

PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION AMONG DATING UNIVERSITY  
STUDENTS: THE PREDICTION OF ATTACHMENT STYLES, REJECTION  
SENSITIVITY, AND SELF-COMPASSION

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STUDENTS: THE PREDICTION OF ATTACHMENT STYLES, REJECTION  
SENSITIVITY, AND SELF-COMPASSION**

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**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION AMONG DATING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE PREDICTION OF ATTACHMENT STYLES, REJECTION SENSITIVITY, AND SELF-COMPASSION**

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The main purpose of this study is to examine to what extent rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and self-compassion predicted perpetration and victimization of psychological dating aggression after controlling for gender, age, and duration of the relationship in university students. A convenient sample of 554 dating university students (395 women, 159 men) completed the demographic information form, Rejection Sensitivity Scale, Self-Compassion Scale, Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse, and Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships-II. Data were collected via relevant online sources. The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses revealed that duration of the relationship, gender, anxiety and avoidance attachment styles, and rejection sensitivity were the significant predictors of psychological dating aggression victimization, and these variables explained the 19% of the total variance in victimization. Contrary to the victimization, age and self-compassion were found to be significant predictors of psychological dating perpetration along with the other predictor variables as the duration of the relationship, age, anxiety and avoidance attachment, and rejection sensitivity. The joint

contribution of these predictors explained the total variance of 18.9% in perpetration. While being male was a significant predictor for victimization, age and self-compassion were found to be significant predictors for the only perpetration. It was found that resort to psychological aggression perpetration decreased as the age and self-compassion level increased. Results were discussed considering the relevant literature, implications were drawn for theory, research, and practice, recommendations for future research were mentioned.

**Keywords:** Psychological dating aggression, Rejection sensitivity, Attachment insecurity, Self-Compassion, University students.

## ÖZ

### FLÖRT İLİŞKİSİ OLAN ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİ ARASINDA PSİKOLOJİK SALDIRGANLIK: BAĞLANMA STİLLERİ, REDDEDİLME DUYARLILIĞI VE ÖZ-ŞEFKATİN YORDAYICI ROLÜ

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Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık  
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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, cinsiyet, yaş ve ilişki süresi kontrol edildikten sonra, reddedilme duyarlılığı, bağlanma stilleri ve öz şefkat, psikolojik saldırganlığı ne ölçüde yordadığını incelemektir. 554 üniversite öğrencisi (395 kadın, 159 erkek) Demografik Bilgi Formunu, Reddedilme Duyarlılığı Ölçeğini, Öz-Şefkat Ölçeğini, Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeğini ve Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanterini doldurarak araştırmaya katılmıştır. Veriler, ilgili çevrimiçi kaynaklar aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi bulgularına göre ilişki süresi, cinsiyet, kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stilleri ve reddedilme duyarlılığı psikolojik flört saldırganlığına maruz kalmanın anlamlı yordayıcıları olarak bulunmuştur ve bu değişkenler toplam varyansın %19'unu açıklamaktadır. Maruz kalmadan farklı olarak yaş ve öz-şefkat, ilişkinin süresi, kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stilleri ve reddedilme duyarlılığı gibi diğer yordayıcı değişkenlerle birlikte psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmanın anlamlı yordayıcıları olarak bulunmuş ve toplam varyansın %18,9'unu açıklamıştır. Erkek olma maruz kalma için önemli bir yordayıcı iken, yaş ve öz-şefkat saldırganlığa başvurmanın önemli yordayıcılarıdır. Yaş ve öz-şefkat düzeyi arttıkça psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmanın azaldığı görülmüştür. Sonuçlar, ilgili alanyazın dikkate alınarak tartışılmış, kuram, araştırma ve uygulama için çıkarımlar yapılmış, gelecekteki araştırmalar için önerilerden bahsedilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Psikolojik saldırganlık, Reddedilme Duyarlılığı, Baęlanma, Öz-Şefkat, Üniversite öğrencileri..

*To the people who choose to protect themselves primarily from their own violence*

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## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

The psychosocial developmental theory developed by Erikson (1968) states that people experience eight different phases, and each phase contains a certain conflict within itself. Erikson defines the conflict that appeared in the young adulthood stage as intimacy versus isolation. Therefore, the basic need underlying the crisis experienced by many of the university students is intimate relationships. Crises and conflicts in these intimate relationships are important opportunities to strengthen the ego and psychological resilience.

It is known that the most common reasons for university students to apply to student counseling or mental health centers are their experiences and difficulties in romantic relationships (Creasey, Kershaw, & Boston, 1999; Green, Lowry & Kopta, 2003). When university students experience intimacy and love in their romantic relationships, this period may be protective for their mental health. There are studies showing that a healthy romantic relationship protects university students from depression, anxiety disorder, eating disorder, stress, and drug use (Braithwaite, Delevi & Fincham, 2010; Whitton, Weitbrecht, Kuryluk & Bruner, 2013). On the other hand, for university students who experience violent unhealthy relationships rather than intimacy and love, it can have negative consequences that deeply and destructively affect their mental health (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990). Major risk factors for university students who experience dating violence in their relationships are stated as

anger, anxiety, and depression issues; substance and alcohol addiction; sexually risky behaviors; academic failure and withdrawal (Kaukinen, 2014).

Dating violence is a crucial risk factor for university students who are in the middle of a developmental crisis with the need of intimate relationships for their healthy development. It is also stated that violence is common among dating couples during young adulthood (Woodin, Caldeira, and O'Leary, 2013). Here, it is apt to mention that dating violence is a general framework that includes many types of violence. Within this frame, psychological dating violence has been investigated under the title of psychological aggression in the literature as the most common dating violence. Murphy and Hoover (1999, p. 40) define psychological dating aggression as “coercive and aversive acts intended to produce emotional harm or threat or harm and directed at the target's emotional wellbeing or sense of sense.” Psychological dating perpetration is also defined as “fooling, verbal threats, abstraction from his/her family and friends, and an attempt to control the partner for purposes of humiliating a person's partner and making him/her feel guilty, sad, incomplete/inadequate among others” (Lawrence, Yoon, Langer, & Ro, 2009, p. 20). Psychological dating victimization includes being recipient of the perpetrator violent acts.

The results of Makepeace's (1981) research, which is accepted as a pioneer in dating violence research, revealed that one out of every five people was exposed to physical violence. The results of the research conducted with university students in many different countries reported that the vast majority of dating students were exposed to psychological violence and the rate of psychological violence was higher than the other types of violence (Cornelius, Shorey & Beebe, 2010; Hines & Saudino, 2003). In addition, according to the results of the research conducted with approximately 5000 university students, the rates were high and close to each other and ranged between 81-88%, regardless of gender, in terms of victimization and perpetration of psychological dating violence whereas physical violence rate were found between 32-39% (White & Koss, 1991). Research findings showed similar results in Turkey; the psychological dating violence rate was found to be higher than physical and sexual violence rates. In one of the recent studies conducted with university students also

showed that women and men have been using violence as psychological (80.1% of women and 75.5% of men), physical (43.0% of women and 35.0% of men), and sexual (25.0% of women and 41.8% of men) (Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer, & White, 2013).

“Dating violence victimization includes being the recipient of a partner’s violent acts” (Kaura & Lohman, 2007, p. 368). The empirical evidence has shown that the rate of psychological violence victimization is high in the world. In earlier studies which psychological dating violence was investigated, over 75 percent of dating female university students was found to be exposed to violence (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; Neufeld, McNamara, & Ertl, 1999). Torres, Schumm, Weatherill, Taft, Cunningham, and Murphy (2012) investigated the attitudinal relationships between physical and psychological aggression perpetration and victimization in dating relationships; they reported men (97%) and women (96%) were exposed to psychological aggression by their partners. Selçuk, Avcı and Mercan (2018) found that with a rate of 39.8%, psychological aggression is the highest form of victimization among Turkish university students.

In line with the high prevalence of victimization results, Straus (2004) found a high rates of dating violence perpetration among university students from 16 different countries. When the literature was reviewed in terms of using psychological aggression to romantic partners among university students, many researchers reported high rates like more than 80% psychological aggression perpetration for both men and women (Cornelius et al., 2010; Hines & Saudino, 2003; Jenkins & Aube, 2002). Similarly, Toplu-Demirtaş and Fincham (2020) reported similar psychological violence perpetration rates for Turkish university students for women, 80.1% and for men, 75.5%.

Many theories have tried to explain the factors that cause dating violence. In this respect, attachment theory has been viewed by many researchers as a useful framework for understanding the dynamics and causes of dating violence and has been explored since the nineties. According to the attachment theory, individuals whose needs are

not met by their primary caregivers and develop insecure attachment style in their childhood are evaluated in the risk group in terms of dating violence (Cicchetti & Howes, 1991; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989; Earls, Cairns & Mercy, 1993; Fang & Corso, 2007). Chapple and Trina (2003) also emphasized the importance of family attachments for both genders in terms of perpetration. Another study within the frame of attachment theory systematically examined the relationship between dating violence and attachment and looked at the psychological dating violence's relation to both perpetration and victimization (Velotti, Beomonte-Zobel, Rogier & Tambelli, 2018). When the results of 23 studies conducted on attachment and psychological dating violence since 1997 have been examined, almost half of the studies found that psychological dating violence victimization is not related either to anxiety or to avoidance attachment styles (Bélanger, Dugal, Courchesne, & Mathieu, 2015; Henderson, Bartholomew, & Dutton, 1997; Oka Sandberg, Bradford & Brown., 2014; Shurman & Rodriguez, 2006; Tougas Péloquin, & Mondor., 2016; Wigman, Graham-Kevan, & Archer 2008). On the other hand, the results of five studies examining intimate partner violence and attachment style relationship in terms of university students revealed an association between victimization and anxious attachment (Bonache et al., 2016, 2017; Henderson

, Bartholomew, Trinke & Kwong, 2005; O'Hearn and Davis, 1997; Riggs and Kaminski, 2010). In addition, there are 11 studies that found a moderate relationship between avoidance attachment and victimization. When the results of 42 studies were reviewed in terms of the psychological dating violence perpetration and the attachment relationship, most of them reported a positive relationship between anxiety and avoidance attachment styles and the perpetration of psychological dating violence (Velotti, Beomonte-Zobel, Rogier & Tambelli, 2018). Among these studies, Dutton and his colleagues have conceptualized the development of violent behavior in intimate relationships as arising from problems in early attachment (Dutton, 1998; Dutton & Golant, 1995 as cited in Follingstad et al., 2002, p. 37). They stated that especially in an anxious attachment style, a person may become hypersensitive due to the fear of loss of relationship and love, and the difficulty in regulating emotions. They

mentioned, for instance, feeling vulnerable to abandonment may turn into a controlling behavior, and emphasized that the reason for this may be the lack of secure attachment development during childhood. Researchers stated that more studies are needed to understand the underlying mechanisms of psychological dating aggression. Dutton (1995) speculates that due to early attachment difficulties, individuals may develop internal relationship patterns that lead to hypersensitivity to signal that they believe indicate abandonment or rejection in romantic relationships. At this point, the rejection sensitivity can be counted as one of the risk factors and underlying mechanisms of psychological aggression.

Easily perceiving rejection hints, anxiously waiting to be rejected, and showing intense high reactions to perceived rejection are defined as rejection sensitivity. Downey and Feldman (1994) expanded the literature on rejection sensitivity according to Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory. They stated that children, whose basic needs were rejected by the caregiver and who grow up with the rejection experiences, internalize these experiences that continue to show its effects in the form of rejection sensitivity in adulthood. Downey and Feldman (1996) investigated the association of rejection sensitivity with romantic intimate relationships in their first studies. According to the findings, they reported that individuals with high rejection sensitivity perceived more rejection and displayed more controlling and jealous behavior in their relationships. They stated that women with high sensitivity to rejection were more aggressive and colder, while men were more jealous and controlling. Research findings in the literature have not demonstrated consistent results regarding perpetration or victimization in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and psychological dating aggression. In one of the recent studies reporting the meta-analytical results of 52 studies conducted between 1990 and 2018, demonstrated that individuals with high rejection sensitivity were associated with dating aggression perpetration and victimization regardless of age and gender (Gao, Assink, Liu, Chan, & Ip, 2019).

People with high sensitivity to rejection experience intense emotions when they perceive rejection in a romantic relationship. In this regard, emotions such as anxiety and anger may cause different behavioral consequences. According to Woodin et al.

(2013), there is a strong negative relationship between anger management skills and the perpetration of women and men to dating aggression. In addition, there are many research findings in the literature that displayed the close relationship between inability to regulate emotions and dating violence perpetration (Lawlor, 2016; McNulty & Hellmuth, 2008; Shorey, Brasfield, Febres, & Stuart, 2011; Stappenbeck, Davis, Cherf, Gulati, & Kajumulo, 2016). For this reason, it has been stated that regulating emotions may help prevent the maintenance of dating violence perpetration (Chase, O'Leary, & Heyman, 2001; McNulty and Hellmuth, 2008). Here, an emotional regulation mechanism may be needed to prevent negative and intense emotions caused by rejection sensitivity which also leads to dating violence. In this study, self-compassion was elaborated as an emotional regulation mechanism. Self-compassion is an emotional regulation skill and includes being kind to ourselves when we make mistakes, accepting emotions by staying in the moment and leaving a gap between emotions and behaviors, and seeing the suffering as a common part of being human. Accordingly, self-compassion is also described as a healthy way of predicting satisfaction and relationship quality in romantic relationships (Jacobson, Wilson, Kurz & Kellum, 2018; Neff & Beretvas, 2013). Studies on self-compassion and dating aggression have mostly reported negative correlations regarding victimization. Nonetheless, research regarding perpetration is limited in quantity (Erb, 2016; Williamson, 2019) and reveals inconclusive results. Individuals with high self-compassion were found to be less affected by the negative effects of dating violence (Játiva & Cerezo, 2014). Although studies on rejection sensitivity and self-compassion are limited, findings of the studies investigating the relationship between anxiety and self-compassion have shown that individuals with high fear of rejection report low self-compassion (Raque-Bogdan, Ericson, Jackson, Martin, & Bryan, 2011; Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011). A recent study by Sommerfeld and Shechory- Bitton (2020) reported that people with high rejection sensitivity and low self-compassion show more aggressive behavior.

Duration of the relationship is one of the important relationship characteristics regarding dating violence. The available research on adolescents and young adults

reported a significant relationship between dating violence and the length of time spent in the relationship (Capaldi, Shortt, & Crosby, 2003; Giordano, Soto, Manning, & Longmore, 2010). These studies found that dating violence and the duration of relationship had a significant relationship with higher levels of physical, sexual, and emotional violence, especially as the duration of the relationship increased (Capaldi, Shortt, & Crosby, 2003; Fritz & Slep, 2009; Giordano, Soto, Manning, & Longmore, 2010; Reppucci, Oudekerk, Guarnera, Nagel, Reitz-Krueger, Walker, & Warner, 2013; Rizzo, Joppa, Barker, Zlotnick, Warren & Cadely, 2017). Giles-Sims (1983) stated that in longer relationships, the likelihood of experiencing violent behavior may be higher due to more intense intimacy. They also emphasized that as long as the relationship persists, these behaviors may become a pattern and perceived as normal by partners. Jackson, Cram and Seymour (2000) stated that physical violence that may occur with the impulse of intense emotions such as jealousy and anger may become more likely. It has also been reported by Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, and Hannan (2003) that half of the individuals who were sexually and physically abused could not end a violent relationship because of fear of being harmed and break-up with their partner.

Studies stating that the dating relationship started between the ages of 14-16 and reported that the risk of exposure to dating violence also increased in parallel with age (Glass, Fredland, Campbell, Yonas, Sharps & Kub, 2002; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). When examined by age, it is seen that the prevalence and intensity of dating violence increases from early age to adolescence in terms of both being the victim and the perpetrator (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Holt & Espelage, 2005). Moreover, according to the literature, psychological violence is more common in younger age groups; this means that young people are more at risk (Karakurt & Silver, 2013). On the other hand, O'Leary (1999) assumed that dating violence would reach the highest level around 25 years of age. In another study conducted by O'Leary with Slep (2003), it was stated that aggression between partners generally occurs by both people regardless of gender. As a matter of fact, they stated that dating violence was seen in the form of mutual violence in the following years (O'Leary, Slep, Avery-Leaf, & Cascardi, 2008).

National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (Niolon, Kearns, Dills, Rambo, Irving, Armstead, & Gilbert, 2017) results showed that women and men have experienced at the same rate (47%) of psychological aggression in the United States. There are also studies reporting gender differences in terms of dating aggression (Gover, Kaukinen, & Fox., 2008; Volz & Kerig, 2010).

Psychological aggression, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion are current issues that have often been studied. Individuals whose needs are not met by their primary caregivers and who develop insecure attachment style in their childhood are considered in the risk group in terms of dating violence (Cicchetti & Howes, 1991; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989; Earls, Cairns & Mercy, 1993; Fang & Corso, 2007) because they can develop internal relationship patterns that lead to hypersensitivity to signals to indicate abandonment or rejection (Dutton, 1995). Therefore, rejection sensitivity which is defined as being ready to perceive rejection with anxiety and overreacting to rejection signals (Downey & Feldman, 1996) and is theoretically in line with Bowlby's attachment theory, was investigated together with attachment styles in this study as one of the underlying mechanisms and risk factors of psychological aggression. In addition, in the relevant literature, it is reported that people with high rejection sensitivity behave aggressively towards their partners when they perceive rejection (Ayduk, Gyurak & Luerssen, 2008; Downey & Feldman, 1996; Downey, Freitas, Michaelis & Khouri, 1998). Existing research results showed that self-compassion is an effective emotional-regulation intervention method for responses such as shame, self-blame, anxiety, and depression, which are frequently seen as a result of dating violence (Goss & Gilbert, 2011; Meredith & Mark, 2011; Tesh, Learman & Pulliam, 2015), and for reactions such as anger, anxiety, and fear felt with high sensitivity to rejection (Ahmadi, Hamid & Marashi, 2018). Thus, self-compassion will provide a useful therapeutic framework for dating violence and rejection sensitivity in this study. In addition, although age and duration of relationship have an effect in a certain direction, studies on gender present inconclusive findings. Therefore, all of these variables have been investigated in this study in order to better understand psychological aggression. Nevertheless, there are not any studies and

findings that investigate them together since most of the time they have been examined individually. Therefore, this study aimed to be a comprehensive one examining them in a relational context in which these aforementioned issues would be explored together. Particularly, this study attempts to be the first to examine psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration in Turkey in relation to the role of age, gender, duration of the relationship, attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion.

## **1.2. Purpose of The Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examine to what extent rejection sensitivity, attachment styles (i.e., anxiety and avoidance), and self-compassion predict psychological dating aggression perpetration and victimization among dating university students. In that regard, it gave special importance to examination of factors such as age, gender, duration of relationships and how they contributed to this prediction.

## **1.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses of the Study**

In line with the purpose of the study, main research questions and hypotheses of the current study are presented below:

1. Is there a significant gender difference in terms of psychological dating aggression, attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion of the participants?
2. To what extent do attachment styles (i.e., anxiety and avoidance), rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion predict psychological dating aggression victimization, after controlling for gender, age, and duration of the relationship?
3. To what extent do attachment styles (i.e., anxiety and avoidance), rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion predict psychological dating aggression perpetration, after controlling for gender, age, and duration of the relationship?

H1: Men and women will significantly differ in terms of psychological dating aggression, attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion.

H2: Rejection sensitivity, self-compassion and attachment styles will significantly explain the psychological dating aggression victimization after controlling for gender, age, and duration of the relationship.

H3: Rejection sensitivity, self-compassion and attachment styles will significantly explain the psychological dating aggression perpetration after controlling for gender, age, and duration of the relationship.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Looking at the developed societies as well as the prehistoric and historical societies, it can be seen that humanity has acquired a habit of aggression. With the article "Beyond the Principle of Pleasure", Freud (1922) pointed out the destructive impulses of mankind and stated that aggression can have deeper origins than libidinal impulses besides being the darkest and secret impulse of man. Therefore, it is necessary to keep in mind that aggression is one of the basic components of the human psyche and it should be tried to keep them under control by being aware of these aggressive impulses. In a world where chaotic aggression prevails and the dose of violence increases day by day, the dynamics of human aggression should be analyzed by the psychological counseling discipline so that solutions can be suggested.

Violence has changed form after the changing social structures, industry and technology, and is still changing. Although the concept of violence is mostly associated with physical violence, literature shows that psychological violence is more common than physical violence. Hence, the emphasis on understanding the consequences of psychological violence rather than physical violence is increasing. Studies indicate that psychological aggression is a sign for physical and sexual violence in ongoing dating relationships (Frieze, 2000). Psychological aggression is a subject that has started to garner attention recently. Therefore, there is only a limited number of studies investigating its prevalence, taking it as a sign of physical and sexual

violence and studying its destructive effects. This especially poses a risk for young people and university students as these unexamined factors make them more vulnerable to violence and abuse. Karakurt and Silver (2013) also reported in their studies which especially has investigated violence in terms of age, found higher rates of emotional violence in youth.

Psychological aggression also causes negative effects on the mental health of both victims (Follingstad, 2009) and perpetrators (Shorey, Brasfield, Febres, Cornelius & Stuart, 2012). Importantly, these effects are less visible, but deeper and more destructive than other types of violence (Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990). Dating violence affects the quality of the romantic relationships of individuals and reduces the level of relationship satisfaction. At the same time, it influences the integrity and psychological states of individuals and reduces their life satisfaction. It has been found that individuals experience depression and post-traumatic stress disorders after being exposed to dating aggression. Increasing rates of psychological aggression show that more research is needed especially in terms of negative consequences of victimization and perpetration. A growing field of research on dating violence has recently investigated especially psychological aggression among university students. Although there are studies investigating psychological aggression, studying possible underlying mechanisms such as rejection sensitivity and attachment styles is important for the current literature.

Psychological dating aggression, rejecting sensitivity, and compassion are current issues in psychology; therefore, studies on this context in Turkey is rather limited. This study is important in that it is the first study in the national and international literature aimed at investigating the psychological dating aggression with the predictive effect of rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and self-compassion among university students. According to the results of the literature reviews of Velotti and colleagues (2018) in terms of dating violence and attachment, studies conducted with university students in terms of psychological dating violence are satisfactory for the perpetration but are limited in terms of victimization. Also, it is seen that almost half of these studies are performed in the US; therefore, the results of this study are important for both

Turkish and international literature. The findings of this study can broaden the perspectives of university students in dating relationships so that they become more aware of psychological aggression and the behaviors triggered by it. Findings of rejection sensitivity may have an important relationship with the mechanisms underlying their behavior of resorting to psychological aggression. In addition, the results of this study can be used in the prevention, education, and intervention stages of counseling services. School psychological counselors working in high schools and psychological counseling services of universities can introduce psychological aggression and produce preventive and psychoeducational program contents by explaining its possible results. Intervention methods in terms of rejection sensitivity and self-compassion with clients who experience different dimensions of psychological aggression in their relationships can be developed by mental health professionals. As an emotional regulation strategy, self-compassion can be used in the areas of psychological aggression to prevent or interfere with the occurrence of psychological aggression. For this reason, the findings of this study are expected to shed light on the awareness to be created regarding the prevention and maintenance of violent behavior.

### **1.5. Definition of the Terms**

Psychological dating aggression consisted of “coercive and aversive acts intended to produce emotional harm or threat or harm and directed at target’s emotional wellbeing or sense of sense” (Murphy & Hoover, 1999, p.40). Lawrence, Yoon, Langer, and Ro (2009, p. 20) have also explained a variety of perpetrator behaviors that can be mentioned within the frame of psychological dating aggression and these are “behaviors such as ridiculing, verbal threats, isolating partner from family and friends, and attempting to control partner, and are intended to degrade partner, and attack his or her self-worth by making him or her guilty, upset, or inadequate”. Additionally, victimization includes being recipient of perpetrator violent acts.

Rejection sensitivity defined as “the interaction of the extent to which one expects rejection, and one is anxious or concerned about the prospect of rejection in situations with a potential for rejection.” (Feldman & Downey, 1994, p.235).

Self-compassion involves being touched by and open to one’s own suffering, not avoiding or disconnecting from it, generating the desire to alleviate one’s suffering and to heal oneself with kindness (Neff, 2003). Self-compassion is also defined as the ability to alternate negative attitudes towards the self with a sense of warmth, concern, and care (Neff & McGehee, 2010).

Anxiety attachment involves behaviors as difficulty in leaving their partner because of their fear of abandonment and rejection (Mikulincer & Florian, 2001).

Avoidance attachment refers to individuals who focus too much on self-sufficiency, so they feel uncomfortable when their partners are close (Mikulincer & Florian, 2001).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this section, firstly the definition, prevalence, and theoretical background of psychological dating aggression are presented. Secondly, the development of the rejection sensitivity, its theoretical background, and the rejection sensitivity model are explained. Thirdly, information is provided within the scope of the conceptualization and sub-dimensions of self-compassion. In the fourth section, the relationship between psychological dating aggression, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion are elaborated with current international and national studies. The chapter is ended with a summary of the literature review.

#### **2.1. Dating, Dating Violence, and Psychological Dating Aggression**

Dating is defined by Murray and Kardatzke as “a relationship in which two individuals share an emotional, romantic, and/or sexual connection beyond a friendship, but they are not married, engaged, or in a similarly committed relationship” (2007, p. 79). Dating involves the formation of a long-term romantic relationship, a short-term romantic relationship, a one-time dating, a one-night sexual partner, just a sexual partner, hanging out with one and several people, socializing with a group of friends. Some young people define dating as a monogamous relationship in which two people are committed to each other, while others may define it as a devotional relationship or one in which one person can be with more than one partner at a time. Apart from these, dating forms that people define in different ways can also be seen.

Dating violence is an umbrella concept that covers many types of violence in dating and comes up with quite different definitions. Sugarman and Hotaling's (1989, p. 5) defined dating violence as "the use or threat of physical force or restraint carried out with the intent of causing pain or injury to another." Dating violence is a concept widely used in the literature and is also used by different researchers as psychological dating violence, psychological aggression, intimate partner violence, and emotional abuse (Cinsel Şiddetle Mücadele Derneği, 2019, March). Psychological dating violence is the most common type of dating violence and has been examined under the heading of psychological aggression in the literature in recent years. How to define dating violence has been an issue because the concepts of violence and abuse were not found clear and objective by some researchers. The premises of the subject also suggest that it is called 'psychological aggression' rather than violence or emotional abuse (Follingstad, 2007; Jackson, 1999). Therefore, in this study, it was found more appropriate to use the concept of psychological aggression to avoid judgment. Psychological aggression is examined under two headings: psychological dating aggression perpetration and psychological dating aggression victimization. According to Murphy and Hoover (1999), psychological aggression refers to "coercive and aversive acts intended to produce emotional harm or threat or harm and directed at target's emotional wellbeing or sense of sense" (p.40). Psychological dating perpetration is defined as fooling, verbal threats, abstraction from his family and friends, and an attempt to control the partner, for purposes such as humiliating a person's partner and making him feel guilty, sad, incomplete/inadequate (Lawrence, Yoon, Langer, & Ro, 2009, p. 20). Psychological dating victimization includes being recipient of perpetrator violent acts.

Makepeace (1981) has been a pioneer in early studies of dating violence, pointing out that in the literature, violent behavior is mostly researched between family and child and that it receives little attention in terms of dating violence. The results of Makepeace research also reported that one-fifth (21.2%) of the sample of 202 university students were directly exposed to dating violence. Initially, dating violence was restricted only examined as physical violence, then Jackson (1999) stated that the

psychological and sexual violence investigation would be more inclusive from the holistic point of view. Shorey, Cornelius and Bell (2008) reported that psychological aggression is higher in university students than physical violence. In addition, it was stated that psychological aggression has more harmful effects compared to physical violence (Follingstad et al.1990; Lawrence et al., 2009). Despite its prevalence and these deep and destructive effects, it has been reported that young people do not see psychological aggression as negative or a problem, and but rather normalize and accept it under the name of love and jealousy (Capezza & Arriaga, 2008; Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer & Fincham, 2017). It has been stated that these accepting attitudes may cause young people to continue to resort to psychological aggression in the long term or not to seek support when exposed to psychological aggression (Toplu-Demirtaş, 2015).

Psychological aggression is the most common type of dating violence. Among the dating university students, the psychological aggression rates are quite high and reaching approximately 90% (Harned, 2001; Hines & Saudino, 2003; Leisring, 2013; Muñoz-Rivas, Graña Gómez, O'Leary & González Lozano, 2007). Hines and Saudino (2003) reported that 481 college students' perpetration rates of psychological dating aggression varied within the range of 82-86% by gender, and victimization results in the range of 80-81%. In one of the recent studies conducted in Turkey, psychological aggression is the highest in terms of victimization with a rate of 39.8% compared to physical (8.5%) and sexual violence (3.9%) among 292 university students (Selçuk et al., 2018). Another recent study conducted with 812 university students reveal that women and men have been using violence as psychological (80.1% of women and 75.5% of men), physical (43.0% of women and 35.0% of men) and sexual violence (25.0% of women and 41.8% of men) (Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer & White, 2013). In another study conducted with 834 dating university students, 77.4% of women and 70.0% of men reported that they were exposed to psychological violence by their partners (Toplu-Demirtaş & Hatipoğlu Sümer, 2011).

It was also emphasized by Jackson (1999) that it would be important to know whether there is an association between different types of violence related to both perpetration

and victimization. In a violent situation when it comes to social desirability, individuals tend to perceive themselves more positively whereas perceiving others in a negative way (Edwards, 1957). Consistent with this, in the Makepeace (1981) research participants were asked, "Would you consider yourself a victim or an aggressor of the event?" participants in their answers were tended to report more victimization (71.1%) instead of aggression. Perpetration and victimization have been found to be highly and significantly related in many studies because psychological aggression has been reported by many studies as mutual, bidirectional, and reciprocal rather than one-sided; which made gender differences as meaningless (Follingstad & Edmundson, 2010; Kahya, 2018; Lawrence et al., 2009; Renner & Whitney, 2012; Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). When the person became a perpetrator after receiving psychological aggression, there were studies that found that they continued the cycle of violence as victims (Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward & Tritt, 2004; Widom, 1989). On the other hand, studies are stating that university students who are victims by accepting psychological aggression continue their psychological dating aggression in the cycle as a perpetrator (Aloia & Solomon, 2013c; Fincham, Cui, Braithwaite & Pasley, 2008). Given the closeness of perpetration and victimization rates and high rates over the years, mechanisms are needed to prevent the sustainability of the aggression.

In its pioneer study, Makepeace (1981) found that women felt more victims than men (91.7), while men perceived themselves as (69.2) aggressors. Different results have been reported in the literature in terms of gender and gender symmetry. There are many research results reporting that there is no gender difference when it comes to aggression (Brush, 1990; Fincham et al., 2008; Kaura & Lohman, 2007; O'Keefe, 1997; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998). No significant gender differences were also found in terms of both perpetration and victimization in terms of psychological dating aggression except for sexual violence in 1015 dating university students (Toplu-Demirtaş, 2015). There are also studies reporting gender differences in terms of dating aggression (Gover, Kaukinen, & Fox., 2008; Hammock & O'Hearn, 2002). Gover et al. (2008) found that in a sample of nearly 2500 university students, women are more likely to be involved in both victimization and perpetration. Tussey, Tyler and Simons

(2018) also have found that women have higher rates of perpetrating violence among 1432 university students (51% women). Archer (2000) has reported in a meta-analytic review of sex differences in physical aggression that women engaged in more physical aggression. On the contrary, there are research results in which men's psychological dating perpetration is reported more than women (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000b; Volz & Kerig, 2010). In addition, Shorey et al. (2010) reported that among 196 undergraduate students 77% of male students had a perpetrator role in psychological dating aggression. Due to the uncertainty of the findings in the literature, the researchers turned their curiosity towards who started the aggression behavior. Allen, Swan, and Raghavan (2009) found that men initiated violent action first and then women showed aggression to protect themselves. On the other hand, the article published by Hoff (2012) for the national survey reported that women initiated 30 to 73 percent of the violence incidents. Apart from all these, Anderson (2005) stated psychological dating aggression as not a gendered problem and stated social expectations differed within the context of gender roles.

As with other variables of dating aggression, psychological aggression research data are limited regarding the duration of relationship. Giles-Sims (1983) emphasized that the possibility of experiencing aggressive behaviors may be higher due to the more intense intimacy experienced in long-term relationships and that these behaviors can be perceived as normal and become sustainable as long as the relationship continues. There a lot of research results that reporting dating violence and relationship duration are significantly associated with higher levels of physical, sexual, and emotional violence, especially as the duration of the relationship increases (Capaldi, Shortt, & Crosby, 2003; Fritz & Slep, 2009; Giordano, Soto, Manning and Longmore, 2010; Reppucci, Oudekerk, Guarnera, Nagel, Reitz-Krueger, Walker, & Warner, 2013; Rizzo, Joppa, Barker, Zlotnick, Warren & Cadely, 2017). Contrary to the fact that physical violence that can occur with the impulse of intense emotions such as jealousy and anger has become the norm; it has been reported that half of the individuals who were sexually and physically abused could not end a violent relationship due to fear of being harmed and separation from their partner (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, &

Hannan, 2003). Perceiving this type of violence as normal or fear of not being able to terminate the relationship affects younger individuals more. Current studies on adolescents and young adults have reported a significant relationship between dating aggression and the length of time spent in the relationship (Capaldi, Shortt, & Crosby, 2003; Giordano, Soto, Manning, & Longmore, 2010). Another point is that it has been reported by many studies that starting in early adolescence, dating violence increases in terms of both victimization and perpetration during adolescence (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Foshee, Benefield, Suchindran, Ennett, Bauman and Karriker-Jaffe, 2009; Glass, Fredland, Campbell, Yonas, Sharps & Kub, 2002; Holt & Espelage, 2005; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Foshee et al. (2009) also stated that the negative consequences of dating violence may occur as a result of poor perception at this age level. On the other hand, there are research results indicating that dating violence reaches its highest levels in young adulthood rather than adolescence (Giordano, Longmore & Manning, 2010; Karakurt & Silver, 2013; O'Leary, 1999; Woodin, Caldeira & O'Leary, 2013).

## **2.2. Theories of Psychological Dating Aggression**

This section includes some of the theories' explanations regarding psychological dating aggression. These theories are: Attachment Theory, Power Theory, Feminist Theory, and Social Learning Theory.

### **2.2.1. Attachment Theory**

Children are completely dependent on the loving intimacy and care of their parents for their physical, emotional and mental development. According to Bowlby (1973), the tendency to build strong emotional bonds with significant people is part of human nature, and in the newborn baby, this tendency already exists. When a baby's needs meet by instinctive caring behaviors and intimacy between parents and baby form a secure attachment relationship. Formation of attachment is vital for the baby because it provides the care of and first relationship framework of the baby. This first relationship with primary caregivers becomes consistent over time and affects the adult

relationships that the baby will experience in the future. Although there are different classifications in attachment literature, it has been observed that insecure adult attachment behaviors can be defined in two dimensions as anxiety attachment and avoidance attachment (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998; Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000). Anxiety attachment involves behaviors as difficulty in leaving from their partner because of their fear of abandonment and rejection (Mikulincer & Florian, 2001). In avoidance attachment, individuals focus too much on self-sufficiency, so they feel uncomfortable when their partners are very close (Mikulincer & Florian, 2001).

Hazan and Shaver (1987), argued that the person had established a similar relationship with the figure of attachment as a child with the person with whom he/she had a romantic relationship in adulthood. Therefore, they showed that attachment theory can also be used for romantic relationships in adulthood. The existence of a romantic partner, where the person will be accepted and supported, is in many ways similar to secure attachment relationships with those who give primary care to children. On the other hand, individuals who are not with secure attachment are predicted to be at high risk in the future dating relationship by some researchers because they developed victimized and submissive frameworks (Cicchetti & Howes, 1991; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989). Hazan and Shaver (1987) also stated that insecure individuals showed jealousy in their relationships with their loved ones. It has been found that anxiety and avoidance attachment styles significantly associated with psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration (Henderson, et al.,2005). In some studies, a relationship found between psychological dating aggression and anxiety attachment, while there was no relationship with avoidance attachment (Cadely, Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018; Sandberg, Suess & Heaton, 2010). In addition, Cadely et al. (2018) stated that individuals who have anxiety attachment type may be exposed to psychological dating aggression more due to their desire to maintain relationships and high dependence. On the other hand, there is a research finding that individuals with only avoidance attachment predicted psychological dating aggression perpetration with high stress (Gormley & Lopez, 2010). Refusing criticism of

attachment theory is about how to explain the psychological dating aggression of people who are securely attached (Schwartz, Hage, Bush, & Burns, 2006). Thus, the role of attachment styles on psychological aggression remains unclear.

### **2.2.2. Feminist Theory**

According to Laura Brown (1994); feminism is a collection of all political philosophies aimed at breaking down the patriarchy, thereby ending gender-based inequalities by providing a cultural transformation and radical social change. Feminism is a philosophical approach rather than a specific theoretical structure. This approach is against the social norms that give men power and status whereas pressure women. Feminists argue that stereotypes about being a woman or man which is created by social pressure have an important effect on people's behaviors (Murdock, 2013). The feminist theory advocates violent behavior as a result of the underlying patriarchal social system that affects power and control struggles between men and women (Dobash & Dobash, 1992). The feminist theory sees interpersonal violence as a result of the power structure of male domination and the obedience of women and argues that this power inequality leads to violent behavior. Lloyd argues that the reason for maintaining dating aggression is the result of patriarchal values and romance, leading to the view that men try to control, and women are dependent (Lloyd, 1991).

Although feminist theory accepts that violence is perpetrated by both genders, it is argued that women show aggression to defend themselves after victimization while seeing men as initially violent and aggressive (Walker, 1979; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). The results of the research (Archer, 2000) where women show aggression in romantic relationships and findings that show that reasons other than self-defense led women to aggression (Stuart, Moore, Gordon, Hellmuth, Ramsey & Kahler, 2006) remain uncertain in this regard. In addition, the feminist theory argument cannot explain the violence experienced in homosexual women's relations. In general, social, and physical differences between genders can make one partner more vulnerable and vulnerable than the other, which increases the likelihood of being exposed to dating

aggression and then experiencing psychological problems (Caldwell, Swan, & Woodbrown, 2012).

### **2.2.3. Power Theory**

On the contrary to feminist theory, which argues that dating aggression stems from the patriarchal social structure; theory of power argues that power imbalances between gender can increase tension between partners so that the risk of aggression in the dating relationship can increase (Sagrestano, Heavey, & Christensen, 1999; Straus, 1977). Power theorists argue that not only the cultural structure but also the family structure is effective based on interrelated aggression (Straus, 1976). It was also found that conflicts between family members, strict social beliefs about dating aggression, gender inequality affect and increase the risk of dating aggression (Bell & Naugle, 2008; Hutchinson, 2012). According to a study by Kapıcıoğlu in 2008, it was determined that there is a linear relationship between "power" and "aggression". It was concluded that the concept of power is a triggering factor in the implementation of all types of aggression. However, research on power theory is limited and may not fully cover recent research on dating aggression (Bell & Naugle, 2008).

### **2.2.4. Social Learning Theory**

The social learning theory developed by Bandura (1973) defends that individuals learn their behavior by observing and imitating from other individuals and then show the behaviors they have learned. Imitation has a very important effect in the development of new behavior or increasing and maintaining developed behavior, or a decrease in certain behaviors (Cochran, Maskaly, Jones & Sellers, 2015). In this approach, aggression is evaluated not as an innate characteristic, but as a tendency learned and acquired afterwards (Bandura, 1978). According to Bandura (1973, 1978), although there is a capacity for aggression in humans, in order to exhibit this, the individual must first learn the behavior, have conditions that will trigger aggression, and the presence of internal and external conditions that reinforce aggressive behavior. Bandura (1973) also stated that an individual's behavior is limited to those of the

closest individuals. People learn certain conflict resolution tactics in the first years of their lives by imitating the strategies used in family conflicts. In this process, if people witness and experience aggression in the family, individuals can learn that violence is the most effective solution for solving their problems and controlling others (Shorey et al. 2008). While these learnings are limited to the family in the first years of life, they diversify and differ as the child grows. Children who have been abused and witnessed interparental violence in childhood reported as high-risk groups for dating aggression perpetration in a future close relationship (Earls, Cairns & Mercy, 1993; Fang & Corso, 2007). Some studies found an important relationship between social learning theory and its components and dating aggression and victimization (Cochran et al. 2015; 2016; Wareham, Boots & Chavez, 2009). On the other hand, Follette and Alexander (1992) stated that observing aggression in the family is not enough to predict future aggression of individuals because people may learn new behavior by taking the role model of other individuals apart from the family. However, they can play an important role in predicting the determinants and underlying mechanisms of future aggression behavior. Therefore, more research results are needed.

In summary, since no specific theory exists for psychological aggression, the most frequently cited theories (i.e., Attachment Theory, Feminist Theory, Power Theory, and Social Learning Theory) have been chosen to explain this phenomenon. Although theories have limited aspects in explaining the psychological aggression concept completely, they can provide a useful theoretical framework to examine the related factors. Despite most of the theories indicate a certain direction in explaining psychological aggression, the empirical findings have not demonstrated this consistency. Moreover, most of the empirical results have not contained cross-cultural generalizability. In this study, a model was created to explain psychological aggression among university students by including anxiety and avoidance attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and gender variables in the context of Feminist Theory and Attachment Theory.

### **2.3. Rejection Sensitivity**

It is an important psychological need for people to be approved and accepted by people they love and care about. In connection with our natural biological reactions to the threat, we learn to wait for acceptance or rejection through our experience (Romero-Canyas, Downey, Berenson, Ayduk, & Kang, 2010). The learned nature of our expectations of being accepted or rejected indicates that anxiety for rejection may be specific to the environment. In other words, one can learn to wait for rejection from certain people (parents) or certain groups (schoolmates) (Romero-Canyas et al. 2010). The sensitivity of rejection was conceptualized by Feldman and Downey (1994) and expressed as aggressive behaviors that occur as a result of violence in the family towards the child, with the motivation of acceptance. People who are open to easily perceive rejection from important people in their life and overreacting anxiously to rejection described as highly rejection sensitive people. Rejection sensitivity defined as excessive sensitivity to rejection situations and clues about rejection that occur concretely or are likely to happen. People with high rejection sensitivity show intense emotional reactions not only in cases of rejection but also in situations where they expect to be rejected. These individuals need to be accepted by others, and incoming messages in communication are considered as an indication of whether the individual sees acceptance or value (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Pietrzak, Downey & Ayduk, 2005). It is stated that even if every people face rejection once in their lives, the readiness of people to be rejected is different and therefore their reactions are unique to them (Downey & Feldman, 1996).

Downey and Feldman (1996) explained the development of rejection sensitivity through Bowlby's attachment theory. As conveyed in attachment theory, the working models developed by children about themselves and their relationships include expectations about whether they will be satisfied, fulfilled, and rejected by their primary caregivers. In cases where the caregiver is sensitive to the signals sent by the child, performs physical contact frequently and continuously, a safe care environment is provided and the needs are met on time, the child perceives the caregiver and the environment as safe and this leads to the development of secure attachment. When

these expectations are rejected or neglected by the caregiver, children develop a model based on insecurity and anxiety, which leads them to be individuals with experiencing feelings of worthlessness and skeptical attitudes in their future relationships (Bowlby, 1973). Situations that make the child feel pain, loveless, and deprived are effective in developing anxious attachment relationships. As a result of their rejection experiences during childhood, these individuals develop the expectation that they will be rejected when they seek acceptance and support from others, and they experience anxiety about rejection. Rejection sensitivity, which is thought to be due to early rejection experiences, continues its effect in adulthood through the internalization of these experiences (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Feldman & Downey, 1994).

According to Horney, rejection sensitivity is one of the neurotic tendencies unconsciously developed against anxiety. Horney (1937) also saw basic anxiety as a painful sensitivity to any rejection. Horney stated that people with high rejection sensitivities were extremely sensitive to being undesirable and any kind of rejection. Sometimes disruptions in the fulfillment of their desires, such as a small appointment change and sometimes having to wait, are perceived as rejection by these individuals. Since the rejection situation also contains some humiliation, sometimes terrible anger may appear, and sometimes a cold and indifferent attitude may appear instead of an explosion of anger. According to Horney (1937), individuals with a high level of rejection sensitivity refrain from getting close to the opposite sex and attempting a romantic relationship unless they are sure they will not be subjected to rejection. For these individuals, avoiding relationship attempts serves as a defense. In this framework, people organize their behavior in order not to be subject to a possible rejection for acceptance and social support by others who are valued.

People who have a high expectation of rejection, begin to show extreme sensitivity to the rejection hints in the environment and perceives other elements of communication as a hint of rejection later in the process (Levy, Ayduk & Downey, 2001). People with high sensitivity to rejection can interpret the conversation and tone of the other person as dislikes to them and often have self- conversations about their rejection inside their heads. Pietrzak, Downey and Ayduk (2005) also stated that these individuals

personalize negative hints from the environment. According to Downey and Feldman (1996), people with this high sensitivity also perceive tips for rejection more quickly than others, tend to perceive uncertain situations as rejected and, in such cases, they may show more extreme and negative reactions than others. As a result, excessive negative reactions damage to interpersonal relationships (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Rejection sensitivity is a structure that weakens the relationship and causes people to be distant each other and lose their trust in each other, and basically, rejection can cause them to act in a way that disrupts the possibility of maintaining a supportive and satisfying close relationship (Downey et al., 2000; Gonzaga, 2001). Anxiously waiting rejection and extreme negative reactions to rejection, as a result harming relationship quality, creates a process. This process gradually becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and creates a cycle that feeds itself. The rejection sensitivity model summarizes the basic links in this cycle Figure 2.1.

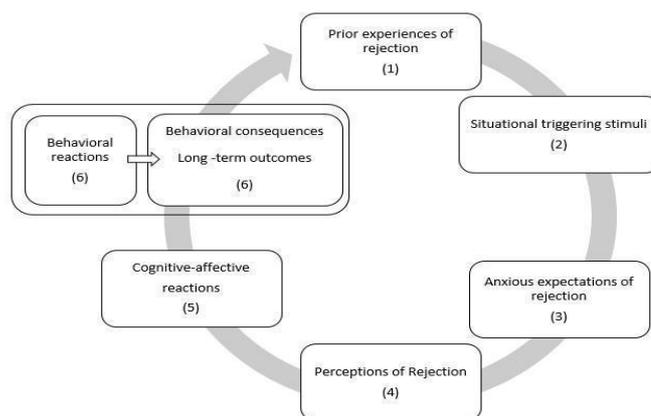


Figure 2.1: Rejection sensitivity model (Adapted from Feinstein, 2020)

Expectations of rejection are observed to increase if the person has prior experiences of rejection by the important people for them (Figure: 2.1, phase 1). When the sensitivity of rejection increases due to prior experiences, the individual becomes ready to perceive triggering stimuli and the behaviors with unclear intentions in communication as deliberate rejection and this increases their anxious expectations (Figure: 2.1, phase 2). In the third phase of rejection sensitivity processing dynamics, after anxious expectations were increased, behaviors of important others perceived negatively with anger. Afterward, perceived rejection leads to intense negative

reactions (Figure 2.1, phases 4 and 5). Finally, in phase 6 the reactions of individuals as a result of their false perceptions cause the rejection situation to occur.

As shown in the model, the most important part of the rejection sensitivity dynamic is the anxious rejection expectation. While both waiting to be rejected and having high anxiety about this will happen were defined as high rejection sensitivity; lack of anxiety about waiting to be accepted and rejection was defined as low rejection sensitivity (Downey & Feldman 1996). Once such a dynamic and cycle occurs, it guides one's interpersonal perceptions and behaviors throughout life. Different people use different ways to prevent rejection or to deal with rejection; some are angry and resort to violence, while others avoid any situation that may include anxiety and rejection, while another person is constantly trying to please others (Pietrzak, Downey & Ayduk, 2005). In addition, Downey and Feldman (1996) stated that rejection sensitivity is a more prominent subject at younger ages when more diverse interpersonal relationships are experienced. This sensitivity may be more likely in university settings where young people can establish friendship, dating, and professional relationships.

When the sensitivity of rejection was first conceptualized, the results of the study did not show a significant relationship between gender and rejection sensitivity (Feldman & Downey, 1994). In parallel in the following years, no gender differences were found in rejection sensitivity by some of the studies (Breines & Ayduk, 2015; Downey, Mougios, Ayduk, London & Shoda, 2004; Harrison, 2006; İbrahim, Rohner, Smith, & Flannery, 2015; Khaleque, Uddin, Hossain, Siddique, & Shirin, 2019). Then, Downey and Feldman (1996) reported that rejection sensitivity was higher in women. In Turkey, studies conducted by Erözkan (2004b, 2009) found that women showed a higher level of rejection sensitivity than men. A study in which the anxious rejection expectations of middle school students were measured longitudinally, it was reported that female students got more points than male students (London, Downey, Bonica & Paltin, 2007). On the other hand, there is a research result where men are more sensitive to rejection than women (Hafen, Spilker, Chango, Marston, & Allen, 2014).

Although it has been reported by some studies in the literature that rejection sensitivity does not differ according to gender, there are also contradictory results.

#### **2.4. Self-Compassion**

Self-compassion is psychological resilience and emotional regulation skill that keeps people alive. Although people live in a social structure, they are alone with their feelings and thoughts. Self-compassion is the ability to help yourself and protect yourself primarily from your violence at the point where emotions and thoughts cause harsh criticism to yourself due to negative experiences. Self-compassion has been conceptualized by Neff (2003b) as an alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself with empirical support. Neff (2003a) stated that self-compassion is a Buddhist concept from eastern philosophy. In Buddhist psychology, self-compassion is an emotional state felt for everyone rather than the individual. This approach emphasizes that everyone in the universe has weaknesses and imperfections, so everyone needs courtesy. It also advocates that approaching our defects and weaknesses with a judgmental attitude will reduce resilience to difficulties in life. Therefore, instead of blaming ourselves, it suggests graciously hosting our faults and feelings.

Neff (2003a) specifically explained that self-compassion should not be confused with self-pity, self-indulgence, and self-esteem. People who feel self-pity behave like they have a heavy emotional burden on their backs. They think that this emotional burden is unrighteous only in themselves. They forget that they are part of the whole with others because of these thoughts. They believe that everyone else's life is flawless by keeping themselves out of everyone else. As a result, they hurt themselves because they live their emotions not as they are but by exaggerating them. On the contrary, a self-compassionate approach knows that everyone is imperfect and suggests living them before emotions become a burden. Neff also underlined that there is a difference between self-indulgence and self-compassion. In self-indulgence, people tend to give some rewards and pleasure (such as a box of chocolates and a few bowls of ice-cream) to themselves to cope with difficulties. This is a procrastination method to face with

realities. It is not a cognitive and emotional-based solution as a self-compassionate approach toward problems. Another issue that should not be confused with self-compassion is self-esteem. Self-esteem is a concept that more about how much we value and respect ourselves. Therefore, unlike self-compassion, it depends on conditions and includes evaluations based on these conditions. Moreover, it may increase or decrease depending on these evaluations and depends on external factors. Self-compassion is a force that exists within us, unlike self-esteem. It allows us to approach ourselves and our mistakes unconditionally.

Self-compassion consists of three basic dimensions and these dimensions contain contrasts in themselves. These dimensions defined by Neff (2003b) as self-kindness against self-judgment, common humanity against social isolation, mindfulness against over-identification. Firstly, self-kindness includes, showing support toward ourselves when we make mistakes or feel inadequate. It is basically when things go wrong in our life, self-kindness is the inner voice that shows us understanding with a comfortable and gentle language rather than the tone that judges us and stuck in all the negativities. Neff (2011) argued that when people deal with their features that they want to improve in their lives by a critical and destructive language, they will harm their self-confidence. At this point, it will not be as helpful as expected to try to motivate the sentences that will not be told to someone, we do not like by telling ourselves critically and harshly. On the contrary, self-kindness consists of welcoming its deficiencies, grieves sincerely and patiently in a healthy way. Thus, Neff explains that when we graciously encourage ourselves with the motivation of self-kindness, it is more beneficial to make good changes by relying more on their abilities. Also, Neff(2003b) emphasized that acting by self-compassion instead of criticism of negative emotional experiences makes people more balanced in life. Secondly, Neff (2003b) stated that people generally tend to behave more patiently and sensitively to the people they care about or foreigners. Direct opposite to this tendency, self-compassion is not a situation where people focus entirely on themselves. Self-compassion emphasizes that human nature involves mistakes, failures and insufficient situations and anyone can face unpredictable difficult living conditions. When the problems are unsolvable and

emotions are intense, many people may tend to think that they are the only people experiencing this condition and that others sit pretty. May (1972) mentions compassion as follows: Compassion is the name of the type of love that is based on our understanding of each other. Compassion is an awareness that we are all on the same boat and that we will all sink or go out together. Compassion, after being felt to someone because we are only human, we give up the demand to be a perfect divine being to accompany humanity in their pain and destiny. In this way, when a common humanity dimension is noticed and a person gives up to desire to be perfect, one feels less guilty and easily accepts oneself. Thus, when self-compassion and common humanity allows a person to failures are not special for oneself, it reduces the degree of self-blame and harsh judgment. Thirdly, another component of self-compassion is mindfulness. Mindfulness is simply a conscious understanding of what is going on at the moment we live with an open and loving attitude. It is to be here in this moment without judging, without rejecting what is happening, without losing yourself to the speed of daily life (Snel, 2010). Through Mindfulness, a person can see the real face of thoughts: they are the constructions of the mind, mysterious creations, and mental events that accurately reflect or do not reflect reality (Williams, Teasdale, Segal & Kabat-Zinn, 2007). By leaving a gap between emotions and thoughts and reactions, a better chance of observation is obtained when you are in the moment. In this way, noticing by observing purposefully and without trial brings acceptance and courtesy. Through compassion that comes with acceptance and courtesy; thoughts can be recognized as only thoughts. Also, emotions are experienced like a temporary guest without avoiding and suppressing. It is important to welcome all feelings as guests in the brain. When the guest's time is up, they will go wherever they belong. The most important point to be considered while hosting these feelings is to realize that it is time to send them. Additionally, careful attention should be given to over-identification with feelings and thoughts, as this leads to distancing from reality. Over-identification leads to magnifying the incident, not being able to get away from delusions and prolonging the guests.

It has been another matter of curiosity for researchers how the difference between men and women made in terms of self-compassion levels. At this point, the impact of gender roles and social structures on men and women is important. Research in the field of self-compassion did not reveal a noticeably clear difference between these two genders. While some studies indicate that women find their self-compassion levels lower than men, some studies have shown that there is no significant difference. Yarnell, Stafford, Neff, Reilly, Knox and Mullarkey (2015) according to the results of the meta-analysis study in which they examined self-compassion and potential gender differences across 71 journal articles written in English between 2003 and September 2014; found that men's self-compassion levels were slightly higher than women. In addition, in studies where ethnic differences were higher; they stated that the differences of self-compassion between men and women were greater and it might be related to social norms.

When the studies conducted in terms of men and self-compassion variable were examined, they first evaluated this relationship in terms of the behavior of men seeking help. Eisenberg, Hunt and Speer (2012) stated that every year, at least 70% of their men who need mental health support do not apply for counseling or other mental health services. In another study, they stated that the beliefs of men who adhere to masculine norms and their psychological help-seeking behavior are in conflict (Vogel & Heath, 2016). Heath, Brenner, Vogel, Lannin and Strass (2017) found that self-compassion acts as a buffer between adhering to masculine norms and help-seeking self-stigma and self-disclosure risks. In line with the results of the study, researchers stated that male university students could volunteer to get help without embarrassment and self-judgment by developing self-compassion skills. Booth, McDermott, Cheng and Borgogna (2019, April) also found in their research self-compassion was negatively related with masculine gender role socialization. On the other hand, according to the results of the study conducted with the male athletes included in the university team of intentional power sports and male university students who are not members of a team, the probability of supporting traditional masculine norms and the levels of self-compassion were higher in athletes than others. Although the researchers emphasized

that the reason for the high level of self-compassion in athletes is not clear, the development of feelings of partnership and comprehend nature of wins and losses as a concept of sportsmanship may be an important factor (Wasylikiw & Clairo, 2018). After the meta-analysis study of Yarnell et al. (2015) Yarnell, Neff, Davidson, and Mullarkey (2018) published a study in which they investigated the role of gender role orientation at the level of self-compassion. In this study, it was found that gender role orientation is an important factor; it has been reported that men and women with androgen and masculine properties have the highest level of self-compassion. In addition, this research stated that the masculine role may be more willing to meet their own needs and to be compassionate in terms of the importance it places on independence. According to results masculinity with medium effect size was the most consistent positive indicator of self-compassion in women and men.

In one of the studies, successful people with the Impostor phenomenon with a high fear of failure; the level of self-compassion has been tested in the context of gender and gender role orientation (Patzak, Kollmayer & Schober, 2017). According to the results of this study, female, feminine and undifferentiated students were found to have lower scores in self-compassion measurements than male, masculine and androgenic individuals. In addition, they stated that individuals with feminine characteristics are more prone to motivate negatively due to the impostor phenomenon compared to masculine individuals. The reason why women are slightly less at self-compassion levels than men is in the literature as their brutally critical attitudes and cruel self-talks (DeVore, 2013; Leadbeater, Kuperminc, Blatt, & Hertzog, 1999; Neff, 2003a). In addition, when women have to make a choice, the option to show compassion to themselves remains secondary because of their self-sacrificing structure that prefers to meet the needs of others. (Baker-Miller, 1986; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004; Ruble & Martin, 1998). Yarnell, Neff, Davidson and Mullarkey (2018) also underlined that if masculine characteristics such as independence women can use feminine, loving and gentle structures together, they can apply self-compassion to themselves. In addition to the studies in which self-compassion differs according to all these gender and gender roles, there are also studies on the side that these differences should not be emphasized

much (Hyde, 2005). In one of the examples in recent studies, it was found that women and men showed no difference in self-compassion overall scores and on the other hand, it was reported that women's over-identification scores were high while men's common humanity scores were low (Murn & Steele, 2019). There are a lot of research findings by Neff and others which are no significant gender differences in terms of self-compassion (Neff, Pisitsungkagarn, & Hsieh, 2008; Neff, Kirkpatrick & Rude, 2007; Neff & Pommier, 2013).

## **2.5. Studies of Psychological Dating Aggression, Rejection Sensitivity, and Self-Compassion**

In this section, the relationship between psychological dating aggression, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion were elaborated with relevant research findings in detail under three subsections.

### **2.5.1. Rejection Sensitivity and Psychological Dating Aggression**

During university years, when close and romantic relationships were handled as a developmental crisis and emotional intensity was felt more; how rejection sensitivity affects the relationship of individuals has attracted the attention of many researchers. Downey and Feldman's (1996) studies pioneered this issue and according to their model, partners with high rejection sensitivity tend to perceive more rejection as deliberately in their relationships, to be unhappy in their relationships, and to behave as jealous and controlling to rejection that they perceived. They reported that men with high rejection sensitivity tend to envy and control their romantic partners more than those with low sensitivity. Women with high rejection sensitivity were found to be more aggressive and colder towards their partners than those who were low (Downey & Feldman, 1996). In addition, when individuals with high sensitivity started a new relationship, it was seen that they considered their partners as indifferent and cold with a negative intention. It was found that women and men with high rejection sensitivity at the beginning of the relationship predicted the possibility of ending the relationship (Downey, Freitas, Michaelis & Khouri, 1998).

In another study, Ayduk, Gyurak and Luerssen (2008) found that high sensitivity to rejection was closely related to the angry reactions to romantic partners. After being reported by Ayduk, Downey, Testa, Yen and Shoda (1999) that male university students with high sensitivity to rejection resort to verbal violence in their relationships; a study investigating the relationship between rejection sensitivity and perpetrating violence behavior of male university students has been conducted (Downey, Feldman, & Ayduk, 2000). It was stated that men with high rejection sensitivity could apply to two different alternative maladaptive strategies as a result of attachment styles. The first one described as "intimacy seeking high rejection sensitive people may be vulnerable to responding to perceived rejection with physical aggression. Thus, we expect that intimacy-seeking high rejection sensitive men will show the heightened risk of intimate violence." and the second one described as "intimacy avoidance high rejection sensitive people may attempt to shield themselves from rejection through reduced involvement in discretionary intimate relationships such as close friendships and serious romantic relationships." (Downey, Feldman, & Ayduk, 2000, p.47). The results of this research have found that male individuals who are intimacy avoidance high rejection sensitive stay away from relationships by making less investment, and intimacy-seeking high rejection sensitive men show more psychological dating perpetration by more investment. On the other hand, intimacy-seeking high rejection sensitive youth are defined as high-risk group in terms of psychological dating victimization because of their fast dependence with needy and mostly interested kind of partners (Downey, Bonica & Rincón, 1999). It has been also found that adolescent female students with high rejection sensitivity, who do not receive acceptance from their peers and important adults in their lives, are more likely to be managed and exposed to violence by their partners in order to maintain their romantic relationships regardless (Purdie & Downey, 2000). It was reported that submissive coping mechanisms were used in cases of high rejection sensitivity especially in women during late adolescence and it was emphasized that they could become vulnerable to violence (Hafen, Spilker, Chango, Marston, & Allen, 2014). Young women who are exposed only to psychological violence continue to stay in

their violent relationships and cannot improve their mental health (Blasco-Ros, Sánchez-Lorente & Martínez, 2010).

The results of Volz and Kerig's (2010) study were found that relational insecurity mediate fully the relationship between rejection sensitivity and psychological dating perpetration, directly related to victimization in a sample of 176 adolescents. In addition, it was emphasized that the sensitivity of rejection may be more related to the perpetration of psychological dating aggression rather than a victim who submits to violence because it contains angry and hostile reactions (Volz & Kerig, 2010). In another aspect, it was stated by Galliher and Bentley (2010) that rejection sensitivity was associated with self-silencing (Harper et.al., 2006) passive behaviors, and it may be related to the role of victimization in psychological dating violence and weakness in romantic relationships. In addition, the results of Galliher and Bentley's (2010) study showed that rejection sensitivity of male adolescents related to higher aggression, whereas rejection sensitivity of girls related to low relationship satisfaction in 92 adolescent romantic couples. The results of a study with only 288 female participants were also reported to childhood emotional maltreatment with rejection sensitivity victimization in their romantic relationships (Kahya, 2018). In one of the recent studies (Gao, Assink, Liu, Chan & Ip, 2019) conveyed that people with high rejection sensitivity is prone in terms of being a victim or showing aggression regardless age and gender by the way of meta-analytic review results of 52 studies conducted between 1990 and 2018. In general, it has been reported by different studies that rejection sensitivity is related to both victimization and perpetration.

### **2.5.2. Self - Compassion and Psychological Dating Aggression**

The interest in studies in the field of self-compassion increased but the number of studies examined in terms of romantic relationships is very limited. Neff and Beretvas's (2013) study result showed that self-compassion is associated with healthier relationships and higher satisfaction and lower verbal aggression in romantic relationships. In line with these results, Jacobson, Wilson, Kurz, and Kellum (2018) also reported that individuals with a high level of self-compassion are prone to

expressing a high level of relationship quality, and self-compassion is a positive predictor of relationship quality. In addition, individuals with high self-compassion were defined by their partners as gentler, understanding, warm, accepting, and respectful to their partners' autonomy (Neff & Beretvas, 2013). On the other side, people with low self-compassion have been described as more dominating and controlling towards their partners (Neff & Beretvas, 2013). The results of a study investigating self-compassion and romantic jealousy in romantic adult relationships reported that individuals with higher self-compassion levels had lower emotional and cognitive jealousy levels (Tandler & Petersen, 2020).

In the violence literature, in which self-compassion was investigated, researchers mostly addressed this relationship in terms of victimization. It has been reported that there is a negative relationship between self-compassion and victimization, individuals with a high level of self-compassion are less affected by negative consequences when exposed to violence, and thus it is a protective method against violence (Játiva & Cerezo, 2014). In a study of self-compassion strategies for survivors abused by their partners, the therapeutic framework for these victims was discussed (Tesh, Learman & Pulliam, 2015). It has been stated that victims who have been subjected to dating aggression by their partners have blamed themselves in a conflict for calming their partner, alleviating the conflict while the relationship continues as a coping strategy. The importance of using self-compassion to reduce self-blame strategy is underlined in this study (Tesh, Learman & Pulliam, 2015). Although self-blame is a method not to trigger perpetrators, it has been reported to have negative consequences in a sample of 131 women with a wide age range (Flicker, Cerulli, Swogger, & Talbott, 2012). According to the results of Erb's (2016) research on self-blame, shame, self-compassion, and intimate partner violence; a negative relationship has been reported between self-compassion and shame and self-blame. It is stated in the research that women who are embarrassed by their partner for being subjected to violence and control may not be able to show compassion to them as a result of abuse. In addition to shame, it is stated that women who blame themselves for the violence they are exposed, may also struggle to show compassion to them. The importance of self-

compassion for victims of violence has been conveyed for future research (Erb, 2016). On the other hand, according to the results of the master's thesis (LeVine, 2018), where the number of participants was insufficient, there was no relationship between self-compassion and experiences of intimate partner violence. In the same study, it was reported that self-compassion and intimate partner violence are related when social support is high.

Although studies on the psychological dating violence with self-compassion are limited; there is another study investigating the relation between sexual violence on women and their self-compassion. In this study, it was stated that women who were exposed to sexual violence had low levels of self-compassion, and it was reported that these women scored high in self-judgment, isolation, and over identification and low in self-kindness subscales of self-compassion (Williamson, 2019). In one of the recent studies, the relationship of people who experienced psychological aggression in a previous intimate relationship with self-kindness, which is the sub-dimension of the self-compassion scale, was investigated (Samios, Raatjes, Ash, Lade, & Langdon, 2020). Those who experience a high degree of psychological aggression have been reported to be associated with less self-kindness.

### **2.5.3. Rejection Sensitivity and Self-Compassion**

Since self-compassion is an emotion regulation method involving awareness and kindness towards intense emotions, it was thought by researchers that it is an effective method to manage anxiety and anger caused by rejection sensitivity. When the relationship between anxiety and self-compassion was measured, individuals with high fear of abandonment and rejection were found to have lower levels of self-compassion (Raque-Bogdan, Ericson, Jackson, Martin, & Bryan, 2011; Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011). Although there is no direct relationship between rejection sensitivity and self-compassion in Christman's (2012) study, no significant relationship has been reported between rejection sensitivity and depression, rejection sensitivity and

relationship satisfaction in highly compassionate people. In a study examining self-compassion, forgiveness, and rejection sensitivity in a sample of 496 university students, it was reported that participants with high self-compassion received a lower rejection sensitivity score (Sakız & Sariçam, 2015). At the end of an experimental study in which participants with the highest rejection sensitivity among 100 female high school students were selected and received compassion-based therapy, the researchers stated that this therapy method could be an effective method to decrease the rejection sensitivity of female students (Ahmadi, Hamid & Marashi, 2018).

In a recent study in which there were two categories of participants with borderline personality disorders and no diagnosis on this subject, the sensitivity of rejection, self-compassion, and aggressive behavior were investigated; self-compassion and rejection sensitivity were reported to have a negative relationship (Sommerfeld & Shechory-Bitton, 2020). They were also found that individuals show more aggressive behaviors in their relationships in cases where there are high rejection sensitivity and low self-compassion. It was emphasized that people who were kind to themselves were less likely to perceive signs of rejection. On the other hand, in one of the master's thesis where individuals' emotional reactions to rejection and self-compassion are investigated in 49 participants with borderline personality traits; it was found that self-compassion did not have a significant impact on these reactions to interpersonal rejection (Northey, 2017).

## **2.6. Summary of the Literature Review**

There was no study in the literature where the variables included in this study were examined together. Thus, the studies that examined them separately are reviewed in this chapter. Although rejection sensitivity is a current concept, leading researchers, who conceptualize it, have also investigated its relationship with dating violence, and many researchers have reported that people with high rejection sensitivity are at high risk of dating violence. Studies conducted in the national and international literature in terms of self-compassion and dating violence and types are quite limited, but available limited studies have reported significant relationships between victimization

of dating violence and low self-compassion. In addition, there are studies reporting a negative significant relationship between self-compassion and rejection sensitivity. When the literature on these study variables in terms of gender is examined, inconsistent results are presented by most of the researchers. In summary, when the literature is reviewed, it is seen that more research is needed in terms of these variables in order to better understand psychological dating aggression phenomenon.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3. METHOD**

In this section, the steps taken in the methodological process followed in this study are explained. In the first part of the chapter, the research design is presented. In the second part, demographic information about the participants and their relationship status are given. Data collection instruments and their psychometric characteristics are introduced in the third part. In the fourth part, the process of data collection starting from the ethics committee permission process is explained. In the following sections, variables are defined operationally, and statistical methods applied for data analysis and then finally, limitations of the research are presented.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The aim of this study is to investigate to what extent rejection sensitivity, self-compassion, and attachment styles of participants predict psychological dating aggression in university students' romantic relationships after age, gender, and duration of the relationship variables were controlled. Demographic Information Form, Rejection Sensitivity Scale, Self-Compassion Scale, Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse, and Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships-II scales were used for data collection. Data was collected as online and dating university students participated in via social media platforms. Correlational research design was used to be in line with this aim. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis models were

used as the primary analysis in this study to evaluate psychological dating violence predictions. Descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis of variance, and independent samples t-test analyses were also conducted to analyze the data.

### **3.2. Participants**

The target population of the research was university students who currently had a romantic relationship. In order to reach university students, convenient and purposeful sampling procedures were applied. Being university students, over the age of 18 and having an ongoing romantic relationship were set as criteria for the participants in the study. University students living in Turkey from 56 different cities participated in the online survey and 52.4 percent of the participants reported that they lived in Ankara. Although 710 people participated in the study, the total number of participants meeting the study criteria was calculated as 554. After removing 156 people who did not meet the study criteria (university students who are currently in a dating relationship over the age of 18) from 710 university students who voluntarily participated in the study, 395 of the total 554 participants were women (71.3%) and 159 (28.7%) were men.

The ages of the participants were between 18 and 38, with an average of 22.65 ( $SD = 2.90$ ). Twenty-four (4.3%) of the students continue their education at associate degree, 376 (67.9%) at the undergraduate level, 138 (24.9%) at the level of master's degree, and 16 (2.9%) at the level of doctorate. In order to better understand the characteristics of the participants, questions were also asked about romantic relationship characteristics in the demographic form. The relationship characteristics are presented in Table 3.1. The ongoing relationship duration of the participants ranged from one week to 120 months. The average relationship duration is 24 months ( $SD = 23.16$ ). Majority of the participants stated their seriousness of the relationship as stable, only 3.1% reported as casual. Considering the future of their current romantic relationships; the percentage of those who thought they would get married (53.6%) and those who had no idea (35.7%) were close to each other. Finally, the vast majority (63.9%) of college students of different ages and grade levels reported as "had more than one" in previous romantic relationships situation.

Table 3.1.  
*Relationship Characteristics of the Participants (n= 554)*

Variables		Gender				Total	
		Female		Male		n	%
		n	%	n	%		
Seriousness of the relationship	Don't Know/Uncertain	64	16.2	15	9.4	79	14.3
	Casual	10	2.5	7	4.4	17	3.1
	Stable/Serious	321	81.3	137	86.2	458	82.7
Contact of face-to-face frequency	Less than a month	50	12.7	15	9.4	65	11.7
	Once a month	41	10.4	8	5.0	49	8.8
	Once a every two week	32	8.1	11	6.9	43	7.8
	Once a week	44	11.1	13	8.2	57	10.3
	Several times a week	115	29.1	56	35.2	171	30.9
	Everyday	71	18.0	34	21.4	105	19.0
	More than once a day	42	10.6	22	13.8	64	11.6
Future of the current relationship	We'll get married	212	53.7	85	53.5	297	53.6
	We'll stay together	32	8.1	13	8.2	45	8.1
	I will break off	7	1.8	4	2.5	11	2.0
	My partner will break of	2	0.5	1	0.6	3	0.5
	No idea/Don't Know	142	35.9	56	35.2	198	35.7
Previous relationship situation	Never had one	67	17.0	18	11.3	85	15.3
	Had one	92	23.3	23	14.5	115	20.8
	Had more than one	236	59.7	118	74.2	354	63.9

Since MANOVA analyses of relationship characteristics variables violate assumptions, they were used only in the sample characteristics information and were not included in further analyses.

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

In this section, the scales were introduced with psychometric information about Demographic Information Form (Appendix B), Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Appendix C), Self-Compassion Scale (Appendix D), Multidimensional Measure of Emotional

Abuse (Appendix E) and Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships-II (Appendix F).

### **3.3.1. Demographic Information Form**

Demographic information form was developed to collect data about participants' basic demographics as gender, age, where they live, and current level of studying at the university. Relationship characteristics were also gathered such as in an ongoing romantic relationship or broke up in the last 6 months, length of the relationship in months, type of ongoing relationship (don't know/no idea, casual, stable/serious), frequency of face to face contact (less than a month, once a month, once every two week, once a week, several times a week, every day, more than once a day), future of ongoing relationship (we'll get married, we'll stay together, I will break off, my partner will break off, don't know/no idea about future) and previous relationships status (never had a relationship before, had one, had more than one).

### **3.3.2. Rejection Sensitivity Scale**

The 18-item scale, developed by Downey and Feldman (1996), includes some hypothetical social situations in which a person has the potential to be rejected (e.g., "You want support from your parents for a trip abroad"). The participants evaluated these items on a 6-point Likert-type scale, indicating both their degree of anxiety about the situation they faced (e.g., "How much are you worried or worried about whether your parents may want to help you?"; 1 = never worried/ don't feel anxious, 6 = I am very worried / anxious) and their expectations of acceptance (e.g., "I would expect my parents to be willing to help me"; 1 = very small probability, 6 = very likely). The level of rejection sensitivity is calculated by first reverse-coding to represent the inverse of the expectation of acceptance and then multiplying it with the rejection anxiety assessment. Once this is done for each item, all points are added and divided by 18. Thus, the score of rejection sensitivity level, which can vary between 1-36 ranges, is obtained.

Downey and Feldman (1996) found the internal consistency coefficient to be .83 and the three weeks test-retest reliability as .83. Test-retest reliability was found to be .78 with four months intervals. They also found that individuals with a high rejection sensitivity, perceived a higher level of "rejection" in their interpersonal interactions where rejection status was certain or not clear, compared to people with low rejection sensitivity. This finding can be accepted as a predictive validity of the rejection sensitivity scale. The predictive validity of rejection sensitivity has also been demonstrated by individuals having a high rejection sensitivity, with the intention to hurt the negative behavior of their new romantic partners (Downey & Feldman, 1996). The adaptation of the Rejection Sensitivity Scale in Turkish and evaluation of its psychometrics were conducted by Göncü Köse, Özen- Çıplak, Ulaşan Özgüle and Sümer (2017). During the adaptation procedure of the rejection sensitivity scale to Turkish, it was completed by university students in two separate studies. In addition, in order to test the predictive validity of the scale, participants in the sample of the first study used the quality of friendship and attachment styles in close relationships scales; participants in the sample of the second study completed the responsibility attributions to negative romantic partner behaviors and variable self-esteem scales. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .85 and .82, respectively in their study. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire calculated as .81 for the total scale.

### **3.3.3. Self-Compassion Scale**

Self-Compassion Scale is a self-evaluation scale developed by Neff (2003b), which consists of 26-items and includes six sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are self-kindness (e.g., "I try to be insightful and patient against the aspects of my personality that I don't like") against self-judgment (e.g., "I can be a little hard-hearted against myself in times of distress."); common humanity (e.g., "When I feel inadequate somehow, I try to remind myself that most people may experience such inadequacy.") against social isolation (e.g., "While I was struggling with difficulties, I tend to feel that other people's living conditions are easier than mine."); mindfulness (e.g., "When something hurts, I try to see the situation from a certain mental distance,

from a balanced perspective.”) against over identification (e.g., "When I feel sad, I tend to be obsessed and set up everything that goes wrong."). Participants states how often they experienced the situation stated in each item on 5-grade Likert type scales (1 = Never, 5 = Always).

Turkish adaptation study of this scale was carried out first by Akın, Akın and Abacı (2007) and then by Deniz, Kesici, and Sümer (2008). However, authors have suggested that the validity and reliability of the sample required to be tested again in Turkey. Therefore, Kantaş and İmamoğlu (2013b) have adapted the form by repeating the relevant translation and back translation processes and comparing it with the other two former adaptations. Kantaş's (2013) adaptation used in this study because it has satisfactory internal reliability with a value of .94. It was one of the most equivalent adaptations to the original form in terms of meaning as compared to other adaptations. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire calculated as .91 for the total scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the subdimensions of self-compassion questionnaire calculated as for self-kindness .85, for self-judgment .86, for common humanity .80, for isolation .76, for mindfulness .77, for over identification .81.

#### **3.3.4. Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse**

The Multidimensional Emotional Abuse Scale (Murphy & Hoover, 1999) is a self-report measure covering 56-items (28-items for victimization and 28-items for perpetration) and is developed to determine the behaviors of resorting to psychological aggression among dating individuals. Both victimization and perpetration dimensions include four subscales with seven items each: Restrictive Engulfment (RE), Denigration (DEN), Hostile Withdrawal (HW), and Dominance/Intimidation (D/I). RE includes behaviors aimed at limiting and controlling partner's social relationships through jealousy to increase partner dependency (e.g., "I tried to make my partner feel guilty because we couldn't spend enough time together"). DEN includes humiliation and defamatory behaviors and verbal bullying to harm the partner's self-esteem and self-worth (e.g., "I addressed my partner with a poor, unsuccessful or similar

statement”). HW includes behaviors aimed to avoid the partner during a conflict and retain emotional usability to increase anxiety or distrust about the relationship (e.g., “I was cold or distant to my partner when I got angry”). D/I includes behaviors and verbal attacks aimed to destroy possession and threaten through verbal aggression to produce fear and obedience in the partner (e.g., “I drove a car dangerously to scare my partner.”). Each item in the scale measured how often the behaviors occurred in the last 6 months, which is rated on 7-point frequency scale. Numbers in frequency represent that "1" has only happened once in the past year, "2" twice, "3" three-five times, "4" six-ten times, "5" eleven-twenty times, "6" more than twenty times, "7" indicates that has not been in the last six months but happened before that, "0" indicates that never. Scores are obtained by summing up the answers for each subscale and ranges from 0 to 42. The high scores of the participants from the relevant subscales indicate the excessive behaviors that include psychological aggression.

The scale was adapted to Turkish by Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer, and Murphy (2018). The first findings about psychometric properties provide evidence that the scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool for measuring psychological aggression behaviors of university students in dating relationships. Confirmatory factor analyses results showed that similar and acceptable evidence for the construct validity of the MMEA-TR for both perpetration and victimization. The four-factor model was confirmed among dating university students and the results provided further empirical evidence for construct validity of the MMEA for both perpetration and victimization. For each subscale of MMEA-TR, Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was calculated both for perpetration and victimization to assess internal consistency. In terms of perpetration, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value was calculated as .74 for RE, .68 for DEN, .83 for HW and .72 for D/I. For victimization, Cronbach's was calculated as .73 for  $\alpha$  RE, .70 for DEN, .86 for HW and .77 for D / I. The total Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the perpetration and victimization dimensions of the MMEA-TR were also found .89 and .90 by Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer and Murphy (2018), respectively.

In the present study, for each subscale of the MMEA-TR, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated both for perpetration and victimization to assess internal consistency. In terms of perpetration, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value was calculated as .79 for RE, .83 for DEN, .84 for HW, and .87 for D/I. For victimization, Cronbach's was calculated as .82 for  $\alpha$  RE, .85 for DEN, .88 for HW, and .87 for D/I. The total Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the perpetration and victimization dimensions of the MMEA-TR were found .80 and .82., respectively.

### **3.3.5. Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships-II**

The "Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships-II" developed by Fraley et al. (2000), consists of 36 items, 18 of which are anxiety (e.g., "I am afraid of losing the love of the person I am with.") and 18 of which measure the avoidance (e.g., "It would be hard for me to trust and believe in those I have a romantic relationship with.") dimensions. Participants were asked to evaluate to what extent each item reflects their feelings and thoughts in their romantic relationships on 7-interval scales (1 = never agree, 7 = fully agree). Anxiety and avoidance scores calculated for each participant by averaging items regarding relevant dimensions. Both avoidance and anxiety dimensions had a high level of internal consistency, and Cronbach alpha coefficients were .90 and .86 for these dimensions, respectively. It was also found that the test-retest reliability of anxiety dimension was .82 and the avoidance dimension was .81. Both dimensions were found to have a high internal consistency and high test-retest reliability.

In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated as .90 for the total scale. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the anxiety was found .87 and for the avoidance attachment dimension of the YIYE-II was found .88.

## **3.4. Data Collection Procedure**

Before proceeding with the data collection process, in accordance with the purpose of the research, authors who developed and adapted the instruments have been contacted

via e-mail and received of their permission to use instruments. Then, demographic information form was created. Permission was obtained from the human research ethics committee of the Middle East Technical University Applied Ethics Research Center for the data collection process. An online survey link, which continues with demographic forms and scales after the approval of the participant including the information and consent form, was created through Google Forms. University students who have an ongoing romantic relationship were asked to participate in the online survey. Data were collected via relevant online sources. In order to reach the targeted number of participants, assistance was requested from the student communities of universities and thesis solidarity groups for sharing. After reaching the sufficient number of female participants, the announcement was made only for male participants. The target number could not be reached after announcement for men. The data collection process was completed between December 2, 2019 and March 2, 2020, since the transition to the analysis phase is necessary, even if the target number cannot be reached.

### **3.5. Description of Variables**

In this section, variables in the study are defined operationally.

Age: refers to the age of the participants as a continuous variable.

Gender: refers to the biological sex of the participants as categorical variable. No statement containing gender identity was specified. For hierarchical multiple regression analyses, it was dummy coded as 0 = female; 1 = male.

Duration of the relationship: refers to a continuous variable that expresses the duration of the relationship that the participants indicate as the number of months.

Rejection sensitivity: refers to the total score obtained from the Rejection Sensitivity scale.

Self-Compassion: refers to the average score of the self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over identification subscales of the Self-Compassion scale.

Psychological Dating Violence Victimization: refers to the sum of the scores obtained from restrictive engulfment, denigration, hostile withdrawal, and dominance subscales victimization dimension of the Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse scale.

Psychological Dating Violence Perpetration: refers to the sum of the scores obtained from restrictive engulfment, denigration, hostile withdrawal, and dominance subscales perpetration dimension of the Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse scale.

Anxiety Attachment: refers the mean scores obtained from anxiety attachment sub-dimension of Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships-II.

Avoidance Attachment: refers to the mean scores obtained from avoidance attachment sub-dimension of Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships-II.

Psychological dating violence victimization and perpetration, which are dependent (criterion) variables of the study, were measured by the Multidimensional Emotional Abuse Scale and the total score was calculated with its sub-dimensions. While the total score varies between 0 and 168, the scores of sub-dimensions such as restrictive engulfment, denigration, hostile withdrawal, and dominance can varies between 0 and 42. Rejection sensitivity, self-compassion, and attachment styles are independent (predictor) variables of the study. Rejection sensitivity was measured by the Rejection Sensitivity Scale and the total scores varies between 0 and 36. One to 7 points are obtained from the anxiety and avoidance styles from the Inventory of Experiences in Close Relationships. Self-compassion was measured by the Self-Compassion Scale and the total scores obtained from the self-compassion scale ranged from 1 to 5.

### **3.6. Data Analyses**

The steps followed in the data analyses procedure were presented in this section. In the data screening process, when the data collection was terminated, e-table was created, and all the data was merged in the excel file. Scale items on the excel file were abbreviated according to their sub-dimensions and order, and then the excel file was transferred to SPSS 22 version. As a mistake of Google Forms, duplicated data of the answers of the same participants were cleared on SPSS. Label arrangements were made for categorical variables and reverse items were re-coded within the scales. The total scores of the subdimensions and scales were calculated, and missing data were controlled.

Descriptive statistics and assumption checks were carried out at first. Then, reliability analyses were run for the total scales and sub-dimensions of the scales, and Cronbach alpha values were calculated. After these processes were completed, the main data analyses were carried out by IBM Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS). MANOVA and independent t-tests analyses were conducted regarding the first research question of this study to investigate the gender differences in psychological dating victimization and perpetration, rejection sensitivity, anxiety and avoidance attachment, and self-compassion. Two separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed regarding research question 2 and 3 to examine to what extent psychological dating violence perpetration and victimization predicted by rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and self-compassion after controlling for gender, age, and duration of the relationship. In all statistical analyses, .05 alpha level was chosen as the statistical significance criterion and all analyses were performed by the IBM (2013) Statistical Packages of Social Sciences 22.0 (SPSS) version.

### **3.7. Limitations of the Study**

This study had a number of limitations observed during the data collection process. Since data was collected using the convenient sampling method via social media, university students from 56 different cities, half of whom were from Ankara,

participated in the research. The number of participants could not be reached to represent 56 different cities. It was therefore one of the limitations of this study and results cannot be generalized to all university students in Turkey. Moreover, although a special effort was made to increase the number of male participants in the data collection process, the sample was not balanced in terms of gender (female 71.4% and 28.6% male). Some of the male participants who participated in the research reported to the researcher that it took too long to complete the questionnaire and they found it unnecessary. As another limitation, the sub-dimensions of self-compassion and psychological dating violence measures were not included in the analysis and total scores were used. More detailed predictions could be reported if included.

The current study also contains some limitations due to the correlational design of the research.

No causality interpretation can be drawn from the results. Although the scale items in the questionnaire contain many emotional expressions, strong emotions such as anxiety, fear, and violence are mostly included. For this reason, there are risks of participants not being honest enough to express their emotional state and behavior and giving socially desired answers. This may have affected their self-report even though their identity has been kept confidential.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4.RESULTS**

In this section, the analyses and results of the data obtained at the end of the data collection process are explained. The results are reported by classifying the analyses as preliminary and primary. Preliminary analyses contain assumption checks, data screening, missing data, outlier analysis, normality tests, linearity and homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, assumption of independence of errors, descriptive statistics of study variables and bivariate correlations. Then, MANOVA and t-test results are presented in terms of gender comparison of the variables. Next, results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses utilized to examine how rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and self-compassion predict psychological dating victimization and perpetration are displayed. Lastly, this chapter is ended with a summary of the results.

#### **Preliminary Analyses**

In preliminary analyses procedure, data screening procedure was completed to get ready for the main analyses. Reverse items were re-coded, total, and sub-dimension scores of the scales were calculated. Data file was checked for missing data. Normality was tested and outliers were checked. Finally, the raw data were made carried out to test the hypotheses and conducted the primary analyses.

#### **4.1.1. Assumption Checks**

Prior to the hierarchical regression analyses, preliminary analyses were carried out to see that normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity assumptions were not violated.

##### **4.1.1.1. Data Screening**

During the data screening process, firstly inputs were checked for errors to verify the accuracy of the data. Input errors have been removed and the data has been made ready for analysis. In addition, minimum-maximum values and ranges were checked through frequencies and data screening process was completed.

##### **4.1.1.2. Sample Size**

Different authors tend to provide different criteria for the number of cases required for multiple regression. Stevens (1996) states that in social science research, 15 participants per predictor are needed for a reliable equation. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) provide a formula that takes into account the number of arguments you want to use to calculate the sample size:  $N > 50 + 8m$  ( $m$ : number of arguments). According to this calculation, the number of participants ( $n=554$ ) is sufficient for this research. They stated that if the dependent variable is skewed to one side, more participants are needed. According to the scale of psychological dating violence, there are two dependent variables, which are perpetration and victimization. Although these variables appear to be skewed positively, the possibility of skewness to be balanced may be difficult as self-reported violent behaviors were measured.

##### **4.1.1.3. Missing Data**

In the online questionnaire, answering each item for continuous variables was made obligatory during the data collection process. The participants who completed the

questionnaire confirmed that there was an option to leave the questionnaire at any time at the beginning of the questionnaire.

#### **4.1.1.4. Outlier Analysis**

Considering the histogram at first, there were data in the tail parts of the distribution at the end points among other data, but number of cases were not high. These values were checked as a result of the analysis and no mistake observed in data entry. There was no significant difference when the Trimmed Mean value and the averages of the variables were taken. In the regression analyses results, 10 cases for victimization and 7 cases for perpetration were found as outliers in the casewise diagnostic table. Cook's distance values were checked, and maximum values were evaluated as .16 and .22, which indicated that there was no major problem since they were less than 1 (Cook & Weisberg, 1982). Since there was no difference in the preliminary analyses results in case of the removal of these cases, the researcher decided to include these outliers.

#### **4.1.1.5. Normality Tests**

After all variables were checked, compared with their mean values and 5% Trimmed Mean value, outliers did not make a significant difference in the mean. For example, the average value of the psychological dating violence perpetration variable that showed a positive distortion was 26.09 while the Trimmed Mean value was 23.94 and for victimization mean was 25.6 whereas Trimmed mean value was 23.07. While Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) accepted the range of  $\pm 3.29$  as normal distribution, it was acceptable for normality to be in the range of  $\pm 2$  according to George and Mallery (2010). Skewness values for psychological dating violence victimization were between 1.860 and .104, kurtosis was between 4.693 and .207, while skewness values for perpetration variable were between 1.801 and .104, kurtosis values were between 5.078 and .207. According to the normality standards of Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the kurtosis values of the psychological dating violence perpetration variable were violated. According to the results of the Tests of normality, the significance value with respect to the results of the Shapiro-Wilk plant was .000, and the normality assumption

was violated according to this value, the data were not normally distributed below in Figure 4.1 and 4.2. This situation was frequently seen in large samples (Pallant, 2015).

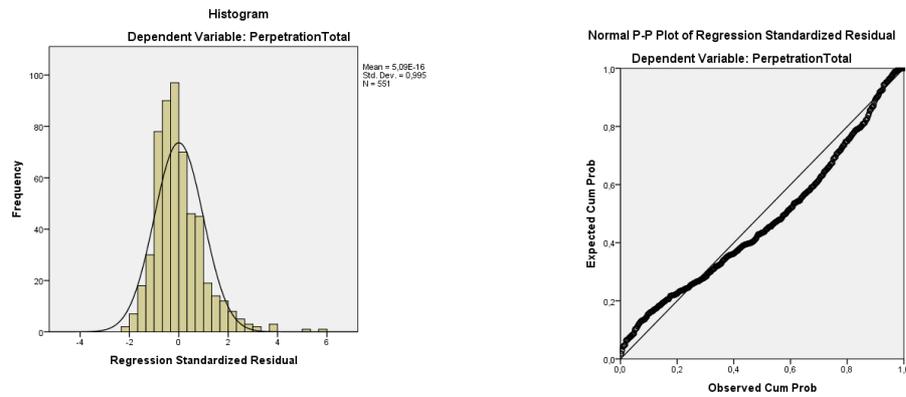


Figure 4.1. The histogram and normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual for victimization.

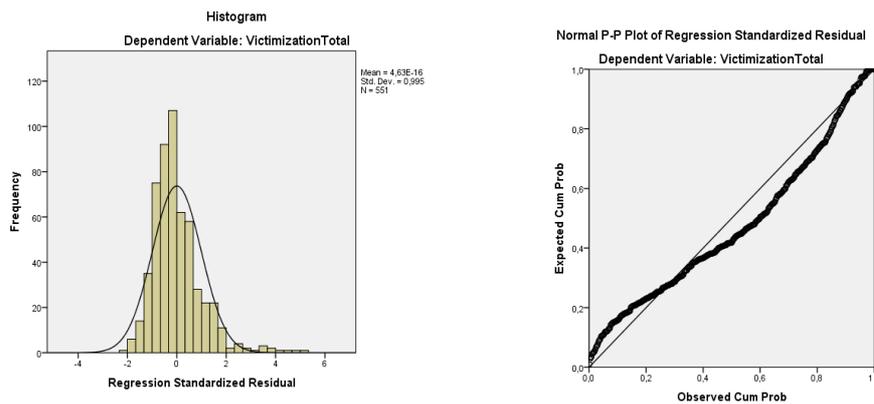


Figure 4.2. The histogram and normal P-P plot of regression standardized residual for perpetration.

#### 4.1.1.6. Linearity and Homoscedasticity

The linearity assumption was examined by controlling the normal probability plot for both dependent variables. Although there were some deviations, the points in the plot generally followed a straight line. Homoscedasticity assumption was also examined by controlling scatter plots for both variables. Values between  $\pm 3$  are required to validate the homoscedasticity assumption. Although scatterplots show some outlier values, both of them do not show a major problem as seen below in Figure 4.3.

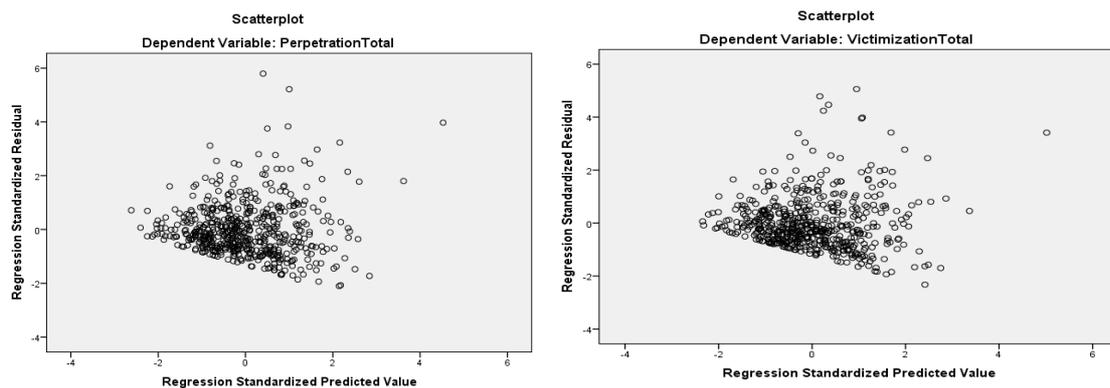


Figure 4.3. Scatterplot of regression standardized predicted value for victimization (left) and perpetration (right).

#### 4.1.1.7. Multicollinearity

In this study, multicollinearity was tested for two dependent variables investigated as psychological dating violence victimization and perpetration. When the relationship of perpetration and victimization variables with other independent variables was checked, there was no greater correlation coefficient value than .70 ( $r = .26$  max.) Correlation between each of the independent variables was not too high either. The highest correlation coefficient value was found to be -.46 significant relationship between self-compassion and anxious attachment variables. Therefore, all values were preserved. Variance inflation factors (VIF) and tolerance values in the coefficients table for the collinearity diagnostics process were also determined for multivariate multicollinearity. Tolerance indicates that how much of a given argument is not explained by other variables in the model. If this value is less than .10, it indicates the possibility of multicollinearity. Variance inflation factors is the opposite of the is tolerance value and values above 10 indicate multicollinearity. In this study, tolerance values varied between .99 and .77. These values were also supported by 1.484, the highest value for VIF with a common breakpoint less than 10. Therefore, the proposition of multicollinearity was not violated.

#### 4.1.1.8. Assumption of Independence of Errors

The Durbin-Watson coefficient test was conducted to examine the assumption of the independence of errors. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the value should be close to 2 in order not to violate the assumption. In this study, Durbin-Watson value was calculated as 1.833 in the analysis for psychological dating violence perpetration and as 1.891 in the analysis for victimization. These values showed that the assumptions were not violated.

#### 4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

As shown in Table 4.1, descriptive data of selected variables were summarized. For example, considering the rejection sensitivity variable, 554 participants ranged between 1-18.67 with an average of 7.65 and a standard deviation of 3.0. For self-compassion variable participants ranged between 1.23-4.62 with an average of 3.05 and a standard deviation of .69.

Table 4.1.  
*Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables*

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Potential Range	Actual Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Rejection Sensitivity	554	7.65	3.00	1-36	1-18.67	.54	.44
Self-Compassion	554	3.05	0.69	1-5	1.23-4.62	-.138	-.54
Victimization Total	554	25.64	23.89	0-168	0-151	1.86	4.69
Perpetration Total	554	26.13	22.03	0-168	0-148	1.80	5.08
Anxiety Attachment	554	3.49	1.04	1-7	1.33-6.39	.40	-.42
Avoidance Attachment	554	2.47	0.94	1-7	1-6.33	.70	.21

In terms of psychological dating violence as the victimization variable of the study mean score was 25.6 ( $SD = 23.89$ ) and perpetration variable of the study, mean score was 26.12 ( $SD = 22.03$ ) with potential range varied between 0-168. In terms of

inventory of experiences in close relationships as the anxiety attachment variable of the study mean score was 3.49 ( $SD = 1.04$ ) and avoidance attachment variable of the study, mean score was 2.47 ( $SD = .94$ ) with potential range varied between 1-7. In the sample of this study, the prevalence rates of psychological dating victimization were found as 93.4% in women and 95.6 % in men and for perpetration 96.2% in women and 96.9% in men.

### 4.3. Bivariate Correlations Among Study Variables

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to define the relationship between variables, strength, and direction of the relationship. As a result of the analysis, the coefficients of the variables are presented in Table 4.2. Correlation coefficients between 0 and 1 were interpreted by Cohen (1988) as .10 to .29 as weak, from .30 to .49 as moderate, and from .50 to 1.00 as strong. There are significant relationships between the variables of the study and results are in the range of weak and moderate regarding Cohen's standards. Firstly, the number of participants in the correlations table was checked and no missing data was found. Looking at the Table 4.2, self-compassion had a strong negative relationship with all variables except for age.

Self-compassion was significantly and negatively correlated with rejection sensitivity ( $r = -.25, p < .01$ ), psychological dating perpetration ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ), psychological dating victimization ( $r = -.13, p < .01$ ), anxiety attachment ( $r = -.46, p < .01$ ), and avoidance attachment ( $r = -.16, p < .01$ ); whereas positively correlated with age ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ). Anxiety attachment was significantly and positively correlated with rejection sensitivity ( $r = .24, p < .01$ ), psychological dating perpetration ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ), psychological dating victimization ( $r = .28, p < .01$ ), and avoidance attachment ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ). Avoidance attachment was significantly and positively correlated with psychological dating perpetration ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ), and psychological dating victimization ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ). Psychological dating violence perpetration and victimization were positively and significantly correlated ( $r = .84, p < .01$ ). Also, age was significantly and negatively correlated with anxiety attachment ( $r = -.13, p < .05$ ), and rejection sensitivity ( $r = -.16, p < .01$ ). Relationship duration was significantly and

negatively correlated with rejection sensitivity ( $r = -.10, p < .01$ ), anxiety attachment ( $r = -.13, p < .01$ ) and avoidance attachment ( $r = -.09, p < .01$ ); whereas significantly and positively correlated with age ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ), and dating violence victimization ( $r = .10, p < .05$ ).

Table 4.2.  
*Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Age	1	.324**	-.156**	.127*	.037	.068	-.133*	-.021
2.Duration of Relationship		1	-.095**	.063	.101*	.076	-.129**	-.089*
3.RejectionSensitivity			1	-.246**	-.080	-.079	.242**	.078
4.Self-Compassion				1	-.131**	-.202**	-.454**	-.160**
5.Victimization					1	.839**	.279**	.321**
6.Perpetration						1	.318**	.290**
7.Anxiety Attachment							1	.379**
8. Avoidance Attachment								1

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

#### 4.4. Results Regarding Gender Differences

In line with the first question of this study, MANOVA and independent sample t-test analyses were conducted to examine gender differences in terms of psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration, anxiety and avoidance attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion of the participants.

##### 4.4.1. MANOVA Results for Gender Comparison

Single factor MANOVA analysis was carried out separately to make group comparison of dependent variables, and independent attachment variables with

gender. Before MANOVA was performed, preliminary analyses were conducted to check the sample size, normality, outliers, linearity, homogeneity of regression assumptions. Since there was no violation of assumptions for anxiety and avoidance attachment variables, the result was found different for dependent variables. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices of results showed no violation of the homogeneity of variance and covariance matrices for anxiety and avoidance attachment variables (Box's M = 1.501,  $F(2, 428) = .126, p = .68$ ), whereas a violation of the homogeneity of variance and covariance matrices was found for psychological dating violence victimization and perpetration (Box's M = 23.75,  $F(2, 551) = .000, p = .000$ ). According to the results of Levene's test given in Table 4.3, none of the variables revealed significant values; therefore, the existence of equal variances was assumed.

Table 4.3.  
*Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances*

	F	df1	df2	<i>p</i>
Perpetration	.020	1	552	.889
Victimization	1.442	1	552	.230
Anxiety Attachment	.301	1	552	.583
Avoidance Attachment	.121	1	552	.728

By adjusting the Bonferroni procedure, a higher alpha value was determined to reduce the likelihood of Type 1 error. The original alpha value of .05 was set to .025 by dividing the number of variables in both analyses. After Bonferroni applied as shown in Table 4.4, no statistically significant difference was found between men and women for attachment variables (anxiety and avoidance),  $F(2, 551) = 2.08, p = .126$ ; Wilk's Lambda = .99;  $\eta^2 = .008$ . Moreover, statistically significant difference was not found between men and women for perpetration and victimization,  $F(2, 551) = 8.73, p = .000$ ; Wilk's Lambda = .97;  $\eta^2 = .031$ .

Table 4.4.  
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Univariate Test Results for Gender*

	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>sd</i>	ANOVA		
					Type III <i>ss</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Perpetration	Female	395	26.5	22.1	292.48	.602	.438
	Male	159	24.9	21.8			
Victimization	Female	395	24.6	22.9	1376.1	2.416	.121
	Male	159	28.1	25.9			
Anxiety Attachment	Female	395	3.5	1.03	4.13	3.81	.051
	Male	159	3.3	1.06			
Avoidance Attachment	Female	395	2.4	.95	.032	.036	.849
	Male	159	2.4	.91			

#### 4.4.2. Independent Sample t-test Results Regarding Gender

Independent samples t-tests were conducted separately to compare the rejection sensitivity and self-compassion scores of female and male participants. Before the tests were carried out, the results of the Levene's tests were evaluated to check the assumptions to measure the equality of variances. According to the results, homogeneity of variance assumption was violated for rejection sensitivity whereas not violated for self-compassion. Therefore, t value was selected according to "equal variances not assumed" option for rejection sensitivity.

According to the results of the rejection sensitivity test, there was no significant difference between the scores of women ( $M = 7.6$ ,  $SD = 2.83$ ) and men ( $M = 7.68$ ,  $SD = 3.37$ );  $t(252) = -.145$ ,  $p = .89$ ,  $\eta^2 = .001$ . According to the results of the self-compassion test, there was a significant difference between the scores of women ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) and men ( $M = 3.15$ ,  $SD = .65$ );  $t(552) = -2.053$ ,  $p = .041$ ,  $\eta^2 = .008$ . Nevertheless, according to the Cohen's d criteria (1988), results of the analyses indicated small effect size ( $\eta^2$ ; .2 = small, .5 = medium, and .8 = large).

Table 4.5.  
*Independent Sample t-test Results Regarding Gender*

Gender		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Rejection	Female	395	7.64	2.83	-.145	252.09	.885
Sensitivity	Male	159	7.68	3.37			
Self-Compassion	Female	395	3.01	.71	-2.053	552	.041*
	Male	159	3.15	.65			

Note. \* $p < .05$

#### 4.5. Hierarchical Regression Analyses

In line with the second question of this study, a Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to find out to what extent attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion predicted psychological dating aggression victimization, after gender, age and duration of the relationship were controlled.

In hierarchical regression analysis, unlike multiple regressions, variables entered in steps in a predetermined order (Pallant, 2015). In this study, gender, age, and relationship duration were entered in the first step and possible effects on the psychological dating violence victimization were kept under control. In the first step, gender, age, and duration of relationship variables explained 2.2% of the variance  $\Delta R^2 = 2.2$ ,  $\Delta F(3, 546) = 4.01$ ,  $p < .05$  in victimization. In the second step, anxiety and avoidance attachment variables were added to find their contributions to the model and the total variance significantly explained in by the Model 2 was computed as 16.7%,  $\Delta R^2 = 14.5$ ,  $\Delta F(5, 544) = 47.35$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the third step, the rejection sensitivity variable was entered to the Model 3 and the variance was found as 18.9% with  $\Delta R^2 = 2.2$ ,  $\Delta F(6, 543) = 14.88$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the last step, the self-compassion variable was entered to the model. Model 4 explained the 19% of the variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ,  $\Delta F(7, 542) = .73$ ,  $p < .05$ . Additionally, self-compassion explained additional 0.1% of the variance in victimization.

In the Model 1, only duration of the relationship is a significant predictor for victimization ( $\beta = .13, p < .05$ ). In Model 2, gender ( $\beta = .10, p < .05$ ), duration of the relationship ( $\beta = .18, p < .001$ ), anxiety attachment ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ) and avoidance attachment variables ( $\beta = .26, p < .001$ ) significantly predicted victimization. In Model 3, gender ( $\beta = .10, p < .05$ ), duration of the relationship ( $\beta = .14, p < .001$ ), age ( $\beta = -.08, p < .05$ ), anxiety attachment ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ), avoidance attachment ( $\beta = .26, p < .001$ ) and rejection sensitivity ( $\beta = -.16, p < .001$ ) significantly predicted victimization. Lastly, as shown in Table 4.6, gender ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ), duration of the relationship ( $\beta = .17, p < .001$ ), anxiety attachment ( $\beta = .23, p < .001$ ) avoidance attachment ( $\beta = .26, p < .001$ ), and rejection sensitivity ( $\beta = -.16, p < .001$ ) significantly predicted victimization whereas self-compassion ( $\beta = -.04, p < .001$ ) was not found as a significant predictor of victimization.

Table 4.6

*Results of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Victimization*

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>Adjusted R</i> <sup>2</sup>
1 (Constant)	36.27	8.13		.000	.022	.022	.016
Duration of Relationship	.14	.05	.13	.003*			
Gender	4.07	2.24	.08	.070			
Age	-.67	.37	-.08	.070			
2 (Constant)	-1.07	8.61		.901	.167	.145	.159
Duration of Relationship	.18	.04	.18	.000**			
Gender	5.24	2.08	.10	.012*			
Age	-.52	.34	-.06	.128			
Anxiety Attachment	4.65	.98	.20	.000**			
Avoidance Attachment	6.58	1.08	.26	.000**			
3 (Constant)	9.09	8.91		.308	.189	.022	.18
Duration of Relationship	.18	.04	.14	.000**			
Gender	5.44	2.06	.10	.008*			
Age	-.67	.34	-.08	.049*			
Anxiety Attachment	5.47	.99	.24	.000**			
Avoidance Attachment	6.53	1.06	.26	.000**			
Rejection Sensitivity	-1.24	.32	-.16	.000**			
4 (Constant)	14.21	10.78		.186	.19	.001	.179
Duration of Relationship	.18	.04	.17	.000**			
Gender	5.55	2.06	.11	.007*			
Age	-.65	.34	-.08	.056			
Anxiety Attachment	5.11	1.08	.23	.000**			
Avoidance Attachment	6.54	1.06	.26	.000**			
Rejection Sensitivity	-1.28	.33	-.16	.000**			
Self-Compassion	-1.3	1.52	-.04	.392			

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

In line with the third question of this study, Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis was also conducted to find out to what extent attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion predicted psychological dating aggression perpetration, after gender, age and duration of the relationship were controlled. The same steps were followed for perpetration and in the first step, gender, age, and duration of the

relationship variables explained 1.6% of the variance  $\Delta R^2 = 1.6$ ,  $\Delta F(3, 546) = 2.94$ ,  $p < .05$  in perpetration. In the second step, anxiety and avoidance attachment variables were added to find their contributions to the model and the total variance significantly explained in by the Model 2 was computed as 15.6%,  $\Delta R^2 = 14$ ,  $\Delta F(5, 544) = 45.21$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the third step, the rejection sensitivity variable was entered to the Model 3, after duration of relationship, age, gender, and attachment styles were controlled and the variance was found as 18.2%,  $\Delta R^2 = 2.5$ ,  $\Delta F(6, 543) = 16.85$ ,  $p < .05$ . In the last step, the self-compassion variable was entered to the Model 4 and the whole model explained 18.9% of the variance  $\Delta R^2 = 0.8$ ,  $\Delta F(7, 542) = 5.2$ ,  $p < .05$ .

In Model 1, duration of the relationship ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and age ( $\beta = -.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly predicted perpetration. In Model 2, duration of the relationship ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ), anxiety attachment ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and avoidance attachment variables ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predicted perpetration. In Model 3, duration of the relationship ( $\beta = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ), age ( $\beta = -.01$ ,  $p < .05$ ), anxiety attachment ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $p < .001$ ), avoidance attachment ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and rejection sensitivity ( $\beta = -.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly predicted perpetration. Finally, as shown in Table 4.7, duration of the relationship ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < .001$ ), age ( $\beta = -.09$ ,  $p < .05$ ), anxiety attachment ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), avoidance attachment ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ), rejection sensitivity ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and self-compassion ( $\beta = -.10$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly predicted perpetration.

Table 4.7  
*Results of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Perpetration*

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>Adjusted R</i> <sup>2</sup>
1 (Constant)	41.58	7.52		.000	.016	.016	.011
Duration of Relationship	.1	.04	.11	.017*			
Gender	-1.16	2.07	-.02	.576			
Age	-.78	.34	-.10	.023*			
2 (Constant)	5.87	7.99		.463	.156	.140	.148
Duration of Relationship	.15	.04	.15	.000**			
Gender	.09	1.93	.002	.964			
Age	-.61	.32	-.08	.058			
Anxiety Attachment	5.25	.91	.25	.000**			
Avoidance Attachment	4.86	.99	.21	.000**			
3 (Constant)	15.89	8.25		.055	.182	.025	.173
Duration of Relationship	.14	.04	.15	.000**			
Gender	.28	1.91	.01	.882			
Age	-.75	.32	-.01	.018*			
Anxiety Attachment	6.06	.92	.29	.000**			
Avoidance Attachment	4.81	.99	.21	.000**			
Rejection Sensitivity	-1.22	.3	-.17	.000**			
4 (Constant)	28.41	9.9		.004	.189	.008	.179
Duration of Relationship	.14	.4	.146	.000**			
Gender	.54	1.9	.01	.777			
Age	-.71	.32	-.09	.025*			
Anxiety Attachment	5.19	1	.246	.000**			
Avoidance Attachment	4.82	.98	.206	.000**			
Rejection Sensitivity	-1.32	.3	-.18	.000**			
Self-Compassion	-3.18	1.4	-.10	.024*			

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

#### 4.6. Summary of the Results

Considering the research questions of the study, independent sample t-tests, MANOVA, and hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted, and their assumptions were tested. In line with the first question of the study, MANOVA and independent sample t-tests analyses were performed to investigate gender differences. According to the results, only a slight significant difference was found between men

and women in the self-compassion variable and other variables did not differ in terms of gender.

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed within the scope of the second and third questions of the study. Results of the analyses revealed that the duration of relationship, rejection sensitivity, anxiety and attachment variables were significant predictors for both victimization and perpetration. Within the scope of the second and third research questions, variance values were found as 19% and 18.9%, respectively. While being male was a significant predictor for victimization, age and self-compassion were found to be a significant predictor for only perpetration. It was found that resort to psychological aggression perpetration decreased as the age and self-compassion level increased.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Parallel to the aim of the study, which is investigating the role of Turkish emerging adults' conflict resolution and attachment styles on romantic relationship commitment considering contributions of satisfaction, investment, and quality of alternatives after gender, relationship duration, and student status were controlled, quantitative correlational design was used via using MANOVA, simultaneous multiple regression, and hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Discussion of the findings was presented in this chapter. In the first section, the findings of the main study are discussed. The second section provides the implications drawn from the results of the study. Lastly, the third section presents recommendations for future research and practice.

#### **5.1. Discussions of the Findings**

The main purpose of this study is to examine to what extent rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and self-compassion predict perpetration and victimization of psychological dating aggression in dating university students after controlling for gender, age, and duration of the relationship. The results of the analyses conducted in line with this purpose and research questions are discussed in this section.

### **5.1.1. Gender Differences in Dating Aggression, Attachment, Rejection Sensitivity, and Self Compassion**

MANOVA and independent t-test analyses were conducted regarding the first research question of this study to investigate the gender differences in psychological dating victimization and perpetration, rejection sensitivity, anxiety and avoidance attachment, and self-compassion.

According to the MANOVA results of the present study, men showed slightly higher mean scores in victimization whereas women showed slightly higher mean scores in perpetration and in general no statistically significant difference was observed between men and women in terms of psychological dating victimization and perpetration. There are many research results reporting that there is no gender difference when it comes to perpetration (Brush, 1990; Fincham et al., 2008; Kaura & Lohman, 2007; O’Keefe, 1997; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998). Some researchers, who have stated that psychological aggression is reciprocal and mutual, claimed that aggression occurs regardless of gender (Kahya, 2018; O’Leary & Slep, 2003; O’Leary, Smith Slep, Avery-Leaf, & Cascardi, 2008; Renner & Whitney, 2012). In contrast to the results of the present study, previous empirical findings indicated that men used more psychological dating aggression than women (; Shorey et al. 2010; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000b; Volz & Kerig, 2010). There are also research results that demonstrated higher rates of perpetration of women in dating aggression (Gover et al., 2008; Tussey, Tyler & Simons, 2018). Although the results of a National Survey conducted in the United States highlighted that men were more victims in previous years (Hoff, 2012), a recent survey reported that men and women exhibited the same degree of psychological aggression (Niolon et al., 2017). Even the researchers investigated who initiated the violence first due to inconsistent gender results, no distinct gender was prominent in the obtained results (Allen, Swan, & Raghavan, 2009; Hoff, 2012). Toplu-Demirtaş (2015) also found no significant gender differences regarding both psychological dating aggression perpetration and victimization in Turkish young adult sample.

Some studies in the literature stated that attachment and gender relationship are inconsistent and controversial, and this may be related to the scales used and the age of the participants (Del Giudice, 2009; Scharfe, 2017). Studies reporting differences in terms of gender have stated that males have higher scores in avoidance attachment style than females (Brennan et al. 1998; Del Giudice, 2009; Kirkpatrick 1998; Picardi, Vermigli, Toni, D'Amico, Bitetti, & Pasquini. 2002; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994). In addition, Del Giudice (2009) stated that women are mostly associated with anxious attachment style. According to the results of the study examining the attachment of adults in 62 different cultural backgrounds, it was observed that men have avoidance attachment style in most countries (Schmitt, Alcalay, Allensworth, Allik, Ault, & Austers, 2003a). In Turkey, Karairmak and Oguz-Duran (2008) reported that while male university students express themselves with a secure attachment style, female students perceive themselves more anxiously than men. According to the MANOVA analysis results in this study, gender was not a variable that made a difference in terms of attachment styles. Hence, considering inconclusive findings regarding attachment styles and gender, it would be better to carry out further studies with different variables and factors that may affect them. There are research reports stating that sexual orientation may play an important role in attachment especially with homosexual samples (Bartholomew, Regan, Oram, & White, 2008; Velotti et al., 2018).

Likewise, in this study, independent sample t-test result also revealed that the sensitivity of rejection scores of the participants did not change significantly according to gender. Though the mean value of rejection sensitivity of men is higher than that of women, no statistical difference was found. Although there are some studies that found women's rejection sensitivity higher than men (London, Downey, Bonica & Paltin, 2007), and some others found men's rejection sensitivity higher than women (Hafen, Spilker, Chango, Marston, & Allen, 2014), the majority of the studies yielded that there is no gender difference in the overall rejection sensitivity (Breines & Ayduk, 2015; Downey, Mougios, Ayduk, London & Shoda, 2004; Harrison, 2006; İbrahim, Rohner, Smith, & Flannery, 2015; Khaleque et al. 2019). A review of the national

literature among university students has shown parallel results with the international literature regarding rejection sensitivity. Despite the fact that there are various studies demonstrating that rejection sensitivity among university students does not differ significantly between men and women (Erbaş, 2012; Erözkan, 2004a; İnce, 2020; İslamoğlu, Atan, & Ünver, 2019; Özdemir, 2017;), there are also studies reporting that the level of rejection sensitivity of women is higher than men (Çağlayaner, 2020; Erözkan, 2004; 2007; 2009). On the contrary, Sarıçam (2011) found the opposite, stating that men are more susceptible to rejection.

There are many studies evaluating self-compassion in terms of gender. Yarnell et al. (2015) examined the results of 71 studies conducted between 2003 and 2014 and reported that men's self-compassion levels were slightly higher than women. Consistent with these results, in this study, independent sample t-test result revealed that men scored slightly higher in self-compassion than women. In the available literature, studies indicating higher levels of self-compassion for women are extremely limited. Additionally, results of the studies regarding gender roles demonstrated that masculinity was associated with higher self-compassion (Patzak, Kollmayer & Schober, 2017; Yarnell et al., 2018). Masculinity was found "the most consistent positive predictor of self-compassion, for both men and women" (Yarnell et al., 2018, p.12). Though it seems hard to put being tough (masculinity gender role), and empathetic, loving, and compassionate towards others (femininity gender role) in the same ballpark, it overlaps with the yin and yang philosophy of self-compassion (Yarnell et al., 2018). Although gender role variable was not examined in the current study, it could be speculated that the self-sacrifice norms of femininity, influenced by the inequality of power (Neff & Harter 2002), might be a factor influencing the self-compassion level of the participants.

### **5.1.2 Prediction of Attachment, Rejection Sensitivity, and Self-Compassion regarding Victimization**

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis performed in the direction of the RQ2 in terms of psychological dating aggression victimization of university students. As a

result of the analysis, duration of the relationship, gender, anxiety and avoidance attachment styles, and rejection sensitivity contributed significantly to the variance in the prediction of psychological dating aggression victimization whereas self-compassion was not contributed significantly. These variables explained the 19% of the total variance in victimization. When the beta coefficient values were examined, the duration of the relationship and the anxiety and avoidance attachment styles showed a positive correlation with psychological dating aggression victimization, while the rejection sensitivity showed a negative correlation with victimization. It indicates that in longer dating relations, participants with high anxiety and avoidance attachments, and low rejection sensitivity are more prone to be the victims of psychological aggression. Considering the r-square changes in the results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis, anxiety and avoidance attachment styles revealed as the strongest predictors of victimization. This finding was also supported by the bivariate correlation results, even r values were too close to each other, victimization was moderately and positively associated with the avoidance attachment style whereas it had weak but positive association with anxiety attachment style. The present findings were consistent with the findings that anxiety and avoidance attachment styles are contributed significantly to the variance of predicting psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration (Henderson et al., 2005). On the other hand, Velotti et al. (2018) did not demonstrate a clear path in their systematic review regarding the associations between psychological aggression victimization and anxiety and avoidance attachment styles. In that systematic review, 23 studies published since 1997 were examined. Half of the studies did not report an association between victimization and anxiety and avoidance the attachment styles (Bélanger, Dugal, Courchesne, & Mathieu, 2015; Henderson, Bartholomew, & Dutton, 1997; Oka Sandberg, Bradford & Brown., 2014; Shurman and Rodriguez, 2006; Tougas Péloquin, & Mondor., 2016; Wigman, Graham-Kevan, & Archer 2008), eleven studies reported a moderate relationship with avoidance attachment style, and five studies which were conducted with university students found a relationship only with anxiety attachment style (Bartholomew, Trinke & Kwong, 2005; Bonache et al., 2016; 2017; Riggs and Kaminski, 2010; O'Hearn and Davis, 1997). Therefore, the

results of this study suggests that both anxiety and avoidance attachment should be examined in predicting psychological dating aggression victimization in future studies to obtain a clear picture regarding their relations.

In terms of rejection sensitivity, the present study showed that it is a significant predictor of victimization with the joint effects of gender, age, duration of the relationship, and attachment styles. The negative beta coefficient value of rejection sensitivity indicated that as the rejection sensitivity increased victimization decreased. Considering the R square change, rejection sensitivity explained the additional 2.2% of the variance in victimization. This result is inconsistent with the results of quantitative research in the rejection sensitivity and aggression literature. In the literature, some studies have reported that rejection sensitivity is related to victimization (Volz & Kerig, 2010). Several other studies revealed that women and female adolescents who are not accepted by their social environment, needy, and exhibit passive behaviors by silencing themselves with submissive mechanisms with high rejection sensitivity are more likely to be victims of violence (Galliher & Bentley, 2010; Hafen, Spilker, Chango, Marston, & Allen, 2014; Kahya, 2018; Purdie & Downey, 2000). Moreover, a meta-analytical review of 52 quantitative studies on rejection sensitivity, aggression, and victimization between 1990 and 2018 showed that individuals with high rejection sensitivity tend to show both victimization and perpetration (Gao, Assink, Liu, Chan, & Ip, 2019). They reported that rejection sensitivity showed a slightly lower than moderate and significant relationship with victimization. The majority of the 52 studies included in this meta-analytical study were conducted in North America and Australia. Therefore, more research is needed especially in non-western cultures to understand rejection sensitivity and the psychological aggression victimization relationship clearly. There may be other mediator or moderator variables that impact this relationship along with factors specific to Turkish culture.

In the present study, self-compassion was not found as a statistically significant variable in explaining victimization. Researchers reported more about the relationship

between self-compassion and victimization (Erb, 2016; Játiva & Cerezo, 2014; Williamson, 2019). Studies indicated that women with a tendency to blame themselves and ashamed of being victims of dating violence may not be able to show compassion to themselves (Erb, 2016; Flicker, Cerulli, Swogger, & Talbott, 2012). Tesh, Learman, and Pulliam (2015) also reported that victims of dating violence displayed self-blame behavior in the conflict to calm their partner and end the conflict. Accordingly, the result of the present study is not in line with the literature stating that individuals with low self-compassion are more prone to blame themselves and more likely to be the victims of dating violence. It should also be noted that in the present study, the sub-dimensions of self-compassion were not examined, and only total scores were used. Therefore, examining the components of self-compassion might reveal more information about the role of self-compassion in explaining psychological aggression victimization.

Duration of the relationship was another significant predictor variable for victimization in the current study. This finding is consistent with the findings of the previous studies. It has been reported that there are victims who continue their violent relationship for a long time because of fear of being harmed and break-up (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, & Hannan, 2003). Hence, in the long relations, victims may find themselves in a trap that in both options (being harmed in the relationship or out of the relationship) the outcome would not be desirable. Another finding of the present study yielded that age was not a significant predictor of victimization. This finding is not consistent with the literature. The literature reported that the rates of victimization increased at younger ages (Karakurt & Silver, 2013), and there was a greater risk of victimization, especially during the adolescent years (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Holt & Espelage, 2005). If adolescents were included in this study, perhaps different results in terms of victimization would have occurred.

Although there was no significant gender effect on victimization in MANOVA results, the hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that gender contributed significantly to the variance in victimization in the final model, and being male was a

risk for psychological aggression victimization. Studies regarding male victimization of dating aggression are limited but Shorey et al. (2008) reported that approximately 70% to 90% of men were victims of psychological aggression. In the following years, Shorey, Febres, Brasfield, and Stuart (2012) also reported the victimization rate as 82.1% in their study with 187 male university students. These results suggest that rather than accepting men as aggressive, they can be the victim of the violence. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the current study, when the prevalence rates of victimization were examined, both men and women participants reported considerably high rates of psychological aggression victimization. Besides, reported rates of perpetration were also similar to those of victimization across gender. Taken together, the results suggest that more research is needed to uncover the factors associated with the bidirectional and/or unidirectional nature of psychological aggression in dating relations.

### **5.1.3 Prediction of Attachment, Rejection Sensitivity, and Self-Compassion regarding Perpetration**

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed in the direction of the RQ3 regarding psychological dating aggression perpetration of university students. Contrary to the victimization, in the final model, age and self-compassion significantly explained the variance in psychological dating aggression perpetration along with other variables as the duration of the relationship, anxiety and avoidance attachment, and rejection sensitivity. The total variance explained by these variables was 18.9% of the perpetration. When the beta coefficient values were examined, the duration of the relationship and the anxiety and avoidance attachment styles correlated positively with psychological dating aggression perpetration, whereas age, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion correlated negatively. In other words, young participants in long relations with the lower level of rejection sensitivity and self-compassion, the higher level of anxiety and avoidance attachment styles, are tended to use psychological aggression in dating.

Considering the r-square changes, anxiety and avoidance attachment styles emerged as the strongest predictor variables, contributing to the 14% of the additional variance in perpetration. This result is partially supported by the literature. For instance, in some studies, researchers reported that anxiety attachment style rather than avoidance attachment style related to psychological dating aggression perpetration (Cadely et al., 2018; Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski & Bartholomew, 1994; Gormley & Lopez, 2010a; Roberts & Noller, 1998; Sandberg et al., 2010; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2019). Moreover, in the studies conducted with Turkish university students, restrictive engulfment (i.e., one of the sub-scales of the MMEA that contains actions aimed at limiting, isolating, and controlling the partner's social contacts and activities through ownership and jealousy) was found to have a positive relationship with anxiety attachment whereas no significant relationship was found with avoidance attachment (Toplu-Demirtaş, Murray, Hatipoğlu Sümer, 2017; Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer, Murphy, 2018). Nevertheless, there are some studies reporting findings consistent with the present study that anxiety and avoidance attachment styles were significantly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration (McDermott et al., 2017). Velotti, Beomonte-Zobel, Rogier, and Tambelli (2018), in their systematic review study about psychological dating violence and attachment, also indicated a positive association between perpetration and anxiety and avoidance attachment style in most of the reviewed 42 studies. Therefore, the results of this study suggest that both anxiety and avoidance attachment should be examined in predicting psychological dating aggression perpetration.

In the literature, rejection sensitivity has mostly been associated with psychological dating perpetration behaviors. According to the pioneering study of Downey and Feldman (1996), partners with high rejection sensitivity tended to perceive more rejection tips and exhibited more jealous and controlling behaviors towards perceived rejection in their relationships. Also, it has been reported that individuals with high rejection sensitivity showed more angry and hostile behaviors as a result of their intense anxiety rooted in perceived rejection cues (Ayduk, Downey, Testa, Yen, & Shoda 1999; Ayduk, Gyurak & Luerssen, 2008; Volz & Kerig, 2010). Gao et al. (2019)

reported that rejection sensitivity showed a weak but significant relationship with perpetration in their meta-analytic review. Inconsistent with the literature, in this study, rejection sensitivity was found negatively associated with perpetration and explained the 2.6% of the total variance in psychological dating aggression perpetration. This unexpected result might have stemmed from the possible personality traits that mediate the relationship between rejection sensitivity and aggression. Thus, further research is needed considering unique features of Turkish culture and including personality traits variable as a mediator.

Another noticeable finding of the present study is that self-compassion is one of the significant predictors of perpetration. While self-compassion was negatively correlated with both victimization and perpetration in the bivariate correlation analysis, the magnitude of the relationship was higher in perpetration. In both national and international literature, a limited number of studies have been conducted on perpetration and self-compassion. Considering the limited number of available empirical findings, the present study findings are in accord with the existing literature. Individuals with low self-compassion are more jealous, dominant, and controlling towards their partners, and these are important behavioral criteria for perpetration (Neff & Beretvas, 2013; Tandler & Petersen, 2020). Additionally, in a recent study, a significant negative relationship was found between psychological aggression and self-kindness, which is the sub-dimension of the self-compassion scale (Samios, Raatjes, Ash, Lade, & Langdon, 2020). Taken together, the results suggested that self-compassion should be considered as a possible effective emotion-behavior regulation skill for perpetrators of psychological aggression.

The duration of a relationship was another significant variable that explained 1.6% of the total variance in perpetration. Consistent with this result, Capaldi, Shortt, and Crosby, (2003) have reported a significant relationship between dating aggression and the length of time spent in the relationship. Giles-Sims (1983) emphasized that as long as the relationship continues, aggressive behaviors can become a pattern and can be perceived as normal by the partners. In addition, in a study with Turkish sample, it was

claimed that, despite its negative effects, young people did not see psychological aggressive behaviors as a problem, but rather normalized it and accepted it under the name of love and jealousy (Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer & Fincham, 2017). Hence, the finding regarding the longer the relationship the higher the use of psychological aggression could be explained by the participants' perception of 'controlling behaviors are an inseparable part of loving relations.' Furthermore, results showed that the use of psychological dating aggression decrease as the participants get older. This result is in line with the literature stating that psychological violence is more common in younger age groups (Foshee et al., 2009; Karakurt & Silver, 2013; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999) and longitudinal studies also showed that aggressive behavior and tendency to violence decrease after a certain age (Broidy et al., 2003).

Regarding the role of gender in perpetration, the current study did not reveal a significant result. Thus, gender was not one of the variables that explained psychological aggression perpetration among university students. This result is consistent with other research results conclude that the difference between the two genders is negligible in many respects (Brush, 1990; Fincham et al., 2008; Kaura & Lohman, 2007; Niolon et al., 2017; O'Keefe, 1997; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Toplu-Demirtaş, 2015). Besides, Hammock and O'Hearn (2002) argued that women and men display different aggressive behaviors. They found that men display aggression to harm, control, and manipulate their partner, and women display aggression to express their discontent and emotional turmoil. Therefore, it appears important to look at the gender differences according to the sub-dimensions of psychological aggression perpetration.

## **5.2. Implications for Theory, Research and Practice**

Based on Bowlby's attachment theory (1973), it has been shown in this study to what extent attachment styles and rejection sensitivity explained psychological aggression among university students. The findings of the study showed that early experiences are related to both psychological aggression victimization and perpetration, as suggested by Attachment Theory. Also, anxiety and avoidance attachment styles were

revealed as the strongest variable in explaining victimization and perpetration. These findings, in general, support the assumptions of the attachment theory on psychological aggression. The internal working models developed in childhood enable individuals to see themselves as valued by love and compassion also affect the romantic relationship that a person experiences in adulthood. It has been reported that the behaviors shown in the insecure attachment model established by the primary caregiver and the infant are similar to the patterns of violence displayed in romantic relationships (Dutton & Painter, 1993; Henderson et al., 2005). On the other hand, while evaluating the dynamics that cause dating aggression, multidimensional relationships and complex risk factors should be considered. It has been argued that when family and social structures which include social inequality, poverty, and power imbalance and affect the whole, individual assessment based on aggression will be incomplete. For example, feminist theory sees interpersonal violence as a result of the power structure of male domination and the obedience of women and argues that this power inequality leads to violent behavior. Therefore, in this study, gender is considered an important variable in gaining insight into psychological aggression among dating university students.

The findings of the research are expected to shed light on university psychological counselors, counselor educators, program developers, and mental health professionals. It was thought that the findings of the study could contribute significantly to understanding, preventing, and treating aggressive behaviors. Psychoeducation programs to raise awareness about dating aggression and seminars about safe dating relationships can be offered to university students at counseling centers. To manage perceptions and emotions that support psychological aggression, it is particularly important to develop the content of the program by considering attachment styles. At this point, mental health professionals should first build a rapport for a relationship based on trust. Also, professionals can inform university students about attachment and organize sessions on how it might have affected their romantic relationship. In this study, the prevalence rates of psychological dating victimization were found 93.4% in women, 95.6% in men, and for perpetration 96.2% in women, 96.9% in men. These

results are consistent with the high prevalence rates of psychological aggression reported in national and international literature for both victimization and perpetration (Cornelius et al., 2010; Hines & Saudino, 2003; Jenkins & Aube, 2002; Toplu-Demirtaş & Hatipoğlu Sümer, 2011; Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoglu-Sümer, & White, 2013; White & Koss, 1991). Based on these high prevalence rates, violence prevention units can be established specifically for university students and group sessions and training can be carried out through these units.

Consistent with the literature, the results of this study also showed that psychological aggression perpetration decreases with an increase in age. Therefore, it is important to develop intervention strategies by mental health professionals for younger age groups. It is of critical importance to support mental health professionals working with younger age groups to develop their professional competencies in recognizing and responding to dating violence in their interventions. Interventions in younger age groups are important because they can prevent having negative consequences of psychological aggression such as anger, depression, and anxiety or prevent these consequences from being deeper and more destructive. In particular, male university students can be empowered by raising awareness so that they do not become victims of psychological aggression behavior.

Furthermore, individuals who have low self-compassion and a tendency to blame themselves and not to be kind to themselves may become perpetrators of psychological aggression. For this reason, individuals can be empowered by developing self-kindness skills, which is the sub-dimension of self-compassion in intervention studies. Emotional regulation such as anger and anxiety management can be achieved by developing mindfulness skills and leaving a gap between behaviors and emotions. There are some therapeutic interventions and strategies that can be used by mental health professionals in individual counseling sessions to empower individuals with low self-compassion. It is suggested that the client should be given homework about writing letters to herself/himself through the eyes of her/him closest friend and discovering strong features about her/him (Neff, 2009). Interventions used to increase

self-compassion were suggested to be supported by open-ended questions under three headings. The following are the example questions that can be used to develop self-kindness: "When you think of something that troubles you, what is something you could tell yourself to be kinder to yourself, Is it possible that you might be placing too much blame on yourself?" and "Can you think about a time when you knew of someone else in a similar position?" (Tesh, Learman, & Pulliam, 2015, p.198).

### **5.3. Recommendations for Future Research**

Firstly, starting from the limitations of the present study, it is recommended to replicate the study with the same variables by a larger group of participants with gender balance. In this study, psychological dating aggression was investigated within the scope of victimization and perpetration, while the sub-dimensions of psychological aggression as restrictive engulfment (RE), denigration (DEN), hostile withdrawal (HW), and dominance/intimidation (D/I) were not examined. Moreover, the self-compassion variable was evaluated as a whole, and its sub-dimensions were not examined. In future studies, the inclusion of these sub-dimensions may be useful in understanding the components of psychological dating aggression and self-compassion. According to Hammock and O'Hearn (2002), the motivation underlying the psychological aggression behavior of women and men differ greatly. They reported that men seem to use these behaviors to harm, control, and manipulate their partner, and women seem to use these behaviors to express their discontent and emotional turmoil. Therefore, when sub-dimensions of psychological aggression and self-compassion variables are included in future studies, more comprehensive results can be obtained regarding gender differences.

In addition, in future studies, it is important to collect data from both partners instead of the self-reporting method from a single partner in a dating relationship. Psychological aggression, rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and self-compassion are concepts that include strong and difficult emotions. For this reason, it is important to have a high emotional awareness so that participants can answer honestly and without social-desirable concerns in mind. Since the variables of this study include

intrapsychic processes, measuring by self-report is a limitation in itself. The number of longitudinal and qualitative studies within the scope of these variables is also limited. Therefore, qualitative studies that can enable the participants to express themselves emotionally or following the participants' life experiences longitudinally can provide an opportunity to understand the reasons and outcomes of psychological aggression better.

The relationship between the variables of the study and gender/gender roles is not clear. For clarification including gender roles as a variable in the analysis may open different doors and broaden perspectives because gender roles are seen as a much more fundamental predictor of aggression than biological sex (Richardson & Hammock, 2007). On the other hand, it is seen that the new research trend on gender is focusing on “gender similarities” rather than “gender differences” (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2018). Else-Quest and Hyde's (2018) review of 46 meta-analyses' studies indicate that either no gender difference is revealed, or extremely low-power effects are reported in support of the gender similarity hypothesis. Another important point in terms of gender is that studies on psychological dating aggression are limited with poor and minority women sample. It is expected that the high rates of violence these women are exposed to. Working with a sample of poor and minority women, especially in Turkish culture, may provide valuable information about this group that does not receive the necessary attention (Park, 2016).

In addition, as stated earlier, it would be beneficial to work with partners to understand psychological aggression more clearly. All in all, due to the correlational design of the present study, causality interpretation cannot be drawn from the results. Therefore, using more robust research methods and statistical analyses, the dynamics among psychological aggression, attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-compassion can be discovered.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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21 KASIM 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (IAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Zeynep Hatipoğlu SÜMER

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Şafak ATAY'ın "Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Flört Şiddeti, Reddilme Duyarlılığı ve Öz Şefkat Arasındaki İlişkiyi İnceleme" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 415 ODTU 2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

Prof. Dr. Tülin GENÇÖZ

Başkan

Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN

Üye

Doç.Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ

Üye

## APPENDIX B: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM IN TURKISH

### Katılımcı Bilgi Formu

Bu kısımda sizinle ilgili genel bilgiler sorulmaktadır. Lütfen her bir maddeyi okuyup durumunuzu en iyi yansıtan seçeneği işaretleyiniz ya da boşlukları doldurunuz.

1. Cinsiyetiniz

*Yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

Kadın

Erkek

2. Yaşınız

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Yaşadığınız şehir

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Üniversitede eğitim gördüğünüz düzey:

*Yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

Ön lisans

Lisans

Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

5. Şu anda devam eden romantik ilişki sürenizi ay olarak belirtiniz.

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR REJECTION SENSITIVITY SCALE IN TURKISH

### Reddedilme Duyarlılığı Ölçeği

Aşağıdaki her bir madde genelde üniversite öğrencilerinin bazen diğer kişilerden talep ettiği şeyleri tanımlamaktadır. Lütfen, her bir durumda/koşulda bulunduğunuzu düşünün ve cevaplarınızı ona göre verin. Her bir soruda, sizin için uygun olan numarayı işaretleyiniz.

- Maddeleri değerlendirirken, karşınızdaki kişinin (örneğin, bir hocanız veya bir arkadaşınızla ilgili olan maddelerde) lütfen belirli bir kişiyi değil, ORTALAMA BİR KİŞİYİ DÜŞÜNEREK yanıt veriniz.

- Araştırma, özel kişilere karşı olan tutumlarınızı değil, GENEL TUTUMLARINIZI incelemektedir.  
- Her bir maddenin ardından gelen şu soruları yanıtlamanız beklenmektedir:

- 1) Başkalarının size tepkisi konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?
- 2) İlgili durumda diğer kişilerin ne tür tepki verebileceğini düşünürsünüz?

Sınıftaki birine notlarını ödünç alıp alamayacağınızı soruyorsunuz.

Kişinin notlarını vermek isteyip istemeyebileceği ile ilgili olarak ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

*Yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

1 2 3 4 5 6

Hiç endişelenmem/Kaygı Duymam       Çok endişelenirim/ Kaygı duyarım

Bu kişinin notlarını bana isteyerek vermesini beklerdim.

*Yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

1 2 3 4 5 6

Çok küçük ihtimalle       Çok büyük ihtimalle

**APPENDIX D: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR SELF-COMPASSION SCALE IN  
TURKISH**

## Öz-Şefkat Ölçeği

Aşağıdaki cümleler, zor durumlar karşısında kendinize genel olarak nasıl davrandığınızla ilgilidir. Ne sıklıkla aşağıda belirtildiği şekilde davranma eğilimde olduğunuzu size en uygun şekilde işaretleyiniz.

1: Neredeyse hiçbir zaman 2: Nadiren 3: Ara sıra 4: Çoğu zaman 5: Neredeyse her zaman

Kişinin notlarını vermek isteyip istemeyebileceği ile ilgili olarak ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

*Her satırda yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Kişiliğimin beğenmediğim yanlarına karşı anlayışlı ve sabırlı olmaya çalışırım.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Kendimi bir şekilde yetersiz hissettiğimde, çoğu insanın da böylesi yetersizlik duyguları yaşayabileceğini kendime hatırlatmaya çalışırım.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Kendimi üzgün hissettiğimde, yanlış giden her şeyi kafama takma ve kurma eğilimindeyimdir.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Ben zorluklarla mücadele ederken, başka insanların yaşam koşullarının benimkinden daha kolay olduğunu hissetme eğilimi gösteririm.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Acı veren bir şey olduğunda, durumu belirli bir zihinsel mesafeden, dengeli bir bakış açısıyla görmeye çalışırım.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## APPENDIX E: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR MULTIDIMENSIONAL MEASURE OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN TURKISH

### Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği

Aşağıda, partnerinizle ilişkinizdeki son altı ayı düşünerek yanıtlanmanız istenen maddeler verilmiştir. Şu anda bir partneriniz yoksa bu maddeleri bir önceki ilişkinizi düşünerek yanıtlayabilirsiniz.

Her bir madde için iki yanıt vermeniz gerekmektedir. Tek sayılı satırlarda belirtilen davranışı sizin ne sıklıkta yaptığınızı gösteren seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Çift sayılı satırlarda ise belirtilen davranışı, partnerinizin ne sıklıkta yaptığını gösteren seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

Eğer siz ya da partneriniz bu davranışlardan birini son altı ay içinde göstermediyseniz ama daha önceden yaptysanız "Son 6 ayda olmadı ama daha önce oldu" seçeneğini işaretleyiniz.

*Her satırda yalnızca bir şıkki işaretleyin.*

	Bir kere	İki Kere	3-5 Kere	6 - 10 kere	11 - 20 kere	20+ kere	Son 6 ayda hiç olmadı	Hiç olmadı
1.Partnerime şüpheli bir tavırla nerede veya kimlerle birlikte olduğunu sordum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.Partnerim bana şüpheli bir tavırla nerede veya kimlerle birlikte olduğunu sordu.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.Partnerimin kişisel eşyalarını gizlice karıştırdım.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.Partnerim kişisel eşyalarımı gizlice karıştırdı.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX F: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR INVENTORY OF EXPERIENCES IN  
CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS-II IN TURKISH**

## Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri

Aşağıdaki maddeler romantik ilişkilerinizde hissettiğiniz duygularla ilgilidir. Bu araştırmada sizin ilişkinizde yalnızca şu anda değil, genel olarak neler olduğuyula ya da neler yaşadığınızla ilgilenmekteyim. Maddelerde sözü geçen "birlikte olduğum kişi" ifadesi ile romantik ilişkide bulunduğunuz kişi kastedilmektedir. Eğer halihazırda bir romantik ilişki içerisinde değilseniz, aşağıdaki maddeleri son 6 ay içerisinde sonlanmış ilişkinize göre cevaplandırınız. Her bir maddenin ilişkilerinizdeki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi ne oranda yansıttığını karşılardaki 7 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde işaretleyiniz.

1: Hiç Katılmıyorum, 4: Kararsızım, 7: Tamamen Katılıyorum

1-Birlikte olduğum kişinin sevgisini kaybetmekten korkarım.

*Yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hiç Katılmıyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tamamen Katılıyorum

2-Gerçekte ne hissettiğimi birlikte olduğum kişiye göstermemeyi tercih ederim.

*Yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hiç Katılmıyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tamamen Katılıyorum

3. Sıklıkla, birlikte olduğum kişinin artık benimle olmak istemeyeceği korkusuna kapılırım.

*Yalnızca bir şıkkı işaretleyin.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Hiç Katılmıyorum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Tamamen Katılıyorum

## APPENDIX G: TURKISH SUMMARY/ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### FLÖRT İLİŞKİSİ OLAN ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİ ARASINDA PSİKOLOJİK SALDIRGANLIK: BAĞLANMA STİLLERİ, REDDEDİLME DUYARLILIĞI VE ÖZ-ŞEFKATİN YORDAYICI ROLÜ

#### GİRİŞ

Erikson (1968) tarafından geliştirilen psikososyal gelişim teorisi, insanların doğumdan ölüme kadar sekiz farklı aşamadan geçtiklerini ve her aşamanın kendi içinde belirli bir çatışma içerdiğini belirtmektedir. Üniversite öğrencilerinin kendi gelişim aşamalarında yaşadıkları krizin altında yatan temel ihtiyaç, samimi ve yakın ilişkilerdir. Bu yakın ilişkilerdeki krizler ve çatışmalar, ego ve psikolojik dayanıklılığı güçlendirmek için önemli bir fırsattır.

Üniversitelerin psikolojik danışma merkezlerinden elde edilen veriler, öğrencilerin çoğunlukla romantik ilişkilerinde yaşadıkları sorunlar nedeniyle yardım almak için başvurduklarını göstermiştir (Creasey, Kershaw, & Boston, 1999; Green, Lowry & Kopta, 2003). Üniversite öğrencileri, romantik ilişkilerinde samimiyet ve sevgi içeren ilişkiler yaşadıklarında, bu dönem ruh sağlığı için koruyucu olabilir. Sağlıklı bir romantik ilişkinin üniversite öğrencilerini depresyon, anksiyete bozukluğu, yeme bozukluğu, stres ve uyuşturucu kullanımından koruduğunu gösteren araştırmalar vardır (Braithwaite, Delevi ve Fincham, 2010; Whitton, Weitbrecht, Kuryluk ve Bruner, 2013). Bu noktada, flört şiddeti gelişimsel krizin ortasında yer alan ve sağlıklı gelişimleri için yakın ilişkilere ihtiyaç duyan üniversite öğrencileri için çok önemli bir risk faktörüdür. Flört şiddetinin, genç yetişkinlik evresindeki çiftler arasında yaygın olduğu belirtilmektedir (Woodin, Caldeira ve O'Leary, 2013). Flört şiddeti, birçok şiddet türünü içeren genel bir çerçevedir. Anderson ve Danis (2007, s.88) flört şiddetini, tehdit veya eylem yoluyla flört ilişkisindeki partnerlerden birinin fiziksel, cinsel veya sözel (psikolojik) istismar edilmesi olarak tanımlamaktadırlar. Dünyanın

birçok farklı ülkesinde üniversite öğrencileri ile yapılan şiddet arařtırmalarının sonuçları, öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun psikolojik şiddetle karşılařtığını ve psikolojik şiddet oranının, diđer şiddet türlerinden daha yüksek olduğunu rapor etmektedir.

Son yıllarda arařtırmacılar, şiddet kavramının ön yargı içermesi ve net olmaması gerekçesiyle saldırganlık kavramını kullanmayı tercih etmektedirler. Psikolojik saldırganlık kavramını Lawrence ve arkadaşları (2009) “bir kişinin partnerini alay ve sözlü tehditlerle aşağılaması ve suçlu hale getirmesi, ailesinden ve yakınlarından uzaklařtırarak kontrol etmeye çalışması ve üzgün veya yetersiz hissettirerek öz değerine zarar vermesi” olarak tanımlamaktadırlar (Lawrence, Yoon, Langer & Ro, 2009, s. 20). Bugüne kadar yapılan çalışmalar, romantik iliřkisi olan üniversite öğrencileri arasında psikolojik saldırganlığın yaygınlığının %75 ile %90 oranında deđiřtiđini bildirmektedir (White & Koss, 1991; DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993; Neufeld et al., 1999; Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipođlu Sümer & White, 2013).

Birçok kuram, flört şiddetine etki eden faktörleri açıklamaya çalışmıştır. Doksanlı yıllardan itibaren bađlanma teorisi, birçok arařtırmacı tarafından, flört şiddetinin dinamiklerini ve nedenlerini anlamak için faydalı bir çerçeve olarak görülmüřtür. Bađlanma kuramına göre, ihtiyaçları birincil bakıcıları tarafından karşılanmayan ve çocukluklarında güvensiz bađlanma stili geliřtiren bireyler, flört şiddeti açısından risk grubunda olarak deđerlendirilmektedirler (Cicchetti & Howes, 1991; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989; Earls, Cairns & Mercy, 1993; Fang & Corso, 2007). Chapple ve Trina (2003), saldırganlığa başvurma açısından her iki cinsiyet için de aile bađlarının önemini vurgulamışlardır. Arařtırmacılar, psikolojik flört saldırganlığının altında yatan mekanizmaları anlamak için daha fazla çalışmaya ihtiyaç olduğunu belirtmiştir. Dutton (1995), erken dönem bađlanma zorlukları nedeniyle bireylerin romantik iliřkilerde terk edilmeye veya reddedilmeye iřaret ettiđine inandıkları ipuçlarına karşı aşırı duyarlılığa yol açan, içsel kalıpları geliřtirdiklerini iddia etmektedir. Bu noktada reddedilme duyarlılığı, risk faktörlerinden ve psikolojik saldırganlığın altında yatan mekanizmalardan biri olarak sayılabilir.

Kolayca reddedilme ipuçlarını algılamak, endişeyle reddedilmeyi beklemek ve algılanan reddedilmeye yoğun tepkiler göstermek, reddedilme duyarlılığı olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Downey ve Feldman (1994), Bowlby'nin (1973) bağlanma teorisine göre temel ihtiyaçları birincil bakım veren kişi tarafından reddedilen ve reddedilme deneyimleriyle büyüyen çocukların, yetişkinlikte bu deneyimlerin içselleştirilmesiyle, reddetme duyarlılığı gösterdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Downey ve Feldman'ın (1996) araştırma bulgularına göre, yüksek reddedilme duyarlılığı olan bireylerin daha fazla reddedilme algıladıklarını ve ilişkilerinde daha kontrol edici ve kıskanç davranışlar sergilediklerini bildirmektedir. 1990-2018 yılları arasında yürütülen 52 çalışmanın meta-analitik sonuçlarını bildiren güncel çalışmalardan birinde, yaş ve cinsiyete bakılmaksızın, yüksek reddedilme duyarlılığının, psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalma ile ilişkili olduğu raporlanmaktadır (Gao, Assink, Liu, Chan ve Ip, 2019).

Reddedilme duyarlılığı yüksek bireyler algılanan ret sonucu kaygı ve öfke gibi zorlu duygularla baş etmek durumunda kalmaktadırlar. Literatürde duyguları düzenleyememe ve saldırganlığa başvurma arasında önemli bir ilişki ifade eden birçok araştırma bulgusu vardır (McNulty ve Hellmuth, 2008; Shorey, Brasfield, Febres ve Stuart, 2011; Lawlor, 2016; Stappenbeck ve ark., 2016). Bu nedenle duygu düzenlenmesinin, döngüsel saldırganlığın devam etmesini önlemeye yardımcı olabileceği belirtilmiştir (Chase, O'Leary ve Heyman, 2001; McNulty ve Hellmuth, 2008). Bu çalışmada öz-şefkat, bir duygusal düzenleme mekanizması olarak ele alınmıştır. Öz-şefkat, kendine nazik olmayı, anda kalarak duyguları kabul etmeyi, duygu ve davranışlar arasında bir boşluk bırakmayı ve acıyı, insan olmanın ortak bir parçası olarak görmeyi içeren, bir duygusal düzenleme becerisidir. Romantik ilişkilerde doyum ve ilişki kalitesini yordayan sağlıklı bir yöntem olarak ifade edilmektedir (Neff ve Beretvas, 2013; Jacobson, Wilson, Kurz ve Kellum, 2018). Öz şefkati yüksek olan bireylerin, flört şiddetinin olumsuz etkilerinden daha az etkilendiği bulunmuştur (Játiva ve Cerezo, 2014). Sommerfeld ve Shechory-Bitton (2020) tarafından yakın zamanda yapılan bir araştırma, yüksek reddedilme duyarlılığı olan ve düşük öz-şefkatli insanların, daha saldırgan davranışlar sergilediğini bildirmektedir.

İhtiyaçları birincil bakım veren kişiler tarafından karşılanmayan ve çocukluklarında güvensiz bağlanma stili geliştiren bireyler, terk edilme ve reddedilme sinyalleri karşısında aşırı duyarlılığa sebebiyet veren içsel mekanizmalar geliştirebilmeleri sebebiyle flört şiddeti açısından risk grubunda değerlendirilmektedirler (Cicchetti & Howes, 1991; Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989; Earls, Cairns & Mercy, 1993; Dutton, 1995; Fang & Corso, 2007). Bu nedenle, reddedilmeyi kaygı ile algılamaya hazır olma ve reddedilme sinyallerine aşırı tepki verme olarak tanımlanan (Downey & Feldman, 1996) ve teorik olarak Bowlby'nin bağlanma kuramı ile benzerlik gösteren reddedilme duyarlılığı, bu çalışmada bağlanma stilleri ile birlikte psikolojik saldırganlığı yordayan bir risk faktörü olarak araştırılmıştır. Ayrıca, ilgili alanyazında, reddedilme duyarlılığı yüksek kişilerin, reddedilme algıladıklarında, partnerlerine karşı saldırgan davranışlar gösterdikleri de belirtilmektedir (Downey ve Feldman, 1996; Downey, Freitas, Michaelis ve Khouri, 1998; Ayduk, Gyurak ve Luerksen, 2008). Mevcut araştırma sonuçları, öz-şefkatin, sıklıkla flört şiddetinin bir sonucu olarak görülen utanç, kendini suçlama, kaygı ve depresyon gibi tepkiler için (Goss ve Gilbert, 2011; Meredith ve Mark, 2011; Tesh, Learman ve Pulliam, 2015) ve yüksek reddedilme duyarlılığı sonucu hissedilen öfke, kaygı ve korku gibi duygular için (Ahmadi, Hamid & Marashi, 2018) etkili bir duygusal düzenleme müdahale yöntemi olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, öz-şefkatin, bu çalışmada flört şiddeti ve reddedilme duyarlılığı için yararlı bir kuramsal çerçeve sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca yaş ve ilişki süresinin belirli bir yönde etkisi olmasına rağmen, cinsiyetle ilgili araştırmalar tutarlı sonuçlar göstermemektedir. Sonuç olarak, psikolojik saldırganlığı daha iyi anlamak için tüm bu değişkenler bu çalışmada araştırılmıştır. Psikolojik saldırganlık, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz-şefkati ayrı ayrı inceleyen çalışmalar alanyazında yer alsa da hepsinin birlikte incelendiği hiçbir çalışmaya ve bulguya rastlanmamıştır.

### **Araştırmanın Amacı**

Alanyazındaki mevcut bulgular, psikolojik flört saldırganlığının devam etmesinin, üniversite öğrencilerinin sağlıklı gelişimi için önemli bir risk faktörü olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, reddedilme duyarlılığı, bağlanma stilleri ve

öz şefkatin, romantik ilişkisi olan üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurmayı ve maruz kalmayı ne ölçüde yordadıklarını incelemektir.

### **Araştırma Soruları**

Araştırmanın amacı doğrultusunda bu çalışmada şu sorular araştırılmıştır: “Katılımcıların psikolojik flört saldırganlığı, bağlanma stilleri, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz şefkat puanlarında cinsiyet açısından anlamlı bir fark var mıdır?”, “Bağlanma stilleri (kaygılı ve kaçınma), reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz-şefkat, cinsiyet, yaş ve ilişki süresi kontrol edildikten sonra psikolojik flört saldırganlığına maruz kalmayı ne ölçüde yordamaktadır?” ve “Bağlanma stilleri (kaygılı ve kaçınma), reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz-şefkat, cinsiyet, yaş ve ilişki süresi kontrol edildikten sonra psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurmayı ne ölçüde yordamaktadır?”

### **Araştırmanın Önemi**

İnsan gelişiminin tüm aşamalarında olduğu gibi üniversite yılları da şiddet içeren davranışların gözlemlendiği dönemlerden biridir. Bu dönemde flört şiddeti karşısındaki tutumları ve deneyimleri, hayatlarının geri kalanında yaşayacakları ilişkileri etkileme gücüne sahiptir. Bireylerin flört şiddetine maruz kaldıktan sonra depresyon ve travma sonrası stres bozuklukları yaşadıkları bulunmuştur. Şiddet kavramı çoğunlukla fiziksel şiddet ile ilişkili gibi algılansa da literatür sonuçları psikolojik şiddetin fiziksel şiddetten daha yaygın olduğunu göstermektedir. Genç yetişkinlikte romantik ilişkileri olan kişilerle yapılan çalışmalar, yüksek oranda psikolojik flört saldırganlığı rapor etmişlerdir (ör., Karakurt ve Silver, 2013). Artan psikolojik saldırganlık oranları ile ilgili olarak, özellikle başvurma ve maruz kalmanın olumsuz sonuçları açısından daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç olduğu görülmektedir. Psikolojik flört saldırganlığı, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz şefkat, psikoloji bilimindeki güncel yaklaşımlardır ve Türkiye’de bu yaklaşımla ilgili çalışmalar oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencileri arasında reddedilme duyarlılığı, bağlanma stilleri ve öz şefkatin öngörücü etkisi ile psikolojik saldırganlığı araştırmayı amaçlayan ulusal ve uluslararası literatürdeki ilk çalışma olması bakımından önemlidir. Reddedilme

duyarlılığı bulguları, psikolojik saldırganlık davranışlarının altında yatan mekanizmaları anlamada önemli bir etkiye sahip olabilir. Duygusal bir düzenleme stratejisi olarak, psikolojik saldırganlığın ortaya çıkmasını önlemek veya buna müdahale etmek için öz şefkatin önemli bir rolü olabilir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın bulguları ile saldırganlık içeren davranışların önlenmesi konusunda yaratılacak farkındalığa ışık tutması beklenmektedir.

## **YÖNTEM**

### **Araştırmanın Deseni**

Bu çalışmanın amacı, reddedilme duyarlılığı, bağlanma stilleri ve öz şefkatin, romantik ilişkisi olan üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurmayı ve maruz kalmayı ne ölçüde yordadıklarını incelemektir. Bu kapsamda çalışmada ilişkisel araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada psikolojik flört saldırganlığı yordayıcılarını değerlendirmek için hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analiz modelleri kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde ayrıca betimleyici istatistikler, çok değişkenli varyans analizi ve bağımsız örneklem t-testi analizleri yürütülmüştür.

### **Örneklem**

Bu araştırmanın örneklemini, çoğunluğu (52.4%) Ankara olmak üzere Türkiye'nin 56 farklı şehrinde yaşayan ön lisans, lisans, yüksek lisans ve doktora düzeyinde eğitimlerini sürdüren, romantik ilişkisi olan, 554 üniversite öğrencisi oluşturmuştur. Romantik ilişkisi olan hedeflenen katılımcı sayısına ulaşmak için üniversite öğrencileri erişilebilir bir gruptur ve bu nedenle kolay ulaşılabilirlik örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların 395'i (%71.3) kadın, 159'u (%28.7) erkektir. Katılımcıların yaşları 18 ile 38 arasında değişmekte olup ortalama yaşları 22.65'dir (SS = 2.9). Öğrencilerin 24'ü (% 4.3) ön lisans, 376'sı (% 67.9) lisans düzeyinde, 138'i (% 24.9) yüksek lisans düzeyinde ve 16'sı (% 2.9) doktora düzeyinde eğitimlerine devam etmektedir.

## **Veri Toplama Araçları**

Bu çalışmada araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan Demografik Bilgi Formu, Reddedilme Duyarlılığı Ölçeği, Öz-Şefkat Ölçeği, Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği ve Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılmıştır.

### **Demografik Bilgi Formu**

Demografik bilgi formu, araştırmacı tarafından, katılımcıların cinsiyet, yaş, yaşadığı yer ve eğitim düzeyi gibi temel demografik bilgilerini toplamak için geliştirilmiştir. Formda, romantik ilişkinin ay cinsinden süresi, devam eden ilişkinin türü, yüz yüze görüşme sıklığı, devam eden ilişkinin geleceği ve önceki ilişki durumu gibi ilişki özellikleri de sorulmuştur.

### **Reddedilme Duyarlılığı Ölçeği**

Downey ve Feldman (1996) tarafından geliştirilen ölçekte 18 madde yer almaktadır. Bu maddeler, bir kişinin reddedilme potansiyeline sahip olduğu bazı varsayımsal sosyal durumları içerir. Katılımcılar bu maddeleri hem karşılaştıkları durumla ilgili kaygı derecelerini hem de kabul beklentilerini gösteren 6'lı Likert tipi bir ölçekte değerlendirmektedir. Downey ve Feldman (1996) iç tutarlılık katsayısının ilk olarak .83 ve üç hafta sonra test-tekrar test güvenilirliğini .83 olarak bulmuşlardır. Test-tekrar test güvenilirliği dört ay aralıklarla uygulandığında .78 olarak bulunmuştur.

Ölçeğin Türkçe'ye uyarlanması ve psikometrik özelliklerinin değerlendirilmesi Göncü Köse, Özen- Çıplak, Ulaşan Özgüle ve Sümer (2017) tarafından yapılmış ve iç tutarlılık katsayısı .85 ve .82 olarak bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada, Cronbach alfa katsayısı toplam ölçek için .81 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

### **Öz-Şefkat Ölçeği**

Öz-Şefkat Ölçeği, Neff (2003b) tarafından geliştirilen ve 26 maddeden oluşan ve altı alt boyut içeren bir öz değerlendirme ölçeğidir. Bu alt boyutlar, öz nezakete karşı öz yargı; ortak insanlığa karşı sosyal izolasyon, bilinçli farkındalığa karşı aşırı

özdeşleşme olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. Katılımcılar, her bir maddede belirtilen durumu 5 dereceli Likert tipi ölçekte ne sıklıkta yaşadıklarını belirtmektedir (1 = Asla, 5 = Her Zaman). Bu ölçeğin Türkçe uyarlama çalışması önce Akın, Akın ve Abacı (2007), ardından Deniz, Kesici ve Sümer (2008) tarafından yapılmıştır. Ancak yazarlar, ölçeğin Türkiye'de geçerliliğinin ve güvenilirliğinin tekrar test edilmesini önermişlerdir. Bu öneri üzerine Kantaş ve İmamoğlu (2013b), ilgili çeviri ve geri çeviri süreçlerinin tekrarlanması ve diğer iki çeviri ile karşılaştırılması sonucunda ölçeği uyarlamıştır. Bu çalışmada, diğer çevirilere kıyasla orijinal forma anlam açısından daha çok benzerlik taşıması ve .94 iç tutarlılık katsayısına sahip olması nedeniyle Kantaş'ın (2013) çevirisi kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, Cronbach alfa katsayısı toplam ölçek için .91 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Ölçeğin alt boyutlarının Cronbach alfa katsayısı, öz-nezaket için .85, öz-yargı için .86, ortak insanlık için .80, izolasyon için .76, bilinçli farkındalık için .77 ve aşırı özdeşleşme için .81 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

### **Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği (ÇBDİÖ)**

Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği Murphy ve Hoover (1999) tarafından geliştirilen, bireyler arasında psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalma davranışlarını belirlemek için kullanılan 56 maddelik (başvurma için 28 madde ve maruz kalma için 28 madde) bir öz bildirim ölçeğidir. Psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalma boyutları her biri yedi maddeden oluşan Kontrol, Aşağılama, Düşmanca Geri Çekilme ve Gözdağı olarak dört alt ölçeği içerir. Ölçekteki her madde, son 6 ay içinde davranışların ne sıklıkta meydana geldiğini ölçer.

Ölçek, Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer ve Murphy (2018) tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlanmıştır. Psikometrik özelliklerle ilgili ilk bulgular, ölçeğin flört ilişkisi olan üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik saldırganlık davranışlarını ölçmek için geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçüm aracı olduğuna dair kanıt sunmaktadır. Doğrulayıcı faktör analizi sonuçları hem başvurma hem de maruz kalma için ÇBDİÖ'nün yapı geçerliliğine dair kabul edilebilir kanıtlar sağladığını göstermiştir. ÇBDİÖ'nün başvurma ve maruz

kalma boyutları için toplam Cronbach alfa değeri .89 ve .90 olarak bulunmuştur (Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer ve Murphy, 2018).

Bu çalışmada, Cronbach alfa katsayısı toplam ölçek için .96 olarak hesaplanmıştır. ÇBDİÖ'nün her alt ölçeği için, iç tutarlılığı değerlendirmek için hem başvurma hem de maruz kalma için Cronbach alfa katsayısı hesaplanmıştır. ÇBDİÖ 'nün başvurma ve maruz kalma boyutları için toplam Cronbach alfa katsayıları sırasıyla .80 ve .82 olarak bulunmuştur.

### **Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri-II**

Fraley ve ark. (2000) tarafından geliştirilen Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri-II, bağlanma stillerini, 18'i kaygı ve 18'i kaçınma olarak, 36 maddede ölçen bir araçtır. Katılımcılardan, her bir maddenin romantik ilişkilerindeki duygu ve düşüncelerini 7 aralıklı ölçeklerde ne ölçüde yansıttığını işaretlemesi istenir (1 = asla katılmıyorum, 7 = tamamen katılıyorum). Kaygı ve kaçınma puanları, her bir katılımcı için, ilgili boyutları ölçen maddeler toplanarak ve bunların ortalaması alınarak hesaplanır. Bu ölçeğin Türkçe uyarlaması Selçuk, Günaydın, Sümer ve Uysal (2005) tarafından yapılmıştır. Hem kaçınma hem de kaygı boyutları yüksek düzeyde iç tutarlılık göstermiştir ve bu boyutlar için Cronbach alfa katsayıları sırasıyla .90 ve .86 olarak bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, kaygı boyutunun test-tekrar test güvenilirliğinin .82 olduğu ve kaçınma boyutunun .81 olduğu bulunmuştur. Her iki boyutun yüksek bir iç tutarlılığa ve yüksek test-tekrar test güvenilirliğine sahip olduğu görülmüştür.

Bu çalışmada, ölçeğin Cronbach alfa katsayısı toplam ölçek için .90 olarak hesaplanmıştır. YIYE-II'nin kaygılı bağlanma boyutu için Cronbach alfa katsayısı .87 ve kaçınmalı bağlanma boyutu için .88 olarak bulunmuştur.

### **Veri Toplama Süreci**

Veri toplama sürecine başlamadan önce, araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak, ölçekleri geliştiren ve Türkçe'ye uyarlayan yazarlar ile iletişime geçilerek, mevcut araştırmada kullanım için izin alınmıştır. Veri toplama süreci için Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi

Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi'nin insan araştırma etik kurulundan izin alınmıştır. Bilgi ve onam formu dahil olmak üzere katılımcının onayından sonra demografik form ve ölçeklerle devam eden çevrimiçi bir anket bağlantısı, Google Formlar aracılığıyla oluşturulmuştur. Romantik bir ilişkisi olan üniversite öğrencilerinin çevrimiçi ankete katılmalarını istenmiştir. Veriler, araştırmacının kişisel sosyal medya ağındaki kişiler aracılığıyla toplanmaya başlanmış ve hedeflenen katılımcı sayısına ulaşmak için üniversitelerin öğrenci topluluklarından ve tez dayanışma gruplarından paylaşım için yardım istenmiştir. Yeterli sayıda kadın katılımcıya ulaştıktan sonra duyuru sadece erkek katılımcılar için yapılmıştır. Erkek katılımcı açısından hedeflenen sayıya ulaşılamasa da analiz aşamasına geçiş için veri toplama süreci 2 Mart 2020'de sonlandırılmıştır.

### **Veri Analizi**

Reddedilme duyarlılığı, öz-şefkat, bağlanma stillerinin, yaş, cinsiyet ve ilişki süresi kontrol edildikten sonra, psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmayı ve maruz kalmayı ne ölçüde yordadıklarını incelemek için iki ayrı hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada yapılan tüm istatistiksel analizlerde .05 alfa düzeyi istatistiksel anlamlılık ölçütü olarak seçilmiş ve tüm analizler IBM (2013) Sosyal Bilimler İstatistiksel Paketleri 22.0 (SPSS) versiyonu ile yapılmıştır.

### **Araştırmanın Sınırlılıkları**

Bu çalışmada veri toplama sürecinde gözlenen birtakım sınırlılıklar bulunmaktadır. Veriler sosyal medya yoluyla uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak toplanmış ve yarısı Ankara'dan olmak üzere 56 farklı şehirden üniversite öğrencileri araştırmaya katılmıştır. Ulaşılan katılımcı sayısı, araştırma sonuçlarının Türkiye'de okuyan tüm üniversite öğrencilerine genellenebilmesi için yeterli değildir. Ayrıca, veri toplama sürecindeki erkek katılımcı sayısını artırmak için özel bir çaba harcanmasına rağmen, örneklem cinsiyet açısından (kadın %71.4 ve % 28.6 erkek) dengelenmemiştir. Mevcut çalışma, araştırmanın korelasyonel deseni nedeniyle de bazı sınırlılıklar içermektedir. Dolayısıyla, sonuçlardan nedensellik yorumu çıkarılamaz. Diğer bir

sınırlılık olarak, öz-bildirime dayalı veri toplama süreci nedeniyle katılımcıların sosyal olarak istenen cevapları vermiş olma riskleri bulunmaktadır.

## **BULGULAR**

Bu çalışmada psikolojik flört saldırganlığı, reddedilme duyarlılığı, öz-şefkat ve bağlanma stilleri arasındaki ilişkiler farklı analizlerle incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın birinci sorusu doğrultusunda cinsiyet farklılıklarını araştırmak için MANOVA ve bağımsız örneklem t-testi yapılmıştır. t- testleri ve MANOVA sonuçlarına göre, öz-şefkat değişkeni açısından kadın ve erkekler arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmuş, erkeklerin öz-şefkat seviyelerinin kadınlardan daha fazla olduğu gözlenmiştir. Araştırmanın diğer değişkenleri ile cinsiyet açısından fark bulunmamıştır. Hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizleri çalışmanın ikinci ve üçüncü soruları kapsamında yürütülmüştür. Hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizlerinin sonuçları, ilişki süresi, reddedilme duyarlılığı, bağlanma stillerinin hem psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma hem de psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma için önemli yordayıcılar olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. İkinci ve üçüncü araştırma soruları kapsamında açıklanan varyans değerleri sırasıyla %19 ve % 18.9 olarak bulunmuştur. Cinsiyetin (erkek olma) psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma için önemli bir yordayıcı olduğu, öz-şefkatin ise yalnızca psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma için önemli bir yordayıcı olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma yaygınlık oranları kadınlarda % 93.4, erkeklerde % 95.6, psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma oranları ise kadınlarda % 96.2, erkeklerde % 96.9 olarak bulunmuştur.

## **TARTIŞMA**

Bu çalışmanın MANOVA sonuçlarına göre, erkekler psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalmada biraz daha yüksek ortalama puanlar rapor ederken, kadınlar psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmada biraz daha yüksek ortalama puanlar rapor etmiş ve genel olarak erkeklerle kadınlar arasında psikolojik saldırganlığın boyutları açısından anlamlı bir fark gözlenmemiştir. Maruz kalmanın aksine, cinsiyetin psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma oranlarının anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olmadığı görülmüştür. Bu

çalışmanın bulgularıyla tutarlı olarak psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmada cinsiyet farkı olmadığını bildiren birçok araştırma sonucu vardır (Brush, 1990; O'Keefe, 1997; Simonelli & Ingram, 1998; Kaura & Lohman, 2007; Fincham ve ark., 2008). Psikolojik saldırganlığın karşılıklı ve döngüsel olduğunu belirten bazı araştırmacılar, bu saldırganlığın cinsiyete bakılmaksızın gerçekleştiğini bildirmişlerdir (O'Leary ve Slep, 2003; O'Leary, Smith Slep, Avery-Leaf ve Cascardi, 2008; Renner ve Whitney, 2012, Kahya, 2018). Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde yapılan bir ulusal anketin sonuçları, erkeklerin önceki yıllarda daha fazla şiddete maruz kaldığını gösterse de (Hoff, 2012), yakın zamanda tekrarlanan aynı anketin sonuçları, erkeklerin ve kadınların aynı derecede psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurduğunu göstermiştir (Niolon ve ark., 2017). Araştırmacılar, cinsiyete ilişkin tutarsız bulgular nedeniyle şiddeti ilk kimin başlattığını araştırmış olsa da elde edilen yeni sonuçlarda da belirgin bir cinsiyet öne çıkmamıştır (Allen, Swan ve Raghavan, 2009; Hoff, 2012). Toplu-Demirtaş (2015) Türk genç yetişkin örnekleminde yaptığı çalışmasının sonuçlarında hem psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurma hem de saldırganlığa maruz kalma açısından önemli bir cinsiyet farkı rapor etmemiştir.

Alanyazındaki bazı araştırmalar bağlanma ve cinsiyet ilişkisinin tutarsız ve tartışmalı olduğunu, bunun da kullanılan ölçekler ve katılımcıların yaşları ile ilgili olabileceğini belirtmiştir (Del Giudice, 2009; Scharfe, 2017). Cinsiyete göre farklılıklar bildiren araştırmalar, erkeklerin kaçınmalı bağlanma stili puanlarının kadınlara göre daha yüksek olduğunu göstermiştir (Brennan ve diğerleri 1998; Del Giudice, 2009; Kirkpatrick 1998; Picardi, Vermigli, Toni, D'Amico, Bitetti ve Pasquini. 2002; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994). Ayrıca Del Giudice (2009), kadınların çoğunlukla kaygılı bağlanma stiliyle ilişkili olduğunu belirtmiştir. 62 farklı kültürel geçmişe sahip yetişkinlerin bağlanmasını inceleyen çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, çoğu ülkede, erkeklerin kaçınmalı bağlanma stiline sahip oldukları görülmüştür (Schmitt, Alcalay, Allensworth, Allik, Ault ve Austers, 2003a). Kararımak ve Oğuz-Duran (2008), erkek üniversite öğrencilerinin kendilerini güvenli bağlanma stiliyle ifade ederken, kız öğrencilerin kendilerini erkeklere göre daha endişeli algıladıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu

çalışmada MANOVA analizi sonuçlarına göre cinsiyet, bağlanma stilleri açısından farklılık yaratan bir değişken değildir.

Yarnell ve arkadaşları (2015), 2003-2014 yılları arasında yapılan 71 çalışmanın sonuçlarını incelemiş ve erkeklerin öz-şefkat düzeylerinin kadınlardan biraz daha yüksek olduğunu bildirmiştir. Bu nedenle, kadınlar için daha yüksek düzeyde öz-şefkat gösteren çalışmalar son derece sınırlıdır. Alanyazınla tutarlı olarak bu çalışmada cinsiyetle öz-şefkat, bağımsız örneklem t-testi sonucunda anlamlı sonuçlar göstermiş ve erkeklerin biraz daha yüksek düzeyde öz-şefkate sahip oldukları bulunmuştur. Reddedilme duyarlılığı için yürütülen bağımsız örneklem t-testi sonuçlarında ise cinsiyete göre anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Kadınların reddedilme duyarlılığını daha yüksek bulan (London, Downey, Bonica ve Paltin, 2007) ve erkeklerin reddedilme duyarlılığını daha yüksek bulan (Hafen, Spilker, Chango, Marston ve Allen, 2014) çalışmalar olmasına rağmen, genel reddedilme duyarlılığının cinsiyet açısından farklılık göstermediği bulunmuştur (Downey, Mougios, Ayduk, London & Shoda, 2004; Harrison, 2006; Breines & Ayduk, 2015; İbrahim, Rohner, Smith ve Flannery, 2015; Khaleque ve diğerleri 2019). Üniversite öğrencileri arasında ulusal literatürün gözden geçirilmesi, reddedilme duyarlılığına ilişkin uluslararası literatür ile paralel sonuçlar göstermiştir. Üniversite öğrencileri arasında reddedilme duyarlılığının cinsiyetler arasında anlamlı bir fark göstermediğini rapor eden çeşitli çalışmalar olmasına rağmen (Erözkan, 2004a; Erbaş, 2012; Özdemir, 2017; İslamoğlu, Atan ve Ünver, 2019; İnce, 2020) kadınların reddedilme duyarlılığı düzeyinin erkeklerden daha yüksek olduğunu bildiren araştırmalar da bulunmaktadır (Erözkan, 2004; 2007; 2009; Çağlayaner, 2020). Sarıçam (2011) ise tersini ifade ederek, erkeklerin reddedilmeye daha yatkın olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Çalışmanın ikinci sorusu doğrultusunda yürütülen çoklu hiyerarşik regresyon analizi sonuçları ve alanyazın ile ilişkisi bu bölümde açıklanmıştır. Araştırmanın ikinci sorusu doğrultusunda yapılan analiz sonucunda; ilişki süresi, cinsiyet, kaygılı ve kaçınılmalı bağlanma stilleri ve reddedilme duyarlılığı, psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma için anlamlı yordayıcılar olarak bulunmuş ve bu değişkenler toplam varyansın %19'unu açıklamıştır. Öz-şefkat ise maruz kalmanın önemli bir yordayıcısı olarak

bulunmamıştır. Hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizinden elde edilen beta katsayı değerleri incelendiğinde, ilişkinin süresi ile kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stilleri, psikolojik flört saldırganlığına maruz kalma ile pozitif korelasyon gösterirken, reddedilme duyarlılığı saldırganlığına maruz kalma ile negatif korelasyon göstermiştir. Daha uzun süren flört ilişkilerinde, yüksek kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stiline sahip ve reddedilme duyarlılığı düşük olan katılımcıların, psikolojik saldırganlığına maruz kalmaya daha yatkın olduklarını göstermektedir. Hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi sonuçlarındaki r-kare değişiklikleri dikkate alındığında, kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stilleri psikolojik saldırganlığına maruz kalmanın en güçlü açıklayıcı değişkeni olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu bulgu, iki değişkenli korelasyon sonuçlarıyla da desteklenmektedir, r değerleri birbirine çok yakın olsa bile psikolojik saldırganlığına maruz kalma, kaçınmalı bağlanma stiliyle orta düzeyde pozitif ilişki gösterirken, kaygılı bağlanma stiliyle zayıf ama pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki göstermiştir. Velotti vd. (2018), psikolojik saldırganlığına maruz kalma ve kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stilleri ile sistematik incelemelerinde kesin bir yön göstermemişlerdir. Bu sistematik incelemede, 1997'den beri yayınlanan 23 çalışma, psikolojik saldırganlığına maruz kalma ve bağlanma açısından incelenmiştir. Araştırmaların yarısı saldırganlığına maruz kalma ile kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stilleri arasında bir ilişki olduğunu bildirmemiştir (Henderson, Bartholomew ve Dutton, 1997; Shurman ve Rodriguez, 2006; Wigman, Graham-Kevan ve Archer 2008; Oka Sandberg, Bradford ve Brown ., 2014; Bélanger, Dugal, Courchesne ve Mathieu, 2015; Tougas Péloquin ve Mondor., 2016), on bir çalışma kaçınma bağlanma stili ile orta düzeyde bir ilişki olduğunu bildirmiş ve üniversite öğrencileriyle yapılan beş çalışma sadece kaygılı bağlanma ile ilişki olduğunu bildirmiştir (O'Hearn ve Davis, 1997; Henderson, Bartholomew, Trinke & Kwong, 2005; Riggs ve Kaminski, 2010; Bonache ve diğerleri, 2016, 2017). Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın sonuçları, ilişkilerine ilişkin net bir sonuç elde etmek için psikolojik flört saldırganlığına maruz kalmayı açıklarken hem kaygılı hem de kaçınma bağlanma stiline incelenmesi gerektiğini düşündürmektedir.

Hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizinde ilişki süresi, yaş, cinsiyet, kaygı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stillerinin ortak etkisiyle reddedilme duyarlılığı varyansa anlamlı katkı

sağlamıştır. Reddedilme duyarlılığının negatif beta katsayısı değeri, reddedilme duyarlılığı arttıkça psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalmanın azaldığını göstermiştir. R kare değişimi dikkate alındığında, reddedilme duyarlılığı varyansın ek olarak % 2,2'sini açıklamıştır. Bu sonuç, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve saldırganlık literatüründeki nicel araştırma sonuçlarıyla tutarsızdır. 52 nicel çalışmanın meta-analitik incelemesi, reddedilme duyarlılığı yüksek olan bireylerin psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma eğiliminde olduğunu bildirmiştir (Gao, Assink, Liu, Chan ve Ip, 2019). Bu nedenle, reddedilme duyarlılığını ve psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma ilişkisini net bir şekilde anlamak için özellikle farklı kültürlerde daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç vardır. Türk kültürüne özgü faktörlerle birlikte bu ilişkiyi etkileyen başka aracı veya moderatör değişkenler olabilir.

Öz-şefkat, psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalmayı açıklamada istatistiksel olarak önemli bir değişken olarak bulunmamıştır. Utanmanın yanı sıra kendini suçlama eğilimi olan kadınların kendine şefkat göstermede zorluk yaşayabileceği belirtilmiştir (Flicker, Cerulli, Swogger ve Talbott, 2012; Erb, 2015). Tesh, Learman ve Pulliam (2015) ayrıca flört şiddetine maruz kalanların, partnerlerini sakinleştirmek ve çatışmayı sona erdirmek için çatışmada kendini suçlama davranışı sergiledikleri görülmüştür. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın sonuçları, öz-şefkat düzeyi düşük, kendilerini suçlamaya meyilli bireylerin psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğunu belirten alanyazınla tutarlı değildir. Ayrıca bu çalışmada öz-şefkatin alt boyutlarının incelenmediği ve sadece toplam puanların kullanıldığı unutulmamalıdır. Bu nedenle, öz-şefkatin bileşenlerini incelemenin, öz-şefkatin psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalmayı açıklamadaki rolü hakkında daha fazla bilgi verebileceği söylenebilir.

MANOVA sonuçlarında maruz kalma açısından anlamlı bir cinsiyet farkı olmamasına rağmen, bağlanma değişkenleri hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizine dahil edildikten sonra son modeldeki maruz kalma varyansına cinsiyetin anlamlı katkı sağladığı görülmüştür. Erkeklerin flört şiddetine maruz kalmalarına ilişkin çalışma sayısı sınırlıdır ancak Shorey ve ark. (2008) erkeklerin yaklaşık %70 ila %90'ının psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kaldığını bildirmiştir. Sonraki yıllarda Shorey, Febres, Brasfield ve Stuart (2012), 187 erkek üniversite öğrencisi ile yaptıkları araştırmada maruz kalma

oranını %82,1 olarak raporlamışlardır. Bu sonuçlar, erkekleri sadece saldırgan olarak kabul etmek yerine şiddete maruz kalan taraf da olabileceklerini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, mevcut çalışmada, maruz kalma yaygınlık oranları incelendiğinde hem erkek hem de kadın katılımcıların oldukça yüksek oranda psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma rapor ettiklerini belirtmek gerekir. Ayrıca, rapor edilen cinsiyetler arası psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma oranları da maruz kalma oranlarına oldukça yakın sonuçlar göstermiştir. Birlikte ele alındığında sonuçlar, flört ilişkilerinde psikolojik saldırganlığın çift yönlü ve / veya tek yönlü doğası ile ilişkili faktörleri anlamak için daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç olduğunu göstermektedir.

Üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurmalarına ilişkin olarak araştırmanın üçüncü sorusu doğrultusunda hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Yaş ve öz-şefkat, ilişkinin süresi, kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma ve reddedilme duyarlılığı gibi diğer yordayıcı değişkenlerle birlikte psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma anlamlı yordayıcısı olarak bulunmuş ve toplam varyansın %18,9'unu açıklamıştır. Beta katsayıları incelendiğinde, ilişkinin süresi ile kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma stilleri, psikolojik flört saldırganlığı ile pozitif yönde korelasyon gösterirken yaş, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz-şefkat, mağdur olmayla negatif yönde korelasyon göstermiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz-şefkat düzeyleri düşük, kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma düzeyleri yüksek ve ilişki süresi daha uzun olan genç katılımcılar, flört ilişkisinde psikolojik saldırganlığa daha fazla başvurma eğilimindedirler. Bazı çalışmalarda psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma, kaçınmalı bağlanma stilinden ziyade kaygılı bağlanma ile ilişkili olduğu bildirilmiştir (Sandberg ve ark., 2010; Cadely ve ark., 2018; Toplu-Demirtaş, Murray, Hatipoğlu-Sümer, 2018). Türk üniversite öğrencileri ile yapılan her iki çalışmada da partneri sahiplenme ve kıskançlık yoluyla faaliyetlerini sınırlandırmaya, izole etmeye ve kontrol etmeye yönelik eylemleri içeren psikolojik saldırganlık ile kaygılı bağlanma arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunurken, kaçınmalı bağlanma stili ile anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmamıştır (Toplu-Demirtaş, Murray, Hatipoğlu Sümer, 2019; Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer, Murphy, 2018). Velotti, Beomonte-Zobel, Rogier ve Tambelli (2018) de psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve bağlanma hakkındaki

sistemantik inceleme alıřmalarında, 42 arařtırmanın oğunda saldırganlıęa bařvurma ile kaygılı ve kaınmalı baęlanma stilleri arasında pozitif bir iliřki bildirildiğini belirtmiřtir. Bu nedenle, bu alıřmanın sonuçları psikolojik flört saldırganlığını yordamada hem kaygılı hem de kaınmalı baęlanmanın incelenmesi gerektiğini dūřündürmektedir.

Bu alıřma cinsiyet, yař, iliřki sūresi ve baęlanma stilleri kontrol edildikten sonra psikolojik saldırganlıęa bařvurma iin reddedilme duyarlılıęının anlamlı bir yordayıcı olduęunu gōstermiřtir. Bu sonuç, reddedilme duyarlılıęı ve saldırganlık alanyazınındaki nicel arařtırma sonuçlarıyla tutarsızdır.1990-2018 yılları arasında reddedilme duyarlılıęı, saldırganlık ve maruz kalma ūzerine yapılan 52 nicel alıřmanın meta-analitik incelemesi, reddedilme duyarlılıęı yūsek olan bireylerin psikolojik saldırganlıęa bařvurma eęiliminde olduęunu bildirmiřtir (Gao, Assink, Liu, Chan ve Ip, 2019). Bu meta-analitik alıřmaya dahil edilen 52 alıřmanın oęu Kuzey Amerika ve Avustralya'da gerekleřtirilmiřtir. Bu nedenle, farklı kūltūrlerde genellenebilirlięi sınırlıdır. Alanyazın ile tutarsız sonucun nedenlerinden biri kūltūrel farklılıklar olabilir.

Öz Őefkat, korelasyon analizinde psikolojik saldırganlıęa maruz kalma ve bařvurma ile negatif korelasyon gōsterirken, psikolojik saldırganlıęa bařvurmanın korelasyon katsayısı daha yūsek bulunmuřtur. Hem ulusal hem de uluslararası alanyazında, psikolojik saldırganlıęa bařvurma ve öz-řefkat konusunda sınırlı sayıda alıřma yapılmıřtır. Bu doęrultuda, mevcut arařtırmanın bulgularının, alanyazındaki sınırlı sayıdaki ampirik bulgularla tutarlı olduęunu sōylemek mūmkündür. Öte yandan, öz-řefkati dūřük olan bireylerin partnerlerine karřı daha kıskan, baskın ve kontrol edici oldukları bulunmuřtur ve bunlar saldırganlık iin önemli davranıř kriterleridir (Neff ve Beretvas, 2013; Tandler ve Petersen, 2020). Bu sonuç, öz-řefkatin, psikolojik saldırganlıęa bařvuran ūniversite oęrencileri iin olası etkili bir duygu-davranıř dūzenleme becerisi olarak deęerlendirilmesi gerektiğini dūřündürmektedir. Psikolojik saldırganlıęa bařvurma iin yūrūtūlen hiyerarřik oklu regresyon analizinde, maruz kalmadan farklı sonuç gōsteren bir dięer deęiřken ise yař olarak bulunmuřtur. Analiz, yař ilerledike psikolojik flört saldırganlıęına bařvurmanın azaldığını gōstermiřtir. Bu

sonuç, daha genç yaş gruplarında psikolojik şiddetin daha yaygın olduğunu belirten (Wekerle ve Wolfe, 1999; Foshee vd., 2009; Karakurt ve Silver, 2013) ve belli bir yaştan sonra saldırgan davranışların azaldığını belirten araştırmalarla uyumludur (Broidy vd, 2003).

### **Kuram, Araştırma ve Uygulamaya Yönelik Çıkarımlar**

Çalışmanın bulguları, Bağlanma Kuramı'nın önerdiği gibi, erken deneyimlerin doğrudan psikolojik saldırganlıkla ilişkili olabileceğine işaret etmektedir. Bu bulgular, genel olarak, psikolojik saldırganlığın nedenlerine ilişkin bağlanma kuramının varsayımlarını desteklemektedir. Araştırmanın bulgularının, üniversite psikolojik danışmanlarının, psikolojik danışmanlara eğitim veren akademisyenlerin, program geliştiricilerin, ruh sağlığı profesyonellerinin çalışmalarına ışık tutması beklenmektedir. Çalışmanın bulgularının saldırgan davranışların anlaşılmasına, önlenmesine ve tedavisine önemli bir katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Bu kavramlar hakkında danışma merkezleri tarafından üniversite öğrencilerine farkındalığı arttırmak ve şiddet içeren davranışların sorgulanmasını sağlamak için psikoeğitim programları hazırlanabilir ve güvenli flört ilişkileri hakkında seminerler sunulabilir. Psikolojik saldırganlığı destekleyen algı ve duyguların yönetilebilmesi için bağlanma stilleri dikkate alınarak psikoeğitim programlarının içeriğinin geliştirilmesi oldukça önemlidir. Bu noktada ruh sağlığı profesyonelleri güvene dayalı bir ilişki kurmayı önceliklendirmelidir. Ayrıca danışma merkezlerinde çalışan ruh sağlığı profesyonelleri, üniversite öğrencilerini bağlanma konusunda bilgilendirebilir ve romantik ilişkilerine olası etkilerine dair oturumlar düzenleyebilir. Alanyazınla uyumlu olarak, bu çalışmanın sonuçları, yaşla birlikte psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmanın azaldığını göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, daha genç yaş grupları için ruh sağlığı uzmanları tarafından müdahale yöntemlerinin geliştirilmesi önemlidir. Bu yöntemleri geliştirmek adına, flört şiddetini tanıma ve müdahale etme konusunda mesleki yeterliliklerini geliştirmelerine destek olmak kritik önem taşımaktadır. Daha genç yaş gruplarındaki müdahaleler, öfke, depresyon ve anksiyete gibi psikolojik saldırganlığın olumsuz sonuçlarının olmasını önleyebilir veya bu sonuçların daha

derin ve yıkıcı olmasını önleyebilir. Özellikle erkek üniversite öğrencileri, psikolojik saldırganlık davranışına maruz kalmamaları için bilinçlendirilerek güçlendirilebilirler.

### **Gelecekteki Araştırmalar için Öneriler**

İlk olarak, bu çalışmanın kısıtlılıkları göz önüne alınarak, gelecekteki çalışmaların cinsiyet dengesi olan, daha geniş bir katılımcı grubuyla, aynı değişkenlerle tekrarlanması önerilmektedir. Psikolojik saldırganlığın ve öz şefkatin alt boyutlarının analize dahil edilmesinin psikolojik saldırganlık davranışları ve öz şefkatin daha iyi anlaşılmasında yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Hammock ve O'Hearn'e (2002) göre, kadın ve erkeklerin psikolojik saldırganlık davranışlarının altında yatan motivasyon büyük ölçüde farklılık göstermektedir. Erkeklerin bu davranışları partnerlerine zarar vermek, kontrol etmek ve manipüle etmek için kullandıkları ve kadınların bu davranışları hoşnutsuzluklarını ve duygusal kargaşalarını ifade etmek için kullandıkları rapor edilmiştir. Buradan hareketle, gelecek çalışmalarda psikolojik saldırganlığın alt boyutlarının da dahil edilmesinin cinsiyet açısından farklı sonuçlar ortaya çıkarabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, gelecekteki çalışmalarda, tek bir partnerden öz bildirim yolu yerine her iki partnerden de veri toplamanın daha anlamlı sonuçlar doğuracağı düşünülmektedir. Çalışmanın değişkenleri bağlamında mevcut boylamsal ve nitel çalışmalar, ulusal ve uluslararası düzeyde oldukça sınırlıdır. Bu nedenle, katılımcıların kendilerini duygusal olarak ifade etmelerine rehberlik etmek veya katılımcıların yaşam deneyimlerini uzunlamasına takip etmek, psikolojik saldırganlığın nedenlerini ve sonuçlarını daha iyi anlama fırsatı sağlayabilir.

Araştırmanın değişkenleri ile cinsiyet ve cinsiyet rolleri arasındaki ilişki açık değildir. Açıklık getirmek gerekirse, analize bir değişken olarak cinsiyet rolünü dahil etmek farklı kapılar açacak ve bakış açılarını genişletecektir. Cinsiyet açısından bir diğer önemli nokta ise, psikolojik flört saldırganlığı konusunda yapılan araştırmaların örneklemelerinin yoksul ve azınlık kadınlar açısından sınırlı sayıda olmasıdır. Yoksul ve azınlık grubundaki kadınların, yüksek oranlarda saldırganlığa maruz kalabilecekleri ifade edilmektedir. Özellikle Türk kültüründe böyle bir örneklemle çalışmak henüz hak ettiği ilgiyi görmeyen yoksul ve azınlık gruptaki kadınlar hakkında değerli bilgiler

sağlayabilir (Park, 2016). Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın korelasyonel tasarımı nedeniyle, nedensellik yorumu sonuçlardan çıkarılamaz. Bu nedenle, farklı analizler kullanılarak psikolojik saldırganlık bağlanma stilleri, reddedilme duyarlılığı ve öz şefkat arasındaki dinamikler keşfedilebilir.

## APPENDIX H: THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

- Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences
- Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Social Sciences
- Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics
- Enformatik Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Informatics
- Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü** / Graduate School of Marine Sciences

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**Bölümü** / Department: Eğitim Bilimleri, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık / Educational Sciences, Guidance and Psychological Counselling

**TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English):** PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION AMONG DATING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE PREDICTION OF ATTACHMENT STYLES, REJECTION SENSITIVITY, AND SELF-COMPASSION

**TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE:**  **Yüksek Lisans** / Master  **Doktora** / PhD

1. Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.
2. Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of two years. \*
3. Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for period of six months. \*

\* Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. /

A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.

Yazarın imzası / Signature ..... Tarih / Date .....