

THE ROLES OF ATTACHMENT BEHAVIORS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION
STYLES IN RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION: A COMPARISON OF LONG-
DISTANCE AND GEOGRAPHICALLY CLOSE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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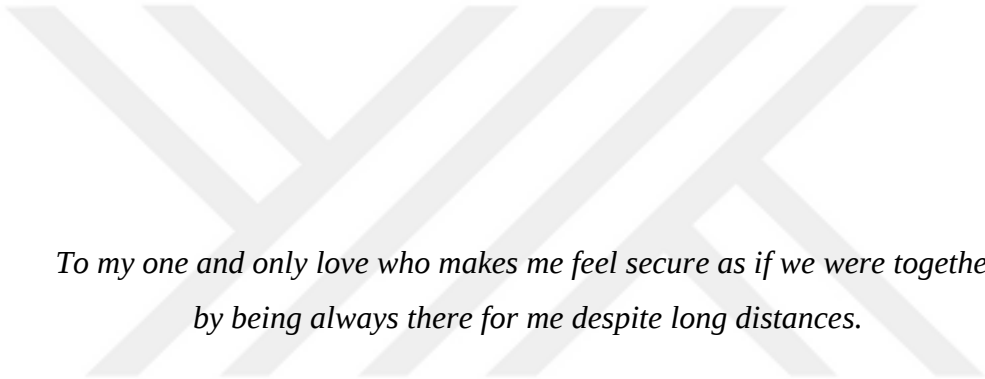
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*To my one and only love who makes me feel secure as if we were together
by being always there for me despite long distances.*

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated how people in long-distance relationships (LDRs) and geographically close relationships (GCRs) differ in perceiving attachment behaviors and dyadic coping skills, using conflict resolution styles during the Covid-19 pandemic, and how they are related to their relationship satisfaction. The sample comprised 201 individuals 18 to 31 years old who had been in a romantic relationship for at least 12 months. Perceived attachment behaviors were assessed via the Brief Accessibility, Responsiveness, and Engagement (BARE) Scale. In contrast, Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS) was used to determine which style they were using during conflicts. The outcome variable was relationship satisfaction, measured via the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). Participants were asked questions about their stress level, dyadic coping skills, and negative experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. The self-reports determined the relationship type for some analyses. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis showed that negative and positive resolution style, dyadic coping, and perceived attachment behaviors explained significant variances in relationship satisfaction for both LDRs and GCRs. However, there was no additional variation from the relationship type over and beyond the main effects of the focal predictors. Exploratory mediation analysis revealed that dyadic coping partially mediated the relation between attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction. The results and related discussion were provided as well as implications and future research directions.

Keywords: Long-distance relationships, geographically close relationships, attachment behaviors, dyadic coping, conflict resolution styles, relationship satisfaction, comparison

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, uzak ve yakın mesafe romantik ilişkisi olan insanların Covid-19 salgını sırasında bağlanma davranışlarının ve ikili başa çıkma becerilerinin nasıl algılandığını ve çatışma çözme stillerini kullanmada nasıl farklılık gösterdiğini ve buna bağlı olarak bunların ilişki doyumlarıyla ilişkilerini araştırdı. Örneklemi, 18-31 yaş aralığında ve en az 12 aydır romantik ilişki içinde olan 201 birey oluşturmuştur. Bağlanma davranışları Duyarlılık, Ulaşılabilirlik ve Yakınlık (DUY) Ölçeğiyle; çatışmalarda hangi stili kullandıkları ise Çatışma Çözme Stilleri Ölçeği (ÇÇSÖ) ile ölçülmüştür. Bağımlı değişken, İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği (İDÖ) ile ölçülen ilişki memnuniyetiydi. Katılımcılara, Covid-19 salgını sırasındaki stres düzeyleri, algılanan başa çıkma becerileri ve olumsuz deneyimleri hakkında bir dizi soru soruldu. İlişki durumu, öz-bildirimlerle belirlendi. Hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi, olumsuz ve olumlu çözümleme tarzının, çift olarak başa çıkmanın ve algılanan bağlanma davranışlarının, hem uzak hem de yakın mesafe ilişkileri için ilişki memnuniyetinde önemli farklılıkları açıkladığını gösterdi. Bununla birlikte, başlıca yordayıcıların ana etkilerinin üzerinde ve ötesinde ilişki durumundan gelen ek bir varyasyon olmadığı bulundu. Açımlayıcı aracılık analizi, ikili başa çıkmanın bağlanma davranışları ile ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Detaylı bulgular, ilgili tartışma, uygulama ve gelecek çalışma önerileri sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uzak mesafe romantik ilişkiler, coğrafi olarak yakın ilişkiler, bağlanma davranışları, çatışma çözme stilleri, ilişki memnuniyeti, karşılaştırma

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

Romantic relationships are essential for human life. Responsive partners regulate each other's stress reactivity (Selçuk, Zayas, & Hazan, 2010) and contribute to their well-being (Selçuk, Günaydın, Ong, & Almeida, 2016). Having a responsive partner is related to better health outcomes (Selçuk et al., 2016; Selçuk, Stanton, Slatcher & Ong, 2017). Most couples' research focused on cohabiting couples in geographically close relationships (GCR).

However, romantic relationships may face long distances for many reasons, including education, employment, military service, and the pandemic. In these cases, couples have difficulty getting together and even communicating with each other. However, some couples cope with these struggles. More interestingly, long-distance relationships (LDRs) are equally or even more satisfying than GCRs (Stafford & Merolla, 2007; Kolozsvari, 2015; Roberts & Pistole, 2009; Kelmer, Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2013). Specific factors might protect couples from the negative aspects of long distances and contribute to maintaining a satisfying relationship.

Long distances create many problems for couples. People in LDRs may experience difficulties such as an intense feeling of loneliness and communication problems due to separation-reunion cycles. LDR couples' cycles were proposed to activate their attachment behavioral system more often than their GCR counterparts (Pistole, 2010; Pistole & Roberts, 2011). Specifically, it is due to the inability to sustain physical proximity with their romantic partner when needed (Bowlby, 1973). Therefore, attachment styles take place in the picture that explains how partners experience these separation-reunion cycles. However, Sandberg, Bradford, and Brown (2017) revealed that attachment behaviors explain significantly more

variance in relationship quality than attachment styles for both males and females. Thus, attachment behaviors which are accessibility, engagement, and responsiveness, deserve more importance. They may be protective factors for LDR couples who are satisfied with their relationships despite the physical distance.

Another negative aspect is that couples in LDRs may have difficulty communicating enough and effectively (Tseng, 2016). Since they cannot meet daily, most of the communication between the partners is not face-to-face (Tseng, 2016; Firmin, Firmin, & Merical, 2013; Stafford & Merolla, 2007). This may cause communication problems such as misunderstandings and conflicts (Firmin, Firmin, & Merical, 2013). Hence, conflict management becomes essential to end the discussions and lead the relationship. Despite the limited face-to-face communication, LDR couples reported that they improved their communication skills by using different ways to interact with each other (Firmin, Firmin & Merical, 2013). They benefitted from these differentiated communication mediums more than their GCR counterparts (Crystal Jiang & Honcock, 2013). Therefore, they may manage their conflicts well thanks to their improved use of technology tools, and this may be protective for their relationship satisfaction.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected people's lives in various aspects. Many people experience a greater level of distress pertaining to their well-being and their beloved ones (Genç et al., 2021) and the conditions they live through in general (Rusu et al., 2020). In addition to these stressors, the pandemic also altered the dynamics of romantic relationships. Quarantines might cause couples to spend more or less time together than they were used to in accordance with the nature of their relationship (i.e., long-distance or cohabiting). These changes require one to cope with these stressors. From a relational and systemic perspective, dyadic coping may offset the harmful effects of the pandemic on romantic relationships. Recent studies showed that dyadic coping was strongly correlated with attachment styles

(Iuga & Candel, 2020; Fuenfhausen et al., 2013), stress (Genç et al., 2021; Rusu et al., 2020; Breinstein et al., 2018), relationship satisfaction (Genç et al., 2021; Iuga & Candel, 2020; Breinstein et al., 2018; Falconier et al., 2015; Fuenfhausen et al., 2013). Additionally, dyadic coping was a mediator between attachment insecurity and relationship satisfaction (Iuga & Candel, 2020; Fuenfhausen & Cashwell, 2013); and between Covid stress and relationship (Genç et al., 2021). Only one study investigated the relations between stress, coping, and relationship satisfaction in LDRs. Different communication coping strategies were focal predictors for low and high-stress LDRs (Maguire & Kinney, 2010). Thus, it is crucial to examine the relations between dyadic coping and other relational outcomes in LDRs and GCRs during the pandemic.

In summary, the thesis aimed to investigate how people in long-distance and geographically close relationships differ in perceiving attachment behaviors and dyadic coping skills, using conflict resolution strategies during the pandemic, and how they relate to their relationship satisfaction. It is crucial to examine these relations to contribute to the LDR and relationship literature and provide better therapy for clients who maintain dating relationships and seek therapy for relational problems.

1.2 Conceptualization of Long-distance Relationships

Previous research defined long-distance relationships in different ways. Some studies operationalized LDR with the physical distance between the partners (Helgeson, 1994; Schwebel, Dunn, Moss, & Renner, 1992), distance, and period traveled to meet (Knox, Zusman, Daniels, & Brantley, 2002). However, until Pistole and Roberts (2011), there was no specific cut-off for these criteria. They defined LDR as a prominent physical distance between partners that makes daily meetings practically impossible, and most communication is not face-to-face. This definition was used to operationalize long-distance relationships in the present study.

1.3 Conceptualization of Attachment Behaviors

Attachment behaviors are defined as specific behaviors that people display when they or their partner needs some kind of proximity (Bowlby, 1979). Bowlby (1973) first emphasized the importance of an attachment figure who is accessible and responsive to the infant. Similarly, adults also seek closeness and nurturing from their romantic partners, and there is an attachment bond as well (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Three attachment behaviors are listed in the literature. They are accessibility, responsiveness (Bowlby, 1973), and engagement (Johnson, 2008). Accessibility refers to the availability and presence of the romantic partners for each other. Responsiveness, on the other hand, is related to the extent to which the partner cares about and understands the other partner in need. In addition to accessibility and responsiveness, Johnson (2008) proposed that engagement can be the third attachment behavior playing a critical role in couple relationships. Engagement refers to establishing an emotionally closer and more connected relationship with the romantic partner for more enjoyable moments (Johnson, 2008). Consequently, accessibility, responsiveness, and engagement constitute attachment behaviors in adult romantic relationships.

1.4 Conceptualization of Conflict Resolution Styles

Conflicts are inevitable in any reciprocal relationship, including romantic relationships. A person's conflict resolution style can be characterized by how they handle disagreements. There are various ways to manage conflicts, and each person may have a different conflict resolution style. However, not all of them are adaptive. To capture both adaptive and maladaptive conflict resolution styles, four of them were the focus of the present study. They are subordination, retreat, negative, and positive conflict resolution styles (Ozen et al., 2016). Some people use subordination which is complying with the partner without taking a turn to speak. Retreat, on the other side, includes postponing the discussion, staying silent, or avoiding the talk. Retreat does not resolve the conflict; instead, it just covers up the

problems. More destructively, the negative conflict resolution style includes physical or verbal aggression. Lastly, a positive conflict resolution style involves discussing the issue and finding a solution that pleases both partners (Ozen et al., 2016). Studies showed that the positive style is the most utilized, whereas the least used style was the negative conflict resolution style (Ozen, 2006; Tulum, 2014). Subordination and retreat are used at a moderate level by married couples (Ozen, 2006; Tulum, 2014).

1.5 Conceptualization of Dyadic Coping

Coping is a concept referring to the mechanism behind how people deal with stressors by using different resources. Stressors can be adverse events such as disorders, yet some positive situations like getting married may also create distress. Some examples of everyday stressors may be daily hassles with kids, relationship conflicts, work-related problems, economic hardship, physical or mental disorders, or from a broader perspective, the pandemic. People may cope with these stressors individually but can also benefit from others' help. When people deal with the stressor with the aid of another person, generally their romantic partner, it becomes dyadic coping (Bodenmann, 1977). From the lenses of family systems theory (Kerr, 1981; Mikesell et al., 1995) which emphasizes the reciprocity of relational dynamics as well as the problems and solutions, dyadic coping is a better-suited concept than individual coping. There are several theories on dyadic coping focusing on different aspects and both positive and negative coping strategies. These theories were discussed in the second chapter.

1.6 Conceptualization of Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction is one of the essence outcome variables in relationship studies. The level of relationship satisfaction usually determines the quality of a romantic relationship. It can be defined as the extent to which the romantic partner and the relationship fulfill the individual's expectations. Additionally, relationship satisfaction is related to

subjectively assessing the relationship and expectations and comparing it with possible other options (Thibaut & Kelley, 1961). If the comparison is above the level of personal criteria and there is no better alternative, then the person would probably conclude that their relationship satisfaction is high. Relationship satisfaction is a prominent predictor of relationship commitment as well (Le & Agnew, 2003; Tran, Judge, & Kashima, 2019). In long-term relationships, there are several factors determining the commitment level. In addition to the quality of alternatives (Thibaut & Kelley, 1961), the investment in the relationship is crucial for predicting relationship satisfaction and commitment (Rusbult, 1980; 1983). According to accumulated research, when the investment into the romantic relationship increases and the quality of alternatives decreases, the satisfaction rises, and they all explain significant variance in relationship commitment (Le & Agnew, 2003; Tran, Judge, & Kashima, 2019). In conclusion, people consider their assessment of expectations, alternatives, and investments to specify the level of relationship satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Long-distance Romantic Relationships

Previous research on LDRs provides in-depth information about how partners feel and what they do to maintain their relationship at a distance. For example, in one study, the interviews with women in LDRs about their communication dynamics showed that women read the tone of their partner's voice, strive to communicate well, felt the urge to improve it, and also thought that both should contribute to the communication (Firmin, Firmin, & Merical, 2013). These findings pinpoint the extraordinary efforts that partners in LDRs make to communicate well. Another study focused on the feeling of loneliness which is one of the difficulties that might be experienced commonly by college students in LDRs (Firmin, Firmin, & Lorenzen, 2014). Results revealed that loneliness is experienced more frequently right after they have separated from their partners due to long distance. Also, when they come across other happy couples and on holidays in general, they experience loneliness. Moreover, participants reported that their loneliness decreased when they talked on the phone with their partner and when they were preoccupied (Firmin, Firmin, & Lorenzen, 2014). Another study showed that college students maintaining LDRs felt lonelier on campus than outside of the campus, and these participants had a less positive affect and engaged in fewer activities than their GCR counterparts (Waterman, Wesche, Leavitt, Jones, & Lefkowitz, 2017). These studies exemplify the difficulties in communication, dating, and feelings of loneliness individuals experience while maintaining LDR.

2.1.1. Long-distance, Geographically Close Relationships, and Relationship Satisfaction

The difficulties LDR couples face may lead one to think that these relationships are not as stable as GCRs or less satisfying than GCRs. Although 30% of LDRs may end within

three months of permanent reunion (Stafford et al., 2006), research also showed that LDRs are as stable as GCRs in the following four months (Kelmer, Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2013), or even more durable than GCRs in the following six months (Stafford & Merolla, 2007). The results of relationship satisfaction were similar to stability; people in LDRs reported equal or even more relationship satisfaction than their GCR counterparts (Stafford & Merolla, 2007; Kolozsvari, 2015; Roberts & Pistole, 2009; Kelmer, Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2013). This controversy between the difficulties, stability, and satisfaction results urges researchers to explain it. The most common explanation for this result has been the idealization of the partner and the relationship. Idealization in romantic relationships refers to the evaluations favoring the partner and the relationship. Idealization and relationship satisfaction are positively correlated with each other (Lee & Pistole, 2011). This means that people who idealize their partner and relationship also report more relationship satisfaction than actual because idealistic perceptions are not always realistic. Stafford and Reske (1990) argued that partners in LDR tend to idealize their partner, communication, and relationship more than their GCR counterparts. However, idealization in romantic relationships tends to occur more frequently in the initial stages that passionate love takes place (Tennov, 1998; Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000). Nevertheless, researchers did not restrict the duration of the relationship in most of the LDR studies. Therefore, as we did in the present study, limiting the relationship duration as a participation criterion is crucial while investigating how they feel satisfied despite these negativities.

2.2. Attachment Theory

Bowlby (1973) suggested that there is a strong emotional bond between an infant and the primary caregiver, who is usually one of the parents, and the bond is called attachment. It is formed within the first two years of childhood, and the caregiver becomes an attachment figure (Ainsworth, 1989). Infants reach for the caregiver when they are stressed or in need

since they cannot regulate their emotions yet. The caregiver's responses shape the bond. This means that child's attachment style is determined by how and when the caregiver fulfills the infant's needs (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Attachment style can be secure or insecure in accordance with the caregiver's availability, caring, and stability. The attachment is shaped as secure if the caregiver is present, sensitive, and stable most of the time while meeting their needs. Insecure attachment styles consist of anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Anxious attachment style occurs when the caregiver is inconsistently available and responsive to the infant's needs. Finally, if the caregiver is not present and sensitive to the infant's demands most of the time, the avoidant attachment style develops. The attachment style gives information about the person's view of others and themselves. These views are defined as internal working models (Bowlby, 1973). The internal working models establish the basis of future relationships (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). Thus, attachment styles are crucial for interpersonal relationships.

Related to interpersonal relationships, different behavioral systems check the individual's status and manage external elements as required (Bowlby 1969/1982). Under unexpected conditions that jeopardize our well-being, a collection of behaviors might be exhibited for survival needs when one of the behavioral systems is activated. For instance, the attachment behavioral system is activated when the infant feels unsafe since they cannot sustain proximity with the caregiver. Next, they start to cry or crawl to reach the parent if they are capable of doing so. The attachment behavioral system is prevalent not only in infant-parent interactions but also in adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Unlike infant-parent relationships, adult romantic relationships comprise sexual mating, caring, and attachment behavioral systems.

Attachment is formed through various functions, including proximity seeking, secure base, and safe haven in infancy (Bowlby, 1973). The consistency of these steps in adult

romantic relationships is supported by research (Heffernan et al., 2012). Cumulated research suggested that clear-cut attachment in adulthood is formed when the romantic relationship lasts at least 12 months (Zeifman & Hazan, 2008). There are numerous differences between the infant-parent and adult attachment relationships. One of these distinctions is that a child requires physical contact with the caregiver to create this strong emotional bond. In contrast, adults can benefit from non-face-to-face communication, photographs, and even mental representations of their attachment figures when they need to connect and feel safe (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). This allows partners to feel emotionally close even if they are physically separated.

Attachment figures might alter throughout life (Zeifman & Hazan, 2008). According to research, romantic partners take the role of attachment figure from parents in adulthood (Zeifman & Hazan, 2008). This means that individuals reach for their beloved ones as attachment figures when distressed and attribute some views and expectations towards them in accordance with their attachment style. Securely attached people, for example, regard their spouse as approachable and use them as a secure base; avoidant people, on the other hand, find it difficult to see their partner as a secure base in times of distress because they consider them to be inaccessible or insensitive (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

2.2.1. Attachment Behaviors and Relationship Satisfaction

Attachment styles are determinants of relationships. Thus, they can be protective of LDR satisfaction as well. Accumulated research has linked attachment security with relationship satisfaction (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Feeney, 2016). In contrast, attachment insecurity has been found to be negatively related to both LDRs' and GCRs' relationship satisfaction and idealization (Lee & Pistole, 2012). Primarily attachment avoidance has been found to negatively correlate with relationship satisfaction in LDRs (Roberts & Pistole, 2009). However, proportions of attachment styles were found to be similar in LDRs and

GCRs (Pistole et al., 2010). In other words, people with different attachment styles do not systematically maintain LDRs or GCRs.

In the attachment literature, there is more recent research on adults' attachment behaviors in romantic relationships rather than attachment styles. As stated in the introduction, attachment behaviors explain significantly more variance in marital quality than attachment styles (Sandberg et al., 2017). Thus, attachment behaviors may protect LDR couples' relationship satisfaction more than attachment styles.

Sandberg, Busby, Johnson, and Yoshida (2012) designed a short self-report measure, the Brief Accessibility, Responsiveness, and Engagement (BARE) scale, to test whether attachment behaviors predict specific relational outcomes. The results showed that these three attachment behaviors were strongly and positively correlated with relationship satisfaction and stability (Sandberg et al., 2012). Further research showed that attachment behaviors moderate the link between the negative family background of partners and their marital communication (Knapp et al., 2015). To put it differently, the researchers found that perceived attachment behaviors played a protective role in marital communication against former negative experiences in family-of-origin. This is important because perceived attachment behaviors take place as a buffer even against former experiences. Thus, they may be protective of LDRs against physical distance.

One may think that individuals in LDRs may have difficulty displaying these attachment behaviors due to physical distance. Although a partner's physical presence is desired when the attachment system is active, perceived partner availability can be sustained via phone calls, messages, and photographs (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). This means that symbolic presentation can be enough for adult intimacy. Furthermore, LDR couples can "more successfully create intimacy through mediated communication" (Kaye, Levitt, Nevins, Golden, & Schmidt, 2005; cited in Merolla, 2012, p.775) thanks to their perceived improved

communication strategies (Firmin, Firmin & Merical, 2013). Thus, LDR couples may engage in attachment behaviors without being physically close to each other and, in turn, feel satisfied.

2.3. Conflict Resolution Styles

Beyond long-distance, conflicts might be challenging for romantic relationships. Conflict is defined as discord between two individuals' behaviors, desires, ideals, or aims. (Peterson, 1983). A variety of factors might lead to a conflict. Couples may have disagreements over the planning of a day, the division of labor, finances, and relations with the family of origin regarding romantic partnerships. Because conflicts are unavoidable in general, people take a variety of behaviors to settle them. These relational behaviors are referred to as conflict resolution styles (Marchand, 2004). These styles are critical for relationships since maladaptive resolution styles are associated with decreased relationship satisfaction (Marchand & Hock, 2000), depression (Beck, 1967; Marchand, 2004), and even dissolution of the relationship (Gottman, 1994).

There were plenty of studies in the literature on conflict resolution styles. They were first studied in interpersonal relations in general (Thomas, 1976; Rahim, 1983; Kurdek, 1994). Then, they gained importance for romantic relationships as well. Researchers created different scales to measure conflict resolution strategies of individuals (e.g., for Conflict Resolution Style Inventory, see Kurdek, 1994; for The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II see Rahim, 1983; for Conflict Resolutions Styles Scale, see Özen, 2006). They constructed and described a set of conflict management styles based on their perspectives. However, these different conflict resolution styles have one characteristic in common. This commonality is that conflict resolution styles are investigated within two dimensions: focus on the self and focus on the other (Rubin & Brown, 1975; Ruble & Thomas, 1976). Some styles prioritize the self over the other. For example, in the negative style (Ozen, 2006) and

dominating style (Rahim & Magner, 1995), the focus on the self is higher than the focus on the other. Some give more importance to the other than the self, such as obliging (Rahim & Magner, 1995) and subordination (Ozen, 2006). The most adaptive ones are considering both the self and the other highly. They are integrating (Rahim & Magner, 1995) and positive resolution style (Ozen, 2006). Also, there are different resolution styles, such as avoiding (Rahim & Magner, 1995) and retreat (Ozen, 2006), in which people focus less on either party and try to ignore the conflict.

2.3.1. Conflict Resolution Styles and Attachment Behaviors

Conflict is one circumstance where the actions associated with a particular attachment style are likely to be noticed since it challenges the security of the emotional connection (Kobak & Duemmler, 1994). Therefore, studying the relations between conflict resolution styles and attachment is important. Previous research found links between conflict resolution styles and attachment styles. Attachment security was found to be positively correlated with positive styles, whereas attachment insecurity is linked with more maladaptive conflict resolution styles (Creasey, 2002; Pistole & Arricale, 2003; Shi, 2003; Ricco & Sierra, 2017). To exemplify, Ricco and Sierra (2017) revealed that insecure attachment styles were positively linked with dominating resolution style, which is self-focused. They also found that the avoidant attachment style is negatively associated with integrating and also obliging (Shi, 2003) resolution styles which are other-focused. These findings were supported by the research of Shi (2003) as well.

There are other studies conducted in Turkey on conflict resolution styles and attachment as well. Especially the ones that utilized Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS; Özen, 2006; Özen, Salman-Engin, & Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2016) for measuring resolution styles are on the scope of this part. Tulum (2014) found that negative resolution style and retreat positively correlated with attachment anxiety and avoidance. Moreover, subordination was

positively related to avoidant attachment only. However, a positive conflict resolution style was negatively associated with both attachment anxiety and avoidance (Tulum, 2014). The literature also supports these results (Shi, 2003; Ricco & Sierra, 2017).

Related to attachment behaviors specifically, there is only one study examining relations between conflict resolution styles and attachment behaviors in married couples (Hee, Sandberg, Yorgason & Miller, 2019). They specifically looked at a moderation model in which attachment behaviors moderate the link between conflict resolution styles and marital quality. Their research revealed that constructive conflict resolution styles positively correlated with both partners' attachment behaviors. Although many results from previous research were about attachment styles and some were about attachment behaviors, these findings formed the basis of the hypotheses of the current study. In conclusion, it is critical to discover relations between all conflict resolution styles and attachment behaviors in dating couples to fill the gap in the literature.

2.3.2. Conflict Resolution Styles and Relationship Satisfaction

Besides attachment behaviors, conflict resolution styles are related to relationship satisfaction and marital quality (Clymer et al., 2006; Hee et al., 2019). Findings showed that using a positive style was positively related to marital adjustment (Tulum, 2014; Ozen et al., 2016). On the other hand, negative resolution style was found to be negatively correlated with marital adjustment (Tulum, 2014; Ozen et al., 2016). Although retreat-style was negatively linked to marital adjustment (Tulum, 2014), subordination was not significantly associated with it (Tulum, 2014; Ozen et al., 2016).

There are also studies investigating different types of conflict resolution styles used by dating couples. Constructive conflict resolution style was found to be positively correlated with relationship quality in GCRs (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2014) and LDRs (Jimenez & Asendorpf, 2010). However, Jimenez and Asendorpf (2010) did not compare LDR and GCR

couples. Instead, they just recruited LDR couples. Hence, it is essential to examine the differences between LDRs and GCRs. Thus, it is important to investigate the relation between all conflict resolution styles and relationship satisfaction in LDRs and GCRs to see whether they differ in the use of the strategies and, as a result, contribute to relationship satisfaction.

2.3.3. Conflict Resolution Styles, Attachment Behaviors, and Relationship

Satisfaction

To the author's knowledge, only one study focuses on relations between attachment behaviors, conflict resolution styles, and marital quality from a dyadic perspective (Hee et al., 2019). They recruited married couples and utilized different scales than those used for the present study except for BARE (Sandberg et al., 2012). This is important since each scale operationalizes the variables from various perspectives. Further, they combined conflict resolution styles into two categories as moderate and extreme styles for the analysis (Hee et al., 2019). In the present study, relations among these variables were provided in accordance with four different conflict resolution styles in the results section. Moreover, their sample was composed of married couples with an average age of 33 years old. It is shown that the dynamics of romantic relationships change according to cohabitation or marriage status (Hsueh et al., 2009) and becoming a parent (Keizer & Schenk, 2012). Therefore, it is also essential to investigate the relationship between the variables in dating couples.

2.4. Dyadic Coping

In early theories, the Transactional Model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) considered coping as an intrapsychic process concerning one's resources and external stressors. In such a model, coping seems to be an individual process in which a person faces a stressor and tries to handle it by using various sources such as emotion regulation or finding a concrete solution to get rid of the stressor. Nonetheless, systems theory and therapy (Kerr, 1981;

Mikesell et al., 1995) asserted that relationships, problems, and solutions are reciprocal and even circular. Whatever problem a person focuses on can be solved within the relationship. Research supported that partners experience stress together even if only one of them was initially stressed (Revenson & Lepore, 2012). Previous research also displayed that even looking at a partner's picture alleviated the pain participants experienced (Eisenberger et al., 2011). Therefore, the partner's active participation in the coping process would create enormous benefits. From this point of view, coping should be conceptualized in a more interactional way. Later, dyadic coping was conceptualized as an interpersonal phenomenon, unlike the former one.

The first model perceiving coping from a reciprocal perspective was Systemic Transactional Model (Bodenmann, 1997; 2005). It focused on the communication about the stressor and common coping styles to deal with it. Bodenmann (1997) emphasized three important aspects of dyadic stress: it affects both partners in either the same or different ways, the stressor may be within the relationship or an external threat, and finally, the timing of the stressor for partners. Concerning those, the dyadic coping styles of partners may alter forms. Examples of positive and negative dyadic coping include stress communication, common dyadic coping, and ambivalent coping.

Another interpersonal model of coping is Developmental-Contextual Coping Model (Berg & Upchurch, 2007). This model takes developmental and contextual elements into the picture while focusing on the partner's involvement in the process of coping with everyday stressors, especially an illness. The level of partner involvement determines the direction of the correlation. For example, if the partner is overinvolved in a controlling manner, it was expected to be probably negatively related to relationship satisfaction.

Finally, another mainly researched and related model is Relationship-focused Coping Model (Coyne & Smith, 1991). Based on this model, partners not only help each other cope

with the stressor but also engage in different relationship-maintaining behaviors. For instance, partners may keep sensitive information from their partners to protect them and their relationship while displaying some coping behaviors. This is referred to as protective buffering and was inversely associated with relationship satisfaction for both the self and the partner (Langer et al., 2009).

These theoretical frameworks summarized the concept of dyadic coping. They all conceptualize dyadic coping on an interactional basis but still from different angles. They highlighted the importance of the role of the partner in the coping process, joint coping skills, sociocultural aspects such as gender and culture, and developmental features like the timing of the stressor.

2.4.1. Dyadic Coping, Attachment Behaviors, and Conflict Resolution Styles

Dyadic coping was found related to many relational outcomes. One of which is attachment styles and attachment behaviors. Since the present study focuses on attachment behaviors, the relations between attachment styles and dyadic coping will be given shortly. Attachment styles are projections of a person's view of others, as stated before. Attachment styles are related to dyadic coping since they are closely related to a reciprocal and intimate romantic relationship. Attachment insecurities were negatively linked to dyadic coping (Iuga et al., 2020; Fuenfhausen & Cachwell, 2013). Dyadic coping also mediated the link between attachment insecurity and relationship satisfaction in these studies. This means that dyadic coping provides an explanation for the negative association between insecure attachment and relationship satisfaction.

To the author's knowledge, only one study includes attachment behaviors and coping as variables. It is not astounding when considering the brand new history of attachment behaviors in the couple relationship literature. Banford Witting, Busby, and Rellaford (2021) investigated the relations among covid-related loss, attachment behaviors, anxiety, and

trauma-coping self-efficacy. Though they did not collect data on dyadic coping specifically, their longitudinal dyadic research findings enlightened the surroundings on the possible link between dyadic coping and attachment behaviors. Their design includes data collection at three points in the first year of the pandemic. They hypothesized that more covid-related loss would be linked with lower attachment behaviors and minor trauma coping self-efficacy but higher anxiety. Contrary to actor effects, they found that one's loss and attachment behaviors were positively correlated with the partner's trauma coping self-efficacy. This finding is a sign of dyadic support provided by their partner for their dealing with the loss and distress. In other words, when one partner is distressed, their attachment behaviors and coping skills decrease, during their partner's increase as a protective buffer so they can better cope with the situation. They also revealed that coping self-efficacy mediated the negative relation between attachment behaviors and anxiety (Banford Witting et al., 2021). The previous results on both the attachment styles and behaviors suggest that perceived dyadic coping may mediate the positive link between attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction. When more attachment behaviors are displayed, people are satisfied with their relationship more, and maybe it is due to increasing dyadic coping they see from their partner, which is also positively linked with the two.

Another relational concept that dyadic coping is linked with is conflict resolution styles. Although there are not many studies on this relation, studies showed that positive dyadic coping styles were linked with more constructive conflict resolution styles. In contrast, hostile dyadic coping was inversely associated with constructive resolution styles (Vedes et al., 2013). For example, it was found that constructive conflict resolution style is higher when supportive and common dyadic coping skills (Vedes et al., 2013; Ledermann et al., 2010) and delegated dyadic coping (Falconier et al., 2013) took place. This means that

people can use more constructive and positive conflict resolution styles during conflicts if they are coping with stressors together in a positive way with their partner.

2.4.2. Dyadic Coping and Relationship Satisfaction

In line with different theoretical perspectives mentioned before, several studies were conducted on dyadic coping and its place with respect to other relational variables. The most studied concept was relationship satisfaction. Dyadic coping was strongly correlated with relationship satisfaction (Genç et al., 2021; Rusu et al., 2020; Falconier et al., 2015). The form of dyadic coping determined the direction of this association. Positive styles of dyadic coping were positive, whereas adverse forms of dyadic coping were inversely correlated to relationship satisfaction (Papp & Witt, 2010; Falconier et al., 2015). Papp and Witt (2010) also revealed that dyadic coping predicted more variance in relationship satisfaction over and beyond individual coping styles. This finding supports the systemic theory (Kerr, 1981; Mikesell et al., 1995) that reciprocal coping methods help partners more when the focus is on relationship satisfaction. Additionally, the meta-analysis, including more than 50 studies and over 17.000 participants, clearly showed that dyadic coping strongly predicted relationship satisfaction, and thus, it is crucial (Falconier et al., 2015).

Falconier et al. (2015) investigated data from studies conducted in Western countries. They found that the strong association can be seen regardless of many demographic characteristics such as gender, age, level of education, and nationality. This also pinpoints the magnitude of the relationship between dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction. However, Hilpert et al. (2016) found that ethnicity and gender actually have an influence on this relationship. They recruited approximately 8000 participants worldwide with the collaboration of researchers from 35 nations. Their results revealed that the correlation between dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction in some countries (i.e., Canada and Germany) was more robust than in others (i.e., Italy and Portugal). Moreover, they found that

in some nations, including Turkey, the correlation was more remarkable for men than women, contrary to the former studies, their hypotheses, and other countries where the association was either the same in magnitude or higher for women. Their findings revealed that culture and gender affect the strength of the relationship between dyadic coping and relationship satisfaction. It is actually foreseeable from the theories emphasizing the importance of context and the culture (Berg & Upchurch, 2007). Therefore, it is important to examine further the relationship between the two in different samples in Turkey.

The abovementioned findings on relations between attachment behaviors, relationship satisfaction, and dyadic coping suggest that perceived dyadic coping may mediate the positive link between attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction. When people perceive more attachment behaviors from their partner, they satisfy with their relationship more, and maybe it is due to increasing dyadic coping, which is also positively linked with the two.

2.5. Current Study

2.5.1. The Significance of the Current Study

The covid-19 pandemic period was expected to diminish relationship functioning and satisfaction (Pietromonaco & Overall, 2021). Mandatory quarantines had both positive effects on relationship satisfaction if couples have higher coping skills and adverse effects if they have lower levels of coping skills (Williamson, 2020). The data was collected from both dating and married couples, and the results showed the importance of coping skills in relationship satisfaction. Hence, we decided to use dyadic coping as a proximal predictor of relationship satisfaction because of the integral feature of the current study conducted during the pandemic. Dyadic coping would give information about how partners cope with it. Based on the previous literature, dyadic coping is highly correlated with relationship satisfaction (Falconier et al., 2015) and attachment styles (Fuenfhausen & Cashwell, 2013; Iuga & Candel,

2020) which are related to attachment behaviors. In this way, it was aimed to explore how well people in LDRs and GCRs cope with relationship challenges during the pandemic and how this influences their relationship satisfaction.

Concerning married couples' relationship quality and functioning, the Covid-19 pandemic's effects interacted with attachment insecurities, problem severity, and stress level (Overall et al., 2022). These studies suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic may alter relational dynamics for both married and dating couples. Its effects may even be more detrimental for long-distance couples since their meeting frequencies might decrease, and their stress level might increase due to uncertainty about quarantines. Consequently, there is still a gap in the literature that relations between perceived attachment behaviors, conflict resolution styles, dyadic coping, and relationship satisfaction were not investigated in a sample of emerging adults compared to long-distance and geographically close dating relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, there may be a unique contribution of perceived attachment behaviors to relationship satisfaction through dyadic coping because individuals were dealing with a collective trauma called the pandemic (Silver, 2020).

2.5.2. The Goal of the Current Study

The initial goal of the present study was to examine whether perceived attachment behaviors, dyadic coping and conflict resolution styles predicted relationship satisfaction differently in LDRs and GCRs. Second, it aimed to explore the indirect effect of perceived attachment behaviors on relationship satisfaction through dyadic coping.

2.5.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses of the Current Study

Research questions (RQ) and related hypotheses (H) are as follows:

RQ1: How do conflict resolution styles (positive style, negative style, subordination, retreat), perceived attachment behaviors, and dyadic coping correlate with relationship satisfaction?

H1A: Positive conflict resolution style, dyadic coping, and perceived attachment behaviors will positively correlate with relationship satisfaction.

H1B: Negative conflict resolution style is hypothesized to correlate with relationship satisfaction negatively.

H1C: Retreat is expected to be negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction.

H1D: As discussed in the aforementioned literature review, no correlation was found between subordination and relationship satisfaction. Hence, this part of the research question will be exploratory.

RQ2: How do conflict resolution styles, dyadic coping, and perceived attachment behaviors uniquely contribute to relationship satisfaction in LDRs or GCRs?

H2: As discussed in the previous literature review, there is not any study, to the author's knowledge, related to this part. Therefore, it will be explored.

RQ3: To what extent does dyadic coping mediate the relation between perceived attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction?

H3: As discussed in the literature review, there is not any study that examined this mediation. Therefore, this part will be exploratory.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

3.1. Participants

Individuals older than 18 years old and in an ongoing dating romantic relationship for at least 12 months could participate in the study. This relationship duration was set at 12 months to ensure that a clear-cut attachment is formed (Zeifman & Hazan, 2008) and to eliminate the idealization factor since it is much higher in the first year of the relationship (Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000). Participants in the age range of 18 and 29 years were aimed to be recruited since it is the range for emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2014) and LDRs are more common in college years (Stafford, 2005; Beckmeyer, Herbenick, & Eastman-Mueller, 2021). The Long-distance Relationship Index (Pistole & Roberts, 2011) was planned to be used to divide the sample into two groups in accordance with close or long-distance relationships. Nevertheless, the index could not be used for this purpose because of the lack of a cut-off point. One of the most related and used ways was selected to differentiate long-distance and geographically close relationships. Since not only the physical distance is a determinant of this distinction, but also personal experiences may alter how they perceive the relationship, the self-report question was utilized to group participants for some of the analyses. Partners may be at a distance that makes face-to-face meetings on a daily basis difficult, but they still may stay together for a few days a week. This means that there is no strict border between LDR and GCR. Instead, there are gray areas. This kind of variety in long-distance relationships requires one to value self-reports as much as reliable and valid measures. In sum, it was thought that the self-report measure would tap those gray areas better than the index while grouping participants.

The study required online participation, and 323 individuals were involved. However, 109 participants did not complete the survey leaving a few questionnaires empty at all. Thus,

their data were removed. Then, 13 individuals who did not meet the criteria for participation, such as age, the duration of the relationship, and marital status, were detected, and their data was deleted from the data set. See Chapter 4 for detailed steps in data cleaning and preliminary analysis. In conclusion, the final sample consisted of 201 participants in romantic relationships for at least 12 months.

Participants' age varied between 18 and 31 ($M = 23.97$, $SD = 2.29$). There were 30 male participants, approximately 15% of the total sample, and the rest, 85%, were female. Most of the sample (94.5%) was heterosexual. Only two participants reported that they were lesbians and one reported his sexual orientation as gay, and eight other participants were bisexual and had current partners of the opposite gender. Participants spent 17.06 years in education on average ($SD = 1.77$). The majority of the sample (61.7%) reported that they were students. Forty-six percent of the total sample, including students, reported that they were employed, whereas the remaining was not employed. Regarding family income, 19.4% of the sample reported less than 5000£; 43.3% reported income between 5000-10000£; the rest, 37.3%, reported more than 10000£ per month. In general, it can be stated that most of the sample consisted of highly educated young individuals from high socioeconomic status levels. See Table 1 for details.

Considering relational demographics, the average duration of the relationship ranged from 13 to 153 months ($M = 43.35$, $SD = 25.39$) for the sample. The majority of the sample (85.6%) reported that they were dating, and the remaining 14.4% were engaged. Taking the definition of Pistole and Roberts (2011) into consideration, 85 participants (42.3%) reported that they see their relationship as long-distance, whereas 116 participants (57.7%) defined it as a geographically close relationship. The duration of LDR as self-reported by participants was between 4 and 111 months ($M = 25.62$, $SD = 20.73$). Bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to see whether self-reports and the scores on the Long-distance Relationship Index

would match. The results showed that the two measures of relationship type were strongly correlated $r(201) = -.81, p < .001$, two-tailed; where 0 stands for LDR and 1 refers to GCR in the scoring of self-reports on SPSS. This means that self-reports were meaningful and projected the reality well.

3.2. Procedures

The approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Board of Özyeğin University in December 2020. The data was collected online in the first half of the year 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Individuals both in LDRs and GCRs were recruited during the same period. The study was announced via emails, WhatsApp, and social media posts (i.e., LinkedIn and Instagram). Hence, the snowball sampling method was used to recruit participants. Participants who met the study's inclusion criteria were asked to fill out the questionnaires online via Qualtrics after giving informed consent (see Appendix A). The scales would take approximately 20 minutes in total. There was a draw for the D&R prize of 75€. Participants could participate in the draw voluntarily by providing their e-mail addresses. At the end of the study, it was explicitly written that their e-mail addresses were asked if they were willing to be a part of the draw only, and the data would be deleted after the draw was conducted.

The data was exported to SPSS 25.0, and the analyses were conducted in the program. To protect the anonymity of participants, I coded each participant's data with ID numbers, and the e-mails were deleted after the data cleaning process of those who did not complete the study.

Table 1
Demographic Information

	Long-distance Relationship		Geographically Close Relationship		All Participants	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Gender						
Female	85.9	73	84.5	98	85.1	171
Male	14.1	12	15.5	18	14.9	30
Relationship Status						
Dating	91.8	78	81	94	85.6	172
Engaged	8.2	7	19	22	14.4	29
Sex Orientation						
Heterosexual	97.6	83	92.2	107	94.5	190
Gay/Lesbian	1.2	1	1.7	2	1.5	3
Bisexual	1.2	1	6	7	4	8
Relationship Duration						
12-24 months	28.2	24	23.3	27	25.4	51
25-60 months	45.9	39	52.6	61	49.7	100
61-153 months	25.9	22	24.1	28	24.9	50
LDR Duration						
3-24 months	63.5	54	-	-	-	-
25-60 months	28.2	24	-	-	-	-
61-111 months	8.3	7	-	-	-	-
Family Income						
<5000£	22.3	19	17.2	20	19.4	39
5001-10.000£	41.2	35	44.9	52	43.3	87
> 10.000£	36.5	31	37.9	44	37.3	75
Accommodation						
With partner	2.4	2	26.7	31	16.4	33
Without partner	97.6	83	73.3	85	83.6	168

3.3. Instruments

There were five instruments to collect data to investigate specified research questions. They were demographic information form, Long-distance Relationship Index, Brief Accessibility, Responsiveness and, Engagement (BARE) Scale, Conflict Resolution Styles Scale, and Relationship Assessment Scale.

3.3.1. *Demographic Information Form*

The form included questions about age, gender, education, income, sex orientation, accommodation, the length of the relationship, the frequency of face-to-face dating, the physical distance between partners, self-report of LDR/GCR, and a series of questions about the pandemic (see Appendix B). For the self-report item, the definition of Pistole and Roberts (2011) was provided to the participants. At the end of the demographic information form, there was a single question assessing overall stress levels related to the pandemic and a set of questions for negative changes such as losing a job during the pandemic (Williamson, 2020). These parts were added to be utilized in preliminary analysis as well as for further analysis as control variables if needed.

Dyadic coping was assessed via three questions placed in the demographic information form. Participants were provided with the statement, “Please answer the following questions considering your last one month in the pandemic.” To exemplify the questions, one of them was, “How often have the two of you helped each other relax with pleasant activities?” The common feature of the items was the focus on collaborative common dyadic coping. These three items were taken from the study of Williamson (2020) since the goal was only to examine dyadic coping during the pandemic. Furthermore, the selected questions mainly focused on common dyadic coping, which was found to be a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction in many studies (Falconier et al., 2015). The Cronbach’s alpha for the set of questions was .71.

3.3.2. Long-distance Relationship Index

Participants were provided with Long-distance Relationship Index (Pistole & Roberts, 2011) to determine the relationship type (i.e., LDR and GCR). The index was designed to distinguish people in LDR and GCR. As stated, Pistole and Roberts (2011) investigated the LDR literature and noticed the variability in the operationalization of LDR. To specify a single objective operational definition, they formed the index. They found that the scale enables researchers to identify different relationship types of participants with high internal reliability. Cronbach's alpha value was found to be .96 in the original study (Pistole & Roberts, 2011) and .95 in the Turkish adaptation (Ceylaner, 2019). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .93. The index consists of 7 items on 7 points Likert scale in which 1 corresponds to disagree totally and 7 refers to totally agree. The 2nd item, "My romantic partner lives so far away that it is difficult or impossible for me to see her every day," can be displayed as an example (see Appendix C). Higher scores reflect an LDR, and lower scores reveal GCR. Unfortunately, any cut-off point is provided in either study to split the data into two groups, LDR and GCR. Thus, the data was divided in half by the self-report measure to rely on their personal experiences.

3.3.3. Brief Accessibility, Responsiveness, and Engagement (BARE) Scale

Brief Accessibility, Responsiveness, and Engagement (BARE) Partner Scale (Sandberg, Busby, Johnson, & Yoshida, 2012) was administered to measure how the participants perceived their partner's specific attachment behaviors. The original scale has 12 items on 5 points Likert scale (i.e., 1= never vs. 5=always) in total. The scale involves two subscales: self and partner attachment behaviors. Self-subscale measures the participant's own attachment behaviors, whereas partner-subscale measures the participant's perception of their partner's attachment behaviors. Each subscale consists of 6 items, including two for each attachment behavior (e.g., responsiveness, accessibility, and engagement). The scale

was a valid and reliable measure to assess attachment behaviors that people engage in romantic relationships (Sandberg et al., 2012). In the original version, Cronbach's alpha values were reported for the accessibility responsiveness and engagement separately, ranging from .66 to .85 for self and partner subscales (Sandberg et al., 2012). However, the Cronbach's alpha values for the entire scale, self, and partner subscales were not reported (Sandberg et al., 2012). The scale was translated into Turkish and tested for reliability and validity by Zeytinoglu-Saydam, Erdem, and Söylemez (2021). The Cronbach's alpha values were found to be .76 for the self-subscale, .86 for the partner-subscale, and .89 for the full scale. They showed that all items are loaded to one factor. Additionally, self and partner subscales were highly correlated with each other. Thus, the BARE scale was suggested to be used with 12 items; or use either the self or partner subscale, including six items. In the current study, the BARE partner subscale was utilized since it was shown to be more effective in assessing attachment behaviors (Oka, Sandberg, Bradford, & Brown, 2014) and for practical reasons to keep the duration short for participants. For example, there is the item "When I share my feelings, my partner listens to me" under responsiveness (see Appendix D). The scores were averaged to get the mean score of perceived attachment behaviors. The scale was reliable for further analysis since the Cronbach's alpha was .83.

3.3.4. Conflict Resolution Styles Scale

Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS; Özen, 2006) was administered to assess which styles are used by participants during their conflicts with their romantic partners. CRSS consists of 25 items on a 6-point Likert scale originally (i.e., 1= totally disagree and 6=totally agree). The scale is designed and found as a reliable and valid measure for assessing the conflict resolution styles of Turkish people. It involves four subscales measuring negative conflict resolution style, positive conflict resolution style, subordination, and retreat (Appendix E). The subscales' Cronbach's alpha values were .82, .80, .73, and .74

respectively (Ozen et al., 2016). There is not any reverse-coded item on the scale. The negative resolution style subscale included items 1, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, and 25. The items numbered 5, 9, 11, 13, 22, and 24 were loaded under a positive resolution style subscale. Items 2, 4, 7, 17, 19, and 20 were loaded under the subordination subscale. Lastly, the retreat resolution style's subscale consists of items numbered 3, 10, 15, 18, 21, and 23. The scale was administered as 5-Likert due to some technical problems. As suggested, average scores were calculated, and the subscales were found reliable with .76, .69, .81, and .80 Cronbach's alpha values for negative style, positive style, subordination, and retreat, respectively, in the present study as well.

3.3.5. Relationship Assessment Scale

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988) was used to measure how satisfied the participants were with their romantic relationships and partners. The scale consists of 7 items on a 7-point Likert scale (Appendix F). Items numbered 4 and 7 on the scale are reverse coded. Higher scores indicate higher relationship satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha was found to be .86 (Hendrick, 1988). The scale is translated into Turkish by Curun (2001). It was shown in the study that the Turkish version has high internal consistency as well, with the Cronbach's alpha level of .86. The scale has .90 of Cronbach's alpha in the present study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This section includes detailed information about data cleaning, preliminary analysis, correlation analysis, hierarchical regression analysis, and finally, exploratory mediation analysis. All statistical analysis was conducted in IBM SPSS 25.0 (IBM Corp, 2017). PROCESS Macro v3.4.1 (Hayes, 2013) and the Sobel test were utilized for mediation analysis.

4.1. Data Cleaning

As stated in the Participants section, 323 individuals participated in the study, but 109 of them did not complete all questionnaires. Hence, their data was deleted from the data set. Then, the data was sorted with respect to the duration of the relationship. Six participants' data were eliminated since they had been in a romantic relationship for less than 12 months. Moreover, one participant's data was removed due to marriage status since only individuals with dating relationships should be included. Five participants' data were deleted since they are older than 31 years old. Two participants' data, aged 31 years old, were not removed to hold as many participants as possible. After these eliminations according to the participation criteria, 202 participants constituted the sample. The scorings were conducted for dyadic coping, pandemic change, LDRI, BARE, CRSS, and RAS. Only the RAS included two reverse-coded items, and its scoring was done accordingly. Average scores were computed for each scale for preliminary and further analysis.

4.2. Data Screening and Preliminary Analyses

The preliminary analysis assessed the multivariate outliers, the distribution of residuals, and whether there was a multicollinearity problem. There were eight focal study variables: relationship type (i.e., LDR and GCR), perceived attachment behaviors,

relationship satisfaction, dyadic coping, and four conflict resolution styles (i.e., positive, negative, subordination, and retreat). The descriptive statistics revealed that the means and standard deviations were relatively normal and that all the scores of attachment behaviors, conflict resolution styles, and relationship satisfaction were correct and within the range. There was no need for the replacement of values.

To detect any multivariate outlier, Mahalanobis distance method was utilized, $X^2 (8, N = 202) = 24.36, p = .001$. This cut-off was determined in the chi-square table, where the p-value was .001 to reduce the margin of error (Tabachnick et al., 2017). One participant's distance was above the criterion value. This participant's data were removed, leaving 201 participants for the final sample.

By descriptive statistics analysis, the normality of the data was investigated. Expressly, through the range of ± 2 for skewness (George & Mallery, 2016) and the range of ± 7 for kurtosis (Byrne, 2010) values, it could be declared that the data were normally distributed (See Table 2). The multivariate normality plot showed that the results for all seven variables were normal yet, slightly and negatively skewed for perceived attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction. The normal P-P Plot of regression standardized residual scatter plot revealed that the variables were almost linear since they were placed on the line. The Standardized Regression Scatter plot showed that the results were homogeneous because the spread above the line drawn at 0 was the same as below that line but was not homoscedastic since the spread was not equal across the whole way zero line.

Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to see associations among variables. First, the Pearson correlation analysis was run to examine associations between demographic variables and relationship satisfaction which is the outcome variable (See Table 3). The investigation revealed that stress level was correlated with adverse changes in the pandemic, $r(201) = -.38, p < .01$, two-tailed. Considering its coding, this association means that more

changes make people more distressed, which was typically expected. Any demographic variables, including relationship durations, were not associated with relationship satisfaction significantly.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Long-distance Relationship Index, Perceived Attachment Behaviors, Conflict Resolution Styles, Dyadic coping, and Relationship Satisfaction

	Min- Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range	Cronbach Alpha (α)
LDRI	1.0-7.0	3.95	2.14	.09	-1.53	6.00	.93
BARE Partner	2.83-5.0	4.44	.50	-.97	.54	2.17	.83
Negative RS	1.0-4.29	2.16	.67	.51	-.08	3.29	.76
Subordination RS	1.0-5.0	3.03	.78	-.02	-.04	4.00	.81
Positive RS	1.83-5.0	3.86	.58	-.40	.45	3.17	.69
Retreat RS	1.0-5.0	2.99	.87	.05	-.40	4.00	.80
Dyadic Coping	1.0-5.0	4.05	.74	-1.14	1.89	4.00	.71
RAS	3.14-7.0	6.00	.85	-1.08	.63	3.86	.90

Note. LDRI=Long-distance Relationship Index, BARE= Brief Accessibility, Responsiveness, Engagement, RS= Resolution Style, RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale.

Another bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to examine relations between major study variables which are relationship satisfaction, perceived attachment behaviors, dyadic coping and four conflict resolution styles. Findings from Pearson bivariate correlation analysis showed that, relationship satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with perceived attachment behaviors, $r(201) = .66, p < .001$; dyadic coping, $r(201) = .58, p < .001$; and positive resolution style, $r(201) = .21, p < .01$, all two-tailed. On the other hand, it was negatively correlated with long-distance relationship type, $r(201) = -.19, p < .01$; and negative resolution style, $r(201) = -.37, p < .001$, both two-tailed.

Table 3***Correlations among Demographic Variables and Relationship Satisfaction***

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Relationship Satisfaction	-					
2. Relationship Duration	.06	-				
3. LDR Duration	.14	.58**	-			
4. Physical Distance	-.01	-.06	-.07	-		
5. Change in Pandemic	.11	.02	-.11	.01	-	
6. Stress Level	-.00	-.12	.01	.06	-.38**	-

Note. Relationship durations were calculated in months. The unit for physical distance is kilometers. ($N = 201$). Change in pandemic (0 = Yes 1 = No). $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$

On the other hand, it was negatively correlated with long-distance relationship type, $r(201) = -.19$, $p < .01$; and negative resolution style, $r(201) = -.37$, $p < .001$, both two-tailed. Long-distance relationship was found to be negatively associated with dyadic coping, $r(201) = -.16$, $p < .05$, two-tailed. Perceived attachment behaviors were significantly correlated with dyadic coping, $r(201) = .56$, $p < .001$; positive resolution style, $r(201) = .17$, $p < .05$; negative resolution style, $r(201) = -.18$, $p < .05$, two-tailed; and with subordination resolution style, $r(201) = -.18$, $p < .05$, all two-tailed. Dyadic coping was also significantly and positively correlated with positive resolution style, $r(201) = .18$, $p < .05$, two-tailed; whereas, negatively linked with negative resolution style, $r(201) = -.25$, $p < .001$, and retreat resolution style $r(201) = -.16$, $p < .05$, both two-tailed. Positive resolution style was negatively associated with negative resolution style $r(201) = -.21$, $p < .01$, two-tailed; and retreat resolution style $r(201) = -.30$, $p < .001$, two-tailed. Finally, subordination resolution style was correlated significantly with retreat, $r(201) = .22$, $p < .01$, two-tailed. See Table 4 for all correlation results. These results were supporting hypotheses of the first research question in general.

Table 4***Correlations among focal study variables***

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Relationship Satisfaction	-							
2. LDRI	-.19**	-						
3. P. Attachment Behaviors	.66**	-.03	-					
4. Dyadic Coping	.58**	-.16*	.56**	-				
5. Positive RS	.21**	.05	.17*	.18*	-			
6. Negative RS	-.37**	-.03	-.18*	-.25**	-.21**	-		
7. Subordination RS	-.08	.11	-.18*	-.09	-.01	-.11	-	
8. Retreat RS	-.13	.01	-.08	-.16*	-.30**	.11	.22**	-

Note. P. = Perceived, RS = Resolution Style, LDRI = Long-distance Relationship Index.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Independent samples *t*-test was performed to examine differences between long-distance and geographically close relationships. Results revealed that relationship satisfaction of individuals in LDR ($M = 5.89$, $SD = .98$) was not significantly higher than relationship satisfaction of other individuals in GCR ($M = 6.08$, $SD = .74$), $t(199) = -1.58$, $p > .05$. This also means that people in both relationship types reported a statistically similar level of relationship satisfaction. Therefore, the data was not divided into two groups based on the relationship type. Rather, the effect of the distinction was examined by interaction terms.

4.3. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

To test the fifth hypothesis, a two-step hierarchical regression analysis was performed in which relationship satisfaction was regressed on relationship type, perceived attachment behaviors, four conflict resolution styles, and dyadic coping. In the first step, relationship type, dyadic coping, negative style, positive style, subordination, and retreat styles were added with perceived attachment behaviors as predictors. The interaction terms were computed for all these predictors with Long-distance Relationship Index scores separately to

test whether those terms explain additional variances over and beyond the main effects of focal predictors. Those interaction terms were added to the regression model in the second step.

In the first step, relationship type, dyadic coping, perceived attachment behaviors, and four conflict resolution styles significantly explained 57% of the variance in relationship satisfaction, $F(7, 193) = 36.8, p < .001, R^2 = .27$. Variables entered in the second step did not account for additional variance in relationship satisfaction, $F(6, 187) = 19.64, p = .83, \Delta R^2 = .01$. In the first step, relationship type ($b = -.06, \beta = -.15, t = -3.10, p < .01$), perceived attachment behaviors ($b = .83, \beta = .49, t = 8.44, p < .001$), negative resolution style ($b = -.27, \beta = -.21, t = -4.28, p < .001$), and dyadic coping ($b = .26, \beta = .22, t = 3.74, p < .001$) significantly predicted the relationship satisfaction. However, positive resolution style ($t = .82, p = .41$), subordination ($t = .52, p = .60$), and retreat resolution styles ($t = -.44, p = .66$) did not significantly predict satisfaction.

In the second step, only perceived attachment behaviors ($b = .70, \beta = .41, t = 3.01, p < .01$) significantly predicted relationship satisfaction. Relationship type ($t = -1.04, p = .30$), positive style ($t = .01, p = .99$), negative style ($t = -1.60, p = .11$), subordination style ($t = -.71, p = .48$), retreat style ($t = -.05, p = .96$), and dyadic coping ($t = 1.77, p = .08$), as well as all other interaction terms did not predict relationship satisfaction significantly. See Table 5 for details. Results showed that relationship type did not interact with any of the focal predictors. Therefore, it can be concluded that dyadic coping, perceived attachment behaviors, and negative resolution style predicted similar amounts of variance in relationship satisfaction for people in both LDRs and GCRs. In sum, individuals' relationship satisfaction cannot be separately explained by the relationship type specified as LDR and GCR within these predictors.

Table 5

Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Relationship Type, Perceived Attachment Behaviors, Conflict Resolution Styles, and Dyadic Coping Predicting Relationship Satisfaction

Predictors	Relationship Satisfaction			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Step 1				
LDRI	-.06	.02	-.15	3.10**
Perceived Attachment Behaviors	.84	.10	.49	8.44**
Positive Resolution Style	.06	.07	.04	.82
Negative Resolution Style	-.27	.06	-.21	-4.28**
Subordination Resolution Style	.03	.06	.03	.52
Retreat Resolution Style	-.02	.05	-.02	-.44
Dyadic coping	.26	.07	.22	3.74**
Total R^2				.57
<i>F</i>				36.70**
Step 2				
LDRI	-.30	.28	-.75	.30
Perceived Attachment Behaviors	.70	.23	.41	3.01**
Positive Resolution Style	.002	.16	.00	.01
Negative Resolution Style	-.21	.13	-.17	-1.60
Subordination Resolution Style	-.08	.12	-.71	.48
Retreat Resolution Style	-.00	.11	-.00	-.05
Dyadic coping	.26	.15	.23	1.77
PAB * Relationship Type	.03	.05	.37	.66
Positive RS * Relationship Type	.01	.04	.15	.39
Negative RS * Relationship Type	-.02	.03	-.10	-.51
Subordination RS * Relationship Type	.03	.03	.26	1.09
Retreat RS * Relationship Type	-.00	.02	-.03	-.13
Dyadic Coping * Relationship Type	.26	.15	.23	-.07
Total R^2				.58
ΔR^2				.55
<i>F</i>				19.64

Note. LDRI = Long-distance Relationship Index, PAB = Perceived Attachment Behaviors.

RS = Resolution Style. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

4.4. Mediation Analysis

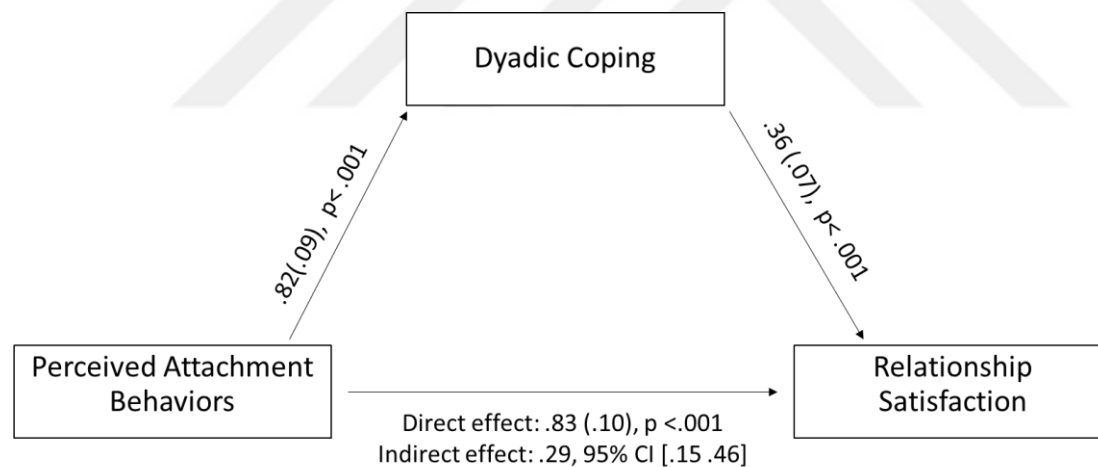
There should be direct effects from the predictor variable to the outcome variable (c-path), from the predictor variable to the possible mediator (a-path), and also from the mediator to the outcome variable (b-path) to investigate any mediating role (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Therefore, mediation analysis was determined to test the mediating role of dyadic coping in the relationship between perceived attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction. The relationship type (i.e., LDR or GCR) was not considered in the mediation analysis since there was no significant difference between predicted variances by these variables in LDRs and GCRs. Relationship satisfaction was added as the outcome variable; perceived attachment behaviors were the predictor, and dyadic coping was the mediating variable. The indirect effects' significance was tested using bootstrapping analysis (5000 replications) with 95% confidence intervals (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). Bootstrapping is an intensive statistical method for which resampling techniques generate empirical estimates of population distribution (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). In addition, the Sobel test was performed to test the significance of the indirect effects (Sobel, 1982).

The direct effects from perceived attachment behaviors to dyadic coping ($B = .82, \beta = .56, t = 9.50, p < .001$); that from perceived attachment behaviors to relationship satisfaction of individuals ($B = .83, \beta = .49, t = 8.14, p < .001$), and that from dyadic coping to relationship satisfaction ($B = .36, \beta = .31, t = 5.10, p < .001$) were all statistically significant. The results revealed that the current mediation model accounted for approximately 50.4% of the variance in satisfaction. The 95% confidence interval limits from bootstrapping analyses for indirect effect [.1531, .4644] indicated a significant indirect effect since the interval did not include the value of zero. The indirect effect of perceived attachment behaviors on relationship satisfaction through dyadic coping is .29 in the 95% confidence interval [.1531,

.4644]. Results from the Sobel test also supported that the indirect effect was significant, $z = 4.50$, $p < .001$. It would be incorrect to state that it is a robust mediation without a longitudinal design (Agler & Boeck, 2017), yet, there is a strong and significant indirect effect of perceived attachment behaviors on relationship satisfaction via dyadic coping. See Figure 1 for a depiction of the model. In particular, when individuals perceive more attachment behaviors from their partner, they tend to engage in and perceive high dyadic coping; in turn, higher levels of the perceived attachment behaviors and more dyadic coping together have positive effects on relationship satisfaction, indicating that individuals would experience increased relationship satisfaction.

Figure 1

Mediation Model for Dyadic Coping on the Relationship between Perceived Attachment Behaviors and Relationship Satisfaction



Note. Mediating effect of dyadic coping for the relationship between perceived attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction. Unstandardized coefficients (standard errors) are reported. Indirect effect = .29, 95% CI [.15, .46].

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The present study's initial aim was to investigate the roles of perceived attachment behaviors, conflict resolution styles, and dyadic coping on relationship satisfaction in LDRs and GCRs during the Covid-19 pandemic. The second goal was to explore a mediation model in which perceived attachment behaviors contribute to relationship satisfaction through dyadic coping. This section summarized the discussion of findings in comparison with hypotheses and the literature. Next, implications were provided as well as limitations and future research direction.

5.1. Research Questions and Relevant Findings

The first research question was about the correlations between predictors and the outcome variable, relationship satisfaction. In line with the first hypothesis, we found that positive conflict resolution style, dyadic coping, and perceived attachment behaviors were positively associated with relationship satisfaction. This means that the more they use positive style, dyadic coping, and perceive partner attachment behaviors, the more satisfied they are with their romantic relationship. While the correlation was weak for positive conflict resolution style, the correlations with perceived attachment behaviors and dyadic coping were moderate. These results were in accordance with the previous literature mentioned above. Positive conflict resolution style was found to be positively linked with relationship satisfaction in the Turkish sample (Ozen et al., 2016), just like constructive conflict resolution styles did in other cultures (Perrone-McGovern et al., 2014; Jimenez & Asendorpf, 2010). Further, attachment behaviors were shown to be correlated with relationship satisfaction positively as well (Sandberg et al., 2012). Attachment behaviors are displays of intimacy and security that the partner is there for the one when they are in need. Thus, higher levels of

perceived attachment behaviors are associated with greater satisfaction. Similarly, dyadic coping is strongly related to relationship satisfaction (Falconier et al., 2015) since it helps partners deal with stressors and, in turn, increases relationship satisfaction.

Under the first research question, the second hypothesis was about the negative association between negative conflict resolution style and relationship satisfaction. As expected, there was a weak but significant correlation between the two, in line with the literature (Ozen et al., 2016). The initial possible explanation for this correlation might be the 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse in relationships (Gottman & Gottman, 2015). A few items under negative conflict resolution style include inferences on emotional and verbal abuse. The rest of the items resemble two of four horsemen: criticism and contempt. Mainly, contempt is the most accurate predictor of relationship dissolution (Gottman & Gottman, 2015). Therefore, a significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and negative style was expected.

Contrary, retreat and subordination resolution styles were not significantly correlated with relationship satisfaction. In the literature, besides unpublished theses, this finding is also in accordance with previous research by Ozen et al. (2016). To explain, subordination and retreat may be related to the partner's relationship satisfaction, instead of one's satisfaction, since the items are based on peace-keeping or not communicating at all. Retreat style is about avoiding conflicts rather than providing any solution; thus, the partner may be dissatisfied with the relationship over time. However, as known from attachment theory and Emotion Focused Therapy (Johnson, 2008), people generally avoid conflicts to calm down by themselves. In addition, people may avoid disputes to find a less hurtful way to express themselves (Roloff & Wright, 2009). Hence, it may also serve as peace-keeping and may not be significantly related to their relationship satisfaction directly. Subordination is about

complying with the partner's desires or getting silent to keep a peaceful environment. Therefore, retreat and subordination styles are similar in functions. They serve for peace-keeping and might be associated with the partner's relationship satisfaction rather than oneself. In sum, the third hypothesis was not confirmed because it was formed based on an unpublished thesis (Tulum, 2014), and the results are controversial (Ozen, 2016).

The present study compared LDRs and GCRs in a *t*-test to see whether their relationship satisfaction differs significantly. Results showed that participants with a long-distance relationship did not report higher or less relationship satisfaction than their geographically close counterparts. In the *t*-test, their self-report statements were used. Although their mean scores on satisfaction were not statistically different in the *t*-test, bivariate correlation analysis utilizing the Long-distance Relationship Index, which offers a continuous measure, revealed that individuals' relationship satisfaction gets lower as their physical distance with their partner increases. This was not expected since most of the previous studies demonstrated equal or even higher relationship satisfaction favoring LDRs (Stafford & Merolla, 2007; Kolozsvari, 2015; Roberts & Pistole, 2009; Kelmer, Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2013). Nevertheless, the results were mixed. A similar result pattern was obtained in the study by Billedo et al. (2020). They have stated that individuals in LDR reported less relationship satisfaction, probably because of the challenges such as infrequent face-to-face meetings. However, our findings may be caused by the unusual characteristics of the current period. We collected the data during the Covid-19 pandemic, which might alter the dynamics of LDRs. When someone is separated from their romantic partner, it is possible that they do not face the hassles of the relationship as much as their GCR counterparts, enabling them to maintain an optimistic view of their relationship. Then, when partners occasionally date for short periods of time, they probably make pleasant memories. They

engage in different activities, focus on their relationship and each other, and spend the time as quality as possible, making it a fun reunion. During the pandemic, yet, long-distance relationships might be deprived of such fun reunions due to quarantine restrictions in Turkey. This might diminish their relationship satisfaction. As a result, they reported less satisfaction than individuals in GCRs whose relationship rituals did not change that much.

Another possible explanation for the difference between LDRs and GCRs in the results can be discussed within the scope of the Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It emphasizes that people are more satisfied and motivated when they make important decisions on their own in their lives. From this point of view, most LDR participants could not possibly choose to maintain their relationship at a distance. Most got separated because of the pandemic and related education restrictions. As they did not personally and eagerly decide to be in the relationship from a distance, their motivation to maintain in such circumstances may decrease. In conclusion, regarding the data collection period and theoretical background, the difference in relationship satisfaction favoring GCRs is meaningful.

Related to the first aim of the thesis, the contributions of perceived attachment behaviors, conflict resolution styles, and dyadic coping to relationship satisfaction were explored in comparison with long-distance and geographically close relationships. Single hierarchical regression analysis was performed to demonstrate the findings in a more compact and statistically readable way. Relationship type was added as a continuous variable utilizing LDRI, and related interaction terms were computed to compare LDRs and GCRs. Results indicated that relationship type (i.e., LDR and GCR), perceived attachment behaviors, dyadic coping, and only negative conflict resolution style predicted relationship satisfaction

significantly. Overall, the model explained 57% of the variance in relationship satisfaction which is a significant amount.

A part of the present results related to the second research question were in line with previous studies. These results further support the idea that attachment behaviors explain significant variance in relationship satisfaction (Sandberg et al., 2017). Although only the partner subscale was utilized, the subscales of the BARE scale are equally valid (Sandberg et al., 2012). Hence, the present findings are in line with the previous results. Moreover, the operationalization of dyadic coping in the current study resembles the common dyadic coping in the literature. Yielded research showed that it was the most accountable type of dyadic coping in explaining relationship satisfaction (Falconier et al., 2015, Rusu et al., 2020). Therefore, predicted variance in relationship satisfaction by dyadic coping corroborates these earlier findings.

Further, only the negative conflict resolution style predicted relationship satisfaction significantly. In bivariate correlation analysis, positive and negative styles were significantly related to satisfaction. However, the magnitude of the correlation for positive style was weak. Therefore, it could be foreseen that it did not account for significant variance in relationship satisfaction. Along with attachment behaviors and dyadic coping; positive resolution style was not as crucial as the formers. One may solve the problems in a way that pleases both sides without emotional intimacy or responsiveness. In turn, being a great negotiator means nothing for relationship satisfaction if these resolution skills are not supported by emotional availability and the feeling of togetherness. On the other side, it is not surprising that subordination and retreat did not predict relationship satisfaction since they were not significantly correlated in the present and previous studies (Ozen et al., 2016). Even though the intention is peace-keeping, it does not contribute to relationship satisfaction without a

secure emotional bond. In addition, the results pinpoint that one's relationship satisfaction is explained well by one's perceptions of their partner rather than their own conflict resolution styles. It is crucial within the systemic perspective indicating couple relational dynamics are reciprocal (Kerr, 1981; Mikesell et al., 1995). These results infer that the critical predictor of relationship satisfaction is the partner's emotional intimacy, availability, and dyadic coping rather than conflict resolution styles which are more cognitive and intrapersonal concepts.

Interaction terms were added in the second step of the regression to test whether relationship type (i.e., LDR and GCR) has an effect over and beyond other focal variables'. None of the interaction terms significantly predicted relationship satisfaction. The finding indicates that the variance from relationship type depends on other relational predictors, not vice versa. The *t*-test also revealed that the level of relationship satisfaction of people who describe their relationship as long-distance and geographically close did not differ. The non-significant result in regression also showed that these two relationship types were similar in many aspects.

The third research question was to what extent dyadic coping mediates the relation between perceived attachment behaviors and relationship satisfaction. Mediation analysis results indicated an indirect path from perceived attachment behaviors to relationship satisfaction via dyadic coping. When people perceive more attachment behaviors, they tend to cope well together and, in turn, report higher relationship satisfaction. A particular hypothesis was not stated because this part of the analysis was exploratory. Besides, the findings were parallel with the theoretical basis. From the attachment theory perspective, partners form a strong bond in time and engage in attachment behaviors, enabling them to feel closer and safe (Bowlby, 1973; Johnson, 2008; Sandberg et al., 2017). When they feel secure, probably, they can use their resources efficiently and depend on each other to cope

with stressors together. Previous research also showed that more partner's attachment behaviors have an increasing effect on the other's coping self-efficacy (Banford Witting et al., 2021). Next, they would feel more satisfied with their relationship since they perceive a responsive, accessible, and engaged partner (Sandberg et al., 2017) from whom they can get support (Falconier et al., 2015).

5.2. Implications

Overall, the results emphasized the essential roles of diminished negative conflict resolution style, increased attachment behaviors and dyadic coping on relationship satisfaction. Beyond the relationship type and conflict resolution styles, perceived attachment behaviors and dyadic coping explained significant variance in relationship satisfaction. This implies that a person would be more satisfied with their romantic relationship if their partner engages in more attachment behaviors. It is impossible to mention a causal or a partner effect due to the research design, yet the findings still indicate that one's relationship satisfaction may change by increasing their partner's attachment behaviors. In clinical settings, couple therapists may focus on the emotional presence of partners to reach their therapy goals if it is higher relationship satisfaction.

The specific clinical implications may focus on two areas. First, intervention programs referring to attachment behaviors and dyadic coping can be held for premarital couples. Attachment-based couple relationship education programs can help inform both partners about the role of perceived attachment behaviors and dyadic coping over and beyond conflict resolution styles on relationship satisfaction. Fortunately, this implicates both LDRs and GCRs. Couple relationship education programs positively correlate with many relational outcomes, such as better communication skills and greater satisfaction (Halford & Bodenmann, 2013). Hence, people may benefit from these programs before getting married

and have worse negative cycles. It is also shown that these education programs are more beneficial if implemented earlier (Gilmore, 2018; Gilmore & Jorgensen, 2019). That's why it is vital to prevent couples from sticking in such negative processes for years when we have the ability to do so. Secondly, besides premarital education programs, attachment-based couple therapy models may help people be satisfied with their relationship and partner. Our results underline the critical role of a partner's emotional intimacy and responsiveness to relationship satisfaction. Avoiding contempt, criticism, and verbal abuse in romantic relationships is definitely essential since they result in the dissolution of the relationship (Gottman & Gottman, 2015). However, knowing how to negotiate well seems inadequate without the partners' emotional presence and intimacy. That's why the positive effects of Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) emerge in the therapy process and last long, even after years (Beasley & Ager, 2019). In light of the results, attachment-based premarital education programs and couple therapy would work better than cognitive-behavioral approaches focusing on communication by ignoring emotions.

Mediation analysis revealed an indirect effect of attachment behaviors via dyadic coping. This finding can be used in therapy to help couples dealing with a medical condition or current stressor as well. As attachment behaviors increase, the couple tends to cope better with the situation together. In turn, their relationship satisfaction may increase correlationally.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations of the present study, like other studies. First, the data was prone to self-report bias (Bound et al., 2011). We collected the data online, which may help participants feel unknown and show their experiences as they are. However, it is somehow inevitable for survey data to eliminate self-report bias because people may feel urged to report their experiences favorably. Second, dyadic coping was measured via three questions

taken from the study of Williamson (2020) to keep the survey as short as possible. Still, there are reliable and valid measures, such as Dyadic Coping Inventory (Bodenmann, 2008; Kurt & Akbaş, 2019). Thus, it would be better to measure dyadic coping via such measurements to get in-depth information about the relationships. Third, the design was cross-sectional and not dyadic. Therefore, the results must be interpreted cautiously. Both hierarchical regression and mediation results did not indicate a robust effect from a statistical perspective.

For future research, longitudinal studies should be conducted to support the findings. A longitudinal study may help draw more precise paths from attachment behaviors and dyadic coping to relationship satisfaction. Further, dyadic data may be helpful in interpreting the results from different partners' sides. Last but not least, the sample mainly consisted of young women. We restricted the age range of participants since LDRs are more common in college years (Stafford, 2005; Beckmeyer et al., 2021). However, having fewer male participants is the actual limitation of the study. This decreased the external validity of the research, which means that the results cannot be generalized since they did not project men's experiences much. More extended sample sizes and characteristics should be used in future research to generalize the results to broader populations.

5.4. Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the roles of attachment behaviors, conflict resolution styles, and dyadic coping on the relationship satisfaction of members in long-distance and proximal relationships. The sample comprised 201 emerging adults who completed the survey online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Analyses emerged that relationship type, negative conflict resolution style, perceived attachment behaviors, and dyadic coping predicted relationship satisfaction significantly, whereas retreat, subordination, and positive resolution styles did not. In addition, long-distance and geographically close

relationships did not differ in explaining a significant amount of variance over and beyond other focal variables. Furthermore, mediation analysis showed an indirect effect of perceived attachment behaviors on relationship satisfaction through dyadic coping. Overall, results indicate that partners' emotional presence and support play a significant role in relationship satisfaction. Findings can be helpful for psychotherapists working with couples and individuals who deal with relational problems. Future research may focus on longitudinal and dyadic research designs with extended and more representative samples.



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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

Projenin Adı: İlişki Doyumunda Bağlanma Davranışlarının ve Çatışma Çözme Stillerinin Rolü: Uzak Mesafe ve Coğrafi Olarak Yakın Romantik İlişkilerin Karşılaştırılması

Proje yürütücüsünün adı ve iletişim bilgileri:

Refia Tezer

.....

E-posta:

Proje bütçesine katkı ile ve/veya diğer şekillerde projeyi destekleyen kuruluşlar:
Özyeğin Üniversitesi

Projenin amacı: Bu araştırmanın amacı bireysel süreçlerin, farklı türdeki romantik ilişkilere olan etkisini incelemektir.

Süreç: Sizden internet üzerinden yollanan link aracılığıyla paylaşılan anketleri cevaplandırmanız istenmektedir. Anketleri tamamlamanız yaklaşık 15-20 dakika sürecektir. Anketleri tamamladıktan sonra ilgili alana e-posta adresinizi yazarak toplamda 5 kişiye vereceğimiz 50₺ değerindeki D&R hediye kartı çekilişine katılabiliyorsunuz. Çekilişin sonucu veri toplama süreci sonlandığında duyurulacaktır.

Gizlilik: Çalışma içerisinde sizden kimliğinizin ortaya çıkmasına yol açabilecek herhangi bir kişisel bilgiyi paylaşmanız talep edilmeyecektir. Sizden elde edilen tüm bilgiler tamamen gizli tutulacaktır. İstatistik programlarına veri girişi sadece katılımcılara atanan numaralar üzerinden yapılacaktır. Toplanan veriler sadece araştırma yürütücüsünün şifreli bilgisayarında tutulacak ve tez danışmanı dışında başka kimsenin erişimine açılmayacaktır. Elde edilen sonuçlar ışığında ortaya çıkacak yayın ve sunumlarda toplanan verilerin kullanılması durumunda, bireylerin kimliklerinin ortaya çıkmasına yol açabilecek herhangi bir bilgi kullanılmayacaktır.

Gönüllü Katılım: Bu çalışmaya katılımda tamamen gönüllülük esastır. İstedığınızde çalışmadan çekilme hakkınız vardır ve katılımı reddetmek sizin için herhangi bir olumsuz duruma yol açmayacaktır. Araştırma sırasında veya sonrasında herhangi bir sorunuz olursa lütfen yukarıda belirtilen iletişim bilgilerinden bize ulaşınız.

Bu formda anlatılan araştırmanın etik yönleriyle ilgili soru veya görüşleriniz varsa lütfen Özyeğin Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu ile (216) numaralı telefondan temasa geçiniz.

Yukarıda sözü geçen “İlişki Doyumunda Bağlanma Davranışlarının ve Çatışma Çözme Stillerinin Rolü: Uzak Mesafe ve Coğrafi Olarak Yakın Romantik İlişkilerin Karşılaştırılması” isimli araştırma projesinin detaylarını okudum ve bu proje ile ilgili sorularım cevaplandı. Bu çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

APPENDIX B**Demographic Information Form***Demografik Bilgi Formu*

1. Hangi şehirde yaşıyorsunuz? _____
2. Cinsiyetiniz: ☐ Kadın ☐ Erkek
3. Cinsel yöneliminiz:
 - ☐ Heteroseksüel (Karşı cinse yönelimi olan)
 - ☐ Eşcinsel (Hemcinsine yönelimi olan)
 - ☐ Biseksüel (Her iki cinse yönelimi olan)
 - ☐ Diğer: _____
4. Yaşınız: _____
5. Toplam kaç yıl okula gittiniz? _____ yıl
6. Çalışma Durumunuz:
 - ☐ Öğrenciyim ve çalışmıyorum
 - ☐ Öğrenciyim ve çalışıyorum
 - ☐ Çalışmıyorum
 - ☐ Çalışıyorum
 - ☐ Diğer (lütfen açıklayınız): _____
7. Ailenizin ortalama aylık geliri aşağıdakilerden hangisine en yakındır?
 - ☐ 2700₺ ve altı
 - ☐ 2701₺ – 5000₺
 - ☐ 5001₺ – 7500₺
 - ☐ 7501₺ – 10.000₺
 - ☐ 10.001₺ – 12.500₺
 - ☐ 12.501₺ ve üstü
8. Kiminle yaşıyorsunuz?
 - ☐ Tek başıma
 - ☐ Arkadaş(lar)ımla
 - ☐ Ailemle/Akrabalarımle

- ☐ Romantik partnerimle
- ☐ Diğer: _____

9. Güncel romantik ilişki durumunuz:

- ☐ Şu anda romantik ilişkim yok
- ☐ Flört / Sevgili
- ☐ Sözlü / Nişanlı
- ☐ Evli

Evli olan ve romantik ilişkisi olmayanlar için; “Bu çalışma romantik ilişkisi olup evli olmayan bireylerle yürütüldüğü için bundan sonraki sorulara lütfen cevap vermeyiniz. Teşekkür ederiz.”

10. Güncel romantik partnerim:

- ☐ Hemcinsim olan biri
- ☐ Karşı cinsten biri

11. Lütfen sizin için uygun olanı işaretleyiniz

- ☐ Çocuğum yok
- ☐ Bebek bekliyorum
- ☐ Çocuk sahibiyim

12. Partnerinizle ne kadar süredir birliktesiniz? _____ ay

13. Partneriniz ile sizin yaşadığınız yer arası mesafe ortalama kaç kilometredir? _____ km

14. Partnerinizle **en sık** görüşme şekliniz nedir?

- ☐ Yüz yüze
- ☐ Telefonda sesli görüşme
- ☐ Kısa mesaj ya da uygulamalar aracılığıyla yazışarak
- ☐ Çevrimiçi ortamda görüntülü görüşme

15. Partnerinizle pandemi öncesi yüz yüze görüşme sıklığınız nasıldı? ☐ Haftada birden fazla ☐ Haftada bir kez ☐ Ayda birkaç defa ☐ Ayda bir kez ☐ Birkaç ayda bir ☐ Yılda birkaç defa ☐ Hiç	16. Partnerinizle pandemi sürecinde yüz yüze görüşme sıklığınız nasıldı? ☐ Haftada birden fazla ☐ Haftada bir kez ☐ Ayda birkaç defa ☐ Ayda bir kez ☐ Birkaç ayda bir ☐ Yılda birkaç kez ☐ Hiç
--	--

17. Romantik partneriniz sizden 40 km veya daha uzakta, görüşmenizi güçleştiren bir konumda yaşıyorsa buna uzak mesafe ilişkisi denir. Eğer mesafe görüşmenize engel oluşturmuyorsa bu ilişkiye yakın mesafe ilişkisi diyebiliriz. Siz kendi ilişkinizin **son 1 yılını** nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?

- ☐ Uzak mesafe ilişkisi
- ☐ Yakın mesafe ilişkisi

18. Eğer uzak mesafe ilişkisi ise, ilişkinizi ne kadar zamandır uzak mesafeden sürdürüyorsunuz?
_____ay

19. Eğer uzak mesafe ilişkisi ise, hangi sebeple ilişkinizin uzak mesafe ilişkisi olduğunu belirtiniz.

- ☐ Eğitim
- ☐ Askerlik
- ☐ İş
- ☐ Diğer: _____

20. Pandemi sürecindeki deneyimlerinizi dikkate aldığınızda, koronavirüs salgınıyla ilgili genel olarak ne kadar stresliydim?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10

Hiç

Çok Stresliydim

stresli değildim

İkili Başa Çıkma Soruları (Dyadic Coping)

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları pandemi sürecindeki son 1 ayınızı göz önünde bulundurarak cevaplayınız.

1= Hiçbir zaman	2= Nadiren	3= Bazen	4= Genellikle	5= Her zaman
-----------------	------------	----------	---------------	--------------

21. Siz ve partnerinizin bir ekip olarak birlikte hareket ettiğinizi ne sıklıkla düşündünüz? 1 2 3 4 5
22. Keyifli aktivitelerle ne sıklıkla birbirinizin rahat hissetmesine yardımcı oldunuz? 1 2 3 4 5
23. Yapılacak işlerin siz ve partneriniz arasında adil bir şekilde paylaşıldığını ne sıklıkla hissettiniz? 1 2 3 4 5
24. Partnerinizle görüşme sıklığınız pandemi öncesine göre değişti mi? **Evet / Hayır**
25. Değiştiyse, nasıl değişti? **Azaldı / Arttı**

Pandemi Süreci Deneyimleri

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları pandemi sürecindeki son 1 yılınızı göz önünde bulundurarak cevaplayınız.

1. Diğer insanlardan izole olmuş hissettim. **Evet / Hayır**
2. Maaşımda veya gelirimde azalma oldu. **Evet / Hayır**
3. Çevremdeki yakınlarımla salgına verdikleri tepkilerden dolayı tartışmalar veya çatışmalar yaşadım. **Evet / Hayır**
4. Güvensiz olduğunu düşündüğüm koşullarda çalışmak zorunda kaldım. **Evet / Hayır**
5. Aile fertlerimin sağlığı konusunda endişelendim. **Evet / Hayır**
6. Partnerim işini kaybetti. **Evet / Hayır**
7. Ekstra harcamalarım oldu. (örneğin tıbbi bakım, daha yüksek faturalar vb.) **Evet / Hayır**
8. Partnerim güvensiz olduğunu düşündüğü koşullarda çalışmak zorunda kaldı. **Evet / Hayır**
9. İşimi kaybettim. **Evet / Hayır**
10. Partnerimin gelirinde azalma oldu. **Evet / Hayır**

APPENDIX C

Long-distance Relationship Index

Uzak Mesafe İlişkisi Endeksi (UMİE)

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları romantik partnerinizi (flörtünüz, sevgiliniz vb.) düşünerek yanıtlayın. Her soruyu sizin için uygun olan seçeneği karşılarındaki 7 aralıklı cetvel üzerinde, ilgili rakamı seçerek değerlendirin.

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kısmen Katılmıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum/ Ne Katılmıyorum	Kısmen Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
1. Romantik partnerim coğrafi olarak yakınımda yaşamıyor.							
2. Romantik partnerim o kadar uzakta yaşıyor ki onu her gün görebilmek benim için çok zor ya da imkânsız.							
3. İlişkimi uzak mesafe ilişkisi veya göçebe tarzı bir ilişki olarak görüyorum.							
4. Romantik partnerim ve ben haftada en az iki gece birbirimizden ayrı kalıyoruz.							
5. Farklı şehirlerde çalışıyoruz/okuyoruz ve işimizin/okulumuzun olduğu şehirde kalıcı olarak ikamet ediyoruz.							
6. Romantik partnerim ve ben birbirimizi her zaman yüz yüze göremiyoruz.							
7. Romantik partnerimden 40 km ya da çok daha uzakta yaşıyorum.							

APPENDIX D

Brief Accessibility, Responsiveness, and Engagement Partner Scale

DUY (Duyarlılık, Ulaşılabilirlik, Yakınlık) Partner Ölçeği

Lütfen şu anki ilişkinizde partneriniz ile yaşadıklarınızı en iyi ifade eden seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

1= Hiçbir zaman	2= Nadiren	3= Bazen	4= Genellikle	5= Her zaman
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Sevgilimin Ulaşılabilirliği

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Sevgilim bana vakit ayırır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Sevgilimin ilgisini çekebilirim. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Sevgilimin Duyarlılığı

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Duygularımı paylaştığım zamanlarda sevgilim beni dinler. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Sevgilimin benimle iyi iletişim kurabildiğine inanıyorum. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Sevgilimin Yakınlığı

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Sevgilim bana sırlarını anlatır. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Sevgilim bana kendini yakın ve bağlı hisseder. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- ____18) Sorun yaşadığımızda sevgilimin yanından uzaklaşıyorum.
- ____19) Sorunun çözülmesine yardımcı olacağına inanırsam durumu alttan alırım.
- ____20) Onun olumsuz tepkilerine karşılık vermeyerek problemin büyümemesini sağlamaya çalışırım.
- ____21) Çok gergin olduğumuzda susarım.
- ____22) Bir problem yaşandığında, konuyla ilgili düşündüğüm her şeyi açıklarım.
- ____23) Eğer çok sinirlenmişsem, sinirim geçene kadar konuşmayı reddederim.
- ____24) Bir problem yaşandığında, kendimi sevgilimin yerine koyarak onun ne düşündüğünü anlamaya çalışırım.
- ____25) Sürekli imalarda bulunurum.

APPENDIX F

Relationship Assessment Scale

İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği (İDÖ)

Aşağıda romantik ilişkilerden sağlanan doyuma ilişkin ifadeler bulunmaktadır. Her maddenin, şu andaki romantik ilişkinizle ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerinizi ne oranda yansıttığını karşılardaki 7 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde belirtiniz.

1. Sevgiliniz ihtiyaçlarınızı ne kadar iyi karşılıyor?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

Hiç karşılamıyor

Çok iyi karşılıyor

2. Genel olarak ilişkinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

Hiç memnun değilim

Çok memnunum

3. Diğerleriyle karşılaştırıldığında ilişkiniz ne kadar iyi?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

Çok daha kötü

Çok daha iyi

4. Ne sıklıkla ilişkinize hiç başlamamış olmayı istiyorsunuz?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

Hiçbir zaman

Çok sık düşünürüm

5. İlişkiniz ne dereceye kadar sizin başlangıçtaki beklentilerinizi karşılıyor?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

Hiç karşılamıyor

Tamamen karşılıyor

6. Sevgilinizi ne kadar seviyorsunuz?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

Hiç sevmiyorum

Çok seviyorum

7. İlişkinizde ne kadar problem var?

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

Hiç yok

Çok var

*50₺ değerindeki D&R hediye kartı çekilişimize katılmak istiyorsanız lütfen e-posta adresinizi yazınız: _____