

PSYCHOLOGICAL DATING AGGRESSION IN LGB+ RELATIONSHIPS: A
PATH MODEL WITH PERPETRATION, VICTIMIZATION, INTERNALIZED
HOMOPHOBIA, COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY, AND AFFECTIVITY

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

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ABSTRACT

PSYCHOLOGICAL DATING AGGRESSION IN LGB+ RELATIONSHIPS: A PATH MODEL WITH PERPETRATION, VICTIMIZATION, INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA, COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY, AND AFFECTIVITY

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The current study investigates the direct and indirect associations between positive affect, negative affect, psychological dating aggression victimization, cognitive flexibility, internalized homophobia, and psychological dating aggression perpetration among lesbian, gay, and bi+sexual individuals.

The study sample consisted of 522 LGB+ individuals gathered from various online platforms. Turkish versions of the Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, Internalized Homophobia Scale, Cognitive Flexibility Scale, and the Demographic Information form developed by the researcher were used for the data collection. Path analysis was used to test the proposed model, and independent samples t-test was used to analyze sexual orientation differences.

The results of path analysis showed that the model has acceptable fit indices. Except for the paths from positive and negative affect to psychological dating aggression perpetration, all the other paths were statistically significant. Cognitive flexibility fully mediated the relationship between positive affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration. Similarly, internalized homophobia fully mediated the relationship

between negative affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration. There was no significant difference between homosexuals and bi+sexuals regarding the psychological dating aggression perpetration. Furthermore, results showed high prevalence rates for both perpetration (88%) and victimization (87.8%).

In conclusion, derived from normative creativity theory, cognitive flexibility and positive affect were protective factors for the perpetration of psychological aggression. From the minority stress perspective, negative affect and internalized homophobia appeared to be the risk factors. The findings, theoretical and practical implications, and recommendations for future research were discussed.

Keywords: Psychological Aggression, Minority Stress, Cognitive Flexibility

ÖZ

LGB+ BİREYLERDE PSİKOLOJİK FLÖRT SALDIRGANLIĞI: BAŞVURMA, MARUZ KALMA, İÇSELLEŞTİRİLMİŞ HOMOFOBİ, BİLİŞSEL ESNEKLİK VE DUYGULANIM İLE BİR YOL ANALİZİ

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Bu çalışmada, lezbiyen, gey ve bi+seksüel bireylerden oluşan bir örnekleme, pozitif ve negatif duygular, psikolojik flört saldırganlığına maruz kalma, içselleştirilmiş homofobi, bilişsel esneklik ve psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma arasındaki doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkiler incelenmiştir.

Araştırmanın örneklemini çeşitli çevrimiçi platformlarda yapılan duyurularla katılım gösteren 522 LGB+ birey oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada veri toplama araçları olarak Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği, Pozitif ve Negatif Duygular Ölçeği, İçselleştirilmiş Homofobi Ölçeği, Bilişsel Esneklik Ölçeği Türkçe formları ve araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen Demografik Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Önerilen modeli test edebilmek için Yol Analizi ve cinsel yönelim farklarını inceleyebilmek için bağımsız örneklem t testi kullanılmıştır.

Yol analizi sonuçları, modelin kabul edilebilir uyum endekslerine sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Pozitif ve negatif duygulardan psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmaya giden yollar hariç, bütün yollar istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur. Bilişsel esnekliğin, pozitif duygular ve psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma arasındaki ilişkiye tam aracılık yaptığı ve benzer bir şekilde, içselleştirilmiş homofobinin, negatif duygular ve

saldırganlığa başvurma arasındaki ilişkiye tam aracılık yaptığı bulunmuştur. Bağımsız örneklem t testi sonuçları, eşcinsel ve bi+seksüel bireyler arasında psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurma açısından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olmadığını göstermiştir. Ek olarak, sonuçlar psikolojik şiddete başvurma oranının %88 ve maruz kalmanın ise %87,8 gibi yüksek oranlarda olduğunu göstermiştir.

Sonuç olarak, normatif yaratıcılık kuramına dayalı pozitif duygular ve bilişsel esnekliğin, psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma açısından koruyucu faktörler olduğu gözlenmiştir. Azınlık stresi kuramı çerçevesinden bakıldığında ise, negatif duygular ve içselleştirilmiş homofobinin psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma için risk faktörü olduğu gözlenmiştir. Bulgular, kuramsal ve uygulamaya yönelik katkıları ve daha sonraki araştırmalara yönelik öneriler doğrultusunda tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Psikolojik Saldırganlık, Azınlık Stresi, Bilişsel Esneklik

*To my fellow queer folk who are constantly fighting for our right to exist without fear
and shame*

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CHAPTERS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Throughout the history of research on interpersonal relationships, aggression, violence, and abuse have been used to define the harmful ways of involving others. Psychological aggression has become an interest to researchers for an extended period, and there is a lack of unanimity in a single definition. Violence is defined as the intended behaviors that aim to hurt someone, and violent behaviors, regardless of context, are often considered aggressive and maintain strong negative emotions (Geen & Donnerstein, 1998). On the other hand, dating violence is an umbrella term that includes a set of behaviors aiming to hurt the romantic partner physically, sexually, verbally, or psychologically in a private or public environment (Ely, Dulmus, & Wodarski, 2002). This definition of dating violence was primarily based on Sugarman and Hotling (1989). They indicated that dating violence is “the perpetration or threat of an act of physical violence by at least one member of an unmarried dyad on the other within the context of dating process” (p. 5). These three definitions have some common functional elements and lack deepening the types and dimensions of dating violence. They are mainly focusing on physical harm and perpetrators while they are failing to capture victimization. Unlike previous definitions, Murphy and Cascardi (1999) pointed out the importance of psychological abuse in intimate relationships since it may be an issue that led romantic partners to engage in physical violence. Their definition of psychological abuse includes “coercive and aversive acts intended to produce emotional harm or threat or harm and directed at target’s emotional wellbeing or sense of sense” (Murphy & Cascardi, 1999, p. 198). Furthermore, Lawrence, Yoon, Langer, and Ro (2009) defined psychological aggression as “behaviors such as ridiculing, verbal threats, isolating one’s partner from family and friends, and attempting to control one’s partner, and are intended to degrade one’s partner and attack his or her self-worth by making him or her feel guilty, upset, or inadequate” (p. 20). This definition is distinct from others because it clearly defines behaviors, intentions, consequences of psychological aggression. Also, it captures the

multidimensional nature of the construct by directing attention to both perpetration and victimization.

Although the problem of psychological violence in relationships has been studied for a long time along with other types of violence, the concept, and its possible occurrences in interpersonal relations other than marriage and family context have been undermined until the last twenty years (Lewis & Fremouw, 2001). In their study, Jenkins and Aubé (2002) revealed that psychological dating aggression rates were visibly high in Spanish college students for both perpetration and victimization. Rates vary for men (90.6% for perpetration, 85.9% for victimization) and women (88.2% for perpetration, 81.2% for victimization). Hines and Saudino (2003) conducted a survey with 481 college students and found out similar psychological aggression perpetration (82% for men, 86% for women) and victimization (81% for men, 80% for women) rates. Gormley and Lopez (2010) also reported high levels of psychological aggression perpetration in their study with 127 college students. They stated that there is a moderate correlation between stress level and emotional abuse. Also, they found out that women are more likely to be perpetrated in their relationships than men. Rubio-Garay and colleagues (2017) conducted a systematic review of dating violence and examined 113 references, each with over 500 participants. Systematic review results revealed that the prevalence of psychological violence perpetration varies from 4.2% to 97%, while victimization rates are found between 8.5% and 95.5%.

While international literature offers a substantial amount of work on psychological aggression perpetration, a few studies have examined the construct in the Turkish population. Toplu and Hatipoğlu-Sümer (2011) surveyed 834 participants, and results indicated high rates of perpetration (85.2% for women, 76.6% for men) and victimization (77.4% for women, 70% for men). Similarly, Karatay and colleagues (2018) reported in their study (n=600) that 28.6% of their participants were victimized by dating violence while 22.1% of them perpetrated it. Also, 13.9% of the participants reported that they ended their relationship due to violence. Fidan and Yeşil (2018) found out that any form of violence usually occurred in the first six months of the relationship. In addition, the participants reported in in-depth interviews that they had seen psychological violence more than physical and sexual assault. A most recent

study conducted by Toplu-Demirtaş and Fincham (2021) revealed that among 428 women, 80.1% of them, and among 383 men, 75.5% reported psychological aggression perpetration.

Even though the rate of psychological aggression in heterosexual relationships is alarming, recent research on the issue indicates that psychological dating aggression in LGBTI+ relationships is as higher as heterosexual relationships. Also, it is identified as a significant public health problem due to LGBTI+ individuals' disadvantaged position in society (Martin-Storey, 2015; Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013). Research studies founded in the international literature on this issue are sufficient to present evidence of violence in LGBTI+ relationships (Greenwood et al., 2002; Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Messinger, 2011; Ollen et al., 2017; Walters, Chen, & Breiding, 2013).

One of the earliest works on this issue was conducted by Merrill and Wolfe (2000). Their study (n=111) found that victimization in emotional abuse varies from 60% to 94% in all types, including restrictive behaviors, verbal harassment, and threats, and lying. Also, they have reported that victimization does not stay limited to psychological abuse. Rates of financial (from 52% to 67%), physical (from 42% to 79%), and sexual abuse (from 39% to 60%) victimization in all forms was also critically high. Greenwood and colleagues (2002) reached a similar result in their study with 2881 gay men. They phone-interviewed the participants between 1996 and 1998. Results indicated that psychological/symbolic battering was around 34%, while physical violence rates were 22% and sexual violence was 5%. One of the most prominent research on the literature was conducted by Messinger (2011). Using the National Violence Against Women Survey (n=14.182), U.S. adult same-sex intimate partner violence (IPV) prevalence was examined. Results revealed that independent from gender identity, sexual minority individuals were at risk of experiencing psychological, physical, and sexual violence in their relationships. Also, lesbians experience victimization in their relationships compared to gays, and violence was more common in LGB relationships than heterosexuals in their relationships.

Furthermore, Walters, Chen, and Breiding (2013) reached a similar result in their study using the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (n=16.507).

Especially for psychological violence, %67 of bisexual women, 53% of bisexual men, 59.6% of gay men, and 63.5% of lesbians reported that they had been victimized in their relationship. Finally, in a more recent qualitative study, researchers interviewed 14 sexual minority college students in 2 different focus groups and results indicated a difference with the previous literature (Ollen et al., 2017). In this study, students' perspectives on psychological and physical violence and sexual assault in dating relationships contradict previous quantitative data. Results stated that prevalence was lower than their heterosexual counterparts. Unfortunately, the literature reveals very few study regarding psychological aggression in LGBTI+ relationships in Turkey (Ayhan Balık & Bilgin, 2019; Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş & Jessen, 2021). In the descriptive study with lesbians (n=149) conducted by Ayhan Balık and Bilgin (2019), the most common form of intimate partner violence was the psychological aggression perpetration (66.4%) and victimization (63.1%). On the other hand, Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş, and Jessen (2021) presented the most recent data on this issue. Their study, where they compared the samples of Denmark and Turkey, revealed that aggression perpetration rates are significantly high in both countries, and country of residency directly affects psychological aggression perpetration. Also, literature revealed that there are sexual orientation differences in engaging in violent behaviors in intimate relationships regarding homosexuality, bisexuality, and heterosexuality (Gonzalez-Guarda, De Santis & Vasquez, 2013; Harland, Peek-Asa & Saftlas, 2021; Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş & Jessen, 2021; Whitfield et al., 2021).

Considering the statistics on the prevalence of psychological dating aggression and stating the importance of studying this variable, it is also vital to conceptualize it theoretically. Literature provides many theories to conceptualize psychological dating aggression. Bandura and McClelland (1971) formed the theory of social learning, which is highly prominent among researchers who study aggression and violence. According to this theory, learning occurs on an individual level in a social context. Social norms heavily influence it by using imitation of a role model (Bandura, 1977). The famous Bobo doll experiment was a critical study explaining the development of aggressive behaviors through observation and imitation (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963). This experiment is considered evidence that aggressive behaviors, like other

behaviors, are learned. On the other hand, the social information processing model holds significance in conceptualizing aggressive behaviors (Crick & Dodge, 1994). In this model, Geen and Donnerstein (1998) further explained that eliciting conditions leads to negative affectivity and negative affectivity creates an immediate response to that condition. Furthermore, previous experiences also influence immediate response. So then, immediate response, social learning, and background variables (e.g., personality, gender identity, sexual orientation, and perceived discrimination) form individuals' aggressiveness potential and potentially influence cognitive processes (e.g., cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills). In the end, the resulting behavior comes out as aggressive.

As consistent with the social information processing model, affectivity is another important variable of this study and is worth conceptualizing theoretically. Emotions are in a key position in determining individuals' actions in certain situations. Behaviors are heavily influenced by negative and positive affect (Ashkanasy & Fisher, 2000). Affectivities are usually considered under two categories as positive and negative. While positive affectivity manifests the tendency to positive emotional situations, negative affectivity is the opposite (Cengiz & Özkalp, 2003). Positive affectivity states satisfaction and negative affectivity states dissatisfaction (Cropanzano, Hale, Reb, & Weiss, 2003). In broader terms, Gençöz (2000) defines positive affect as the active joy and pleasure and negative affect as the activation of unpleasant feelings such as stress, fear, and anger.

Individuals who have higher levels of negative affectivity can find themselves in situations where they exhibit negative emotions independent of environmental cues. In this situation, negative affectivity can play a personality trait role and causes a decrease in self-esteem and self-concept. As a result, it can make it harder for people to maintain social and romantic relationships (Şirvanlı-Özen & Temizsu, 2010). Emotions can be theoretically evaluated under two strands: as a personality trait or as a state. When negative and positive affect are treated as a personality trait, emotions can stay with people for a long time and become a part. Broaden-and-Build theory, conceptualized by Barbara Fredrickson (1998), suggests similar explanations about the nature and function of emotions. The difference is that this theory focuses on the

position of positive affect by highlighting the importance of increasing and sustaining positive emotions as a strength in human relations. Fredrickson (1998) states that thinking styles broaden when individuals experience positive emotional situations. In these situations, people become more available at reaching different and various solutions towards a particular event. The broadening influence of positive affect on the mind also increases peoples' attention, executive functioning skills (e.g., working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control) (Fredrickson, 2013).

Furthermore, the relationship between emotions and social relations is undeniable. Similarly, as a form of social relations, romantic relationships should be evaluated within the scope of positive and negative emotions. In this study, positive and negative emotions are valuable for conceptualizing how partners in a romantic relationship communicate and respond to their relationship problems. The negative affect (e.g., anger, hostility, upset, anxiety, and irritation) is a risk factor for aggression. Specifically, literature revealed that negative affect may increase the odds of aggression and may result in psychological, physical, and sexual intimate partner violence (Birkley & Eckhardt, 2015; Crane & Eckhardt, 2013; Elkins, Moore, McNulty, Kivisto & Handsel, 2013; Fletcher et al., 1990; Maiuro et al., 1998; Bell & Naugle 2008; Shorey et al., 2014; Shorey, Moore & Stuart, 2015; Swan, Gambone, Fields, Sullivan, & Snow, 2005).

Cognitive flexibility is another personality-related variable that is concerning both violent behaviors and affectivity. Spiro and Jehng (1990, p.169) first coined the term cognitive flexibility as "the ability to adaptively re-assemble diverse elements of knowledge to fit the particular needs of a given understanding or problem-solving situation." Similarly, Eslinger and Gratan (1993) state that cognitive flexibility is a skill to shift cognitive sets (e.g., thoughts and attention) to perceive and respond to external or internal situations differently. Furthermore, it is also defined as the awareness state of one's choices and alternatives to a given problem and appears to be one of the contributing factors of problem-solving skills and executive functioning (Martin & Rubin, 1995; Martin & Anderson, 1998; Martin, Anderson, & Thweatt, 1998). Thus, definitions of cognitive flexibility have some common elements, such as shifting cognitive sets, and this shift appears to be the basic principle. However, this

shifting process is not operationally defined and explained in most of the research (Downes et al., 1989).

The most comprehensive conceptualization of cognitive flexibility was made by Rende (2000). According to Rende (2000), cognitive flexibility theory explains the nature of the construct with its forms, sources, and possible error responses. Rende (2000) divides cognitive flexibility into two forms: reactive flexibility and spontaneous flexibility. Reactive flexibility is “the ability to freely shift cognition or behavior in response to changing the task or situational demand” (Rende, 2000, p. 122). On the other hand, spontaneous flexibility is about fluency. The notion of fluency points to the capacity of producing diverse sets of ideas and consideration of different types of responses in each situation and modifying the cognitive processes to turn reactions into behaviors.

Another theory supporting the importance of exploring the construct of cognitive flexibility within the scope of sexual identity and related constructs is normative creativity (Brown, 1989). It is a theory about being “normatively different,” meaning that LGBTI+ individuals become more creative than heterosexuals about living their lives in terms of creating norms and scripts for their lives. One example study to this theory is conducted by Clunis and Green (1988) with lesbian couples. This study stated that those couples had fewer role models for a committed relationship. Thus, they had to improvise on how they live their lives. Brown (1989) summarized it as “... by lacking clear rules about how to be lesbian and gay in the world, we have made up the rules as we go along” (p. 451). Theory of normative creativity, in this case, has the notion that LGB+ individuals might score higher than heterosexuals in cognitive flexibility scales because of the reason that being creative in setting rules and routines about life requires being cognitively flexible (Konik & Crawford, 2004; Zinik, 1985). Even though it is limited, empirical evidence is also available to prove a sexual orientation difference in cognitive flexibility in heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality (Konik & Crawford, 2004; Zinik, 1985).

A substantial amount of research has been found in the literature linking affectivity to cognitive flexibility. Especially, positive affect is proven to be an essential factor in

the development of cognitive flexibility skills in many studies, including physical, neurological, and psychological assessments (Banich et al., 2009; Bolte & Goschke, 2009; Chiew & Braver, 2011; Emich & Pyone, 2018; Goschke & Bolte, 2014; Isen, 2002; Liu & Wang, 2014; Mitchell & Phillips, 2007; Mueller, 2011; Pessoa, 2009; Ray & Zald, 2012; Williams, Belkin & Chen, 2020). As stated before, cognitive flexibility is one of the crucial components of executive functioning. Research is also broad on the relationship between intimate partner violence (both victimization and perpetration) and executive functioning, and significant associations have been established between these variables (Becerra-Garcia, 2015; Cohen, Rosenbaum, Kane, Warnken, & Benjamin, 1999; Cohen et al., 2003; Parrott, Swartout, Eckhardt, & Subramani, 2017; Stanford, Conklin, Helfritz, & Kockler, 2007; Teichner, Golden, Van Hasselt, & Peterson, 2001; Walling, Meehan, Marshall, Holtzworth-Munroe, & Taft, 2012).

Since this research takes LGB+ individuals as the sample and explores the psychologically violent behaviors in their romantic relationships, the construct of internalized homophobia was found to be an essential factor to evaluate along with affectivity and cognitive flexibility. Internalized homophobia is a stressor that can be defined as a process of internalizing societies' negative attitudes (discriminative and oppressive thoughts, feelings, and actions) towards homosexuality and bisexuality and projecting this attitude to oneself (Barnes & Meyer, 2012). In other words, it is the anti-homosexual bias in the homosexual psyche (Allen & Oleson, 1999). Literature shows that internalized homophobia is subsequently related to many issues that may affect the social and psychological wellbeing of the LGBTI+ individuals, such as HIV-risk behaviors, sexual orientation disclosure, and interpersonal conflicts in social contexts (Amola & Grimmet, 2015; Frost & Meyer, 2009; Morris, Waldo & Rothblum, 2001). Internalized homophobia is a construct developed under minority stress theory. This theory is a framework to understand mental health and social relations challenges of those who identify their gender and sexual orientation outside of heteronormativity (Meyer, 2003). The basic premise of this theory is that mental health issues and psychosocial problems that LGBTI+ individuals face, such as drug and alcohol abuse and perpetration of violence in intimate relationships, stem from the stigma, prejudice,

and discrimination from society. Also, minority stress theory is helpful to develop a strategy to address those issues since it also defines protective factors and the risk factors (Chodzen et al., 2019).

Furthermore, cognitive dissonance theory has been found essential to conceptualize internalized homophobia. According to Festinger (1962), cognitive dissonance is the inconsistency between individuals' psychological representations of the outer world and themselves. Similarly, Cooper (2007) defined it as "a pair of cognitions is inconsistent if one cognition follows from the obverse (opposite) of the other" (p. 6). Considering the definition of internalized homophobia, cognitive dissonance theory suits to conceptualize it. Internalized homophobia suggests that gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals mostly feel guilty and ashamed for engaging in sexual activity with the same gender even though this activity is what they desire. This inconsistency is very much in line with what cognitive dissonance theory suggests.

The literature review provided many research studies on the relationship between internalized homophobia and other study variables. To start with, it can be said that scientific evidence is persuasive on the relationship between internalized homophobia and intimate partner violence. Research studies established a significant association between internalized homophobia and victimization and perpetration of intimate partner violence (Edwards & Sylaska, 2013; Finneran, Chard, Sineath, Sullivan, & Stephenson, 2012; Finneran & Stephenson, 2014; Kelley et al., 2014; Milletich, Gumienny, Kelley, & D'Lima, 2014; Peeper & Sand, 2015; Roberts, 2006; West, 2012). Literature is also broad on the association between victimization and perpetration of specifically psychological dating aggression and internalized homophobia. Significant relationships have been established between these variables, and internalized homophobia is proven to be an essential factor in predicting the likelihood of being victimized and perpetrating psychological aggression (Badenes-Ribera, Sánchez-Meca & Longobardi, 2019; Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Byers, 2006; Bartholomew, Regan, Oram, et al., 2008; Carvalho, Lewis, Derlega, Winstead, & Viggiano, 2011; Chong, Mak, Mabel & Kwong, 2013; Edwards & Silaska, 2013; Kelley et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2014; Mason et al., 2016; Milletich, Gumienny,

Kelley, and D'Lima, 2014; Pepper & Sand, 2015; Roberts, 2006; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008).

Prejudice, discrimination, and bias directed to LGBTI+ individuals, the roots of the development of internalized homophobia, have been found to be related to negative mood and emotions such as anger, stress, anxiety, depression (Adam, 1998; Dudley, Rostosky, Korfhage, & Zimmerman, 2004; Firestone, 1987; Igartua, Gill, & Montoro, 2003; Lease et al., 2005; Lewis et al., 2006; Newcomb & Mustanski, 2010; Ratti, Bakeman, & Peterson, 2000; Rosario, Scrimshaw, Hunter, and Gwadz, 2002; Szymanski, Chung & Balsam, 2001; Tan, 2003; Szymanski & Kashubeck-West, 2008). Thus, it can be said that internalized homophobia is related to many crucial mental health problems. Also, it is known that mental health problems are closely associated with the levels of positive and negative affect (Gençöz, 2002). Thus, it is important to examine internalized homophobia and its relationship to positive and negative affect.

Normative creativity theory suggests that internalized homophobia is an important construct that can be related to cognitive flexibility. When it comes to the relationship between cognitive flexibility as a mental health promoter and internalized homophobia as a form of minority stressors, literature is still in progress and has not revealed substantial research. However, some studies have revealed that internalization of prejudice and discrimination is related to cognitive flexibility skills because cognitive flexibility is theorized to be a salient and protective factor for discrimination and prejudice LGBTI+ individuals face (Brewster, Moradi, Deblaere & Velez, 2013; Dworkin, 2002; Riggle et al., 2008; Rostosky et al., 2010). In addition to the relationships between internalized homophobia and other study variables, literature provides evidence on sexual orientation differences in internalized homophobia (Baams et al., 2018; Kuyper & Bos, 2016; Puckett et al., 2016; Roi, Meyer & 2019).

Apart from its definition, theoretical conceptualization, and empirical evidence of internalized homophobia being an outcome of and predicting this study's other variables, firm international statistics based on a comparison between countries can be found about the prevalence of hate-based homophobic activities towards LGBTI+

individuals. Report on Discriminatory Laws and Practices and Acts of Violence Against Individuals Based on Their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity released by OHCHR (United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights) (2011) stated that Turkey was one of the 22 member states in which LGBTI+ individuals became victims to “honor killings carried out against those seen by family or community members to have brought shame or dishonor on a family, often for transgressing gender norms or for sexual behavior, including actual or assumed same-sex sexual activity” (p. 9). According to the latest edition of the State-Sponsored Homophobia Report released by ILGA World (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association) (2020), 67 UN Member states are listed under the section of criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual acts. Among them, 6 Member states have full legal sanctions, punishing LGBTI+ individuals up to the death penalty for consensual sexual activity. Turkey is also listed under this section due to increased barriers to freedom of expression. It was stated in the ILGA World Homophobia Report (2020) that “The section on Europe was supplemented by legislative initiatives and instances of the enforcement of repressive legislation, including incidents related to “propaganda” laws in Lithuania and Russia. Turkey was also added to the list, based on the application of existing legislation to block websites and the prosecution of activists and advocates” (p. 25). These reports and statistics point to a significant mental health problem as well as physical safety. Living under such distress arising from gender identity and sexual orientation prejudice and discrimination, it is more likely for the LGBTI+ community in Turkey to develop internalized homophobia.

In this research, cognitive flexibility and internalized homophobia were hypothesized as mediator variables. To begin with, it was proposed that cognitive flexibility fully mediates the relationship between positive affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration for several reasons. Firstly, literature provides extensive evidence on how positive affect is a contributing factor for increased cognitive flexibility skills related to set-switching and perseveration with many experimental and fMRI studies (Dreisbach & Goschke, 2004; Frober & Dreisbach, 2012; Liu & Wang, 2014; Ritter et al., 2012; Wang, Chen, and Yue, 2017; Zwosta et al., 2013). Secondly, the evidence

base is also broad on explaining how cognitive flexibility impairments and poor performances on set-switching and perseveration increases the likelihood of intimate partner violence perpetration (Becerra-Garcia, 2015; Brenner, 2017; Cohen et al., 2003; Chesebero & Martin, 2003; Martin, Anderson, Thweatt, 1998; Teichner, Golden, Van Hasselt & Peterson, 2001; Stepteau-Watson, 2014; Romero-Martinez et al., 2016). Thirdly, broaden-and-build theory supports the theoretical base of the mediating effect of cognitive flexibility between positive affect and psychological aggression perpetration. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001) suggests that positive emotions facilitate the tendency to think more flexibly, creatively, and open-mindedly. Also, the normative creativity theory conceptualized by Brown (1989) states that cognitive flexibility is a crucial tool for LGB+ individuals who need to create their own rules and routines for living their lives. Moreover, managing the problems in intimate relationships is also an important part of their creative process due to the lack of non-heteronormative role models and scripts for a healthy relationship.

Furthermore, internalized homophobia was determined as a mediator variable. It was proposed that internalized homophobia partially mediates the relationship between negative affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration by taking empirical evidence and theoretical conceptualizations as a basis. Similarly, evidence is broad on the relationship between negative affect (specifically, shame, guilt, and distress) and internalized homophobia (Allen & Oleson, 1999; Brown & Trevethan, 2010; Cody & Welch, 1997; DiPlacido, 1998; Gençöz & Yüksel, 2006; Greene & Britton, 2012; Lewis et al., 2017; Legate et al., 2018; Mereish and Poteat, 2015; Plummer, 2002; Sherry, 2007), negative affect (specifically, hostility and anger) and psychological aggression perpetration (see Birkley & Eckhardt, 2015; Norlander & Eckhardt, 2005 for reviews), and internalized homophobia and psychological aggression perpetration (see Badenes-Ribera, Sánchez-Meca & Longobardi, 2019; Decker, Littleton & Edwards, 2018; Longobardi & Badenes-Ribera, 2017 for reviews).

Theory of traits due to victimization and minority stress theory also form the theoretical basis for the hypothesized mediation. According to an early theory of traits due to victimization (Allport, 1954), negative affect such as self-hatred, hostility,

anxiety, and anger increases due to environmental perception of homosexual and bisexual identities. Stigma and prejudice emotionally harm LGB+ individuals, and those emotions result in the internalization of homophobia. While internalized homophobia harms the positive development of minority sexual identities, it was also theorized with its harmful outcomes towards other LGB+ identities since internalized homophobia is not limited to being homophobic towards the self. By adapting, practicing, and spreading heterosexist norms, LGB+ individuals may act homophobic towards other LGBT+ identities that they are in relation to. This homophobic act may manifest itself as being aggressive, controlling, and manipulative towards the significant other. Thus, evidence of a mediation of internalized homophobia may extend the understanding of the abovementioned theories and help create awareness with many counseling interventions on LGB+ individuals and their violent romantic relationships in individual, group, and couple counseling settings.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the current study is to test a hypothesized recursive pathway towards psychological aggression perpetration in dating relationships of LGB+ individuals using perpetration as an endogenous variable, internalized homophobia and cognitive flexibility as mediator variables, and affectivity (positive and negative affect), and psychological aggression victimization as exogenous variables. Furthermore, considering the available empirical evidence, two additional purposes were stated. One of them is to reveal the prevalence rates of psychological aggression victimization and perpetration in dating relationships among LGB+ participants. And the second one is to examine sexual orientation differences in psychological dating aggression perpetration.

1.3. Research Questions, Hypotheses, & Hypothesized Path Model

The first research question is “What are the prevalence rates of psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration?” The second research question is “Is there a significant sexual orientation difference in terms of psychological dating aggression perpetration?”. The third and the main research question is “To what extent the psychological dating aggression perpetration is explained by the proposed path model

including psychological dating aggression victimization, positive and negative affect as mediated by internalized homophobia and cognitive flexibility?”

In this study, the following hypotheses were tested through the proposed path model of psychological dating aggression in LGB+ relationships to answer the third research question.

H₁: Positive affect will be directly and significantly associated with cognitive flexibility. (Path A)

H₂: Positive affect will be directly and significantly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. (Path B)

H₃: Psychological dating aggression victimization will be directly and significantly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. (Path C)

H₄: Negative affect will be directly and significantly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. (Path D)

H₅: Negative affect will be directly and significantly associated with internalized homophobia. (Path E)

H₆: Internalized Homophobia will be significantly and directly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. (Path F)

H₇: Cognitive flexibility will be directly and significantly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. (Path G)

H₈: Internalized homophobia will mediate the relationship between negative affect and psychological aggression perpetration.

H₉: Cognitive flexibility will mediate the relationship between positive affect and psychological aggression perpetration.

A path model was created to answer the third research question and test the hypotheses (Figure 1.1). In the model, various relationships were established using the study

variables, namely, positive affect (PA), negative affect (NA), psychological aggression victimization (VIC), internalized homophobia (IHS), cognitive flexibility (CFS), and psychological aggression perpetration (PER).

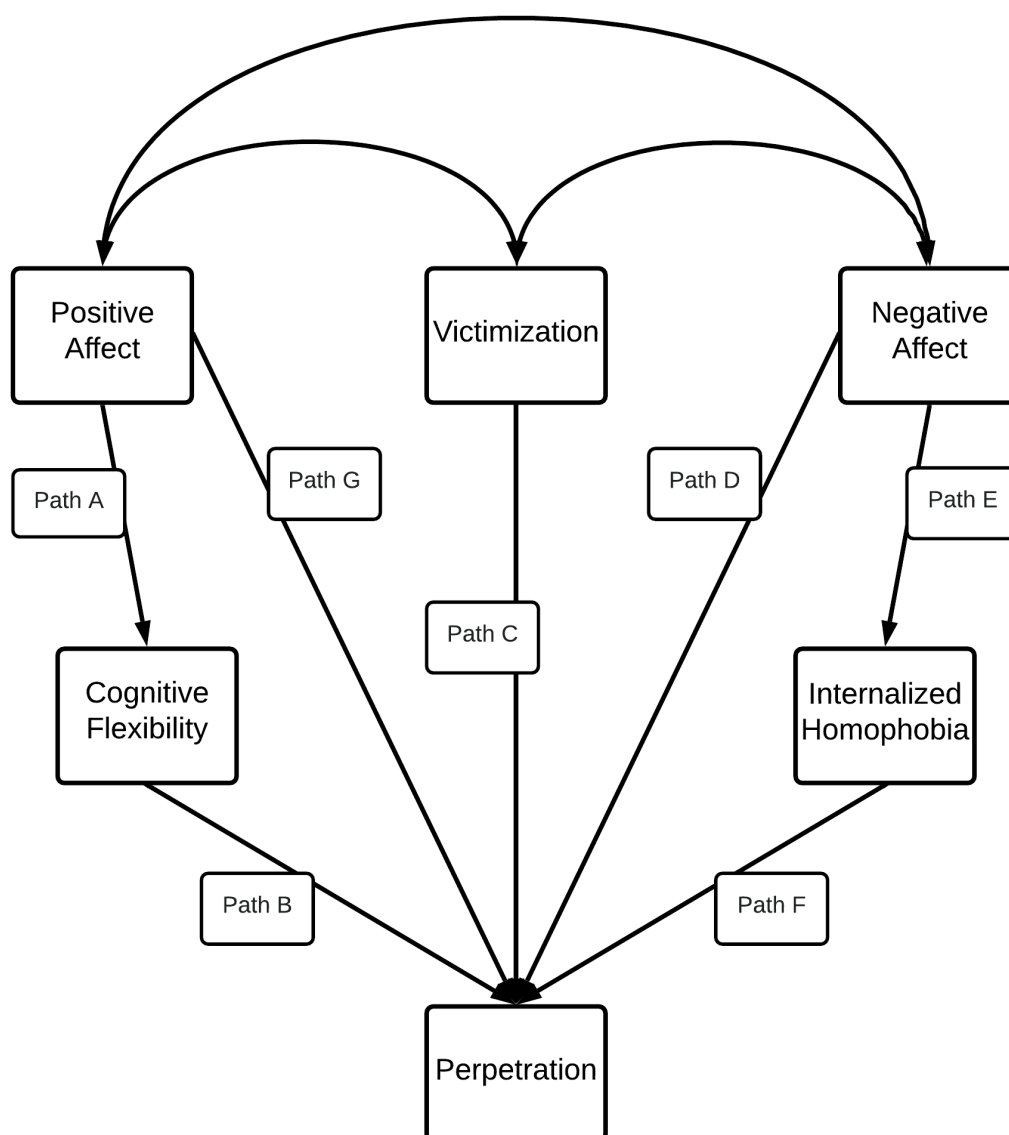


Figure 1.1. Conceptual Model of Psychological Dating Aggression in LGB+ Relationships

1.4. Significance of the Study

The present study is uniquely positioned regarding its theoretical framework, methodology, sample, and possible contributions to counseling and education. As

stated earlier in this chapter, psychological aggression in intimate relationships is a very crucial and common problem. Also, what makes it crucial for further investigation is that psychological aggression can be a sign of future physical and sexual violence (Frieze, 2000). For that reason, expanding the theoretical explanations regarding psychological dating aggression is an important contribution to this research area. The main purpose of this research is to identify some protective and risk factors for psychological dating aggression by using the variables positive and negative affect, cognitive flexibility, and internalized homophobia. In addition, this research is expected to extend the knowledge on social learning theory, social information processing, and the general affective aggression model.

Given that these theories have a solid place in conceptualizing physical and sexual violence (DeWall, Anderson & Bushman, 2011; Lindsay & Anderson, 2000; Murphy, 2013), they will also help form a basis for psychological dating aggression. Furthermore, the present research was one of the few studies examining the relationship between victimization and perpetration in intimate relationships. Results on the relationship between victimization and perpetration will extend the theoretical knowledge and collective understanding about how psychological aggression can be conceptualized with social learning theory.

As for the other variables of the study, internalized homophobia is a widely examined phenomenon explaining how homophobia and discrimination affect LGBTI+ individuals and their self-concept. In this research, minority stress and cognitive dissonance theories are used to explain this construct. As for cognitive flexibility, initial cognitive flexibility theory and normative creativity theories are used to explain. This research takes these theories to explain the relationship between them. Minority stress theory and normative creativity theory create room to explain how cognitive flexibility is a necessary tool for LGBTI+ individuals to cope with discrimination and its effect on their mental health and relationships.

On the other hand, cognitive dissonance theory and cognitive flexibility theory and its elements such as set-shifting may explain the cognitive processes that LGBTI+ individuals may maintain against discrimination and internalizing discrimination and

violence. This research is the first to examine the function of cognitive flexibility on the psychologically aggressive behaviors derived from internalized homophobic feelings to the researcher's knowledge. On the other hand, positive and negative emotions are selected as exogenous variables for this study. Literature provides an extensive background for how emotions are key elements in peoples' lives and influence many aspects of behaviors. Violence and aggression are among them. With the help of broaden-and-build theory, positive and negative emotion is linked to protective factors like cognitive flexibility and risk factors like internalized homophobia.

Apart from the importance of the relationship between the abovementioned theories over the concept of psychological dating aggression, this study is also significant for several other reasons. The concept of cognitive flexibility is dominantly measured with performance-based assessment tools in mostly clinical samples of IPV perpetrators. However, to the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to examine it with a self-report measure in a non-clinical sample of LGBTI+ individuals for examining psychological dating aggression. Also, this assessment will enhance the limited knowledge about the theory of normative creativity since cognitive flexibility is seen as an important factor for the assumptions of this theory.

One other significance of this study lies in the characteristics of the sample and methodology. To the researcher's knowledge, the sample of this study is the most extensive and diverse one considering sexual orientation for the Turkish literature investigating the abovementioned constructs. Also, it will be one of the pioneer research studies on LGBTI+ individuals' experiences on psychological dating aggression in Turkey. Furthermore, this study is formed as a path analysis model. This research will analyze relationships between multiple variables, specifying and estimating complex path models by identifying direct and indirect relationships. Thus, this research will expand the literature and collective understanding on the issue of psychological dating aggression and LGBTI+ experiences and will clear the road for further research and replication studies. Furthermore, evidence of a mediation effect of cognitive flexibility will be beneficial for specific counseling implications that can be designed for psychological aggression perpetrators with interventions to broaden

their flexibility skills and problem-solving abilities through facilitating their positive emotions.

With the assumptions of these theories, this research will shed light on possible counseling interventions in both group and individual settings for LGBTI+ individuals who are experiencing perpetration and victimization of psychological aggression. Also, it can be helpful not only for counselors who work individually but also for counselors who work in educational institutions like universities. First of all, this research can be helpful for LGBTI+ individuals to develop awareness on the importance of flexible and creative thinking necessary to create a safe space for themselves and their social and intimate relationships. Also, it can help to spread awareness on dating violence, psychological aggression, and the behavioral patterns in which aggression presents itself. Finally, for counselors, this research can be helpful to design new interventions or strengthen the existing ones for clients to understand the nature of their emotions, identify them, and their ways of operating in intimate relationships with taking broaden-and-build theory as a basis. Furthermore, this research can be helpful for the school counselors in terms of creating awareness on LGBTI+ identities for high school students to prevent bullying and discrimination against LGBTI+ teenagers so that internalized homophobia can be prevented in one important setting like schools. Also, they can design seminars and workshops related to non-violent communication and its importance to help those students to make and maintain healthy intimate relationships in the future.

1.5. Definitions of the Terms

Gender Identity is the term used to define the inner concept of self as male, female, both (e.g., intersexuality) or neither (e.g., non-binary). It is how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves according to it.

Sexual Orientation is the term to define the innate and fluid emotional, romantic, and sexual feelings individuals maintain toward other people. Individuals' identification determines their sexual orientation as it determines their gender identity and expression.

Psychological Aggression (Emotional Abuse) is the set of intended behaviors in which the expression style often appears aggressive. Those behaviors include ridiculing, verbal threats, isolating one's partner in a way that interrupts involvement in different types of relationships, and attempting to control one's partner. In addition, behaviors are seemed to target self-worth by making the other person in the relationship feel guilty, upset, or inadequate (Lawrence et al., 2009). Psychological aggression is examined under two categories which are perpetration (using psychological aggression) and victimization (being exposed to psychological aggression). Therefore, emotional abuse and psychological aggression terms will be used interchangeably in this study.

Internalized Homophobia is the internalization of societies' discriminative and oppressive norms and attitudes towards individuals who identify their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian, and bisexual. It includes strong maladaptive emotions such as self-hatred and shame (Malyon, 1982; Shidlo, 1994).

Positive Affect is an umbrella term used to explain positive emotions, including feelings such as joy, attraction, and wonder (Watson et al., 1988). Experience and transmission of positive affect have resulted from the activities in the brain's right hemisphere (Davidson, 1992).

Negative Affect is an umbrella term used to explain negative emotions, including feelings such as distress, bitterness, and shame (Watson et al., 1988). Like positive affect, negative affect is the result of brain activities. In negative affect, the left hemisphere of the brain is responsible for the experiences and transmission (Davidson, 1992).

Cognitive Flexibility is the ability to what degree individuals are aware of the suitable choices and possible alternatives to given circumstances and be willing to be flexible under those circumstances. Feelings related to the beliefs and thoughts about exhibiting behaviors sufficient to be flexible also consider cognitive flexibility (Martin, Anderson & Thweatt, 1998).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of the literature that is relevant to this research can be found in this chapter. First section includes definitions of dating and psychological dating aggression following related theoretical explanations. Second section reviews the definitions of homophobia and internalized homophobia as well as its theoretical background. Then, same structures were followed for cognitive flexibility and affectivity in the third and fourth sections. Fifth section presents the relevant empirical research on the association between model variables. Sixth section contains the empirical background of sexual orientation differences in aggression perpetration. Finally, summary of the literature review can be found in the seventh section.

2.1. Definitions and Theoretical Models of the Psychological Dating Aggression

In this section, definitions and theoretical models that can be used to conceptualize dating and psychological dating aggression were presented.

2.1.1. Definitions of Dating and Psychological Dating Aggression

Dating appears as a relatively new phenomenon in the academic field, and its various characteristics and dimensions are newly studied as well as definitions. In a broad sense, dating can be defined as a stage where two individuals meet socially to evaluate each other for a possible partner selection. It can be seen as a process where couples engage in activities to get to know each other and see if they are emotionally and sexually compatible (Bogle, 2008). The context of dating can vary across cultures. In some cultures, it can be seen as a path towards engagement and marriage, whereas in other cultures, it is just an exhibition of shared romantic and sexual feelings between two or more individuals (Stets, 1991).

One of the earliest definitions of dating was made by Muehlenhard and Linton (1987). They stated that it is the “planned social activity with the opposite sex” (p. 188). Two years later, Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) proposed a definition of dating as “a dyadic interaction that focuses on participation in mutually rewarding activities that may increase the likelihood of future interaction, emotional commitment, and sexual

intimacy.” (p. 5). Another attempt to define the context of dating made by Harned (2001) and the definition involved more components than the previous one as “having engaged in any dating behavior ranging from one-time dates to long-term relationships and included both same and opposite-sex dating partners.” (p. 272). Another definition of dating is made by Murray and Kardatzke (2007) as “a relationship in which two individuals share an emotional, romantic, and sexual connection beyond a friendship, but they are not married, engaged, or in similarly committed relationship.” (p.79).

Definitions of dating have evolved, then they have shared some similar content and some significant distinctions. The majority of the definitions adopted a pattern of behaviors that fall in line with heteronormative values. Murray and Kardatzke’s (2007) definition seem appropriate to use in this study for several reasons. Firstly, dating is not seen as a path towards marriage, engagement, and excluded them. Secondly, it highlights emotional and sexual intimacy. Thirdly, it does not exclude individuals who have non-heterosexual gender identity and sexual orientation.

On the other hand, violence, abuse, and aggression in dating relationships have become an important topic to examine in the literature after special attention has been given to the relationship types other than engagement and marriage. Several definitions emerged as a result of conceptualizing it and determining its dimensions. In the earliest attempts, attention was given to the physical and sexual violence in dating relationships, and the definitions were formed around it. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) defined it as “the use or threat of physical force or restraint carried out with the intent of causing pain or injury to another” (p. 5). This definition states the physical damage occurs in the relationship. After a while, Straus (1979) made a more comprehensive definition of dating violence even though the definition still focuses on the physical dimension. In the Conflict Tactics Scale, behaviors such as “throwing something, grabbing, slapping, and kicking” are considered violent (Straus, 1979). After long criticism, literature shifted its attention to the psychological dimension of violence in dating relationships. Anderson and Danis (2007) stated that “the threat or actual use of physical, sexual or verbal abuse by one member of an unmarried couple on the other member within the context of a dating relationship” (p. 88). This definition captures psychological violence with its special attention to verbal threats.

Maiuro et al.'s (2001) framework elaborate on psychological aggression regarding its outcomes in mental health. According to the study, it has four dimensions. The first of them is denigration. It aims to harm partners' self-esteem and self-concept, which may lead to anxious or depressive symptoms due to the experience of negative affect. Secondly, withholding attitude is defined. It is purposeful behavior that damages self-esteem and self-concept, resulting in submissiveness and depressive symptoms. The third one is threatening attitudes, which create fright and intimidation, leading to depressive and anxious moods and submissiveness. Fourth and the last, restrictiveness is defined as behaviors aiming to control partners' behaviors. One of the most precise definitions of psychological dating aggression made by Murphy and Cascardi (1999) is "coercive or aversive acts intended to produce emotional harm or threat of harm" (p. 198). Another precise and relatively current definition of psychological dating aggression has been made by Lawrence, Yoon, Langer, and Ro (2009). They stated that psychological dating aggression is "behaviors such as ridiculing, verbal threats, isolating one's partner from family and friends, and attempting to control one's partner, and are intended to degrade one's partner and attack his or her self-worth by making him or her feel guilty, upset, or inadequate" (p. 20). This definition is distinct from others because it clearly defines behaviors, intentions, and consequences of psychological aggression. Also, it captures the multidimensional nature of the construct by directing attention to both perpetration and victimization. Thus, this definition was found useful to use for this study.

2.1.2. Theoretical Models of Psychological Dating Aggression

2.1.2.1. Social Information Processing Model

Information processing refers to the effort that individuals exhibit to make sense out of their life experiences. The efficiency, quality, and accuracy of the information process are believed to be the key to survival. The information process can be faulty. Every individual has core beliefs about their life. Once activated, individuals try to confirm them by examining the environment, looking for some in-favor evidence while ignoring the counterevidence. Confirmation of biased core beliefs is related to psychological distress. In cognitive psychology, information processing is seen as a key to communicating with others in any context. There are two distinct forms: rational

information processing and experiential (social) information processing (Evans, 2008). Rational information processing is based on logic and reasoning, whereas social information processing is considered automatic and intuitive (Evans, 2008; Pacini & Epstein, 1999). The difference between the two types of information processing is that the rational process operates consciously and analytically and requires an active effort, whereas the social process is rather unconscious, intuitive and does not require effort as much as the rational information processing (Evans, 2008; Pacini & Epstein, 1999).

According to Crick and Dodge (1994), there are six steps in social information processing. In the first step, individuals encode the cues that they receive in any form of social interaction. Second, they interpret the cues. Third, they clarify the goals of social interaction. Fourth, they construct a response to it. Fifth, they decide how to deliver their constructed response, and finally, they execute it. Crick and Dodge's path to respond in social interactions seems very precise and clear; however, social experiences, especially negative ones, greatly impact how individuals proceed in these steps (Claypool & Bernstein, 2019). According to social information processing theory, every behavioral response should be considered within its social context since the cues retrieved from the environment go according to the individuals' perception about the space that behaviors occur. Retrieving social information depends on several components. Memory, thoughts and beliefs, and emotions and mood appear significant in the social information process. Thoughts and beliefs that go back to memories of past experiences are activated through immediate social cues. How individuals respond depending on their belief system is highly influenced by their emotions (Fiske, 1993).

Hence, psychological aggression can be explained with a possible error in the steps of social information processing displayed in Figure 2.1 below, specifically, how individuals retrieve and interpret social cues that turn into an aggressive response. Geen and Donnerstein (1998) created a unified model which incorporates schemas, emotions, and steps of social information processing to explain how human aggression operates. According to this model, behavioral responses to social situations are heavily influenced by individual cognitive scripts in the first place. Scripts contain (1) what happened in the environment, (2) how people "should" behave, and (3) what emerges

as an outcome of the behavior. In the background, emotions come to the surface, and in environmental situations that are not desirable to individuals' schemas, anger becomes the dominant feeling.

Regarding the fact that the social information processing system operates automatically and intuitively, normative beliefs emerge from the scripts. Those beliefs may maintain rationalizations for the appropriateness of aggressive behaviors. According to Huesmann and Guerra (1997), individuals unconsciously use normative beliefs to evaluate their behaviors and others'. If the behaviors do not fall in line with the social norms about "what is right" for them, aggressiveness occurs. It may be a physical manifestation and a psychological one (Guerra, Huesmann & Tolan, 1997).

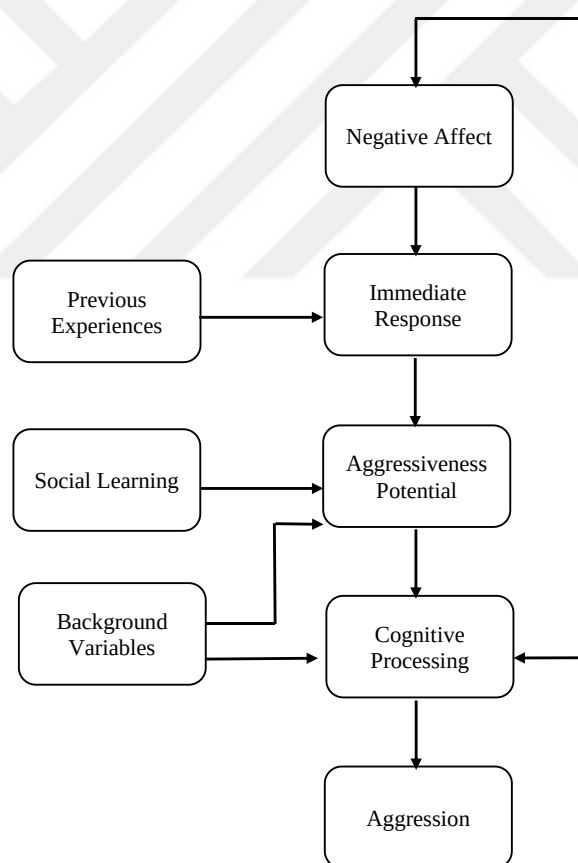


Figure 2.1. Overview of Process in Development of Aggression

2.1.2.2. Social Learning Theory

In social learning theory, the basic principle is that learning happens through observing and imitating other's behaviors and drawing conclusions from them (Bandura &

McClelland, 1971). Furthermore, Albert Bandura stated that behaviors gained through observation and modeling are maintained by direct reinforcements derived from classical and operant conditioning and through cognitive processes (Bandura & McClelland, 1971). Social learning theory has broad categories that can be implemented, and explaining the development of aggression in various contexts, such as intimate relationships, appear to be significant among them. The Bobo Doll experiment may be one of the most descriptive studies considering the development of aggressive behaviors through observation and imitation (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963). In this experiment, Bandura and colleagues made children observe a predetermined model who behaves aggressively to a doll named Bobo in different ways, such as throwing it and beating it in different parts of it. After the model finishes beating the doll, children are asked to play with some toys, including the previous Bobo doll. Bandura and colleagues saw that children who observed the model being aggressive to the doll were behaved in the same way as the model and imitated the model. Two distinct conclusions were made in that experiment. Firstly, it has been observed that the model thought of new ways of manifesting aggression. Second, in addition to the imitated behaviors, children started to develop different ways of attacking and behaving aggressively.

According to many researchers who studied the social learning theory of aggression, individuals whose childhood experiences maintain witnessing violence and aggressive behaviors among the household may demonstrate aggressive behaviors. Intimate relationships and dating contexts are important in those future behaviors (O'Leary, 1988; Riggs & O'Leary, 1989). The key point in learned aggressive behaviors is that witnessing violence can teach children that it is a practical and solution-focused way of dealing with interpersonal problems within the family and close relationships. Maladaptive problem-solving strategies are developed in this way.

Moreover, the development of aggressive behaviors is examined in three parts in social learning theory: origins, instigators, and regulators of aggressive behaviors (Bandura, 1978). According to the theory, there are three origins of social learning of aggression: observation of aggressive behaviors, reinforcement of the aggressive performances, and other structural determinants such as personality, sex differences, and degree of

socialization. These origins are defined to operate together rather than being a separate and distinct starting point in the motivation of aggressive behaviors. The second part of the social learning theory of aggression is the instigator. Instigators are the type of stimuli that trigger the origin points of aggressive behaviors and enhance them. They are categorized as the influences of the model, aversive treatment incentive inducements, instructional control, and bizarre symbolic control. The third part is the regulators of aggression, which conceptualizes aggressive behaviors in social learning theory. Detailed schematic visualization of origins, instigators, and regulators of aggressive behaviors in social learning theory can be seen in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1
Origins, Instigators, and Regulators of Aggressive Behaviors

ORIGINS OF AGGRESSION	INSTIGATORS OF AGGRESSION	REGULATORS OF AGGRESSION
Observational Learning Reinforced Performance Structural Determinants	Modeling Influences Disinhibitory Facilitative Arousing Stimulus Enhancing Aversive Treatment Physical Assault Verbal Threats and Insults Thwarting Incentive Inducements Instructional Control Bizarre Symbolic Control	External Reinforcements Tangible Rewards Social and Status Reward Expressions of Injury Vicarious Reinforcements Observed Reward Observed Punishment Self-Reinforcement Self-Reward Self-Punishment Punishments Inhibitory Informative

2.1.2.3. General Affective Aggression Model

In short, the General Affective Aggression Model (GAAM) proposes an order with specific factors which together lead to an expression of aggressive behaviors. According to Lindsay and Anderson (2000), situational variables (e.g., cognitive cues, discomfort, and pain, frustration, attack, etc.) along with individual differences such as attitudes, beliefs, and values concerning aggression and traits and skills influences a cyclical relationship between accessible cognitions, accessible affects, and psychological arousal. While those cognitions may maintain aggressive thoughts and scripts, accessible affects may maintain negative feelings, and some immediate motor responses arouse from the affectivity. Then, the triggered cyclical relationship mentioned above initiates an appraisal process containing a series of interpretations

within an individuals' information processing system. Those interpretations are categorized into two; namely, situational interpretation and affective interpretation. Individuals tend to interpret the first trigger, situational variables according to their preset cognitions, the threat of harm, intent of the social cues they receive are being assessed, and how individuals feel towards those social cues. In the last step, a behavioral choice needs to be made whether aggression will be expressed or not.

Three main things seem important and need consideration in the GAAM according to these proposed stages (DeWall, Anderson, & Bushman, 2011). Firstly, person and situation input form the basis for the aggression cycle to begin. As described above, personal traits and how individuals exist in violently triggering situations are important in activating the cyclical relationship of cognitions, affections, and arousal processes. Secondly, an individual's internal state at the time of aggressively triggering social cues needs to be suitable. Anger may be felt along with some other feelings that can lead individuals to irritability, shame, upset, and fear. These feelings are in a significant relationship between individuals' preset thoughts containing violence, and together they create psychological arousal. The degree of the arousal in question also influences feelings and thoughts in terms of their degree and severity. Thus, the cyclical relationship within the internal state begins. The third component is the appraisal process. This process is also referred to as the decision-making process. In this process, individuals decide how to behaviorally react to the social cues interpreted by their internal state contains the aforementioned cyclical relationship. Behaviors include some form of violence that may come to the surface as well as the other way around as a result of this decision-making process.

One other factor to consider in the General Affective Aggression Model is how individuals receive feedback towards their choice of behavior (e.g., being physically, sexually, and psychologically violent or not). Several research studies state that possible negative feedback towards the aggressive behaviors may create an escalation in individuals' internal state which can produce future aggression cycles (Anderson, Buckley, & Carnagey, 2008; DeWall & Anderson, 2011; Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

2.2. Definitions and Theoretical Models of Internalized Homophobia

In this section, definitions and theoretical models that can be used to conceptualize internalized homophobia were presented.

2.2.1. Definitions of Homophobia and Internalized Homophobia

It would be appropriate to begin this section with the definitions of phobia and homophobia in the literature to fully capture the difference between them. The differences would highlight what kind of stressor internalized homophobia is and how theories consider its impact on the mental health of LGB+ individuals. In the mental health field, “phobia” describes unrealistic, improper, and exaggerated fear towards different kinds of situations and objects (APA, 2013). Even though the term phobia is a medical term pointing to specific psychopathology, and there are different kinds of phobia defined in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders), homophobia did not enter the list because of its’ origins. Homophobia was first defined as the “dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals” (Weinberg, 1972, p. 4). This term and its’ definition have gained popularity over time as a descriptive word of a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors towards LGBTI+ individuals. Furthermore, early writing stated that “physical attacks on homosexuals, discriminations against lesbians and gay men by employers, personal rejection by family and neighbors, and derogatory jokes demonstrate widespread homophobia” (Ernulf & Immala, 1987, p. 501). Herek (1986) pointed out that “to be a man in contemporary society is to be homophobic, that is to be hostile towards homosexual persons in general, and gay men in particular” (p. 563).

Definitions and conceptualizations of homophobia started as taking cognitive processes as a base. They evolved into a framework where it is considered in relation to social and cultural structures. The context shifted to a political field since it contains prejudicial and discriminatory attitudes (Szymanski & Chung, 2002). As seen from the literature on homophobia, it is not considered a specific phobia that requires psychiatric treatment and exposure as any other phobia does. Even Weinberg, one of the early theorists who worked on this issue, elaborated that “When a phobia incapacitates a person from engaging in activities considered decent by society, the person himself is the sufferer....but here, the phobia appears as antagonism directly

toward a particular group of people. Inevitably, it leads to disdain toward the people themselves and mistreatment of them. The phobia in operation is a prejudice, and this means we can widen our understanding by considering the phobia from the point of view of its being prejudice and then uncovering its motives” (Weinberg, 1972, p.8). This statement has some important elements in defining homophobia; (1) it is antagonism rather than psychopathology, (2) it contains prejudice and is rooted in cultural scripts, and (3) it is harmful to LGBTI+ individuals rather than the person who has the fear against LGBTI+ individuals.

Homosexuality is one of the many sexual orientations, and it has been seen in different cultures at different times in history. Societies have demonstrated different kinds of attitudes towards homosexuality, from accepting and praising to ignoring and punishing. The presumption of heterosexuality being acceptable, legitimately right, and only true sexual orientation and considering non-heterosexual orientations and sexual identities as derogatory are heterosexism. Homophobia appears to be occurring as a natural consequence of heterosexism (Başar et al., 2010). Considering the context and historical development of homophobia and how it is embedded in cultures, it may be inevitable for LGBTI+ individuals living in societies in which the ideology of heterosexism is dominant to feel fearful and discriminated against. Also, it may be inevitable for them to conflict with their identity and other LGBTI+ individuals and experience problems with the coping strategies that they are forced to develop for fear, anxiety, guilt, and shame. This situation may result in internalized homophobia.

Despite different definitions exist in the literature, internalized homophobia is best defined as the LGBTI+ individual’s tendency to internalize negative societal view about homosexuality and project it onto themselves (Malyon, 1982; Shidlo, 1994; Barnes & Meyer, 2012). Similarly, Sherry (2007) stated that internalized homophobia is the negative beliefs and assumptions that have been internalized by LGBTI+ individuals who live in cultures that praise heterosexist values and unpraised LGBTI+ experiences and discriminates against them. Also, there is a consensus in the literature that internalization may occur consciously and unconsciously (Malyon, 1982; Shidlo, 1994; Sherry, 2007; Barnes & Meyer, 2012). Definitions of internalized homophobia seem to be similar in all the perspectives described above. First, they all accept that

problems related to developing a healthy sexual identity come from external environmental stigma. Second, they all emphasize the negative emotions related to developing the internalized homophobia within the self.

According to Shidlo (1994), the concept of internalized homophobia is important because (a) it has a significant influence on psychological health, (b) it is a result of growing up in a heterosexist culture, (c) it is important to intervene the level of internalized homophobia via therapy and counseling to improve the quality of life for LGBTI+ individuals, and (d) it is a crucial part of explaining mental health problems that non-heterosexual individuals experiences. Shidlo (1994) also states that understanding and detecting internalized homophobia in LGB+ individuals carry importance since it affects depression, self-esteem, and motivation to create intimate relationships and maintain them.

2.2.2. Theoretical Models of Internalized Homophobia

2.2.2.1. Minority Stress Theory

To fully understand the Minority Stress Theory developed by Meyer (2003), Allports' (1954) theory called "Traits Due to Victimization" must be briefly mentioned. According to Allport (1954), the defense and coping mechanisms of stigmatized individuals are activated due to the experience of prejudice and discrimination. Those defense mechanisms may emerge as obsessive, anxious feelings connected to the characteristics of the stigmatization. Thus, the stigmatization may be internalized and may be resulted in self-hatred and hostile attitudes towards self. Minority stress theory, on the other hand, is similar to this point of view about stigmatization and prejudice.

Minority stress theory has many assumptions regarding the psychological states of LGBTI+ individuals. However, the main assumption posits that sexual minorities expose routine and ongoing stressful events in daily life compared to heterosexuals (Herek & Garnets, 2007). Those stressful events have two main bases regardless of how they manifested in daily life; involves prejudices and discrimination. Brooks (1981) defined them as;

“a state intervening between the sequential antecedent stressors of culturally sanctioned, categorically ascribed inferior status, social prejudice and discrimination, the impact of these environmental forces on psychological well-being, and consequent readjustment or adaptation” (p. 107).

As seen in the definition, prejudices, and discrimination cause LGBTI+ individuals to show a continuous effort to adapt themselves to every routine; they must protect and preserve their psychological well-being.

Meyer (2003) was the first researcher who conceptualized the effects of certain gender-based discrimination and prejudice under minority stress. The aim was to understand the scientific link between these socially important stressors and psychiatric disorders that LGBTI+ individuals may experience. Minority stress theory, which has its roots in the psychology discipline. Specifically, literature on stress, LGBTI+ health research, and theories focuses on stigma and prejudices popular in social psychology posits those four specific processes can form the framework of minority stress theory. The first process is chronic and acute stressful events related to discrimination and prejudice. Secondly, the expectations of a possible stressful event and being alert for it. Thirdly, internalizing that social prejudice and discrimination-related stressful events. Last but not least, being in the closet, meaning, hiding one's self-identified sexual orientation from others.

According to this theory, internalized homophobia is complicated and is believed to begin in the early phases of human life. Internalized homophobia is highly related to the family environment of LGBTI+ individuals grow up. According to Meyer and Dean (1998), internalized homophobia is believed to be sustained and unconsciously supported in family environments where the other family members are predominantly heterosexual and heteronormative values are adopted. In traditional heterosexist families, it is commonly seen that the presumption of heterosexual individuals is naturally superior to LGBTI+ individuals. Thus, family structures and rules about raising children are shaped around the belief that heterosexual individuals deserve more rights and freedom than LGBTI+ individuals (Szymanski & Carr, 2008). Many children are exposed to mono sexist and anti-gay belief systems at the beginning of

their lives. The exposure of heteronormative values can be seen in all sorts of environments that children get involved, including immediate and extended family, school, and media. The pressure of heteronormative values also contributes to the stigmatization of LGBTI+ individuals on a legal basis. In many cultures, LGBTI+ individuals have no legal right to marry and adopt a child. Heteronormative family values prevent LGBTI+ individuals from forming a family of their own and create an invisible status among society. Efforts to become visible result in more stigmatization. As the minority stress theory posits, increased stigmatization and pressure often result in negative attribution to their sense of sexuality and identity by LGBTI+ individuals (Shidlo, 1994).

This theory has another side where there are some specific coping strategies are defined. Rather than only problematizing, individual efforts to cope with exposed discrimination and prejudices and social support roles are also important for this theory (Meyer, 2003). According to Meyer (2003), being involved with their community and creating strong connections with people they share similar characteristics increases the quality of self-evaluation and can be helpful to reduce the negativity derived from society and increase the positive self-image.

2.2.2.2. Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive dissonance has a history of over 50 years and can be accepted as one of the prominent theories in cognitive psychology. In its bear form, cognitive dissonance is defined as an inconsistency between individuals' two psychological representations about the outer world and themselves (Festinger, 1962). Festinger (1968) further elaborated the existence of dissonance and explained how it could be related to psychological disturbances as "The holding of two or more inconsistent cognitions arouses the state of cognitive dissonance, which is experienced as uncomfortable tension. This tension has driven-like properties and must be reduced." (p. 7). Cooper (2007) further defined cognitive dissonance as "a pair of cognitions is inconsistent if one cognition follows from the obverse (opposite) of the other." (p. 6). Magnitude is a crucial term and separates cognitive dissonance theory from the other inconsistency theories, such as the status inconsistency theory (Campbell, 1992; Yick, 2001). The

magnitude of dissonance refers to the length of the discrepancy between two cognitions, behavior, or emotion. If the discrepancy increases, so does the disturbance derive from the discrepancy.

Furthermore, the ease of decision to be made between two discrepant cognition is a factor in the dissonance's magnitude. Some dissonances, in that sense, seem to be easier to reduce than the others. For example, daily life choices about what to eat may be easier than selecting a partner. A discrepancy between eating healthy and ordering street food from outside would be easier to reduce than being sensitive to poverty in society and refusing to donate money to charities. More recent models on cognitive dissonance propose “but only” prerequisite conditions for it to happen and also for the magnitude mentioned before (Cooper, 2007). Cooper (2007) identified four prerequisite conditions. He indicated that dissonance occurs, and the magnitude of the dissonance increases “but only when decision freedom is high, but only when people are committed to their behavior, but only when the behavior leads to aversive consequences, but only when those consequences were foreseeable.” (p. 63).

From a cognitive perspective, the concept of cognitive dissonance seems to be a suitable explanation for internalized homophobia. Following Festinger's (1957) and Cooper's (2007) definitions, internalized homophobia can be considered as a dissonance between the two main cognitions of LGBTI+ individuals. As a part of their sexual orientation identification, LGBTI+ individuals are prone to involve in romantically, emotionally, and sexually with people who also have the same sexual orientation identification. However, LGBTI+ individuals with higher internalized homophobia may also think that it is wrong to engage in romantic, emotional, and sexual activities with the same gender. This belief comes from society's negative attitudes towards them. Inconsistency between these two cognitions appears to signal a dissonance. Cooper's (2007) later work on the prerequisite conditions for cognitive dissonance plays a role in the development and magnitude of internalized homophobia. As the LGBT+ visibility increases, so does the freedom to choose to be involved in a romantic, emotional, and sexual relationship with the same gender increases. However, society's negative attitude still plays a role in the relationships of LGBT+ individuals' negativity is foreseeable. While individuals choose to maintain

relationships with the same gender, undesirable consequences may happen (i.e., getting hurt, getting discriminated against, and being alienated).

2.3. Definitions and Theoretical Models of Cognitive Flexibility

In this section, definitions and theoretical models that can be used to conceptualize cognitive flexibility were presented.

2.3.1. Definitions of Cognitive Flexibility

Spiro and Jehng (1990) were the first scientists to introduce cognitive flexibility, and they stated that “the ability to adaptively re-assemble diverse elements of knowledge to fit the particular needs of a given understanding or problem-solving situation” (p. 169). This early definition falls a bit short of capturing the essence of awareness state in this cognitive flexibility. Martin, Anderson, and Thweatt (1998) altered the definition of cognitive flexibility to a more complex and specified form. They stated that it is the ability to what degree individuals are aware of the suitable choices towards and feasible alternatives to given circumstances and be willing to be flexible under those circumstances. Dennis and Vander Wal (2010) also stated that cognitive flexibility is the ability to shifts cognitive sets to adapt to environmental changes.

Another conceptualization for cognitive flexibility was made by Ionescu (2012). He proposed it as “a property of the cognitive system.” The term property is defined as dependent on interactions of cognitive mechanisms responding to environmental factors. Ionescu’s proposition (2012) states that the emergence of cognitive flexibility depends on the interaction of context, cognition, emotions, and sensorimotor activities. Conceptualizations about cognitive flexibility can be further elaborated; however, there are some commonalities in each of them.

Martin and his colleagues (1998) stated that cognitive flexibility is a general psychological condition necessary for adaptation rather than in certain situations and certain times. Canas et al. (2006) made a similar statement and added that cognitive flexibility is a trait that individuals learn to develop and improve over time. A positive association between cognitive flexibility and interpersonal communication was found (Rubin & Martin, 1994). Similarly, Martin and Anderson (1998) found out that

individuals who have higher levels of cognitive flexibility reported feelings of safety and comfort in communicating with others than those who have lower levels of cognitive flexibility. In the meta-analysis conducted by Baas, De Dreu, and Nijstad (2008), cognitive flexibility appeared as an important skill people use to communicate with others and the world more creatively. It is an essential part of problem-solving in interpersonal relationships.

Literature provides different definitions of cognitive flexibility. Three common elements can be found in those definitions: (1) it is an ability to change (Canas, Quesada, Antoli, & Fajardo, 2003; Dennis & Vander Wal, 2010), (2) it is the ability to think several categories and concepts (Hirt, Devers, & McCrea, 2008; Murray, Sujan, Hirt, & Sujan, 1990), and (3) it is the ability to perceive multiple perspectives (Bishop et al., 2004; Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, Greeson, & Laurenceau, 2007).

2.3.2. Theoretical Models of Cognitive Flexibility

2.3.2.1. Cognitive Flexibility Theory

Even though cognitive flexibility has many definitions mainly formed with general statements about shifting cognitive sets and adapting to environmental changes, there is no clear explanation on how the cognitive shifts occur (Downes et al., 1989). Rende (2000) extended the explanations on cognitive flexibility and theorized it under two main aspects: forms of cognitive flexibility and sources of cognitive inflexibility.

Rendes' (2000) conceptualization highlights that cognitive flexibility is a multicomponent process and states that "collective cognitive processes contribute to cognitively flexible behaviors, such as producing diverse ideas, considering response alternatives, and modifying plans and behaviors to manage changing circumstances and long-term goals." (p. 122). A dichotomous categorization has been made to define forms of cognitive flexibility: reactive flexibility and spontaneous flexibility (Eslinger & Grattan, 1993). Firstly, reactive flexibility is defined. Rende (2000) indicated that reactive flexibility is "the ability to freely shift cognition or behavior in response to changing the task or situational demands." (p. 122).

Different kinds of tasks or environmental changes may require a different type of reactive shift, meaning that underlying cognitive processes may change according to the tasks. Thus, intradimensional and extradimensional shifts are defined as reactive flexibility (Slamecka, 1968; Rende, 2000). Intradimensional shift is used when characteristics of environmental stimuli (e.g., tasks, changes, situations) remain constant when cognitive sets happen. As opposed to intradimensional shift, characteristics of the stimuli becomes relevant to the cognitive shift in the extradimensional shift. The other form of cognitive flexibility is spontaneous flexibility. Different from reactive flexibility, spontaneous flexibility has the component of fluency (Rende, 2000). Also, it is referred to as divergent thinking and emphasizes the variety, quantity, and relevance of information when cognitive shifts happen (Chapey, 1994; Rende, 2000).

What differentiates spontaneous flexibility from reactive flexibility is that spontaneous flexibility is much more complex than reactive flexibility. It requires a more comprehensive assessment and evaluation of external stimuli and the environmental situation, and it is more suitable for social relations. For example, people with higher levels of spontaneous flexibility may consider other peoples' feelings and points of view while in an argument. Thus, modify their plans and react in a way that both control their negative emotions by expressing them in a non-violent way and being emphatic towards the other people. Similarly, people who use reactive flexibility skills more than spontaneous flexibility may react to only relieve their negative emotions and ignore the other peoples' feelings and views on the issue.

The theory also defined cognitive inflexibility and inflexibility sources characterized by poor shifting behaviors regarding cognitive and perceptual domains (Lezak, 1995; Rende, 2000). Sandson and Albert (1984) label these poor shifting behaviors as stuck-in-set perseveration and states that it is the inappropriate continuation of the current mental set regarding environmental situations.

2.3.2.2. Normative Creativity Theory

Brown's (1989) theory of normative creativity is related to cognitive flexibility, distinguishing the reality of LGBTI+ individuals. Previous cognitive flexibility theory

is a highly clinical theory that explains inflexible behaviors solely with cognitive processes and neurological bases. On the other hand, the theory of normative creativity sheds light on the living practices of LGBTI+ individuals and the importance of being cognitively flexible to be able to simply exist in a heteronormative world.

This theory is examined in three main parts: biculturalism, marginality, and normative creativity (Brown, 1989). Biculturalism, defined under the assumption of heterosexism. As Brown (1989) stated, “Our knowledge base is heterosexist. That is, it assumes heterosexuality and heterosexual forms of relating as the norm. More precisely, white, middle class, married, religious, and able-bodied heterosexuality is defined as the norm. All other forms of experience are viewed in contrast to the norm.” (p. 447). The heterosexist norms force LGBTI+ individuals to simultaneously exist in both heterosexual experiences and their own experiences of reality. Nestle (1987) elaborates on this issue and states that LGBTI+ individuals are in a position to shift their behaviors in between heterosexual norms and normal and cultural stereotypes of exhibiting “obvious” gay or lesbian behaviors. Marie Root (1988) stated that this could lead to confusion and non-fitting to any context. Following Root’s model, Brown (1989) stated that;

“a successful resolution of a bicultural identity may create a propensity to view things on a continuum than in a polarized fashion. Being able to operate within grey areas and on middle grounds and balancing the demands of two divergent groups that are now internalized self-representations are characteristics of the experience of being gay or lesbian” (p. 449).

The second theme of this theory is marginality, and this theme is shaped around the notion of “otherness” (Brown, 1989). Brown (1989) states that even in the most accepting and supporting environments;

“for many lesbians and gay men, the first awareness of who we were was simply that vague sense of difference and distance from the rituals of heterosexual culture, of not understanding what our friends saw in the opposite gender, of watching to see how

heterosexual courtship rituals were played out so that we could imitate them and fit in” (p. 450).

The third theme of this theory is called normative creativity. In line with the concepts of biculturalism and marginality, normative creativity also highlights the lifestyles that are being left out by heteronormativity. As Brown (1989) stated, “by lacking clear rules about how to be lesbian and gay in the world, we have made up the rules as we go along” (p. 451). Brown gave an example to this assumption with a study conducted by Clunis and Green (1988). In their study, lesbian couples indicated that they had to improvise ways to live their lives and form their relationship because they had very few role models on how to be a lesbian in a committed relationship.

Brown’s theory of normative creativity suggests the assumption that LGBTI+ individuals might show higher levels of cognitive flexibility skills than those who are heterosexual and conform with the heteronormative ways of living (Konik & Crawford, 2004). The three themes of normative creativity have some elements in common that can also be seen in the definitions of cognitive flexibility. These elements imply that LGBTI+ individuals live with a sense of difference and outside the values of cultures. Thus, they are most likely to struggle to shift their cognitive sets between heteronormative and their own rules and routines about life.

2.4. Definitions and Theoretical Models of Positive and Negative Affect

In this section, definitions and theoretical models that can be used to conceptualize positive and negative affect were presented.

2.4.1. Definitions of Positive and Negative Affect

In a broad sense, affectivity refers to a level of capacity in which people involve in stimuli, situations, memories, and thoughts with an emotional response. Affects are considered a temporary emotional response opposite to mood, reflecting a longer period of affectivity and often considered a part of the trait. Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) made a two-dimensional distinction to conceptualize affectivity better. Affectivity can be separated into positive and negative affect. Positive affect is characterized by positive feelings and emotions such as excitement, joy, and

enthusiasm. On the other hand, the negative affect appears to be an umbrella term for negative feelings such as shame, guilt, and fear.

Intensity and frequency of positive and negative affect determine the fluctuations in mood, and these fluctuations seem to be related to subjective well-being (Wessman & Ricks, 1966). According to Wessman and Rick (1966), individuals differ in terms of fluctuations in the affective states on a day-to-day basis depending on two factors. The first one is the “average hedonic level,” which explains the amount of experienced positive affect instead of the negative affect. The second one is the variability exhibited in those affects. The results of this study suggest a correlation between positive and negative affect. On the other hand, another study conducted by Bradburn (1969) suggests the opposite. According to Bradburn (1969), positive and negative affect vary independently if measured separately, meaning that feelings of positive affect do not correlate with the amount of negative affect on a simultaneous level.

Positive and negative affect is a debate topic in terms of the separation that has been made. Some studies argue that positive and negative affect are significantly correlated, operate together, and interact with thoughts and behaviors (Green, Goldman, & Salovey, 1993). However, some studies are arguing the opposite. They state that a distinction is established due to an absence of significant correlation between them because they both interact with thoughts and behaviors (Cheng & Funham, 2003). Similar to Wessman and Ricks’s (1966) findings, various studies found that positive and negative affect are substantially correlated (Brenner, 1975; Diener & Emmons, 1984; Kammann, Christie, Irwin, & Dixon, 1979). At the same time, some studies found the opposite similar to Bradburn’s (1969) work (Clark & Watson, 1986; Harding, 1982).

Two major scales assess positive and negative affect on a determined timeline (Bradburn, 1969; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). In this study, the positive and negative affect schedule developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) will be used due to some controversial features existing with the Bradburn affect balance scale. Firstly, items of the Bradburn scale differ in positive and negative affect; specifically, positive affect items reflect arousal and activity, whereas negative affect

items are not. Secondly, items in the positive affect seem to be conditional, and emotions seem to depend on situations rather than assessing them independently. Thirdly, items on the Bradburn scale are rated on a yes-no format rather than a point-type Likert system. Bradburn scale assesses the existence of specific feelings; however, it fails to include the intensity and frequency of the feelings in the scale.

2.4.2. Theoretical Models of Affectivity

2.4.2.1. Broaden-and-Built Theory

To better understand how Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2001) conceptualizes positive emotions and in what place the theory puts negative emotions, the term action tendency and attribution-emotion models need to be further elaborated. Action tendency is an urge to express some form of behavior (i.e., expressive and instrumental behaviors) rooted in specific emotions. On the other hand, emotions grabbed a lot of attention in the history of emotion theories; specifically, emotions are associated with action tendencies (Frijda 1986; Frijda et al. 1989; Tooby & Cosmides 1990; Lazarus 1991; Levenson 1994; Oatley & Jenkins 1996). Specific emotions are linked to specific behaviors. For instance, fear is believed to cause the urge to escape and, similarly, anger for the urge to attack and be violent. Betancourt and Blair (1992) have created an attribution-emotion model on how individuals use violence and aggressive behaviors. In their study, the emotion of anger is significantly linked to the intention to use violence and intention to use violence; in this context, it was considered an action tendency.

The basic premise of Broaden and Build Theory of positive emotions, conceptualized by Fredrickson (2001), is that positive emotions cause positive influences on every aspect of human life, enhance people, and increase overall well-being. Like other attributional theories, positive emotions are considered as impactful as negative emotions to lead individuals to exhibit some actions. According to this theory, positive emotions contribute to optimal well-being via modifying behaviors, creating personal and social resources, and enhancing functionality (Fredrickson, 2001). Specifically, positive emotions have some fundamental influences on human life: they (1) broaden peoples' attention and cognitive processes, (2) revoke the negative affective arousal,

(3) enhance psychological resilience, and (4) create personal resources (e.g., increase flexible and creative thinking, and permanent coping strategies).

However, among all the hypotheses of this theory, two of them are important for the scope of the current study: broadening thought and attention and undoing the effects of actions fueled by negative emotions. For example, individuals tend to think flexible, different than usual, creative and productive, and become more open-minded in the presence of higher levels of positive emotions (see Isen, 2000 for a review). Also, Fredrickson and colleagues (1998; 2000) found out that positive emotions may undo the effects of negative emotions on physical grounds, such as decreasing the increased blood pressure and heart rate.

2.5. Empirical Research on the Association of the Model Variables

Previous literature provides a comprehensive body of research on the variables of this study, namely, psychological dating aggression, internalized homophobia, cognitive flexibility, and positive and negative affect. However, the available studies have not examined all the variables of this study concomitantly. Therefore, the variables of this study are grouped, and the findings are presented below.

2.5.1. Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration and Internalized Homophobia

Literature provides many research studies conducted to see the relationship between psychological dating aggression and internalized homophobia (Badenes-Ribera, Sánchez-Meca & Longobardi, 2019; Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Byers, 2006; Bartholomew, Regan, Oram, et al., 2008; Carvalho, Lewis, Derlega, Winstead, & Viggiano, 2011; Chong, Mak, Mabel & Kwong, 2013; Edwards & Silaska, 2013; Kelley et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2014; Mason et al., 2016; Milletich, Gumienny, Kelley, and D'Lima, 2014; Otis, Riggle, & Rostosky, 2006; Pepper & Sand, 2015; Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, & Meyer, 2008).

In their study, Balsam and Szymanski (2005) examined the relationship between internalized minority stressors (internalized homophobia and discrimination), degree of outness, relationship quality, and domestic violence with a sample of 272 European

American lesbian and bisexual women. Their results revealed that minority stress variables were associated with lower levels of relationship quality and all forms of domestic violence perpetration and victimization (physical, sexual, and psychological). Also, they found that relationship quality mediates the relationship between internalized homophobia and domestic violence (both perpetration and victimization). In her doctoral dissertation, Byers (2006) examined the role of internalized homophobia and power differentials to use conflict tactics among lesbians. The study was conducted with 61 lesbians, and results indicated a significant correlation between internalized homophobia and psychological perpetration in intimate relationships. Furthermore, internalized homophobia was a significant predictor of all types of violence in intimate relationships. Bartholomew, Regan, Oram, and White (2008) found similar results in their study to identify possible correlations of intimate partner violence. Their study included 196 men (%94 gay and %6 bisexual). They found out that internalized homophobia is a significant predictor of intimate partner violence perpetration (physical and psychological). Carvalho, Lewis, Derlega, Winstead, and Viggiano (2011) conducted a descriptive study with 581 gay men and lesbian women and found that internalized homophobia levels were significantly higher in IPV perpetrators than non-perpetrator, and a similar outcome was obtained in victimization as well. However, it should be noted that IPV was not assessed with the scale used in this study. Instead, they asked participants if they have ever been victims or perpetrators by responding in a yes or no format. Finneran and colleagues (2012) conducted a multinational study in six countries (i.e., the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Brazil) with a total of 2368 gay and bisexual men. They collected the data through selective banner advertisements placed on social media. Their measurement tools assessed social pressure through homophobic discrimination, internalized homophobia, and heteronormativity. Results revealed that internalized homophobia was in a significant relationship with intimate partner violence only in South Africa and Brazil.

Kelley and colleagues (2014) examined the predictors of men's same-sex partner violence with a relatively small sample consisting of 107 gay and bisexual men. Results revealed a small correlation between internalized homophobia and intimate

partner violence perpetration. Lewis and colleagues (2014) also found a small correlation between internalized homophobia and psychological perpetration in intimate partner violence in their study with 220 lesbian women. They also revealed that internalized homophobia is indirectly affecting perpetration through rumination. Milletich and colleagues (2014) also revealed a small correlation between internalized homophobia and psychological aggression perpetration in the study which they identified predictors of women's same-sex partner violence perpetration with a sample of 209 lesbian women. Despite the significant correlation coefficient between those variables, internalized homophobia did not predict psychological aggression perpetration in that study.

Stephenson and Finneran (2016) conducted a study with 1075 gay and bisexual men on online platforms to examine the relationship between minority stressors (internalized homophobia, lifetime experiences of homophobic discrimination, and lifetime experiences of racist discrimination) types of intimate partner violence. Among all the logistic regression analyses, only internalized homophobia was significantly associated with psychological perpetration in intimate partner violence. In addition, homophobic discrimination was associated with physical and sexual violence and HIV-related violence.

As opposed to the previous findings, Chong, Mak, Mabel, and Kwong (2013) conducted a study in China with 398 gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. They found out that internalized homophobia, in fact, showed no significant association with physical and psychological intimate partner violence. Edwards and Sylaska (2013) researched 391 college youth who identified their gender and sexual identity under the LGBTQ umbrella. In this study, intimate partner violence and internalized homonegativity were assessed, and results revealed no significant correlation between internalized homonegativity and the psychological perpetration of intimate partner violence. However, they found that there is a small correlation between internalized homonegativity and physical perpetration. Also, Pepper and Sand (2005) conducted a study on the relationship of internalized homophobia, intimate partner violence, and personality characteristics with a small sample of 40 lesbian and bisexual women. Their study revealed a significant relationship between internalized homophobia and

sexual aggression. However, no relationship was found between internalized homophobia and psychological aggression subscale of the conflict tactics scale.

2.5.2. Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration and Cognitive Flexibility

A burgeoning body of research indicates that individuals who exhibit aggression also show neurocognitive decrements, meaning that aggressiveness is linked to executive dysfunctions (Becerra-Garcia, 2015; Brenner, 2017; Cohen et al., 2003; Chesebero & Martin, 2003; Martin, Anderson, Thweatt, 1998; Parrott, Swartout, Eckhardt & Subramani, 2017; Romero-Martinez et al., 2016; ; Rosenbaum & Hoge, 1989; Rosenbaum et al., 1994; Stepteau-Watson, 2014; Teichner, Golden, Van Hasselt & Peterson, 2001; Warnken, Rosenbaum, Fletcher, Hoge & Adelman, 1994).

Literature review shows that Rosenbaum and colleagues (Cohen et al., 2003; Rosenbaum & Hoge, 1989; Rosenbaum et al., 1994; Warnken, Rosenbaum, Fletcher, Hoge & Adelman, 1994) are the pioneers in studies that examine the relationship between executive functioning and intimate partner violence perpetration. Their findings led the directions of future research studies. Even though their research examined the potential effects of head injury on the relationship of executive functioning and intimate partner violence, findings suggest that there is a strong relationship between executive functioning, including cognitive flexibility, and perpetration. Martin, Anderson, and Thweatt (1998) found out in their study that aggressive communication traits (argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, tolerance for disagreement) are in a relationship with cognitive flexibility. Moreover, Teichner, Golden, Van Hasselt, and Peterson (2001) examined the role of executive functioning in predisposing individuals to intimate partner violence. Their experimental study measured several executive functions, including cognitive flexibility in 50 intimate partner perpetrators and 23 non-violent individuals. Results revealed that participants' scores exceeded the recommended cutoff for 24 individuals in the experiment and one individual in the control group. Thus, they have concluded that executive functioning is an important factor in predicting IPV. Chesebero and Martin (2003) found out that cognitive flexibility is an important factor in conversational sensitivity. They stated that individuals who obtain higher scores on cognitive flexibility are more likely to be

sensitive in handling conversations and maintain them more smoothly than those who obtain lower scores on cognitive flexibility. Cognitive flexibility was also found to be indirectly related to verbal aggressiveness and interpersonal aggression.

Similarly, Romero-Martinez et al. (2016) demonstrated that an intervention program successfully implemented neuropsychological changes (emotional decoding, perspective-taking, emotional empathy, and cognitive flexibility) in intimate partner violence perpetrators. They found that lower levels of cognitive flexibility are associated with perpetration behaviors, and an intervention can be useful to reduce perpetrating behaviors through increasing cognitive flexibility. Brenner (2017) examined the relationship between cognitive flexibility and intimate partner violence perpetration in a sample of 92 male perpetrators. It was found that self-report cognitive flexibility is not related to intimate partner violence perpetration, whereas performance-based cognitive flexibility is associated with perpetration. Furthermore, higher scores of self-report cognitive flexibility were associated with negotiation skills in intimate relationships.

Stepteau-Watson (2014) reviewed the relationship between cognitive flexibility as a protective factor of dating violence in their systematic review and the constructs are negatively correlated, meaning that higher levels of cognitive flexibility can play a role in mitigating dating violence. Also, some forms of executive functioning deficits are found to be uniquely associated with IPV. In a study conducted by Becerra-Garcia (2015), executive functioning performances of IPV perpetrators, sexual offenders, violent offenders, and non-offenders were compared. This study revealed that IPV perpetrators and sexual offenders showed significantly lower performance than other groups in cognitive flexibility. Parrott, Swartout, Eckhardt, and Subramani (2017) conducted a study with 612 couples with a history of psychological and physical partner violence. Participants completed the measures for alcohol use, IPV, and executive functioning. Results indicated that higher levels of partner abuse are associated with higher levels of executive dysfunctions.

2.5.3. Internalized Homophobia and Cognitive Flexibility

The body of research studies considering the relationship between internalized homophobia and cognitive flexibility is highly limited. Instead, the relationship between the constructs was mainly formed concerning other variables such as normative creativity and sexual identity formation since positive sexual identity negatively correlated with internalized homophobia and positively correlated with cognitive flexibility. Meaning that cognitively flexible sexual minority individuals are more likely to develop positive sexual identity and less internalized society's negative attitudes. Also, a review of the literature shows that previous research studies mainly concerned with bisexual identity (Brewster et al., 2013; Konik & Crawford, 2004; Moore & Norris, 2005; Rostosky et al., 2010).

Konik and Crawford (2004) tested the relationship between cognitive flexibility and sexual identity with a sample of 358 university students. In this study, heterosexual, lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals completed the cognitive flexibility scale as it has been theorized as a function of sexual identity. Results indicated a significant difference in cognitive flexibility scores between bisexual and gay/lesbian and heterosexual participants. Bisexuals scored significantly higher than the other participants, and there was no significant difference between heterosexual and gay/lesbian participants. The authors indicated that not having a sexual interest towards exclusively a gender is related to higher cognitive flexibility skills. A similar study was conducted by Moore and Norris (2005) with a sample of 138 participants (heterosexual, gay/lesbian, and bisexual). They hypothesized that bisexuals would score more than heterosexuals and gay/lesbian participants on cognitive flexibility; however, the results of their study suggested the opposite. They found out that bisexuals were more conflicted about their sexuality regarding perceived stigma from society than gay/lesbians and heterosexuals. It was stated that bisexuals receive higher levels of prejudice and discrimination from the gay/lesbian community and the heterosexual community.

In the study conducted by Brewster and colleagues (2013) with a sample of 411 bisexual individuals, minority stress variables (i.e., experiences of prejudice,

expectations of stigma, internalized biphobia, outness/concealment of bisexuality) were positively associated with psychological distress and negatively with well-being. Also, protective factors such as cognitive flexibility were positively correlated with well-being and negatively with psychological distress. The importance of this study lies in the moderating effect of cognitive flexibility. It was found that cognitive flexibility plays a moderating role in the relationships above.

2.5.4. Cognitive Flexibility and Positive and Negative Affect

As one of the key features of executive functioning, cognitive flexibility is related to emotions. Especially, literature is broad on the association between cognitive flexibility and positive affect (Dreisbach & Goschke, 2004; Frober & Dreisbach, 2012; Isen, 2002; Liu & Wang, 2014; Oaksford et al., 1996; Phillips et al., 2002; Ritter et al., 2012; Wang, Chen, and Yue, 2017; Zwosta et al., 2013).

Initial research studies about the effects of affective components on executive functioning vary regarding the results. For example, Oaksford and colleagues (1996) found that positive mood negatively affects executive functioning performances in experiments like the Tower of London task, requiring a high preservation ability. Similarly, Philips and colleagues (2002) revealed that positive affective stimuli reduce performance tasks requiring cognitive set-shifting skills. Isen (2002) examined the role of positive affect on the facilitation of cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skill and stated that “one of the most robust and widely confirmed findings in the affect literature is that positive affect increases cognitive flexibility” (p. 57). In their study, Dreisbach and Goschke (2004) examined the role of positive affect in the cognitive stability and flexibility performance with 18 undergraduate students for the first experiment, 32 undergraduate students for the second experiment, and 17 undergraduate students for the last experiment. They conducted three experiments. The first experiment investigated the absence of positive affect on the participants’ performances about perseveration of the given task. The second experiment presented positive and neutral affective stimuli to test their cognitive-set shifting ability (cognitive flexibility). In the third experiment, they presented both positive and negative affective stimuli to ensure the outcome gained in experiment two. This study

indicated that the effects of positive affect on cognitive stability and cognitive flexibility are significant. They have also concluded that dopamine levels in the frontal brain area mediate positive emotions on cognitive functions. Later on, Frober and Dreisbach (2012) replicated the experiments conducted by Dreisbach and Goschke (2004) and obtained similar and consistent results.

Moreover, Ritter and colleagues (2012) examined the diversifying experiences on cognitive flexibility. Diversifying experiences, in this context, referred to unexpected events and a trigger for feeling “active.” In this experiment, sixty-one undergraduate students were exposed to two types of events: unexpected and normal life events in a virtual reality setting. These experiments suggested that participants who experienced positive feelings under unexpected events showed higher cognitive flexibility skills than those in normal life events. Zwosta and colleagues (2013) conducted an experimental study with sixty undergraduate students to see if mood affects set switching abilities and task blocking related to perseveration performance. Participants were randomly assigned to positive and negative valence groups in the experiment where they have presented either positively or negatively affective films. After the affective manipulation, participants completed a task and the procedure continued with a mood assessment (pre). Then, participants were asked to read an affectively neutral newspaper article, and the initial procedure was repeated with a second mood assessment (post). Results of the study indicated that emotional states significantly determine the parameters of the performances on stability-flexibility tasks. Liu and Wang (2014) also designed an experiment to see the relationship between positive affect and cognitive flexibility and stability and how approach-motivation (expectation of a reward) intensity affects those relationships. Their sample for this experiment was consist of thirty-two undergraduate students. In the experimental procedures, first, they tested the perseveration and switching of the tasks. In the second experiment, they tested the distractibility by presenting affectively stimulant pictures. Results indicated that low approach motivation positively affects increased cognitive flexibility performance and distractibility, whereas high approach motivation positively affects enhanced cognitive flexibility while decreasing distractibility. Wang, Chen, and Yue (2017) conducted a recent fMRI study to see how positive emotions influence

cognitive flexibility. In the experiment with nineteen undergraduate students, participants viewed pictures of different emotional valence (e.g., positive, negative, and neutral). They responded to a discrimination task including odd and event digits in different colors, which was changed during the procedure to assess participants' set-shifting performance with their reaction time. Based on the reaction times and fMRI images, the study results indicated that positive emotions facilitate cognitive flexibility. Also, they found that there is no significant difference between cognitive flexibility based on their reaction time under neutral and negative affective stimuli.

On the other hand, several studies examined the effects of negative mood on cognitive flexibility. Derakshan, Smyth, and Eysenck (2009) examined the effects of state anxiety on task-switching performance with an experimental design consisting of fifty-nine undergraduate students as the sample. Participants rated their anxiety level in their experiment, were asked to solve different mathematical problems as quickly and accurately as possible and rated their anxiety level again in the middle of the experiment. Results of the study indicated that higher levels of anxiety led to poorer performance on task switching. De Lissnyder and colleagues (2010) examined the association between depressive symptoms and executive control impairments with an experiment where they assessed the set-shifting performance of 120 undergraduate students with an experiment presenting pictures of faces with different emotions (negative, neutral, and positive emotions). Results of the study showed that set-shifting was observed in moderately to severely depressed participants. In an experimental study conducted by Shields et al. (2016), participants were placed in the experimental group to face acute stress induction, and others were placed in the control group. The authors concluded that acute stress impairs the ability of cognitive flexibility through the mediation of neurobiological circuits.

2.5.5. Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration and Positive and Negative Affect

In respect to the many theoretical conceptualizations of violent behaviors and their assumptions about how those behaviors contain affective components in the background, it can be said that empirical evidence is also broad considering the relationships between positive and negative emotions and intimate partner violence.

Specifically, anger is one of the negative emotions that have been related to the IPV perpetration (Crane and Eckhardt, 2013; Dye & Eckhardt, 2000; Eckhardt, Jamison & Watts, 2002; Elkins et al., 2013; Follingstad et al., 2002; Follingstad, Kalichman, Cafferty, & Vormbrock, 1992; Feiring, Jashar & Heleniak, 2010; Kendra, Bell & Guimond, 2012; Lewis et al., 2017; Shorey, Cornelius & Idema, 2011; Shorey et al., 2015; Swan et al., 2005).

One of the earliest works on the relationship between negative emotions and intimate partner violence was established by Follingstad and colleagues (1992). The research was designed as an experimental study. Their sample consisted of 74 men selected among the students who attended an introduction to psychology lecture with a single question about their history of violence in an intimate relationship. Half of their sample reported physical and verbal violence, whereas the other half consisted of non-violent men. Participants were put in a frustration condition where the idea of their partners would be the source of conflict and promoter of the frustration. Subjects were randomly assigned to no, low, or high frustration conditions. Their reactions were assessed using Likert-type scales (i.e., self-esteem, conflict tactics, hostility-guilt inventory). Results suggested that abusive participants scored significantly higher than non-abusive participants on hostility and irritability. Also, they scored significantly higher on verbal, emotional, mild, and moderate physical abuse than non-violent participants. Furthermore, one of the earliest research studies examining the relationship between negative emotions, specifically anger and psychological aggression, was conducted by Landolt and Dutton (1997) with a sample of 52 gay men couples. Researchers assessed the predictors of intimate partner violence with power, personality-related variables (borderline personality disorder, anger, and attachment), and recollections of early child-rearing. Results of their study indicated significant correlations among all study variables. Especially, anger had the highest correlation with psychological aggression in intimate relationships.

Dye and Eckhardt (2000) conducted a study to differentiate violent perpetrators from their non-violent counterparts. For that purpose, researchers surveyed 95 men and 152 women undergraduate students with conflict tactics scale, state-trait anger expression inventory, the survey of personal belief, and dysfunctional attitudes scale. Results

indicated no significant difference between violent and non-violent participants in their self-reported level of anger and cognitions. However, violent participants were found to be more struggle in controlling their anger. Eckhardt, Jamison, and Watts (2002) also conducted an experimental study to measure anger and other negative emotional differences between violent and non-violent participants. Participants recorded in terms of their aggressive verbal reactions during listening affectively arousing audiotapes. They also completed the scale measuring their anger and rated their moods with a mood rating scale consisting of 15 mood adjectives. Results indicated that violent participants scored higher in trait anger, lower in anger control and mood ratings. Also, mood ratings were assessed in this study with a composite score obtained from the angry, hostile, irritable, disgusted, and annoyed mood adjectives.

In their study, Follingstad and colleagues (2002) examined the predictors of dating violence with a structural equation modeling. Their selected variables were anxious attachment, anger, and the need for relationship control. College students (213 men; 199 women) completed the questionnaires. SEM model of dating violence predictors resulted in good fit indices. Also, all the direct paths were significant except for the path from anxious attachment to relationship control. Correlational values indicated a moderate correlation between anger and violence perpetration. Swan and colleagues (2005) conducted a path analysis to reveal possible antecedents of women's aggression perpetrations with a sample of 108 women who are African American, urban, and poor, who had used violence against a partner in the previous six months. They examined the variables of victimization, PTSD symptoms, anger, and childhood abuse experiences as the predictors of aggression perpetration. Results of this study indicated that anger predicted the increased likelihood of perpetration behaviors. Also, victimization was found to be a predictor of aggression perpetration.

Shorey, Cornelius, and Idema (2011) conducted a mediation analysis to examine the relationship between difficulties in emotion regulation, trait anger, and psychological aggression perpetration with a sample of 145 women undergraduate students. Results suggested a high correlation between difficulties in emotion regulation, anger, and aggression perpetration. Also, it was found out that anger mediated the relationship

between difficulties in emotion regulation and psychological aggression perpetration. In another study, Kendra, Bell, and Guimond (2012) examined the factors (childhood abuse, PTSD symptoms, and anger arousal) affecting physical and psychological dating violence among college-age women with a sample of 496 individuals. Preliminary results indicated that childhood abuse directly predicted physical and psychological aggression perpetration, and anger arousal mediated the relationship. Also, descriptive analyses indicated that anger arousal is significantly correlated with physical and psychological aggression perpetration.

Feiring, Jashar, and Heleniak (2010) conducted a qualitative study that extensively analyzes college-age women's relationship dynamics and the role of negative emotions and aggression. They interviewed thirty-six undergraduate students and asked them to complete a survey on relationship emotions, power, and aggression. Qualitative analyses suggested that when their needs are not met, participants reported the use of denigration as the expression of aggression. Also, the survey suggested that negative emotions influence the likelihood of aggression when the needs are not met. In the study conducted by Elkins and colleagues (2013), the relationship between anger and physical, psychological, and sexual intimate partner violence was examined via electronic diary entries assessment with a sample of 184 men and women. Results of the study associated anger with the increased likelihood of physical, psychological, and sexual aggression perpetration. Also, a quadric relationship between anger and psychological aggression perpetration was established, meaning that anger was in a strong and significant relationship with psychological aggression when anger was relatively low and higher in the first place. Furthermore, age and length of the relationship were reported as moderators of the mentioned relationship. Another diary assessment on the relationship between negative affect, alcohol consumption, and intimate partner violence was conducted by Crane and Eckhardt (2013). Their sample consisted of forty-three college-age women who reported a recent history of perpetration. The study suggested that negative emotions increased the risk of IPV perpetration in physical, psychological, and sexual forms. Shorey and colleagues (2015) examined the relationship between negative affect and intimate partner violence with a sample of 67 college-age men. In this research, participants completed

a daily survey on negative affect and intimate partner violence perpetration. The result of the study indicated that the effects of composite negative affect on psychological aggression perpetration were significant. Also, anger, frustration, hostility, irritation, and upset mood adjectives were significantly affected psychological aggression perpetration.

Finally, Lewis and colleagues (2017) conducted a path analysis to examine the predictors (discrimination, internalized homophobia, anger, alcohol use, and relationship satisfaction) of IPV perpetration in the romantic relationships of lesbian women with a sample of 1048 individuals. Significant paths were detected from internalized homophobia to anger, from internalized homophobia to perpetration, from anger to perpetration, and alcohol use to perpetration.

2.5.6. Internalized Homophobia and Positive and Negative Affect

As one of the roadblocks to positive sexual identity development, internalized homophobia is an important factor in gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals' lives. Many studies associated affectivity with internalized homophobia. Especially, feelings of shame and anger became prominent feelings that have been related to internalized homophobia (Allen & Oleson, 1999; Brown & Trevethan, 2010; Cody & Welch, 1997; DiPlacido, 1998; Gençöz & Yüksel, 2006; Greene & Britton, 2012; Legate et al., 2018; Mereish and Poteat, 2015; Plummer, 2002; Sherry, 2007). In his book, Plummer (2002) highlighted the critical effects of public stigma towards sexual minority identities via various narratives and stated that "The awareness of the stigma that surrounds homosexuality leads the experience to become an extremely negative one: shame and secrecy, silence and self-awareness, a strong sense of differentness-and of peculiarity-pervades the consciousness" (p.89). In another earlier study about sexual identity, Cody and Welch (1997) conducted an ethnographic study thematically analyze the life experiences of 20 gay men living in the rural areas of northern New England. In the study, gay men frequently expressed their intense feelings of shame and guilt. In one of the interviews, one participant stated that "I was the embodiment of all those nasty things that have been said about gay people" (p. 60).

One of the earliest works on the relationship between affectivity and internalized homophobia was carried out by DiPlacido (1998), with a relatively smaller sample of lesbian women. In the sample, almost half of them (%41) identified themselves as “in the closet,” meaning that they are not publicly open with their sexual identity. In this study, a significant relationship between internalized homophobia and a composite score of negative affects was established. Allen and Oleson (1999) also conducted one of the pioneer research study on the relationship between shame and internalized homophobia with a sample of 100 gay men. A significant positive relationship was found between shame and internalized homophobia. Also, participants were divided into two according to their scores on internalized homophobia as low and high. T-test results showed that feeling of shame is significantly higher in participants in the high internalized homophobia group.

Gençöz and Yüksel (2006) conducted the adaptation study of the Internalized Homophobia Scale to Turkish. In their study with 132 gay and bisexual men, internalized homophobia was significantly correlated with the composite score of negative affect. Similarly, Sherry (2007) conducted a survey study with a sample of 286 lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals to see the relationship between certain negative emotions, attachment styles, and internalized homophobia. The study’s correlation matrix indicated a moderately significant relationship between internalized homophobia and shame and guilt, respectively. Also, it was found out that secure attachment was negatively correlated with internalized homophobia, shame, and guilt.

Furthermore, Greene and Britton (2012) explored Cass’s (1984) theoretical model of identity formation with a sample of 855 gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. They analyzed the impact of shame, internalized homophobia, ambivalence over emotional expression, and personal mastery. They have created four different models to identify possible predictors for each variable. The correlation matrix indicated that there is a strong positive correlation between shame and internalized homophobia. Also, internalized homophobia was found to be a predictor of shame in Model 4, and shame was found to be a predictor of internalized homophobia in Model 2. Mereish and Poteat (2015) created a model to examine factors affecting sexual minority mental and physical health. In their study, participants were 719 sexual minority individuals. As

consistent with the literature, bivariate correlations indicated a positive and significant correlation between shame and internalized homophobia. In this study, internalized homophobia was identified as a proximal stressor that is directly predicting shame.

Legate and colleagues (2018) created a model to investigate the relationship between parental autonomy support, shame, internalized homophobia, and psychological health with a sample of 484. In this study, a significant positive correlation between shame and internalized homophobia was found. Also, shame was a significant predictor of internalized homophobia and mediated the relationship between parental autonomy support and internalized homophobia.

2.5.7. Psychological Dating Aggression Victimization and Internalized Homophobia

Violence in intimate relationships has been a hot topic in the literature of interpersonal relations, and victimization in violent relationships holds special attention. In the briefest form, it can be said that psychological aggression victimization is found to be related to internalized homophobia in the research studies which takes LGBTI+ individuals as the sample (Finneran, Chard, Sineath, Sullivan, & Stephenson, 2012; Goldenberg et al., 2016; Lewis et al., 2017; McKenry et al., 2006; West, 2012).

McKenry and colleagues (2006) conducted a study to understand the differences between victims and perpetrator characteristics with a relatively small sample of 77 gays and lesbians. Results indicated that internalized homophobia levels were high in both perpetrators and victims. Finneran, Chard, Sineath, Sullivan, and Stephenson (2012) examined the relationship between intimate partner violence and social pressure among gay men in six different countries (United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Brazil) with a sample of 2368 gay men. For social pressure, researchers used the scales of internalized homophobia, homophobic discrimination, and heteronormativity. Results of the study indicated that internalized homophobia was a predictor of victimization in two of the six countries. In the other countries, the most common predictor of victimization was found as experiencing homophobic discrimination.

In their qualitative study, Goldenberg and colleagues (2016) examined the sources of tension in intimate partner violence in same-sex couples with a total of 64 gay men. Participants were divided into seven focus groups; each consist of 8 to 13 members. Focus groups were about the sources of stress such as gender roles and gender roles conflicts, dyadic differences in demographic variables, outness, alcohol and drug use, and external violence. Among those topics discussed in focus groups, external violence discussion highlighted how perceived stigma and discrimination might result in violent behaviors in the relationship and cause victimization. For example, one participant in one of the focus groups highlighted this issue by saying “violence [is] not just in your relationship, but just walking down the street. So, there’s a lot of stress from work in terms of how people perceive you ... so, I think because of some of those factors that may not be present in a straight relationship, that it might cause an environment of additional violence” (p. 883). Another study conducted by Lewis and colleagues (2017) with a sample of 1048 lesbian women examined the relationship between sexual minority specific and general risk factors for intimate partner violence. Their study indicated a significant positive correlation between internalized homophobia and psychological aggression victimization, and physical violence victimization.

2.5.8. Psychological Dating Aggression Victimization and Perpetration

Literature is substantial when it comes to the relationship between victimization and perpetration, and descriptions such as cycle and pattern are being made to define this reciprocal interaction (Benedini, Fagan & Gibson, 2016; Gomez, 2011; Kuijpers, van der Knaap & Winkel, 2012; Knight, & Lovegrove, 2012; Kahya, 2021; Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2009; Nikparvar et al., 2021; Sutter et al., 2019; Thornberry, Plummer & Cossins, 2018; Walters, 2020). Moreover, in a paper, Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2009) summarized some important controversies in intimate partner research and pointed out the bidirectional nature of all types of intimate partner violence. The authors referred the bidirectionality as dyadic couple violence. Dyadic couple violence suggests that victims can engage in violent behaviors towards their perpetrator partners in terms of “retaliating” the violence they have been receiving.

Gomez (2011) modeled the intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration and stated that previous child abuse experiences and dating violence experiences in adolescence predict the likelihood of perpetration and victimization in adulthood. In this study, secondary analyses were conducted based on the data from three waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). This study provides solid evidence and is special for its direct path to previous victimization perpetration in dating contexts. Thornberry, Knight, and Lovegrove (2012) did a comprehensive literature review to determine how victims can become perpetrators, and their study focused on childhood sexual abuse. According to their results, childhood sexual abuse can be a predisposing factor for later perpetrator behaviors in intimate relationships, especially those who identify themselves as cisgender males, considering the power-related conflicts between victims and perpetrators. Another important study about the cycle of violence was conducted by Kuijpers, van der Knaap, and Winkel (2012). The researchers examined the risks of revictimization, and the role of attachment, anger, and violent behaviors exhibited by victims. In their study, 74 women help-seeking victims of IPV. Bivariate correlations between variables indicated that victim perpetrated IPV was highly and significantly correlated with psychological revictimization. Also, regression analyses indicated that victim perpetrated IPV was a significant predictor of psychological revictimization.

Similarly, Benedini, Fagan, and Gibson (2016) conducted a longitudinal study on child abuse and neglect with 831 participants. They revealed that individuals who have experienced physical or sexual abuse by the age of 12 are most likely to be victimized again in their romantic relationships in terms of physical abuse and intimidation. Sutter and colleagues (2019), with 150 lesbians and bisexual women, revealed that being a victim through heterosexist discrimination can perpetuate romantic relationships. This study analyzed the data with latent class analysis, and four distinct categories have been made to identify the victim-perpetrator cycle in romantic relationships. Results suggested that individuals who are being victimized in their relationships in terms of all types of abuse (e.g., psychological aggression, physical, and sexual abuse) and aggressive behaviors are scored higher in exposing heterosexist discrimination. Swan and colleagues (2019) researched discrimination and intimate partner violence

perpetration and victimization with a convenient sample of LGBT individuals in Latin America. Their study sample consisted of 99 individuals. Bivariate correlation results indicated a high and significant association between lifetime psychological victimization and perpetration.

The cycle between victimization and perpetration has been examined in various contexts. Walters (2020) conducted a meta-analysis with 22 longitudinal studies examining the perpetration and victimization of school-age bullying. The findings of this meta-analysis suggested a significant correlation between bullying victimization and perpetration. Furthermore, the relationship worked in both directions, meaning that the previous victimization can lead to perpetration and the previous perpetration can lead to victimization in later interactions. The cycle between being a victim and being perpetration and the factors leading to creating this kind of a cycle have been supported with a vast body of research. Kahya (2021) conducted recent research on the relationship between IPV victimization and perpetration and the role of rejection sensitivity and hostility with a sample of 288 Turkish women who are married or currently in a romantic relationship. The study's initial results indicated a strong correlation between intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration. Rejection sensitivity was found to be mediating the relationship between childhood abuse and neglect and IPV victimization. Also, hostility mediated the relationship between childhood abuse and neglect and IPV perpetration. Another recent study was conducted on IPV victimization and perpetration and associated factors in Iran by Nikparvar and colleagues (2021) with a sample of 250 individuals (111 men and 139 women). Their study also revealed a high and significant correlation between psychological aggression victimization and perpetration. Regression analyses indicated that psychological aggression victimization and perpetration predict physical aggression perpetration.

2.6. Sexual Orientation Differences in Aggression Perpetration

A literature review of empirical studies showed that there are significant sexual orientation differences in psychological dating aggression perpetration in terms of homosexual identity (gay and lesbian), bisexuality, and heterosexuality (Gonzalez-

Guarda, De Santis & Vasquez, 2013; Harland, Peek-Asa & Saftlas, 2021;; Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş & Jessen, 2021; Whitfield et al., 2021).

To begin with, it can be said that sexual orientation is a significant determinant in psychological dating aggression perpetration and victimization. Gonzalez-Guarda, De Santis, and Vasquez (2013) examined the sexual orientation and demographic, cultural, and psychological factors associated with the perpetration and victimization of intimate partner violence among Hispanic men with 77 heterosexual, 63 gays, and 20 bisexual men. Analyses showed that bisexual men scored significantly higher in psychological aggression perpetration than gay and heterosexual men. Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş, and Jessen (2021) examined the role of minority stress on psychological intimate partner violence by comparing samples from Turkey and Denmark with 169 lesbians and 102 bisexual women. They also checked the moderator role of sexual orientation. Their results indicated that bisexual women scored higher in psychological aggression perpetration measures compared to lesbians.

Similarly, Whitfield and colleagues (2021) examined the IPV perpetration and victimization rates and the role of minority stress variables with a sample of 541 bisexual individuals and 268 gay and lesbians. Results were consistent with previous literature, and bisexual individuals scored higher in perpetration than gay and lesbian individuals. Harland, Peek-Asa, and Saftlas (2021) reached similar results in their study examining general and minority specific risk factors on IPV with a sample of 1008 heterosexual and 120 non-heterosexual participants. Their results revealed that non-heterosexual participants scored significantly higher in the perpetration of IPV. Furthermore, among the sexual minority participants (51 bisexual and 50 gay and lesbian), bisexuals reported higher perpetration rates than gay and lesbian individuals.

2.7.Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter presented definitions and theoretical frameworks of aggression, internalized homophobia, affectivity, and cognitive flexibility to conceptualize further the possible factors related to psychological aggression in dating relationships.

Firstly, psychological aggression, aggressive behaviors, predictors and processes, consequences, and protective factors against it have long been interested in scientific research. The literature demonstrates strong theoretical and empirical evidence in accordance to explain the scope of aggression. Over the years, theoretical explanations have been various. One of the earliest theories which conceptualized aggressive behaviors is social learning theory. According to this theory, aggression expression is learned just like any other behavior observed in social relations. Social learning theory posits that through observation and modeling, individuals learn that aggression may be a component of social functioning. Thus, social learning is a helpful theory to understand the relationship between psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration and the process behind the cycle of violence. Other theories approach aggression as a behavioral choice that individuals make due to an interaction between personal and environmental factors, thoughts, emotions, and arousal that comes from it. Social information processing and general affective aggression models can be considered in this category. On the other hand, these theories can help to conceptualize how certain emotions lead to aggression.

Secondly, internalized homophobia is considered an LGBTI+ environmental and proximal stress factors explained in two theoretical approaches. Firstly, it is widely seen as a minority issue where individuals make an active effort to deal with the stress they face routinely. Thus, minority stress theory reflects the social and interactional aspects of the internalized homophobia. Second, cognitive dissonance theory discusses how negative attitudes can be internalized and produce a biased and unhealthy thinking process. According to cognitive dissonance theory, consequences of internalizing negative attitudes create a contradiction in thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and aggression, which can be an outcome of this contradiction.

Thirdly, cognitive flexibility, which is considered a skill that individuals develop and use when thoughts become imprinting, is another issue discussed in the literature. The degree to which individuals can be flexible in their information process and decision-making may make it hard to create alternative solutions in an unpleasant situation and increase abilities to solve it in a comforting and easy way. Normative creativity theory is best to understand how cognitive flexibility is a crucial skill that LGBTI+

individuals need. According to this theory, cognitive flexibility is a necessary skill for LGBTI+ individuals to deal more effectively with environmental stress and create their ways of living when there are no or only a few role models for non-heteronormative non-heterosexist relationships. Furthermore, broaden-and-build theory helps this research to establish the link between positive emotions and executive functioning. The basic premise of this theory suggests that positive emotions can lead individuals to think more creatively and flexibly while broadening their minds.

Lastly, apart from the theoretical explanations and conceptualizations of the study variables, the literature review is also extensive regarding the empirical evidence on the relationship between variables even though they are not entirely consistent. For example, strong empirical evidence can be found on the relationship between positive and negative emotions and psychological dating aggression perpetration. While some studies suggest that positive emotions may have reduced the use of violence and negative emotions strengthen it, others state the opposite. Similarly, the relationship between victimization and perpetration was found to be bidirectional while some studies did not find a meaningful relationship between being a victim and perpetrate psychological aggression. Cognitive flexibility was found to be a statistically significant protective factor against, and internalized homophobia was found to be a risk factor for the use of psychological aggression in many studies whereas other studies failed to find such results. Moreover, many studies established a statistically significant difference between homosexuals and bi+sexuals regarding psychological dating aggression perpetration. Most of the studies concluded that bi+sexual individuals are more likely to perpetrate in their relationships.

3. METHOD

Methodological steps taken for this research were explained in this chapter. The chapter starts with the design of the study. In the second part, the sampling procedure was explained. In the third part, the participant profile was given in detail. The fourth part contains detailed information about the data collection instruments, their psychometric properties for this study, and the assumption and model fit criteria used for the psychometrics. The fifth part contains information about how the data was collected. Finally, operational definitions and descriptions of the variables and limitations of the study were presented in the sixth and seventh sections, respectively.

3.1. Design of the Study

The primary focus of this research is to explore the relationships between psychological dating aggression (victimization and perpetration), internalized homophobia, affectivity (positive and negative affect), and cognitive flexibility in a sample of LGB+ individuals. To do so, quantitative inquiry with a correlational design was used in this study. As stated by Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott (2015, p. 139), "Correlational studies aim to examine the relationship between two or more variables to see whether they covary, correlate, or are associated with each other." In order to analyze the data, path analysis, which is a multivariate statistical analysis technique to test the relationships between endogenous and exogenous variables, was employed (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). All the descriptive and inferential statistics were run by using IBM Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) 25 (IBM Corp, 2017) and AMOS 24 (Arbuckle, 2014).

3.2. Participant Profile

The study sample consisted of 522 LGB+ individuals. The participants' demographic information showed that the age of the participants ranged from 18 to 38 with a mean of 24.38 ($SD = 4.17$). In terms of gender identity, which was asked as an open-ended question to allow participants to self-identify their gender, 297 were cisgender men (56.9%), 176 were cisgender women (33.7%), 42 were non-binary (8%), 1 were men

with trans experience (0.2%), 4 were women with trans experience (0.8%), and 2 were questioning (0.4%). Concerning sexual orientation, 272 participants identified themselves as gay (52.1%), 36 of them were lesbian (6.9%), 214 were bi+sexual (41%).

Among 522 participants, 235 were high school graduate (45%), 26 were associate degree graduate (5%), 261 were university graduate (50%). The employment status of participants was also asked. 289 participants were unemployed (55.4%), whereas 233 stated they had a job (44.6%). Among the regions that participants are residing in Turkey, 37 were living in Mediterranean Region (7.1%), 76 were in Aegean Region (14.6%), 256 were in Marmara Region (49%), 18 in Black Sea Region (3.4%), 125 in Central Anatolia Region (23.9%), three in Eastern Anatolia Region (0.6%), and seven in Southeastern Anatolia Region (1.3%).

Besides gathering basic demographics such as age, gender identity, sexual orientation, education, working status, and region of residency, the demographic information form also contained questions related to the romantic relationships of the participants in respect to the topic of this research. Among 522 participants, 255 stated that they are in a romantic relationship (48.9%), whereas 267 of them do not currently have a relationship (51.1%). Among the participants who reported that they have a romantic relationship, 218 identified their relationship as monogamous (85.8%), whereas 36 indicated that they had a non-monogamous/open relationship (14.2%). About living conditions, 176 were living separately (69%), and 79 participants lived with their partners (31%). Last but not least, the length of the relationships in months was asked, and it was found that relationship lengths were ranged from one month to 132 months (11 years) with a mean of 21.91 ($SD = 23.69$).

Demographic information provided by the participants is presented in Table 3.1. As can be seen in the table, most participants identified their gender as cisgender men and women, respectively. About orientation, the most prevalent identification was gay, while bi+sexual individuals were the second most common. In this research, bi+sexual term was used as an umbrella term to include pansexuality and demisexuality. The vast majority of the participants had high school and university degree. In terms of working

status and employment, percentages emerged close to each other, meaning that almost half of the participants were unemployed. In contrast, the other half had a job and income. Participants also stated their city of residency for this research. According to the results, many participants were living in the three most crowded urban areas in Marmara, Central Anatolia, and Aegean regions. Demographic information related to the intimate relationships of participants also showed that nearly half of the participants were in a relationship. Additionally, most participants identified their relationship as monogamous, and they did not live with their partners.

Table 3.1
Frequencies and Percentages in the Demographic Information of the Participants

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Gender Identity		
Cisgender Man	297	56.9
Cisgender Woman	176	33.7
Non-Binary	42	8
Men with Trans Experience	1	0.2
Women with Trans Experience	4	0.8
Questioning	2	0.4
Sexual Orientation		
Gay	272	52.1
Lesbian	36	6.9
Bi+sexual	214	41
Working Status		
Employed	233	44.6
Unemployed	289	55.4
Highest Education Degree Earned		
High School	235	45
Associate Degree	26	5
University Degree	261	50
Region		
Mediterranean	37	7.1
Aegean	76	14.6
Marmara	256	49
Black Sea	18	3.4
Central Anatolia	125	23.9
Eastern Anatolia	3	0.5
Southeastern Anatolia	7	1.3
Relationship Status		
Not in a Relationship	267	51.1
In a Relationship	255	48.9

Table 3.1 (cont'd)

Variable	<i>f</i>	%
Type of the Relationship*		
Monogamous	219	85.8
Non-Monogamous	36	14.2
Living Conditions*		
Separately	176	69
Together	79	31

Note. * among "currently in a relationship" participants

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

A total of five instruments were used in this research. They were the Demographic Information Form (Appendix A), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Gençöz, 2000; Watson et al., 1998) (Appendix B), Internalized Homophobia Scale (; Gençöz & Yüksel, 2006; Herek et al., 1997) (Appendix C), Cognitive Flexibility Scale (Çelikkaleli, 2014; Martin & Anderson, 1998) (Appendix D), and Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu-Sümer, & Murphy, 2018) (Appendix E).

3.3.1. Criteria for Assumption Check and Model Fit

Before analyzing the validity of the instruments through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), recommended assumptions (univariate outliers and normality, and multivariate outliers and normality) were evaluated separately for each scale and reported (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The CFAs reported in this chapter were made through Stata 14 (StataCorp, 2015).

In this research, missing case analyses were not performed since data were collected through Google Forms, and Google Forms allows researchers to mark questions compulsory in the survey. Therefore, there were not any missing data detected within the responses.

- 1) *Univariate and Multivariate Outliers.* Values were detected by taking Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommendations. Standardized z scores were calculated for univariate outliers, and values above the threshold of 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed test) were treated as a potential outlier score. On the other hand, Mahalanobis distances were calculated, and values above the critical chi-

square value ($p < .001$) were treated as potential multivariate outliers. After the detection of outliers, three separate data files were created for each scale. In one of them, all univariate and multivariate outliers were deleted. In the second one, only the cases with both univariate and multivariate outliers were deleted. In the final one, no intervention was made to the outliers; therefore, cases remained the same. A decision on which data file to use was made after assessing the fit indices, and CFA analyses were built upon the data files, which presented a better fit.

- 2) *Sample Size*. Even after the deletion of potential outliers, the sample size was reasonably large enough for every variable to run CFA when Kline's (2011) recommendation clearly states that adequate sample size for CFA should be around 200.
- 3) *Univariate and Multivariate Normality*. For univariate normality, skewness, and kurtosis values, tests of normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk), histograms, Q-Q Plots, and Box Plots were inspected. Kline (2011) suggested skewness and kurtosis values that fall outside the range of -3 and +3 were regarded as signs of non-normality. Therefore, significance values were inspected for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. On the other hand, visual assessments were made for histograms, Q-Q Plots, and Box Plots. For multivariate normality, the procedure continued by running Mardia's tests. According to Bentler (2005) and Byrne (2010), skewness and kurtosis values greater than 5 indicate non-normality.
- 4) *Model Chi-Square (χ^2)*. Model chi-square is a goodness of fit statistic that can be evaluated by looking at a higher probability for a close fit between hypothesized model and covariance matrix (Byrne, 2010; Kline, 2011). However, its sensitiveness to sample size and multivariate normality emerge as a limitation since significance can easily be achieved with larger sample sizes. Thus, normed chi-square (χ^2/df) was reported to assess goodness of fit with the thresholds of 3 (Kline, 2015) and 5 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).
- 5) *Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA)*. As opposed to chi-square, RMSEA is used to assess the goodness of the fit between hypothesized and independence model; fit can be evaluated as better as it gets closer to the zero

(Kline, 2011). Values lower than .08 can be treated as acceptable (Browne & Cudeck, 1993), whereas values lower than .06 indicates a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

- 6) *The Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI)*. Assessment of the improvement in the model through comparison of hypothesized and independence models is made by looking at the CFI value (Kline, 2011). According to Bentler (1992), values greater than .90 indicate acceptable model fit, while values greater than .95 indicate good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).
- 7) *Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)*. Evaluation of TLI is similar to CFI. The index can have a value between 0 and 1, and higher values indicate a better fit. Values equal to or higher than .95 indicate a good fit, whereas values between .90 and .95 are regarded as acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999).
- 8) *Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)*. According to Brown (2015), it is "—an average discrepancy between the correlations observed in the input matrix and the correlations predicted by the model" (p.70). Thus, values equal to or lower than .08 indicate a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

3.3.2. Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form was created to create the participant's profile. Questions related to age, gender identity, sexual orientation, level of education, city, region of residency, working status, relationship status, type of the relationship, length of the relationship, and living conditions were included in this form.

3.3.3. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

Developed by Watson et al. (1988), this scale has a total of 20 items. Half of them is designed to measure positive affect (PA), while the other half measures negative affect (NA). A 5-point scale is constructed (1: not at all, 5: very much), and participants are asked to rate their experiences related to the affective states described in each item. Positive affect measures feelings such as active, alert, and enthusiastic, while negative affect looks for distress, anger, disgust, and shame. The score range is between 10 and 50 for each of the emotions stated in the list. The higher scores obtained through the

positive affect indicate the experiences of being joyful, alert, enthusiastic, and being engaged with the environment in a pleasurable way. In contrast, higher scores gained from the negative affect indicate the opposite. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found to be adequate, .86 to .90 for positive affect and .84 to .87 for negative affect. For the test-retest reliability, positive affect ranges from .47 to .68, and negative affect ranges from .39 to .71.

Turkish adaptation of the positive and negative affect schedule was conducted by Gençöz (2000). The adaptation study revealed that internal consistency scores were ranging between .83 and .86; test-retest reliabilities were found out as .45 for the positive affect subscale and .54 for the negative affect subscale. The Turkish version of the scale was correlated with Beck Depression Inventory (Hisli, 1989), and Beck Anxiety Inventory (Ulusoy, Şahin & Erkmen, 1996) for PA ($r = -.48$, $p < .001$) and ($r = -.22$, $p < .001$) and for NA ($r = .51$, $p < .001$) and ($r = .47$, $p < .001$), respectively. Crawford and Henry (2004) evaluated the reliability and validity of the PANAS by comparing different structural models. They revealed that the best-fitting model for this scale consisted of two correlated factors with PA and NA with correlated error terms between items under the same mood categories following the work of Zevon and Tellegen (1982). Thus, evaluating positive and negative affect schedule with correlated factor structure rather than creating a single hierarchical factor model seems suitable for this study.

3.3.3.1. Psychometric Properties of PANAS for the Present Study

Assumption Checking. There was no univariate and multivariate outlier detected in PANAS. Therefore, the sample size remained the same with 522 cases. All items were in the desired range for skewness and kurtosis values, and normality tests showed significance. Also, visual inspections of histograms, Q-Q Plots, and Box Plots indicated normal distribution except four out of twenty items. Therefore, the univariate normality assumption can be considered as validated. For multivariate normality, the value appears to be greater than 5 ($c.r. = 29.69$), which indicates data are non-normally distributed.

Since analysis implied multivariate non-normality, recommended alternative technique to handle non-normality is using the Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 (Finney & DiStefano, 2006; Kline, 2011). However, when the CFA procedure was run with Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation and Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 separately, no significant difference was detected, and the results were almost the same. The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 results indicated very poor fit of the model to the sample of this study ($\chi^2(169)= 1115.63$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 6.60$; SRMR=.07, RMSEA=.09; CFI= .80; TLI= .75). Thus, Maximum Likelihood estimation was favored, and as recommended by Kline (2011), Bandalos (2002), and Rogers and Schmitt (2004), the item parceling technique seemed suitable since the scale contains more than five items (20 items) and grouping them would increase the fit indices.

There are various ways to do item parceling according to many studies (Hall, Snell, & Foust, 1999; Little et al., 2002; Matsunaga, 2008; Matsunaga, 2017), and for this study, the way of randomly assigning items into parcels was used according to the suggestion of Little and colleagues (2002). For each subscale, three parcels were created based on the sum of each item on the assigned parcel, and in each subscale, two parcels contained three items, whereas one parcel contained four items. After the parceling procedure, multivariate normality assessment was rechecked with Mardia's test, and the value appeared lower than 5 ($c.r.= 3.09$). Fit indices were controversial. Thus, one error covariance was added between error terms of the 5th and 6th parcels. Such modification is reasonable since the 5th and 6th parcels were formed with certain negative mood adjectives. Crawford and Henry (2004) suggested that correlating error terms in this way is meaningful since they are established *a priori* on the ground of theory, and empirical findings indicate a correlation between those mood adjectives. As can be seen in Table 3.2. below, final results indicated good fit of the two-factor structure of the PANAS to the sample data ($\chi^2(7)= 11.92$, $p=.10$; $\chi^2/df= 1.70$; SRMR=.01, RMSEA=.03; CFI= .99; TLI= .99). The path diagram of the scale was presented in Appendix F.

Table 3.2

Summary of Fit Indices for PANAS with Parceled Items and Modification

Models	N	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
1 st Model	522	65.36(8)	8.17	.07	.11	.96	.90
2 nd Model	522	11.92(7)	1.55	.01	.03	.99	.99

Standardized estimates of the scale fell between .80 and .89 for the positive affect dimension and .56 and .94 for the negative affect dimension. Squared multiple correlations for each parcel were also calculated, and they were in the range between .31 and .78. Reliability analyses were also conducted for each dimension. Cronbach's alpha value was .86 for negative affect and .87 for positive affect.

3.3.4. Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHS)

Internalized Homophobia Scale (IHS) is a self-report measure developed by Herek et al. (1997) and aims to assess the degree of homophobic feelings that LGB+ individuals experience. The original scale consists of 9 items (e.g., item 4, “I feel that being gay/bisexual is a personal shortcoming for me”; item 5, “I would like to get professional help in order to change my sexual orientation from gay/bisexual to straight”). Principle component analysis revealed that a single factor accounted for 43.4% of the total variance. The split-half reliability coefficient was .82. Whereas Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .68 and .72 were reported. The minimum score that participants can have appears to be 10, while the maximum score is 50. Higher scores indicate higher levels of internalized homophobia.

The scale was translated into Turkish by Gençöz and Yüksel (2006). An extra item was added to the Turkish version after conducting semi-structured interviews. The final version of Turkish IHS consists of 10 items with a 5- Likert type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Turkish version of the scale is correlated with psychological problems assessed by the total score of Brief Symptom Inventory (Şahin & Durak, 1994) ($r=.39$, $p<.001$), depression ($r=.32$, $p<.001$), anxiety ($r=.35$, $p<.001$), Self Esteem Scale (Çuhadaroğlu, 1986) ($r=-.25$, $p<.01$), Negative Affect ($r=.30$, $p<.001$), and Positive Affect ($r=.09$).

3.3.4.1. Psychometric Properties of IHS for the Present Study

Assumption Checking. A total of 12 univariate and multivariate outliers were detected in the IHS, and all univariate and multivariate outliers were the same cases. After running separate CFA with data files in which outlier cases were deleted and retained, results showed better fit indices in the data file in which the cases were deleted. Therefore, the sample size was reduced to 510. Half of the items were in the desired range for skewness and kurtosis values, whereas the other half exceeded the threshold, and normality tests showed significance. Therefore, the univariate normality assumption can be considered as violated. For multivariate normality, the value appears to be severely greater than 5 (c.r.= 154.33), which indicates data are non-normally distributed.

The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 results indicated poor fit of the single-factor model to the sample data and have not met the CFI, TLI and normed-chi square criteria ($\chi^2(35)= 379.64$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 10.84$; SRMR=.08, RMSEA=.13; CFI= .83; TLI= .78). Thus, Maximum Likelihood estimation was favored, and the procedure continued with item parceling. After parceling procedure, multivariate normality assessment was rechecked, and the value appeared as greater than 5 again (c.r.= 54.36). In this situation, running another CFA with Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 was decided based on the second multivariate normality violation. As can be seen in Table 3.3 below, final results indicated acceptable fit of the single-factor model of the IHS with Satorra-Bentler correction to the sample data due to the normed-chi square had not met the criteria ($\chi^2(5)= 49.58$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 7.08$; SRMR=.05, RMSEA=.08; CFI= .96; TLI= .92). The path diagram of the scale was presented in Appendix G.

Table 3.3
Summary of the Satorra-Bentler Fit Indices for the IHS

Models	N	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
1 st Model	510	379.64(35)	10.84	.08	.13	.83	.78
2 nd Model (with item parceling)	510	49.58(7)	7.08	.05	.08	.96	.92

Standardized estimates of scale fell between .37 and .87. Squared multiple correlations for each parcel were also calculated, and they were in the range between .11 and .78. Reliability analysis was also conducted, and the obtained Cronbach's alpha value was .78.

3.3.5. Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS)

The Cognitive Flexibility Scale is a unidimensional, self-report, 12-item scale aimed to assess the level of cognitive flexibility individuals exhibit under given circumstances. Participants rate the items on a 6-point Likert type scale from strongly agree (6) to strongly disagree (1). In the original scale, Martin and Anderson (1998) calculated the internal consistency as .72, .73, and .81, and the test-retest reliability coefficient was .83.

The scale was adapted to Turkish by Çelikkaleli (2014) with an internal consistency coefficient of .74, a test-retest reliability coefficient of .98, and split-half reliability of .77. On the scale, 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 10th items are reverse items (e.g., item 2, “I avoid new and unusual situations”; item 3, “I feel like I never get to make decisions”). The minimum score that can be gained from this scale is 10, while the maximum is 60. Higher scores indicate higher levels of cognitive flexibility. Turkish version of the Cognitive Flexibility Scale is correlated with the subscales of the Problem-Solving Inventory (Şahin, Şahin & Heppner, 1993): For Problem-Solving Confidence ($r=.15$, $p<.01$), for Personal Control ($r=.23$, $p<.01$), and for Approach/Avoidance Style ($r=-.12$, $p<.01$).

3.3.5.1. Psychometric Properties of CFS for the Present Study

Assumption Checking. There was a total of 1 multivariate outlier detected in the CFS. After running separate CFA with data files that outlier case was deleted and retained, results showed better fit indices in the data file in which the case was kept. Therefore, the sample size remained the same with 522 cases. All the items were in the desired range for skewness and kurtosis values, and normality tests showed significance. Also, visual inspections of histograms, Q-Q Plots, and Box Plots indicated non-normal distribution for half of the items. Therefore, the univariate normality assumption can

be considered as validated. For multivariate normality, the value appears to be greater than 5 ($c.r.= 28.67$), which indicates data are non-normally distributed.

The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 results indicated poor fit of the one-factor model to the sample data and only SRMR value met the criteria ($\chi^2(54)= 357.53$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 6.62$; SRMR=.08, RMSEA=.10; CFI= .79; TLI= .70). Thus, Maximum Likelihood estimation was favored, and the procedure continued with item parceling. After the parceling procedure, multivariate normality assessment was rechecked with a value as greater than 5 again ($c.r.= 8.20$). As can be seen in Table 3.4 below, final results indicated a good fit with Satorra-Bentler Correction ($\chi^2(9)= 20.76$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 2.31$; SRMR=.02, RMSEA=.05; CFI= .98; TLI= .97). The path diagram of the scale was presented in Appendix H.

Table 3.4
Summary of the Satorra-Bentler Fit Indices for the CFS

Models	N	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
1 st Model	522	357.53(54)	6.62	.08	.10	.79	.70
2 nd Model (with item parceling)	522	20.76(9)	2.31	.02	.05	.98	.97

Standardized estimates of the scale fell between .58 and .74. Squared multiple correlations for each parcel were also calculated, and they were in a range between .34 and .55. Reliability analysis was also conducted, and Cronbach's alpha value was .82.

3.3.6. Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (MMEA)

The Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (MMEA) is a self-report measure that aims to assess the degree to which partners are emotionally/psychologically victimized or perpetrated in the past six months of their dating, cohabiting, and marital relationships (Murphy & Hoover, 1999). The scale consists of 56 items. Twenty-eight items for perpetration and 28 for victimization. Subscales of this measurement tool are restrictive engulfment (RE) (e.g., item 2, “Secretly searched through the other person’s belongings”; item 3, “Tried to stop the other person from seeing certain friends or family members”), hostile withdrawal (HW) (e.g., item 17, “Refused to have any

discussion of a problem”; item 20, “Sulked or refused to talk about an issue”), denigration (DEN) (e.g., item 12, “Called the other person a loser, failure, or similar term”; item 14, “Said that someone else would be a better partner”), and dominance/intimidation (DI) (e.g., item 22, “Became angry enough to frighten the other person”; item 26, “Threw, smashed, hit, or kicked something in front of the other person”). Items of the MMEA are rated on a 7rating type scale for the past six months (never, once, twice, 3-5 times, 6-10 times, 11-20 times, and more than 20 times) and an additional option (not in the past six months, but it has happened before).

Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu-Sümer and Murphy (2018) adapted the scale into Turkish. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for perpetration was found .89. The same value for victimization was calculated as .90 in the Turkish version of the scale. Participants can obtain scores between 0 and 42 for each subscale in each dimension. Also, a total score can be calculated and ranges from 0 to 168. Higher scores indicate higher rates of perpetration and victimization of emotional abuse. Each subscale of the Turkish version is correlated with the physical assault scale of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale, Experiences in Close Relationship Inventory, and Relationship Assessment Scale. Correlation coefficients varied between .02 and .50.

Two Confirmatory Factor Analyses were carried out separately for each dimension to assess the scale's validity for the sample of this study. The results of the CFA's are presented in separate sections.

3.3.6.1. Psychometric Properties of the MMEA-TR/Perpetration for the Present Study

Assumption Checking. There were eight univariate outliers for the RE, 13 univariate outliers for DEN, 17 univariate outliers for DI. Also, 26 multivariate outliers were detected in the Perpetration dimension of the MMEA-TR. After running three separate CFA's, results showed better fit indices in the data file which only the same cases in terms of univariate and multivariate outliers were deleted. Therefore, the sample size was reduced to 509 cases. Only ten items out of 28 were in the desired range for skewness and kurtosis, and normality tests showed significance. Also, visual

inspections of the histograms, Q-Q Plots, and Box Plots indicated non-normal distribution for half of the items. Therefore, the univariate normality assumption can be considered as violated. For multivariate normality, the value appears to be severely greater than 5 (c.r.= 326.17).

Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 results indicated a poor fit of the four-factor model to the sample data. Even though most of the values were in the desired range, CFI and TLI values were too low to consider this correction as a validated analysis ($\chi^2(344)=1548.69$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 4.50$; SRMR=.07, RMSEA=.08; CFI= .80; TLI= .73). Thus, Maximum Likelihood estimation and item parceling were favored. For the four-factor scale, two parcels were created with randomly selected three items in each and one item left for each subscale. Therefore, every factor contained three indicators. However, normality assessment could not be validated again (c.r.= 140.22). As can be seen in Table 3.5 below, final results indicated a good fit of MMEA-TR/Perpetration with Satorra-Bentler Correction ($\chi^2(48)= 155.81$, $p=.01$; $\chi^2/df= 3.24$; SRMR=.04, RMSEA=.06; CFI= .91; TLI= .93). The path diagram of the scale was presented in Appendix I.

Table 3.5
Summary of Satorra-Bentler Fit Indices for MMEA-TR/Perpetration

Models	N	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
1 st Model	509	1548.69(344)	4.50	.07	.08	.80	.73
2 nd Model (with item parceling)	509	155.81(48)	3.24	.04	.03	.91	.93

Standardized estimates of scale fell between .44 and .82 for RE, .56 and .74 for DEN, .73 and .83 for HW, and .54 and .78 for DI. Squared multiple correlations for each parcel and items were also calculated, and they were in the range between .20 and .68. Reliability analyses were also conducted for each subscale, and Cronbach's alpha value was .63 for Restrictive Engulfment, .66 for denigration, .76 for Hostile Withdrawal, and .66 for Dominance/Intimidation. Cronbach's alpha value for the total scale was .89.

3.3.6.2. Psychometric Properties of the MMEA-TR/Victimization for the Present Study

Assumption Checking. There was a total of 8 univariate outliers for RE, 14 outliers for DEN, 18 outliers for DI. Also, 29 multivariate outliers were detected in the Victimization dimension of the MMEA-TR. After running three separate CFA's, results showed better fit indices in the data file which all of the outliers were retained. Therefore, the sample size remained the same with 522 cases. Only 15 items out of 28 were in the desired range for skewness, and kurtosis values and normality tests show significance. Also, visual inspections of the histograms, Q-Q Plots, and Box Plots indicated non-normal distribution for all of the items. Therefore, the univariate normality assumption can be considered as violated. For multivariate normality, the value appears to be severely greater than 5 (c.r.= 278.64).

The Satorra-Bentler scaled χ^2 results indicated a poor fit of the four-factor model to the sample data. Even though most of the values were in the desired range, CFI and TLI values were too low to consider this correction as a validated analysis ($\chi^2(344)= 1710.09$ $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 4.97$; SRMR=.07, RMSEA=.08; CFI= .80; TLI= .81). Thus, two parcels were created with randomly selected three items for one parcel and the rest four items for the other parcel for each subscale. However, normality assessment could not be validated again (c.r.= 89.48). As can be seen in Table 3.6 below, final results indicated good fit of MMEA-TR/Perpetration with Satorra-Bentler Correction ($\chi^2(48)= 236.30$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 4.92$; SRMR=.02, RMSEA=.08; CFI= .94; TLI= .91. The path diagram of the scale was presented in Appendix J.

Table 3.6
Summary of the Satorra-Bentler Fit Indices for the MMEA-TR/Victimization

Models	N	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
1 st Model	522	1710.09(344)	4.97	.07	.08	.80	.81
2 nd Model (with item parceling)	522	236.30(48)	4.92	.02	.08	.94	.91

Standardized estimates of scale fall between .80 and .84 for RE, .81 and .90 for DEN, .89 and .90 for HW, and .83 and .94 for DI. Squared multiple correlations for each parcel were also calculated, and they were in the range between .65 and .90. Reliability analyses were also conducted for each subscale, and Cronbach's alpha value was .79 for Restrictive Engulfment, .80 for denigration, .86 for Hostile Withdrawal, and .84 for Dominance/Intimidation. Cronbach's alpha value for the total scale was .91.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Before the data collection procedure, approval from the Human Subject Ethics Committees of Middle East Technical University (METU) was granted (see Appendix K for the ethical permission).

Since the invisible minority status and the external and internal homophobia result in the oppression of sexually diverse identities, traditional random sampling and recruitment methods were not suitable for this research. Web-based recruitment would work best for all research studies working with sexual minorities (Turell, 2000). The web-based recruitment model has only a decade of history in social sciences and has some advantages regarding the sexual minority sample (Castillo, Mendoza & Poblete, 2011). Web-based recruitment allows participants to take part in the research anonymously. Online data collection was also preferred due to the pandemic. Thus, a survey instrument was created in Google Forms consisting of the abovementioned measurement tools and an informed consent form (see Appendix L). The survey instrument was circulated across the internet over social media both by the researcher and with the help of several non-governmental organizations working on LGBTI+ rights. It took about four months to gather data from the sample, as mentioned earlier. No identifying information was gathered regarding the confidentiality and the risk factor related to being an LGBTI+ individual. The survey instrument was taking approximately 20 minutes to complete.

3.5. Description of the Variables

In this section, description and operational definitions of the variables were given.

3.5.1. Exogenous Variables

Affectivity (positive and negative affect) and victimization in intimate relationships were included as exogenous variables in this study.

Affectivity was assessed by Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) as 20 items, 5-point Likert-type scale with two subscales (positive affect and negative affect). In this study, positive affect and negative affect subscales were used as separate exogenous variables. Scores obtained from the scales range from 10 to 50 for both positive affect and negative affect.

Victimization was assessed by MMEA-TR as 28 items, a 7-point Likert-type scale with four subscales (restrictive engulfment, denigration, hostile withdrawal, and dominance/intimidation). Victimization is one of the dimensions of the scale. In this study, victimization was used with a total score rather than using subscales as separate variables. Scores obtained from the scale range from 0 to 42 for each subscale. The total victimization score can be calculated with the sum of the subscales, ranging from 0 to 168.

3.5.2. Mediator Variables

Internalized Homophobia and Cognitive Flexibility were included as mediator variables in this study.

Internalized homophobia was assessed by the Internalized Homophobia Scale as ten items, 5-point Likert-type scale. The IHS is a unidimensional and single-factor structure measurement tool. In this study, internalized homophobia was used with a total score that ranged between 10 and 50.

Cognitive flexibility was assessed by the Cognitive Flexibility Scale as 12 items, 6-point Likert-type scale. The CFS is a unidimensional and single-factor structure measurement tool. In this study, cognitive flexibility was used with a total score ranged between 10 and 60.

3.5.3. Endogenous Variables

Perpetration in intimate relationships was included as the endogenous variable in this study.

Perpetration was assessed by the Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse as 28 items, 7-point Likert-type scale with four subscales (restrictive engulfment, denigration, hostile withdrawal, and dominance/intimidation). It is the other dimensions of the MMEA-TR. In this study, perpetration was used with a total score rather than using subscales as separate variables. Scores obtained from the scale range from 0 to 42 for each subscale. The total perpetration score can be calculated with the sum of the subscales, ranging from 0 to 168 (see Table 3.7 for the operational definitions of the study variables).

Table 3.7
Operational Definitions of the Study Variables

Variable	Scale	Description	Range
<i>Endogenous Variable</i>			
Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration	MMEA-TR	28 items; 7-point	Continuous; Min-Max=0-168
<i>Mediator Variables</i>			
Cognitive Flexibility	CFS	12 items; 6-point	Continuous; Min-Max=10-60
Internalized Homophobia	IHS	10 items; 5-point	Continuous; Min-Max=10-50
<i>Exogenous Variables</i>			
Positive Affect	PANAS	10 items; 5-point	Continuous; Min-Max=10-50
Negative Affect	PANAS	10 items; 5-point	Continuous; Min-Max=10-50
Psychological Dating Aggression Victimization	MMEA-TR	28 items; 7-point	Continuous; Min-Max=0-168

3.6. Data Analysis

The main purpose of this study was to test a model of psychological dating aggression perpetration in intimate relationships based on several theories, including social information processing, social learning, minority stress, normative creativity, and the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. For this main purpose, IBM SPSS AMOS 24 (Arbuckle, 2014) was used to examine this multi-theoretical approach and

relationships among dependent, independent, and mediator variables over path analysis. The second purpose was to reveal the prevalence rates of psychological aggression victimization and perpetration in dating relationships among LGB+ participants. IBM SPSS Statistics v25 (IBMCorp, 2017) was used to calculate the prevalence rates. The third purpose was to investigate group differences regarding sexual orientation for psychological dating aggression perpetration. For this purpose, IBM SPSS Statistics v25 (IBMCorp, 2017) was used to perform independent samples t-test for sexual orientation differences.

Path analysis is a statistical method to form a priori causal model with multivariate non-experimental data set (Wright, 1934). One reason to choose path analysis over regression analysis was that it is very well suitable for multiple mediation analysis and empirically proven to be useful for planning research on a theoretical basis (Barker et al., 2015). Secondly, structural equation modeling with a detailed measurement model and structural models are favored in many cases. However, path analysis is still a valid method of analysis that researchers are still using in educational and psychological research (e.g., Andersson & Risberg, 2019; Gökçearsan, Uluyol & Şahin, 2018; Khaddouma & Gordon, 2018; Kirk et al., 2019; Weiss et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2017; Yu & Levesque-Bristol, 2020). Thirdly, even though path analysis has some long-debated limitations concerning measurement and specification error, it still allows researchers to establish indirect effects, take correlations and covariances, and transform them into causal and noncausal components (decomposition of effect) (Maruyama, 1998). Finally, independent samples t-test was used to see the group differences. Taking previous literature as a basis, psychological dating aggression was examined to see if there are any significant sexual orientation differences. Since there were no equal frequency distribution in sexual orientation, gay and lesbian participants were merged under the category of homosexual to be able to make comparison with bi+sexual participants. The analysis included one dependent variable and one independent variable comprised of two comparison groups. Therefore, independent samples t-test was favored (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009).

3.7. Limitations of the Study

Following limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of this study.

Firstly, the sample size and the sample characteristics might not be quite suitable for a generalization since it is impossible to make estimations or predictions about the size of the population addressed in this study. Because official national census studies carried out by governmental organizations like the Turkish Statistical Institute (e.g., Social Structure and Gender Statistics and General Census of Population) and Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (e.g., Turkey Demographic and Health Survey and Survey on Population Structure in Turkey) do not gather information related to sexual orientation and gender is defined as binary and biological (i.e., male, female). Thus, an adequate determination of sample size was not possible.

Secondly, although the demographic information form asked for the city where participants live, the descriptive analysis showed that participation was made from 49 cities. Thus, even after converting them into regions, they were not equally distributed and were not enough for generalization in this way either.

Thirdly, even though online anonymous data collection is preferable when working with LGBTI+ individuals, instrument decay (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1994) may impose threats to internal validity and impacts the results. The participants' physical, cognitive, and emotional conditions were unknown and uncontrollable when they completed the survey. Even though the anonymous data collection has its own benefits when working with LGBTI+ samples, it also brings limitations regarding the data collection method. In this research, the data were collected entirely online. For this reason, controlling the data collection process was not possible.

Fourthly, history threats should be considered (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1994). Some significant and negative political events related to the LGBTI+ identities occurred at the time of data collection. Exposure to such negative events through daily news agencies and social media may have influenced the participants' views and responses. Second history threat, which may have an impact on participants' views and responses and needs consideration, is the pandemic.

Social desirability was another issue that can be considered as a limitation. It was not assessed in this study. Since the topic of this research concerns aggression, violent behaviors, and being a victim and expressing them, individuals may tend to respond to the questionnaires in a socially acceptable and politically correct way. Thus, evaluating the responses, whether they are socially desirable or not, through establishing a correlation was not possible for this study.

Lastly, common method variance should be considered to interpret the association between psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration. Common method variance refers to a possible false variation between constructs that can be resulting from the measurement (e.g., specific items, scales, and response format) rather than the actual relationships between them (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In this study, victimization and perpetration of psychological dating aggression were measured with the two dimensions of the same scale. Therefore, common method variance should be thought when interpreting the specific relationship between victimization and perpetration.

4. RESULTS

In this section, the results of the data analyses were explained. Results were divided into two as preliminary and primary. Preliminary analyses contain assumption checks for the path analysis, descriptive statistics, prevalence rates of psychological dating aggression perpetration and victimization, and sexual orientation differences. On the other hand, primary analyses include fit indices for model testing, results of individual paths, regression equations, and results of the direct and indirect effects. Then, hypothesis testing, and a summary of the results were presented, respectively.

4.1. Preliminary Analyses

In this section, assumptions of path analysis, descriptive statistics, results prevalence of psychological dating aggression and sexual orientation differences were presented.

4.1.1. Assumptions of the Path Analysis

The variables were controlled for missing data, univariate, and multivariate outliers before conducting the analyses. No missing data were detected in all the variables. Outlier cases were detected by taking Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommendations. Standardized z scores were calculated for univariate outliers, and values above the threshold of 3.29 ($p < .001$, two-tailed test) were treated as potential outlier scores. On the other hand, Mahalanobis distances were calculated, and values above the critical chi-square value ($p < .001$) were treated as potential multivariate outliers.

Univariate and Multivariate Outliers. No univariate outliers were detected for the Positive Affect (PA), Negative Affect (NA), and Cognitive Flexibility (CFS). However, there were nine univariate outliers for Internalized Homophobia (IHS; $3.44 \leq z \leq 5.58$), seven univariate outliers for Victimization dimension of Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (VIC; $3.64 \leq z \leq 4.56$), and 12 univariate outliers for Perpetration dimension of Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse (PER; $3.44 \leq z \leq 5.58$). Also, there were 15 multivariate outliers present.

Three different data files were created according to determine whether deleting the outlier cases is necessary. In the first data file, both univariate and multivariate outliers were not deleted (n=602). In the second data file, all outliers were deleted (n=574). Finally, all multivariate outliers were deleted in the third data file, and cases that were an outlier in every variable were detected and deleted (n=582). The data file in which all the outliers were deleted showed better fit indices than the other two. Thus, the decision was made to use the second data file, and the sample size was reduced to 574 for further analyses by deleting 28 cases.

After the missing data and outlier procedures, statistical assumptions were needed to check to run path analysis. According to Munro (2005), two lines of assumptions are necessary to control: the ones related to multiple regression and exclusive to path analysis. Therefore, univariate and multivariate normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were checked using IBM SPSS Statistics v25 and IBM SPSS AMOS 24 Program (Arbuckle, 2014; IBM Corp, 2017).

Univariate Normality assumption was checked by examining skewness and kurtosis values, Q-Q Plots, and Histograms. Kline (2011) suggested that skewness and kurtosis values that fall outside the range of -3 and +3 were regarded as signs of non-normality. On the other hand, visual assessments were made for histograms, Q-Q Plots, and Box Plots. Skewness and kurtosis values were presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Indices of Normality for Study Variables

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Positive Affect	.07	-.64
Negative Affect	.46	-.30
Internalized Homophobia	1.46	1.78
Cognitive Flexibility	-.34	-.31
Victimization	1.03	.77
Perpetration	1.13	1.20

The skewness and kurtosis values given in Table 4.1 were in the recommended range, and most were close to zero. This result suggests less variation in the data and a more normal distribution. Visual inspection showed that half of the histograms indicated normal distribution, and all the dots were close to the Q-Q plots' lines. Histograms of

Perpetration, Victimization, and Internalized Homophobia were positively skewed. If we take all the normality tests into account, it can be said that the univariate normality assumption is satisfied in this study.

For the multivariate normality, the procedure continued by running Mardia's tests. According to Bentler (2005) and Byrne (2010), skewness and kurtosis values greater than 5 indicate non-normality. The multivariate kurtosis value (Mardia's coefficient) was found as 6.21, slightly greater than the cut-off value. Finney and DiStefano (2006) state that in moderately non-normal samples (kurtosis < 7), ML estimation can still be chosen and is fairly robust.

For Multicollinearity assumption, Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were explored to test this assumption. According to Menard (2002), tolerance values should be greater than .20, and Field (2009) states that VIF values should be less than 3. After examining the collinearity coefficients separately by taking all of the study variables as dependent variables in the analyses, results showed that tolerance values were in the range of .34 and .98 while VIF values were in the range from 1.02 to 2.97. Therefore, it can be said that there is no violation of the multicollinearity assumption.

Linearity assumption was checked by creating and visually examining scatterplots of all study variables. As seen in Figure 4.1, most scatterplots were not oval, implying nonlinearity. Therefore, this assumption can be considered as violated.

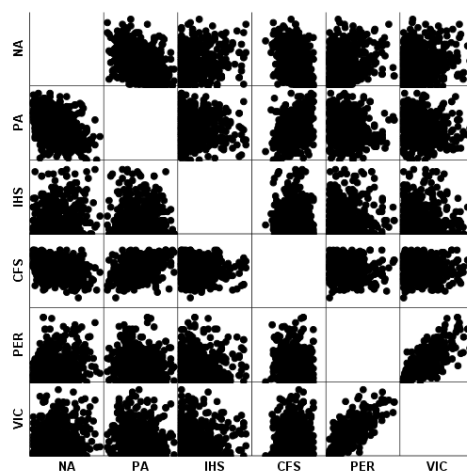


Figure 4.1. Scatterplot matrix of all variables in the study

Homoscedasticity assumption was also checked by creating and visually examining scatterplots of predicted values and residuals. As can be seen in Figure 4.2, the scatterplot did not show any pattern. It can be said that the assumption of homoscedasticity is satisfied.

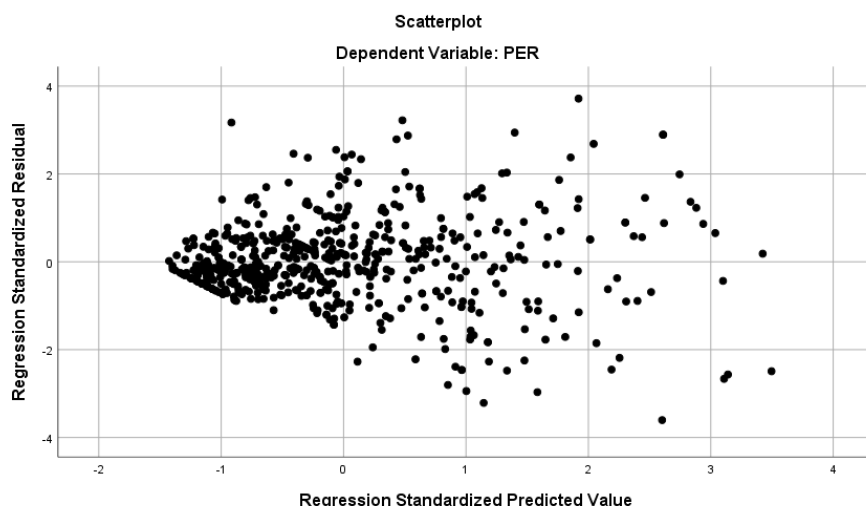


Figure 4.2. Scatter plot of predicted values and residuals

4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics

4.1.2.1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations

Possible and actual ranges, means, standard deviations of the study variables, and intercorrelations between each variable are presented in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

Table 4.2

Possible and Actual Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations

Variables	Possible Range	Actual Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Psychological Aggression				
Perpetration	0-168	0-125	29.57	23.98
Restrictive Engulfment	0-42	0-38	8.19	7.92
Denigration	0-42	0-37	4.05	6.34
Hostile Withdrawal	0-42	0-42	13.58	10.41
Dominance/Intimidation	0-42	0-36	3.91	6.51

Table 4.2. (cont'd)

Variables	Possible Range	Actual Range	M	SD
Psychological Aggression				
Victimization	0-168	0-139	34.64	28.49
Restrictive Engulfment	0-42	0-42	9.95	9.55
Denigration	0-42	0-40	5.26	7.42
Hostile Withdrawal	0-42	0-42	14.98	11.90
Dominance/Intimidation	0-42	0-38	4.58	7.34
Internalized Homophobia	10-50	10-39	15.70	6.47
Cognitive Flexibility	10-60	29-60	55.48	8.18
Positive Affect	10-50	10-50	29.54	8.31
Negative Affect	10-50	10-50	23.56	8.37

Note. $N=522$.

The table above shows that while the possible score ranges that participants can obtain from psychological dating aggression perpetration is from 0 to 168, they scored between 0 and 125. Also, the mean scores of Perpetration levels of participants were found 29.57 ($SD = 23.98$). It means that perpetration levels were low considering the possible and actual ranges. Similarly, the possible range for psychological aggression victimization is from 0 to 168. However, it was found 0 to 139 in this study. The mean score of Victimization levels was 34.64 ($SD = 28.49$), which indicates that victimization levels of participants were also low regarding the given ranges. Regarding the types of aggression perpetration and victimization, it can be said that the highest mean score for perpetration was hostile withdrawal ($M=13.58$, $SD=10.41$), followed by restrictive engulfment ($M=8.19$, $SD=7.92$), denigration ($M=4.05$, $SD=6.34$), and dominance/intimidation ($M=3.91$, $SD=6.51$). Therefore, it can be said that means were low for both their possible and actual ranges. The same comment can be made for victimization as well. The highest mean score belonged to the hostile withdrawal type ($M=14.98$, $SD=11.90$), followed by restrictive engulfment ($M=9.95$, $SD=9.55$), denigration ($M=5.26$, $SD=7.42$), and dominance/intimidation ($M=4.58$, $SD=7.34$).

In the other variables of this study, actual ranges of positive and negative affect were found as the same as the possible ranges. The mean score of Positive Affect was found as 29.54 ($SD = 8.31$), and the mean score of Negative Affect was 23.56 ($SD = 8.37$).

While both positive and negative affect scores were average, it is seen that the mean score of positive affect was higher by a narrow margin than negative affect.

The possible range for internalized homophobia was between 10 and 50, but the actual range found in this study was from 10 to 39. The mean score of Internalized Homophobia was 15.70 ($SD = 6.47$), indicating that internalized homophobia levels were quite low according to the possible ranges but can be considered as average for the actual ranges. Lastly, actual (29-60) and possible ranges (10-60) were also different for cognitive flexibility. The mean of Cognitive Flexibility was 55.48 ($SD = 8.18$), indicating that cognitive flexibility levels of participants were high for both actual and possible ranges.

Table 4.3
Intercorrelations Between Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological Aggression Perpetration	-					
2. Psychological Aggression Victimization	.81**	-				
3. Internalized Homophobia	.10*	.03	-			
4. Cognitive Flexibility	-.13**	-.07	-.10*	-		
5. Positive Affect	-.17**	-.14**	-.04	.42**	-	
6. Negative Affect	.20**	.20**	.23**	-.35**	-.37**	-

Note. $N=522$. ** $p < .01$., * $p < .05$

Bivariate correlations resulted in several patterns, as can be seen in Table 4.3. Mostly significant and theoretically expected correlations were found. However, some correlations were not significant as opposed to the theoretical and previous empirical findings.

Consistent with the theoretical expectations, perpetrating behaviors were strongly, positively, and significantly correlated with victimization ($r = .81$, $p = .00$). It means that the higher level of victimization is related to the higher level of perpetrating behaviors. Also, a low but significant and positive correlation between negative affect and perpetration ($r = .20$, $p = .00$) was found. As the negative affectivity increases, so does the perpetration. On the other hand, a low, negative, and significant correlation

was found between perpetration and positive affect ($r = -.17, p = .00$). As expected, a decrease in positive affect results in higher levels of perpetrating behaviors. Cognitive flexibility and perpetration were also demonstrated a theoretically expected relationship. Low but significant and negative correlation ($r = -.13, p = .00$) indicated that the higher the level of perpetration, the lower the level of cognitive flexibility. Similarly, a low but positive and significant correlation between perpetration and internalized homophobia ($r = .10, p = .02$) was found. It means that increased internalized homophobia levels were related to increased perpetration levels.

The other statistically significant findings were also in line with the theory and previous empirical findings. Negative affect and positive affect were moderately and negatively associated ($r = -.37, p = .00$). Meaning that higher degrees of negative feelings are related to lower degrees of positive feelings. Low but significant results between negative affect and internalized homophobia indicated a positive correlation ($r = .23, p = .00$). The homophobic feelings towards oneself increase as the negative feelings increase. Cognitive flexibility also negatively correlated with negative affect ($r = -.35, p \leq .00$) and positively correlated with positive affect ($r = .42, p = .00$). The level of cognitive flexibility skills is related to positive and negative emotions. Significant but low correlation was also found between cognitive flexibility and internalized homophobia ($r = -.10, p = .02$). As the degree of homophobic feelings towards oneself increases, the level of cognitive flexibility skills decreases. Victimization also showed low but significant correlations with positive ($r = -.14, p = .00$) and negative affect ($r = .20, p = .00$). As the victimization level increases, the positive affect scores decrease, and the negative affect scores increase.

Inconsistent with the theoretical expectations and previous empirical findings, some correlations were not significant. There was no significant correlation between victimization and cognitive flexibility ($r = -.07, p = .10$) and internalized homophobia ($r = .03, p = .43$).

4.1.2.2. Prevalence of Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration and Victimization

Regarding the first research question of the study, the prevalence of psychological dating aggression perpetration, victimization, and their types was also examined. 7-point Likert-type scale was dichotomized as 0 and 1, indicating no and yes. The category “yes” included at least one act of psychological dating aggression perpetration or being victimized from an act of psychological dating aggression. Table 4.4 summarizes the prevalence of psychological dating aggression perpetration, victimization, and their types.

Table 4.4
Percentages of Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration, Victimization, and Their Types

	Yes*		No	
	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>f (%)</i>	<i>N</i>
Aggression Perpetration	88	505	12.0	69
Restrictive Engulfment	75.6	434	24.4	140
Denigration	51.4	295	48.6	279
Hostile Withdrawal	83.3	478	16.7	96
Dominance/Intimidation	44.1	253	55.9	321
Aggression Victimization	87.8	504	12.2	70
Restrictive Engulfment	75.6	434	24.4	140
Denigration	53.1	305	46.9	269
Hostile Withdrawal	83.3	478	16.7	96
Dominance/Intimidation	47.7	274	52.3	300

Note. Total *N*=522. *A dichotomous 0/1 scoring was created for the prevalence. In this regard, category 7 (not in the past year but did happen before) was coded as 0 as suggested by the author of the scale because the present research is concerned with perpetration and victimization in the past six months rather than lifelong. Yes means that psychological aggression perpetration or victimization occurred at least one time in the past six months.

As can be seen from the table above, the prevalence of psychological dating aggression perpetration is high as 88% (*N*=505), and the victimization rate is similar with the frequency of 87.8% (*N*=504). Among the types of psychological aggression perpetration, the majority of the participants (*N*=478) reported hostile withdrawal (83.3%), 434 participants reported restrictive engulfment (75.6%), 295 participants reported denigration (51.4%), and 253 participants reported dominance/intimidation (44.1%). Therefore, it can be said that the most common type of perpetration was found to be hostile withdrawal for the sample of this study, meaning that psychological aggression presents itself in the form of withholding oneself from emotional

availability. The second most common type of perpetration was restrictive engulfment. Controlling and delimitative behaviors are the characteristics of this type of aggression, and the statistics show that it is widely used. Third and the last common types were denigration and dominance, and intimidation, respectively. Almost half of the participants reported humiliating and belittling behaviors and establishing hegemony by threatening and intimidating their partners.

Types of victimizations are similar to perpetration. For example, 478 participants reported victimization by hostile withdrawal (83.3%), 434 participants reported restrictive engulfment (75.6%), 305 participants reported denigration (53.1%), and 274 of them reported dominance/intimidation (47.7%).

4.1.2.3. Sexual Orientation Differences Regarding Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration

Regarding the second research question, with the support of the previous empirical evidence, psychological dating aggression perpetration (Gonzalez-Guarda, De Santis & Vasquez, 2013; Harland, Peek-Asa & Saftlas, 2021; Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş & Jessen, 2021; Whitfield et al., 2021) was examined for sexual orientation differences.

Sexual orientation was taken as an independent variable, and psychological dating aggression was the dependent variable. An independent samples t-test was conducted to see the differences between groups to answer the second research question. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) stated, comparing groups with such frequency distribution differences would mislead the homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and the assumption becomes untestable. Therefore, gay and lesbian participants were merged under the category of homosexual ($N= 308$) just for this analysis to make comparison groups similar in their frequency distributions. Sexual orientation was taken as the independent variable, and psychological dating aggression, was taken as dependent variable. Independent samples t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between homosexuals ($M= 30.12$, $SD= 25.70$) and bi+sexuals ($M= 29.75$, $SD= 21.33$) regarding psychological dating aggression perpetration ($t(537)= .18$, $p= .86$).

4.2. Primary Analyses

In this section, results and the path analysis, individuals paths, relationships among variables were presented.

4.2.1. Path Analysis for Model Testing

In this study, the model was constructed as recursive to answer the third research question and test hypotheses 1 through 9. Fit statistics were presented in the following section.

4.2.1.1. Results of the Fit Statistics

Table 4.5 below summarizes the fit statistics obtained from the path analysis.

Table 4.5
Summary of Fit Statistics for the Proposed Model

Models	N	$\chi^2(df)$	χ^2/df	SRMR	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	TLI
Proposed Model	522	26.9(5)	5.38	.04	.08	.98	.97	.92

Note. SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; RMSEA: Root mean Square Error of Approximation; GFI: Goodness of Fit Index CFI: The Bentler Comparative Fit Index; TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index

For the interpretation of the fit statistics, commonly used model criteria were chosen, namely, Model Chi-Square (χ^2) and Normed Chi-Square (χ^2/df), Mean Square of Error Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), The Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). χ^2/df should be below the threshold of 3 or 5 (Kline, 2015). SRMR values and RMSEA values below .08 indicate a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). GFI should be greater than .90 to mention a good fit (Kelloway, 1998), whereas CFI and TLI values should be greater than .95 points to a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The results presented a controversial but acceptable fit. ($\chi^2(5)= 26.9$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/df= 5.38$; SRMR=.04, RMSEA=.08; GFI= .98; CFI= .97; TLI= .92). Hence, the results indicated a good fit to the data.

4.2.1.2. Results of Individual Paths

The results indicated that five of the paths (out of seven) were statistically significant. Figure 4.3 below presents the path model with beta weights (standardized regression coefficients). In the model, solid lines are used to indicate significant paths, and dashed lines are used to indicate non-significant paths.

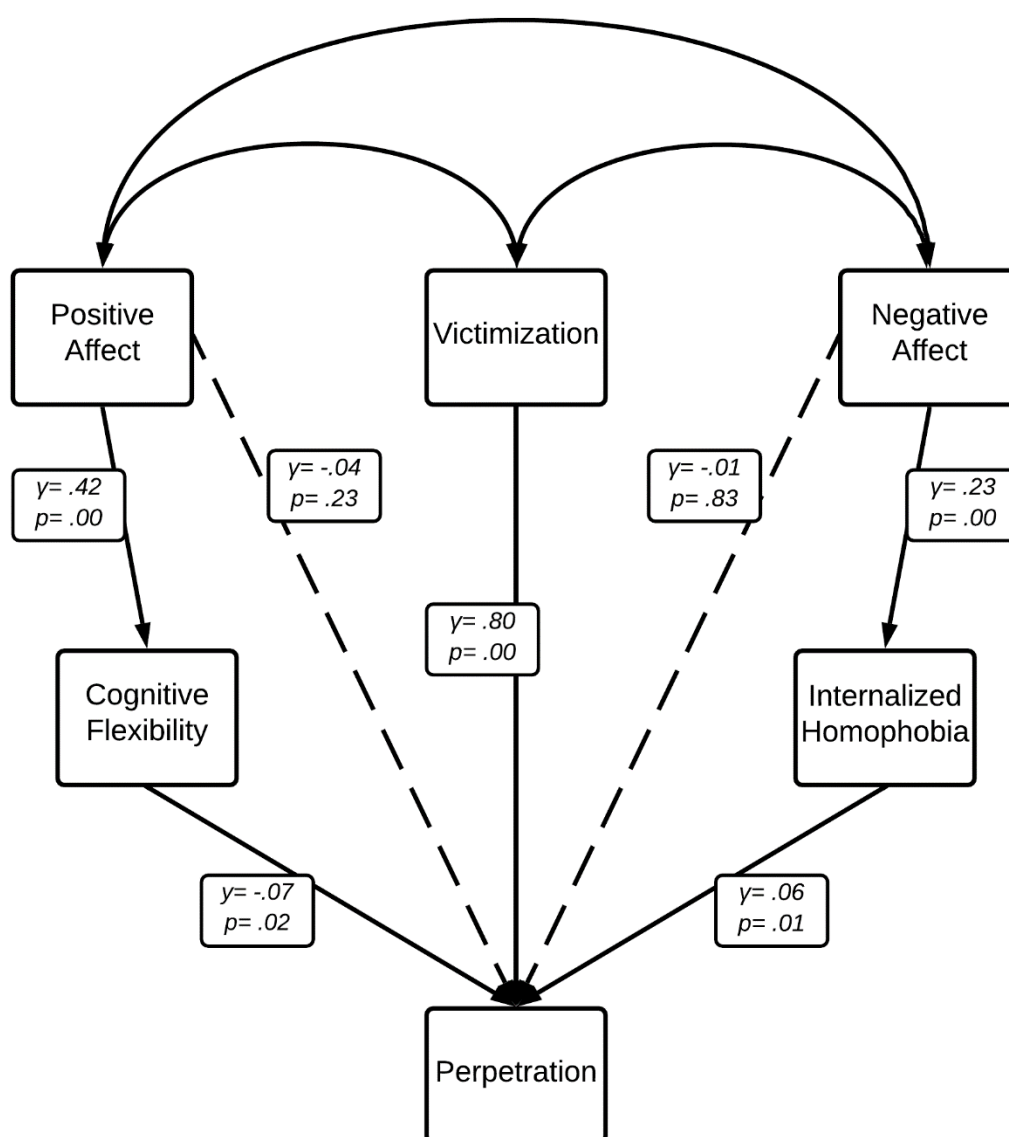


Figure 4.3. Standardized Path Coefficients for the Hypothesized Model

Double-headed arrows were used to indicate the correlation between exogenous variables in Figure 4.3 above. Correlational coefficients were calculated for each of

the relationships. Consistent with the previous empirical findings, results revealed that negative affect and victimization were positively ($r = .20$, $n = 522$, $p < .01$); positive affect and victimization were negatively ($r = -.14$, $n = 522$, $p < .01$), and positive affect and negative affect were negatively ($r = -.37$, $n = 522$, $p < .01$) associated. All the correlational relationships were statistically significant. On the other hand, single-headed arrows were used to indicate the direction of the relationships between variables. The values on them were the standardized regression coefficients (γ), indicating the strength of the relationships. There is no cut-off value to interpret the individual paths. However, Cohen (1988) and Kline (2015) suggest that if a γ value is less than .10, it can be considered a small effect; close to .25 can mean medium effect, equal to or greater than .40 large effect.

4.2.1.3. Squared Multiple Correlations

Squared Multiple Correlations (R^2) were shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Squared Multiple Correlation Coefficients (R^2) for the Proposed Model

Variable	R^2
Perpetration	.67
Cognitive Flexibility	.18
Internalized Homophobia	.05

As seen in Table 4.6 above, cognitive flexibility, internalized homophobia, negative affect, positive affect, and victimization predicted perpetration. Five of them explained 67% of the total variance in perpetration. Cognitive flexibility was predicted by the positive affect, and the prediction explained 18% of the total variance in cognitive flexibility. Also, negative affect predicted internalized homophobia. It explained 5% of the total variance in internalized homophobia.

4.2.1.4. Direct and Indirect Associations

Haukoos and Lewis (2005) state that bootstrapping is a technique of resampling from the initial data to estimate standard error and create confidence intervals for direct, indirect, and total effects between variables. It is also recommended to test indirect effects by bootstrapping technique to get more accurate results (Cope, Harju, &

Wuensch, 2000). Hence, bootstrap was used to examine direct and indirect relationships (the number of bootstrap samples was set as 1000, and bias-corrected confidence intervals were set as %95). Results of all types of effects can be seen in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7

Bootstrapped Results of Standardized Total, Indirect, and Direct Estimates

Paths	β	p	BC Interval
Internalized Homophobia → Perpetration			
Total	.06	.012	(.018, .111)
Direct	.06	.012	(.018, .111)
Indirect	-		
Cognitive Flexibility → Perpetration			
Total	-.07	.019	(-.115, -.008)
Direct	-.07	.019	(-.115, -.008)
Indirect	-		
Positive Affect → Cognitive Flexibility			
Total	.42	.001	(.344, .493)
Direct	.42	.001	(.344, .493)
Indirect	-		
Positive Affect → Perpetration			
Total	-.06	Ns	(-.110, -.016)
Direct	-.04	Ns	(-.083, .014)
Indirect	-.03	.017	(-.051, .011)
Negative Affect → Internalized Homophobia			
Total	.23	.001	(.139, .307)
Direct	.23	.001	(.139, .307)
Indirect	-		
Negative Affect → Perpetration			
Total	.00	Ns	(-.039, .061)
Direct	.00	Ns	(-.055, .046)
Indirect	.01	.009	(-.004, .028)
Victimization → Perpetration			
Total	.80	.001	(.757, .835)
Direct	.80	.001	(.757, .835)
Indirect	-		

4.2.1.5. Relationships Among Endogenous Variables

Results of the path analysis indicated that internalized homophobia was significantly associated ($\gamma = .06$, $p < .05$) with perpetration. Cognitive flexibility was also significantly associated ($\gamma = -.07$, $p < .05$) with perpetration. Those results can mean that greater levels of internalized homophobia may lead to greater level of perpetration.

Also, greater levels of cognitive flexibility may lead to lower levels of perpetration. For clarity, these paths are illustrated below.

Internalized Homophobia → Perpetration (Direct Effect)

Cognitive Flexibility → Perpetration (Direct Effect)

4.2.1.6. Relationship Among Positive Affect and Endogenous Variables

Results of the path analysis indicated that positive affect was significantly associated ($\gamma = .42, p < .01$) with cognitive flexibility. In addition, positive affect had also significant and indirect ($\gamma = -.03, p < .05$) association with perpetration. However, results indicated no significant association ($\gamma = -.04, p = .16$) between positive affect and perpetration. It can be said that greater positive feelings may lead to greater cognitive flexibility skills. Also, greater positive feelings may be related to less perpetrating behaviors through increased cognitive flexibility skills. Results showed that cognitive flexibility fully mediated the relationship between positive affect and perpetration since the association between positive affect and perpetration was not significant. Only an indirect relationship through cognitive flexibility was established. Reported relationships are illustrated below as well.

Positive Affect → Cognitive Flexibility (Direct Effect)

Positive Affect → Perpetration (Direct Effect, Ns)

Positive Affect → Perpetration (Indirect Effect, Full Mediation)

4.2.1.7. Relationship Among Negative Affect and Endogenous Variables

Negative affect was found to be a significant exogenous variable in predicting internalized homophobia. Results of the path analysis indicated that negative affect was significantly associated ($\gamma = .23, p < .01$) with internalized homophobia. It was also found that negative affect had a significant and indirect association ($\gamma = .01, p < .01$) with perpetration. However, negative affect did not significantly and directly predict ($\gamma = .00, p = .86$) perpetration. It can be said that increased negative emotions may link to increased internalized homophobia. Those results revealed that internalized

homophobia fully mediated the relationship between negative affect and perpetration since there was no association between negative affect and perpetration, and only an indirect relationship could be established through internalized homophobia. Reported relationships are illustrated below.

Negative Affect → Internalized Homophobia (Direct Effect)

Negative Affect → Perpetration (Direct Effect, *Ns*)

Negative Affect → Perpetration (Indirect Effect, Full Mediation)

4.2.1.8. Relationship Among Victimization and Endogenous Variables

Results of the path analysis indicated that victimization was significantly associated ($\gamma = .80, p < .01$) with perpetration, meaning that higher levels of victimization may lead to higher levels of perpetration.

Victimization → Perpetration (Direct Effect)

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Among 9 hypotheses, results supported 7 of them, while 2 of them were not supported. Supported hypotheses are shown with a “tick” sign.

✓ *Hypothesis 1:* The null hypothesis was rejected; Hypothesis 1 was accepted. A significant positive direct effect of Positive Affect on Cognitive Flexibility was found ($\gamma = .42, p < .01$).

Hypothesis 2: The null hypothesis was accepted; Hypothesis 2 was rejected. There was no significant direct effect of Positive Affect on Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration ($\gamma = -.04, p = .16$).

✓ *Hypothesis 3:* The null hypothesis was rejected; Hypothesis 3 was accepted. A significant positive direct effect of Psychological Dating Aggression Victimization on Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration was found ($\gamma = .80, p < .01$).

Hypothesis 4: The null hypothesis was accepted; Hypothesis 4 was rejected. There was no significant direct effect of Negative Affect on Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration ($\gamma = .00, p = .86$).

✓ *Hypothesis 5:* The null hypothesis was rejected; Hypothesis 5 was accepted. A significant positive direct effect of Negative Affect on Internalized Homophobia was found ($\gamma = .23, p < .01$).

✓ *Hypothesis 6:* The null hypothesis was rejected; Hypothesis 6 was accepted. A significant positive direct effect of Internalized Homophobia on Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration was found ($\gamma = .06, p < .05$).

✓ *Hypothesis 7:* The null hypothesis was rejected; Hypothesis 7 was accepted. A significant negative direct effect of Cognitive Flexibility on Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration was found ($\gamma = -.07, p < .05$).

✓ *Hypothesis 8:* The null hypothesis was rejected; Hypothesis 8 was accepted. Internalized Homophobia fully mediated the relationship between Negative Affect and Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration ($\gamma = .01, p < .01$).

✓ *Hypothesis 9:* The null hypothesis was rejected; Hypothesis 9 was accepted. Cognitive Flexibility fully mediated the relationship between Positive Affect and Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration ($\gamma = -.03, p < .05$).

4.4. Summary of the Results

First of all, preliminary analyses were conducted. Assumptions of path analysis were checked and satisfied. Means, standard deviations, possible and actual ranges, and correlations were calculated and presented. Bivariate correlations showed that most of the study variables are significantly related to each other. Also, the prevalence of psychological dating aggression perpetration and victimization were presented. Prevalence rates showed that perpetration and victimization rates are quite high in the sample of this study. Also, the most common type of psychological dating aggression was hostile withdrawal, followed by restrictive engulfment, denigration, and

dominance/intimidation, respectively. Furthermore, sexual orientation differences regarding psychological dating aggression perpetration were checked by conducting independent samples t-test. Results showed that psychological dating aggression perpetration did not significantly differ for sexual orientation.

Secondly, analyses were conducted to test the hypothesized path model. Fit indices showed that the hypothesized model has an acceptable fit over the sample of this study. Correlations between exogenous variables were significant, and five individual paths out of seven were found statistically significant. Paths from positive affect and negative affect to psychological dating aggression perpetration were not statistically significant. On the other hand, cognitive flexibility fully mediated the relationship between positive affect and aggression perpetration. Similarly, internalized homophobia fully mediated the relationship between negative affect and aggression perpetration. After the examination of individual paths, the hypotheses of the study were examined. Results supported seven of the hypotheses out of nine.

5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECCOMENDATIONS

Discussion of the findings was presented in this chapter. In the first section, a discussion regarding the prevalence of psychological dating aggression perpetration and victimization was presented. Later, a discussion on the sexual orientation differences was given. After the sexual orientation differences, a discussion regarding the hypothesized model and specific hypotheses were presented. Finally, implications for theory, research, and practice were given out of the results of this study. In the last part, recommendations were given to future research studies.

5.1. Discussion of the Findings

In this section, findings related to the prevalence of psychological dating aggression, sexual orientation difference regarding aggression perpetration and the hypothesized model are discussed.

5.1.1. Prevalence of Psychological Dating Aggression

The prevalence of psychological dating aggression perpetration and victimization was one of the important findings of this study. In this study, participants rated the multidimensional measure of emotional abuse differently according to their relationship status. For example, participants who stated that they are currently in a relationship rated the items based on their recent experiences. On the other hand, participants who stated that they are not currently in a relationship rated the items based on the experiences in their previous relationships. Thus, composite prevalence rates were calculated for perpetration, victimization, and their types, considering those two types of relationship status.

Results indicated that prevalence rates were alarming for the sample of this study. Unfortunately, 88% of the sample consisting of lesbian, gay, and bi+sexual individuals reported at least one act of psychological dating aggression perpetration. Furthermore, most participants (83.3%) reported using hostile withdrawal as a form of aggression perpetration, meaning that presenting themselves as emotionally unavailable was their strategy to deal with relationship problems. To further elaborate, emotional

unavailability is just a term to cover some specific behaviors such as being cold and distant, rejecting a discussion on a given problem, and denying the existence of a problem. Overall and McNulty (2017) stated that direct and indirect cooperation during conflicting situations are the most beneficial types of communication for many reasons, including softening the conflict, reaching to reasoning on the problem, and outlining the possible causes and consequences of the problem so that the partners can resolve it. A withholding attitude is surely pushing intimate partners away from resolution. The second most common type of dating aggression perpetration was restrictive engulfment, with a prevalence rate of 75.6%. It was found out that the second most common type of violence showed itself with controlling behaviors such as suspiciously questioning partners' actions, sneaking on their belongings, complaining over their individual and independent social times, and putting restrictive rules on their lives. In collectivist cultures, restrictive behaviors can be seen as a form of love and affection since they can be perceived as a form of romantic jealousy. Turkish society is in a transition period where both individualistic and collectivist characteristics can be observed (Demir & Aydın, 1995). Thus, the prevalence of restrictive engulfment says that the sample might have reflected a collectivist characteristic.

The prevalence rates of the other types of psychological dating aggression perpetration were quite low compared to hostile withdrawal and restrictive engulfment. For example, 51.4% of the sample reported denigration, and 44.1% reported dominance/intimidation. Only two studies in the Turkish literature provide prevalence rates of psychological dating aggression among sexual minority individuals, and both reported rates only for lesbian and bisexual women. The most current one was conducted by Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş, and Jessen (2021). Their findings stated that 75.3% of the participants reported restrictive engulfment, 48.7% reported denigration, 96.1% reported hostile withdrawal, and 56.8% reported dominance/intimidation. The prevalence rates of this study are somewhat similar to their findings. However, a slight increase in using restrictive engulfment and denigration and a decrease in using hostile withdrawal and dominance/intimidation was obtained.

Moreover, victimization rates were pretty similar to the perpetration rates in the present study. Participants reported 87.8% victimization. Also, 75.6% reported being victimized from restrictive engulfment, 53.1% denigration, 83.3% hostile withdrawal, and 47.7% dominance/intimidation. Victimization rates are much higher than the current study conducted by Ayhan Balık and Bilgin (2019) on the minority stress experiences and intimate partner violence among lesbian women in Turkey. They reported that 63.1% of their participants were victimized by psychological aggression, but current study victimization rates were higher. In addition to Turkish literature, this study also revealed higher victimization rates when compared to the latest study conducted with sexual minority sample. In the study conducted by Swan and colleagues (2019), 54.5% of the sample (99 self-identified LGBT individuals) reported psychological aggression victimization. This study reported 33.3% higher rates of victimization. Same study also reported perpetration rates (Swan et al., 2019). Similar to victimization, perpetration rates were much higher in the current study than the latest study conducted with LGBT individuals. Swan and colleagues (2019) found out that 53.5% of the sample reported perpetration whereas the same rate was 88% in this study.

The mean scores of the psychological dating aggression variables were also calculated. The highest mean score belonged to hostile withdrawal perpetration (13.58) and victimization (14.98). The second highest mean score was restrictive engulfment for both perpetration (8.19) and victimization (9.95), followed by denigration (4.05 for perpetration; 5.26 for victimization) and dominance/intimidation (3.91 for perpetration; 4.58 for victimization). Similar to the comparison of prevalence rates, means were slightly higher for all the aggression perpetration types compared to the findings of the study (12.71 for hostile withdrawal; 4.24 for restrictive engulfment; 2.55 for denigration; 2.56 for dominance/intimidation) conducted by Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş, and Jessen (2021).

5.1.2. Sexual Orientation Differences Regarding Psychological Dating Aggression Perpetration

To answer research question 2, sexual orientation differences were examined regarding psychological dating aggression perpetration. Thus, independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the differences between homosexual (gay and lesbian) and bi+sexual individuals regarding psychological dating aggression perpetration. However, no sexual orientation difference was found regarding psychological dating aggression perpetration in the present study. Results contradicted with many studies stating that there is a significant difference between gay and lesbian and bi+sexual individuals regarding aggression perpetration (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Gonzalez-Guarda, De Santis & Vasquez, 2013; Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş & Jessen, 2021; Whitfield et al., 2021; Harland, Peek-Asa & Saftlas, 2021). For example, in one of the first studies that examined the abovementioned difference, Balsam and Szymanski (2005) reported a significant difference between bisexual (46.2%) and homosexual (15.2%) individuals in sexual minority related psychological IPV. Similarly, in the most recent study, Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş, and Jessen (2021) found out that bisexual women scored significantly higher in all types of psychological aggression perpetration up to 12%, except for dominance/intimidation. Considering the previous research findings, a possible difference in aggression perpetration was expected, but no difference was found in this study. One possible explanation could be that previous studies examined the differences for not only LGBTI+ individuals but also heterosexuals in contrast to this study. Meaning that previously found statistically significant differences might result from the nature of the comparison groups, including heterosexuals.

5.1.3. The Hypothesized Model and Specific Hypotheses

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the possible predictors of psychological dating aggression perpetration in the romantic relationships of LGB+ individuals. In this study, predictors were selected according to two points of consideration. Firstly, the model hypothesized not just to state problems but also some preventive and protective factors. Thus, the model was created by taking positive

affect and cognitive flexibility as protective and aggression victimization, negative affect, and internalized homophobia as risk factors. Path analysis, a special form of structural equation modeling, was used to test the described model, and results were presented in the fourth chapter.

Previous literature showed that those protective and risk factors identified for psychological dating aggression perpetration were in a relationship with each other, and empirical evidence and theoretical explanations are firm. However, no research study examining those factors as a whole in a conceptual model has been found neither in international nor Turkish literature. In addition to the study variables, psychological dating aggression literature in Turkey is just growing, and a limited number of studies taking LGBTI+ individuals as the sample have been found. Specifically, two research studies have been conducted yet. This situation made it difficult to make a solid comparison of the findings of this study to the previous ones. For example, the current study is the first to broaden its sample regarding sexual orientation by including gay, lesbian, and bi+sexual individuals. The hypothesized model accounted for 5%, 18%, and 67% of the variance in internalized homophobia, cognitive flexibility, and psychological dating aggression, respectively.

The findings also supported the theoretical explanations regarding affectivity, cognitive flexibility, internalized homophobia, and psychological dating aggression perpetration. In this study, internalized homophobia fully mediated the relationship between negative affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration. Also, cognitive flexibility fully mediated the relationship between positive affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration. Through a minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) lenses, it can be said that internalized homophobia is a significant factor affecting the use of psychological dating aggression among the sample of LGB+ individuals. Unfortunately, perceived prejudice, stigma, and discrimination contribute to the development of negative sexual identity development, meaning that LGB+ individuals discover their identity and orientation under the pressure of labeling them as “wrong.” The constant pressure against sexual minority identities, naturally, causes the internalization of these negative beliefs. Internalization can find itself a place by creating a cognitive dissonance between wanting and having non-heterosexual

relationships and thinking that it is wrong (Cooper, 2007). From a normative creativity (Brown, 1989) perspective, it can be said that cognitive flexibility is a preventive and protective factor that significantly decreases the use of psychological dating aggression. The basic premise of normative creativity is that cognitive flexibility is a very crucial skill for LGBTI+ individuals to create and maintain their safe spaces, their own norms to live their lives and sustain their relationships in the absence of a positive role model in the heterosexist and heteronormative society. Creating flexible and realistic rules and routines containing equality and respect in the relationship to prevent possible aggressive expressions is also a goal for spontaneous flexibility since the spontaneous flexibility skill is highly related to modifying planned behaviors and plans considering the changing nature of social relations (Rende, 2000).

Furthermore, the present study findings are also significant from the social learning theory perspective by indicating a relationship between victimization and perpetration. Aggression expression, just like any other behavior, can be learned inside and outside of the romantic relationship. The significant and strong direct path from victimization to perpetration can be considered as evidence to this assumption. Moreover, two other theories' assumptions related to the conceptual model of this study (i.e., social information processing and the general affective aggression model) appear to be supported. Firstly, social information processing theory (Crick & Dodge, 1994) posits that eliciting conditions, such as aggression victimization influences emotions, and negative emotions may increase. Negative affect, victimization, and background variables, such as discrimination, homophobia, and internalized homophobia, together may influence the cognitive processes. Cognitive processes, in this case, are highly related to and dependent on cognitive flexibility skills. Depending on the level of cognitive flexibility skill, aggressive behaviors may or may not occur. Thus, it can be said that the present conceptual model and the relationships between variables have a good fit to clarify the steps in social information processing theory.

Secondly, the main premise of the general affective aggression model (Lindsay & Anderson, 2000) indicates the cyclical relationship between affect, cognition, and arousal, in which external situational and individual variables may activate. Then, the cyclical relationship can start with the appraisal process where individuals decide

whether they will express aggressive behaviors based on the interpretation of individual and situational variables and affective components. Considering that aggression victimization is a situational variable, and it is in a significant relationship with negative affect, aggression perpetration may occur because of this relationship. Furthermore, considering the general affective aggression model, the role of internalized homophobia is unique. External homophobia and perceived discrimination present themselves as a situational variable, and the evaluation process resulting from the cyclical relationship can be the place of internalized homophobia where individuals evaluate homophobia in a way that can harm their self-concept, meaning that it can be internalized.

All in all, the present model was formed with selected protective and risk factors of psychological dating aggression perpetration in LGB+ relationships. However, the model fit indices and theoretical discussion of the hypothesized model can only partially answer the third research question of this study. Therefore, to fully answer the third research question, specific hypotheses (hypotheses 1 to 9) were also examined.

Hypotheses 1 to 7 were formed for the direct relationships between study variables. Two hypotheses were rejected (hypotheses 2 and 4), while the data supported the others. Also, Hypotheses 8 and 9 were the mediation hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 (Path A) assumed that positive affect would be significantly and directly associated with cognitive flexibility. This hypothesis was supported, and a positive association was found. It can be said that LGB+ individuals who experience positive emotions tend to be cognitively flexible in their lives. This result is supported by previous empirical research and in line with the assumptions of the Broaden-and-Build theory of positive emotions. As stated before, positive affect is found to be contributing factor to cognitive flexibility skills proven by many experimental studies (Oaksford et al., 1996; Phillips et al., 2002; Isen, 2002; Dreisbach & Goschke, 2004; Frober & Dreisbach, 2012; Ritter et al., 2012; Zwosta et al., 2013; Liu & Wang, 2014; Wang, Chen, and Yue, 2017). The common points in those experiments were the affective manipulations before and mood assessment before and after the task that requires

cognitive flexibility skills. The results of those studies are supportive of the first hypothesis. Furthermore, the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions has a specific assumption about the function of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). This theory states that positive emotions can influence personal resources. Specifically, it can lead individuals to think flexibly, outside the box, and be creative. In that sense, the result of the first hypothesis is theoretically sensible and provides further evidence to the experimental findings by revealing a statistically significant relationship with self-report measures of positive affect and cognitive flexibility.

Hypothesis 2 (Path B) assumed that positive affect would be significantly and directly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. This hypothesis was rejected. In other words, experiencing positive emotions does not eliminate the chances of using psychological aggression in dating relationships. Furthermore, Hypothesis 4 (Path D) assumed that negative affect would significantly and directly be associated with the use of psychological dating aggression. This hypothesis was also rejected. At first glance, these results appear to be contradictory to the available literature. Firstly, as previously stated, positive emotions have an undoing effect on the outcomes of negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), and positive emotions can be treated as a separate construct and have different relationships with many other variables comparing the negative affect (Crawford & Henry, 2004). Nevertheless, the existing empirical findings do not firmly suggest a direct link between positive affect and aggression perpetration (physical, sexual, and psychological). Secondly, previous research studies found out that negative affect is in a relationship with aggression perpetration (Landolt & Dutton, 1997; Dye & Eckhardt, 2000; Eckhardt, Jamison & Watts, 2002; Follingstad et al., 2002; Swan et al., 2005; Feiring, Jashar & Heleniak, 2010) and can be a predictor of aggression perpetration (Crane & Eckhardt, 2013; Shorey et al., 2014; Shorey et al., 2015; Lewis et al., 2017). One possible explanation of the current study findings could be related to the role of possible mediator variables involved in this relationship. In fact, the study findings revealed that positive and negative affect have an indirect effect on the psychological aggression perpetration via cognitive flexibility and internalized homophobia.

Hypothesis 3 (Path C) assumed that psychological dating aggression victimization would be directly and significantly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. This hypothesis was supported with the data, and a strong and significant relationship was established. It can be said that the cycle of violence can also occur within a romantic relationship. Many research studies have established that being a victim of childhood abuse can predict adulthood aggression perpetration (see Augsburger, Basler, & Maercker, 2019 and Fitton, Yu & Fazel, 2020 for reviews). Also, Kimmes and colleagues (2019) highlighted in their review article that witnessing IPV can be a risk marker for all types of IPV perpetration. Even though participants' history and source of victimization were not measured in this study, the results seemed to be in line with the previous research findings and theoretically sound considering the general affective aggression model and social learning theory conceptualization of aggression and violence. One issue to consider for this significant relationship is the common method variance. Since victimization and perpetration were assessed with the different items and dimensions of the same scale in this study, the highly significant relationship may be a result of this measurement bias.

Hypothesis 5 (Path E) assumed that negative affect would be directly and significantly associated with internalized homophobia. The data supported this hypothesis, and a direct relationship was found. Meaning that negative emotions can be a factor for increasing internalized homophobia. This finding is sensible considering the theory of traits due to victimization (Allport, 1954). This theory suggests that homophobia and discrimination can create negative emotions such as fear, shame, guilt, and anger. Those emotions can lead LGBTI+ individuals to struggle in many aspects of life. Furthermore, Meyer's (2003) minority stress theory has similar assumptions and centers on internalized homophobia due to external stigmatization. Thus, negative emotions that emerged from society's prejudice and discrimination can affect the internalization process. Also, the general affective aggression model posits that situational variables are evaluated within the shadow of the cyclical relationship between affect, cognition, and arousal. In this case, perceived homophobia might be internalized through negative affect. Empirical evidence on the relationship between negative affect and internalized homophobia can also be found in the literature (Cody

& Welch, 1997; DiPlacido, 1998; Allen & Oleson, 1999; Plummer, 2002; Gençöz & Yüksel, 2006, Sherry, 2007; Brown & Trevethan, 2010; Greene & Britton, 2012; Mereish and Poteat, 2015; Lewis et al., 2017; Legate et al., 2018).

Hypothesis 6 (Path F) assumed that internalized homophobia would be significantly and directly associated with psychological dating aggression perpetration. This hypothesis was also supported. Due to the empirical evidence that marks internalized homophobia as a significant sexual minority-specific risk factor for intimate partner violence (see Badenes-Ribera, Sanchez-Meca & Longobardi, 2019 and Kimmes et al., 2019 for reviews) and the minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003), this was an expected result. Thus, it can be concluded that increased levels of internalized homophobia can lead LGB+ individuals to perpetrate in their romantic relationships.

Hypothesis 7 (Path G) assumed that cognitive flexibility would be directly and significantly associated with the use of psychological dating aggression. Data also supported this hypothesis. Therefore, it can be concluded that cognitive flexibility is a significant protective factor for the use of psychological dating aggression. Individuals with higher levels of cognitive flexibility are most likely not to use aggressive behaviors in their romantic relationships. Fully discussing this result with previous research studies is not possible. Because, previous research studies examining the relationship between executive functioning and intimate partner violence have mostly been conducted with heterosexual individuals and severe violent offenders, and they have mostly used performance-based assessment tools for executive functioning rather than self-report measures (Teichner, Golden, Van Hasselt & Peterson, 2001; Cohen et al., 2003; Chesebero & Martin, 2003; Stepteau-Watson, 2014; Becerra-Garcia, 2015; Romero-Martinez et al., 2016; Brenner, 2017; Parrott, Swartout, Eckhardt & Subramani, 2017). Even though the result of this hypothesis is in line with other research studies using performance-based measurement tools, due to the lack of evidence using a self-report measure for cognitive flexibility and examining its relationship with psychological aggression perpetration, especially with an LGBTI+ sample, further discussion could not be made.

Hypothesis 8 was one of the mediation hypotheses of this study. This hypothesis assumed that internalized homophobia would mediate the relationship between negative affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration. Results supported this hypothesis. Internalized homophobia fully mediated the relationship between negative affect and the use of psychological aggression. Thus, it can be said that negative emotions may link to psychological dating aggression perpetration only in the presence of internalized homophobic feelings. This mediation is also theoretically supported considering the theory of minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003), social information processing theory (Crick & Dodge, 1994), and the general affective aggression model (Lindsay & Anderson, 2000).

Similar to hypothesis 8, hypothesis 9 was stating a mediation. This hypothesis assumed that cognitive flexibility would mediate the relationship between positive affect and psychological dating aggression perpetration. A full mediation was also found for this hypothesis. Positive emotions, by themselves, are not a preventive factor for individuals not to express aggressive behaviors. However, positive emotions can prevent aggressive behaviors by strengthening people's cognitive flexibility skills. This mediation is also theoretically supported considering the assumptions of the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001) and the normative creativity theory (Brown, 1989).

5.2. Implications for Theory Research, and Practice

Implications for theory, research and practice regarding the results of this study are presented in this section.

5.2.1. Implications for Theory and Research

Considering the examined variables, this study and the conceptual model provided a multi-theoretical framework for approaching psychological dating aggression among LGB+ individuals. Even though this research did not investigate psychological dating aggression with its multidimensional nature as it was suggested and theorized (Murphy & Hoover, 1999), it provided an insight to the contributing factors of psychological dating aggression perpetration of LGB+ individuals. Also, it is possible to conduct

cross-cultural studies as it is available in English (Murphy & Hoover, 1999), Italian (Bonechi & Tani, 2011), and Spanish (Guzmán, Riverón, Bonechi, & Menna, 2012) as well.

Furthermore, this study benefited from some crucial theories to explain psychological dating aggression and how it can be conceptualized for the LGBTI+ community. First, the essence of social learning theory is that violent behaviors are learned behaviors. It can be speculated that there can be a relationship between being a victim to psychological aggression and learning by looking at the strong connection between psychological aggression victimization and perpetration. Second, this research is also benefited from social information processing since positive and negative emotions are used as independent variables. Also, the aggression conceptualization of social information processing theory is fed by social learning, and the abovementioned relationship between victimization and perpetration made it more possible for this research to consider social information processing as one of the baseline theories. On the other hand, minority stress theory and normative creativity theory were useful to conceptualize the mediator variables and their role in aggression perpetration.

All in all, psychological dating aggression in LGB+ relationships is a complex issue to theorize, and the current study contributed to the efforts with its significant findings. Therefore, this research can be considered for replication to examine psychological dating aggression and its occurrence in LGBTI+ communities in Turkey and the world.

The present study also contributed to the research practices with its significant findings along with the theoretical contributions. Firstly, as the strongest predictor of the study, victimization appeared to be a risk factor for aggression perpetration. Secondly, despite the previous empirical evidence, affective components were not directly related to the use of psychological aggression. Instead, cognitive flexibility and internalized homophobia mediated the path from affective components to the use of psychological aggression. In that sense, the findings of this study contradicted the conceptual models created by Mason and colleagues (2016) and Lewis and colleagues (2017), both stating that negative emotions stem from internalized homophobia and internalized homophobia predicts aggression perpetration in both physical and

psychological levels through negative emotions. Furthermore, the role of positive emotions and cognitive flexibility as a protective factor in the use of psychological aggression was demonstrated. Direct paths from positive emotions to cognitive flexibility and cognitive flexibility to aggression perpetration and the non-significant path from positive emotions to the use of aggression showed that cognitive flexibility is an important variable for the possible interventions of perpetration, which was discussed in the next section.

5.2.2. Implications for Practice

This study has some crucial aspects that can be beneficial for mental health professionals (psychological counselors, counselor educators, and psychologists), educators in formal and informal education, and university administrators to be able to make a change in individual, interpersonal, and structural settings. To begin with, the findings of this study are significant and have guiding characteristics for mental health professionals, and those characteristics can be discussed for both individuals and group settings.

Possible considerations for individual counseling practices can be informed from the findings of this research. For example, internalized homophobia fully mediated the relationship between negative affect and the use of psychological aggression in dating relationships. Thus, mental health professionals need to consider the degree of internalization of external stigma, discrimination, and prejudice when working with LGB+ individuals who have been involved in psychological dating aggression, regardless of being victim or perpetrator. On the other hand, previous group intervention programs are found to mainly focus on several important issues such as justification of dating aggression, enhancement of awareness and knowledge on the issue of dating aggression (Foshee & Langwick, 2004; Jaycox et al., 2006), self-recognition in romantic relationships, romantic relationship styles and stages, problem-solving abilities, and communication (Togay, Şahin, Atıcı & 2019).

All of the issues addressed in group interventions are crucial and have proven to be helpful for IPV perpetration and victimization. However, concerning the findings of

this study, group interventions need to be transformed to be more inclusive and suitable for LGBTI+ romantic relationships and dating aggression experiences. For example, the issue of distal and proximal minority stressors should be incorporated into those programs. In the US, such intervention programs were designed. Derived from the Duluth Model of Domestic Violence began earlier in the 1980s, which focuses on marital and domestic issues in heterosexual relationships (Pence, Paymar & Ritmeester, 1993), and Anti-Violent Project, which mainly focuses on victims' needs and has a heteronormative frame, the very first same-sex batterer intervention program was created in 1991 under the name of Seeking Non-Violent Alternatives Program (SNAP) (Mendoza & Dolan-Soto, 2011).

In addition to altering some sexual minority-specific risk factors to group interventions, a strength-based approach is also needed to increase their efficiency. For example, as Meyer (2003) suggested, a sense of universality can be created through promoting supportive and encouraging conversations within the group to ease the effects of marginalization and stigmatization. Also, activities and homework to increase cognitive flexibility can be implemented. For example, studies show that mindfulness-based interventions are effective ways to increase cognitive flexibility through developing and balancing attention, cognition, and affect (Bishop et al., 2004; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006; Moore & Malinowski, 2009). Furthermore, as one of the outcomes of this study, positive emotions can also be addressed in group interventions as they are closely related to cognitive flexibility and problem-solving and can have an undoing effect on the negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). Multiple interventions have been identified to promote positive emotions such as practicing forgiveness (McCullough, Pargament, & Thoresen, 2000), reliving previous positive experiences (Burton & King, 2004; Lyubomirsky, Sousa, & Dickerhoof, 2006), and learning the ways of nurturing a relationship (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Besides the importance of actively working on these issues in a professional setting, some significant implementations can concern counselor educators. Two important topics arise considering counselor education: dating aggression and LGBTI+ identities. The common point in those two topics is awareness. Counselor educators need to be sensitive and aware of the prevalence, types, and perpetration and

victimization experiences of LGBTI+ individuals in dating relationships. Also, they need to be aware of LGBTI+ basic concepts, the possible physical and psychological impacts of discrimination, and the distal and proximal minority stressors. In addition to being competent on the abovementioned issues, counselor educators are responsible for passing that knowledge to students in counseling education. Toplu-Demirtaş and Akçabozan-Kayabol (2018) stressed the importance of multiculturalism and advocacy in counseling. They pointed out that counselors are crucial to address LGBTI+ individuals' needs in various settings such as individual and group counseling, and school counseling.

Not so different from the suggestions for counselor educators, educators in formal and informal education, and university/school administrators also need to work on the same issues. Some specific actions are suggested to prevent dating aggression and be a safe space for LGBTI+ students. Seminars, workshops, and events can be organized to spread awareness on dating aggression and its consequences and LGBTI+ issues, and the importance of gaining knowledge and being sensitive to a diverse set of gender identities and sexual orientations. Thus, administrators are obligated to create financial and physical resources to accomplish such aims.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Research

The current study has some limitations to consider for future research studies and has some useful recommendations independent of its limitations. First of all, this study can be replicated using the same variables but with a sample that the frequency distribution of sexual orientation is closer to equal. One of the reasons for the need for balanced frequencies of sexual orientation is the group difference analyses. In this study, lesbian and gay individuals were merged to be able to compare them with bi+sexual individuals. However, gay, and lesbian populations have unique characteristics independent from each other. So, examining the group differences between gay, lesbian, and bi+sexual individuals would give more accurate results and be more politically correct. The other reason is that balanced frequencies would allow researchers to conduct a multi-sample analysis on the hypothesized model. Rather than examining variables separately, hypothesized models can be examined via multi-

sample analysis to see if a true difference for sexual orientation exists and reduce type I error (Byrne, 2010; Kline, 2011; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

Furthermore, in this study, psychological aggression was examined with a focus on perpetration. Further studies can examine victimization as an endogenous variable. Also, even though the prevalence rates were calculated, types of psychological aggression as restrictive engulfment, denigration, hostile withdrawal, and dominance/intimidation were not exclusively examined in this study. In future studies, including those types would result in a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of psychological dating aggression. Even though the Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse is a very comprehensive assessment tool that approaches psychological aggression in a detailed way, it still falls short of capturing the technological, online aspect of dating. According to a very recent Pew Research Center national survey, one-third of the U.S adults stated that they had used online dating apps and sites as an option to looking for an intimate partner, and the number of people using dating apps and sites is rapidly increasing (Anderson, Vogels & Turner, 2020). Thus, psychological aggression requires special consideration regarding online psychological abuse, stalking, and sexual harassment. A recent measurement tool was developed to address cyber aggression in relationships (Watkins, Maldonado & DiLillo, 2018). However, the scale of cyber aggression in relationships has not yet adapted to Turkish. One other issue to suggest future research studies is to check social desirability. Social desirability can prevent researchers from presenting their findings in a less biased way. In addition to assessing social desirability, gathering data from both partners would also be helpful to reduce biased answers (Hendy et al., 2012).

Controlling for common method variance is another important suggestion for future research studies considering the psychological dating aggression. Different measurement tools can be used to test the relationship between psychological dating aggression victimization and perpetration to avoid bias from common method variance.

Apart from sampling and psychological aggression-related considerations, this research has some other suggestions on the issue of internalized homophobia and its

measurement. Measuring the internalization of negative societal attitudes is a challenge for researchers since each sexual orientation and gender identity experiences somewhat similar but, in essence, different, and unique forms of stigmatization. There are only three measurement tools available in Turkish assessing different facets of being a sexual minority individual to the researcher's knowledge. The earliest measurement tool adapted into Turkish is the internalized homophobia scale developed by Herek and colleagues (1997) and adapted by Gençöz and Yüksek (2006). This scale can be used for gathering information from gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. The second measurement tool that has found itself a place in Turkish measurement tools is the Lesbian Internalized Homophobia Scale developed by Szymanski and Chung (2001) and adapted by Öztürk and Kındap (2011) that specifically addressed to gather information from lesbian and bisexual women. The third one is the Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Scale (LGBIS) (Mohr & Kendra, 2011), and adapted to Turkish by Kemer, Toplu-Demirtaş, Pope, and Ummak (2017). The third and the most current scale is not just about internalization but also examines the experience of sexual minorities in a variety of factors. Thus, suggestions regarding the measurement of minority stress can be divided into three parts.

Firstly, considering views about the internalization of negative societal attitudes that occurs as a result of an interactional exchange between the minority individual and the heteronormative society (Meyer, 2003), future research studies are encouraged to examine minority stress with scales such as LGBIS to fully grasp the impact of being a minority individual on the issue of psychological dating aggression.

The second suggestion about the minority identities arises from the issue of bi+phobia. As the distal minority stress theory (Pachankis et al., 2015) stated, bisexual individuals often deal with discrimination and stigmatization not only from heterosexuals but also from gay and lesbian communities for not having an exclusive sexual and romantic attraction to one gender. Thus, the stress and negative emotions that bi+sexual individuals experience would be different. Unlike the LGBIS, some researchers might want to focus on bi+sexuality experiences on various issues such as psychological dating aggression exclusively. Literature review revealed that a Bisexual Identity

Inventory exists (Paul, Smith, Mohr & Ross, 2014) but has not adapted into Turkish language and culture yet.

Thirdly, transsexuality needs special consideration for minority stress. Different from sexual orientation, the trans+ community faces challenges regarding their gender identity and expression. Thus, the trans+ community faces stigmatization from the heteronormative belief system stating that sex can only be determined by biology, is assigned at birth, and binary. Thus, internalized homonegativity, homophobia, or bi+phobia cannot measure their experiences. Recently, a measure of transsexual identity is developed by Bockting, and colleagues (2020) to assess multiple dimensions of trans+ identities, including internalized transphobia. However, this measure is not available in Turkish yet. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to examine the experiences of the trans+ community via their perceptions of identity on various issues, including psychological dating aggression.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS INFORMATION FORM IN TURKISH

1. Yaşınız:
2. Cinsiyet kimliğinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız? (Trans deneyime sahip kadın, trans deneyime sahip erkek, interseks, kadın, erkek, vb. gibi, kendinizi hangi cinsiyette hissettiğinizi ve başkaları tarafından nasıl görülmek istediğinizi belirtiniz):
.....
3. En son bitirilen okul:
☐ İlk okul
☐ Ortaokul
☐ Lise
☐ Yüksek okul/Ön lisans
☐ Lisans/ Üniversite
☐ Yüksek lisans
☐ Doktora
4. Herhangi bir işte çalışıyor musunuz?
☐ Evet
☐ Hayır
5. Yaşadığınız şehir:
6. Cinsel yöneliminizi nasıl tanımlarsınız?
☐ Gey
☐ Lezbiyen
☐ Biseksüel+
☐ Bilmiyorum/ Emin değilim
7. Şu an devam eden duygusal/ romantik bir ilişkiniz var mı?
☐ Evet
☐ Hayır
8. Evet ise ilişkinizin ne kadar süredir devam ettiğini belirtiniz:
.....Yıl Ay
9. Şu an devam eden ilişkiniz için hangisi uygundur?
☐ Tek eşli bir ilişkimiz var
☐ Açık bir ilişkimiz var
10. Partnerinizle birlikte mi yaşıyorsunuz?
☐ Evet
☐ Hayır

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR PANAS

Pozitif ve Negatif Duygular Ölçeği

Bu ölçek farklı duyguları tanımlayan bir takım sözcükler içermektedir. Son iki hafta nasıl hissettiğinizi düşünüp her maddeyi okuyun. Uygun cevabı her maddenin yanında ayrılan yere (puanları daire içine alarak) işaretleyin. Cevaplarınızı verirken aşağıdaki puanları kullanın.

1. Çok az veya hiç
2. Biraz
3. Ortalama
4. Oldukça
5. Çok fazla

1. İlgili	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sıkıntılı	1	2	3	4	5
3. Heyecanlı	1	2	3	4	5
4. Mutsuz	1	2	3	4	5
5. Güçlü	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR IHS

İçselleştirilmiş Homofobi Ölçeği

Aşağıda on cümle ve her birinde cevaplarınızı işaretlemeniz için 1'den 5'e kadar rakamlar verilmiştir. Her cümlede verilen bilginin sizin için ne kadar doğru olduğunu belirtmek için o cümlelerin yanındaki rakamlardan yalnız bir tanesini daire içine alarak işaretleyiniz. Bu değerlendirmede aşağıdaki açıklamaları dikkate alınız:

1= Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

2= Katılmıyorum

3= Kararsızım

4= Katılıyorum

5= Kesinlikle katılıyorum

1. Diğer eşcinsel ve biseksüel erkeklerle kişisel ya da toplumsal beraberliklerden mümkün olduğunca kaçınıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Genel olarak hemcinslerimi çekici bulmamaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Birisi bana tamamen heteroseksüel olma imkânı sağlasaydı, bu şansı kaçırmazdım.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Keşke eşcinsel/biseksüel olmasaydım	1	2	3	4	5
5. Eşcinsel olduğum için kendime yabancılaştığımı hissediyorum	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR CFS

Ek 1. Bilişsel Esneklik Ölçeği

Bu ölçme aracı, bireylerin kendileriyle ilgili algılamalarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Aşağıda verilen ifadelerin DOĞRU ya da YANLIŞ cevapları bulunmamaktadır. Lütfen HER BİR İFADEYİ ayrı ayrı dikkatle okuyup, yandaki cevap bölümünde size uygun olan daireyi işaretleyin.	Kesinlikle <i>Katılmıyorum</i>	Katılmıyorum	Kısmen <i>Katılmıyorum</i>	Kısmen <i>Katılmıyorum</i>	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle <i>Katılmıyorum</i>
	6	5	4	3	2	1
1. Bir fikri/düşünceyi birçok farklı şekilde ifade edebilirim.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. Yeni ve alışılmadık/sıra dışı durumlardan <i>kaçınıyorum</i> .	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. Hiçbir zaman, hiçbir konuda karar <i>veremeyecekmişim</i> gibi hissederim (gelecekle ilgili, alışveriş yaparken, karşı cinsle ilgili vb.)	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. Her duruma uygun hareket edebilirim.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. Çözümlemeyecek gibi görünen sorunlara pratik/işe yarar çözümler bulabilirim.	6	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE ITEMS FOR MMEA

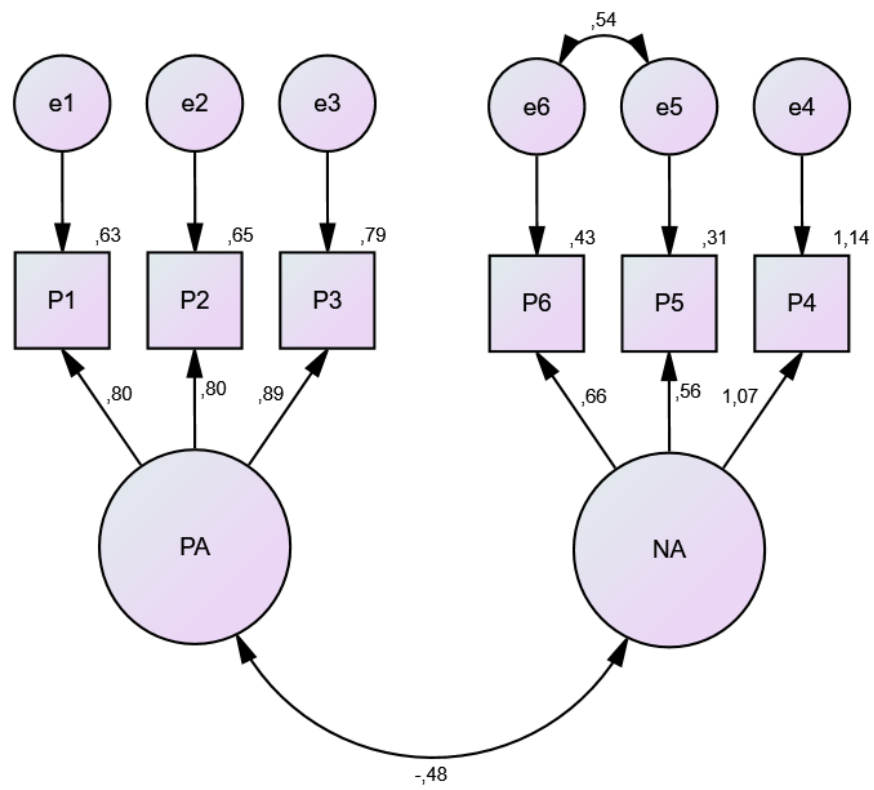
Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği (ÇBDİÖ)

Aşağıda, partnerinizle ilişkinizdeki son altı ayı düşünerek yanıtlamanız istenen maddeler verilmiştir. Şu anda bir partneriniz yoksa bu maddeleri bir önceki ilişkinizi düşünerek yanıtlayabilirsiniz. Her bir madde için iki yanıt vermeniz gerekmektedir. “Siz” yazan satırda, belirtilen davranışı sizin ne sıklıkta yaptığınızı gösteren rakamı daire içine alarak işaretleyiniz. “Partneriniz” yazan satırda ise belirtilen davranışı, partnerinizin ne sıklıkta yaptığını gösteren rakamı daire içine alarak işaretleyiniz. Eğer siz ya da partneriniz bu davranışlardan birini son altı ay içinde göstermediyseniz ama daha önceden yaptıysanız 7’yi işaretleyiniz.

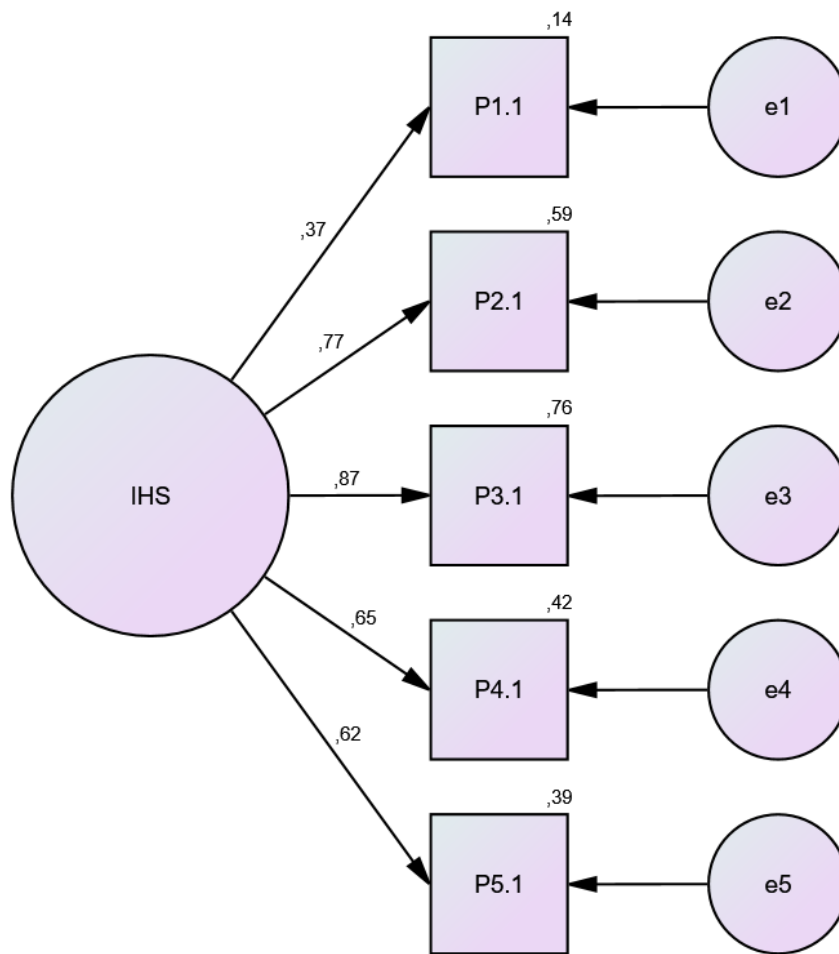
- (1) Bir kere (4) 6-10 kere (7) Son altı ayda olmadı ama daha önce oldu
(2) İki kere (5) 11-20 kere (0) Hiçbir zaman olmadı
(3) 3-5 kere (6) 20 kereden fazla

	Bir kere	İki kere	3-5 kere	6-10 kere	11-20 kere	20 + kere	Son 6 ayda olmadı	Hiç olmadı
1.Partnerime şüpheli bir tavırla nerede veya kimlerle birlikte olduğunu sordum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0
2.Partnerim bana şüpheli bir tavırla nerede veya kimlerle birlikte olduğumu sordu.								
3.Partnerimin kişisel eşyalarını gizlice karıştırdım.								
4.Partnerim kişisel eşyalarımı gizlice karıştırdı.								
5.Partnerimin bazı arkadaşları veya aile üyeleriyle görüşmesini engellemeye çalıştım.								

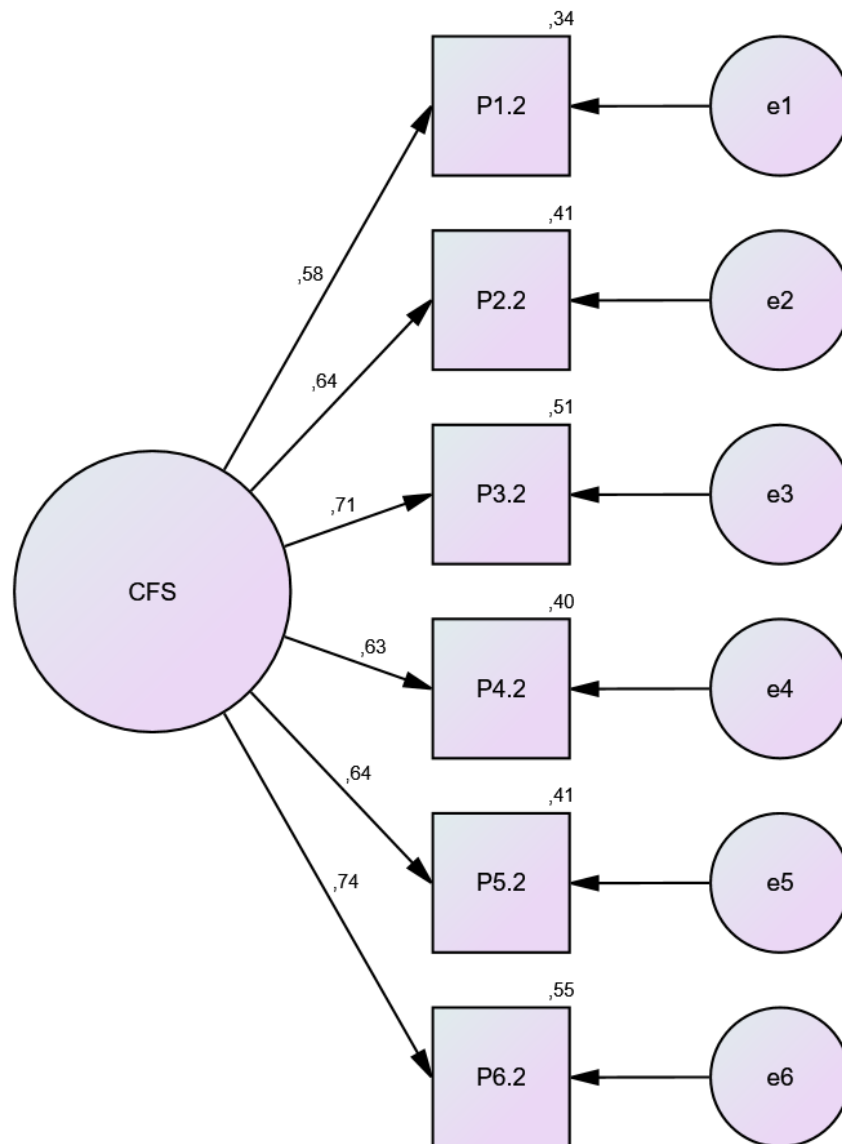
APPENDIX F: PATH DIAGRAM OF PANAS



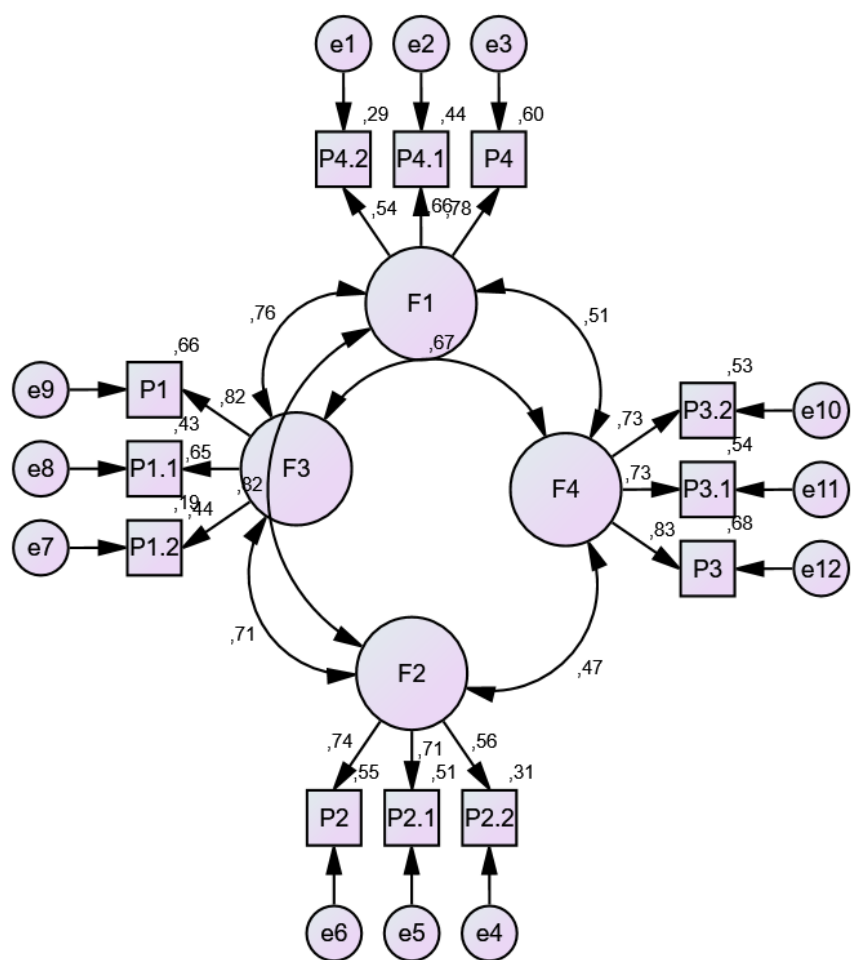
APPENDIX G: PATH DIAGRAM OF IHS



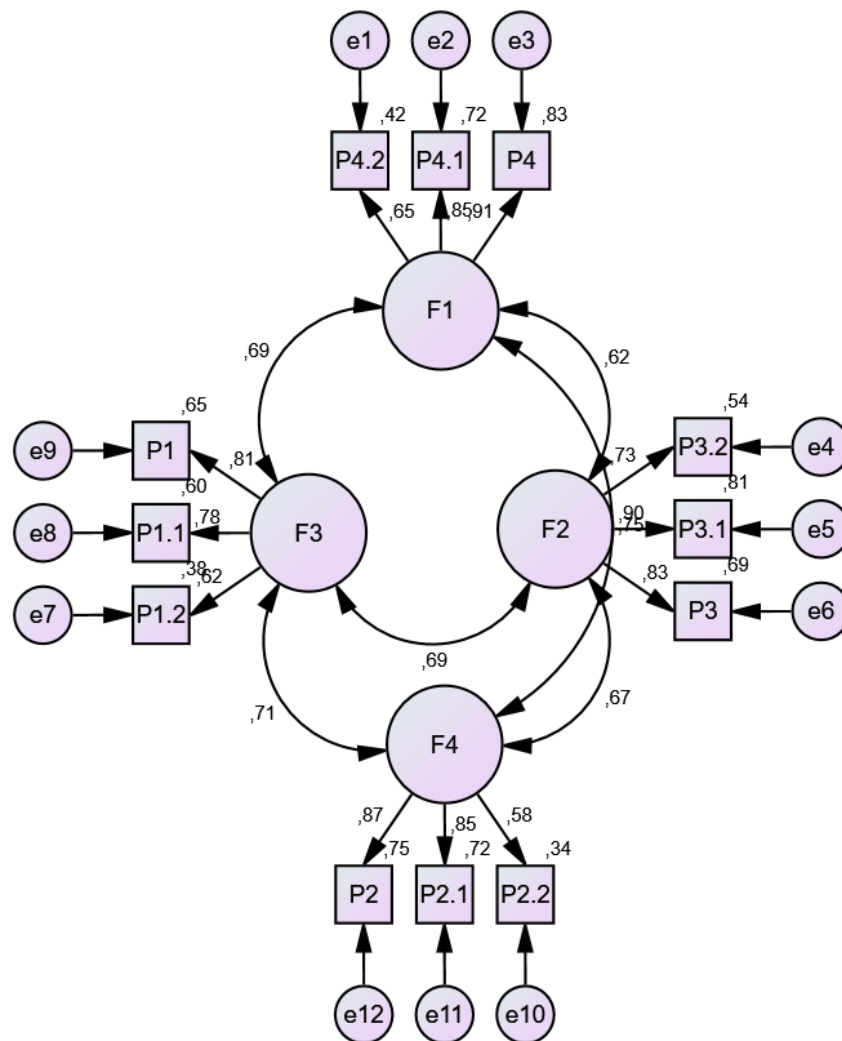
APPENDIX H: PATH DIAGRAM OF CFS



APPENDIX I: PATH DIAGRAM OF MMEA/PERPETRATION



APPENDIX J: PATH DIAGRAM OF MMEA/VICTIMIZATION



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

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç.Dr. Zeynep HATİPOĞLU SÜMER

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Mert Nedim MERCAN'ın "LGB Bireylerin Flört İlişkilerindeki Psikolojik Şiddet Davranışları: Bilişsel Esneklik, İçselleştirilmiş Homofobi ve Duygulanım'ın Rolü" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 225 ODTU 2020 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.


Prof.Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY
Başkan


Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN
Üye

BULUNAMADI
Doç.Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
Üye


Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT
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BULUNAMADI
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye


Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL
Üye

APPENDIX L: INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN TURKISH

Araştırmaya Gönüllü Katılım Formu

Bu araştırma, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık programı yüksek lisans öğrencisi Mert Nedim Mercan tarafından Doç. Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu Sümer'in danışmanlığında yürütülen bir tez çalışmasıdır. Bu form size araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgi vermek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir? Araştırmanın amacı cinsel yönelimini gey, lezbiyen veya biseksüel olarak tanımlayan bireylerin flört ilişkilerindeki bazı dinamikleri incelemektir. Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden beklenen, birtakım ölçekleri maddelerini size uygunluğu açısından derecelendirdiğiniz bir anket doldurmaktır. Bu çalışmaya katılım ortalama olarak 15 dakika sürmektedir.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz? Araştırmaya katılım, gönüllü katılımı onayladığınız takdirde önünüze gelecek anketlerdeki maddeleri, size uygunluğu açısından derecelendirmektedir.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız? Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Ankette, sizden kimlik veya kurum belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak, sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler: Bu çalışma günlük hayatta karşılaşılan problem ve sorunların ötesinde fiziksel veya psikolojik herhangi bir risk etmeni içermemektedir. Katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda anketi kapatıp ilgili web sayfasından çıkmanız yeterli olacaktır.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz: Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Araştırma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık programı yüksek lisans öğrencisi Mert Nedim Mercan (E-posta: mercan@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

- ☐ Evet
- ☐ Hayır

APPENDIX M: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

LGB+ BİREYLERDE PSİKOLOJİK FLÖRT SALDIRGANLIĞI: BAŞVURMA, MARUZ KALMA, İÇSELLEŞTİRİLMİŞ HOMOFOBİ, BİLİŞSEL ESNEKLİK VE DUYGULANIM İLE BİR YOL ANALİZİ

1. GİRİŞ

Flört şiddeti, literatürde çatı bir terim olarak belirtilmektedir. Flört şiddeti, Sugarman ve Hotling (1989) tarafından evlilik dışı bir birliktelikte, bir tarafın diğerine yönelik gösterdiği fiziksel şiddet veya fiziksel şiddete yönelik tehdidi tanımlamaktadır. Bir başka tanım ise, flört şiddetinin romantik ilişki içerisindeki kişiye fiziksel, cinsel, sözel veya psikolojik olarak zarar verebilecek her türlü davranışı kapsadığını söyler (Ely, Dulmus ve Wodarski, 2002). Bakıldığı zaman bu tanımlar şiddetin daha çok fiziksel olarak gerçekleşmesi üzerine kurulmuş olup, şiddete başvurma odağında yapılmışlardır. Psikolojik şiddet olarak değerlendirilebilecek her davranışın ileride fiziksel veya cinsel şiddete zemin hazırlayabileceği göz önünde bulundurulunca (Murphy ve Hoover, 1999), psikolojik şiddet ve saldırganlığın tanımının yapılması önem arz etmektedir. Lawrence, Yoon, Langer ve Ro (2009) ise psikolojik şiddetin daha detaylı bir tanımlamasını yaparak, alay etme, tehdit etme, partneri ailesi ve arkadaşlarından uzaklaştırma, kontrol etmeye çalışma gibi karşı tarafın onurunu kırıcı ve kendilik değerine zarar verici ve dolayısıyla da kendini suçlu, üzgün ve yetersiz hissettirebilen davranışlar olarak tanımlamışlardır. Lawrence ve ark.'nın (2009) tanımı, davranış biçimlerini açıkça tanımlaması, davranışların arkasındaki niyete değinmesi ve psikolojik şiddetin karşı taraf açısından sonuçlarından bahsetmesinden dolayı psikolojik şiddetin çok boyutlu doğasını aktararak, bir adım öne çıkmaktadır.

Mevcut araştırmalar psikolojik saldırganlığın flört ilişkilerinde bir hayli yaygın olduğu gerçeğini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Uluslararası ve ulusal literatür, LGBTI+ bireylerin ilişkilerindeki psikolojik saldırganlığın yaygınlığına dair bilgiler vermektedir. Uluslararası literatür saldırganlığa başvurma için %53 ve %94 arasında değişen oranlar verirken (Merrill ve Wolfe, 2000; Walters, Chen ve Breiding, 2013; Ollen ve

ark., 2017), Türkiye’de yapılan sınırlı sayıdaki çalışmalar bu oranı %60 civarında vermektedir (Ayhan Balık ve Bilgin, 2019; Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş ve Jessen, 2021).

Romantik ilişkilerde psikolojik saldırganlık birçok farklı kuram ile kavramsallaştırılabilir. Bu çalışmada kullanılan değişkenler göz önüne alındığında, sosyal öğrenme kuramı (Bandura, Ross ve Ross, 1963; Bandura ve McClelland, 1971; Bandura, 1977) ve sosyal bilgi işleme kuramı (Crick ve Dodge, 1994; Donnerstein, 1998). Sosyal öğrenme kuramı, diğer bütün davranışlarda olduğu gibi şiddetin de öğrenildiğini öne sürer. Bu kuram baz alındığında şiddetin ve saldırganlığın birçok sosyal ilişki içeren ortamda olduğu gibi romantik ilişki içerisinde de öğrenilebildiği çıkarımı yapılabilmektedir. Öte yandan sosyal bilgi işleme kuramı ise, şiddet içeren davranışların nasıl açığa çıktığını aşamalarıyla birlikte sunmaktadır. Bu kurama göre kişilerin cinsiyet, cinsel yönelim, etnik köken gibi birtakım özellikleri, şiddetin bir çözüm olarak sunulmasına ortam sağlayan çevresel koşullar, sosyal öğrenme süreçleri ve geçmiş deneyimler kişinin duygularını olumsuz yönde etkilerken, oluşan bu olumsuz duygular bilişsel süreçleri etkileyerek, en nihayetinde şiddet içeren davranışı ortaya çıkarırlar.

Çalışmanın bağımsız değişkenlerinden biri duygulanımdır. Neşe, heyecan, mutluluk, uyanıklık gibi sıfatlar pozitif duygular ve utanç, suçluluk, öfke, kızgınlık gibi sıfatlar ise negatif duygular olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Watson, Clark ve Tellegen, 1988). Bu çalışmada pozitif ve negatif duygular ayrı bağımsız değişkenler olarak ele alınmıştır. Duygu kavramı literatürde birçok farklı kuramla açıklanmıştır. İki önemli sebepten kaynaklı bu çalışmada duyguları ele alış biçimi, genişletme ve inşa etme kuramına dayandırılmıştır. Fredrickson’a (2001) göre pozitif duyguların insan yaşamında önemli bir işlevi bulunmaktadır ve öznel iyi oluş için çok büyük bir önem arz etmektedir. Bu işlevlere daha derinlemesine bakıldığında iki tanesi dikkat çekmektedir. İlk olarak, pozitif duyguların negatif duygular üzerinde geriye alma etkisi yarattığı gözlemlenmiştir. İkinci olarak ise, pozitif duyguların kişilerin bilişsel süreçlerine (ör., esnek ve yaratıcı düşünme) anlamlı bir katkıda bulunduğu ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada aracı değişken olarak ele alınan bilişsel esneklik, literatüre Spiro ve Jehng (1990) tarafından kazandırılmıştır. Bilişsel esneklik ve problem çözme becerileri gerektiren durumlara yönelik duygu ve düşünceleri ve bilişe dair çeşitli unsurları düzenleyebilme ve uyumlu hale getirebilme becerisi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bilişsel esneklik, bu çalışmada LGBTI+ bireylerin yaşamlarına dair önemli bir beceri olarak normatif yaratıcılık kuramı (Brown, 1989) baz alınarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Bu kurama göre LGBTI+ bireyler, heteronormatif toplumlardaki rol modeli eksikliği veya azlığı sebebiyle, dengeli ve psikolojik olarak sağlıklı bir yaşam sürebilmek adına kendi normlarını, yaşam biçimlerini ve kurallarını kendileri oluşturmak durumundadır.

Çalışmanın ikinci aracı değişkeni ise içselleştirilmiş homofobidir. İçselleştirilmiş homofobi, toplumun LGBTI+ bireylere yönelik olumsuz, ayrımcı ve önyargı içeren tutum ve davranışlarının LGBTI+ bireyler tarafından içselleştirilmesi ve kendileri hakkında benzer bir tutum içerisine girmeleri olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Allen ve Oleson, 1999; Barnes ve Meyer, 2012). İçselleştirilmiş homofobi, azınlık stresi kuramı baz alınarak ortaya atılmış bir kavramdır. Azınlık stresi kuramı (Meyer, 2003) cinsiyet kimliği ve cinsel yönelimini heteronormatif, ikili sistemin dışında tanımlayan bireylerin akıl sağlığı ve sosyal ilişkiler kapsamında yaşadıkları sorunları anlamaya yönelik bir kuramdır. Bu kuramın en temel önermesi, LGBTI+ bireylerin yaşadığı sorunların büyük ölçüde toplumdan gelen önyargı, ayrımcılık ve etiketlemeye dayandırılmasıdır.

Kuramların yanı sıra, literatür, çalışmanın değişkenlerinin birbirleriyle ilişkili olduğunu ampirik olarak da kanıtlamaktadır. Psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma, içselleştirilmiş homofobiyle (Balsam ve Szymanski, 2005; Mason ve ark., 2014; Milletich, Gumienny, Kelley ve D'Lima, 2014; Badenes-Ribera, Sánchez-Meca ve Longobardi, 2019), pozitif ve negatif duygularla (Swan ve ark., 2005; Elkins ve ark., 2013; Crane ve Eckhardt, 2013; Shorey ve ark., 2015; Lewis ve ark., 2017) ve saldırganlığa maruz kalmayla (West, 2012; Finneran ve ark., 2012; Lewis ve ark., 2014; Goldenberg ve ark., 2016; Lewis ve ark., 2017), istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ilişkiler göstermektedir. Çalışmalar, saldırganlığa maruz kalmanın, içselleştirilmiş homofobinin ve negatif duyguların psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma açısından birer

risk faktörü olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Öte yandan birçok çalışma, bilişsel esnekliğin, bireylerin problem çözme becerilerine ve problem durumlarında duygular, düşünceler ve davranışlar üzerindeki olumlu etkisine dikkat çekmekte, saldırganlığa karşı koruyucu bir faktör olarak belirtmektedir (Stepteau-Watson, 2014; Becerra-Garcia, 2015; Romero-Martinez ve ark., 2016; Brenner, 2017; Parrott ve ark., 2017).

Literatür, çalışmanın bağımsız ve aracı değişkenlerinin bağımlı değişken olan psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmayla ilişkisinin yanı sıra bunların birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerine dair de ampirik kanıtlar sunmaktadır. Pozitif duyguların bilişsel esneklikle ilişkisi çalışmalarca kanıtlanmıştır. Pozitif duygular insanların yaşamını birçok açıdan zenginleştirmekte, bilişsel süreçleri geliştirmekte ve kişilerin daha esnek, yaratıcı ve işlevsel düşüncelerine yardımcı olmaktadır (Chiew ve Braver, 2011; Mueller, 2011; Ray ve Zald, 2012; Goschke ve Bolte, 2014; Liu ve Wang, 2014; Emich ve Pyone, 2018; Williams, Belkin ve Chen, 2020). Negatif duygular ise içselleştirilmiş homofobi ile ilişkilendirilmektedir. Negatif duygulardan özellikle utanma, suçluluk duygusu ve öfke, içselleştirilmiş homofobi ile en çok ilişkilendirilen duygular olarak literatürde yerini almıştır. Toplumun önyargısından, ayrımcı tutumundan ve etiketlemelerinden dolayı yaşanan negatif duyguların içselleştirilmiş homofobiyi arttırabildiği yönünde kanıtlar bulunmaktadır (Lease ve ark., 2005; Lewis ve ark., 2006; Szymanski ve Kashubeck-West, 2008; Newcomb ve Mustanski, 2010).

Kavramların birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerinin yanı sıra, psikolojik şiddete başvuranın cinsel yönelime ilişkin farklılıklar gösterdiği de ampirik kanıtlarla ortaya konmuştur (Balsam ve Szymanski, 2005; Baams ve ark., 2018; Roi ve Meyer, 2019; Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş ve Jessen, 2021; Whitfield ve ark., 2021; Harland, Peek-Asa ve Saftlas, 2021).

1.2. Araştırmanın Amacı

Araştırmanın temel amacı, pozitif duygular, negatif duygular, saldırganlığa maruz kalma, bilişsel esneklik, içselleştirilmiş homofobi ve psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma arasındaki doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkileri incelemektir. İkinci amaç, psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurma ve maruz kalmaya dair yaygınlık oranlarını

tespit etmektir. Üçüncü ve son amaç ise, psikolojik flört saldırganlığına başvurmada cinsel yönelim farklılıklarını incelemektir.

1.3. Araştırmanın Soruları

Belirtilen amaçlara yönelik olarak üç tane araştırma sorusu oluşturulmuştur.

- a) Psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalmanın yaygınlık oranları nelerdir?
- b) Psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmada cinsel yönelim açısından anlamlı bir farklılık var mıdır?
- c) Pozitif duygular, negatif duygular, saldırganlığa maruz kalma, bilişsel esneklik ve içselleştirilmiş homofobi değişkenlerini kullanarak oluşturulan model, LGB+ bireylerin romantik ilişkilerindeki psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma davranışlarını ne ölçüde açıklamaktadır?

1.4. Araştırmanın Önemi

Psikolojik saldırganlığın ileride cinsel ve fiziksel şiddete başvurma bir işareti olabildiği göz önünde bulundurulunca (Frieze, 2000) bu konuyu kuramsal olarak çerçevelendirmek bu araştırmanın önemli bir boyutudur. Ek olarak, kullanılan diğer değişkenlerden ötürü normatif yaratıcılık kuramı ve azınlık stresi kuramı romantik ilişkiler ve psikolojik saldırganlık bağlamında LGB+ bireylerden oluşan bir örneklem ile ele alınmıştır. Araştırmanın diğer bir önemi normatif yaratıcılık teorisi baz alınarak çalışılan bilişsel esneklik değişkenidir. Uluslararası ve ulusal literatür incelendiğinde bu araştırma bilişsel esnekliğin psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmadaki rolünü ve bu değişkenin azınlık bir grup açısından değerlendirmesini ele alan ilk çalışmadır.

Kuramsal altyapısı ve değişkenlerinin yanı sıra bu araştırma ele alınan örneklem ve kullanılan yöntem açısından da önem arz etmektedir. Bu araştırma, Türkiye'deki cinsel azınlıkları konu alan araştırmalar arasında şu ana kadar sayıca en çok katılımcı içeren ve cinsel yönelim açısından en çok çeşitliliğe sahip olan bir çalışmadır. Ayrıca, araştırmada ele alınan değişkenler yol analizi kullanılarak modellenmiştir. Yol analizi, birçok değişkenin birbirleriyle olan ilişkisini, doğrudan ve dolaylı etkilerini ve birden fazla aracılık analizini tek seferde yapabilmesi ve kuramlara dayandırılan modelleri

test edebilmesi açısından işlevsel bir yöntemdir. Bu nedenle, bu araştırmanın bulgularının LGB+ bireylerin romantik ilişkilerindeki psikolojik saldırganlık deneyimlerini anlamaya yönelik önemli bir katkı sağlayacağı ve gelecekteki araştırmalara bir kaynak olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Son olarak, bu araştırmanın danışmanlık ve eğitim alanına yapacağı muhtemel katkılardan dolayı önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu araştırmanın çıktıları flört şiddeti, psikolojik saldırganlık ve LGBTI+ bireylerin şiddet deneyimlerine ilişkin farkındalığın artırılması ve şiddetsiz iletişimin yaygınlaştırılması için psikolojik danışmanlık sürecine ve eğitim kurumlarında yürütülebilecek çalışmalara ışık tutar niteliktedir.

2. YÖNTEM

2.1. Araştırmanın Deseni

Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, pozitif duygular, negatif duygular ve saldırganlığa maruz kalmayı bağımsız, bilişsel esneklik ve içselleştirilmiş homofobiyi aracı ve psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmayı bağımlı değişken olarak ele alan kavramsal bir modeli test etmektir. İlişkisel araştırma desenine dayalı bu çalışmada yapısal eşitlik modellemesinin özel bir türü olan yol analizi kullanılmıştır.

2.2. Örneklem

Bu araştırmanın örneklemine, çoğunluğu lise ve üniversite mezunu (%95), halihazırda romantik bir ilişkisi olmayan (%51,1) ve gey (%52,1) toplam 522 birey oluşturmaktadır. 297 katılımcı (%56,9) cinsiyet beyanını erkek olarak ifade etmiştir. 289 katılımcı (%55,4) bir işte çalışmadığını belirtmiştir. 256 katılımcı (%49) Marmara bölgesinde ikamet etmektedir. İlişkisi olan katılımcılar arasında 218 kişi (%85,8) tek eşli bir ilişki sürdürdüğünü, 176 kişi (%69) ise partnerinden ayrı yaşadığını belirtmiştir. İlişkisi olan katılımcıların ilişki süresi 1 ay ile 11 yıl arasında değişmekle birlikte ortalama ilişki uzunluğu 24 aydır.

2.3. Veri Toplama Araçları

2.3.1. Demografik Bilgi Formu

Demografik bilgi formu, araştırmacı tarafından oluşturulmuştur ve katılımcılardan, cinsiyet kimliği ve cinsel yönelim beyanları, yaş, eğitim durumu, ikamet edilen şehir, çalışma durumu, ilişki durumu, tipi, süresi ve partnerle mi yoksa ayrı mı yaşadıklarının bilgisi toplanmıştır.

2.3.2. Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği (ÇBDİÖ)

Çok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar Ölçeği, Murphy ve Hoover (1999) tarafından geliştirilen, bireyler arasında psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalma davranışlarını belirlemek için kullanılan, 56 maddelik (başvurma için 28 madde ve maruz kalma için 28 madde) bir öz bildirim ölçeğidir. Psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalma boyutları her biri yedi maddeden oluşan Kontrol, Aşağılama, Düşmanca Geri Çekilme ve Gözdağı olarak dört alt ölçeği içerir. Ölçekteki her madde, son 6 ay içinde davranışların ne sıklıkta meydana geldiğini ölçer. Ölçek, Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer ve Murphy (2018) tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlanmıştır. Psikometrik özelliklerle ilgili ilk bulgular, ölçeğin flört ilişkisi olan veya daha önce olmuş bireylerin psikolojik saldırganlık davranışlarını ölçmek için geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçüm aracı olduğuna dair kanıt sunmaktadır. ÇBDİÖ'nün başvurma ve maruz kalma boyutları için toplam Cronbach alfa değeri .89 ve .90 olarak bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada, toplam Cronbach alfa katsayıları başvurma ve maruz kalma boyutları için sırasıyla .90 ve .91 olarak bulunmuştur.

2.3.3. Pozitif ve Negatif Duygu Ölçeği (PNDÖ)

Pozitif ve Negatif Duygu Ölçeği Watson, Clark ve Tellegen (1988) tarafından pozitif ve negatif duyguları ölçmek için geliştirilmiştir. Ölçeğin, 10 pozitif ve 10 negatif duyguyu, 5'li Likert tipinde ölçen 20 maddesi vardır. Türkçe'ye uyarlaması Gençöz (2000) tarafından yapılmıştır. Alt ölçeklerin iç tutarlılığı negatif duygu için .83 ve pozitif duygu için .86'dır. Kriter geçerliliği için Beck Depresyon Envanteri ve Beck Kaygı Envanteri kullanılmıştır. Pozitif duygu için sırasıyla depresyon ve kaygı ile korelasyonlar -.48 ve -.22 iken, negatif duygu için .51 ve .47'dir. Bu çalışmada,

PNDÖ'nün pozitif duygu ve negatif duygu boyutları için toplam Cronbach alfa katsayıları sırasıyla .87 ve .86 olarak bulunmuştur.

2.3.4. İçselleştirilmiş Homofobi Ölçeği (İHÖ)

Herek ve arkadaşları (1997) tarafından geliştirilen İçselleştirilmiş Homofobi Ölçeği, eşcinsel bireylerin kendi cinsel yönelimleriyle ilgili hissettikleri rahatsızlığın derecesini ölçen bir öz bildirim ölçeğidir. Tüm maddeler 1 ile “kesinlikle katılmıyorum” 5 “kesinlikle katılıyorum” arasında değişen 5’li Likert tipindedir. Ölçek toplam 10 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ölçeğin Türkçe’ye uyarlaması, 2006 yılında Gençöz ve Yüksel tarafından yapılmıştır. Ölçekten alınabilecek en düşük puan 10 iken, en yüksek puan 50’dir. Ölçekten alınan puanın artması içselleştirilmiş homofobi düzeyinin arttığını göstermektedir (Gençöz ve Yüksel 2006). İHÖ’nün Cronbach alfa katsayısı .82 olarak bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada ise, Cronbach alfa.78 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

2.3.5. Bilişsel Esneklik Ölçeği (BEÖ)

Martin ve Rubin (1995) tarafından geliştirilen Bilişsel Esneklik Ölçeği, 12 maddeden ve tek boyuttan oluşmaktadır. 6’lı Likert tipi bir ölçme aracı olan BEÖ 1 “kesinlikle katılmıyorum” 6 “kesinlikle katılıyorum” biçiminde cevaplandırılmaktadır. Ölçme aracının Cronbach alfa değeri .80, test-tekrar test katsayısı ise .83 olarak elde edilmiştir. Martin ve Anderson (1998) tarafından yapılan güvenirlik çalışmasında, BEÖ’nün Cronbach alfa değerleri .72, .73 ve .81 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Ölçek Türkçe’ye Çelikkaleli (2014) tarafından uyarlanmıştır ve uyarlama çalışmasında Cronbach alfa değeri .74, test tekrar test korelasyonu .98 olarak hesaplanmıştır. 2, 3, 6 ve 10. maddeler ters puanlanmaktadır. Ölçekten alınabilecek minimum puan 10, maksimum puan ise 60’tır. Alınan puan yükseldikçe bilişsel esneklik düzeyi de yükselmektedir. Bu çalışmada ise, Cronbach alfa katsayısı .82 olarak hesaplanmıştır.

2.4. Veri Toplama Süreci

Veri toplama işleminden önce, araştırmada kullanılacak ölçekleri geliştiren ve uyarlayan araştırmacılarla iletişime geçilmiş ve ölçek kullanım izinleri alınmıştır.

Daha sonra Orta Dođru Teknik Üniversitesi Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi'nin İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan izin alınmıştır. Anket formu Google Forms aracılığı ile oluşturulmuş ve katılımcılar bilgilendirme ve onam formunu doldurduktan sonra anket seti ile devam etmişlerdir. Yeterli katılımcı sayısına ulaşabilmek için anket seti çevrimiçi platformlarda paylaşılmış ve ankete katılım gösterecek olan kişilerin bu anketi yayması duyuru kapsamında rica edilmiştir. Veri toplama süreci 25 Ekim 2020 tarihinde sonlandırılmıştır.

2.5. Veri Analizi

Araştırmanın ana amacı doğrultusunda değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri incelemek için yol analizi, ölçeklerin geçerliliği için doğrulayıcı faktör analizleri, örneklem özelliklerini inceleyebilmek için betimsel istatistikler ve cinsel yönelim açısından grup farklarını inceleyebilmek adına bağımsız örneklem t testi yapılmıştır. Bu analizler için IBM SPSS Statistics v25 (IBMCorp, 2017), IBM SPSS AMOS 24 (Arbuckle, 2014) ve Stata 14 (StataCorp, 2015) programlarından yararlanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada yapılan istatistiksel analizlerde .05 alfa düzeyi istatistiksel anlamlılık ölçütü olarak seçilmiştir.

2.6. Araştırmanın Sınırlılıkları

Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu ve Hacettepe Nüfus Araştırmaları Enstitüsü gibi ulusal çapta nüfus sayımı ve demografik araştırmalar yapan kurumların araştırmalarında cinsel yönelim bilgisine yer verilmemesi nedeniyle örneklem büyüklüğünün ne kadar olması gerektiğine dair bir tespit yapmak mümkün olmamıştır. Dolayısıyla, bu araştırmanın örnekleminin ve elde edilen sonuçların Türkiye'de yaşayan lezbiyen, gey ve bi+seksüel bireylerin tamamını temsil ettiğini söylemek mümkün değildir.

LGBTI+ katılımcıların anketleri yanıtlarken ki fiziksel, bilişsel ve duygusal durumlarının nasıl olduğunun kontrol edilememiş olması, çalışmanın iç geçerliliğine bir tehdit oluşturmuş olabilir. Ayrıca, veri toplama sürecinde LGBTI+ bireylerin fiziksel ve psikolojik sağlıklarını olumsuz yönde etkileyebilecek birçok politik ve toplumsal olay yaşanmış olması da iç geçerlilik için başka bir tehdit oluşturmaktadır.

Son olarak, sosyal beğenirliğin kontrol edilmemiş olması, anket yanıtlarının sosyal olarak istenir ve kabul görür yönde olup olmadığını ayırt etmeyi mümkün kılmamıştır.

3. BULGULAR

Öncelikle yol analizi ve regresyona ilişkin varsayımlar kontrol edilmiş, değişkenler arası korelasyon değerleri hesaplanmıştır. Kontrol edilen varsayımlar arasında doğrusallık (linearity) hariç hepsinin sağlandığı görülmüştür. Değişkenler arası korelasyonların 0.1 ve .05 alfa değerleri çerçevesinde, -.37 ile .81 arasında değiştiği görülmüştür. Pozitif duygular ve içselleştirilmiş homofobi, psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma ve sırasıyla bilişsel esneklik ve içselleştirilmiş homofobi arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki gözlenmemiştir.

Yaygınlığa bakıldığında psikolojik şiddete başvurmada %88, maruz kalmada %87,8 gibi oranlar ortaya çıkmıştır. Saldırganlığın çeşitleri baz alındığında ise oranlar başvurma için %44,1 ile %83,3 arasında değişirken, maruz kalma için %47,7 ile %83,3 arasında değişmektedir. Psikolojik flört saldırganlığı için cinsel yönelim farklılıkları bağımsız örneklemeler için t-testi ile incelenmiş ve cinsel yönelim açısından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır.

Araştırmanın ana sorusuna cevap verebilmek için yol analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, oluşturulan modelin toplanan veriye uyum sağladığını ve endekslerin ki kare/serbestlik derecesi oranı hariç kabul edilebilir düzeyde olduğunu göstermiştir. Modelin ki kare/serbestlik derecesi oranı 6.41, GFI değeri .98, CFI değeri .97, TLI değeri .92, RMSEA değeri .08, SRMR değeri ise .04 olarak bulunmuştur.

Modelde doğrudan ve dolaylı birtakım ilişkiler önerilmiştir. Dolaylı ilişkiler bilişsel esneklik ve içselleştirilmiş homofobinin aracı değişken olması üzerine kurulmuştur. Bu ilişkileri değerlendirmek için bir yeniden örnekleme metodu olan bootstrapping ile elde edilen beta yükleri (β) kullanılmıştır. Önerilen 7 doğrudan ilişkiden 5 tanesi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı çıkmıştır. Bu anlamlı ilişkilerden en yükseği .80 beta yükü ile psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma ve başvurma arasında ve en düşüğü ise -.06 beta yükü ile bilişsel esneklik ve psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma arasındadır. Ek olarak, önerilen bağımsız değişkenler arasındaki 3 korelasyonel ilişki de anlamlı

çıkıştır. Bilişsel esneklik ve içselleştirilmiş homofobi ise aracılık özelliği sergilemişlerdir. Sonuçlar pozitif duyguların psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma doğrudan bir yordayıcısı olmadığını ve bilişsel esneklik yoluyla dolaylı bir etkisinin olduğunu göstermiştir. Benzer şekilde, negatif duyguların psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma doğrudan bir yordayıcısı olmadığı ve içselleştirilmiş homofobi yoluyla dolaylı bir etki gösterdiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Regresyon eşitlikleri ve R^2 sonuçları göz önünde bulundurulunca, pozitif ve negatif duyguların sırasıyla bilişsel esneklik ve içselleştirilmiş homofobiye ilişkin varyansın %18ini ve %5ini açıkladığı, bu değişkenler ve saldırganlığa maruz kalmanın ise saldırganlığa başvurmayla ilişkin varyansın %67sini açıkladığı görülmüştür.

4. TARTIŞMA

İlişkisi olanların mevcut ilişkilerini, olmayanların ise bir önceki ilişkisini baz alarak katılım gösterdiği bu çalışmada, psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalma için toplam puanlar ve ek olarak saldırganlığın çeşitleri için ayrı ayrı puanlar baz alınarak yaygınlık oranları hesaplanmıştır.

Yaygınlık oranları endişe verici düzeyde yüksek çıkmıştır. Psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma için %88 ve maruz kalma için %87,8 bulunmuştur. Saldırganlığın çeşitleri baz alınınca ise, hem başvurma hem de maruz kalma için düşmanca geri çekilme alt boyutu en yüksek oranla %83,3 olarak bulunmuştur. Saldırganlığa başvurma için diğer alt boyutlarda oranlar kontrol, aşağılama ve tehdit için sırasıyla %75,6, %51,4 ve %44,1 olarak bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, kontrol, aşağılama ve tehdide maruz kalma için oranların sırasıyla %75,6, %53,1 ve %47,7 olduğu görülmüştür. Bu oranlar, psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmayla ilişkin cinsel azınlıklardan oluşan bir örnekleme yapılan güncel bir çalışma sonuçları (Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş ve Jessen, 2021) ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Maruz kalmayı konu alan ve cinsel azınlıklardan oluşan bir örnekleme yürütülen bir diğer güncel çalışmanın (Ayhan Balık ve Bilgin, 2019) sonuçları baz alınınca (%63,1) ise bu çalışmada elde edilen sonuçların bir hayli yüksek olduğu sonucuna varılabilir.

Yol analizi sonuçları, farklı kuramlar temel alınarak önerilen ve birtakım koruyucu ve risk faktörlerini içeren psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma modelinin, LGB+ bireylerden toplanan verilerle desteklendiğini göstermektedir. Modelde önerilen 9 hipotezden 7 tanesi verilerce doğrulanmıştır. Doğrudan ilişki belirten 7 hipotezden 5'i ve dolaylı ilişki belirten hipotezlerin hepsi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bulunmuştur. Model, psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma'nın %67'sini açıklamaktadır. Ayrıca, içselleştirilmiş homofobinin, negatif duygular ve psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma arasındaki ilişkiye tam aracılık ettiği, bilişsel esnekliğin ise pozitif duygular ve psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurma arasındaki ilişkiye tam aracılık ettiği bulunmuştur.

4.1. Kuram, Araştırma ve Uygulamaya Yönelik Çıkarımlar

Bu araştırma, romantik ilişkilerde psikolojik saldırganlık ve psikolojik saldırganlığın çok boyutlu yapısını ele alışı açısından hem kuramsal hem de araştırma boyutunda bazı çıkarımlar sağlamaktadır. Tasarlanan model, azınlık stresi ve normatif yaratıcılık kuramlarını temel almış olması açısından, aracı olarak tanımlanan değişkenlerin psikolojik saldırganlığa başvurmadaki rollerini temellendirmede kanıtlar sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada psikolojik saldırganlık, her ne kadar Murphy ve Hoover (1999) tarafından önerildiği gibi alt boyutları dikkate alınarak çok boyutlu bir şekilde incelenmemiş, sadece saldırganlığa başvurma ve maruz kalma açısından değerlendirilmiş olsa da LGB+ bireyler özelinde çeşitli değişkenlerin etkisini incelemiş olması sebebiyle literatüre katkı sağlamıştır.

Bu araştırma, çalışılan değişkenler göz önünde bulundurulunca birçok farklı kuramdan beslenmiştir ve psikolojik saldırganlığın LGBTI+ bireyler özelinde modellenmesi ve açıklanabilmesi açısından literatüre katkı sağlamıştır. Şiddetin öğrenilen bir davranış biçimi olduğunu savunan sosyal öğrenme, bu kuramlardan biridir. Psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma ve başvurma arasındaki güçlü ilişkiyi gösteren araştırma bulgusu, psikolojik saldırganlığa maruz kalma ile öğrenme arasında bir ilişki olabileceğine işaret etmektedir. Ek olarak, azınlık stresi kuramı ve normatif yaratıcılık kuramı bu araştırmanın bağımsız değişkenlerinden ikisi olan ve tam aracı özelliğe sahip içselleştirilmiş homofobi ve bilişsel esnekliği kuramsal olarak açıklamada fayda sağlamıştır.

Ruh sađlıđı alıřanlarına ynelik neriler bireyle ve grupla psikolojik danıřmanlık olmak zere iki boyutta deđerlendirilebilir. İselleřtirilmiř homofobinin olumsuz duygular ve psikolojik saldırganlıđa bařvurma arasındaki iliřkiye aracılık etmesi, uzmanların psikolojik saldırganlık gemiři olan bireylerle alıřırken azınlık stresini ve iselleřtirilmiř homofobi seviyelerini gz nnde bulundurmaları gerektiđine iřaret etmektedir. Benzer řekilde, biliřsel esnekliđin olumlu duygular ve psikolojik saldırganlıđa bařvurma arasındaki iliřkiye aracılık etmesi, bu bireylerle alıřırken biliřsel esneklik seviyelerini glendirici ve olumlu duygularını pekiřtirici alıřmaların yapılmasının nemli olduđuına deđinmektedir. Bireysel mdahalelerin yanı sıra grup sreleri, nleyici zellikleri ile psikolojik saldırganlıđa iliřkin etkili bir yntem olarak grlmektedir (Cornelius ve Resseguie, 2006). Romantik iliřki becerileri, flrt řiddetine iliřkin farkındalık, romantik iliřkideki benlik, problem zme becerileri ve iletiřim becerileri gibi birok farklı konu eřliđinde psikolojik saldırganlık grupla psikolojik danıřma ortamında ele alınabilir (Jaycox ve ark., 2006; Togay, řahin ve Atıcı, 2019; Hendy ve ark., 2003).

4.2. Gelecekteki Arařtırmalar İin neriler

Bu arařtırmanın barındırdıđı sınırlılıklarla ilgili ve sınırlılıklardan bađımsız olarak farklı neriler sunulabilir. Bu alıřmada eřit veya benzer dađılım gstermediđinden gey ve lezbiyen bireyler eřcinsel kategorisi altında birleřtirilmiř ve bi+seksel bireylerle aralarındaki farklılıklara bakılmıřtır. Gelecekte yrtlecek arařtırmalarda gey, lezbiyen ve bi+seksel bireylerin ayrı ayrı deđerlendirilmesi, her bir cinsel ynelimin kendine has zelliklerinin incelenmesi aısından nemli grlmektedir. Cinsel ynelim aısından daha dengeli bir dađılım, ok rneklemli yol analizi yapma fırsatını da dođuracaktır.

Gelecek arařtırmaların maruz kalmayı bađımlı deđerřiken olarak tanımlayıp, buna gre bir model oluřtırmaları, alıřmanın diđer deđerřikenlerinin maruz kalmayı nasıl etkileyebildiđinin incelenmesine olanak sađlayacaktır. Ek olarak, psikolojik flrt saldırganlıđının eřitlerinin ayrı birer bađımlı deđerřiken olarak ele alınması bu konuda daha detaylı ve etraflica sonular verecektir. Bir diđer neri, řiddeti konu alan eklerle alakalıdır. ok Boyutlu Duygusal İstismar leđi, psikolojik saldırganlıđı

birçok farklı açıdan ele alan detaylı bir ölçek olmasına karşın, şiddetin ve saldırganlığın çevrimiçi ortamlara has yapısını ölçmekte yetersiz kalmaktadır. Gelecek araştırmalar romantik ilişkilerin çevrimiçi halini ve çevrimiçi ortamlardaki saldırganlık davranışlarını inceleyerek, romantik ilişki ve şiddet literatürüne katkı sağlayabilirler (Watkins, Maldonado ve DiLillo, 2018). Sosyal beğenirlik bu araştırmada ele alınmayan, fakat saldırganlık ve şiddet konularında önem arz eden bir konudur. Gelecek araştırmalarda sosyal beğenirliğin etkisi de kontrol edilmelidir (Hendy ve ark., 2003).

Son olarak, gelecek araştırmaların içselleştirilmiş homofobiyi ayrı bir değişken olarak ele almak yerine cinsel kimliğe bir bütün olarak yaklaşan ve kimliği gizleme, etiketleme, algılanan ve içselleştirilen önyargı ve ayrımcılığı bir arada ölçen ölçme araçlarına (Öztürk ve Kındap, 2011; Kemer, Toplu-Demirtaş, Pope ve Ummak, 2017; Paul, Smith, Mohr ve Ross, 2014; Bockting ve ark., 2020) yönelmesi, konunun daha etraflıca incelenmesine, kişisel ve psikolojik değişkenlere daha fazla yer verilebilmesine olanak sağlayacaktır.

APPENDIX N: THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

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TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English): Psychological Dating Aggression in LGB+ Relationships: A Path Model with Perpetration, Victimization, Internalized Homophobia, Cognitive Flexibility, and Affectivity

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

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