more emotional distance to their fathers than to their mothers. They more likely preferred to communicate with mothers, more expected to be respectful toward the authority figures (i.e., father, teachers, relatives) especially in the expression of such disapproved feelings like anger (Güre, Uçanok, & Sayıl, 2006; Hortaçsu, 1989; Sever, 1985; Sunar, 2002). Additionally, couples' disciplinary practices were also transformed between rural-origin, traditional, and urbanized, well-educated Turkish families. For instance, the most crucial characteristic that Turkish mothers (in rural) desired to see in their children was obedience but more democratic parental attitudes and less physical punishment observed in urban middle and upper classes (Fişek, 1982; Kağıtçıbaşı, Sunar & Bekman, 1988, 2001). All that aside, it can be concluded that both rural and urban families were confused on childrearing practices as traditional families presented conflicting discipline methods (Olson, 1982), and urban middle-class Turkish families had difficulties with well-established boundaries and rules within the family (Sunar, 2002). Turkish parents tend to hold more authoritarian parental attitudes during adolescence contrary to early childhood

as they were much more protective towards their children in this period (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982a, 1982b). This confounding, permeant personalistic discipline attitudes of parents triggered more emotional interdependence than autonomy, and more normative patterns with significant others' expectations/states clearly illustrated both Turkish middle-class families in rural and urban consecutively (Sunar & Fişek, 2005).

Besides all, as contemporary Turkish families efforted to have less intergenerational hierarchical boundaries with their children, they had difficulty to maintain proximity, interconnectedness, autonomy, control, which in turn led to marital and familial conflicts (Fişek & Scherler, 1996). In this context, the current results can be extended to the ongoing efforts of the contemporary Turkish couples/parents (because the current sample represents a highly educated profile) towards more individualized and egalitarian trends over traditional parental attitudes on childrearing practices. Nevertheless, such a childrearing practice was not free from the emotional interdependence of fusion, which in turn made marriages more vulnerable through parental conflicts (on child-related topics).

Emotional interdependence was also a threat to self-developmental orientation. There was a barrier for Turkish contemporary parents to overcome. They attempted to identify themselves in a more individualized manner (in childrearing), nevertheless, they had grown up within an interrelational-oriented context. Thus, they had also difficulty in how to succeed in the self-developmental orientation (in childrearing) since "they do not have role models or prescriptions" (Sunar & Fişek, 2005; p.15) in their past experiences. Howbeit, (in line with the literature) defining themselves in a much more individualized familial context made contemporary Turkish parents/couples more satisfied in their marriages. They probably felt themselves more self-realized as a result of avoiding to focus on their children. In sum, it could finally be concluded that participants (in the current sample) preferred to define themselves within an interrelational-oriented context when their marriages (i.e., emotional contact, symptoms in spouses) were considered. On the other hand, the same participants preferred to emphasize more individualized patterns substantially involved in the self-

realization of one's potential without social (or maybe extended families') expectations (as a reference point) when their children were concerned.

Interrelational orientation between ss-significance and marital satisfaction (RQ.2.4).

The direct effect of ss-significance on marital satisfaction (see, 5.1.1 Discussion of the direct effects) was theoretically more consolidated with the involvement of interrelational orientation to the path. The ss-significance involved a general emphasis on the functionality of spouses reflected a fused dyadic relationship pattern with dysfunctional approaches (i.e., constant subordination, dependence, less functionality vs. over-functioning) of spouses. Additionally, "the reciprocal side of each spouse's transference" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; p. 170) reminds someone that marriage was vulnerable to dyadic conflicts. The congruence between these dysfunctional mechanisms in a marital dyad becomes meaningful when the intercorrelation between ss-significance and emotional contact (marital conflict + emotional cutoff) was examined ($r = -.50$).

The direction of the (positive) relationship between ss-significance and marital satisfaction (direct effect) was not changed when interrelational orientation used as a mediator. Nevertheless, this indirect effect was marginally significant and should be interpreted with extreme caution. The interrelational orientation had two additional subordinated dimensions related to individuation. The first was a balanced differentiation; the most healthy orientation, individuals maintained their integration and differentiation simultaneously. On the other hand, related patterning indicated differentiative needs that were a risk to the group togetherness, external locus of control was more significant over internal control locus might cause pseudo-harmony or pseudo-intimacy in relationships. The researcher was not able to examine the mediator roles of these dimensions on marital satisfaction consecutively as the measurement model failed to produce a sufficient model fit with BID's four self-types classifications. When the mean differences of four self-types were investigated, it could be concluded that the sample reported a higher level of related individuation and separated individuation, which actively includes components of the DoS.

On the other hand, as suggested by İmamoğlu (1998), when the means were used as cutting points for the bidimensional structure (i.e., self-developmental, interrelational-orientation), the sample demonstrated a trend toward both interrelatedness and individuation. The interrelatedness dimension in the BID model referred to relationship patterns in the familial context. That is to say, when spouses were encountered with problems that preferred to exhibit symptom development (i.e., physical, emotional, social, and daily functioning) to overcome their relational problems, interrelated familial/marital context increased the occurrence of this dysfunctional mechanism. Interrelatedness referred to a familial/marital context where not only the quality of the marital relationship was on focus, parent-child(ren) relationship mechanisms were involved in the context as well. The research delineated the role of interrelatedness in the familial/marital context broadly. Higher levels of marital satisfaction and spouses who reported their marriage as supportive were more able to meet their children's needs sensitively; otherwise, they became less attentive towards children's needs (Easterbrooks & Emde, 1988). Herein, a positive parent-child relationship was not sufficient to protect the child from the harmful effects of marital conflicts (Erel & Burman, 1995). As previously mentioned, the FC was also a significant contributor to the model. The sample exhibited a highly interrelational-oriented background in the definition of the self that was a risk factor of symptom development (in spouses) to be considered.

Interrelational orientation between emotional contact and marital satisfaction (RQ.2.4). The direct effect of emotional contact on marital satisfaction (see, 5.1.1 Discussion of the direct effects) was also theoretically more consolidated with the involvement of interrelational orientation to the path. The direction of the (negative) relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction (direct effect) was not changed when interrelational orientation used as a mediator. Put differently, when spouses preferred to seek emotional contact, including marital conflicts and emotional cutoff, or became emotionally distant to overcome their relational problems, they were less likely to satisfy their marriages. Moreover, an interrelated marital context might increase the occurrence of this dysfunctional mechanism. The results of the study mainly revealed that the need for emotional contact and interrelational orientation were

the more reliable predictor of the participants' marital satisfaction. When the means of NFEP variables were used, it can be concluded that the sample tended to be in seek of emotional contact. The purpose (with emotional contact) was to bind the anxiety in a dyadic relationship through marital conflicts (i.e., criticism, withdrawal, insulting, sarcasm), at the same time, a struggle against being fused at the risk of intimacy (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Such a pattern strongly referred to the low-level DoS and seemingly appeared more in the context of interrelatedness. This pattern was not a strange structure for Turkish individuals as they were raised in the culture of relatedness and emotionally interdependentness (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996).

The value of children is one of the distinct cultural practices that interrelatedness most appeared in contemporary Turkish families. For instance, the raising girl preference over boys had their origins in the old age security of mothers since they expected prospective help and emotional support (Ataca & Sunar, 1999). Furthermore, personal autonomy, which converges on individuals' boundaries were subordinated within the Turkish family context (Fişek, 1982; Levi, 1994), and fused relationship patterns considered as a norm for Turkish families (Sunar & Fişek, 2005). What else, the difficulty in the integration of contemporary Turkish couples' to more individuated self with less intergenerational hierarchical boundaries may have been led to dyadic conflicts (Fişek & Scherler, 1996), as indicated before.

When the findings of the current study were evaluated in the light of the literature on the Turkish family transition, it could be concluded that participants' self-definition of interrelational-oriented context became a risk factor for the development of dysfunctional relationship patterns for couples. Emotional cutoff and marital conflict were the risk factors to be seriously considered for contemporary Turkish well-educated middle-class married individuals. They might be the generations caught between the strive for less intergenerational hierarchical boundaries towards individuation, and more emotional pressure of traditional practices of elders. Even though they had no models or prescriptions (Sunar & Fişek, 2005), approaches (i.e., BID model, DoS) that emphasized the differentiation would be helpful. In sum, marital conflict and emotional cutoff were the complementary poles in the emotional contact

mechanism and manifested themselves in several cultural practices. All aside, it appeared that the direction of the relationship was changed when the self-developmental orientation included in the study.

The final lines were drawn: Inclusion of the self-developmental orientation to the model (RQ.2.4). The inclusion of the self-developmental orientation (mediator) to the path that previously examined the indirect effect of interrelational orientation (mediator) on the relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction positively changed the direction. More clearly, self-developmental orientation resulted from interrelational orientation revealed a negative indirect effect on the relationship between emotional contact and marital satisfaction. That is, when spouses preferred to seek emotional contact, including marital conflicts and emotional cutoff, or became emotionally distant to overcome their relational problems, they were less likely to be satisfied with their marriages. Moreover, an interrelated marital context might increase the occurrence of this dysfunctional mechanism. However, when married individuals aimed to strive for self-realization to accomplish their potentials (requires more individuation), there was a trend toward more satisfying marital relationships. Typically, it can be expected that enhancing both self-construals made a complementary role for participants to succeed in the DoS. As mentioned before, this is consistent with the notion that individuation and relatedness were not opposite constructs instead defined as balanced, distinct, and complementary (İmamoğlu, 2003), which strongly corresponds to enhanced self-differentiation. As a support to this notion, İmamoğlu and İmamoğlu (2007) indicated that "relationship-specific attachment security was associated mainly with the relational self-orientation" (p. 552); nevertheless, when the process was complemented with individuation (self-developmental orientation), more attachment security was enhanced with the addition of individuation.

Clear enough, when both mediators were synchronized, they functioned as a unique variable seemingly reflected the DoS, and the relationship between emotional processes and marital satisfaction became more apparent, as were repeatedly evidenced in the literature (Gubbins, Perosa & Bartle-Haring, 2010; Peleg, 2008;

Skowron, 2000). Nevertheless, the same mechanism in the current sample seemed to work differently. Thus, the definition of the 'self' should be reconsidered from the lenses of Turkish cultural practices. Individuals'- in the current sample- self-definitions involved in the relatedness more, dissatisfaction in their marriages became visible. However, when they used to define themselves in a more individuated manner, marital conflicts (i.e., criticism, withdrawal, insulting, sarcasm) and emotionally withdrawn have appeared as a struggle against being fused at the risk of intimacy (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). This pattern was an indicator of low-level DoS seemingly experienced more in the context of interrelatedness strongly referred to the pseudo-self and pseudo-intimacy (Orlofsky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973). Aforementioned, this was not a strange structure for Turkish individuals as they were a part of the culture of relatedness and emotionally interdependence (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1996). Among highly-educated contemporary Turkish individuals, there was a predominant trend to become more individuated without a decrease in relatedness (İmamoğlu, 1987), and intergenerational hierarchy was not considered as a threat to maintaining emotional closeness (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007).

Although further evidence was needed, the existence of both individuated and relatedness in the same context might carry a potential risk of pseudo-self in marital relationships. That was the case when both spouses were with low-level DoS, which inevitably resulted in a fused relationship with pseudo-self. Whenever the fusion showed its face in the dyadic relationship, the anxiety follows, and spouses usually preferred the emotional distance to avoid the anxiety. However, dynamics within this newly emerged pattern "are determined by the way the spouses fight for, or share, the ego strength available to them. One spouse usually functions with a dominant share of the ego strength" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988; p. 125), and this was the point where the marital conflicts began. Taken together, participants who mainly defined themselves in the context of relatedness might have been perceived as their struggle in pursuit of a more individuated self that resulted in a cultural and spousal pressure (to maintain relatedness more stable). Thus, marital conflicts and emotional withdrawn emerged in the experiences of the current sample more. Thus, this demand and struggle of more individuation appeared with a pseudo-self, further a pseudo-individuation in their

relational context where the anxiety was ignored. However, this struggle has seemingly belonged to women participants as all evidence was superimposed: participants' mean differences in both self orientations were higher for women than men, and the relationship between both orientations was significant for only women.

The unexpected results (RQ.2.4). The researcher concluded that the primary explanation for the nonsignificant indirect effect was mostly specific to the self-developmental orientation (mediator) that might be related to the characteristics of the sample. The indirect effects through the self-developmental orientation were not significant in explaining the relations between ss-significance, ss-occurrence, emotional contact, and marital satisfaction. Comparing the mean scores for both mediators indicated that the sample was characterized by a more interrelational orientation than self-developmental. Furthermore, reliability analysis in the main study also revealed that interrelational orientation had a much higher (.85) Cronbach Alpha value than self-developmental orientation (.72). These reliability results were consistent with the literature, for instance, Gündoğdu (2007) found Cronbach's alpha .84 for the interrelational, and .70 for self-developmental orientation in a married sample. The reason for nonsignificant results for self-developmental orientation could be related to the cultural background and worldviews of the participants. The self-developmental orientation might not be perceived as desirable and necessary as expected as it referred to a more individualistic pattern that was affected by culture.

Do the model differ concerning gender? (RQ.3). In terms of gender, despite a significant difference was found via independent samples t-test analysis on marital satisfaction, measurement invariance was provided on further SEM analysis (with multigroup CFA). Thus, the current findings were discussed as a single sample model. However, one should be reminded that the FGI (Platt & Skowron, 2013) was originally developed and adapted to other cultures (Józefczyk, 2017) with only married women sample due to theoretical reasons. Bowen's concepts such as DoS -umbrella construct- seemed to be sensitive to gender differences, and the researchers have commonly preferred to study for both gender perspectives. For instance, the researchers found that the relationship between marital satisfaction and DoS differed by gender (Lim &

Jennings, 1996; Peleg, 2008; Tremblay, Sabourin, Lessard & Normandin, 2002), and gender was a distinct dimension to be considered. Therefore, including the males to the current analyses should be considered as one of the strengths of the study and consistent with the literature, the findings on the sample with distinctive characteristics become instructive for further adaptation studies of the FGI into different cultures.

5.2 Implications for Theory and Research

Several theories and approaches in the literature have been used to conceptualize the marital satisfaction and underlying factors that affecting it. The hypothesized structural model of the current study was based on the NFEP and self-construals. The research which has already been examined the applicability of the Bowenian approach in Turkey within the context of marital relationships reflected several cultural values. These studies contributed to literature in the examination of the cultural validity of DoS in different socio-ethnic-cultural groups. However, the contemporary perspectives in family research assumed that the cultural validity of such family-oriented approaches (i.e., Bowen's theory) was much more than noticeable group differences (Erdem & Safi, 2018). From a broader perspective, contemporary family researchers should reintegrate their research questions from "examining for whom theoretical constructs are more or less culturally valid to understanding why theoretical constructs are more or less valid" (Erdem & Safi, 2018, p. 480). In this vein, the integration of concepts from cross-cultural psychology literature to cultural elements of family research would be considerably more beneficial to produce a comprehensive cultural framework (Erdem & Safi, 2018). Precisely, the current study was conducted within this background for theoretical and empirical applications of Bowen's Theory from the lenses of a cross-cultural perspective. The cultural lenses here referred to borrowing BID's cross-cultural concepts that provide an opportunity to integrate theory and research. Findings were remarkable, in this manner, supporting how NFEP concepts function in a sample that was characterized by both individualistic and collectivist self-construal orientations. Thus, as Bowenian constructs reflected a western-individualized background, examining its concepts from the lenses of self-

construal orientations (originally developed on Turkish cultural characteristics) to marital satisfaction made this study as the first attempt (by the researcher's knowledge) to examine the current hypothesized model. In other words, the use of NFEP variables from the perspective of self-construal orientations, the hypothesized model, provided an integrated perspective on İmamoğlu's (1998) BID and Bowen's (1978) approach to a better understanding of the marital satisfaction in Turkish families.

Notwithstanding, the mediating roles of interrelational and self-developmental orientations in the relationship between the NFEP and marital satisfaction revealed the adaptability of integrating these approaches. The current study findings can be a valuable source of the validation of the DoS, NFEP, and self-construal orientations in understanding dysfunctional relationship mechanisms in Turkish married individuals. The researcher assumed that integrating cross-cultural psychology perspectives can still be valuable in cross-validation of the current results across diverse cultural groups in Turkey to reveal whether NFEP variables operate in similar ways.

One of the most important implications of the current study was also that Family Genogram Interview (Platt & Skowron, 2013) was adapted into Turkish. The FGI was initially developed as a genogram interview protocol, which contained qualitative items regarding the family emotional process as well as quantitative questions. Thus, integrating both types of items could make the instrument very useful in the field of family counseling in Turkey to assess the nuclear family emotional process variables. Additionally, in the development study, Platt and Skowron (2013) excluded the FC from the scale due to low reliability. Nevertheless, the Polish version (Józefczyk, 2017) produced a more stable factorial structure and reliability. Although the FC produced sufficient reliability scores in the current sample, the CFA findings revealed that focusing on children was much more relevant to childrearing practices of parents, which resulted in marital conflict. Thus, the FC dimension should be theoretically reconsidered regarding the value of children and Turkish childrearing practices and parental attitudes.

The direct effects of NFEP variables on marital satisfaction supported several assumptions of Bowen's approach. The current study revealed that emotional contact was the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction. Notably, the dimension of emotional cutoff has appeared as the most salient variable in the research of Bowen's approach (Peleg, 2008; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). In line with this literature, the findings of the current study seemed to support the explanatory power of this remarkable variable, which was part of both DoS and NFEP.

5.3 Implications for Practice

The findings provided some suggestions for practice as well. The current study indicated insightful findings for practice regarding the predictors of marital satisfaction, NFEP concepts, and marital satisfaction. Considering the results of the current study, the hypothesized model may provide a useful background to psychotherapists and counselors in the field of family counseling. Family therapists and counselors may focus on such dysfunctional coping manners of symptoms in spouses, focus on child and emotional contact in their professional practice. The FGI was developed as a 75-minute family interview protocol with both quantitative and qualitative questions to conceptualize the dysfunctional relationship mechanism in the families. Although the qualitative dimension was not the scope of the current study, the family therapists can use both dimensions concomitantly for the assessment and therapeutic process planning.

Moreover, the FGI provided the family therapists and counselors with more information about the spouses' symptoms, focus on child and emotional contact (marital conflict+emotional cutoff) in the assessment of how these factors affect the family functioning. However, splitting the SS dimension into two (significance and occurrence) made the scale more functional in the assessment of observed and pathological symptoms in spouses.

The self-construal orientations and their interaction with the individuals' level of DoS regarding marital satisfaction should also be considered. Thus, psychological counselors and family therapists should have cultural awareness to the family's emotional processes and self-construals. Providing psychological support may enhance the DoS levels and self-construal (to related individuation) of married individuals, those who developed related patterning (self-construal) but low level of DoS (emotional cut off). Lastly, married individuals with high related patterning of self-construal and low level of DoS (symptoms in spouses) were more likely to exhibit functioning symptoms. Spouses in such a dyadic relationship might have burdened each other with overmuch responsibility for the other's well-being, functionality, and emotions. Working with these individuals to recognize their dysfunctional coping mechanisms with stress and anxiety might have been supportive of the non-clinical practice. Therefore, supporting these individuals to change their dysfunctional coping mechanisms (family emotional processes) could increase their marital satisfaction levels. Recently, family therapy and Bowenian concepts are increasingly attracting the attention of researchers and practitioners in Turkey. However, examining these factors as predictors (especially DoS) is not independent of Turkish society's cultural structure. Practitioners and researchers should consider these cultural aspects, and think over that correlational studies are not sufficient alone to reveal how these structures, based on western culture, work in Turkish culture. More culture-sensitive studies will be needed to understand the validity of these theoretical structures in Turkish culture. Nevertheless, self-construal can provide a further conceptual framework from social psychology that is not only an understanding of how family counseling approaches work in Turkish culture but also the orientations (self-construal types) that assume togetherness of both individualistic and collectivist characteristics in the same context can become more questionable.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Studies

Like most studies, this current one has its recommendations for further research needed to be clarified. The current study was the first attempt to adapt the FGI to Turkish and

examined the psychometric properties within a sample of married individuals. However, results revealed a different factor structure from its original one. The factor structure of the FGI was more consistent with the Polish version (Józefczyk, 2017) than the original one and produced a much better model fit results. Contrary to the original study, the FC dimension produced an acceptable Cronbach alpha score and was kept in the current study despite its weak factor structure. However, modifying the items in the FC with a concentration on ‘child-related conflicts’ or developing a new scale would be beneficial for researchers. It would produce much better factor loadings and reliability evidence than other themes (i.e., overparenting, too focused on children), as it was verified in the proposed factor structure of the current study.

Along with the modified and culture-specific version of the FGI in the assessment of family-of-origin experiences, researchers might have a chance to give a specific focus on investigating the emotional processes in the family of origin in Turkey, in addition to nuclear family experiences. Another option might be developing a new scale that measures nuclear family emotional processes, considering the Turkish cultural context. Such an attempt would be more beneficial about how nuclear family emotional processes impact the marital satisfaction as “there are so many facets to the concept of differentiation that it can be approached in numerous ways” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 89).

In terms of the sample and generalizability of the findings, the sample in the current study comprised of married participants from a variety of metropolis cities in Turkey and substantially represented a highly-educated profile in which most data represented contemporary Turkish families. This profile of participants might have resulted in more contemporary viewpoints in marital interactions and more individuation in nuclear family emotional processes, which reflected a shift to a more egalitarian viewpoint. Hence, in future studies, researchers were recommended to conduct their studies with more representative samples, including rural and a variety of socio-economic and educational levels. Conclusions on unique self-reports of the married individuals regarding nuclear family emotional processes was a limitation of the study. Therefore, optional assessment techniques can be considered as these processes

concern all family members ultimately. In future studies, researchers may prefer to gather data from each member of the marital dyads and child(ren) in the family to provide further understanding.

Ideally, longitudinal research instead of a cross-sectional study would provide much more detailed information and empirically supported evidence to explore the changes in family transition stages and associations between family emotional processes, self-construals and marital satisfaction in the long run. Next, a more representative and balanced sample in terms of gender, and marriage types of the participants can be concerned in future research to investigate the effects of these demographic variables on marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the model was not able to confirm the four self-construal types (i.e., related individuation, related patterning, separated individuation, separated patterning) in the representation of much detailed categorization of İmamoğlu's (1998) approach which considered as a limitation in the current study. Thus, reexamining these four-dimensional structures in future studies were strongly recommended.

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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

 ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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11 ARALIK 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu
(İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç.Dr. Zeynep HATİPOĞLU SÜMER

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Mustafa Alperen KURŞUNCU'nun "Çekirdek ve Köken Ailede Duygusal Süreçler ve Evlilik Doyumu: Benlik Kurgularının Aracı Rolü" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2018-EGT-177 protokol numarası ile araştırma yapması onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımla bilgilerinize sunarım.


Prof. Dr. Tülin GENÇÖZ

Başkan


Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL
Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR
Üye


Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI (u.)
Üye


Ali Emre TURGUT
Üye


Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK
Üye


Doç. Dr. Üyesi Pınar KAYGAN
Üye

B. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

KİŞİSEL BİLGİ FORMU

Cinsiyetiniz: ①Kadın ②Erkek

Yaşınız:

Medeni Durumunuz: ①Evli ②Bekâr ③Eşimden boşandım ④Eşimi kaybettim

Eğitim Durumunuz:

①İlköğretim ②Ortaöğretim ③Yüksekokul ④Üniversite ⑤Yüksek Lisans

Yaşadığınız şehir:

Eşimin ve Benim:

①İlk evliliğimiz

②Benim ilk evliliğim, eşimin 2.(veya daha fazla) evliliği

③Eşimin ilk evliliği, benim 2.(veya daha fazla) evliliğim ④İkimizin de 2.(veya daha fazla) evlilikleri

Evliliğiniz ne kadar sürdü/sürmektedir?

①1 yıldan az ②1-5 yıl arası ③6-10 yıl arası ④11-15 yıl arası ⑤16 ve daha fazla yıl

Kaç çocuğunuz var?

①Çocuğum yok ②Tek çocuk ③2 çocuk ④3 çocuk ⑤4 veya daha fazla çocuk

En küçük/Tek çocuğunuz kaç yaşında?.....

En büyük çocuğunuz kaç yaşında?.....

(Varsa) Çocuğunuz/çocuklarınız ne zaman dünyaya geldiler?

①Eşimle şu anki evliliğimizde ②Önceki evliliğimde/evliliklerimde ③Eşimin önceki evliliğinde/evliliklerinde

C. SAMPLE ITEMS OF THE FAMILY GENOGRAM INTERVIEW

Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formu Örnek Soruları

- 1.Aşağıdaki aile üyelerinin fiziksel sağlığını genel olarak nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?
- 7.Çekirdek aileniz (kendiniz, eşiniz veya çocuğunuz) duygusal sağlık sorunları açısından ne sıklıkta problem yaşadı/yaşamaktadır?
- 9.Çocuğunuzla/Çocuklarınızla ilişkilerinizin, evliliğinizi ne kadar/sıklıkta etkilediğini düşünüyorsunuz?
- 16.Siz ve eşiniz ne sıklıkta anlaşmazlık ya da çatışma yaşarsınız?
- 23.Eşinizle yaşadığınız sorunlar hakkında konuşmaktan kaçındığınızı ne sıklıkta hissedersiniz?

D. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE TURKISH VERSION OF RAS

İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği (Evlilik Doyumu)

1. Genel olarak, evliliğinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?
2. Evliliğinizde ne kadar problem var?
3. Evliliğiniz sizin başlangıctaki beklentilerinizi ne derece karşılıyor?

E. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE BID

Dengeli Bütünleşme Ayrışma Ölçeği (Benlik Kurguları)

1. Kendi kendime kaldığımda yapacak ilginç şeyler bulabilirim.
2. İnsanlarla ilişki kurmakta güçlük çekiyorum.
3. Farklı olmaksansa, toplumla düşünsel olarak kaynaşmış olmayı tercih ederim.
4. Kendimi yakın çevremden duygusal olarak kopmuş hissediyorum.

F. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Çekirdek Ailede Duygusal Süreçler ve Evlilik Doyumu: Benlik Kurgularının Aracı Rolü” başlıklı bu çalışma, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi’nde Doç. Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu Sümer’in danışmanlığında Araş. Gör. Mustafa Alperen Kurşuncu tarafından yürütülen bir çalışmadır. Çalışmanın amacı, çekirdek ailelerde duygusal süreçler olarak da tanımlanan 'duygusal kopma', 'evlilik çatışması', 'çocuk odaklılık' ve 'aile üyelerinin belirtileri' gibi yapıların evlilik doyumu ile ilişkisini benlik kurguları (ilişki yönelimi, gelişme yönelimi) aracılığıyla incelemektir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır ve sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Ölçeğe vereceğiniz cevaplar tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir ve elde edilecek bilgiler bilimsel yayımlarda ve çalışmalarda kullanılacaktır. Anket, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek soruları içermemektedir. Ancak, bazı sorular bazı kişilerce rahatsız edici olarak algılanabilir. Katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakabilirsiniz. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış cevapları bulunmamaktadır. Sorulara içtenlikle yanıt vermeniz araştırmanın sonuçları açısından önem taşımaktadır. Çalışmaya katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için araştırma görevlisi Mustafa Alperen KURŞUNCU (E-posta: mustafalperenkursuncu@hotmail.com) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz. Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Onaylıyorum

G. CURRICULUM VITAE

Mustafa A. Kurşuncu

Email: mustafakursuncu@odu.edu.tr

Ordu University, Faculty of Education

3.Floor 52200 Altınordu, Ordu/TURKEY

M.S: Middle East Technical University, Faculty of Education, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, (2016) Title: Risk involvement in emerging adulthood: The role of personal authority, intergenerational intimacy and family triangulation Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu Sümer

B.A: Ankara University, Faculty of Education, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, (2005-2009)

EXPERIENCE:

Research Assistant (Ordu University-Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department (2018-)

Research Assistant (Middle East Technical University-Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department (2013- 2018)

Psychological Counselor (Schools and Institutes in the Ministry of Education (MoNE) (2009-2013)

RESEARCH INTERESTS:

Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies, Family Therapy, Crisis Counseling, Grief Counseling, and Learning Disabilities.

PRESENTATIONS:

Ulu-Yalçinkaya, A. & Kurşuncu, Mustafa A. (2015). *Marriage decision and wedding process in Turkish culture from the perspective of the self-differentiation concept*. XIII. National Conference of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Mersin Turkey.

Kurşuncu, Mustafa A & Sümer, Z. (2017). *Psychometric Properties of The Personal Authority In Family System Questionnaire-Turkish Young Adult Version (PAFSQ-VC)*. IX. International Educational Sciences Conference, Antalya, Turkey.

Kurşuncu, Mustafa A. (2017). *Children's experiences of family triangulation process in Turkish culture (Demokratik Katılım Ailede Nasıl Başlamaz: Türk Kültüründe Çocukların Aile Üçgenleşmesine İlişkin Deneyimlerinin İncelenmesi)*. IX. Educational Congress of Educational Research, Ordu/Turkey

Selen Demirtaş-Zorbaz, Mustafa Alperen Kurşuncu, Bilge Tarım & Ömer Karaman (2018). *Higher Education Orientation: Maladjustment Of Students Or Maladjustment Of University?* XXVII. INCES-UBEK, Antalya/Turkey.

Ulu-Yalcinkaya, A., Kursuncu, M.A., Demir, A., & Demir, A. (2018). Internet addiction, loneliness and mindfulness. International Congress on Education, Istanbul, Turkey.

Kursuncu, M.A., Ulu-Yalcinkaya, A., Demir, A., & Demir, A. (2018). The role of experiential avoidance and mindfulness on self-esteem levels of Turkish university students. International Congress on Education, Istanbul, Turkey.

Ulu Yalçınkaya, Ayşe; Alperen Kurşuncu, Mustafa; Imperiale, Federica; Fiordelmondo, Valentina; Sümer, Zeynep; Hoogerwerf, Evert-Jan (2019). *Examining Gender, Disability and Technology: A survey study from the RISEWISE project*. AAATE 2019- Global Challenges in Assistive Technology: Research, Policy & Practice, Bologna.

PUBLICATIONS:

Kurşuncu, M. A. (2016). *Ergenlik Döneminde İntihar* (Suicidal Behaviors in Adolescence). Erdur- Baker, Ö. & Doğan, T. (Eds.). *Kriz Danışmanlığı* (Crisis Counseling). Ankara: Pegem Yayıncılık. ISBN-978-605-318-728-8

Kurşuncu, M. A. (2016). *Okullarda Krize Müdahale ve Ebeveynlerle Çalışma* (Crisis Interventions in Schools and Collaboration with Parents). Erdur-Baker, Ö. & Doğan, T. (Eds.). *Kriz Danışmanlığı* (Crisis Counseling). Ankara: Pegem Yayıncılık. ISBN-978-605-318-728-8

Kurşuncu, M. A. (2017). *Bilişsel Davranışçı Terapiler Açısından Yas* (Grief from the perspective of cognitive behavioral therapies). Erdur-Baker, Ö. & Doğan, T. (Eds.). *Yas Danışmanlığı* (Grief Counseling). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık. ISBN-978-605-170-188-2

Kurşuncu, M. A., Padır, M. A. & Tanacioğlu, B. (2018). *Okullarda Krize Müdahale: Bir Vaka Örneği*. Erdur-Baker, Ö. & Doğan, T. (Eds.). *Kriz Danışmanlığı* (Crisis Counseling). Ankara: Pegem Yayıncılık. Secondth Edition. ISBN-978-605-318-728-8.

Kursuncu, M.A. & Bastemur, S. (2019). Family triangulation experiences of Turkish young women . *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 14(3), 312-329. doi: 10.29329/epasr.2019.208.14

(Editors in translation) Kurşuncu, M. A. & Zorbaz-Demirtaş, S. (2020). *Dyslexia: A Complete Guide for Parents and Those Who Help Them*, Second Edition. Gavin Reid. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık

Kurşuncu, M. A. & Aydın, G. S. (2020). *Erken Çocukluk Dönemi Uyum ve Davranış Problemleri*. Baştemur, Ş. (Eds.). Yaşam Dönemleri ve Uyum Sorunları. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.

Baştemur, Ş., & Kurşuncu, M. A. (2020). Ruh Sağlığı Alanında Genetik ve Çevre: İkiz Araştırmaları. *AYNA Klinik Psikoloji Dergisi*, 7(1), 41-56. doi.org/10.31682/ayna.551379

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

Member, Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association

Board member, Ordu Branch, Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association (2019)

Member, Adolescence and Youth Research Association

PROJECTS:

EU Horizon 2020 (Position: Seconded Person), European Project RISEWISE: Women with disabilities and Social Engagement (GA690874)

AWARDS:

2017-2018 Graduate Courses Performance Award
METU/Turkey

H. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

1. GİRİŞ

Yakınlık, kişinin diğerleriyle kurduğu iletişimin doğal motivasyonlarından olup, köklerini bu en doğal ve evrensel ihtiyaçtan almaktadır. Bu ihtiyaç, anne ile henüz doğmamış yavrusu (fetus) arasındaki bedensel etkileşimle başlayıp, sonraki yakın ilişkileri için de temel oluşturmaktadır (Buber, 1970). Bireyler ailelerinden ayrılrsa ve yeni romantik ilişkiler kursalar bile, köken ailelerin de var olan ilişki sürecinin etkili yönlerini sürdürme eğiliminde olurlar (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). Bununla birlikte, bu ilişkilerdeki en paradoksal kavramlardan biri olarak “yakınlık”, altta yatan birçok ikilemi de beraberinde getirmektedir. Bu ikilemlerden biri de yaşamda ortak duyguları, felsefeyi, ritüelleri, hatıraları, mekanları ve materyalleri paylaşırken, duygusal olarak özgürlüğü ve özerkliği sürdürebilme arasındaki doğal çelişkidir (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988; Minuchin, 1974; Williamson, 1991). Aile, yakınlık paradoksundan kaynaklanan tüm belirtilerin (patolojik, sosyal, davranışsal vb.), yine ailenin duygusal ikliminde deneyimlendiği zorlayıcı bir bağlam haline gelebilmektedir. Bu çalışma, tam da bu nedenle, aile iklimindeki duygusal süreçlerin evlilik ilişkileri bağlamında incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır.

Duygusal bir birim olarak aile, üyelerinin karmaşık etkileşimlerini, davranışlarını, duygularını, kararlarını ve başkalarının beklentilerine ve ihtiyaçlarına nasıl tepki vereceklerini yönlendirebilmektedir (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). Kronik anksiyete (benliğin ayrılaşmasıyla birlikte), aile üyelerinin o duygusal birimde etkileşimlerini belirleyen iki önemli güçten biri olarak tanımlanmıştır. Aile sisteminde; benlik ayrılaşması (DoS) düzeyi ne kadar düşük olursa, kronik kaygı düzeyi o kadar artacak ve özellikle de stresli yaşam olayları (yani kriz, çatışmalar) karşısında ailenin duygusal iklimi etkiye çok daha açık hale gelecektir (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). Bu durum, çatışmalı bir ilişki ikliminin habercisi olur ve evlilikler de bu durumun en belirgin

örneklerden biridir. Eşler özellikle stresli yaşam dönemlerinde daha kaygılı hissettiklerinde, ironik olarak, daha fazla yakınlık ihtiyacının beraberinde getirdiği bir uzaklaşma eğilimi gösterebilmektedirler. Böylece, ilişkide kronikleşmeye başlayan kaygının üstesinden gelebilme pahasına, eşlerin birbirlerine çok daha az tolerans gösterdiği ve diğerinin değişmesini sağlamak için duygusal olarak daha reaktif oldukları bir süreç ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Böyle bir ilişkide değişmeyen eşsiz gerçeklik, bireysellik ve beraberlik arasındaki dengesizlik iken, eşler sıklıkla birbirlerinin yanlışlarına odaklanmaktadırlar (Bowen, 1978). Bu noktada, kronikleşen kaygının duygusal gücünün, çiftlerin evlilikleri ile ilgili doyum düzeylerini etkileyen çatışmalı ilişki kalıpları ile sonuçlanmaya başladığını varsaymak yanlış olmaz. Bu nedenle, evlilik çatışmaları ile ilgili konular alanyazında sıklıkla evlilik doyumu ile ilişkilendirilmiştir. Araştırmalar çoğunlukla çiftlerin çatışma çözme yaklaşımlarına odaklanmıştır (Greeff ve De Bruyne, 2000; Kurdek, 1995; Madden ve Janoff-Bulman, 1981).

Evlilik doyumu, çeşitli açılardan geniş bir şekilde tanımlanmıştır. Evliliğin, yetişkinlerin psikolojik ve fiziksel sağlığı üzerinde de kritik bir etkisi olduğu (Choi ve Marks, 2008; Whisman, 2007) evlilik çatışmasının daha yüksek düzeyde depresyona ve fonksiyonel bozukluğa neden olduğu bilinmektedir. Ayrıca, eşlerin olumsuz davranışları sağlık problemleriyle de ilişkili görünmektedir (Bookwala, 2005). Bu bulgular ışığında araştırmacılar, evlilik doyumunun bir değişken olarak, çekirdek ailenin duygusal süreçleriyle ilişkili işlevsel olmayan etkileşim örüntülerinin derinlemesine anlaşılabilmesinde önemli bir bağlam sağlayabileceğini görmüşlerdir. Cinsiyet, araştırmacıların evlilik doyumuyla ilişkili olarak üzerinde sıklıkla durdukları bir diğer belirgin değişkendir. Bununla birlikte, cinsiyet ve evlilik doyumu ile ilgili bulgular çelişkilidir. Özellikle meta-analiz çalışmaları dikkate alındığında, cinsiyet farklılıkları nadiren bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada ise evlilik doyumu, çekirdek ailenin duygusal sistemleri (NFEP) bağlamında incelenmiş olup, alanyazın doğrultusunda araştırmacı tarafından, öne sürülen modelin cinsiyet açısından farklılaşp farklılaşmadığı da çoklu-grup analizi yapılarak sınanmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın teorik çerçevelerinden biri de Bowen Aile Sistemi Teorisi'ne (BFST) dayanmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, tatmin edici evliliğin ne olduğunu tanımlamaktan çok, işlevsiz ailelerin ve evliliklerin yol açtığı düşünülen belirtilerin altında yatan nedenlerine odaklanmaktadır. Bowen (1978), çatışmaları, duygusal süreçler ve aile bağlamında sağlıklı, işlevsel ve tatmin edici ilişkilerin önündeki engeller olarak görmüştür. Sağlıklı ve işlevsel evliliklerin önündeki engeller de bu duygusal süreçlerin, diğer bir deyişle belirtilerin bir sonucu olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Evlilik doyumu ile ilişkili değişkenlerin incelenmesinde, benlik ayrımlaşması gibi konular araştırmacıların sıklıkla dikkatini çekmektedir. Çiftler evlilik bağlamında iyi tanımlanmış bir benliğe sahip olamadığında ortaya çıkan eleştiri, duygusal veya fiziksel geri çekilme ve birbirini değiştirmeye çalışma gibi davranış biçimleri, evlilikten duyulan hoşnutsuzluğun da nedenleri haline gelebilmektedir (Klever, 2009). Bu nedenle benlik ayrımlaşması, yakın ilişkilerde hayati bir rol oynamaktadır (Bowen, 1978; Kerr ve Bowen, 1988; Titelman, 1998). Evlilik bağlamında tanımlanan içiçe geçmiş (sahte) bir benlik ise kendiliğin kaybıyla birlikte işlevsizlik, stres ve hatta patolojinin kaynağı haline gelebilmektedir (Haber, 1990). Öte yandan, benlik ayrımlaşması, psikoloji alanındaki araştırmacılardan çok az ilgi gören ve evlilik uyumu ile ilişkili olabilecek temel faktörlerden biridir (Peleg, 2008).

Benlik ayrımlaşmasının göstergeleri iki yönlüdür: birincisi, önemli ilişkilerde özerkliği ve samimiyeti koruma, ikincisi ise bilişsel ve duygusal işlevsellik arasında bir denge sağlama yeteneğidir (Bowen, 1978). Bununla birlikte, benlik ayrımlaşmasının antitezi olarak da söz edilebilecek sahte-benliğin (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988) oluşumu köken ailede başlamaktadır. Sahte-benliğin ilişkilerdeki asıl etkisi, ilişkinin sürdürülmesi pahasına eşlerin (farkında olmaksızın), birbirlerine ilişkin talepleri veya birbirlerini değiştirme çabalarıyla kendiliklerini feda etmeye başlamaları ile gerçekleşmektedir (Bowen, 1978; Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). Bu duygusal sistem, bireysellik ve beraberliğin iki karşıt yaşam gücü olarak devam ettiği bir denge arayışını temsil etmektedir ve aile ilişkilerindeki dengesizliğin bir sonucu olarak psikopatoloji üretme potansiyeli bulunmaktadır (Bowen, 1978; Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). Bununla birlikte, bireylerin duygusal, fiziksel ve davranışsal işleyişini etkileyen kronik kaygı

geliştirmeleri durumunda; ilişki de bu durumdan etkilenebilecek bir bağlam haline dönüşmektedir (Papero, 2014). Bu nedenle, düşük düzeyli benlik ayrışmasına sahip bireyler, evlilik ilişkilerinde sorunlar yaşamaya daha eğilimlidirler (Boszormenyi-Nagy ve Spark, 1973).

Benlik ayrımlaşmasıyla ilişkili olarak, çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler, Bowen'ın (1978) yaklaşımında göze çarpan bir diğer kavramdır ve ailenin duygusal bağlamındaki uyumsuz baş etme yollarına atıfta bulunur. Bu ilişki kalıpları (a) evlilik çatışması, (b) duygusal kopma, (c) eşler arası belirtiler ve (d) çocuk odaklılıktır (Bowen, 1978; Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). *Evlilik çatışması*, birbirlerini kontrol etmeye çalışmanın semptomatik belirtileriyle ortaya çıkan veya ötekinde neyin yanlış olduğuna, eleştiriye veya alaycılığa odaklanan eşler arasında gerginlik ve kaygı düzeyinde artış ile ortaya çıkmaktadır. *Duygusal kopma*, ilişkideki yakınlığın yoğunluğunun aşırı veya yetersiz bir şekilde ortaya çıkması ve buna bağlı olarak ortaya çıkan kaygıyı azaltmak için fiziksel, duygusal kaçınma ve çekilmenin semptomatik belirtileriyle ortaya çıkmaktadır. *Eşler arası belirtiler*, ilişkideki uyum ile ilişkilidir. Bir eş, bireyselliğini/benliğini feda etme pahasına, evlilik gerilimini azaltmak için, daha alttan alıcı bir yaklaşım geliştirmiştir. Bu durumda, bireyselliğini feda eden eşin kaygı düzeyi artar; fiziksel, sosyal, zihinsel ve günlük işleyiş belirtileri açısından daha kırılgan bir hale gelir (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). *Çocuk odaklılık*, ebeveynlerin kaygılarının bir veya daha fazla çocuğa yansıtılmasıyla, ailedeki gerginliğin aile sistemindeki dolaşımını ifade eder. Ebeveynlerin çocuk(lar) üzerinde aşırı odaklanması, çocuğun sosyal, zihinsel ve hatta fiziksel belirtiler için daha kırılgan olmasına yol açabilir (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). Yukarıda değinilen alanyazın ve kavramsal açıklamalar doğrultusunda, benliğin ilişkilerde nasıl tanımlandığına odaklanmak, evlilikle ilgili konularda daha geniş bir bakış açısı sağlayabilmektedir.

Benlik kurguları da yakın ilişkilerin incelenmesinde araştırmacılar tarafından genellikle göz ardı edilen değişkenlerden biridir. Benlik kurgusu, “bireylerin benliği nasıl tanımlayıp anlamlandırdıklarını ifade eder” (Cross, Hardin ve Gercek-Swing, 2011, s.143). Araştırmacılar, ailede duygusal süreçler ve evlilik doyumunu arasındaki ilişkinin benlik kurguları (arabulucu değişkenler) aracılığıyla araştırılmasının ise bu

bağlamda daha spesifik bulgular sağlayacağını belirtmişlerdir. İmamoğlu'nun Dengeli Bütünleşme ve Farklılaşma (BID) Modeli (İmamoğlu, 1998 & 2003), Türk kültüründe benlik kurgularını açıklayan başlıca yaklaşımlardan biridir. Model, Bowen'ın benlik ayrımlaşması kavramına bir vurgu yapmaktadır. Her iki yaklaşım da insanlarda benliğin ayrımlaşma ihtiyacına (duygusal olarak geri çekilmeden) ve eş zamanlı olarak başkalarıyla ilişkili olma konusundaki doğal ve dengeli bir ihtiyaca vurgu yapmaktadır (Bowen, 1978; İmamoğlu, 1998). Bu model, benlik kurgusu kavramını açıklamada ilişkililik ve öz-gelişimsel olmak üzere iki ana yönelimi önermektedir (İmamoğlu, 1998). Evlilik, bağlam olarak önemli bir yakın ilişki türünü oluşturmaktadır. İlişkililik ve bireyselleşme yönelimleri, bireylerin temel psikolojik işleyiş örüntüsünü şekillendirme potansiyeline sahiptir. Çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler bu psikolojik işleve atıfta bulunduğu için, bu çalışma, evlilik doyumu, çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler ve benlik kurguları arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyerek alanyazına katkı sağlamayı amaçlamıştır.

1.2 Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu çalışma, çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler (eşler arası belirtiler, çocuk odaklılık, evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma), benlik kurguları (ilişkisellik ve öz-gelişimsel yönelimler) ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi tanımlayan bir modelin araştırılmasını amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın arka planını oluşturan teorik yaklaşımlar olarak dengeli bütünleşme farklılaşma modeli ve Bowen'ın kuşaklar arası aile sistemi kuramı tercih edilmiştir.

1.3 Araştırma Soruları

Model için ön görülen araştırma soruları şunlardır:

Araştırma Sorusu 1. Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formu Türk kültürü açısından geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracı mıdır?

Araştırma Sorusu 2. Evli bireylerin çekirdek ailelerinde duygusal süreçler (eşler arası belirtiler, çocuk odaklılık, evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma) ilişkisel, öz-gelişimsel yönelimler ve evlilik doyumları arasında nasıl bir ilişki vardır?

Araştırma Sorusu 2.1. Çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler (eşler arası belirtiler, çocuk odaklılık, evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma) ve evlilik doyumu arasında nasıl bir ilişki vardır?

Araştırma Sorusu 2.2. İlişkisel, öz-gelişimsel yönelimler ile evlilik doyumu arasında nasıl bir ilişki vardır?

Araştırma Sorusu 2.3. İlişkisel ve öz-gelişimsel yönelimler arasında nasıl bir ilişki vardır?

Araştırma Sorusu 2.4. İlişkisel ve öz-gelişimsel yönelimler, çekirdek ailenin duygusal süreçleri (eşler arası belirtiler, çocuk odaklılık, evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma) ile evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi dolaylı olarak nasıl etkilemektedir?

Araştırma Sorusu 3. Varsayılan araştırma modeli cinsiyet açısından farklılaşmakta mıdır?

1.4 Araştırmanın Önemi

Bu çalışma temel olarak Bowen yaklaşımı kavramlarının Türk kültürüne uygulanabilirliğini incelemeyi amaçlamamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Bowen ve İmamoğlu yaklaşımlarının değişkenleri arasındaki benzerliğin ve evlilik doyumuna etkisinin incelenmesinin Türk kültürü bağlamında çekirdek ailenin duygusal süreçlerinin anlaşılması açısından değerli bilgiler sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları (çocuklu ebeveynler) aile gelişim döngüleri açısından düşünüldüğünde, yukarıda sözü edilen belirtileri yaşamaya açık bir dönemdedir (Bowen, 1978). Bu nedenle, aileler ve evli bireylerle çalışan Türk psikolojik danışma alanındaki uygulayıcılar için çalışmanın sağlayacağı verilerin önemli olduğu

düşünülmektedir. Yüksek düzeyde bir benlik ayrımlaşması ile bu dönemi başarılı bir şekilde tamamlamış ailelerde, aile üyelerinin işlevsellik açısından daha az tutarsızlıklar yaşaması beklenmektedir. Bu nedenle, çocuklu ailelerde, aile üyelerinin işlevsellik düzeylerinde düşüş ile sonuçlanan süreçleri incelemek çok daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Sağlıklı aile ilişkileri için gerekli olan duygusal süreçlerin ve bunların evlilik doyumunu üzerindeki etkisinin ne derecede önemli olduğu, bu çalışmanın ortaya koymaya çalıştığı amaçlarındandır.

Her ne kadar benzerlikler taşısalar da benlik ayrımlaşması ve benlik kurguları yapı olarak belirgin farklılıklar taşımaktadır. Bowen (1978), kavramlarının, özellikle de benlik ayrımlaşmasının, evrensel bir niteliğe sahip olduğunu iddia etse de Erdem ve Safi (2018) bu kavramın farklı kültürel modellerde farklı öz-yapıların bir fonksiyonu olarak, farklı şekillerde geliştiğini belirtmektedir. Hem toplumsal hem de aile düzeylerindeki kültürel faktörler göz önüne alındığında, sağlıklı bir ayrımlaşma süreci daha olası görünmektedir. Benlik ayrımlaşması, çocuğun değeri ya da çocuk yetiştirme uygulamaları gibi kültürel normları da içine alan ve yine bu normlar tarafından şekillendirilen değişken ve dinamik bir sürecin, yani benlik yönelimlerini bir yönüyle yansımaları olarak da tanımlanabilir (Erdem ve Safi, 2018).

Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmada sınanan modelde İmamoğlu'nun benlik kurguları perspektifinden çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçlerin araştırılmasının, Bowen yaklaşımı kavramlarının kültürel uyumluluklarına ilişkin alanyazına da katkı sağlayabileceği de düşünülmektedir. Buna ek olarak, mevcut alanyazında da yukarıda belirtilen yapılar arasındaki ilişkiler yoluyla evlilik doyumunu araştıran çalışmalar açısından bir boşluk vardır ve bu çalışmanın konuya yeni bir bakış açısı getirmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının, köken aile değişkenleri ile ailede duygusal süreçler temel alınarak müdahale programları tasarlanmasında veya geliştirilmesinde alan uzmanlarına ve politika yapıcılara katkı sağlayabileceği de düşünülmektedir. Örneğin, Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı (ASPB), aile, çift ve boşanma danışmanlığının temel becerilerini geliştirmek amacıyla ruh sağlığı uzmanlarına çeşitli eğitimler vermektedir. Bu çalışmada ve ilgili alanyazında elde edilen sonuçlara dayanan öneriler, bu tür programların daha etkili hale getirilmesine yardımcı olabilir. Diğer

yandan bu çalışma, çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçleri ölçmek amacıyla geliştirilen Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formunu (FGI) Türkçeye uyarlayan ve psikometrik özelliklerini inceleyen ilk çalışmadır. İlgili ölçek, klinik dışı uygulamalarda çekirdek aile sürecini anlamak ve değerlendirmek isteyen alan uzmanları ve bu süreçleri araştırmak isteyen araştırmacılar için standartlaştırılmış bir genogram görüşme protokolü sağlamaktadır. Son olarak, varsayılan modeldeki cinsiyet farklılıklarını araştırmak için gelişmiş bir istatistiksel analiz yöntemi olan çoklu grup analizi kullanılmıştır. Bu tercihin, çalışmanın istatistiksel gücünü artırmasının yanı sıra, cinsiyet etkisi yönüyle de çalışma sonuçlarını daha rafine bir hale getirerek, alanyazına katkıda bulunacağı düşünülmektedir.

2. Yöntem

2.1 Araştırmanın Deseni

Bu araştırmanın deseni, ilişkisel araştırma deseni olarak belirlenmiştir. İlişkisel araştırma deseni, iki veya daha fazla değişken arasındaki ilişkileri herhangi bir manipülasyona gerek duymadan araştırmak olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Fraenkel, Wallen ve Huyn, 2012). Ayrıca araştırmada kullanılan analizler, çekirdek ailenin duygusal süreçlerine ilişkin değişkenler ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkide, ilişkisellik ve öz-gelişimsel yönelimlerin aracı rolünün araştırılması amacıyla Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesini (SEM) de içermektedir.

2.2 Örneklem

Ana çalışmanın verileri, evli ve çocuklu gönüllü katılımcılardan elde edilmiştir. Katılım kriterleri, katılımcıların bildirdiği evlilik sayısı dikkate alınmaksızın, katılımcıların heteroseksüel çekirdek bir ailenin parçası olması, en az bir çocuk sahibi olması ve çocuğun(ların) şimdiki evlilikte dünyaya gelmiş olması olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu kriterler, Carter ve McGoldrick'in küçük çocuklu aileler- yaşam döngüsü aşamaları ve Bowen'in teorisiyle de uyumludur. Bowen'in yaklaşımına göre kaygı/stres ve çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler (eşler arası belirtiler, çocuk odaklılık,

evlilik çatışması, duygusal kopma), heteroseksüel ve evli çiftlerde çocukların aileye katılımıyla daha yoğun yaşanmaktadır (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988). Bu örneklem kriterleri Platt ve Skowron'un (2013), araştırmasındaki katılımcı kriterleri ile de uyumludur. Veriler yalnızca çevrimiçi anket yoluyla toplanmış olup, bu yolla değerlendirmenin mevcut çalışmanın kapsamını genişletmesi ve çok daha kabul edilebilir geçerlik-güvenirlik değerlerine ulaşması amaçlanmıştır. Çevrimiçi anket bağlantısını kullanarak Türkiye'nin farklı şehirlerinde yaşayan 647 evli birey çalışmaya katılmıştır. Katılım kriterlerini karşılamayan 29 katılımcı veri seti dışında bırakıldığında, toplam örneklem büyüklüğü 618 olarak gerçekleşmiştir. Katılımcıların çoğunlukla Ordu (%19,6), Denizli (%16), Ankara (%13,3), İstanbul (%7,3), İzmir (%6,0), Van (%3,6), Antalya (%2,8), Gaziantep (%2,3), Kayseri (%2,3), Konya (%2,1) ve geri kalan diğer bazı şehirlerden (ör. Kocaeli, Adana, Sakarya, Adana, Bursa, Mersin, Giresun vb.) olduğu gözlenmiştir. Ana çalışmanın örneklemini 407 kadın (%65,9) ve 211 erkek, (%34,1) oluşturmuştur. Ana çalışmadaki örneklemin oldukça eğitilmiş bir profili temsil ettiği görülmektedir. Katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğu mesleki yüksek öğrenim (n = 60, %9,7), üniversite (n = 297, %48,1) veya yüksek lisans / doktora derecelerine (n = 115, %18,6) sahiptir.

2.3 Veri Toplama Süreci

Bu tez çalışması için (pilot ve ana çalışma olmak üzere) iki ayrı veri toplama süreci yürütülmüştür. Her iki çalışmada da veriler aynı yöntemler kullanılarak 2019 yılı içinde önce pilot çalışma verileri olacak şekilde sırayla toplanmıştır. Her iki çalışmada da ana katılım kriterleri, katılımcıların bildirdiği evlilik sayısı dikkate alınmaksızın, en az bir çocuklu ve evli olmaktır. Bununla birlikte, çocuk(lar), katılımcıların şu anki evliliklerinden dünyaya gelmiş olmalıdır. Katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır (çevrimiçi anket formunun ilk sayfasında bilgilendirilmiş bir onay formu yer almaktadır) ve katılımcılardan hiçbir tanımlayıcı bilgi (ad/soyadı, e-posta adresi, telefon numarası) talep edilmemiştir. Veri toplama süreci, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ) Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi'nden gerekli izin alındıktan sonra başlamıştır.

Arařtırmacılar, çeřitli nedenlerle yalnızca çevrimiçi deęerlendirme araçlarını (Google form) kullanarak veri toplamışlardır. Bu yolla çalışmaya katılımın, kâğıt kalem yoluyla katılıma kıyasla çok daha yaygın olacağını ve çalışmaya katılmak isteyip de mesafe nedeniyle katılamayan ya da yazılı form aracılığıyla çalışmaya katılmayı tercih etmeyen gönüllülere de daha kolay ulaşılabileceęi düşünölmüştür.

2.4 Veri Toplama Araçları

Bu çalışmada, Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formu, Dengeli Bütünleşme-Ayrışma Ölçeęi, İlişki Deęerlendirme Ölçeęi ve demografik bilgi formundan oluşan bir anket paketi uygulanmıştır.

Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formu

Ölçek, ailelerde duygusal süreçlerin deęerlendirilmesi amacıyla, 75 dakikalık standardize bir görüşme formu olarak Platt ve Skowron (2013) tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda yazarlar hem aile deęerlendirme diyagramını (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988) hem de geleneksel aile dizimi formatını (McGoldrick, Gerson ve Petry, 2008) kullanmışlardır. Ölçek, temelde 84 nitel ve 68 nicel maddeden oluşmuştur. Bununla birlikte, Platt ve Skowron (2013) ölçeęin psikometrik özelliklerini deęerlendirmek için yaptıkları çalışmalarında sadece nicel maddeleri kullanmışlardır. Ölçeęin nihai biçimi çekirdek aile versiyonundan eşler arası belirtiler, çocuk odaklılık, evlilik çatışmaları ve köken aile versiyonundan da duygusal kopma boyutları dahil edilerek oluşturulmuştur. Bununla birlikte, çocuk odaklılık boyutu düşük güvenilirlik deęeri nedeniyle (Cronbach's $\alpha = .51$) çalışmadan çıkarılmıştır. Ölçeęin son hali, eşler arası belirtiler (12 madde, $\alpha = .81$), duygusal kopma (11 madde, $\alpha = .82$) evlilik çatışması (6 madde, $\alpha = .86$) boyutlarından oluşmuştur. Kuramsal olarak, evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma ikili ilişkiler üzerinde odaklanırken, eşler arası belirtiler ve çocuk odaklılık evlilik içindeki stresin dięer aile üyelerine projeksiyonu ile tanımlanmaktadır (Józefczyk, 2017). Ölçek, yakın zamanda Józefczyk (2017) tarafından 300 evli kadın katılımcı ile Lehçeye uyarlanmıştır. Çalışmada üç farklı model, doğrulayıcı faktör analizleri (DFA) yoluyla test edilmiştir

ve bulgular dört faktörlü bir yapı ortaya koymuştur. Eşler arası belirtiler iki boyuta ayrılmıştır (*es-önem*; fiziksel, duygusal, sosyal işlevsellik ve *es-yoğunluk*; etkiler ve karşılaşılan zorluklar). Çocuk odaklılık tek bir faktörde yer alırken, duygusal kopma ve evlilik çatışması birlikte tek bir faktör altında birleşmiştir. Cronbach alfa değerleri boyutlar için .78 ile 91. arasında değişkenlik göstermiştir. Józefczyk (2017) eşler arası belirtileri iki boyuta (*es-önem* ve *es-yoğunluk*) bölmenin, eşler arasındaki belirtilerin değerlendirilmesinde ölçeği daha güçlü hale getirdiğini varsaymıştır. Buna ek olarak, duygusal kopma ve evlilik çatışması kuramsal olarak Bowen yaklaşımının iki farklı yapısıdır; çünkü, her ikisi de evlilikteki duygusal süreçlere odaklanmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, ölçeğin Lehçe versiyonunda bu yapılar arasında yüksek bir karşılıklı ilişki de ($r = .75, p < 0.01$) bulunmuştur. Józefczyk (2017) duygusal temas arayışı peşinde iki kutuplu bir süreklilik çizgisine dikkat çekmektedir. Evlilik çatışmaları, bir uçta işlevsiz çatışma formlarını (ses yükselmesi, şiddet vb.) temsil ederken, çekirdek ailedeki duygusal süreçlerden duyulan hoşnutsuzluk, duygusal mesafe hissine yol açabilmekte ve eşler arasında bir kaçınma tercihi olarak işlev görebilmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu tez çalışmasında araştırmacı, iki ayrı modelin psikometrik özelliklerini madde parselleme yöntemiyle incelemeyi seçmiştir. İlk model, Józefczyk'in (2017) çalışması sonucunda ortaya çıkan model 2 temel alınarak faktör yapısını test etmektir. Józefczyk (2017), açımlayıcı faktör analizi sonucunda elde ettiği Model 2'de evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopmanın birleşimi ile ortaya çıkan yeni faktörü 'evlilik ilişkisi' olarak adlandırmayı tercih etse de bu faktörler eşler arasındaki duygusal temasın işlevsiz bir mekanizmasını yansıttığından, bu çalışmada araştırmacılar boyutları eşler arası belirtiler-önem, eşler arası belirtiler-yoğunluk, çocuk odaklılık ve duygusal temas (evlilik çatışması + duygusal kopma) olarak adlandırmayı tercih etmiştir. Orijinal çalışmada olduğu gibi, mevcut çalışmada da sadece kapalı uçlu Likert tipi sorular kullanılmıştır. Son olarak, araştırmacılar, madde düzeyinde beş faktörlü yapıyı (*es-önem*; 6 madde, *es-yoğunluk*; 6 madde, çocuk odaklılık; 8 madde, evlilik doyumu; 7 madde ve duygusal kopma; 6 madde) incelemek için ikinci bir modeli de denemiştir. Uyarlama çalışması sonucunda, ölçeğin Türkiye'deki evli bireyler için çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçlerin ölçümünde geçerli ve güvenilir bir araç olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, test edilen modeller içinde en iyi uyum değerleri model 1'in (*es-önem*, *es-yoğunluk*, çocuk odaklılık ve duygusal kopma) test edilmesiyle

ortaya çıkmıştır. Ölçekten çocuk odaklılık boyutu için alınabilecek en düşük puan 8 ve evlilik çatışması için 7'dir. Her iki eşler arası belirtiler (önem ve yoğunluk) boyutundan alınabilecek en düşük puan ise 6'dır. Diğer taraftan eşler arası belirtiler (önem ve yoğunluk) ve duygusal kopma boyutları için mümkün olan en yüksek puan 30'dur. Çocuk odaklılık için en yüksek puan 40 ve evlilik çatışması için de 35'dir.

Dengeli Bütünleşme-Ayrışma Ölçeği

Ölçek, İmamoğlu (1998, 2003) tarafından, bireylerin dengeli bütünleşme ve ayrışma düzeylerini değerlendirmek amacıyla, 29 maddeden oluşan 5'li Likert tipi bir ölçek olarak geliştirilmiştir. Ölçeğin ilk boyutu, 16 maddeden oluşan ilişkisellik yönelimidir. Bu boyuttan alınabilecek en düşük puan 16 ve en yüksek puan ise 80'dir. Bu boyuttaki yüksek puanlar daha yüksek bir ilişkililik düzeyini ifade eder. Ölçeğin ikinci boyutu, 13 maddeden oluşan öz-gelişimsel yönelimdir. Bu boyuttan alınabilecek en düşük puan 13 ve en yüksek puan ise 65'dir. Bu boyuttaki yüksek puanlar, bireylerin öz potansiyellerini ve kendilerini gerçekleştirme eğilimini gösteren, daha yüksek bir bireyselleşme düzeyini ifade eder. Bu iki ana faktörde kesme noktası olarak medyan puanlar kullanılarak ölçek, her bir boyuttaki yüksek ve düşük uç noktaların birleşimi ile dört alt ölçeğe ayrılabilir: Kopuk-kalıplaşmış (dengesiz), kopuk-kendileşmiş (ayrışık), ilişkili-kalıplaşmış (bütünleşik) ve ilişkili-kendileşmiş (dengeli). Üniversite öğrencilerinden oluşan bir örnekleme, ölçeğin Cronbach alfa değerleri ilişkisellik yönelimi boyutu için .91, öz-gelişimsel yönelimi boyutu için .74 ve tüm ölçek için .83 olarak bulunmuştur (İmamoğlu, 1998). Gündoğdu (2007) ise evli bireylerden oluşan bir örnekleme ilişkisellik için Cronbach alfa değerlerini .84, öz-gelişimsel yönelimi için .70 ve tüm ölçek için .79 olarak bulmuştur. Ana çalışma kapsamında ölçek, katılımcıların benlik kurgularını değerlendirme amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Ölçeğin tümünün Cronbach alfa değeri .77, McDonalds Omega değeri ise .78 olarak bulunmuştur.

İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği

Ölçek, ilişki/evlilik memnuniyetini değerlendirmek amacıyla, Hendrick (1981) tarafından Evlilik Değerlendirme Anketi (MAQ) olarak geliştirilmiş ve sonrasında romantik ilişkiler için de uygulanabilir olması amacıyla yeniden düzenlenmiştir (Hendrick, 1988). Ölçeğin odağının romantik ilişkiler olarak genişletildiği bu versiyonda, ‘eş’ kelimesi ‘partner’ ve ‘evlilik’ kelimesi de ‘ilişki’ olarak değiştirilerek ölçeğin psikometrik özellikleri incelenmiştir. Ölçek 5'li Likert tipindedir ve ikisi ters kodlanan (4. ve 7. maddeler) toplamda 7 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ölçekten alınan puanlar 7 ile 35 arasında değişmektedir. Yüksek puanlar daha fazla ilişki memnuniyetini göstermektedir. Ölçek tek faktörlü bir yapıya sahiptir ve bu tek faktör varyansın %57'sini açıklamaktadır. Ölçeğin iç tutarlılık katsayısı Hendrick'in (1988) çalışmasında .86 olarak bulunmuştur. Türkçeye uyarlama çalışmasında (Curun, 2001) da tek faktörlü yapı %52 varyans ile tekrarlanmış ve iç tutarlılık katsayısı yine .86 olarak bulunmuştur. Mevcut çalışmada bu ölçek, ana çalışmadaki katılımcıların evlilik doyum düzeylerini değerlendirmek için kullanılmıştır. Ölçek için hem Cronbach alfa değeri hem de McDonalds Omega değeri .93 olarak bulunmuştur.

Kişisel Bilgi Formu

Bu form araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilerek hem pilot hem de ana çalışmada uygulanmıştır. Form, katılımcıların demografik (cinsiyet, yaş, medeni durum, eğitim düzeyi) ve ilişki bilgilerini (örneğin evlilik sayısı, uzunluğu, çocuk sayısı, çocukların yaşları, çocukların şu anki evliliklerinde doğup doğmadıkları) içeren sorulardan oluşmuştur.

2.4 Çalışmanın Sınırlılıkları

Bu çalışmada katılımcıları belirlemek için kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme yöntemi kullanıldığından çalışma bulgularının genellenebilirliği sınırlılık taşımaktadır. Bunun yanında, ilişki bir çalışma olmasından dolayı değişkenler arasında neden sonuç ilişkisi elde edilememektedir. Ayrıca, kesitsel bir çalışma olması, yine değişkenler

arasındaki nedenselliğe ilişkin çıkarımları mümkün kılmamaktadır. Bu çalışmadaki ölçeklerin yapısının öz bildirimine dayalı olması da bir başka sınırlılıktır. Ayrıca, bireylerin çekirdek aile duygusal süreçlerine ilişkin deneyimlerini daha derinlemesine anlayabilmek için katılımcıların eşlerinden ve köken aile üyelerinden (benlik ayrılaşmasının biçimlendiği bağlam olması nedeniyle) veri toplanamamış olması da bir diğer sınırlılıktır. Son olarak, katılımcılar arasındaki cinsiyet (genellikle erkek katılımcıların çalışmaya katılma konusundaki isteksizlikleri nedeniyle) ve eğitim düzeyi (yüksek eğitilmiş) dağılımındaki dengesizlik de sonuçların genellenebilirliği açısından sınırlılık olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

2.4 Veri Analizi

Araştırmada çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçler, benlik kurguları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkilerin belirlenebilmesi amacıyla oluşturulan kuramsal modelin Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) ile analizi AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012) ve JASP Team (2019) programları kullanılarak, öncesinde de gerekli varsayımların kontrolü sağlanarak test edilmiştir.

3. Bulgular

Betimsel analiz sonuçları, örneklemin öz-gelişimsel yönelime göre daha yüksek düzeyde ilişkisellik yönelimi taşıdığını göstermiştir. Çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki iki değişkenli korelasyonlar büyük ölçüde anlamlı sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, beklentilerin aksine, öz-gelişimsel yönelim modeldeki hiçbir değişkenle anlamlı bir korelasyon üretememiştir. Cinsiyetin evlilik doyumu üzerindeki etkisi önemli bir faktör olarak değerlendirilmiş ve cinsiyet farklılığının incelenmesine yönelik çoklu-grup doğrulayıcı faktör analizi uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar cinsiyete göre modelin ölçüm değişmezliğinin sağlandığını (Δ CFI ve Δ TLI $<.01$) ortaya koyduğundan önerilen yapısal modelin test edilmesine tek gruplu yapısal model testi ile devam edilmesine karar verilmiştir.

Doğrudan etkiler incelendiğinde, sadece es-önem ($\beta = .15, p < .01$) ve duygusal temas ($\beta = -.45, p < .01$) değişkenlerinin ilişkisellik yönelimi (aracı değişken) üzerinde doğrudan etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur. Es-yoğunluk ($\beta = .05, p > .05$) ve çocuk odaklılık ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$) değişkenlerinin ilişkisellik yönelimi üzerinde doğrudan etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değildir. Bununla birlikte, öz-gelişimsel yönelim (aracı değişken) üzerinde hiçbir değişkenin etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmamıştır: es-önem ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$), es -yoğunluk ($\beta = -.06, p > .05$), çocuk odaklılık ($\beta = .12, p > .05$) ve duygusal temas ($\beta = .16, p > .05$). İlişkisellik yönelimi aracı değişkeninin, öz-gelişimsel yönelim (aracı değişken) değişkenine doğrudan etkisi de istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur ($\beta = .36, p < .01$). Aracı değişkenlerin evlilik doyumu üzerindeki doğrudan etkileri de istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olup, ilişkisellik yönelimi için negatif ($\beta = -.08, p < .01$) ve öz-gelişimsel yönelim için de pozitif ($\beta = .09, p < .01$) bir etki bulunmuştur. İçsel değişkenlerden es-önem ($\beta = .11, p < .01$) ve duygusal temas ($\beta = -.83, p < .01$) değişkenlerinin evlilik doyumu üzerindeki doğrudan etkileri istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Bununla birlikte, es-yoğunluk ($\beta = .04, p > .05$) ve çocuğa odaklanma ($\beta = .01, p > .05$) değişkenlerinin evlilik doyumu üzerindeki doğrudan etkileri istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır.

Dolaylı etkiler incelendiğinde, es-önem ($\beta = .08, p < .05$) ve duygusal temas ($\beta = -.07, p < .01$) değişkenlerinin ilişkisellik yönelimi aracılığıyla evlilik doyumu üzerindeki dolaylı etkileri istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olarak bulunmuştur. Es-yoğunluk ($\beta = .02, p > .05$) ve çocuk odaklılık ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$) değişkenlerinin ilişkisellik yönelimi aracılığıyla evlilik doyumu üzerindeki dolaylı etkileri ise istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değildir. İlginç bir şekilde, istatistiksel olarak hiçbir değişken üzerinde anlamlı doğrudan etkisi bulunmamasına rağmen, çocuk odaklılık ($\beta = -.02, p < .05$) değişkeninin öz-gelişimsel yönelim aracılığıyla evlilik doyumu üzerindeki dolaylı etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur. Es-yoğunluk ($\beta = .02, p > .05$), çocuk odaklılık ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$) ve duygusal temas ($\beta = -.02, p > .05$) değişkenlerinin öz-gelişimsel yönelim aracılığıyla evlilik doyumu üzerindeki dolaylı etkileri ise istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değildir. Son olarak, duygusal temas ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişki, ilişkisellik ve öz-gelişimsel yönelimlerin dolaylı aracılığıyla (birlikte) istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ve pozitif bulunmuştur ($\beta = .02, p < .05$). Çoklu korelasyon

katsayıları, çekirdek aile duygusal süreç değişkenlerinin ve benlik kurgularının, evlilik doyumundaki varyansın %84'ünü açıkladığını ortaya koymuştur.

4. Tartışma

4.1 Doğrudan Etkilerin Tartışılması

Es-önem ve es-yoğunluk, her ne kadar kuramsal olarak örtüşen yapılar olsa da bu çalışma kapsamında (Polonya versiyonu temel alındığında) ayrı değişkenler olarak kullanılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, eşler arası belirtilerden sadece es-öneminin, evlilik doyumu ve ilişkisel yönelime (aracı) doğrudan etkisi bulunmuştur. Öte yandan, es-yoğunluğun ne evlilik doyumuna ne de ilişkisel yönelime doğrudan ve anlamlı bir etkisi olmamıştır. Eşlerde işlevsellik ile ilgili belirtiler arttığında (es-önemi), evlilik doyumunun da arttığı görülmüştür. Bu bulguların, Kerr ve Bowen (1988) tarafından da ifade edildiği gibi, her iki eşin de eşit derecede farklılaşmamış olduğunun ve bir eşin daha bağımlı ve işlevsiz hale gelmesi pahasına uyumu korumaya devam etmeye çalışmasının bir sonucu olabileceği düşünülmüştür. Dolayısıyla bu bulgu eşler arasında iç içe geçmiş ikili bir ilişki örüntüsüne işaret ediyor olabilir. Eşlerden birinin alttan alıcı pozisyonu/kendinden feragati veya çok daha fazla sorumluluk (ilişkideki dengenin sürdürülebilmesi amacıyla daha fazla çaba gösteren taraf olmak) alıyor olması ilişkide fiziksel, duygusal ve sosyal belirtiler gelişmesine neden olabilmektedir; çünkü kaygı ancak bir noktaya kadar bu yolla tolere edilebilmektedir (Kerr ve Bowen, 1988).

Böyle bir örüntü, bir yandan da evlilik problemlerini görmezden gelmek anlamına gelmektedir (Haley, 2017). Bu iç içe geçmiş ilişki biçimi, eşlerdeki belirtilerle ilişkili olarak 'sahte benlik' kavramı (Bowen, 1976) ile açıklanabilir. Köken ailedeki deneyimler sonucunda geliştirilen sahte benlik, ilişkilerde eşlerin kendilerinden feragat etmeyi tercih etmeye başlamaları veya diğer eşin değişmesi talebiyle yakın ilişkilere genelleştirilir (Bowen, 1978).

Benzer bir şekilde, 'sahte yakınlık' (Orlofsky, Marcia ve Lesser, 1973), bireyin kendisini ilişkiye derinlemesine adamadaki başarısızlığı anlamına gelmektedir. Sahte-yakınlık içindeki eşler, otantik ve gerçek bir ilişki duygusuna sahip olmamalarına rağmen, çeşitli nedenlerle evliliklerini sürdürmeyi tercih edebilirler (Waring, 2016). Bu sahte yakınlığı, örneğin, eşlerin biyolojik nedenleri olmamasına rağmen fiziksel yakınmalarının (semptomlar) olduğu ve bir yandan da ilişkilerini tatmin edici ya da çatışmadan bağımsız olarak algıladıkları ilişkiler bağlamında değerlendirmek de mümkündür. Bir bakıma eşler, fiziksel, sosyal ve günlük işleyişlerine ilişkin belirtileri, yaşadıkları ciddi duygusal güçlüklerle ve evliliklerinde karşılaştıkları problemlerle başa çıkma yöntemi (sahte bir yakınlık hissiyle) olarak görüyor olabilirler (Waring, 1983). Çiftler evlilikleri sırasında ilişkilerine dair sorunlar yaşamaktadırlar, ancak asıl mesele sorunların üstesinden gelmek için kullandıkları baş etme yöntemleri gibi görünmektedir. Örneğin, öfke ve çatışma birçok güç mücadelesinin kaynağıdır ve bu sorunlarla baş etmeyi (özellikle yeni evliliklerde) ertelemek yerine yüzleşmek gerekmektedir (Gottman, 1995). Dolayısıyla, yakın ilişkilerde belirtilerin (fiziksel, duygusal, sosyal vb.) nedenleri daha iyi anlaşıldığında, es-önem ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki pozitif ilişki de anlamlı bir hale gelmektedir. Örneğin, Flor, Turk ve Scholz (1987) kronik ağrı hastalarını, eşlerini ve bir kontrol grubunu karşılaştırmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, kronik hastalığın evlilik doyumu üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktır. Sonuçlar, evlilik uyumu ile genel ağrı düzeyleri arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, bu hastalar daha yüksek depresif duygu durum düzeylerinde daha fazla ağrı bildirmiştir. Bulgular, ağrı semptomlarının hastalar ve eşleri (ikili ilişkilerinde) için sorunlarıyla başa çıkma biçimi olduğu yönünde değerlendirilmiştir.

Bu çalışmada, duygusal temas (duygusal kopma + evlilik çatışması), evlilik doyumunun en güçlü yordayıcısı olarak bulunmuştur. Evli bireyler duygusal temasın işlevsiz örüntüsüne daha az maruz kaldıklarında daha fazla evlilik doyumu rapor etmişlerdir. Bu bulgu, duygusal kopmanın evlilik doyumunun önemli bir yordayıcısı olduğunu gösteren önceki çalışmaların bulgularıyla benzerdir. Örneğin, Peleg (2008) evliliklerinin çeşitli aşamalarında bulunan çiftlerle yaptığı çalışmada duygusal kopma ve evlilik memnuniyeti arasında negatif bir ilişki bulmuştur. Benzer şekilde, daha az duygusal tepkisellik ve duygusal kopma yaşayan evli bireyler daha yüksek

benlik ayrılaşması bildirmişler ve daha fazla ilişki doyumu yaşamışlardır (Skowron ve Friedlander, 1998). Duygusal temas, kronik kaygının hem çatışmayı hem de duygusal mesafeyi yoğun bir şekilde beslediği yakınlık arayışının iki ucunu yansıtmaktadır. Bu nedenle, duygusal temas arayışı olarak evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma, eşlerin kendi ilişkilerine özgü ilişkisel sorunlarının altında yatan sorunlar üzerinde çaba göstermeleri gereken farklı yapılar haline gelir, aksi takdirde evlilik doyumlarında azalma riski vardır.

4.2 Dolaylı Etkilerin Tartışılması

Çalışmanın dikkat çekici sonuçlardan biri, çocuk odaklılık ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkinin öz-gelişimsel yönelimin tam aracılığıyla açıklanmasıdır. Çalışmanın bulguları, eşlerin daha az çocuk odaklılık deneyimledikleri aile bağlarında kendi öz-gelişimsel potansiyellerini daha fazla gerçekleştirdiğini ve daha fazla evlilik doyumu yaşadıklarını göstermektedir. Çocuk odaklılık ‘aşırı koruyuculuk’, ‘çocuklar üzerine çok fazla odaklanma’ ve ‘çocuklarla ilgili konuların eşler arasında çatışma sebebi olması’ gibi bileşenleri içerir. Bu süreçler kuramsal olarak çocukların aile üçgenleşmesindeki (çocuklarla ilgili konulara odaklanılarak kronik evlilik çatışmalarının göz ardı edilmesi) konumlarıyla ilişkilendirilebilir. Çalışma (ölçeğin faktör yapısına ilişkin) bulguları da çocuk odaklılık boyutunun, çocuklarla ilgili konuların evlilik çatışmasına neden olmasıyla daha fazla ilişkilendirildiğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle, bu bulgu Türk aile yapısı ve çocuk yetiştirme biçimleri açısından tartışıldığında daha anlaşılır olacaktır.

Çocuk yetiştirme biçimleri söz konusu olduğunda, üç kuşak geleneksel ve modern (kentsel) orta sınıf Türk aileleri arasında hala bazı ortak faktörler olduğu düşünülmektedir. En göze çarpan güncel eğilimlerden biri; çocukların çok daha fazla bireysellik için teşvik edilirken, ailenin bu bireysellikten daha önemli olduğuna ilişkin vurgunun da devam ediyor olmasıdır (Sunar, 2002). Ebeveynlerin disiplin uygulamaları da kırsal, geleneksel ve kentleşmiş iyi eğitilmiş Türk aileleri arasında değişiklik göstermektedir. Örneğin, kırsal kesimdeki Türk annelerin çocuklarında görmek istedikleri en önemli özellik itaatkarlıktır. Bununla birlikte, kentsel orta ve üst

sınıflarda daha demokratik ebeveyn tutumları ve daha az fiziksel cezalar görülmektedir (Fişek, 1982; Kağıtçıbaşı, Sunar ve Bekman, 1988, 2001).

Geleneksel aileler daha fazla tutarsız disiplin yöntemleri kullanırken (Helling, 1996; Olson, 1982), kentsel Türk ailelerinin de aile içinde iyi tanımlanmış sınırlar ve kurallar koymakta zorlandıkları görülmektedir (Sunar, 2002). Bu nedenle de Türk ailelerinin çocuk yetiştirme pratikleri açısından kafa karışıklıkları yaşadıkları değerlendirilebilir. Türk ebeveynlerin bu kafa karıştırıcı ve geçirgen disiplin tutumları, aile üyeleri arasında daha fazla duygusal bağımlılık ortaya çıkarabilmektedir. Aile bireylerinin/diğerlerinin beklentileri daha fazla normatif kalıplar haline gelebilmektedir (Sunar ve Fişek, 2005). Kentli Türk ailelerinin çocuklarıyla daha az kuşaklar arası hiyerarşik sınırlara sahip olma çabaları, yakınlık, bağlılık, özerklik, kontrol vb. süreçleri dengeli bir biçimde sürdürmede güçlük çekmeleri ile neticelenebilmektedir. Bu dengesizlik ise sıklıkla evlilik/aile çatışmalarına yol açabilmektedir (Fişek ve Scherler, 1996).

Bu çalışma, kendilerini çok daha bireyci bir aile bağlamında tanımlamanın ve çocuk odaklıktan kaçınmanın bir sonucu olarak ebeveynlerin evliliklerinden de daha fazla doyum sağladıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Katılımcıların (mevcut örneklemdaki) evlilikleri (duygusal temas, eşlerdeki belirtiler) söz konusu olduğunda, ilişkisellik yönelimiyle (benlik kurgusu) kendiliklerini tanımlamayı tercih ettikleri görülmektedir.

Öte yandan, aynı katılımcılar, çocuklarıyla ilgili konular gündeme geldiğinde sosyal (veya köken ailelerin) beklentilerin (referans noktası olarak) etkisi altında kalmadan, kişinin öz-potansiyelini gerçekleştirmesine yönelik daha bireyci kalıpları vurgulamayı tercih etmektedirler. Duygusal bağımlılık, daha fazla bir bireyci yaklaşımın ve öz-gelişimsel yönelimin önündeki engellerden biri olarak görünmektedir. Kentli ebeveynler kendilerini (çocuk yetiştirmede) daha bireyci bir yönelimle tanımlamaya çalışsalar da birçoğunun ilişkisellik yöneliminin egemen olduğu bir bağlam içinde büyüdükleri varsayılabilir. Bu nedenle, önlerinde (geçmiş deneyimlerinde) gözlemleyebilecekleri herhangi rol modelleri olmadığından (Sunar ve Fişek, 2005)

daha bireyci bir yaklaşımla (ebeveynliklerinde) çocuk yetiştirme konusunda zorlandıkları düşünülebilir.

Yine de (literatüre uygun olarak) kendilerini daha bireyci bir yönelimle tanımlayan kentli Türk ebeveynlerinin daha fazla evlilik doyumu yaşadıkları görülmektedir. Katılımcılar, çocuk odaklı tutumda azalmanın sonucu olarak, kendi potansiyellerini daha fazla gerçekleştirebileceklerinin de daha fazla farkına varmış olabilirler. Sonuç olarak, katılımcılar evliliklerinde (duygusal temas ve eşlerdeki belirtiler) ilişkisellik yönelimiyle kendiliklerini tanımlamayı tercih ederken, çocukları söz konusu olduğunda sosyal beklentilerin ötesine geçerek daha bireyci bir yönelimi vurgulamayı tercih etmişlerdir.

Bunun yanında, es-önemi ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki pozitif ilişki ilişkisellik yöneliminin (benlik kurgusu) modele dahil edilmesi ile daha da pekişmiştir. İlişkisellik yöneliminin aracı etkisi, es-önemi ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki (pozitif) ilişkinin yönünü de değiştirmemiştir, yine de bu dolaylı etki marjinal olarak anlamlıdır ve dikkatle yorumlanması gerekir. Buna göre, eşlerin ilişkileriyle ilgili sorunlarının üstesinden gelmek için geliştirdikleri belirtiler (fiziksel, duygusal, sosyal ve günlük işleyiş) ilişkisellik yöneliminin hâkim olduğu aile/evlilik bağlamında daha belirgin bir hale gelebilmektedir.

Duygusal temasın evlilik doyumu üzerindeki doğrudan etkisi de benzer bir şekilde ilişkisellik yöneliminin modele dahil olmasıyla pekişmiştir ve duygusal temas ile evlilik doyumu (doğrudan etki) arasındaki (negatif) ilişkinin yönü değişmemiştir. Böyle bir örüntü, bu çalışmada düşük düzey bir benlik ayrışmasını güçlü bir şekilde ifade etmektedir. Bu durum, ilişkiselliğin ve duygusal olarak birbirine bağımlılığın ön plana çıktığı bir kültürde yetişen bireyler (katılımcılar) için (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1985, 1990, 1996) beklenmedik değildir. Çocuğun değeri, ilişkisellik yönelimi ile ilgili olarak, kentli Türk ailelerindeki en belirgin kültürel uygulamalardan biridir. Örneğin, kız çocuklarının erkeklere göre daha fazla tercih edilmeye başlanmasının nedeni, ileriye dönük bir duygusal destek beklentisinden ve annelerin yaşlılıkları için kızlarını güvence olarak görüyor olmalarından kaynaklanıyor görülmektedir (Ataca ve Sunar,

1999). Ayrıca, kişisel özerklik, Türk ailesi bağlamında daha az önemliken (Fişek, 1982; Levi, 1994) iç içe geçmiş ilişki örüntüleri Türk aileleri için bir norm olarak kabul edilmektedir (Sunar ve Fişek, 2005). Kentli ebeveynlerin, nesiller arası hiyerarşik sınırların daha az olduğu daha bireyci bir yönelime uyum sağlamalarındaki zorluk, daha önce belirtildiği gibi, evlilik çatışmalarına da yol açabilmektedir (Fişek ve Scherler, 1996). Bu çalışmanın bulguları, bu bağlamda, duygusal kopma ve evlilik çatışması gibi işlevsiz örüntülerin, iyi eğitilmiş, orta sınıf evli bireyler için dikkate alınması gereken risk faktörleri olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, öz-gelişimsel yönelimin (benlik kurgusu); duygusal temas ve evlilik doyumunu arasındaki ilişkiyi ilişkisellik yöneliminin (benlik kurgusu) aracı rolüyle inceleyen yola (analize) dahil edilmesiyle ilişkinin yönü de (negatiften pozitif doğru) değişmiştir. Bu durum, evli bireylerin kendi öz potansiyellerini gerçekleştirme çabasında (bireyci yönelim) daha tatmin edici evlilik ilişkilerine doğru bir eğilim gösterdikleri anlamına gelmektedir.

Kuramsal olarak, her iki benlik kurgusunun katılımcıların yüksek düzeyde benlik ayrımlaşması ortaya koyabilmeleri için tamamlayıcı bir rol oynamaları beklenebilir. Bu durum, öz-gelişimsel ve ilişkisellik yönelimlerinin birlikte dengeli ve tamamlayıcı yapılar oldukları fikriyle de tutarlıdır (İmamoğlu, 2003). Bununla birlikte, mevcut örneklemdaki bu bulgu, (daha önce de değinildiği gibi) ilişkilerde sahte-benlik (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) ya da sahte-yakınlık (Orlofsky, Marcia & Lesser, 1973) örüntülerine işaret etmekte ve 'benlik' tanımının Türk kültürü merceğinden yeniden ele alınmasını gerekli kılmaktadır. Türkiye’de bireyler, ilişki ve duygusal olarak birbirine bağımlı bir kültürün parçası olarak yetişmektedir (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1985, 1990, 1996). Kentli bireyler arasında, yakın ilişkilerin sürdürülmesiyle birlikte daha çok bireyselleşme yönünde de bir eğilim bulunmaktadır (İmamoğlu, 1987). Kuşaklar arası hiyerarşi, duygusal yakınlığın sürdürülmesi için bir tehdit olarak görülmemektedir (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2007). Daha ileri kanıtlara ihtiyaç duyulmasına rağmen, aynı bağlamda hem bireyselleşme hem de ilişkisellik yöneliminin varlığı, evlilik ilişkilerinde potansiyel olarak sahte benlik riski taşıyabilir.

Bu, her iki eşin de düşük benlik ayrılaşması sergiledikleri ve kaçınılmaz olarak sahte benlik ile iç içe geçmiş bir ilişkiye işaret etmektedir. İç içe geçme (füzyon) ilişkide yüzünü göstermeye başladığında ise kaygı bu örüntüyü takip etmekte ve eşler genellikle kaygıyı önlemek için aralarına duygusal bir mesafe koymayı tercih etmektedirler.

Sonuç olarak, kendilerini daha bireyci bir yönelimle tanımlamaya başlayan katılımcıların daha çok evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopmaya neden olan kültürel etkenlere (duygusal bağlılık, eş baskısı vb) maruz kalmaları da muhtemel görünmektedir. Böylece, daha fazla bireyselleşme talebi, kaygının göz ardı edildiği, ilişkisellik bağlamında sahte bir bireyselleşme eğilimi ile sonuçlanabilir. Tüm bulgular birlikte ele alındığında, bireyci yönelimin kadın katılımcılara (daha çok) ait bir çaba olduğu da söylenebilir (katılımcılar arasında her iki benlik kurgusu ortalamaları kadınlarda erkeklerden daha yüksekti ve her iki yönelim arasındaki ilişki sadece kadınlar için önemliydi).

Adaptasyon çalışmaları (Pilot ve ana çalışma), Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formunun (FGI) Türk kültürü için geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, pilot çalışma sonuçları ölçeğin faktör yapısının orijinalinden farklı olduğunu ve Polonya versiyonuyla benzer özellikler gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bulgulara göre, duygusal temas (duygusal kopma + evlilik çatışması) alt ölçeği, tüm alt ölçekler arasında en yüksek faktör yüklerine ve güvenilirlik katsayısına sahip boyuttur. Faktör analizleri, ölçeğin Polonya versiyonunda olduğu gibi, evlilik çatışması ve duygusal kopma alt ölçeklerinin, Türk örnekleme tarafından da tek bir boyut (duygusal temas) olarak algılandığını ortaya koymuştur. Ölçeğin en zayıf boyutu olan çocuk odaklılık alt ölçeğinde düşük faktör yükleri nedeniyle dışarıda bırakılan (Model 2) maddelerin ‘aşırı koruyucu olma’ ve ‘gereğinden fazla üstüne düşme’ tutumlarıyla ilgili olduğu görülmüştür. Bu yapının nedeni, katılımcıların kültürel arka planları ve dünya görüşleri ile ilgili olabilir. Çocuk yetiştirme uygulamaları ile ilgili olarak, katılımcılar bu maddeleri beklendiği gibi semptomatik veya işlevsiz tutumlar olarak algılamamış olabilirler.

4.3 Gelecekteki Çalışmalar için Öneriler

Türkiye'de Bowen yaklaşımını evlilik bağlamında inceleyen araştırmalar sıklıkla kültürel değişkenlere atıfta bulunmuşlardır. Bu çalışmalar, özellikle benlik ayrımlaşmasının farklı sosyo-kültürel gruplardaki kültürel geçerliliğinin incelenmesinde alanyazına katkıda bulunmuştur. Bununla birlikte, aile odaklı yaklaşımların kültürel geçerliliklerinin anlaşılmasının yalnızca (çeşitli) grup farklılıklarının bilinmesinden daha fazlasını gerektirdiği yönündedir. Daha geniş bir perspektif sunması adına, kültürel psikoloji kavramlarının da araştırma sorularına entegre edilmesi gerekliliği vurgulanmaktadır (Erdem ve Safi, 2018.). Bu çalışma, Bowen yaklaşımı kavramlarından çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçleri kültürel bir bakış açısıyla ele almayı amaçlamıştır. Buradaki kültürel mercekler, dengeli bütünleşme ayrışmayı ifade eden kültürel yapıların çalışmaya dahil edilmesi olarak ifade edilmiştir. Bulgular, çekirdek aile duygusal süreçlerinin hem bireyci hem de toplulukçu özelliklere sahip bir örnekleme nasıl deneyimlendiğini ortaya çıkarması bakımından dikkat çekicidir. Bu yönüyle çalışma, bireyci bir yapıyı yansıtan çekirdek aile duygusal süreçlerinin, Türk kültürü temel alınarak geliştirilmiş olan benlik kurguları perspektifinden bir model çerçevesinde incelendiği ilk çalışmadır. Çalışma kapsamında oluşturulan model, Türk kültüründe çekirdek ailelerin sahip olduğu sağlıklı ilişki örüntülerinin anlaşılmasında uygulamaya dönük önemli bulgular sağlamıştır.

Bu çalışma, Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formunu Türkçeye uyarlamak ve evli bireylerdeki psikometrik özellikleri incelemek için yapılan ilk girişimdir. Bununla birlikte, sonuçlar orijinalinden farklı yeni bir faktör yapısının ortaya koymuştur. Bu faktör yapısı, ölçeğin Polonya versiyonuyla (Józefczyk, 2017) daha tutarlıdır ve daha iyi model uyum sonuçları üretmiştir. Orijinal çalışmanın aksine, çocuk odaklılık boyutu kabul edilebilir bir güvenilirlik puanı ortaya çıkarmış ve zayıf faktör yapısına rağmen mevcut çalışmada analizlere dahil edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte, bu boyuttaki öğelerin Türk kültürü için 'çocukla ilgili konulardaki evlilik çatışmaları' üzerine yoğunlaşarak yeniden düzenlenmesi veya yeni bir ölçek geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

Çalışmanın bulguları, uygulamacılar ve alan uzmanları için de önemli bir nitelik taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda, aile danışmanları uygulamalarında, çekirdek ailelerdeki sağlıklı etkileşim örüntüleri (eşler arası belirtiler, çocuk odaklılık ve duygusal temas) ve danışanlarının benlik yönelimleri üzerinde durarak yakın ilişkilerin niteliğine ilişkin değerlendirmeler yapabilirler. Bu amaçla, her ne kadar nitel yönü bu çalışmaya dahil edilmemiş olsa da Aile Dizimi Görüşme Formu, çekirdek ailelerdeki bu sağlıklı etkileşim örüntülerinin iki boyutlu (nicel ve nitelik) olarak değerlendirilmesinde ve terapötik sürecin planlanmasında kullanılabilir. Ölçeğin, Türk kültüründe orijinalinden farklılaşan faktör yapısının, psikometrik özelliklerinin test edilmesiyle birlikte kullanımının daha işlevsel olması sağlanmıştır.

Gelecek çalışmalar için sunulabilecek en önemli önerilerden biri, çekirdek aile duygusal süreçlerinin değerlendirilmesinde araştırmacıların, çekirdek aileye ek olarak Türkiye'deki köken aile duygusal süreçlerini araştırmalarına dahil edebilecekleridir. Başka bir seçenek de Türk kültürel bağlamını göz önünde bulundurarak çekirdek aile duygusal süreçlerini ölçen yeni bir ölçek geliştirmek olabilir. Böyle bir çabanın çekirdek ailede duygusal süreçlerin evlilik doyumunu nasıl etkilediği konusunda daha derinlemesine bilgiler sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Bulguların genellenebilirliği açısından, bu çalışmadaki örneklem, Türkiye'deki çeşitli metropol şehirlerinden evli katılımcılardan oluşmakta ve çoğu veri günümüz Türk ailelerini temsil eden yüksek eğitimli bir profili temsil etmektedir. Katılımcıların bu profili, evlilik etkileşimlerinde daha modern ve eşitlikçi bakış açılarına geçişi yansıtan çekirdek aile duygusal süreçlerinde daha fazla bireyselleşme ile sonuçlanabilir. Bu nedenle, gelecekteki çalışmalarda, araştırmacıların çalışmalarını farklı sosyo-ekonomik ve eğitim düzeyleri de dahil olmak üzere daha temsili örneklerle yürütmeleri önerilmektedir. Ayrıca, gelecekteki çalışmalarda, araştırmacılar daha derinlemesine bulgular elde edebilmek için eşlerin her ikisinden ve çocuklardan da veri toplamayı tercih edebilirler.

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