

EFFECT OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES ON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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

BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

JULY 2020

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

EFFECT OF SOCIAL NETWORK SITES ON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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July 2020, 122 pages

Wide covering zone of internet and popularity of mobile devices have changed our communication habits extensively. Investigators are showing an increased interest in online interpersonal communication dynamics (Derks, Fischer, & Bos, 2008). Due to their popularity, Social Network Sites (SNS) are at the core of these online relationships including romantic ones. This thesis examines the emerging role of SNS on romantic relationships in the context of relational and individual factors. The present study used a qualitative pilot study to understand the role of SNS in social interactions especially romantic ones. Moreover, an experimental design was also used to evaluate role of relational posts of others on viewers. Specifically, relationship social comparison (RSC) based on posts of others on SNS and its possible effect on relationship satisfaction were analyzed. In addition to that, possible other factors that affect the tendency of making RSC were investigated namely, adult attachment orientation, relationship satisfaction, investment, quality of alternatives and Big 5

personality traits. According to results of Study 1, SNS seem to have an important role in the way we experience our romantic relationships, and it is a reference point for some individuals to evaluate their romantic relationships. However, Study 2 clearly showed that there is no significant effect of exposure to relational posts on RSC or relationship satisfaction. In addition, according to results, anxious and avoidant attachment styles, neuroticism and investments in romantic relationships were positively predicting the tendency to make RSC. On the other hand, relationship satisfaction and openness to experience have a significant negative prediction on RSC tendencies.

Keywords: Social network sites, romantic relationships, relationship social comparison tendencies, investment model, cultivation theory

ÖZ

SOSYAL AĞLARIN ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLER ÜZERİNE ETKİSİ

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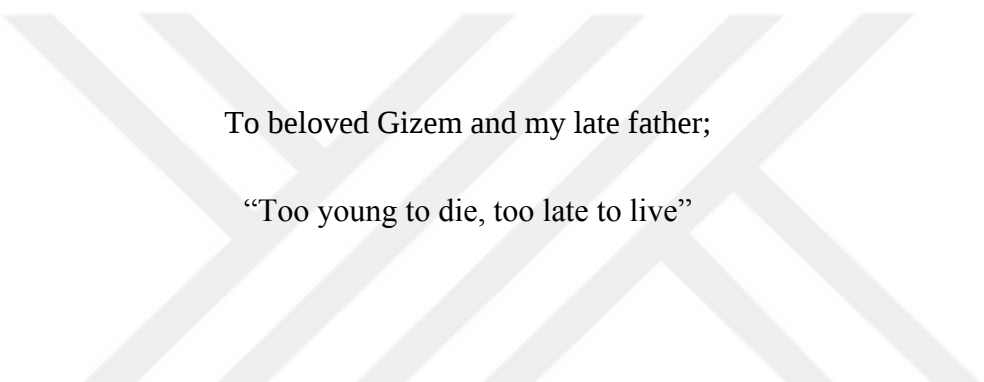
Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Bengi Öner Özkan

Temmuz 2020, 122 sayfa

İnternetin geniş kapsama alanı ve mobil cihazların popülerliği iletişim alışkanlıklarımızı büyük ölçüde değiştirdi. Popülerlikleri ve milyonlarca kullanıcısı nedeniyle sosyal ağlar, romantik olanlar da dahil olmak üzere kişiler arası ilişkilerimizde önemli bir yere sahipler. Bu tez, ilişkisel ve bireysel faktörler bağlamında sosyal ağların romantik ilişkiler üzerindeki rolünü incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada, sosyal etkileşimlerde, özellikle romantik olanlarda sosyal ağların rolünü anlamak için nitel bir pilot çalışma kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, başkalarının ilişkisel gönderilerinin izleyiciler üzerindeki rolünü değerlendirmek için deneysel bir çalışma da kullanılmıştır. Spesifik olarak, başkalarının sosyal ağlar üzerindeki gönderilerine dayanan ilişkiler arası karşılaştırmalar ve bunun ilişki memnuniyeti üzerindeki olası etkisi analiz edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimini etkileyen olası diğer faktörler; yetişkin bağlanma yönelimi, ilişki memnuniyeti, ilişki yatırımı, seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesi ve 5 faktörlü kişilik özellikleri de çalışma içerisinde araştırılmıştır. Çalışma 1'in sonuçlarına göre,

sosyal ağların romantik ilişkilerimizi deneyimleme biçimimizde önemli bir rolü vardır ve bazı bireylerin romantik ilişkilerini değerlendirmeleri için bir referans noktası olarak kendilerine yer bulmaktadırlar. Bununla birlikte, Çalışma 2 ilişkisel paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimi veya ilişki memnuniyeti üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi olmadığını açıkça göstermiştir. Buna ek olarak, sonuçlara göre, endişeli ve kaçınan bağlanma stilleri, duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ve romantik ilişkilere yapılan yatırımların ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimini olumlu yönde etkilemektedir. Öte yandan, ilişki memnuniyeti ve deneyime açıklık, ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimleri üzerinde olumsuz yönde bir etkiye sahiptir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sosyal ağlar, romantik ilişkiler, ilişki sosyal karşılaştırma eğilimleri, yatırım modeli, yetiştirme kuramı



To beloved Gizem and my late father;

“Too young to die, too late to live”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Bengi Öner Özkan. Her encouragement, guidance and supports were made my journey much easier.

I would like to thank my examining committee members Assist. Prof. Dr. Afife Başak Ok, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cemile Müjde Atabey and Prof. Dr. Yeşim Yasak for their participations and feedbacks. I also would like to thank Prof. Dr. Özlem Bozo for not only being a committee member but also being a mentor since my early graduate years.

I am also grateful to my other professors for everything they teach me during my undergraduate and graduate years.

I also want to express my gratitude to participants of my study. They were very patient to conclude my long measurement tools. In addition to that, I would like to thank my friend Civan, Diğdem, Kaan and Cemre to give permission for using their photos in my thesis.

I also would like to thank my dear friends, Aslı Demirel, Çağdaş Yalçın, Aybüke Yalçın, Aleyna Köseömeroğlu, Özgür Akkaya, Elif Meryem Ünsal Akkaya, Mustafa Bedirhan Koyuncu, Ezgi Özten, Can Aydemir, Su Ece Arıboğan and Dicle Çapan for their support in data collection processes. Also, I am grateful for the support of my brother Erdost Çalış. He helped me to create visual materials in my study.

I would like to thank my mom for her support during this journey. I also would like to thank my daughter Donna for showing me unconditional love and giving me an opportunity to share our house with her. Finally, and most importantly, I

would like to thank my wife Gizem for her endless love and support in addition to her feedbacks as a valuable colleague.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From radio broadcasting to 2.0 web, technology has always played an important role in our communication by providing new means. One of the most important technological events in 2000's was the creation of smart phones. In addition to the standard features of a cell phone, a smart phone provides its user a variety of advantages such as, accessibility of internet and multimedia functioning. Since then, smart phones are fast becoming a key instrument in our social life. People's way of communicating with each other has rapidly changed as a result of this technological development in such a way that today we are able to communicate with the whole world in almost anywhere and anytime.

At the end of 2015, internet was accessible for more than three billion people, and 3G mobile-broadband covered 69% of the world's population (ICT Facts & Figures, 2015). Moreover, Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI) states that, internet connection is reaching almost 70% of Turkey, and nearly 60% of users are preferring mobile devices to reach internet (2015). This wide covering zone of internet and popularity of mobile devices have changed our communication habits extensively. From personal blogs to social network sites (SNS), new communication channel systems are at the core of many interpersonal relationships (Walther, 2011). Individuals can post various contents related to any subject, and this new way of broadcasting gives a chance to become media themselves (Thevenot, 2007).

Due to this wide range of internet covering zone and accessibility, the relationship between interpersonal communication and technology has become

a concern in communication studies. Over the past few decades, investigators have shown an increased interest in computer mediated communication (CMC). Studies of CMC covered the topics that are related to communication through Internet, such as texting via e-mail (Derks, Fischer, & Bos, 2008), and growing body of literature has investigated the possible similarities or differences between CMC and vocal communication (Walther, Deandrea, & Tong, 2010) as well as face to face communication (Walther, 1996) on interpersonal relationships. Due to the changes experienced in technology, new actors of internet, Social Network Sites (SNS), such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, are heightened the need for investigating the role of SNS in online interpersonal communication. We can participate an online interaction with others via SNS, and majority of our social network are accessible due to the popularity of SNS. To illustrate, leading social network site Facebook have 1,590 million active users. Instagram follows it with 400 million active users, and Twitter have 320 million active users (Statista, 2016). These numbers clearly show that SNS are important actors in our lives, and they become crucial in establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships (Walther, 2011).

I become interested in role of SNS on interpersonal relationship after witnessing these developments as a member of this social network. This thesis, aims to investigate the factors related to our way of experiencing romantic relationships through the SNS and assess to what extent these factors play a role in this relationship. Moreover, in this paper I argue that, examining the effect of SNS on romantic relationships is a complex task that includes variety of different social aspects from socialization processes to social comparison tendencies. In order to address these issues, this thesis will mainly focus on following topics:

- a) Role of SNS in our socialization processes
- b) Representation of self on SNS
- c) Social surveillance activities and social comparison tendencies
- d) The relationship between SNS and romantic relationships

- e) Relationship social comparison (RSC) based on posts of others on SNS
- f) Possible other factors that affect the tendency of making RSC

To be more specific, the overall structure of this paper consists of seven chapters including this introduction as the first one. The second chapter presents the findings about the role SNS plays in our socialization processes especially focusing on three key themes namely, representation of self on SNS, social surveillance activities on SNS and making social comparisons via SNS. The third chapter of this paper examines the relationship between SNS and RR. In order to do that, this chapter first gives a brief overview of empirical findings related to the role of SNS in RR and then go on to relationship representations on SNS along with relationship social comparison. The fourth chapter ties up various theoretical and empirical strands to make the connections between addressed issues and establishing hypothesis. Chapter five, *Study 1*, analyses the result of the interviews which were designed to assess the role of SNS on RR in Turkey. Chapter six, *Study 2*, is concerned with the study design that analyses the effect of exposure to relational online posts of others on RR along with the findings of *Study 2*. The remaining parts of the paper proceed as follows: Chapter seven, discussion of findings and critique of the study. Finally, areas for further research are identified.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL NETWORK SITES AND ONLINE SOCIALIZATION PROCESSES

2.1. Representation of Self

The broad use of the term social network sites (SNS) refers to any web-based tools that allow its users to create profile pages, share variety of different contents, online posts, publicly or semi-publicly, establish online communications with other users and check for others' online connections on the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). It is necessary here to clarify the term “online post”. It generally refers to any content that help users to share their ideas or interests with others. Moreover, with online posting, people can present and perform who they are in their online interpersonal relationships (Moncur, Orzech, & Neville, 2016).

Representation of self is another related concept and it can be defined as planned behaviors to develop a certain impression about someone's own “self”. It encompasses conscious attempts to act in a certain way (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2006). Self-representation is an important part of social life and understanding this phenomenon in online setting is crucial for analyzing the role of SNS in socialization processes. SNS is a new area for the public that provides an opportunity to live and share reality in a different way (Kose,2015). SNS users can prefer more realistic representations of their self to sustain their interpersonal relationships. They may use SNS to show who they really are rather than their self-idealizations (Back et al., 2010) or they may prefer less honest representations to become a part of new virtual community (Hollenbaugh &

Ferris, 2015). Along with our preferences about how we present our self to others, SNS is also giving individuals an opportunity to receive instant feedbacks, such as number of likes. These feedbacks can lead an individual to post more similar contents with their previous posts (Moncur et al., 2016), and by doing so, representation of self may depend on and shaped by virtual community.

Another crucial point of online self-representations is associated with the individual factors. Personality traits play an important role in how we present our self in SNS. This is exemplified in the work undertaken by Gwendolyn Seidman. Findings of this study suggest that conscientious individuals can have more authentic presentations of their self and can be seen as more cautious. Moreover, expressing actual self on SNS depends on agreeableness, extraversion and neuroticism. High neuroticism and low conscientiousness were also found positively correlated with representing hidden and ideal self-aspects on SNS. It seems that neurotic individuals may accept SNS, such as Facebook, as a secure place to express their hidden self because of their low self-esteem (2013).

Taken together, previous examples showed that we have an online medium to display our “self”. People can use SNS to satisfy their need for self-expressions and this new area of our social interaction is likely to shape the way we build relationships. From posting photographs to sharing written materials, our representations via SNS are making us visible to others.

2.2. Social Networking or Social Surveillance

After the case of Snowden, world started to argue about governments’ electronic surveillance activities over citizens (Eichenmüller, 2014). Everything we post on SNS also provides social cues about who we are, and interpersonal electronic surveillance activities can use it as an information seeking strategy in era of SNS. In other words, once big brother was indeed watching us; but now companies and individuals, small brothers, are reaching us via SNS (Tokunaga, 2011).

Social surveillance seems to be an important motive for individuals to use SNS. Some studies showed that social surveillance is the second reason for using SNS after keeping in touch with friends (Joinson, 2008). This interpersonal electronic surveillance process can be used for reaching out profile pages of others (Bennet, 2001) or finding information about significant others after dissolution of any relationships (Tokunaga, 2011). From this point of view, surveilling others via SNS has some problematic features. Privacy settings on SNS is an important issue that must be considered cautiously. Exchange of personal information via SNS is increasing the risk of virtual harassment or cyber stalking (Salter & Bryden, 2009). Cyber stalking, like offline stalking, has negative effect on victims (most of them female), and it is commonly seen in the relationships of ex-partners (Dreßing, Bailer, Anders, Wagner & Gallas, 2014). Moreover, committed partners experience higher levels of distress after break up, and they most likely to monitor their ex partners via SNS (Fox & Tokunaga, 2015). It seems that SNS are affecting individuals even after the dissolution of romantic relationships.

As it is mentioned above, electronic surveillance of others is a common phenomenon related to SNS. Our personal life is more visible to others in today's world, and various kind of personal information is accessible via SNS. Along with the fast information trafficking on Internet, we can reach out of any information about anyone in our social network. This may have contributed to experiencing and sustaining our social bounds like we never did before.

2.3. Social Comparison on SNS

Social comparison theory tries to explain how our self-evaluations are shaped by others and our eager for evaluating our behaviors, abilities, similarities or differences based on others (Festinger, 1954). During the past 65 years there has been increasingly rapid advances in the field of social comparison research, and the theory has been widened and become much more complex today (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2006). Traditionally, social comparison theory is studied along

with the two main mechanisms namely; downward comparison (Wills, 1981) and upward comparison (Wheeler, 1966). Upward social comparison is about comparing our abilities or traits with who is perceived superior than us in any dimension, and downward social comparison is exactly the opposite (Taylor et al., 2006). Our comparison tendencies generally resulted in making comparisons with the ones who are superior than us and these upward comparisons are affecting our mood and our evaluation abilities negatively (Gerber, Wheeler, & Suls, 2017). We are choosing downward comparison in order to restore our self-esteem when it faces a threat (Wills, 1981). However, classifying upward or downward social comparison based on their effect on individuals is not a simple task. Both conditions can lead same results due to the affective responses. In other words, both upward and downward comparison can have positive or negative outcomes based on the situation that the comparison was made. To illustrate, cancer patients are more likely to see downward comparison as negative however, marital dissatisfaction is found to lead to negative affections both via upward and downward comparisons (Buunk, Collins, Taylor, VanYperen, & Dakof, 1990). One explanation related to these conflicting consequences comes from Upward Assimilation Theory (Collins, 1996). According to Collins (2000), similarity is an important factor that can be resulted positive mood changes. Individuals expectations to find similarities with the comparison object in upward comparison can be resulted in positive emotions and it can be said that we are hoping to find our place “among the better ones.” Another important explanation related to this phenomenon stated that, emotions are playing an important role in contrast effect. Some negative feelings such as, pity and worry can be experienced via downward social comparison as well as positive ones.

The changes experienced in technology over interpersonal relationships were also affecting the field of social comparison studies. Several attempts have been made to assess the role of SNS in social comparisons. Previous studies were mainly focused on the negative consequences of the social comparisons on SNS. To illustrate, greater amount of time spent on SNS (Facebook in this case), was

found to be correlated with greater social comparison on SNS. Furthermore, exposure of self-enhancing posts via SNS is found to be positively correlated with depressive symptoms (Uhlir, 2016). Online comparison on Instagram has also been shown to affect teenage girls' perception of beauty and self-worth via experiencing online posts of others. Moreover, they are considering likes, comments and number of followers as indicators of beauty and self-worth (Chua & Chang, 2016). In another study, social comparison orientation was found to be related to Facebook use and those users are more prone to the negative consequences of excessive use of SNS (Vogel, Rose, Okdie, Eckles, & Franz, 2015). Moreover, this self-enhancing information may lead upward social comparison, which in turn affect self-esteem negatively (Vogel, Rose, Roberts, & Eckles, 2014). Social comparison tendencies on SNS was also found to be related to lower self-esteem (Cramer, Song, & Drent, 2016).

Collectively, these studies outline a critical role for SNS on our socialization processes. So far, it is clear that we are presenting ourselves in SNS and others can "watch" what we serve. From self-representations to social surveilling activities, SNS are undoubtedly at the core of social life for many people. Many studies stated that SNS allow its users to make comparisons with what is online, but our tendency to make social comparisons on SNS can lead negative consequences. Results were not surprising due to the self-enhancing nature of SNS posts. It seems that we are comparing ourselves with others in this virtual world, but our source of information related to others is generally based on questionable representations on SNS.

CHAPTER 3

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND SNS

3.1. Importance and Statistics

Intimacy can be accepted as a fundamental property of interpersonal relationships. Seeking intimacy is an important motive for many individuals, and experiencing intimacy was found to be related to physical and mental health (Moss & Schwebel, 1993). In this search for intimacy in interpersonal relationships, especially having a romantic relationship has significant importance. Experiencing a romantic relationship is an important factor for many people, and studies showed almost all of us experience love in our life at least once (Madsen & Collins, 2011). In the new technologically supported social life, digital platforms, such as SNS, are playing an important role in romantic relationships, especially for adolescents (Lenhart, Smith, & Anderson, 2015). Almost for a decade, researchers were focusing on the factors, such as communication technologies, that affects romantic relationships (Fox, Osborn, & Warber, 2014), and it is clear that recent trends in technology have led to a change in our way of establishing and experiencing romantic relationships.

To illustrate, 50% of all teens (between ages 13-17) in US stated that they reach out others, whom they were romantically interested in, via SNS by friending them. Moreover, 47% of them also show their interest by leaving comments or liking photos on SNS. Also, 63% of the teens sent flirtatious messages to someone they were interested in via SNS. Furthermore, 47% of the teens stated that they share something interesting or funny with their crush via SNS (Lenhart et al., 2015). These numbers clearly suggest that people are generally using SNS

in experiencing romantic relationships. As the main interest of the present study is the effects of SNS on romantic relationships, it is important to know how these new online dynamics enmeshed individuals' romantic relationships. Therefore, factors thought to be influencing this interaction between SNS and romantic relationships will be highlighted in the next sections.

3.2. Exploring the Role of SNS on Romantic Relationships

As mentioned above, SNS are at the core of many interpersonal relationships. In the age of internet, scholars are focusing on various topics that related to SNS. However, effect of SNS on romantic relationships seems to be comparatively understudied. Even SNS are dominating the new communication channels; limited numbers of studies are analyzing the effect of SNS on romantic relationships (Fox et al., 2014). Although the number of studies is limited, relevant literature may help us to draw a bigger picture.

Throughout the following chapters of this paper, romantic relationships will be investigated under four different stages, namely; mate selection, being in a relationship, dissolution and post breakup. Relevant literature for each step will be presented and by doing so, this paper aims to clarify the role of SNS on each different steps of romantic relationships based on empirical findings.

3.3. Four Stages – Mate Selection, Being in a Relationship, Dissolution, Post Breakup

3.3.1. Mate Selection Processes on SNS

Our social network is the main source of potential partners and in the era of internet, and enormous number of individuals are listed in our social network. Even if there is a plenty of fish in the sea, choosing the one is depending on some certain characteristics. How we eliminate the potential partners is fundamental for seeking the “one”. Preliminary work on choosing the one process showed

that accessible, appealing, and interested ones are the most likely candidates for us (Günaydın, Selcuk, & Hazan, 2013). Due to recent developments in technology, accessibility is not a big deal in the era of SNS. Moreover, mate selection processes in romantic relationships are reshaped by new communication channels, and what was not accessible in the past can be reachable now. Empirical evidences also showed that propinquity is an important factor that shaped by our online/offline social network to determine to whom we will be cross path (Günaydın et al., 2013).

Online information seeking strategies are important tools for us to know more about potential partners. Via online channels, we can reach appealing candidates and collect information about them related to various factors such as physical appearance and personality. Checking for others' profile pages can give us additional information including mutual friends, status updates, and personal photos. Moreover, passive online information seeking strategies, such as scrolling down timeline of others and checking for profile pages have found to be accepted as a norm in the process of knowing each other before dating (Fox & Anderegg, 2014). From this point of view, SNS are working as a social surveillance tool. However, even if SNS provide various kinds of information, honesty is an important dilemma in this virtual world (Kose, 2015) when it comes to romantic relationships. At this point, individuals generally seek for uncertainty reduction strategies related to appealing others. One way of reducing uncertainty about potential partners' online self-representations is checking for consistency in their messages (Wildermuth & Vogl-Bauer, 2007). However, SNS may give a little more than messages about potential partners. Mutual friends, coworkers, photos or status updates are giving us a chance to make multi-dimensional cross checking (Van Ouytsel, Van Gool, Walrave, Ponnet, & Peeters, 2016) but reliability of these information is also a concern for receivers. At this point, warranting principle tries to explain this phenomenon and suggests that distortion of the online presentation is lower when receivers have a chance to connect with other members of profile owners' social network such as friends (Walther & Parks, 2002). Studies related to warranting principle also showed

that individuals prefer to look through profile pages and pictures of interested others to reach out more reliable information (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). In other words, it seems that individuals are trying to reach out information that is hard to forge, such as pictures. One other study also revealed that using real name is important factor for others to verify online potential partners' self-representations. Once potential partner's real name was known, receivers are able to reach out third parties to cross check (Gibs, Ellison, & Lai, 2011). To sum up, warranting principle is exploring our need to seek reliable information about appealing potential partners. Information that is uneasy to forge is the most reliable one when it comes to uncertainty reduction about others on SNS.

SNS are also useful tools for showing interest to others. Due to instant notifications, users can see who liked their photos or status updates. According to one study, individuals are using SNS to show their interest for significant others. In order to do that, they prefer liking photos of others, especially old ones. It seems that liking an old photo is creating an impression that "I am looking at your timeline". In other words, someone is showing an interest to you (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). Previous findings clearly showed that SNS create an information pool for individuals during mate selection process. Individuals search or being searched in this virtual market based on their social representations and social surveillance activities of others.

3.3.2. Being in a Relationship

Previous section tried to show how we use SNS in mate selection processes. However, role of SNS is not over once we start romantic relationships. Announcing being in a relationship on SNS is an important way of showing emotions to the public (Rueda, Lindsay, & Williams, 2015). Facebook seems to be the most popular way of declaring relational information, and changing status as "In a relationship" is called becoming "Facebook Official" (FBO) (Fox, Warber, & Makstaller, 2013). FBO is used as a strategy to show that the couple is not available for others. In this virtual world, presentation of romantic

relationship to the surveilling others is probably giving the message that “we are out of market” (Orosz, Szekeres, Kiss, Farkas, & Roland-Levy, 2015). Declaration of relationship via SNS can also have different meanings within the relationships. One study showed that women generally see FBO to a sign of seriousness and commitment in a relationship. On the contrary, men are less likely to accept FBO as a sign of wholeness (Fox & Warber, 2013). However, some other study stated that FBO is not a big deal in the relationship of adolescents but they still see it a way of showing “unavailability” (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016).

Profile pages and online posts can help individuals to show their followers or surveilling others that if they are available for a relationship. In addition to this, studies also showed that SNS are used for monitoring partner in romantic relationship, too (Rueda et al., 2015). From this point of view, SNS seem to be closely related to jealousy and can undermine romantic relationships as it was used for developing them (Fox et al., 2013). To illustrate, declaration of relationship via SNS was found to be related to both romantic love and jealousy (Orosz et al. 2015). Individuals may no longer have the power of control in their privacy. Dyads can reach each other’s profiles and track every activity of their partners such as comments from others. This tracking may lead jealousy (Fox et al., 2014, Orosz et al., 2015). Trust via sharing passwords of SNS also seem to be an important factor in monitoring activities of couples (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016).

Online declaration of romantic relationship may be seen as a protection against potential threats, rivals, on SNS (Tokunaga, 2011). However, declaration of relationship was not the only topic shared with others via SNS. Surveilling others can also receive intimate information about other couples and after that point, comments of others can be harmful for relationship itself. SNS makes it easy for surveilling others to track relationship of others (Fox et al., 2014). Negative comments related to relationship status can cause poor attitudes about that relationships (Balantine, Lin, & Veer, 2015). Moreover, approval of a

relationship by family and friends is important for feeling more love and commitment in romantic relationships (Sinclair, Felmlee, Sprecheher, & Wright, 2015). From this perspective, it is logical to think that SNS make our relationships more accessible to others and comments from others are important problem in the age of Internet.

These above-mentioned findings demonstrate that we can declare our relationship to surveilling others via SNS. This declaration can be seen as a “digital wedding ring” and show surveilling others that the dyad is out of market (Orozs et al., 2015). Once we announce our relationship to this virtual world, our relationship is vulnerable to comments of others (Balantine et al., 2015). On the other hand, surveillance within couple may lead other problematic results such as violation of privacy and jealousy (Fox et al. 2014). Taken together, SNS seem to be dominant actor in the way we maintain and experience our romantic relationship.

3.3.3. Dissolution

Dissolution in romantic relationships refers to the process of breaking up. SNS could have an impact on dissolution of romantic relationships as it had in maintenance. However, there are limited studies existing related to this topic. Studies related to dissolution in offline settings showed that relationship satisfaction (Røsand, Slinning, Røysamb, & Tambs, 2013) and commitment (Bodenmann et al., 2007) were both playing a major role in dissolution. At this point, it is logical to accept that the effect of SNS on relationship satisfaction can be related to dissolution in online settings, too. As mentioned above, studies show that becoming FBO is seen as a sign of seriousness and commitment for women but not for men. This different aspect between sexes may lead distress and dissolution (Fox & Warber, 2013).

Partner monitoring via SNS is another important issue that can cause distress in romantic relationships. A partner may use it as an information gathering strategy for healthy relationships (Tokunaga, 2011). On the other hand, surveillance

between partners via SNS can be seen as a sign of jealousy and violation of privacy (Fox et al., 2014, Orosz et al., 2015) which in turn can be a reason for break up.

Traditionally, studies related to negative sides of SNS on romantic relationships focuses on negative sides on this effect. However, the actual role of SNS on dissolution seem to be ignored in the field. On the other hand, the relationship between SNS and relational distress may be best possible explanation for this mechanism. In order to make further explanations, we need more studies.

3.3.4. Post Breakup

Dissolution is a stressful event for almost every relationship. In the age of internet, things are a bit messier after break ups. Surveillance of ex-partner via SNS is an important phenomenon that affects us even after dissolution. Changing the relationship status and removing related contents, such as pictures of couple, are generally the first step after break ups (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). It seems that individuals are showing their online network that they are available again. Moreover, due to surveillance, individuals may change their statuses and share contents that may make ex-partner jealous or hurt. This kind of a phenomenon needs more analyzes to find out its effect for both creator and receiver of the content (Van Ouytsel et al. 2016, Fox et al. 2014). Surveilling ex-partner's profile after break up is reported as a source of distress. Shared contents and status updates are sources that cause distress by reminding ex-partner, and news feeds are making these sources available even if a person did not monitor his or her ex-partner (Lukacs & Quan-Haase, 2015). In addition to this, news feeds related to common friends make it almost inevitable to avoid this kind of information.

Commitment is also important for surveilling activities after break up. It seems that higher level of commitment during the relationship is related to monitoring activities after breakups along with the risk of becoming a continuous activity. Moreover, if dissolution is not a mutually agreed decision, risk of surveilling ex-

partner increases along with the level of distress (Fox & Tokunaga, 2015). Taken together, it can be said that the negative effect of SNS on romantic relationships continue to pursue us even after dissolution. Due to instant informing nature of SNS, it is almost impossible to avoid contents related to ex-partner even if we did not want it. Moreover, surveilling is another important problem that can cause distress, and it is also found to be related to how we end our relationship. In conclusion, after the technological developments in interpersonal relationships, SNS are deciding how we live and terminate our relationships, and it is also playing a role in the way we suffer after break-ups.

3.4. Social Comparison in Romantic Relationships

As it was mentioned above, social comparison theory suggests that people are motivated to compare themselves with others in order to evaluate their ability and correctness (Festinger, 1954). As a result of the developments in theory throughout the years, social comparison is now available for analyzing many different topics. Traditionally, upward social comparison has been found to have negative effect on self-esteem (Vogel et al., 2014), on the other hand, downward social comparison can cause improvement in self evaluations (Wills, 1981). In spite of this generalization, both upward and downward comparison can have positive or negative outcomes based on situation (Buunk, Collins, Taylor, Van Yperen, & Dakof, 1990). In addition to these common topics in the field, modern approaches in the theory focus on emotions and cognitions, such as the effect of self-enhancing online posts on self-esteem via SNS, along with positive and negative sides of upward and downward comparison (White, 2010).

The main focus of this paper, relationship social comparison (RSC), is a relatively new area of study in social comparison (Wesner, 2008); however, social comparison, both upward and downward, has found its place in romantic relationships as it was found in individuals' interpersonal relationships. People made comparisons within their relationships as well as with relationships of others. Social comparison within the romantic relationships contains self-

evaluations related to one spouse based on the other. One study showed that accepting a partner as a central aspect, higher closeness between couples, eliminate the threat of upward comparison by seeing success of one partner as a success of relationship (Lockwood, Dolderman, Sadler, & Gerchak, 2004). Furthermore, adult attachment has been found to be related to comparison between dyads. It was found that avoidant individuals needed to outperform their partners to feel closer to them (Thai, Lockwood, Pinkus, & Chen, 2016). Moreover, social comparison tendencies were also be part of the interaction between different couples. Making upward comparison between relationships may harm current relationship by leading a partner to feel lower relationship quality. However, there is no strengthening effect was found in downward relationship comparisons (Wesner, 2008).

Even if the studies related to RSC is showing its effect on our relationships, searching for the factors that push us to make such comparisons are also important for understanding RSC. Relationship satisfaction and insecurity are two important factors of our RSC tendencies. It seems that relationship satisfaction is negatively related to relationship social comparison (White, 2010), and RSC tendencies are associated with insecurity, which also leads to negative evaluation of relationship (Lebeau & Buckingham, 2008). Results clearly showed that decreased relationship satisfaction and insecurity make our relationship more prone to RSC.

3.5. Relationship Social Comparison and Social Network Sites

Even if the nature and underlying mechanisms of RSC were studied, the role of SNS on this process seems to be ignored. Although there are some studies related to the effect of media portrayals of romantic relationships via RSC (Wesner, 2008), to the best of my knowledge, there are no studies exist in the field to show the effect of SNS on RSC yet. However, independent results related to these phenomena can be used as a guide to expect a solid relationship between concepts. As already explained, SNS make it possible for us to broadcast almost

everything to our online network. Self-representing and social surveilling nature of SNS provide a platform that provokes social comparison processes. At this point, SNS provide relational sharing of others and status updates, and news feeds are showing us what is going on in other people's relationships. Moreover, due to the self-enhancing nature of the shared contents on SNS, relational information of others may lead unrealistic, even utopic, bases for evaluations. As a result, social surveilling processes of SNS can even increase chance of making RSC via SNS.

As previous works state, relationship satisfaction is crucial for both maintaining our relationship and making relational comparisons (Røsand, Slinning, Røysamb, & Tambs, 2013, White, 2010). Moreover, various kinds of theoretical explanations were made in order to support the same idea. For example, interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959) claims that individuals' expectations related to their relationship must be fulfilled in order to maintain relationship satisfaction (Dainton, 2000). Expectations within relationship are called comparison level, and once these expectations were not fulfilled then comparison level of alternatives will take place (Wang, 2004). In addition to fulfilled expectations and satisfaction, a strong body of literature also claims that making such comparisons are also heavily depended on the level of commitment to ongoing association. Investment model (Rusbult, 1980) states that outcome evaluations, anticipated rewards, and costs along with the possible alternatives also depend on the investments we made to our relationship. Investments can increase our commitment to relationships due to the risk of sacrificing the resources we invest and influence our perceptions related to alternatives (Rusbult, 1983). Similarly, our responses to dissatisfaction in our relationship are also influenced by our investments and quality of alternatives. In light of these findings, it appears that relationship satisfaction and commitment are important driving factors for RSC tendencies.

CHAPTER 4

MAKING THE CONNECTION

4.1. Role of SNS on Romantic Relationships

Previous sections try to summarize the general findings related to SNS and romantic relationships. In order to do that, self-enhancing presentations and social surveilling nature of SNS along with the role of SNS on social comparison were explained. While a variety of definitions of the term SNS have been suggested, this paper will accept SNS as a platform that creates virtual self-enhancing realities about individuals and provides opportunity for others to receive and compare these presented materials with their own. Unfortunately, this virtual platform can lead to a disturbed sense of reality due to its self-enhancing nature, and surveilling others may compare their abilities or behaviors based on these falsely reported presentations.

In the age of Internet along with the popularity of SNS, it is almost inevitable for us to avoid effects of SNS on our relationships. From this point of view, it is logical to accept that today's socialization processes can determine the effect of SNS on romantic relationships. From mate selection to dissolution, SNS are closely intervening romantic relationships. Based on this this it was expected that SNS will be connected to different stages of romantic relationships form beginning to afterwards.

However, more theoretical support is needed to make any suggestions to analyze this effect. Following sections will try to develop some theoretically supported connections for analyzing the effect of SNS on romantic relationships.

4.2. Receiving Relational Messages via SNS

If SNS are providing us any kind of information about others, then it can also be seen as an online personal broadcasting of others. In order to analyze the effect of this broadcast, Gerbner's Cultivation Theory can be used as starting point. According to George Gerbner (1999), we are living in a world that is "erected by stories" (p. 9). These stories were presented to its receivers via TV back in the days that cultivation theory was developed, 1960's, but today TV has a new competitor, SNS. SNS are making it possible for almost anyone to share what is going on their life, and as cultivation theory suggests these presentations may be sources of stories that we shape our sense of reality in today's world. Cultivation theory is basically assuming that the more we spent time via watching TV, the more we perceive the reality as it was presented (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). Fear of crime was the main topic that studied via cultivation theory, and beliefs related to crime, such as prevalence, can be misshaped by TV programs, especially news (Gerbner 1999; Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003). However, the effect of TV broadcast on individuals' sense of reality was also seen for different contents. According to one study, viewing certain TV shows can cause misbelief about romantic relationships. Indeed, watching Korean soap operas led to a misbelief about the average number of children in married couples. Viewers believed that married couples had lesser children than the actual numbers in real life (Jin & Jeong, 2010). Similarly, it was found that viewing romantic comedies and dramas were correlated with the cultivated ideal of "wonderful world" and mythic expectations such as "love conquers all" (Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer, 2015).

Previous examples show that TV broadcasting has an effect on misinterpretation of reality. In the era of internet, cultivation theory was also adapted to new elements of media. To illustrate, a cultivation effect was also found in trust related to brands via SNS, specifically Facebook and Twitter comments related to product have a cultivation effect on the trust of consumers (North, 2011). Gerbner's theory seem to be independent from the media platform, instead it is

more about the stories and their effects on the sense of reality (Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorelli, 2015). From this perspective, SNS can be seen as the new mean for us to tell our stories. Due to the self-enhancing nature of SNS, our stories may lead to misperception of the reality. Self-enhancing relational sharing on SNS may develop a disturbed sense of reality about how things go well in the relationships of others and receivers of relational sharing may start evaluating their relationships based on the presented one.

Similar to cultivation theory's (Gerbner, 1999) suggestions, exposure to these kinds of posts can also disturb our expectations about our relationships. Relational sharing on SNS can lead to misinterpretations about the relationships by surveilling others and result in upward RSC which in turn can cause relational distress. The key research question of this study is about this relationship. Based on this below hypothesis is formed:

H1: Exposure to relational sharing of others will increase the tendency of RSC and decrease relationship satisfaction.

4.3. Relationship Social Comparison, Satisfaction and Commitment

Our social comparison orientations and relationship social comparison tendencies are other important factors that must be considered. The effect of SNS on romantic relationships is a multi-dimensional topic. Comparing our relationships with what is presented online is related to our tendency to make such comparison along with the current relationship quality. Studies showed that satisfaction and insecurity may lead us to make such comparisons (White, 2010; Lebeau & Buckingham, 2008). Similarly, investment model (Rusbult, 1980, Rusbult, 1983) is suggesting that satisfaction and commitment are important aspects of any ongoing relationship, and individuals are motivated to maximize their gain in their social interactions (Rusbult, 1980). Moreover, relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and relationship investment can be seen as

determinants of commitment (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998) therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2: RSC tendencies will be negatively related to relationship satisfaction and investments; positively related to assessing the quality of alternatives

4.4. Individual Factors

Dimension of adult romantic attachment style is also an important factor that must be taken into consideration. Secure attachment style is important predictor of commitment, trust and satisfaction in romantic relationships. On the other hand, anxious and avoidant styles are generally associated with negative emotions (Johnson, 2012). Moreover, avoidant individuals are also vulnerable to upward social comparison within romantic relationship. They need to outperform their partner in order to increase closeness in relationships (Thai et al. 2016). Due to its relationship with satisfaction, commitment and closeness, adult romantic attachment style must be investigated for the effect of SNS on romantic relationships. Based on previous findings;

H3: RSC tendencies will be positively related to anxious and avoidant forms of attachment.

Previous studies showed that there is a strong relationship between personality traits and usage of SNS (Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010). Personality traits such as neuroticism and conscientiousness were also found to be correlated with the self-representation on SNS; (Seidman, 2013). It seems that, five factor personality traits, namely openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, must be analyzed in order to see if there are any personality traits making us more vulnerable to relational sharing on SNS or to show if any personality traits make people more prone to make RSC via SNS so, five factor personality traits will be controlled to see if there is any effect exist between them and RSC tendencies. Finally, current paper will

also examine the moderating role of relational posts of others on romantic relationship, following hypothesis is formed:

H4: The relationship between RSC tendencies, relationship satisfaction, investment in the relationship, assessing the quality of alternatives and anxious and avoidant forms of attachment is moderated by viewing relational posts of other on SNS.

Table 1: Hypothesis of Study

Receiving Relational Messages via SNS

H1: Exposure to relational sharing of others will increase the tendency of RSC and decrease relationship satisfaction.

Relationship Social Comparison, Satisfaction and Commitment

H2: RSC tendencies will be negatively related to relationship satisfaction and investments; positively related to assessing the quality of alternatives

H3: RSC tendencies will be positively related to anxious and avoidant forms of attachment.

Moderation

H4: The relationship between RSC tendencies, relationship satisfaction, investment in the relationship, assessing the quality of alternatives and anxious and avoidant forms of attachment is moderated by viewing relational posts of other's on SNS.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY 1

5.1. Introduction

Designing a qualitative study before attempting any data collection process seemed to be a good strategy since, the relevant literature is from the western societies. Designing a pilot study with qualitative method was very helpful for establishing the design of study 2. Moreover, main aim of this pilot study, Study 1, is to understand the role of SNS on RR and to see if any misperception of reality exists due to the self-enhancing nature of relational posts on SNS in Turkey. In the previous sections, role of SNS on romantic relationships was highlighted based on four different stages, Mate Selection, Being in a Relationship, Dissolution and Post Breakup of any romantic relationships. This pilot study uses face to face interviews and open-ended questions (answered via e-mail) in order to gain insights into the role of SNS play during different stages of romantic relationships. By employing qualitative modes of enquiry, I also attempt to illuminate the effect of relational sharing of others on one's own evaluation of his or her romantic relationships.

5.2. Method

5.2.1. Sample

Data was collected from 20 SNS users (Table 1). An only criterion for participating in the study was having been in a romantic relationship at least once. Six of the participants were male, and 14 of them were female. Nine of the

participants were college students, and 11 of them were white collar workers. Mean age of the participants was 25. Sixteen participants stated that they are in a romantic involvement, four of them were married, and the remaining four participants stated that they are single.

Table 2: Demographics of the participants in Study 1

Participant	Age	Sex	Relationship Status	Education	Occupation	Method
1	28	F	Single	Master's Degree	Engineer	E-mail
2	36	M	Married	Master's Degree	Foreign Trade Specialist	E-mail
3	28	F	Single	Bachelor's degree	Engineer	E-mail
4	26	F	In a Relationship	Bachelor's degree	Engineer	E-mail
5	28	F	Married	Bachelor's degree	Engineer	E-mail
6	29	F	In a Relationship	Master's Degree	Research Associate	E-mail
7	32	M	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	E-mail
8	22	F	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	E-mail
9	23	F	In a Relationship	Bachelor's degree	Engineer	E-mail
10	24	M	Single	Bachelor's degree	Engineer	E-mail
11	23	F	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	E-mail
12	22	F	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	E-mail
13	23	F	In a Relationship	Bachelor's degree	Nurse	E-mail
14	22	F	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	E-mail

Table 2 (continued)

Participant	Age	Sex	Relationship Status	Education	Occupation	Method
15	19	F	Single	High School Diploma	University Student	Face to Face
16	19	F	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	Face to Face
17	19	F	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	Face to Face
18	19	M	In a Relationship	High School Diploma	University Student	Face to Face
19	29	M	Married	Master's Degree	Psychologist	Face to Face
20	27	M	Married	Bachelor's degree	Independent accountant	Face to Face

Note: E-mail: Data was collected via e-mail. Face to Face: Data was collected via face to face interviews.

5.2.2. Measures

A question pool was prepared for interviews (See Appendix B). Pool contains 29 questions, five of which were demographical questions. Sixteen questions were related to different stages of relationships namely mate selection, being in a relationship, dissolution and post breakup. Seven questions were related to general habits of using SNS, and one question was about RSC tendencies on SNS.

5.3. Results

Based on the above explained sections of the interview, the results were divided into thematic units. Frequency analysis was conducted for response rates of broad themes emerged from the analysis (see Table 3).

Table 3: Frequency of Contents

Contents and Thematic Units	Number of Participants
General Habits	
Value of amount of likes	10
Inattentive	5
Quality of the likes from significant others	5
Mate Selection	
Beneficial for starting relationships and gathering information	11
Provides a deceiving atmosphere	9
Being in a Romantic Relationship	
Sharing Happiness	10
Sharing Romantic Relationship	4
Shallow	6
Dissolution	
Breakup	20
Post Break-Up Behaviors	
Just Friends	4
Stalker	7
it's over	9
RSC Tendencies on SNS	
Vulnerable	9
Immune	11

Note: Heading in bold represents the general title for a content. Other titles represent the thematic units for each content.

5.3.1. General Habits

This section of the questionnaire was prepared to understand the general using habits of SNS. According to the results, Instagram was the most popular SNS, and every participant has an Instagram account. Facebook and Twitter follows it with 17 and 13 account owners respectively. Results are similar with the popularity of these companies in the world (Statista, 2016). Respondents stated that sharing a photo is their most frequent activity, and sharing contents about daily life follows it. It seems that “story” mode of Instagram allows them to share fragments of their daily life along with their photos. Moreover, majority of the respondents’ state that they spent almost 2 hours daily on SNS. Based on this

information, participants were accepted as regular users of SNS. When participants were asked to share their opinions about the likes they get on SNS, current content was divided into three thematic units namely, “Value of amount of likes”, “Inattentive”, and “Quality of the likes from significant others”.

Majority of the participants stated that the number of likes that they get on SNS is important for them. Due to the general tendency about this topic, current unit was labeled as “Value of amount of likes”. The overall response to this question showed that number of likes is determining the way we share our life on SNS. As P6 says:

Fotoğraflarımın beğenilmesi garip bir haz veriyor. Aslında sürekli aynı insanlar, yakın arkadaşlarım, ailem beğeniyor paylaştıklarımı. Ama bunun neden yine de haz verdiğiyle ilgili pek bir fikrim yok. Birkaç ayda bir profil fotoğrafı değiştirmek ya da birkaç haftada bir Instagram paylaşımı yapmak ve az sayıda da olsa bu beğenileri görmek bir tür iletişimde kalma hali gibi. Her gün hatta her an paylaşım yapan kişilerden olmama değecek kadar beğeni aldığımı düşünmüyorum. Hatta çoğu zaman paylaşmaya değecek bir hayatım olduğunu da düşünmüyorum. Takipçilerimle seviyeli bir ilişkimiz var diyebilirim. [It is a strange pleasure to getting like from my photos. In fact, the same people, my close friends, my family likes what I share. But I still have no idea why it pleases. Changing profile photos every few months or sharing a photo on Instagram every few weeks and seeing these likes, albeit few, is a kind of communication. I don't think I got enough likes from people to share every day, even at any moment. I don't even think I have a life worth sharing most of the time. I can say that we have a discreet relationship with my followers.]

Current example shows that this respondent clearly stated that the number of likes is main motives for her daily posts. In addition to this, two other respondents (P10 and P17) stated that: “Beğenilmesi hoşuma gidiyor. Açık konuşmak gerekirse beğeni sayımın takibini yaparım fazla beğeni almak egomu tatmin ediyor”. [“I like being liked. To be honest, I follow the number of the likes I get, getting more likes satisfies my ego.”]; “Beğenilmesi benim için önemli. Beğeni sayımı kontrol ederim ve az beğeni alan fotoğraflarımı da hemen kaldırırım.” [“It is important for me to be liked. I check my rating and immediately remove my low-liked photos.”]

SNS are giving us instant feedbacks, and these feedbacks may lead us to share more similar contents (Moncur et al., 2016). It seems that our representation of self may depend on the feedbacks of our virtual community. At this point, it is logical to think that this motive may lead us to make more self-enhancing posts online. Moreover, some respondents are using average number of likes to decide whether or not their posts are beautiful. P15 stated that: “Ortalama bir beğeni durumum var, bunun üzerine çıkarsa güzel olduğunu düşünüyorum ama altında kalan fotoğraflar için çirkin diyebilirim. Beğeni sayısının benim için böyle bir önemi var.” [“I have an average rating, I think it is nice if it goes over it, but I can consider the photos below as “ugly”. The number of likes has such an importance for me.”]

Even if the majority of the participants stated that they were interested in the number of likes, some others state otherwise. Five participants stated that they were not interested in the numbers even if they were feeling good about getting likes. This unit was named as “Inattentive”. Following example, from P11, is showing the general tendency of participants in this unit: “Açıkçası kaç beğeni aldığı önemli değil benim açımdan. Beğenilmediğinde kafama takmıyorum ama beğenilmek herkesin olduğu gibi benim de hoşuma gidiyor.” [“Frankly, it doesn't matter how many likes it receives. I don't mind when it's not liked, but I like getting likes like everyone else.”]

“Quality of the likes from significant others” was the last theme related to this section. Five participants were grouped under this unit. It seems that some respondents have different motives for sharing their posts via surveilling others such as reaching out loved ones. P3 states: “Hoşuma gidiyor tabi ki ama sayısı değil ulaştığı kişiler... Sevdığım insanlarla bunu paylaşmak hoşuma gidiyor. Hem de benden haberdar olmuş oluyorlar.” [“I like it, of course, but not the number instead the people it reaches. I like to share it with the people I love. They are also aware of me.”]. In addition, P9 states: “Beğenilmediğini gösteren bir işaret almıyoruz zaten. Ayrıca birbirimizin her fotoğrafını kayıtsız şartsız beğendiğimiz arkadaş çevrelerimiz var. Bir fotoğrafı sadece onların beğenmiş

olması bile yeterli. Çoğunlukla diğer beğenenlere bakmıyorum bile.” [“We are not getting any signs of dislike anyway. We also have circles of friends that we like unconditionally every photo of each other. It is enough that only they liked a photo. I mostly don't even look at other likes.”].

This section of the questionnaire showed that we have similar tendencies with World in line with the literature. In addition to this, it seems that feedbacks related to our online posts are important for us somehow even if we don't care about the number of likes. Issues related to our habits can also be seen as a proof that we are using surveilling others as a reference point to shape our online representation or we are seeking for sincere acceptance from our friends whatever we post online.

5.3.2. Mate Selection

This section of the questionnaire contained questions about how we use SNS to reach out potential others. Results show that almost every respondent did cyber surveilling activities on others, in other words almost everyone uses “stalk”ing to reach other attractive ones. However, only six participants stated that they started their romantic relationship via SNS. Moreover, 17 participants stated that others reached out to them to show their interests, and 13 participants stated that they reached out potential others via SNS. Numbers are showing that SNS is a tool for us to collect information about others, and as in majority of the cases, we contact them, too. Respondents generally agree that SNS is a good strategy for reaching out potential others but two broad themes occurred according to their responses. Eleven participants stated that SNS is a good tool for getting to know each other well, and it makes it easy to take the first step. This group labelled as “Beneficial for starting relationships and gathering information”. On the other hand, “Provides a deceiving atmosphere” emerged based on nine participants' answers about people's dishonest representations and therefore starting shallow relationships.

SNS can give individuals an opportunity to collect information about almost anyone. In addition to this, it also gives us a chance to present and perform who we are (Moncur et al., 2016). All these surveilling activities and presentations may help us to reach out others easily. As two respondents, P7 and P8 from “Beneficial for starting relationships and gathering information” group state: “Sosyal medyanın ilişkilerin başlamasında ortak ilgi alanlarına sahip kişilerin birbirlerini bulmasına imkân tanıdığını ve kişilere iletişim kurma seçeneklerini kolay ve geniş bir yelpazede sunarak bir aktivatör gibi rol aldığını düşünüyorum”. [“I think that social media enables people with common interests to find each other in the beginning of the relations and plays a role as an activator by providing people with an easy and wide range of communication options.”]; Tanımayı çok kolaylaştırıyor. Bunun yanında beğenilerini ve insan ilişkilerini sormadan da öğrenebiliyorsunuz”. [“It makes recognition very easy. Besides, you can learn likings and interpersonal relationships of others without asking.”].

Information gathering strategies are not the only way of using SNS according to this group. They also believe that reaching out or communicating with appealing others is much easier via SNS. To illustrate, P11 states: “Yüz yüze konuşmaktan daha rahat bir ortam sağladığını düşünüyorum. Yazarak duyguları ifade etmek daha kolay bence”. [“I think it provides a more comfortable environment than talking face to face. I think it's easier to express emotions by typing.”]. In addition, P13 states: “Birine sosyal hesaplardan ulaşmak daha kolay. Bence ilişkilerin başlamasında oldukça etkisi var. Karşı karşıya gelmekten daha kolay bir ortam oluşuyor bence. Tanışma sürecini de hızlandırıyor.”. [“It is easier to reach someone through social accounts. I think it has a lot to do with starting relationships. I think an easier environment is created than to face to face counterparts. It also speeds up the dating process.”].

Moreover, participants from “Beneficial for starting relationships and gathering information” group also believe that SNS are giving us a chance to get to know each other well, and it also develops sense of intimacy. P5 states: “Daha önce hiç tanışmamış insanlar için başka iletişim yolu yoksa kullanılabilir ya da

herhangi bir arkadaş ortamında tanışılmışsa bu tanışıklık üzerinden samimiyet kurmak ve birbirini tanımak için kullanılabilir.” [“If there is no other way of communication for people who have never met before, it can be used, or if two people have been met in any friend environment, it can be used to establish intimacy and get to know each other through this acquaintance.” and P12 states: “Bence artık sosyal ortamda tanışsa bile insanlar sosyal medyayı samimiyet kurma anlamında kullanıyorlar. Paylaşımları ile birbirlerini tanıyorlar ve sohbet başlatmak için bahaneleri oluyor.” [“I think people use social media in terms of establishing sincerity even if they meet in social life. They know each other by sharing and they have excuses to start a conversation.”].

Other common view amongst interviewees was about fictional and fake representations. This group was labeled as “Provides a deceiving atmosphere”, and they generally accept the role of SNS on mate selection but they don’t believe that it’s a sincere way of starting a romantic relationship. Two respondents, P1 and P18 stated that: “İletişim kurulacak başka platform bulunamıyorsa/yaratılamıyorsa sosyal medyalar bu anlamda uygun bir iletişim aracı olarak görünüyor. Buna rağmen samimiyetsiz ve sanal olarak değerlendiriyorum, ciddiyet barındırmıyor.” [“If no other platforms to communicate with can be found / created, social media seem to be a suitable communication tool in this sense. Despite this, I consider it insincere and virtual, it is not serious.”]; “Daha rahat oluyor hiç kasılmıyorsun ama dış görünüşe dayalı. Kendimizi sosyal medyada daha güzel gösteriyoruz” [“It gets more comfortable, you don't get nervous at all, but it is based on appearance. We show ourselves better on social media.”].

Moreover, even if this group accepts that SNS are good for expressing emotions for many people, they still accept that starting a relationship via SNS is trivializing the value of romantic relationships as P6 describes:

Benim tercih ettiğim ya da onayladığım bir ilişki kurma tarzı değil ama birçok kişinin sosyal medyada normal hayatında olduğundan daha girişken, daha rahat olduğunu biliyorum. Bu durumda beğendiği kişiye

hislerini belli etmesi (seri “like” gibi) ya da doğrudan hislerini açması çok daha kolay oluyor. Ayrıca birçok kişi ilişki durumunu açıkça paylaştığı ya da belli ettiği için bu duruma göre pozisyon almak kolaylaşıyor. Bir de tabi ayrılıklar da bu şekilde takibi bırakmak kadar kolay oluyor. Ancak ben eski tarz ilişkilerin insanı olduğumdan tüm bunları romantik ilişkilerin içini boşaltan durumlar olarak görüyorum. [It is not the way I establish or approve of a relationship that I prefer, but I know that many people are more sociable and more comfortable in social media than in their normal life. In this case, it is much easier to express his/her feelings to the person he/she likes (such as liking many photos at once) or to directly open his feelings. Also, since many people openly share or state the relationship status, it becomes easier to take positions according to this situation. And, of course, separations are as easy as unfollowing. However, since I am the person of old-style relationships, I see all of these as situations that shrink romantic relationships.].

A variety of perspectives were expressed related to the role of SNS on mate selection and starting a new romantic relationship. It seems that the role of SNS on this issue is undeniable, but some sees it as a fake and fictional way of building a romantic relationship.

5.3.3. Being in a Relationship

In the previous sections, participants reported their general habits and ideas about online mate selection processes. However, SNS also have an effect during the romantic relationships, and because of this reason, current section focuses on the perspectives related to ongoing romantic involvements. Thirteen participants stated that they are monitoring their partners via SNS, and also, they are paying attention to the likes and comments of others on their partners’ posts. These activities are similar to the literature, as well (Rueda et al., 2015). It seems that privacy is an important issue when it comes to experience a romantic relationship in the age of internet. Current section divided into three broad units based on the ideas related to relational sharing on SNS namely “Sharing Happiness”, “Showing Romantic Relationship” and “Shallow”. It seems that 10 participants, “Sharing Happiness”, think that relational sharing on SNS is a good way of showing their happiness to only their friends and loved ones, but they are also a bit nervous about excessive sharing. Following examples are related to these

perceptions. P4 states: “Mutluluğunuzu sevdiğiniz insanlarla paylaşmak artmasına sebep oluyor.” [Sharing your happiness with the people you love causes an increase in your happiness”]. P6 also states:

Hiçbir hesabım tüm kullanıcılara açık değil ve sadece benim takip etmesine izin verdiğim kişiler takip edebiliyor sosyal medya hesaplarımı. Bu kişiler dışında ilişkimle ilgili yaptığım tek tük paylaşımları kimse göremez. Bunun rahatlığıyla özellikle Instagram’da bazen fotoğraf paylaşıyorum. Ama bunlar genellikle aslında gittiğimiz konserden vb. anı paylaşmak gibi. Durup dururken evde oturduğumuz yerde fotoğraf çekip paylaşmıyoruz ya da Facebook’ta birbirimize aşkımızı haykırmıyoruz. Hatta yapanlarla alay ediyoruz birlikte. [None of my accounts are open to all users and only the people I allow to follow can follow my social media accounts. Apart from these people, no one can see the sporadic posts I made about my relationship. With the convenience of this, I sometimes share photos, especially on Instagram. But these are usually from the concert we went to, etc. like sharing the moment. We do not take photos and share in the place we sit at home while standing still, or we do not shout our love to each other on Facebook. We even mock those who do it together.].

Moreover, P5 stated that: “Sıklığı fazla olmadığı (mesela her gün) sürece, başka güzel anıların paylaşımı gibi, olumlu buluyorum.”. [“Unless its frequency is high (for example every day), I find it positive, like sharing beautiful memories.”].

While some felt this way, others see it as a way of showing that they are not available for others. In other words, four participants, labeled as “Showing RR” stated that they see these activities as a protection against potential threats as it was mentioned before (Tokunaga, 2011). For example, some interviewees, P17, P16, P9 said: “Hep paylaşıyorum, her anımızı paylaşıyorum, herkes görmeli. Çok sevimli bir şey bence. Yorumlar da hoşuma gider.”. [“I always share, I share every moment, everybody should see. I think it's a very cute thing. I also like the comments.”]; Seviyorum paylaşmayı. Belki de bu takipçilerime bir gözdağı oluyor. Sevgilim var, çok mutluyuz... gibi. Göstermeyi seviyorum. [“I love to share. Maybe this will intimidate my followers. I have a lover, we are very happy... like. I like to show it.”]; “İnsan sevdiğini (sevgilisini) göstermek ister.”. [“Person wants to show his/her beloved (lover).”].

On the contrary, some other participants expressed the belief that these kinds of sharing are developing a fictional presentation about relationships. Six participants were placed under this theme, and they were labeled as “Shallow”. Following statements are the examples. P20 believes that: “Bence bu gibi paylaşımları ilişkisinden emin olamayanlar daha çok yapıyorlar. Eğer içeride mutluyusan bunu deklare etmezsin.” [“I think those who are unsure of their relationship do more sharing like this. If you're happy inside, you won't bid this.”]. P10 states: “Bu konu hakkında çok bir fikrim yok ancak biraz daha ‘Evet, ben mutluyum’ imajı çizmek için yapıldığını düşünüyorum.” [“I don't have much idea about this, but I think it was done to draw the image of ‘Yes, I'm happy’.”]. Finally, P19 said that: “Gerçekçi değil. Hep mutlu olunamaz. Bence tam tersini temsil ediyor. Mutlu gibi görülsün. Yardım çağrısı gibi.” [“Not realistic. You cannot always be happy. I think it represents the opposite. May he look happy. Like a call for help.”].

In summary, these comments from participants showed that majority of them are using SNS to represent their romantic relationship. However, some participants seem suspicious about the message that was given via those sharing. Suspicious group can be accepted as more resilient to the effect of relational sharing of others, but more accurate explanations must be developed after testing this effect following the exposure.

5.3.4. Dissolution

Dissolution is relatively weak topic related to the SNS when it is compared to other stages of relationship. Questionnaire contains two questions related to this content, and almost all participants gave similar answers. Due to these similarities, current content did not divide into thematic units. According to the responses, 17 participants did not use SNS as a tool for ending their relationship. Only three respondents used online channels for break up. For example, two participants, P10 and P18, stated as: “Whatsapp aracılığı ile yüz yüze bitirmeye cesaret edemediğim bir ilişkiye son vermiştim.” [“I ended my relationship,

which I did not dare to face face to face through Whatsapp.”]; “Beni aldatan kız arkadaşıma Facebook üzerinden bitti diye mesaj attım.” [“I sent a message to my girlfriend who cheated on me that it was over on Facebook”].

It seems that a small number of individuals use SNS as a communication tool for break ups when they face with stressful dissolutions. Moreover, 18 respondents stated they witnessed breakups of others via SNS. They stated that some certain online behavioral changes make others’ break ups more visible to others. As one interviewee, P6, put it: “Evet. Hatta birçok kişinin yaptığı gibi artık hiç birlikte fotoğraf paylaşılmaması, eski fotoğrafların silinmesi, kız kıza erkek erkeğe paylaşımların artması gibi bazı ipuçlarını çoğunlukla fark ederim.” [“Yes. In fact, I often notice some clues like many people do not share photos together anymore, delete old photos, increase sharing to girl to girl or boy to boy photos.”].

These expressed statements may be insufficient for making general explanations, but some effects of SNS on romantic relationships such as partner monitoring or privacy violations need deeper analysis to see the role of SNS on dissolutions.

5.3.5. Post Breakup

Dissolution can be very stressful for many relationships, and the effect of SNS may determine our post breakup behaviors. This section of the questionnaire required respondents to give answers related to their post breakup behaviors and general opinions about the role of SNS on post breakup. Following example from P6 is a good starting point to show general opinions of the participants related to this topic:

İlişkinin sonlandığı ilk dönemde özellikle ayrılmayı istemeyen ya da unutamayan kişi için hem takip etme gibi bir kapı açık bırakıyor hem de sürekli onun paylaşımlarına maruz kalıp ayrılığın tam olarak yaşanamaması gibi bir duygu yoğunluğuna sebep oluyor. Aslında bence çoğunlukla olumsuz etkiliyor. Ama merak mıdır ya da umut mudur nedir bilmiyorum, bir sebeple en sık bu dönemlerde kullanılıyor olabilir. Bence

bu da başkasını bulmuş mu, yeni sevgilisi benden daha mı güzel, bizim olduğumuzdan daha mı mutlular, ne kaybettim gibi düşüncelere dayanıyor. [For the person who does not want to end the relationship or forget, especially in the first period when the relationship ends, it leaves a door open to stalk and being constantly exposed to his/her sharing causes a intense feeling of not being able to fully experience the separation. In fact, I think it mostly affects negatively. But I do not know whether it is curiosity or hope, for some reason it may be used most often in these periods. I think this is based on thoughts like whether he/she found anyone else, his/her new lover is better than me, are they happier than we are, what I lost.].

This response is showing similarities with the literature. One study found that surveillance activities after breakup are a source of distress (Lukacs & Quan-Hasse, 2015). In addition, due to the common friends and massive information traffic, it is almost inevitable to avoid surveilling activities. Three broad themes appeared related to this content namely “Just Friends”, “It’s Over” and “Stalker”. In “Just Friends”, there were four respondents. This group seems to have healthy relationships after breakups with their ex partners. One interviewee, P4, stated as follow: “Eski partnerimi takip ediyorum. Herhangi bir arkadaşımı nasıl takip ediyorsam onları da öyle takip ediyorum. Başka bir amacım yok. Takip sıklığı onların paylaşım sıklığına göre değişiyor. Sürekli paylaşım yaptıkları dönemlerde daha fazla takip ediyor olabilirim.”. [“I follow my old partner. Just as I follow any of my friends, I follow them as well. I have no other purpose. My frequency changes according to their sharing frequency. I may be following more during periods of continuous sharing.”].

It seems that some respondents successfully manage to continue their relationships with their ex’s, but majority of the respondents prefer not to. Nine participants were in “It’s Over” group, and they were not engaging any kind of communication with their ex partners. P12 stated that she also refuses to answer messages from her ex on SNS: “Eski partnerim sosyal medya üzerinden bana daha önce ulaştı. Bir bahane ile tekrar konuşmak istedi ancak yanıt vermedim.”. [“My former partner has reached me on social media before. He wanted to speak to an excuse again, but I did not answer.”].

As in previous example, participants from the thematic unit “It’s Over” stated that they are not preferring to contact with their ex’s via SNS, but seven participants from “Stalker” suggest otherwise. This theme came up from mostly the surveilling activities. In other words, these interviewees are generally stalking their ex’s to see how they are living their life after breakups. As two interviewees, P16 and P17, said: “Bence sosyal medyanın ilişki sonrası dönemde rolü büyük. Karşı taraf mutlu mu? Ne yapıyor? Nerede takılıyor? Ona atıfta da bulunabiliyorsun, işte şu şarkıyı dinliyorum gibi...”. [“I think social media has a big role in the post-relationship period. Is the other party happy? What is he/she doing? Where does it hang? You can also refer to him/her, like I'm listening to this song...”]; “Bir etki var, şöyle ki; bakarsın nereyi kazanmış? Şu anda nerede? Sevgilisi var mı? Beni çabuk unutmuş mu acaba?”. [“There is an effect, that is; look where did he/she win? Where is he/she now? Does he/she have a girlfriend/boyfriend? Did he/she forget me quickly?”].

Hope can also play a part in this issue. In some cases, participants stated that they try to reach out their ex-partner with hoping to start again but it seems that surveilling activities are at their most right after the breakups. P13 stated as follows: “Bu takip aslında belli bir döneme kadar oluyor. Evet takip etmiştim. Merak edip her gün baktığım oluyordu”. [“This following is actually up to a certain period. Yes, I followed. I was wondering and looking at it every day.”]. Moreover, P16 also states: Engellenmediğim sürece takip ediyorum, stalklıyorum. Başlarda daha çok bakıyordum ama şimdi haftada 1-2. [“Unless I am blocked, I follow and stalk. At first, I was looking more but now 1 or 2 times a week.”].

Moreover, one interviewee, P15, stated that she was using fake accounts to surveilling her ex-partner after breakup. It seems that our post breakup behaviors were related to SNS. Not only our habits to use SNS and the way we end our relationships, but also our personality traits must be investigated to develop more insightful explanations related to this topic.

5.3.6. RSC Tendencies

One single open-ended question was put into the questionnaire to find out respondents' opinions about experiencing relational sharing of others. Two different discourses emerged. Nine participants stated that they were not be affected by those sharing. This group labeled as "Immune". General attitude about relational sharing of others can be seen in the comments. P3: "Ben kıyas tutmuyorum. Beni hiç etkilemiyor." ["I do not compare. It doesn't affect me at all."]. P9: Açıkçası pek umurumda olmaz. İnsanlar beğensin diye ilişki yaşanma şekli değişmiyor, değişmemeli." ["Frankly, I don't care much. The way people have a relationship doesn't change, it shouldn't.]. P14: "Beni etkilemiyor, insanların ilişkileri nasılmış diye stalk yapmıyorum." ["It doesn't affect me, I don't stalk people's relationships."].

In addition to these examples, some other participants in this group also stated that some posts may caught their attention, but they have no effect on their romantic relationships. As P13 stated: "Hayır aslında etkilemiyor. Sayfalarda bloglarda gördüğüm fotoğraflar dikkatimi çekiyor o doğru ama ilişkimi etkilediğini söyleyemem." ["No, it doesn't. The photos I see on the blogs attract my attention, it's true, but I can't say it affects my relationship."]. On the other hand, 11 participants stated otherwise. In "Vulnerable", respondents believe that relational sharing of others has an effect on their relationships. Some argues that famous people are affecting their relationship via their presentation of romantic relationships along with their wealth and opportunities. For example, P11 states: "Özellikle Instagramda luxury diye bahsettiğimiz çok sayıda çiçek veya balon paylaşımı tarzlar hoşuma gidiyor. Karşı taraftan da bu kadar olmasa bile bu tarz bir şey görmeyince bazen tartışma ortamı oluşabiliyor." ["I especially like the many flower or balloon sharing styles that we refer to as luxury on Instagram. There is sometimes an atmosphere of debate when you do not see such a thing from your partner, even if it is not that much"]. P17 said that: "Beni etkiler. Herhâlde ben ünlüleri çok takip ediyorum diye. Daha çok geziyorlar ve daha mutlular. Paraları var. Sen de gitmek istiyorsun (Tatile)." ["It affects me. I guess

I am following the celebrities a lot. They travel more and are happier. They have money. You want to go too (On vacation)"] and P6 describes: "En çok özendiğim benden daha çok parası ve zamanı olan çiftlerin paylaşımları. Birlikte dünyanın bir ucundaki tropik adalara gitmiş bir çift görünce buna çok özenip kendi ilişkimle ilgili de böyle hayal kuruyorum...". ["The shares of couples who have more money and time than I do, are the ones I envy most. When I see a couple, who went to the tropical islands at one end of the world together, I envy of this and dream the same about my own relationship..."]. Some others also stated that this effect is not limited with the posts of famous people. They are also affected by posts of their friends. Another interviewee, P10 said: "Kendi açımdan bir problem yaratmıyor ancak eski partnerime kıyaslama şansı verdiğinden bizim ilişkimiz onlar gibi değil sözlerine maruz kalıyordum.". ["It wasn't a problem for me, but because it gave my ex-partner a chance to compare, I was subjected to the sentence of our relationship is not like them."]. Some other examples showed that viewers may wish to experience similar activities to these posts of others. For example, P15 states: "Açıkçası emin değilim. Başkasında güzel olan bizde olmayabilir ama tabi ki de bakarım. Onlar şunu yapmış aşkımlar biz de yapalım derim ama çok da emin olamıyorum.". ["Frankly, I'm not sure. Something that good for others may not good for us, but of course I will. They said that my love, we should do it too. but I am not so sure."]. P16 also states: "Yakın bir arkadaşın çift olarak tatile veya başka bir yere gittiğinde ben de gideyim diyorsun. Onları görüp sen de plan yapıyorsun birlikte.". ["When a close friend of mine goes on vacation or somewhere else, you say I will go there too. You see them and you make plan with your partner too."]. Finally, P6 describes:

...Benzer şekilde lise arkadaşlarım art arda evlenirken ya da çocuk yaparken ben niye bunlar gibi değilim diye sorguluyorum. Ama bu özendiren paylaşımların sayısı oldukça az. Çoğunlukla insanların mutsuz ilişkilerini mutlu gösterme çabası gibi görüyorum. Etrafımda gerçekten çok çok az sayıda gerçekten mutlu çift var. Sosyal medyada herkesin mutlu gözükmesi gerçekçi gelmiyor. [... Similarly, I question why am I not like my high school friends when they get married or have children. But the number of posts that encourage this is quite low. I often see it as an effort to make people's unhappy relationships happy. There are very

few really happy couples around me. It is unrealistic for everyone to look happy on social media.].

Another interviewee, P5, when asked about her opinion, said that this affect is not limited with the relational sharing. Instead, it is about all posts on SNS. The interviewee stated as follows:

Fazla olumlu paylaşıma maruz kalmanın, bir süre sonra kendi sürecini olumsuz etkilediğini ve kendini yetersiz hissettirdiğini düşünüyorum. Ama bu durum sadece romantik ilişki konusunda geçerli değil. Örneğin çok fazla diyet ve spor hesabı/profilini takip eden insanların zamanla vücut ve sağlık algılarının değiştiğini ve genellikle de olumsuz etkilendiğini düşünüyorum. [I think that being exposed to very positive sharing has a negative effect on our own process after a while and makes us feel inadequate. But this is not just about romantic relationships. For example, I think that people who follow too many diet and sports accounts / profiles have changed their body and health perceptions over time and are generally negatively affected.].

5.4. Summary of Findings

Previous examples showed that posts of others can have an effect on our relationships, and this is one of the main points of this study. Taken together, these results provide important insights into the role of SNS in romantic involvements and general habits related to them. The themes emerged from the data set provides important evidences in parallel to expectations. Issues related to the role of SNS on the different stages of romantic relationships were took place in interviewees responses. Previous examples clearly showed that SNS have a role in every four stages. In addition to this, issues related to RSC based on relational posts of others on SNS were prominent in the interview data. If we now turn to quantitative analysis, the next section of the study will try to find experimental evidences related to the role of SNS on RSC tendencies, relationships satisfaction and so on.

CHAPTER 6

STUDY 2

6.1. Introduction

In the previous section of this thesis, role of SNS on romantic relationships and possible explanations related to our tendency to make RSC based on posts of others were analyzed via a qualitative study. However, analyzing the effect on SNS on romantic relationships needs more analysis to make any further explanations. In order to fulfill the aim of this thesis, Study 2 will try to assess the effect of relational posts of others on viewers romantic relationships with a quantitative experimental design.

In study 2, participants were deliberately exposed to different visual materials of online sharing related to two main topics, relational posts and natural posts. Participants randomly exposed to visual materials of two different topics. Based on presented materials, participants were divided into two groups as experimental group ($N = 133$) and control group ($N = 118$). Measurements was made right after the exposure to assess the effect of SNS on romantic relationships. By doing so, current study aims clarify how online posts of others can shape our beliefs related to romantic relationships and see if there is any effect on viewers' tendency to make RSC (H1) or relationships satisfaction (H2). Moreover, possible other variables related to RSC tendencies such as relationship satisfaction, investment, quality of alternatives, personality traits and attachment style will also be investigated to see if there is any moderation effect of SNS exist on RSC tendencies (H3, H4).

6.2. Method

In order to test the hypothesis of the study, participants in the experimental group will be exposed to a relational post of an individual who shared his/her relationship via SNS. Participants were view the post, and then they answered some ordinary questions, such as number of likes or the names of the places that the couple visited, related to presented post in order to make sure that the participant was focused on the presented material to see the effect of exposure. After that, participants will be asked to answer measurement tools of this study. In control group, same procedure was followed with only one difference: the content of post. In this group, participants were view a post related to nature and asked to answer similar ordinary questions. Due to its popularity, Instagram was chosen as representative of social media. Relational and natural posts were selected via Instagram real posts of three users. Real names were changed, and permissions were granted from owners of photos. Number of likes, tags and shared information related to photos were manipulated to create Instagram posts as close as possible to real ones. Participants were informed about the manipulation after they concluded the study. Examples of visual materials belong to experimental and control groups can be seen in Figure 1.

6.3. Participants

The data of this study were collected form 251 participants. 180 participants were identified themselves as female and 71 as male. The mean age of the participants was 28.16 ($SD = 6.32$) and ranged from 16 to 64. Number of married participants were 84, other 167 participants stated that they are in a romantic relationship. 97 participants concluded that their relationship was lasting less than two years and 69 of them stated 2-5 years; rest of the sample stated that their relationship was lasting more 5 years. 44% of the participants stated that they were graduated from a university ($N = 110$), 25% from high school ($N = 63$), 24% them had a masters degree ($N = 61$) and 7% listed as other ($N = 17$). 226 participants concluded that they have an Instagram account, 205 of them

have a Facebook account and they were followed by Twitter (N = 165) and Snapchat (52). Finally, only 28 participant reported dissatisfaction related to their relationships but majority of the sample stated that they were satisfied with their relationships (N = 223).

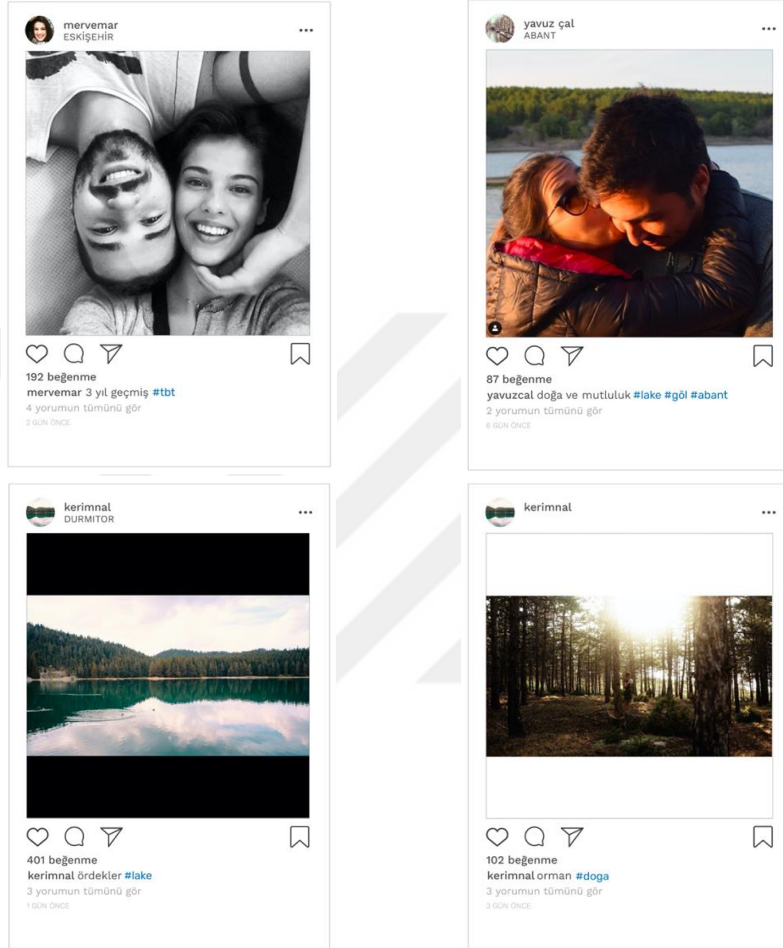


Figure 1: Sample visual materials of experimental and control groups

6.4. Measures

6.4.1. Relationship Social Comparison Measure

The present study intends to assess the relationship social comparison (RSC) tendencies of the participants in order to see the effect of relational posts of others on SNS. In such a concern, this study needs a measurement tool to assess RSC. Similarly, in an investigation of RSC tendencies Smith LeBeau and

Buckingham (2008), developed Relationship Social Comparison Measure (RSCM). RSCM have 24 questions to address how likely and under what kind of circumstances the participants will compare their relationships. RSCM has 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1: never to 5: always. RSCM intended to use as a single scale without any subscales ($\alpha = .92$). RSCM was used in three different studies to investigate the relationship between RSC tendencies, perceived relationship quality and anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Results showed that social comparison tendencies associated with low self-esteem, anxious and avoidant attachment styles and insecurity in relationships. Moreover, results indicate RSC tendencies were also associated with lower satisfaction, commitment and intimacy. Moreover, these tendencies also significantly correlated with insecurity (LeBeau & Buckingham, 2008).

In this study RSCM was translated into Turkish. Before the beginning of any translation processes permission was granted from authors of the original scale. In translation process, each item of the scale was investigated in order to clarify their meanings and intentions. The Turkish version of item 15 and 17 were found to be extremely similar. In order to decrease the risk of asking the same dimension twice, item 15 was excluded from the study. After that, translation back translation method was used to create best possible item set that reflects the original meanings. At the end of translation process, 2 different version of the scale was created in Turkish and finally one psychology professor, native in Turkish and uses English as a foreign language, chose the final version of the measurement. Psychometric properties of translated form of RSCM were examined. The Turkish version of RSCM has high Internal consistency as its original form ($\alpha = .94$). Means, standard deviations and inter item correlations for RSCM can be seen in Table 4. [KMO = .94; Bartlett χ^2 (253) = 3740.90, $p = .001$].

Inter item correlations showed that item 9 “When I am feeling good about my relationship I compare my relationship with other peoples’ relationships” and 23 “I compare my relationship to other peoples’ relationships when I am in a bad

mood” have high correlation scores with the items 22 “I compare my relationship to other peoples’ relationships when I am in a good mood” and 8 “When I am feeling bad about my relationship I compare my relationship to other peoples’ relationships” respectively (r ’s = .72, .73). Due to their high correlation scores with others, items 9 and 23 were discarded from the scale.

In order to address the concerns related to convergent validity, the relationship between RSCM, anxious and avoidant attachment styles and satisfaction was analyzed. The results were expected to show similar tendencies with the study of Smith LeBeau and Buckingham (2008). Anxious and avoidant attachment styles was measured with the Turkish version of Experiences in Close Relationship Inventory (Sümer, 2006) and relationship satisfaction was measured via a single 4-point Likert type ranging from 1: certainly not satisfied to 4: absolutely satisfied. As anticipated, RSC tendencies, assessed with RSCM, in this study was positively related to anxious ($r = .40$) and avoidant ($r = .18$) attachment styles and negatively related to the satisfaction ($r = -.20$).

RSCM was developed as a single scale without any subscales; however, the scale contains questions which can represent different aspects of RSC tendencies. Questions such as, “I compare how happy I am in my relationship to how happy I think others are in their relationships.” and “I compare how my partner and I treat each other to how other couples treat each other.” seem to be related to general RSC tendencies. On the other hand, questions like “I compare how supportive my partner is to other peoples’ partners.” and “I think about how dependable my partner is in comparison to other peoples’ partners.” can be defined as another factor that highlights perceived feature of a partner.

In order to make further explanations, a principal component factor analyses with promax method was conducted. Scree plot analysis and pattern matrix suggested two factor solution. The first factor, will be named as *General Tendency*, contains 14 questions and explains 46% of total variance with loading differs from .47 to .87. Moreover, second factor contains 6 questions and

explains 11% of total variance with factor loadings from .51 to .89. This factor will be named as *Partner Attribution* (see Table 5). Interestingly, item 24 did not have any significant loadings on both factors and did not place under any subgroups so, item 24 “I enjoy listening to other people talk about their relationships” excluded from the scale for further analysis. Final version of the scale can be seen in Appendix D.

A confirmatory factor analysis was also conducted on EQS software (Bentler, 1995) in order to analyze the suggested factor structure of RSCM. Hypothesized model, model 1, was created based on two factors solution of principal component analyses. The first factor, General Tendency, have 14 indicators and second factor, Partner Attribution, have 6 indicators. Analysis was started with model 1 and two other models were created based on post hoc model modifications namely, model 2 and model 3.

Data was not normally distributed so robust statistics were chosen (*Mardia's* $z = 13.87$). The average off-diagonal absolute standardized residual was .05. Distribution of standardized residuals showed that majority of residuals, %87 fall between z scores of -0.1 and 0.1. To illustrate, %41 of the residuals was fall between -0.1 and 0.0 whereas 46% of the residuals fall between 0.0 and 0.1. However, %7 of the residuals was fall between 0.2 and 0.1, %5 of the residuals was fall between -0.2 and -0.1. Finally, only %1 of the residuals was fall between z scores of 0.3 and 0.2. Total number of residuals were 210.

Table 4: Inter Item Correlations, Means and Standard Deviation for Turkish Version of RSCM

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
1	-																						
2	.51	-																					
3	.61	.50	-																				
4	.58	.62	.55	-																			
5	.29	.24	.39	.38	-																		
6	.50	.38	.52	.59	.49	-																	
7	.49	.44	.52	.55	.40	.58	-																
8	.53	.55	.53	.60	.25	.57	.57	-															
9	.53	.51	.57	.61	.43	.59	.62	.57	-														
10	.58	.53	.60	.65	.41	.50	.58	.59	.64	-													
11	.49	.43	.49	.57	.42	.52	.58	.53	.67	.63	-												
12	.60	.58	.59	.64	.39	.54	.56	.65	.57	.62	.65	-											
13	.31	.25	.24	.36	.45	.32	.33	.28	.36	.41	.41	.34	-										
14	.58	.48	.56	.62	.40	.59	.57	.55	.59	.66	.58	.57	.45	-									

Table 4 (continued)

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
16	.41	.43	.47	.53	.45	.44	.48	.42	.50	.49	.51	.52	.33	.66	-								
17	.25	.21	.32	.34	.51	.40	.39	.22	.41	.37	.41	.34	.44	.42	.52	-							
18	.19	.14	.25	.24	.48	.40	.33	.17	.34	.24	.35	.24	.31	.32	.34	.49	-						
19	.23	.15	.28	.27	.42	.36	.36	.27	.40	.30	.35	.30	.35	.38	.40	.58	.70	-					
20	.18	.17	.26	.25	.51	.31	.28	.16	.32	.24	.36	.28	.48	.31	.42	.65	.53	.56	-				
21	.47	.45	.41	.55	.29	.46	.45	.58	.42	.60	.50	.54	.39	.56	.48	.38	.27	.27	.31	-			
22	.45	.50	.49	.53	.33	.51	.59	.50	.72	.59	.66	.58	.27	.51	.46	.34	.34	.36	.28	.44	-		
23	.64	.57	.57	.59	.31	.51	.58	.73	.54	.67	.59	.74	.32	.64	.51	.30	.21	.30	.22	.63	.57	-	
24	.16	.29	.25	.25	.27	.35	.30	.28	.31	.27	.34	.39	.30	.28	.27	.31	.24	.19	.30	.32	.32	.31	-
Mean	2.04	2.04	2.20	2.11	2.80	2.09	2	2.03	1.86	1.98	1.85	2	2.19	2.14	2.24	2.52	2.34	2.35	2.81	2.04	1.69	2.01	2.80
SD	.94	.98	1	1.05	1.21	1.12	1.01	1.06	1.01	1.02	.94	1	1.13	1.06	1.15	1.30	1.27	1.23	1.28	1.02	.94	1.02	1.16

Note: SD = Standard Deviation, Item 15 discarded before correlation analysis

Table 5: Promax rotated factors of Relationship Social Comparison Measure (Turkish)

	I	II
General Tendency ($\alpha = .93$)		
8 - When I am feeling bad about my relationship, I compare my relationship to other peoples' relationships. (İlişkim hakkında kötü hissettiğimde, diğer insanların ilişkileriyle ilişkiyi kıyaslarım.)	.87	-.16
4 - I compare how my partner and I treat each other to how other couples treat each other. (Partnerim/Eşim ile birbirimize nasıl davrandığımızı başkalarının partnerlerine/eşlerine karşı olan davranışlarıyla karşılaştırırım.)	.84	-.05
12 - I compare my relationship with other couples whose relationships are better than mine. (İlişkimi, benimkinden daha iyi ilişkisi olan çiftlerin ilişkileriyle karşılaştırırım.)	.83	-.02
2 - I pay a lot of attention to how well my partner and I resolve problems compared to how well other couples solve their problems. (Partnerim/Eşim ile ilişkimizdeki problemleri çözme becerilerimizi, başkalarının ilişkilerindeki problem çözme becerileriyle karşılaştırırım)	.83	-.21
İlişkimdeki romantizmi başkalarının ilişkilerindeki romantizm ile karşılaştırırım.)		
10 - I think about how romantic my relationship is compared to how romantic other couples' relationships are. (İlişkideki mutluluğumu, başkalarının ilişkilerindeki mutlulukları ile karşılaştırırım.)	.82	-.01
3 - I think about what types of activities my partner and I participate in together compared to what other couples do together. (Partnerim/Eşim ile birlikte yaptığımız aktiviteleri başkalarının ilişkilerinde yaptıkları aktiviteler ile karşılaştırırım.)	.75	-.01
14 - I compare the things that my partner does for me to what other peoples' partners do for them. (Partnerimin/Eşimin benim için yaptıklarını başkalarının partnerleri/eşleri için yaptıklarıyla karşılaştırırım)	.71	.15
22 - I compare my relationship to other peoples' relationships when I am in a good mood. (Kendimi iyi hissettiğim zamanlarda ilişkiyi başkalarının ilişkileriyle karşılaştırırım)	.68	.09
7 - I compare how much time my partner and I spend together to how much time other couples spend together. (Partnerim/Eşim ile ne kadar zaman geçirdiğimizi başkalarının kendi partnerleri/eşleri ile geçirdikleri zamanla karşılaştırırım.)	.68	.12

Table 5 (continued)

	I	II
11 - I compare my relationship with other couples whose relationships are worse than mine. (İlişkimi, benimkinden daha kötü ilişkisi olan çiftlerin ilişkileriyle karşılaştırırım.)	.67	.18
21 - I think about how often my partner and I argue compared to how often other couples argue. (Partnerimle/Eşimle yaşadığımız tartışmaları başkalarının ilişkilerine kıyasla ne sıklıkta yaşadığımızı düşünürüm.)	.66	.09
6 - I compare how satisfied I am with my relationship to how satisfied I think others are in their relationships. (İlişkimden ne kadar memnun olduğumu, başkalarının kendi ilişkilerinden ne kadar memnun olduklarına dair düşüncelerimle karşılaştırırım.)	.61	.21
16 - I compare how supportive my partner is to other peoples' partners. (Partnerimin/Eşimin bana verdiği desteği başkalarının partnerlerinden/eşlerinden buldukları destekle kıyaslarım.)	.48	.35
Partner Attribution ($\alpha = .86$)		
20 - I compare how considerate my partner is to how considerate other peoples' partners are. (Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar anlayışlı olduğu üzerine düşünürüm.)	-.14	.89
18 - I compare how attractive my partner is to how attractive other peoples' partners are. (Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar çekici olduğu üzerine düşünürüm.)	-.13	.84
19 - I think about how successful my partner is in comparison to other peoples' partners. (Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar başarılı olduğu üzerine düşünürüm.)	-.08	.83
17 - I think about how dependable my partner is in comparison to other peoples' partners. (Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar güvenilir olduğu üzerine düşünürüm.)	.01	.81
5 - I think about how well my partner and I communicate with each other compared to how well other couples communicate with each other. (Partnerim/Eşim ile olan iletişimimizin diğer çiftlerin ilişkilerine kıyasla ne kadar iyi olduğu üzerine düşünürüm.)	.14	.64
13 - I think about how romantic my partner is in comparison to other peoples' partners. (Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerleriyle/eşleriyle karşılaştırıldığında ne kadar romantik olduğu üzerine düşünürüm.)	.18	.51

Table 5 (continued)

	I	II
24 - I enjoy listening to other people talk about their relationships. (Diğer insanların ilişkileri hakkında yaptıkları konuşmaları dinlemeyi severim.)	.26	.27
Explained Total Variance	45.89	11.05
Means	2.03	2.49
Cronbach's Alpha	.94	.86

Note: I: General Tendency, II: Partner Attribution

Goodness of fit summary for robust statistics showed that hypothesized model, model 1, did not fit the data ($S-B \chi^2 (169) = 326.80, p = .000, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .06, 90\% CI [.05, .07]$). Loadings of each indicator were significant. Loadings were falling between 8.56 and 13.27. Correlation between General Tendency and Partner Attribution factors was .58. Post hoc model modification results were controlled for finding a better fit. According to these results, additional covariance parameters between the error term of item 14 and item 16 suggested as first modification. In addition to this, an additional covariance parameter between the error term of item 18 and item 19 was also suggested as second modification. Suggestions were added into model separately. Results yielded significant chi square difference exists between model 1 and model 2 as well as model 2 and model 3. [$\Delta \chi^2 (1) = 34.87, p < .01$; ($\Delta \chi^2 (1) = 16.8, p < .01$)]. After final modification, model 3 provides a good fit ($S-B \chi^2 (167) = 275.13, p = .00, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05, 90\% CI [.04, .06]$). Fit indices for each model can be seen in Table 6 and final model presented in Figure 2.

Table 6: Model fit indices for models

	S-B χ^2	df	S-B χ^2/df	CFI	%90 CI	RMSEA	SRMR	p
MODEL 1	326.80	169	1.93	.93	.05-.07	.06	.07	.000
MODEL 2	291.93	168	1.73	.94	.04-.06	.05	.06	.000
MODEL 3	275.13	167	1.65	.95	.04-.06	.05	.06	.000

Note 1: Model 1: The first model without any modification.

Note 2: Model 2: Second model after an additional covariance parameter between the error term of item 14 and item 16

Note 3: Model 3: Third model after an additional covariance parameter between the error term of item18 and item 19.

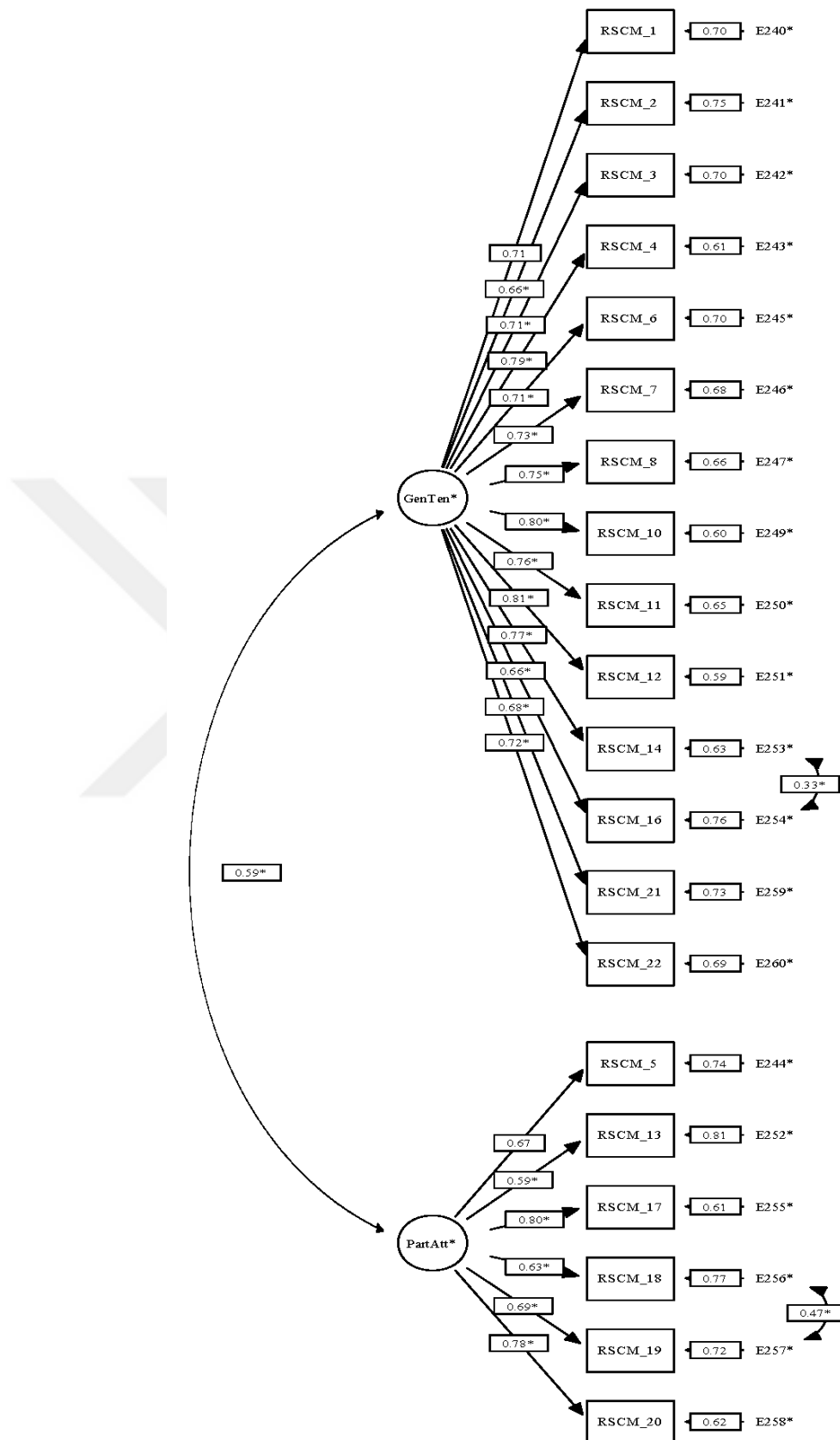


Figure 2: *Final model for RSCM*

6.4.2. Adult Attachment Style

Adult attachment style was assessed via Experiences in Close Relationships Revise (ECR-R) (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Turkish adaptation of ECR-R (Selçuk, Günaydın, Sumer, & Uysal, 2005) was used in the study. ECR-R contains 36 7 - point Likert type questions ranging from 1: Strongly agree to 7: strongly disagree. ECR-R also has two subcategories. Each category has 18 questions. Subcategories were designed to assess anxiety ($\alpha = .86$) and avoidance ($\alpha = .90$) dimensions of attachment (See Appendix E).

6.4.3. Relationship Social Comparison, Satisfaction and Commitment

Relationship Stability Scale (Büyükşahin, Hasta, & Hovardaoğlu, 2005) was used for assessing the satisfaction ($\alpha = .90$), investments ($\alpha = .84$) and quality of alternatives ($\alpha = .84$) (See Appendix F). Scale was originally developed for investigating relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investment and commitment in romantic relationships. In addition to this, relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and relationship investment can be seen as determinants of commitment (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998) therefore, in this study, RSS was used to assess relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and relationship investment like the first adaptation study (Büyükşahin, Hasta, & Hovardaoğlu, 2005). Each three subgroup have 10 questions. First five questions were assessed via 4-point Likert-type scale, while 9-point Likert-type scale was used to assess the last five questions.

6.4.4. Personality Traits

Personality traits will be analyzed for explanatory purposes to see if there are any personality traits making us more vulnerable to the effect of SNS. Basic Personality Traits Inventory (BPTI) were used for assessing the personality traits due to its adaptation to Turkish culture (Appendix G). BPTI contains 45 questions rated on 5-point Likert-type scale to assess personality facets namely, openness to experience ($\alpha = .92$), conscientiousness ($\alpha = .92$), extraversion ($\alpha =$

.92), agreeableness ($\alpha = .92$), neuroticism ($\alpha = .92$) and one additional dimension, negative valence ($\alpha = .92$). This sixth dimension showed that five factor model is not immune to the effect of culture. In Turkish sample, neuroticism and negative valence both have negative effect on psychological well-being. However, negative valence is more related to self-worth while neuroticism is more related to anxiety and distress (Gençöz & Öncül, 2012).

6.5. Results

The results section will cover statistical analyses under four parts. In the first part, data screening process will be mentioned, second part will cover the correlations between variables that were used in the study. Comparison between experimental and control groups will be mentioned in the third part and finally, results of regression and moderation analyses will be presented in the fourth part.

6.5.1. Data Screening

The data was collected via online survey tool Qualtrics. Participants were selected via online channels, and they were invited to this study with a link. Once a participant clicks on the link of the study, Qualtrics recorded their response along with the IP address and progress of the participant. First cleaning was made based on these IP addresses and progress reports. 477 participants were attended in the study but only 254 of them finished. Therefore, 223 participants were excluded from the study. After checking for the missing values, assumptions of normality and linearity were checked in order to see if assumptions of multivariate analyses were met. Skewness and kurtosis values showed that there is an acceptable distribution in terms of normality. However, some variables seem negatively skewed within the acceptable range (Waternaux, 1976; as cited in Tabasnick & Fidell, 2014), such as relationship satisfaction with skewness of -1.15 ($SE = 0.15$) and kurtosis of 1.18 ($SE = .30$) and agreeableness with skewness of - 0.80 ($SE = 0.15$) and kurtosis of 1.97 ($SE = .30$). Scatter plots were examined for linearity, and assumptions were met.

There were also three multivariate outliers exist in the data so, they were omitted for further analyses. Finally, 251 participants were left to test the hypotheses of the study.

6.5.2. Correlations

The first set of analyses were made to see correlations between variables. In the study, RSC tendencies were measured via Turkish version RSCM, and psychometric properties of RSCM yielded that scale has two sub scales namely, general tendency and partner attribution. Since the original form of RSCM has no subgroups, participants total score of RSCM added into calculations in addition to two subcategories. Therefore, participants of the study have three different score for their tendency to make RSC. Moreover, relationship satisfaction, investments and quality of alternatives were calculated via RSS (Büyükşahin, Hasta, & Hovardaoğlu, 2005) and considered in the study as well. Turkish adaptation of BPTI (Gençöz & Öncül, 2012) was used to assess the personality traits of participants. In addition to classical five personality traits namely, openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism; Turkish adaption has an additional personality trait, named as negative valance. All six traits were analyzed in this study. Finally, adult attachment style was measured via Turkish version of ECR-R (Selçuk, Günaydın, Sumer, & Uysal, 2005), and two attachment style, anxious and avoidant, were taken under consideration.

Results yielded some significant correlations between variables. First, total score of RSCM was positively correlated with anxious ($r = .40$) and avoidant ($r = .18$) attachment styles; personality trait neuroticism ($r = .17$); and investments ($r = .25$). On the other hand, it negatively relates to the relationship satisfaction ($r = -.21$) and openness to experience ($r = -.23$). Subcategories of RSCM showed similar correlations. General tendency scores positively correlated with anxious ($r = .46$) and avoidant ($r = .26$) attachment styles; personality trait neuroticism ($r = .20$); quality of alternatives ($r = .15$) and investment ($r = .26$); negatively

correlated with relationship satisfaction ($r = -.32$); conscientiousness ($r = -.15$); and openness to experience ($r = -.28$). However, partner attribution scores only positively correlated with anxious ($r = .15$) attachment style and investment ($r = .15$).

In addition to above mentioned results, relationship satisfaction had some significant correlations within the expected direction. For instance, personality traits extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience, and investment score were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction (r 's = .14, .30, .14, .17, .18 respectively). Relationship satisfaction was also negatively correlated with negative valence ($r = .17$); anxious ($r = .31$); and avoidant attachment styles ($r = .40$). Moreover, quality of alternatives was found to be negatively correlated with conscientiousness ($r = -.13$); and investment was found to be positively correlated with conscientiousness ($r = .16$), neuroticism ($r = .12$); anxious ($r = .24$) attachment style.

Personality traits were also correlated with each other as expected. Extraversion was positively correlated with conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness to experience (r 's = .19, .43, .51 respectively); and negatively with neuroticism and negative valence (r 's = -.24, -.23). Conscientiousness was positively correlated with agreeableness ($r = .30$) and openness to experience ($r = .29$); negatively correlated with neuroticism ($r = -.18$) and negative valence ($r = -.20$). In addition to this, agreeableness was found to be positively correlated with openness to experience ($r = .34$), and negatively with negative valence ($r = -.47$) and neuroticism ($r = -.26$). Moreover, neuroticism was negatively related to openness to experience ($r = -.19$) and positively with only negative valence ($r = .43$). Finally, openness to experience was found to have negative correlation with negative valence ($r = -.13$). All correlations between personality traits were in the expected directions.

Finally, results related to correlations of attachment styles were found as expected. According to analysis, adult attachment styles were positively

correlated with each other ($r = .46$). Moreover, anxious attachment style was found to be negatively correlated with extraversion ($r = -.23$), conscientiousness ($r = -.14$), and openness to experience ($r = -.27$). Anxious attachment style was positively correlated with only neuroticism ($r = .30$) and negative valance ($r = .26$). Similarly, avoidant attachment style was found to be negatively correlated with extraversion ($r = -.32$), conscientiousness ($r = -.15$), agreeableness ($r = -.23$), and openness to experience ($r = -.18$), and positively with neuroticism ($r = .13$) and negative valance ($r = .25$). Table 7 presents the intercorrelations among the variables of the study.



Table 7: Intercorrelations among the variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Age	-																
2. Sex	-.04	-															
3. Duration	.52**	.03	-														
4. RSCM Total	-.14*	.15*	.02	-													
5. RSCM GT	-.14*	.14*	-.01	.95**	-												
6. RSCM PA	-.12	.13*	.06	.79**	.55**	-											
7. Openness to Exp.	.08	-.12*	.05	-.23**	-.28**	-.07	-										
8. Conscientiousness	.13*	.07	.13*	-.10	-.15*	.04	.29**	-									
9. Extraversion	.19**	.11	.15*	-.07	-.11	.05	.52**	.19**	-								
10. Agreeableness	.09	.13*	.04	-.07	-.09	.00	.34**	.30**	.43**	-							
11. Neuroticism	-.17**	.11	-.07	.17**	.20**	.06	-.19**	-.18**	-.24**	-.26**	-						
12. Negative Valance	-.07	-.19**	.03	.06	.09	-.01	-.13*	-.20**	-.23**	-.47**	.43**	-					
13. Anxiety	-.15*	-.03	-.19**	.40**	.46**	.15*	-.27**	-.14*	-.23**	-.11	.31**	.26**	-				

Table 7 (continued)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
14. Avoidance	-.02	-.06	-.14*	.18**	.26**	-.03	-.20**	-.15*	-.32**	-.23**	.13*	.25**	.46**	-			
15. Satisfaction	-.11	.09	-.01	-.21**	-.32**	.08	.17**	.30**	.14*	.14*	-.02	-.17**	-.31**	-.40**	-		
16. Investment	-.06	-.02	.19**	.25**	.26**	.15*	-.04	.16*	.01	.10	.12*	.01	.24**	-.06	.18**	-	
17. Quality of Alt.	.02	-.13	.01	.09	.15*	-.06	.11	-.13*	.06	-.09	-.08	.11	.10	.12	-.38**	-.12	-
18. Mean	28.16	1.72	2.12	2.16	2.02	2.49	3.57	3.63	3.53	4.24	2.91	1.60	3.35	2.48	7.24	4.78	4.50
19. SD	6.31	.45	1.10	.74	.78	.95	.57	.66	.77	.49	.66	.47	.98	.98	1.51	2.03	1.99

Note 1: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Note 2: RSCM Total = Total RSCM score, RSCM GT = General Tendency Subgroup, RSCM PA = Partner Attribution Subgroup, Satisfaction = Relationship Satisfaction. Relationship Social Comparison Measure was rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Never; 5 = Always). Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism and Note (Continued): Negative Valance were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). Anxiety and Avoidance were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1: Strongly Disagree; 7: Strongly Disagree). Relationship Satisfaction, Quality of alternatives and Investment were rated on a 9-point Likert-type scale. (1: Strongly Disagree; 9: Strongly Disagree)

6.5.3. Duration, Gender and RSC Tendencies

Additional analyses were conducted to see the relationship between duration of relationship, gender and RSC Tendencies. To be more specific, an independent sample T-test was used to see if there are any gender differences exist between female and male participants in tendency to make comparisons about their relationships. Result of the analyses yielded that there was a significant differences existing on the RSCM total score $t(249) = -2.5$, $p = .01$, RSCM general tendency score $t(249) = -2.29$, $p < .05$ and RSCM partner attribution score $t(249) = -2.04$, $p < .05$. It seems that female participants have higher tendency to make RSC than males (See Table 8).

Table 8: Independent Sample t-test results, means and standard deviations

	Male (N = 71)		Female (N = 180)		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
RSCM Total	1.98	.75	2.24	.73	$p = .01$
RSCM GT	1.85	.76	2.09	.78	$p < .05$
RSCM PA	2.30	.97	2.57	.93	$p < .05$

Note: RSCM Total = Total score of RSCM, RSCM GT = General Tendency subgroup, RSCM PA = Partner Attribution subgroup, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviations

In order to analyze the effect of duration (how long is the relationship going) on RSC tendencies, relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives and investment scores one-way ANOVA was conducted. According to results four categories of duration namely; 0-2 years, 2-5 years, 5-8 years and more than 9 years, were only differs significantly on investment scores ($F(3, 247) = 3.56$, $p < .05$). Moreover, post hoc analysis showed that only the participants who stated that their relationship lasting more than 9 years ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.83$) have significantly higher scores than the participants who stated that they are in the first 2 years of their relationships ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 2.07$). There are no other significant differences exist between groups of duration in this study.

6.5.4. Differences Between Experimental and Control Group

An independent sample t-test was used to compare the differences between experimental and control groups mean scores on RSC tendencies and relationship satisfaction. As it was mentioned in H1, current study expected to find higher scores on RSC tendencies and lower scores of relationship satisfaction on experimental group.

Result of the analyses yielded that there were no significant differences existing in the RSCM total score between experimental group ($M=2.19$, $SD=.78$, $N=251$) and control group ($M=2.13$, $SD=.69$, $N=251$), $t(249) = .69$, $p > .05$. Moreover, two subgroups of the RSCM yielded similar results. There were no significant differences existing between general tendency scores of experimental ($M=2.05$, $SD=.81$, $N=251$) and control groups ($M=2.00$, $SD=.74$, $N=251$), $t(249) = .47$, $p > .05$. There were also no significant differences existing between partner attribution scores for both experimental ($M=2.54$, $SD=1.00$, $N=251$) and control groups ($M=2.43$, $SD=.88$, $N=251$), $t(249) = .89$, $p > .05$. Even if the mean score of experimental group was higher than control group, these results clearly suggested that there is no significant effect of exposure to relational posts exist on RSC tendencies.

T-test results also showed that there are no significant differences exist between experimental ($M=7.17$, $SD=1.56$, $N=251$) and control ($M=7.31$, $SD=1.46$) groups on relationship satisfaction scores; $t(249) = -.70$, $p > .05$. (See Table 9). Relationship satisfaction scores were lower in the experimental group; however, there is no significant differences exist between two groups. Based on this result, it is clear that, relational posts of others have no significant effect on relationship satisfaction. Taken together, t-test results showed that assumptions of H1 were not met, therefore hypothesis was rejected.

Table 9: Results from Independent Sample t-test, means and standard deviations

	Experimental Group (N = 133)		Control Group (N = 118)		t-test
	M	SD	M	SD	
RSCM Total	2.19	.78	2.13	.69	ns
RSCM GT	2.05	.81	2.00	.74	ns
RSCM PA	2.54	1.00	2.43	.88	ns
Satisfaction	7.17	1.56	7.31	1.46	ns

Note: RSCM Total = Total score of RSCM, RSCM GT = General Tendency subgroup, RSCM PA = Partner Attribution subgroup, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviations, ns = Not significant

6.5.5. Regressions

For testing hypothesis 2 and 3, series of separate regression analysis were executed. A simple linear regression was conducted in order to see the effect of relationship satisfaction on RSC tendencies. Results yielded that relationship satisfaction have a significant prediction effect on RSC tendencies ($R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 250) = 11.04$, $p = .001$). Specifically, relationship satisfaction has significant and negative prediction on RSC tendencies ($\beta = -.21$, $p = .001$), it seems that the more we are satisfied with our relationship, the less we tend to make comparisons, as expected. Moreover, results also showed that investments were significantly predicting RSC tendencies ($R^2 = .06$, $F(1, 250) = 16.31$, $p < .001$). Investment have significant and positive prediction effect on RSC tendencies ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$). Surprisingly, this result showed that participants make more comparison when their investment in relationship greater. Interestingly, there is no significant prediction effect exist related to quality of alternatives on RSC tendencies ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 250) = 1.82$, $p > .05$). According to results, H2 was partially supported.

A linear regression analysis was also used to test H3. According to results, both anxious ($R^2 = .16$, $F(1, 250) = 47.64$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .40$, $p < .001$) and avoidant ($R^2 = .03$, $F(1, 250) = 8.68$, $p < .005$, $\beta = .18$, $p < .005$) attachment styles have positive predicting effect on the RSC tendencies. That is, participants with anxious and avoidant attachment tend to make more RSC. Therefore, H3 was supported. In addition to H2 and H3, series of separate linear regression analyses

were conducted to see if any prediction effect of personality traits exist on RSC tendencies for explanatory reasons. According to results, neuroticism was significantly and positively predicting RSC tendencies ($R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 250) = 7.28$, $p = .001$, $\beta = .18$, $p = .001$); whereas, openness to experience was found to have significant and negative predicting effect on RSC tendencies ($R^2 = .05$, $F(1, 250) = 14.10$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.23$, $p < .001$). Related results will be discussed in the discussion part detailly. Summary of regression analyses can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10: Summary of Regression Analysis for RSCM Total Score

Variables	B	SE B	β	R^2	F	p
Satisfaction	-.10	.03	-.20	.04	11.03	$p = .001$
Investment	.09	.02	.25	.06	16.31	$p < .001$
Quality of Alternatives	.03	.02	.09	.01	1.82	$p > .05$
Anxiety	.30	.04	.40	.16	47.64	$p < .001$
Avoidance	.14	.05	.18	.03	8.68	$p < .005$
Neuroticism	.19	.07	.17	.02	7.28	$p = .001$
Openness to Experience	-.30	.08	-.23	.05	14.10	$p < .001$

6.5.6. Moderations

In order to test the H4, being a member of experimental group was examined as a moderator in the relationships between RSC tendencies and its predictors, namely, relationship satisfaction, investment, quality of alternatives, and anxious and avoidant forms of attachment. Results of moderation analyses yielded that there is no significant moderation effect of being a member of experimental group on the interaction between RSC tendencies and relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.04$, $p > .05$), investment ($\beta = -.05$, $p > .05$), anxious ($\beta = -.05$, $p > .05$) and avoidant ($\beta = -.01$, $p > .05$) attachment styles. In addition, quality of alternatives was not significant predictor of RSC tendencies thus, there is no moderation effect was found. Finally, being a member of experimental group was also examined for moderation effect on the interaction between RSC tendencies and neuroticism ($\beta = -.06$, $p > .05$) and openness to experience ($\beta = -$

.13, $p > .05$) personality traits. Similarly, results showed that being a member of experimental group fell short on significant moderation in these interactions. Taken together, participants from experimental group was exposed to relational sharing of others; however, there is no moderation effect existing related to this exposure. As a result of these findings, H4 was rejected.



CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

This thesis examines the emerging role of SNS on romantic relationship in the context of relational and individual factors. The present study used a qualitative pilot study to understand the role of SNS in social interactions especially romantic ones. Moreover, an experimental design was also used to evaluate role of relational posts of others on viewers. Specifically, it was expected that individuals who were exposed to such posts will start to compare their romantic relationship with presented one. Then, this comparison was expected to affect the relationship satisfaction negatively. This investigation generally showed that exposure of relational posts on SNS is not enough to create a significant change in someone's romantic relationships. In addition, some relational and individual factors are crucial for RSC tendencies. The findings will be discussed in the following sections.

7.1. Role of SNS in Romantic Relationships in Turkey

Relevant literature based on SNS and Romantic Relationships are heavily depending on the findings of the studies from western cultures. In order to develop a local perspective before any data collection processes, a pilot study was conducted. This pilot study, Study 1, was used face to face interviews and open-ended question forms (answered via e-mail) to collect relevant information. Using a qualitative method for Study 1 allowed me to understand the dynamics of the relationship between SNS and romantic relationships in Turkey. Results of the study yielded that more than half of the participants are

concerned with the feedbacks (getting likes) from others on SNS, at least from important or loved ones. This is a good example of how our online network play a part in representation of self on SNS. This instant feedback mechanism may lead us to post more similar contents (Moncur et al., 2016) which in turn will foster the self-enhancing nature of online posts on SNS. Moreover, Study 1 also showed that SNS are playing a part in every four stages of romantic relationships in Turkey. From very beginning to afterwards, SNS are important actors that we experience in our romantic relationships. Finally, almost half of the participants in Study 1 stated that posts of others on SNS related to romantic relationships, wealth and opportunities have an influence on their relationships.

Taken together, these results suggest that SNS have an undeniable role in our social life from self-presentation to romantic relationships. The most important finding to emerge from this is that SNS is a reference point for some individuals to evaluate their romantic relationships.

7.2. Assessing RSC Tendencies

Festinger suggested that people are motivated to evaluate their abilities and correctness based on similar others (1954). A relatively new area in social comparison studies is relationship social comparison (RSC) tendencies, and it was also one of the focus of this study. It was expected that the misinterpretations of reality based on relational posts on SNS will affect the evaluation of one's own romantic relationships. In order to assess RSC tendencies, current study used Relationship Social Comparison Measure (RSCM) of Smith LeBeau and Buckingham (2008). In order to use RSCM in this study, the scale was translated into Turkish. Translation back translation method was used in the process. Psychometric properties of the Turkish version were examined through the reliability and validity analysis. The Turkish version of RSCM has high Internal consistency as its original form ($\alpha = .94$). The scale was positively correlated with anxious ($r = .40$) and avoidant ($r = .18$) attachment styles, and negatively

with satisfaction ($r = -.20$). These scores showed that Turkish version of the scale yielded similar correlation scores with the original form. On the other hand, unlike the original scale without any subscales, principal component factor analysis suggested two factor solution namely, General Tendency and Partner Attribution. Both subscales have high internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$ and $\alpha = .86$, respectively). A Confirmatory Factor Analysis was also conducted to analyze suggested factor structure, and results yielded satisfactory model fit after two modifications ($S-B \chi^2 (167) = 275.13, p = .00, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05, 90\% CI [.04, .06]$) according to the suggestions from the relevant literature (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014; Byrne, 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

These results showed that the Turkish version of RSCM have good psychometric properties, and it is a reliable and valid scale. In accordance with the presented results, this study provides an important Turkish scale related to RSC tendencies, and it is expected to make scientific contributions to the field.

7.3. Receiving Relational Messages via SNS

In order to test the effect of SNS on romantic relationships in an experimental design, participants of the study were randomly divided into two groups. In group 1, participants were exposed to relational posts, and this group was named as experimental group. In group 2, participants were exposed to natural posts, and this group named as control group. Hypothesis of the Study 2 were tested based on comparisons between these two group. In H1, it was expected that the participants from experimental group started to evaluate their romantic relationships based on presented material. Also, it was expected to result in a decrease on their relationship satisfaction. H1 heavily depends on Gerbner's Cultivation Theory (1999). In line with Cultivation Theory, Study 2 tried to develop a disturbed sense of reality based on romantic relationships via exposure. To be more specific, it was expected that presented materials in experimental group was able to cultivate the idea that "everyone is so happy"

with their partners. Based on this idea, participants were expected to compare their relationships with the presented material and due to the self-enhancing nature of SNS, this comparison was expected to cause a decrease in relationship satisfaction.

On the contrary to expectations, t-test results yielded that there are no significant differences existing between experimental and control group on RSC tendencies or satisfaction. It seems that exposure in this study did not significantly affect the participants. Therefore, H1 was rejected. There are several possible explanations for this result. First, both RSC tendencies and relationship satisfaction are vulnerable to social desirability bias. Social desirability bias can be defined as a tendency to answer any question in socially acceptable way rather than true answers (Lavrakas, 2008). In this study, participants may find it hard to evaluate their ongoing relationships negatively or avoid to make an overt relationship comparison. It seems possible that questions related to RSC Tendencies and satisfaction could provoke the urge to answer in a socially acceptable way. In addition to that participants can also avoid experiencing cognitive dissonance about their perception of relationship satisfaction. Majority of the participants stated that they were satisfied with their relationship in the demographic information form so, it can be hard for them to state otherwise at the end of the study. There are however other possible explanations. In cultivation theory, misperception of reality heavily depends on exposure time (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010), but exposure in online settings is a complex variable to analyze. Any user can use social surveilling activities, such as stalking, which in turn will increase the exposure time. On the other hand, experimental settings were designed to develop the most realistic settings as possible in this study. However, presented materials in Study 2 were only providing a sample Instagram post which include various kind of information such as number of likes or number of comments about the couple. Participants may find it hard to develop RSC tendencies based on this limited information. Finally, sample posts in this study were coming from two different couple that participants unfamiliar with. Viewing a strange couple on screen may not be

enough to evoke RSC tendencies. Even if participants made such comparisons, assimilation effect (Collins, 1996) can occur, and participants may see the relationship on the screen “similar” to their own. This similarity may lead even positive feelings rather than negative ones. (Collins, 2000).

7.4. RSC Tendencies, Relational Factors, Attachment Style, Gender and Duration

In order to understand how RSC tendencies were affected from relational factors and attachment style, H2 and H3 were developed. H2 suggested that RSC tendencies will be negatively related to relationship satisfaction and investments; positively related to assessing the quality of alternatives. A simple linear regression was conducted to test the hypothesis. According to the results, relationship satisfaction has significant and negative prediction on RSC tendencies as expected. On the other hand, surprisingly investment have a significant and positive prediction on RSC tendencies. In addition to this, quality of alternatives has no significant effect on RSC tendencies. Therefore, H2 was partially supported. It seems that the more participants are satisfied with their relationships, the less they make comparisons about it. Moreover, they seem to make more comparison when their investment is greater, and quality of alternatives have no effect on RSC tendencies. Rusbult defines investments as resources that we “put into” our relationships both intrinsically and extrinsically (1980). One possible explanation related these findings is that investments we make in our relationship may provoke us make more comparison to check how good our investment was. It may be a way of showing the things we put into our relationships, and by doing so we ensure that our investment is worth it. Moreover, participants in this study are generally satisfied with their relationships in general; therefore, alternatives may not salient to them. Thus, quality of alternatives has no significant effect on RSC tendencies in this study.

Dimension of adult attachment was also taken under consideration in this study. Results showed that anxious and avoidant attachment styles were significantly

correlated with RSC tendencies. This result was in line with the previous findings (LeBeau & Buckingham, 2008). Moreover, regression analysis yielded that participants' anxious and avoidant attachment styles are significantly predicting RSC. Therefore, H3 was accepted. This result was not surprising due to the relationship between secure attachment and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships (Johnson, 2012). It was found by multiple studies that secure attachment is an important predictor of relationship satisfaction (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney, 2002; Pistole, 1989). Thus, current study found that relationship satisfaction has significant and negative prediction on RSC tendencies.

In addition, the attachment style, duration of the relationship and gender were also controlled to see if there is any relationship between these factors and RSC tendencies. Results yielded that female participants have higher tendency to make RSC than males. Since gender differences are understudied topic in social comparison studies, this finding must be interpreted cautiously. Guilmond and Chatarad, discussed gender in social comparison detailly from Festinger's original work to intra group comparisons in their chapter. They summarize the related studies, and it seems that gender differences in social comparison orientation based on sociocultural factors rather than biological ones (2014). I believe that these differences must be analyzed within social context they occur. In a patriarchal society such as ours, it is unlikely for males to compare their romantic relationships based on satisfaction extrinsically. On the other hand, I believe that different results can be seen in different settings related to social status or power. For example, we can find higher scores for male participants in terms of comparison if we focus on male dominant features, such as masculinity. These arguments may depend on speculative interpretations, but I strongly believe that future studies must focus on social context before they make any conclusion based on gender differences in RSC.

Finally, the effect of duration on RSC Tendencies, relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives and investment scores was also analyzed in this study.

Results yielded that duration have only an effect on investment scores, and analysis showed that only the participants who stated that their relationship lasting more than 9 years have significantly higher scores on investment than 2 years group. This result was not surprising. It seems that our investment is growing as time goes on within the romantic relationships.

7.5. Moderations and Personality Traits

The moderating role of relational posts of others on romantic relationship was also investigated in this study. Results yielded that there is no significant moderation effect of being a member of experimental group on the interaction between RSC tendencies and relationship satisfaction, investment, anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Therefore, H4 was rejected. Explanations related to these findings are quite similar with the previous explanations related to rejection of H1. Social desirability bias related to participants ongoing relationships and limited time of exposure from an unfamiliar source can be seen as possible explanations.

Personality traits were also analyzed via series of linear regression for explanatory reasons. According to results, neuroticism was significantly and positively predicting RSC tendencies, and openness to experience was found to have significant and negative predicting effect on RSC tendencies. Neuroticism was a widely studied factor in terms of relationship quality. Findings revealed that neuroticism was negatively associated with relationship quality. (White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004; Fisher & McNulty, 2008; Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2005). From this point of view, its logical to believe that negative effect of neuroticism on relationships will lead to make more RSC due to decreased relationship satisfaction. Moreover, openness to experience was found to have significant and negative predicting effect on RSC tendencies. It was found to be negatively related to social comparison orientations (Oyibo & Vassileva, 2019) and positively with relationship satisfaction (Amiri, Farhoodi, Abdolvand, & Bidakhavidi, 2011) in other studies. In combination of these findings, openness

to experience seem to be a good predictor of relationship satisfaction. In addition to that, its negative relationship with social comparison orientations makes this personality trait resistant to RSC tendencies.

7.6. Limitations, Importance and Suggestions for Future Studies

Several limitations of this study need to be acknowledged. Firstly, this study was aiming to analyze some variables which were vulnerable to social desirability bias. Study tried to assess relationship satisfaction extrinsically, but it must be noted that it can be hard to state dissatisfaction extrinsically about ongoing relationships. Secondly, even if the study design was created to analyze the effect of SNS on romantic relationships in an experimental setting, using mock Instagram pages can be seen as a weakness for this study. To be more specific, participants could not able to visit the profile pages, they could only see an Instagram post which may not be enough to create a realistic environment related to SNS. Finally, current study was collecting the data after an instant exposure. Due to the importance of exposure in cultivation theory, this limited time of exposure can be seen as a weakness for this study.

Besides these limitations, current study has some strengths to. Firstly, current study used both qualitative and quantitative methods for analyzing the effect of SNS on romantic relationships. This strategy allows me understand a local perspective related to topic and test it in an experimental design. Second, this study tried to test the assumptions of cultivation theory in an online setting which is not a common strategy in cultivation studies. Similarly, RSC tendencies were also tested in online settings. Third, current study showed relational and individual factors seem to be more important factors in RSC tendencies rather than SNS. Finally, RSCM (LeBeau & Buckingham, 2008) was translated into Turkish, which can be considered a scientific contribution to the field. Future studies related to the effect of SNS on romantic relationships must develop new strategies to find the effect of exposure. Due to the fast information trafficking in SNS, studies related to cultivation theory in online settings must also be

cautious about time of exposure. In addition to this, in order to provoke an upward comparison and eliminate the assimilation effect, wealth-luxury posts from famous couples can be used as presented materials. Finally, in order to decrease the risk of social desirability bias, future studies can use implicit association techniques for assessment.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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26 MART 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

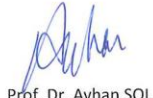
Sayın Prof.Dr. Bengi Öner ÖZKAN

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Burak Emre GÜRSOY'un "Effect of Social Network Sites on Romantic Relationships" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 128-ODTÜ-2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız


Prof. Dr. Tulin GENÇÖZ

Başkan


Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL
Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR
Üye


Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI (4.)
Üye


Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK
Üye


Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN
Üye


Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT
Üye

APPENDIX B. QUESTION POOL OF STUDY I

Demographics

Mesleğiniz:

Yaşınız:

Cinsiyetiniz:

İlişki Durumunuz:

Eğitim Durumunuz:

Mate Selection

Daha önce sosyal medya üzerinden bir romantik ilişkiye başladınız mı?
Cevabınız evet ise olayı kısaca özetler misiniz?

Daha önce sosyal medyada hiç “gözleme” (stalk) yaptınız mı? / Size yapıldığını fark ettiniz mi?

Beğendiğiniz/Hoşlandığınız birine sosyal medya üzerinden ulaşmaya çalıştınız mı?

Sizi beğenen/hoşlanan biri size sosyal medya üzerinden ulaştı mı?

Sosyal medyanın romantik ilişkilerin başlamasındaki rolünü kısaca açıklar mısınız?

Being in a Romantic Relationship

Partnerinizin sosyal medya hesabını kontrol eder misiniz?

Partnerinizin aldığı beğeni ve yorumlar sizi etkiler mi? /Nasıl?

Sosyal medyada romantik ilişkiniz ile ilgili paylaşımlar yapmak hakkındaki düşünceniz nelerdir?

Dissolution

Çevrenizde sosyal medyada hesabından ayrılığını öğrendiniz/fark ettiğiniz çift oldu mu?

Daha önce sosyal medya üzerinden bir romantik ilişki sonlandırdınız mı? Cevabınız evet ise olayı kısaca özetler misiniz?

Post Breakup Behaviors

Sosyal medyada eski partnerlerinizi takip eder misiniz? Cevabınız evet ise takip etme amacınız ve takip sıklığınız nedir?

Sosyal medyada eski partneriniz sizi takip ediyor mu?

Eski partnerinizle sosyal medya üzerinden iletişime geçtiğiniz oldu mu? Cevabınız evet ise iletişim kurma amacınızı kısaca anlatınız.

Eski partnerinizin size sosyal medya üzerinden ulaştığı oldu mu? Cevabınız evet ise iletişim kurma amacını kısaca anlatınız.

Sizce sosyal medyanın ilişki sonlandıktan sonraki dönemde bir rolü var mı?

Sizin sosyal medyayı kullanma alışkanlıklarını ilişkinizin sonlanmasından sonra değişti mi? (Sonlandı ise)

RSC tendencies

Sosyal medyada maruz kaldığınız ilişkisel paylaşımlar (başkalarının kendi ilişkileri ile ilgili yaptığı paylaşımlar) sizin ilişkiniz üzerinde nasıl bir etkiye sahip? Kendi ilişkinizi değerlendirirken bu paylaşımların etkisi oluyor mu?

General Habits

Hangi sosyal medya mecralarında hesabınız var?

Bir gününüzü düşündüğünüzde sosyal medya hesaplarınızı ne sıklıkta kullanırsınız?

Kendinizi aktif bir kullanıcı olarak mı yoksa takipçi olarak mı tanımlarsınız?

En çok fotoğraf paylaştığınız sosyal medya hesabınız hangisi?

En çok yazılı içerik paylaştığınız sosyal medya hesabınız hangisi?

Sosyal medyada yaptığınız paylaşımların içeriklerini en çok olandan en aza doğru listeleyiniz. (Bilgi paylaşmak, fotoğraf paylaşmak, günlük yaşam, politika, ilişkisel paylaşımlar vb.)

Sosyal medyada paylaştığınız fotoğrafların beğenilmesi/beğenilmemesi hakkındaki görüşleriniz nelerdir?

APPENDIX C. DEBRIEFING FORM

Bu araştırma daha önce de belirtildiği gibi Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Psikoloji Bölümü Sosyal Psikoloji Doktora Programı öğrencisi Burak Emre Gürsoy tarafından Prof. Dr. Bengi Öner Özkan danışmanlığında yapılmaktadır.

Teknolojik gelişmelerin iletişimimize yön verdiği bugünlerde, sosyal medya kullanımının bireysel etkilerini inceleyen çalışmalar, sosyal karşılaştırma yapma eğilimlerimiz ve sosyal medya kullanımımız arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya koymaktadır (Zuo, 2014, Uhler, 2016). Katıldığınız araştırma, sosyal medyada ilişkisel paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın ilişkiler arası sosyal karşılaştırma yapma eğilimlerimizi nasıl etkilediğini ölçmek ve bu karşılaştırmaların ilişki tatmini üzerindeki etkisini anlamak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu etkinin tam olarak görülebilmesi ve katılımcıların yanıtlarının etkilenmemesi için araştırmanın amacı sizden kısmen gizlenmiştir. Araştırmada katılımcılar iki gruba ayrılarak iki farklı paylaşım setinden oluşan görsellere göre yanıtlar vermişlerdir. Birinci set sadece romantik ilişki içeren paylaşımlardan oluşurken, ikinci set ise sadece şehir ve doğa fotoğrafları içermektedir. Görseller dışında iki grup arasında herhangi bir fark bulunmamaktadır. Bu iki grup arasında yapılacak karşılaştırma araştırmanın temelini oluşturacaktır.

Bu çalışmadan alınacak ilk verilerin Nisan 2019 sonunda elde edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Elde edilen bilgiler sadece bilimsel araştırma ve yazılarda kullanılacaktır. Bu araştırmaya katıldığınız için tekrar çok teşekkür ederiz.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarını öğrenmek ya da daha fazla bilgi almak için aşağıdaki isimlere başvurabilirsiniz.

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Çalışmaya katkıda bulunan bir gönüllü olarak katılımcı haklarınızla ilgili veya etik ilkelerle ilgi soru veya görüşlerinizi ODTÜ Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi'ne iletebilirsiniz.

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**APPENDIX D. RELATIONSHIP SOCIAL COMPARISON
MEASURE (TURKISH - ENGLISH)**

1. İlişkideki mutluluğumu, başkalarının ilişkilerindeki mutlulukları ile kıyaslarım. (I compare how happy I am in my relationship to how happy I think others are in their relationships.)
2. Partnerim/Eşim ile ilişkimizdeki problemleri çözme becerilerimizi, başkalarının ilişkilerindeki problem çözme becerileriyle kıyaslarım. (I pay a lot of attention to how well my partner and I resolve problems compared to how well other couples solve their problems.)
3. Partnerim/Eşim ile birlikte yaptığımız aktiviteleri başkalarının ilişkilerinde yaptıkları aktiviteler ile kıyaslarım. (I think about what types of activities my partner and I participate in together compared to what other couples do together.)
4. Partnerim/Eşim ile birbirimize nasıl davrandığımızı başkalarının partnerlerine/eşlerine karşı olan davranışlarıyla kıyaslarım. (I compare how my partner and I treat each other to how other couples treat each other.)
5. Partnerim/Eşim ile olan iletişimimizin diğer çiftlerin ilişkilerine kıyasla ne kadar iyi olduğu üzerine düşünürüm. (I think about how well my partner and I communicate with each other compared to how well other couples communicate with each other.)
6. İlişkimden ne kadar memnun olduğumu, başkalarının kendi ilişkilerinden ne kadar memnun olduklarına dair düşüncelerimle kıyaslarım. (I compare how satisfied I am with my relationship to how satisfied I think others are in their relationships.)
7. Partnerim/Eşim ile ne kadar zaman geçirdiğimizi başkalarının kendi partnerleri/eşleri ile geçirdikleri zamanla kıyaslarım. (I compare how

- much time my partner and I spend together to how much time other couples spend together.)
8. İlişkim hakkında kötü hissettiğimde, diğer insanların ilişkileriyle ilişki mi kıyaslarım. (When I am feeling bad about my relationship I compare my relationship to other peoples' relationships.)
 9. İlişkim hakkında iyi hissettiğimde, diğer insanların ilişkileriyle ilişki mi kıyaslarım. (When I am feeling good about my relationship I compare my relationship with other peoples' relationships.)
 10. İlişkimdeki romantizmi başkalarının ilişkilerindeki romantizm ile kıyaslarım. (I think about how romantic my relationship is compared to how romantic other couples' relationships are.)
 11. İlişki mi, benimkinden daha kötü ilişkisi olan çiftlerin ilişkileriyle kıyaslarım. (I compare my relationship with other couples whose relationships are worse than mine.)
 12. İlişki mi, benimkinden daha iyi ilişkisi olan çiftlerin ilişkileriyle kıyaslarım. (I compare my relationship with other couples whose relationships are better than mine.)
 13. Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerleriyle/eşleriyle karşılaştırıldığında ne kadar romantik olduğu üzerine düşünürüm. (I think about how romantic my partner is in comparison to other peoples' partners.)
 14. Partnerimin/Eşimin benim için yaptıklarını başkalarının partnerleri/eşleri için yaptıklarıyla kıyaslarım. (I compare the things that my partner does for me to what other peoples' partners do for them.)
 15. Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar güvenilir olduğu üzerine düşünürüm. (I think about how trustworthy my partner is in comparison to other peoples' partners.)
 16. Partnerimin/Eşimin bana verdiği desteği başkalarının partnerlerinden/eşlerinden buldukları destekle kıyaslarım. (I compare how supportive my partner is to other peoples' partners.)

17. Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar güvenilir olduğu üzerine düşünürüm. (I think about how dependable my partner is in comparison to other peoples' partners.)
18. Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar çekici olduğu üzerine düşünürüm. (I compare how attractive my partner is to how attractive other peoples' partners are.)
19. Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar başarılı olduğu üzerine düşünürüm. (I think about how successful my partner is in comparison to other peoples' partners.)
20. Partnerimin/Eşimin diğer insanların partnerlerine/eşlerine kıyasla ne kadar anlayışlı olduğu üzerine düşünürüm. (I compare how considerate my partner is to how considerate other peoples' partners are.)
21. Partnerimle/Eşimle yaşadığımız tartışmaları başkalarının ilişkilerine kıyasla ne sıklıkta yaşadığımızı düşünürüm. (I think about how often my partner and I argue compared to how often other couples argue.)
22. Kendimi iyi hissettiğim zamanlarda ilişkiyi başkalarının ilişkileriyle kıyaslarım. (I compare my relationship to other peoples' relationships when I am in a good mood.)
23. Kendimi kötü hissettiğim zamanlarda ilişkiyi başkalarının ilişkileriyle kıyaslarım (I compare my relationship to other peoples' relationships when I am in a bad mood.)
24. Diğer insanların ilişkileri hakkında yaptıkları konuşmaları dinlemeyi severim. (I enjoy listening to other people talk about their relationships)

Note: Items 9, 15, 23 and 24 were excluded from the scale in the analyses.

APPENDIX E. EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS – REVISED

1. Birlikte olduđum kiřinin sevgisini kaybetmekten korkarım.
2. Gerçekte ne hissettiđimi birlikte olduđum kiřiye göstermemeyi tercih ederim.
3. Sıklıkla, birlikte olduđum kiřinin artık benimle olmak istemeyeceđi korkusuna kapılırım.
4. Özel duygu ve düşüncelerimi birlikte olduđum kiřiyle paylaşmak konusunda kendimi rahat hissedirim.
5. Sıklıkla, birlikte olduđum kiřinin beni gerçekten sevmediđi kaygısına kapılırım.
6. Romantik ilişkide olduđum kiřilere güvenip inanmak konusunda kendimi rahat bırakmakta zorlanırım.
7. Romantik ilişkide olduđum kiřilerin beni, benim onları önemsemiđim kadar önemsemeyeceklerinden endişe duyarım.
8. Romantik ilişkide olduđum kiřilere yakın olma konusunda çok rahatımdır.
9. Sıklıkla, birlikte olduđum kiřinin bana duyduđu hislerin benim ona duyduđum hisler kadar güçlü olmasını isterim.
10. Romantik ilişkide olduđum kiřilere açılma konusunda kendimi rahat hissetmem.
11. İliřkilerimi kafama çok takarım.
12. Romantik ilişkide olduđum kiřilere fazla yakın olmamayı tercih ederim.
13. Benden uzakta olduđuunda, birlikte olduđum kiřinin başka birine ilgi duyabileceđi korkusuna kapılırım.
14. Romantik ilişkide olduđum kiři benimle çok yakın olmak istediđinde rahatsızlık duyarım.

15. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişilere duygularımı gösterdiğimde, onların benim için aynı şeyleri hissetmeyeceğinden korkarım.
16. Birlikte olduğum kişiyle kolayca yakınlaşabilirim.
17. Birlikte olduğum kişinin beni terk edeceğinden pek endişe duymam.
18. Birlikte olduğum kişiyle yakınlaşmak bana zor gelmez.
19. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişi kendimden şüphe etmeme neden olur.
20. Genellikle, birlikte olduğum kişiyle sorunlarımı ve kaygılarımı tartışırım.
21. Terk edilmekten pek korkmam.
22. Zor zamanlarımda, romantik ilişkide olduğum kişiden yardım istemek bana iyi gelir.
23. Birlikte olduğum kişinin, bana benim istediğim kadar yakınlaşmak istemediğini düşünürüm.
24. Birlikte olduğum kişiye hemen hemen her şeyi anlatırım.
25. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişiler bazen bana olan duygularını sebepsiz yere değiştirirler.
26. Başımdan geçenleri birlikte olduğum kişiyle konuşurum.
27. Çok yakın olma arzum bazen insanları korkutup uzaklaştırır.
28. Birlikte olduğum kişiler benimle çok yakınlaştığında gergin hissederim.
29. Romantik ilişkide olduğum bir kişi beni yakından tanıdıkça, “gerçek ben” den hoşlanmayacağından korkarım.
30. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişilere güvenip inanma konusunda rahatımdır.
31. Birlikte olduğum kişiden ihtiyaç duyduğum şefkat ve desteği görememek beni öfkelenendirir.
32. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişiye güvenip inanmak benim için kolaydır.
33. Başka insanlara denk olamamaktan endişe duyarım
34. Birlikte olduğum kişiye şefkat göstermek benim için kolaydır.
35. Birlikte olduğum kişi beni sadece kızgın olduğumda önemser.
36. Birlikte olduğum kişi beni ve ihtiyaçlarımı gerçekten anlar.

APPENDIX F. RELATIONSHIP STABILITY SCALE

1. Birlikte olduğum kişi, kişisel düşünceleri, sırları paylaşma gibi yakınlık gereksinimlerimi karşılıyor.
2. Birlikte olduğum kişi, beraberce bir şeyler yapma, beraber olmaktan keyif alma gibi arkadaşlık gereksinimlerimi karşılıyor.
3. Birlikte olduğum kişi, el ele tutuşma, öpüşme gibi cinsel gereksinimlerimi karşılıyor.
4. Birlikte olduğum kişi istikrarlı bir ilişki içinde güvende ve rahat hissetme gereksinimlerimi karşılıyor.
5. Birlikte olduğum kişi duygusal olarak bağlı hissetme, o iyi hissettiğinde kendimi iyi hissetmem gibi gereksinimlerimi karşılıyor.
6. İlişkimiz benim için doyum verici.
7. İlişkim başkalarının ilişkilerinden çok daha iyi.
8. İlişkim ideal bir ilişkiye yakın.
9. İlişkim beni çok mutlu ediyor.
10. İlişkimiz yakınlık, arkadaşlık vb. gereksinimlerimi karşılama açısından oldukça başarılı.
11. Kişisel düşünceleri, sırları paylaşma gibi yakınlık gereksinimlerim bir başkasıyla beraber olsam da karşılanabilir.
12. Birlikte bir şeyler yapma, birbirinin varlığından keyif alma gibi arkadaşlık gereksinimlerim bir başkasıyla beraber olsam da karşılanabilir.
13. Elele tutuşma ve öpüşme gibi cinsel gereksinimlerim bir başkasıyla beraber olsam da karşılanabilir.
14. İstikrarlı bir ilişkide güvende ve rahat hissetme gereksinimlerim bir başkasıyla beraber olsam da karşılanabilir.

15. Duygusal olarak bağlanmış hissetme, bir başkası iyi hissettiğinde iyi hissetme gibi duygusal bağıllık gereksinimlerim bir başkasıyla beraber olsam da karşılanabilir.
16. Birlikte olduğum kişi dışında bana çok çekici gelen insanlar var.
17. Bir başkasıyla flört etme, kendi kendime ya da arkadaşlarımla zaman geçirmek gibi seçeneklerim de var.
18. Birlikte olduğum kişiyle çıkmıyor olsaydım, bir şey değişmezdi, çekici bir başka kişi bulabilirdim.
19. Bir başkasıyla flört etme, kendi kendime ya da arkadaşlarımla zaman geçirme bana oldukça çekici geliyor.
20. Yakınlık, arkadaşlık gibi gereksinimlerim bir başka ilişkide de kolaylıkla karşılanabilir.
21. İlişkimiz için çok fazla yatırım yaptım.
22. Birlikte olduğum kişiye, sırlarım gibi pek çok özel şey anlatmaktayım.
23. Birlikte olduğum kişi ve ben birlikte yeri doldurulması güç bir entelektüel yaşama sahibiz.
24. Bireysel kimlik duygum yani kim olduğum birlikte olduğum kişi ve ilişkimle bağlantılı.
25. Birlikte olduğum kişi ve ben pek çok anıyı paylaşıyoruz.
26. İlişkimize öyle çok yatırım yaptım ki, eğer bu ilişki sona erecek olursa çok şey kaybetmiş olurum.
27. Boş zaman etkinlikleri gibi yaşamımın pek çok yönü, şu anda birlikte olduğum kişiye çok fazla bağlı ve eğer ayrılacak olursak bunların hepsini kaybederim.
28. İlişkimize çok fazla bağlandığımı ve bu ilişkiye çok şey verdiğimi hissediyorum.
29. Birlikte olduğum kişiyle ayrılmamız, aile ve arkadaşlarımla olan ilişkilerimi olumsuz etkiler.
30. Başkalarının ilişkileriyle karşılaştırılırsa, ben ilişkiye oldukça fazla yatırım yapmaktayım.

APPENDIX G. BASIC PERSONALITY TRAITS INVENTORY

	Hiç uygun değil	Uygun değil	Kararsızım	Uygun	Çok Uygun		Hiç uygun değil	Uygun değil	Kararsızım	Uygun	Çok Uygun
1 Aceleci	1	2	3	4	5	24 Pasif	1	2	3	4	5
2 Yapmacık	1	2	3	4	5	25 Disiplinli	1	2	3	4	5
3 Duyarlı	1	2	3	4	5	26 Açgözlü	1	2	3	4	5
4 Konuşkan	1	2	3	4	5	27 Sinirli	1	2	3	4	5
5 Kendine güvenen	1	2	3	4	5	28 Cana yakın	1	2	3	4	5
6 Soğuk	1	2	3	4	5	29 Kızgın	1	2	3	4	5
7 Utangaç	1	2	3	4	5	30 Sabit fikirli	1	2	3	4	5
8 Paylaşımçı	1	2	3	4	5	31 Görgüsüz	1	2	3	4	5
9 Geniş-rahat	1	2	3	4	5	32 Durgun	1	2	3	4	5
10 Cesur	1	2	3	4	5	33 Kaygılı	1	2	3	4	5
11 Agresif	1	2	3	4	5	34 Terbiyesiz	1	2	3	4	5
12 Çalışkan	1	2	3	4	5	35 Sabırsız	1	2	3	4	5
13 İçten pazarlıklı	1	2	3	4	5	36 Yaratıcı	1	2	3	4	5
14 Girişken	1	2	3	4	5	37 Kaptisli	1	2	3	4	5
15 İyi niyetli	1	2	3	4	5	38 İçine kapanık	1	2	3	4	5
16 İçten	1	2	3	4	5	39 Çekingen	1	2	3	4	5
17 Kendinden emin	1	2	3	4	5	40 Alıngan	1	2	3	4	5
18 Huysuz	1	2	3	4	5	41 Hoşgörülü	1	2	3	4	5
19 Yardımsever	1	2	3	4	5	42 Düzenli	1	2	3	4	5
20 Kabiliyetli	1	2	3	4	5	43 Titiz	1	2	3	4	5
21 Üşengeç	1	2	3	4	5	44 Tedbirli	1	2	3	4	5
22 Sorumsuz	1	2	3	4	5	45 Azimli	1	2	3	4	5
23 Sevecen	1	2	3	4	5						

APPENDIX H. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Gürsoy, Burak Emre

Nationality: Turkish (TC)

Date and Place of Birth: 05 January 1989, Eskişehir

Marital Status: Married

Phone: +90539 564 17 57

email: gursoyburakemre@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
PHD	METU Social Psychology	2020
MS	METU Family Psychology	2014
BS	Bahçeşehir University Psychology	2012
High School	İçel Anatolian High School	2007

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2013- Present	Ahenk Special Education Center	Psychologist/Coordinator
2019-2020	Eskişehir Technical University	Guest Instructor
2015-2019	Gordion Danışmanlık	Couple/Family Therapist

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

APPENDIX I. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

SOSYAL AĖLARIN ROMANTİK İLİŐKİLER ZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

BİRİNCİ BLM

Teknolojik geliŐmeler bizlere radyo yayınlarından internet baĖlantılarına kadar pek ok farklı iletiŐim kanalı sunmaktadırlar. 2000’li yılların en nemli teknolojik geliŐmelerinden biri de akıllı telefonların retilmesi oldu. Akıllı telefonlar cep telefonlarının standart zelliklerine ek olarak kullanıcılarına internet eriŐimi ve multimedya zellikleri saĖlayarak sosyal hayatın nemli bir parası haline geldiler. Btn bu teknolojik geliŐmelerin sonucunda kiŐiler arası iletiŐim kanallarımız hızla deĖiŐti ve artık dnyanın neredeyse tamamıyla hemen her an iletiŐim kurabilmekteyiz.

2015 yılının sonuna gelindiĖinde dnya zerinde  milyardan fazla kiŐinin internet eriŐimi var ve mobile komnikasyon kanalları dnya nfusunun nerdeyse 70%’ini kapsıyor (ICT Facts & Figures, 2015). Trk İstatistik Kurumu da 2015 yılında yaptıĖı alıŐmalarla benzer oranların lkemizde de grldĖn raporlamakta. Yeni iletiŐim kanalları kiŐisel bloglardan sosyal aĖlara kadar uzanan eŐitlilikleriyle kiŐiler arası iliŐkilerin merkezinde nemli bir yere sahipler (Walther, 2011). Bireyler artık istedikleri konu hakkında hazırladıkları ierikleri yayınlayarak kendilerinin “medyası” olma Őansına elde ettiler (Thevenot, 2007).

İnternetin btn bu poplerliĖi ve geniŐ kapsama alanı, onu kiŐiler arası iletiŐim ile ilgili alıŐmaların da odaĖı haline getirdi. GetiĖimiz yıllarda araŐtırmacılar

bilgisayar üzerinden kurulan iletişim ile ilgili pek çok çalışma yayınladılar. İnternet üzerinden kurulan iletişimlerin yüz yüze kurulan iletişimlerle olan benzerlik ve farklılıkları pek çok çalışmada incelendi (Walther, Deandrea, & Tong, 2010; Walther, 1996). Buna ek olarak milyonlarca kullanıcıya sahip olan Facebook, Twitter ve Instagram gibi sosyal ağlar kişiler arası iletişimde önemli bir yer sahibi olarak bu ağlar ile ilgili yeni çalışmalara duyulan ihtiyacı da arttırdı (Walther, 2011).

Bütün bu teknolojik gelişmelere tanık olmak ve sosyal ağların kullanıcısı olmak benim de bu ağların sosyal hayatımıza olan etkileri üzerinde kişisel merakımın oluşmasını sağladı. Bu merakla paralel şekilde oluşturduğum tezimin amacı sosyal ağların romantik ilişkileri yaşayış biçimimize olan etkilerini aydınlatmaktır. Buna ek olarak sosyal ağların romantik ilişkiler üzerine etkilerinin aydınlatılmasının karmaşık bir süreç olduğu kanısındayım. Bu karmaşık yapının aydınlatılması için tezimde aşağıda yer alan konulara ağırlıklı olarak değineceğim.

- a) Sosyal ağların, sosyalleşme süreçlerindeki yeri
- b) Sosyal ağlarda kişilik temsilleri
- c) Sosyal ağlarda yapılan gözetimler ve karşılaştırmalar
- d) Sosyal ağlar ve romantik ilişkiler arasındaki ilişki
- e) Başkalarının sosyal ağlarda yaptıkları paylaşımlar üzerinden romantik ilişkiler ile ilgili beklentilerin şekillenmesi ve ilişkilerin değerlendirilmesi
- f) İlişki karşılaştırması yapmamıza neden olabilecek diğer muhtemel faktörler

İKİNCİ BÖLÜM

SOSYAL AĞLARIN SOSYALLEŞME SÜREÇLERİNDEKİ YERİ

Sosyal ağlar kullanıcılarına sağladıkları profil sayfaları üzerinden pek çok farklı içeriğin herkese açık ya da sınırlı sayıda seçilen kişinin görebileceği şekilde paylaşılmasına olanak sağlıyorlar (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Bu yolla sosyal ağ kullanıcıları “kim” olduklarına dair bir figür oluşturma ve bu figürü takipçilerine sunma olanağına da sahip oluyorlar (Moncur, Orzech, & Neville, 2016). Benliğin temsili bireylerin bilinçli ve planlı olarak yaptıkları ve belirli bir şekilde davranmayla oluşturulan çaba olarak tanımlarsak (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2006), bu temsillerin sosyal yaşantımızın önemli bir parçası olduğunu ve sosyal ağların bu temsiller için sağladıkları olanaklar ile ilgili yapılan çalışmaların önemini daha iyi kavrayabiliriz.

Genel olarak bakıldığında sosyal ağların bireylerin benliklerini temsil etme ihtiyaçlarını karşılamada önemli bir yeri olduğu ve bununla birlikte sosyal hayatımızın da önemli bir parçası olduğu yadsınamaz bir gerçek. Fotoğraf paylaşmaktan fikirlerimizi yazı ile sosyal ağlarda beyan etmeye kadar sundukları farklı seçeneklerle bu yeni iletişim kanalları bizi çok daha “görünür” kılıyorlar.

Snowden’in dünyayı sarsan itirafları sonrasında hükümetlerin vatandaşları üzerinde yaptıkları elektronik gözetim aktiveleri bütün dünya tarafından tartışılmaya başlandı (Eichenmüller, 2014). Sosyal ağlarda paylaştığımız her şey bir bakıma kim olduğumuz ile ilgili ipuçlarını da içeriyor. Başka bir deyişle bir zamanlar “büyük biraderin gözü” üzerimizdeyken artık “küçük” biraderler, takipçilerimiz ve şirketler de bizi izleyebiliyorlar (Tokunaga, 2011). Yapılan araştırmalar bu gözetleme durumunun sosyal ağların kullanım amaçları arasında

önemli bir yeri olduğunu gösteriyor. Yapılan bir çalışmaya göre insanların sosyal ağları kullanmalarının ilk sebebi arkadaşları ile bağlantıda kalmakken, ikinci sebepleri başkalarını gözleme imkânı olarak bulunmuş (Joinson, 2008). Bu açıdan bakacak olursak, insanlar sosyal ağları başkalarının profillerine ve paylaşımlarına bakarak onlar hakkında bilgi toplamak için kullanıyor gibiler. Bu bilgi toplama aktivitelerinin bazı durumlarda gizlilik açısından problem yaratma riski de oldukça yüksek (Salter & Bryden, 2009).

Yukarıda bahsedilenler üzerinden düşünecek olursak günümüzde insanlar artık çok daha görünür hale geldiler. Kişisel yaşantımız ile ilgili yaptığımız paylaşımlar ve sosyal ağlar üzerinden ulaşılabilen genel bilgilerimiz bizi görünür kılmakla beraber hızlı bir bilgi akışı da sağlıyor. Bu hızlı akış hemen hemen herkes ile ilgili herhangi bir bilgiye istediğimiz anda ulaşmamamıza olanak sağlıyor. Bu akışı da hesaba katarsak sosyal hayatımızı tecrübe etme şeklimiz belki de daha önce hiç tecrübe etmediğimiz şekilde bir değişime uğramış olabilir. Bu noktada bizim sosyal ağlarda temsil ettiğimiz benliğimizin pek çok farklı birey tarafından izleniyor oluşu yeni sosyal hayatımızın temelinde yer alıyor gibi görünüyor.

Festinger'in 1954 yılında temellerini attığı "Sosyal Karşılaştırma Teorisi" kendimiz ile ilgili yaptığımız değerlendirmelerin kendimize yakın bulduğumuz başkaları üzerinden nasıl gerçekleştiğini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Aradan geçen 65 yıldan sonra "Sosyal Karşılaştırma Teorisi" sosyal psikoloji alanında hızlı gelişmelere maruz kalmış ve bugün çok daha geniş kapsamlı bir hale gelmiştir (Taylor, Peplau, & Sears, 2006). Geleneksel olarak yukarı (Wheeler, 1966) ve aşağı (Wills, 1981) yönde yapılan karşılaştırmaların belirli sonuçları üzerinde duran kuram bugün artık her iki yönünde olumlu ve olumsuz duygu durum değişikliklerine yol açabileceğini bizlere söylemektedir (Buunk, Collins, Taylor, VanYperen, & Dakof, 1990).

Kuram ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalarda sosyal ağların da kendilerine yer bulduğunu görmekteyiz. Örnek verecek olursak, bir çalışmada sosyal ağlarda geçirilen

zaman sosyal karşılaştırma yapmaya yönelik eğilimlerle pozitif yönde ilişkili bulunmuştur. Bunun yanında, sosyal ağlarda kendini olduğundan iyi gösteren paylaşımlara fazlaca maruz kalmanın da depresif semptomları arttırdığı bulunmuştur (Uhlir, 2016). Sosyal ağların hayatımızdaki yerini benliğin temsili, ötekileri gözleme ve sosyal kıyas üzerinden değerlendirecek olursak günümüzde kim olduğumuzu sosyal ağlarda gösterdiğimiz ve gösterdiğimiz izlendiği bir sosyalleşme durumu söz konusu. Yapılan araştırmaların da gösterdiği gibi kimi durumda kendimizi ile ilgili yaptığımız değerlendirmelerin dayanak noktası da sosyal ağlarda karşılaştığımızı temsiller olabilir gibi görünüyor.

ÜÇÜNCÜ BÖLÜM

SOSYAL AĞLAR VE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLER

Sosyal hayatta “yakınlık” kurmak kişiler arası ilişkilerimizde önemli bir yere sahiptir. Yakınlık arayışı pek çok insan için öncelikli bir çaba olmakla beraber yapılan çalışmalarda da fiziksel ve zihinsel sağlıkla yakından ilişkili bulunmuştur (Moss & Schwebel, 1993). Bütün bu yakınlık arayışlarının içerisinde ise romantik ilişkiler şüphesiz ki özel bir öneme sahiptir. Yapılan araştırmalar neredeyse hepimizin en az bir kez romantik ilişki deneyimlediğimizi gösteriyor (Madsen & Collins, 2011). Teknolojik gelişmelerin sosyal yaşantımıza olan etkisiyle birlikte sosyal ağlar, özellikle gençlerin romantik ilişkileri tecrübe etmesinde önemli role sahiptir (Lenhart, Smith, & Anderson, 2015). Amerika’da yapılan bir çalışmaya göre 13-17 yaş arasındaki gençlerin neredeyse yarısı karşı tarafa ilgilerini göstermek için sosyal ağlar üzerinden beğeni ve yorum yapma yollarına başvuruyorlar. Bunun yanında gençlerin neredeyse %60’ı flörtleşmek için sosyal ağlar üzerinden mesaj atmaya tercih ediyorlar (Lenhart et al., 2015). Bu rakamların da açıkça gösterdiği gibi

sosyal ağlar özellikle genç nüfusun romantik ilişkilerinde önemli bir yere sahip. Bu çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda sosyal ağların romantik ilişkilere etkilerini anlamak için sosyal ağlar ve romantik ilişkiler arasındaki ilişkiyi daha detaylı incelemek gerektiği kanısındayım.

Romantik ilişkiler ve sosyal ağlar arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek için bir romantik ilişkinin farklı basamaklarında sosyal ağların ne gibi rolleri olduğunu incelemekte fayda var. Bu sebeple çalışmamın sonraki bölümünde romantik ilişkiler ile ilgili dört farklı basamak (sırasıyla partner seçimi, ilişkinin yaşanması, ayrılık ve ayrılık sonrası) ve bu basamaklarda sosyal ağların ne gibi etkileri olabileceğini literatür üzerinden inceleyeceğim.

3.1. Partner Seçimi

Yapılan çalışmalar partner seçimi sırasında çekicilik, erişilebilirlik ve ilgi gösterme özelliklerinin muhtemel partnerin seçiminde önemli bir rol oynadığını gösteriyor (Günaydın, Selcuk, & Hazan, 2013). Bu açıdan düşünüldüğünde çekici adaylara ulaşmak için sosyal ağları kullanmak oldukça avantajlı olabilir. Milyonlarca kullanıcısı olan sosyal ağlar, pek çok kullanıcıyı bizlere ulaşılabilir ve görünür hale getiriyor ve bu durum karşı tarafı çekici bulmamızı sağlayacak fotoğraf veya kişisel bilgilerin bizlere ulaşılabilir olmasını sağlıyor. Sosyal ağlar üzerinden yapılan benlik temsillerinin dürüstlüğü ile ilgili çalışmalar sürse de (Kose, 2015), kullanıcılar belirsizliği en aza indirmek için ortak arkadaşlar ve paylaşımların tutarlığı gibi faktörleri kontrol ederek karşı taraf ile ilgili şüphelerinden kurtuluyorlar. Bu açıdan sosyal ağlar partner seçiminde önemli bir rol oynuyor gibi görünüyor.

3.2. İlişkinin Yaşanması

Farklı duygu, anı ve tecrübelerin paylaşıldığı sosyal ağlarda romantik ilişkiler de partnerlerin paylaşımları ile daha görünür hale geliyorlar. Duyguların sıklıkla ifade edildiği sosyal ağlarda bireyler romantik ilişkileri ile ilgili paylaşımları da sıklıkla yapıyorlar. Böylelikle ilişkileri ile ilgili duygu durumlarını da bir

bakıma çevrelerine iletmiş oluyorlar (Rueda, Lindsay, & Williams, 2015). Bunun yanında kullanıcılar Facebook üzerinden profillerini “ilişkisi var” şeklinde güncelleyerek takipçilerine ilişkide olduklarını duyurabiliyorlar. Bu açıdan ilişkisi var seçeneği, dijital bir evlilik yüzüğü gibi algılanabiliyor (Fox, Warber, & Makstaller, 2013). Öte yandan bu yüzük bir bakıma ilişkiye tehdit oluşturabilecek diğer adaylara da profil sahibinin muhtemel bir partner adayı olmadığını da göstermek için kullanılıyor olabilir (Orosz, Szekeres, Kiss, Farkas, & Roland-Levy, 2015). Ek olarak ilişkinin sosyal ağlarda deklare edilmesinin ilişkinin ciddiyetinin göstergesi olduğu ile ilgili görüşler de çalışmalarda yer buluyor (Fox & Warber, 2013).

Sosyal ağların etkisi partnerler arası kıskançlıklar, partnerin etkinliklerinin ve hesaplarının gözlenmesi (Fox et al. 2014) ya da ilişkisel paylaşılarak yapılan olumsuz yorumlar (Balantine, Lin, & Veer, 2015) gibi farklı değişkenler tarafından olumsuz bir hale de gelebiliyor. Bütün bu bulgular ışığında sosyal ağların ilişkilerimizi yasayış şeklimiz üzerinde önemli bir rolü olduğunu kolaylıkla söyleyebiliriz.

3.3. Ayrılık

Sosyal ağların romantik ilişkilerin bu basamağı ile ilişkisini inceleyen çalışmaların sayısı az olsa da sosyal ağlar üzerinden olumsuz etkilerin ayrılıkla ilişkisi önemli bir konu.

Sosyal ağların romantik ilişkiler üzerindeki olumsuz etkileri ile ilgili çalışmalar ağırlıklı olarak partnerlerin birbirlerini gözetlemeleri ve kıskançlık üzerine yoğunlaşıyor (Fox et al., 2014, Orosz et al., 2015). Bu açıdan yapılan çalışmalar durumu iyi anlamak için yetersiz olsa da sosyal ağların ilişkiler üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerinin yarattığı stres ayrılık konusunda en önemli nokta olarak değerlendirilebilir.

3.4. Ayrılık Sonrası

İlişki durumunun değiştirilmesi ve birlikte olan fotoğrafların hesaplardan silinmesi ayrılık sonrasında sosyal ağlarda yapılan değişikliklerin başında geliyor (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). Bana kalırsa kullanıcılar sosyal ağlar üzerinden tekrar ilişkiye açık olduklarını bu şekilde duyuruyorlar. Bunun yanında pek çok ilişki için stresli bir süreç olan ayrılık, özellikle ayrılıktan daha olumsuz etkilenecek tarafın sosyal ağlar üzerinde gerçekleştirdiği gözetleme aktiviteleriyle ayrılık sonrasında sosyal ağların kullanım şeklini belirliyor (Fox & Tokunaga, 2015). Öte yandan, eski partneri gözetleme davranışı bilinçli olarak yapılmasa da hızlı bilgi akışı ve ortak arkadaşlar eski partner ile ilgili durum güncellemelerini ayrılık sonrasında da görünür kılıyor (Lukacs & Quan-Haase, 2015). Bu durum ayrılık sonrası yaşantıları her koşulda etkiliyor gibi görünüyor.

Sonuç olarak, sosyal ağların romantik ilişkiler üzerindeki etkileri partner seçimimden ilişkinin yaşanmasına, ayrılıktan, ayrılık sonrasına kadar hemen her alanda kendisini gösteriyor. Başka bir deyişle, sosyal ağlar ilişkimizi kiminle ve nasıl yaşayacağımızdan ayrılığa ve ayrılık sonrası nasıl etkileneceğimize kadar pek çok farklı alanda bizleri etkiliyor.

3.5. Romantik İlişkilerin Karşılaştırılması ve Sosyal Ağlar

Festinger'in sosyal karşılaştırma kuramı pek çok farklı alanda olduğu gibi romantik ilişkiler ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalarda da kendisine yer buldu (Wesner, 2008). Bireyler kişiler arası karşılaştırmalar yaptıkları gibi romantik ilişkilerde kendilerini partneriyle ya da ilişkilerini başka insanların ilişkileriyle de karşılaştırabiliyorlar (Lockwood, Dolderman, Sadler, & Gerchak, 2004; White, 2010). Bu çalışmanın da ana konusu olan ilişki karşılaştırmalar, ilişki tatmini, ilişkide güvenli hissetme ve ilişkiden emin olma gibi farklı değişkenler ile ilişkili görünüyor (Lebeau & Buckingham, 2008).

Medya temsillerinin ilişkisel karşılaştırmalar üzerindeki etkisini ölçen çalışmalar (Wesner, 2008) alanda yer alsa da sosyal ağların bu çalışmalar ile ilişkisini gösteren çalışmaların sayısı yok denecek kadar az durumda. Sosyal ağların hemen her anımızı görünür kıldığı bugünlerde romantik ilişkilerle ilgili paylaşımların insanların kendi ilişkilerini değerlendirmelerinde nasıl bir rol oynadığı benim için bir merak konusu. Bu sebeple çalışmamda bu ilişkiyi aydınlatmaya çalıştım. Öte yandan bu ilişkiyi incelemek sadece sosyal ağlar üzerinden açıklanmaması gerek bir durum. Bu sebeple ilişkisel ve bireysel faktörlerin de incelenmesi gerektiği kanaatindeyim. Örnek vermek gerekirse pek çok çalışma ilişki tatmininin ilişkisel karşılaştırmalarla yakından ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koyuyor (Rösand, Slinning, Røysamb, & Tambs, 2013, White, 2010).

DÖRDÜNCÜ BÖLÜM

KAVRAMLARIN İLİŞKİLENDİRİLMESİ VE DENENCELER

4.1. Sosyal Ağlar Üzerinden İlişkisel Paylaşımlara Maruz Kalmak

George Gerbner'in yetiştirme kuramı (1999) ilişkisel paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın etkisini ölçmek için bu çalışmada kuramsal temel olarak kullanıldı. Yetiştirme kuramı televizyon izleme alışkanlıklarının gerçekliğin algılanmasında nasıl etkisi olduğunu açıklamaya çalışıyor ve televizyon izleme süresinin artmasının dünyayı televizyonda gösterilen şekilde algılamayı da arttırdığını çalışmalarla destekliyor (Gerbner 1999; Eschholz, Chiricos, & Gertz, 2003).

Benzer şekilde bu çalışma sosyal ağlar üzerinden yapılan ilişkisel paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın ilişki ile ilgili normları bozarak, ilişkisel karşılaştırmalar sonucunda ilişki değerlendirmelerini bozacağını ve ilişki tatminini olumsuz etkileyeceğini öngörmektedir.

D1: Başkalarının ilişkisel paylaşımına maruz kalmanın, ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimini artırması ve ilişki memnuniyetini azaltması beklenmektedir.

4.2. İlişkiler Arası Karşılaştırmalar ve İlişki Tatmini

İlişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğiliminin çeşitli ilişkisel faktörlere dayandığını daha önce de belirtmiştim. Bu noktada Rusbult'ın yatırım modeli (1980) ne gibi ilişkisel faktörlerin ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimini etkileyeceğini anlamak için kullanılacaktır. Rusbult, ilişkiye yapılan yatırımların, seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesinin ve ilişki tatminin ilişkide kalma ve sürdürme davranışlarını belirlediğini öngörmektedir (Rusbult, 1980, Rusbult, 1983). Rusbult'ın kuramına paralel şekilde:

D2: İlişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimi ilişki memnuniyeti ve ilişkiye yapılan yatırımla olumsuz yönde ilişkili olması ve seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesi ile olumlu yönde ilişkili olması beklenmektedir

4.3. Bireysel Faktörler

Yetişkinlerin sahip olduğu bağlanma stilleri bu çalışma kapsamında ele alınacak ilk bireysel faktördür. Güvenli bağlanmanın ilişki tatmini ile olan olumlu ilişkisine ek olarak kaygılı ve kaçınan bağlanmanın genellikle olumsuz duygularla ilişkilendirilmesi üzerinden:

D3: İlişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimlerinin endişeli ve kaçınan bağlanma biçimleri ile pozitif olarak ilişkili olması beklenmektedir.

Yetişkin bağlanma stillerine ek olarak kişilik özellikleri de beş faktör kişilik kuramı üzerinden çalışmada yer alacaktır. Kişilik tipleri ile ilgili herhangi bir denence kurulmamış olup, kişilik özelliklerinin ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimleriyle olası ilişkileri aydınlatılmak istenmektedir. Bunun yanında çalışmada ilişkisel paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın çalışmada yer alan değişkenlerin ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimleri ile olan ilişkilerinde herhangi bir düzenleyici rolü olup olmadığı da kontrol edilecektir.

D4: İlişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimleri, ilişki memnuniyeti, ilişkiye yapılan yatırımlar, seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesi ile endişeli ve kaçınan bağlanma biçimleri arasındaki ilişkide, sosyal ağlarda diğerlerinin ilişkisel gönderilerini incelemenin düzenleyici bir etkisi olması beklenmektedir.

BEŞİNCİ BÖLÜM

ÇALIŞMA 1: NİTEL PİLOT ÇALIŞMA

Sosyal ağların romantik ilişkiler üzerindeki etkisini araştırırken bulunan çalışmaların hemen hemen hepsi Batı Kültürü'nde yapılmış çalışmalardan oluşmaktadır. Çalışmanın Türkiye'de sosyal ağlar ile romantik ilişkiler arasında nasıl bir ilişki olduğunu analiz edebilmesi adına veri toplama sürecinden önce bir nitel pilot çalışma düzenlenmiştir. Çalışmada açık uçlu sorular kullanılmış ve katılımcılar çalışmaya yüz yüze görüşme yaparak ya da e-posta yoluyla soruları cevaplayarak katılmışlardır. Çalışmanın amacı sosyal ağlarda ilişkileri iyi gösteren paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın kişinin kendi ilişkisini değerlendirmesine etkisi, romantik ilişkilerin daha önce bahsedilen dört basamağının sosyal ağlar ile ilişkisi ve genel olarak sosyal ağların kullanım şekilleri ile ilgili bilgi edinebilmek amaçlanmıştır.

5.1. Yöntem

5.1.1. Katılımcılar

Çalışmaya hayatları boyunca en az bir kez romantik ilişki içerisinde bulunmuş olan 20 sosyal ağ kullanıcısı katılmıştır. Çalışmada 6 erkek ve 14 kadın katılımcı yer almıştır. Katılımcıların 9'u üniversite öğrencisi iken, 11'i beyaz yaka çalışanıdır. Katılımcıların ortalama yaşı 25'tir. Katılımcıların 4'ü evli olduğunu, 12'si ilişkisi olduğunu ve kalan 4'ü ilişkisi olmadığını iletmiştir.

Katılımcılara ilişkileri iyi gösteren paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın kişinin kendi ilişkisini değerlendirmesine etkisi ve romantik ilişkilerin farklı basamakları ile ilgili 29 soru yöneltilmiştir. Çalışmada yer alan sorular ekler kısmında yer almaktadır.

5.2. Sonuçlar

Katılımcıların açık uçlu sorulara verdikleri yanıtlar anlamları açısından değerlendirilerek yakın anlam içeren yanıtlar belli başlıklar altında kümelenmiştir. Yapılan bu analizin sonunda elde edilen sonuçlara göre sosyal ağları genel kullanım alışkanlıkları paylaşılan fotoğraflara gelen beğeniler üzerinden 3 ayrı gruba bölünmüştür. Birinci grup ağırlıklı olarak fotoğraflarının beğenilmesini önemsediklerini iletmiştir. Bu grupta 10 farklı katılımcının yer aldığı görülmüştür. İkinci grup ise beğeni alıp almamayı umursamayan 5 katılımcıdan oluşmaktadır. Son grupta sadece belirli insanlardan gelen beğenileri önemsediklerini ileten 5 katılımcı yer almıştır. Çalışmada ilişkiye ait 4 basamağın da Türkiye'de sosyal ağlar ile ilgisi olduğu ve katılımcıların görüşlerinin belirli alanlarda benzeştikleri bulunmuştur. Buna ek olarak 11 katılımcı başkalarının ilişkisel paylaşımına maruz kalmanın, ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimlerini artırdığını ve ilişkilerini olumsuz yönde etkilediğini iletmiş öte yandan 9 katılımcı bu durumu önemsemediklerini belirtmişlerdir.

5.3. Tartışma

Yapılan pilot çalışma sonucunda Türkiye’ de sosyal ağ kullanımının ve sosyal ağların romantik ilişkilere etkisinin Batı literatürüne paralel özellikler sergilediği bulunmuştur. Buna göre paylaşımlara beğeni almak pek çok kullanıcı için önem teşkil etmektedir. Bu durum sosyal ağların benlik temsillerinde nasıl bir rolü olduğunu bizlere açıklayabilir. Bu durumda beğeni alması muhtemel, en iyi fotoğraflarımızın paylaşılma oranı diğerlerinden fazla olabilir. Benzer şekilde romantik ilişkilerimize dair yaptığımız paylaşımlar da en iyi halimizi yansıtacak şekilde yapılıyor olabilirler. Böyle bir paylaşım alışkanlığı bu paylaşımlara maruz kalanların ilişkiler ile ilgili algılarını değiştirerek kendi ilişkilerini olumsuz değerlendirmelerine sebep olabilir.

Sosyal ağların ilişkinin 4 farklı basamağı, partner seçimi, ilişkinin yaşanması, ayrılık ve ayrılık sonrası, ile ilişkisi ülkemizde de bariz şekilde kendisini göstermiştir. Bu durum sosyal ağların ilişkiler üzerindeki etkilerinin hemen hemen her yerde benzer şekillerde ortaya çıktığı şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Son olarak katılımcıların yarısından fazlası ilişkisel paylaşımına maruz kalmanın, ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimlerini artırdığını ve ilişkilerini olumsuz yönde etkilediğini iletmış bu da bu araştırmada temel olarak işlenen konuların daha detaylı incelemeye ihtiyacı olduğunu düşündürmüştür. Bu sebeple araştırma deneysel bir ikinci çalışma ile sürdürülmüştür.

ALTINCI BÖLÜM

ÇALIŞMA 2

Literatürde yer alan bulgular ve birinci çalışmanın sonuçları ışığında ikinci çalışma için bir deney düzenlenmesine karar verilmiştir. Bahsi geçen çalışma katılımcıların ilişkisel paylaşımına maruz kalma durumlarını kontrollü bir hake getirerek araştırmaya konu olan soruları test etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Çalışmaya katılan katılımcılar rasgele iki ayır gruba ayrılmıştır. Birinci grupta yer alan 133 katılımcı deney grubu olarak adlandırılmış ve kendilerine tanımadıkları iki ayrı çiftin Instagram üzerinden yaptıkları farklı ilişkisel paylaşımlar gösterilmiştir. Katılımcıların bu paylaşımlara maruz kalma durumlarını kesinleştirmek adına kendilerine paylaşımların beğeni sayısı vb. gibi sahte sorular sorulmuştur. Bu soru setinin ardından çalışmanın ölçüm araçları katılımcılara iletilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuna kadar çalışma amacı katılımcılarla tam olarak paylaşılmamıştır. Maruz kalmanın etkisini ölçebilmek adına çalışmada yer alan diğer 118 katılımcı kontrol grubunu oluşturmuşlardır. Kontrol grubunda da deney grubundaki prosedürlerin birebir aynısı uygulanmıştır. Deney ve kontrol grubu arasındaki tek fark ise kontrol grubunun maruz kaldığı paylaşımların sadece doğa ile ilgili olmasıdır. Aynı ölçüm araçları Kontrol grubunda da kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar iki grup arasında anlamlı fark olup olmadığını anlamak için analiz edilmiştir.

6.1. Katılımcılar

Çalışmada 180 kadın 71 erkek olmak üzere toplam 251 katılımcı yer almıştır. Katılımcıların ortalama yaşı yaklaşık olarak 28'dir. Katılımcıların 167'si ilişkisi

içinde olduklarını belirtirken 84 katılımcı evli olduğunu iletmiştir. 97 katılımcının. İlişki süresi 2 yıldan azken, 59 katılımcının ilişki süreleri 2'ile 5 yıl arasındadır. Kalan katılımcılar ilişkilerinin 5 yıldan uzun süredir devam ettiğini iletmişlerdir. Katılımcıların %44'ü üniversite mezunu, %25'i üniversite öğrencisidir. Katılımcıların %24 yüksek lisans mezunu olduklarını iletmişlerdir. Katılımcıların %7'si ise eğitim durumlarını “diğer” olarak belirtmişlerdir. Katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğunun bir Instagram hesabı vardır ve katılımcıların 223'ü ilişkilerinden oldukça memnun olduklarını demografik bilgi formunda iletmişlerdir.

6.2. Ölçüm Araçları

6.2.1. İlişki Sosyal Karşılaştırma Ölçeği (İSKÖ)

İlişki Sosyal Karşılaştırma Ölçeği (İSKÖ), ilişkilerin sosyal karşılaştırma sıklığını ve karşılaştırmanın gerçekleştiği koşulları değerlendirmek için LeBeau ve Buckingham (2008) tarafından geliştirilmiştir. İSKÖ, 24 soruluk herhangi bir alt ölçeği bulunmayan bir ölçektir ($\alpha = .92$). Ölçeğin Türkçe 'ye adaptasyonu bu çalışma kapsamında yazar tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir. LeBeau ve Buckingham, ölçeği tek faktörlü bir yapıda tasarlasa da ölçek incelendiğinde ilişkinin sosyal karşılaştırmasının farklı yönlerinden iki farklı soru setine sahip olduğu düşünülmüştür. Bu iki faktörlü yapı açıklayıcı faktör analizi ile incelendiğinde Genel Karşılaştırma Eğilimi ($\alpha = .94$) ve Partnere Yapılan Atıf ($\alpha = .86$) olmak üzere iki faktörlü çözümün örneklem için uygun olduğu görülmüştür. Önerilen faktör yapısı doğrulayıcı faktör analizi ile de test edilmiştir ve sonuçlar iki faktörlü çözümü desteklemektedir. ($SB \chi^2 (167) = 275.13$, $p = .00$, $CFI = .95$, $RMSEA = .05$, % 90 CI [.04, .06]). Ölçeğin Türkçe versiyonu orijinal hali gibi yüksek iç tutarlılık katsayısına sahiptir ($\alpha = .94$).

6.2.2. İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeği (İİÖ)

İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeği (İİÖ), orijinal olarak Rusbult, Martz ve Agnew (1998) tarafından ilişkiye yapılan yatırımı, seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesini, ilişki tatminini ve ilişkiye bağlanımı ölçmek amacıyla geliştirilmiştir. Rusbult,

ilişkiye yapılan yatırımların, seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesinin ve ilişki tatmininin ilişkide kalma ve ilişkiyi sürdürme (bağlanım) davranışlarını belirlediğini öngörmektedir (Rusbult, 1980, Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult, Martz ve Agnew (1998). Ölçeğin Türkçe 'ye adaptasyonu Büyükşehirin, Hasta ve Hovardaoğlu (2005) tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ölçeğin alt boyutlarının İç tutarlılık katsayıları ise yüksektir; ilişki tatmini ($\alpha = .90$), seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesi ($\alpha = .84$), ilişki yatırımı ($\alpha = .84$). Ölçek toplamda 30 sorudan oluşmaktadır.

6.2.3. Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri-II (YİYE-II)

Yetişkin bağlanma türünü ölçmek amacıyla Fraley, Waller, & Brennan (2000) tarafından geliştirilen Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri-II kullanılmıştır. Ölçeğin Türkçe adaptasyonu Selçuk, Günaydın, Sümer ve Uysal (2005) tarafından gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ölçek kaygılı ve kaçınan bağlanma türlerini ölçen iki ayrı alt gruba sahiptir. Kaygılı bağlanma boyutu ($\alpha = .86$) 18 soru ve kaçınan bağlanma boyutu ($\alpha = .90$) 18 soru olmak üzere toplam 36 sorudan oluşmaktadır.

6.2.4. Temel Kişilik Özellikleri Ölçeği (TKÖÖ)

Kişilik özelliklerinin sosyal ağların romantik ilişkileri etkisi bağlamında incelenmesi için Gençöz ve Öncül (2012) tarafından geliştirilen Temel Kişilik Özellikleri Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Ölçek beş faktörlü kişilik kuramının boyutlarına ek olarak Türkiye örnekleminde altı alt faktörden oluşmaktadır. Olumsuz değerlik alt faktörü Türkiye örnekleminde diğer beş faktöre ek olarak kendisini göstermiştir. 45 maddeden oluşan ölçek, dışadönüklük ($\alpha = .89$), duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ($\alpha = .83$), yumuşak başlılık ($\alpha = .85$), sorumluluk ($\alpha = .85$), deneyime açıklık ($\alpha = .80$) ve olumsuz değerlik ($\alpha = .71$) alt faktörlerini kapsamaktadır.

6.3. Sonuçlar

6.3.1. Korelasyonlar

Değişkenler arası korelasyonları belirlemek için yapılan analizler çalışmanın ilk analizlerini oluşturmaktadır. Sonuçlar değişkenler arasında bazı anlamlı korelasyonlar olduğunu göstermiştir. Birincisi, ilişkiler arası karşılaştırma yapma eğilimi toplam skoru endişeli ($r = .40$) ve kaçınan ($r = .18$) bağlanma stilleri ile duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ($r = .17$) ve ilişkiye yapılan yatırımlar ($r = .25$) değişkenleriyle pozitif korelasyon gösterdi. Öte yandan, ilişki memnuniyeti ($r = -.21$) ve deneyime açıklık ($r = -.23$) ile negatif ilişkili bulundu. Ölçeğin alt kategorileri Genel Karşılaştırma Eğilimi ve Partnere Yapılan Atıflar da benzer korelasyonlar göstermiştir.

Yukarıda belirtilen sonuçlara ek olarak, ilişki memnuniyetinin de beklenen yönde bazı önemli korelasyonları analizler sonucunda bulunmuştur. Örneğin, dışadönüklük, sorumluluk, yumuşak başlılık, deneyime açıklık ve yatırım puanları, ilişki memnuniyeti ile pozitif olarak ilişkili bulundu ($r' = .14, .30, .14, .17, .18$; sırasıyla). İlişki memnuniyeti ayrıca olumsuz değerlik ($r = .17$), endişeli ($r = .31$) ve kaçınan bağlanma stilleri ($r = .40$) ile negatif korelasyon gösterdi. Ek olarak, seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesi, sorumluluk ($r = -.13$) ile negatif korelasyonu olduğu bulunmuştur. Son olarak, ilişki yatırımı; sorumluluk ($r = .16$), duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ($r = .12$) ve kaygılı bağlanma ($r = .24$) stili ile pozitif ilişkili çıkmıştır.

Kişilik özellikleri ile ilgili tüm korelasyonlar beklenen yönde gerçekleşmiştir. Dışadönüklük kişilik özelliği sorumluluk, yumuşak başlılık ve deneyime açıklık ile pozitif korelasyon gösterdi ($r' = .19, .43, .51$; sırasıyla); ek olarak duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ve olumsuz değerlik ile negatif yönde ilişkili bulundu. ($r' = -.24, -.23$; sırasıyla). Sorumluluk kişilik özelliği ise, yumuşak başlılık ($r = .30$) ve deneyime açıklık ($r = .29$) ile pozitif; duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ($r = -.18$) ve negatif değerlik ($r = -.20$) ile negatif korelasyon gösterdi. Buna ek olarak, yumuşak başlılık kişilik özelliğinin, deneyime açıklık ($r = .34$) ile pozitif;

olumsuz deęerlik ($r = -.47$) ve duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ($r = -.26$) ile olumsuz korelasyon gsterdięi bulunmuřtur. Ayrıca, duygusal denge/nevrotisizm, deneyime açıklık ($r = -.19$) ile negatif ve olumsuz deęerlik ($r = .43$) ile pozitif iliřki gsterdi. Son olarak, deneyime açıklığın olumsuz deęerlik ile negatif korelasyonu olduęu bulunmuřtur ($r = -.13$). Bütün bunlara ek olarak, analizlere gre, yetiřkin baęlanma stilleri birbirleriyle pozitif korelasyon gstermiřtir ($r = .46$).

6.3.2. İliřki Sresi, Cinsiyet ve İliřkiler Arası Karřılařtırma Yapma Eęilimleri

İliřkiler arası karřılařtırma yapma eęilimlerinin kadın ve erkekler iin anlamlı farka sahip olup olmadığını anlamak adına baęımsız deęiřkenler T testi kullanılmıřtır. Sonular kadın katılımcıların karřılařtırma yapma toplam skorunda $t(249) = -2.5$, $p = .01$, genel karřılařtırma eęilimi alt faktrnde $t(249) = -2.29$, $p < .05$ ve partnere yapılan atıf alt faktrnde $t(249) = -2.04$, $p < .05$ erkeklerden anlamlı olarak daha yksek skorlar elde ettiğini gstermiřtir. Bu sonulara gre iliřkiler arası karřılařtırma yapma eęilimlerinin kadın katılımcılarda erkeklerden daha fazla olduęu dřnlebilir.

İliřki sresi ile ilgili yapılan tek ynl varyans analizlerinde (ANOVA) ise anlamlı farkın sadece iliřkiye yapılan yatırım deęiřkeninde olduęu grlmřtur ($F(3, 247) = 3.56$, $p < .05$). Buna ek olarak sonular iliřki sresi 9 yıl ve zeri ($M = 5.42$, $SD = 1.83$) olan katılımcıların, iliřki sresi 0-2 yıl arasında ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 2.07$) olan katılımcılara gre iliřkiye yapılan yatırım puanlarında anlamlı olarak daha yksek deęerlere sahip olduęu bulunmuřtur. Bu sonular iliřki sresinin artmasının iliřkiye yapılan yatırımı arttırdığı řeklinde yorumlanabilir.

6.3.3. Deney Grubu ve Kontrol Grubu Arasındaki Farklar

Deney grubu ve kontrol grubu arasındaki farkları analiz etmek iin bir dizi baęımsız deęiřkenler T testi kullanılmıřtır. alıřmanın birinci denencesi bařkalarının iliřkisel paylařımına maruz kalmanın, iliřkiler arası karřılařtırma yapma eęilimini artırmasını ve iliřki memnuniyetini azaltmasını beklemektedir.

Ancak analiz sonuçları, deney ($M=2.19$, $SD=.78$, $N=251$) ve kontrol gruplarının ($M=2.13$, $SD=.69$, $N=251$) ilişki kıyaslama eğilimleri açısından herhangi bir anlamlı farka sahip olmadıklarını göstermiştir; $t(249) = .69$, $p > .05$. Benzer şekilde deney ($M=7.17$, $SD=1.56$, $N=251$) ve kontrol grupları ($M=7.31$, $SD=1.46$) ilişki tatmini açısından da herhangi bir anlamlı farka sahip değildir; $t(249) = -.70$, $p > .05$. Bu sonuçlara dayanarak denence 1 reddedilmiştir.

6.3.4. Regresyon Analizleri

Çalışmada denence 2 ve denence 3'ü test edebilmek adına regresyon analizleri kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre ilişki tatmininin ilişkiler arası kıyas yapma değişkeni üzerinde anlamlı ve negatif etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir ($R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 250) = 11.04$, $p = .001$; $\beta = -.21$, $p = .001$). Buna ek olarak ilişkiye yapılan yatırımın da ilişkiler arası kıyas yapma değişkeni üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif etkisi olduğunu bulunmuştur ($R^2 = .06$, $F(1, 250) = 16.31$, $p < .001$; $\beta = .25$, $p < .001$). Son olarak ise, seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesinin de ilişkiler arası kıyas yapma değişkeni üzerinde herhangi bir anlamlı etkisi bulunamamıştır ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 250) = 1.82$, $p > .05$). Analizlerin sonuçlarına dayanarak denence ikinin kısmen desteklendiği söylenebilir.

Regresyon analizi denence için test edilmesi için de kullanılmış olup sonuçlar kaygılı ($R^2 = .16$, $F(1, 250) = 47.64$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .40$, $p < .001$) ve kaçınan ($R^2 = .03$, $F(1, 250) = 8.68$, $p < .005$, $\beta = .18$, $p < .005$) bağlanma stillerinin ilişkiler arası kıyas yapma eğilimi üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif yönde etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu analiz sonuçlarına dayanarak denence 3 kabul edilmiştir. Kişilik özelliklerinin ilişkiler arası kıyas yapma eğilimi üzerindeki etkisini ölçmek için yapılan analizler ise duygusal denge/nevrotisizm ($R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 250) = 7.28$, $p = .001$, $\beta = .18$, $p = .001$) kişilik tipinin ilişkiler arası kıyas yapma eğilimi üzerinde anlamlı ve pozitif yönde etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Öte yandan, deneyime açıklık ($R^2 = .05$, $F(1, 250) = 14.10$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.23$, $p < .001$) kişilik özelliğinin ise ilişkiler arası kıyas yapma eğilimi üzerinde anlamlı ve negatif yönde etkisi olduğu bulunmuştur.

6.3.5. D zenleyici Deęiřken (Moderator) Analizleri

Deney grubunda yer almanın iliřkiler arası kıyas yapma eęilimi ve onun  zerinde anlamlı etkisi olan iliřki tatmini, iliřkiye yapılan yatırım, kaygılı ve kaınan baęlanma stilleri  zerinde herhangi bir d zenleyici etkisi olup olmadıęını g rmek iin d zenleyici deęiřken (moderator) analizi kullanılmıřtır. Sonulara g re deney grubunda yer almanın iliřkiler arası kıyas yapma eęilimi ve iliřki tatmini ($\beta = -.04, p > .05$), iliřkiye yapılan yatırım ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$), kaygılı ($\beta = -.05, p > .05$) ve kaınan baęlanma ($\beta = -.01, p > .05$) stilleri arasındaki iliřkide herhangi bir anlamlı etkisi bulunamamıřtır. Bu sonuca dayanarak denence 4 reddedilmiřtir.

YEDİNCİ B L M

TARTIřMA

Bu tez kapsamında sosyal aęların romantik iliřkiler  zerine olası etkileri incelemek adına 2 ayrı alıřma d zenlenmiřtir. Birinci alıřma nitel bir alıřma olup sosyal aęların T rkiye’de kullanım řekillerini ve romantik iliřkiler ile ne gibi bir etkileřimleri olduęunu anlamamıza yardımcı olmuřtur. alıřma kapsamında ayrıca, ikinci alıřmaya da konu olacak olan iliřkisel paylařımlara maruz kalmanın iliřkiler arası kıyas ve iliřki tatmini  zerindeki etkisi de katılımcılara sorulmuřtur. Katılımcıların yanıtları bu paylařımlara maruz kalmanın bazı iliřkileri olumsuz etkiledięini ve iliřkiler arası kıyas yapma davranıřlarında bu paylařımların referans noktası olarak kullanıldıęını g stermiřtir. İkinci alıřma kapsamında ise deneysel bir y ntem kullanılarak katılımcıların paylařımlara kontroll  olarak maruz kalmaları saęlanmıřtır. İkinci alıřmada genel olarak maruz kalmanın. İliřki tatmini azaltacaęı ve iliřkiler arası kıyas davranıřını arttıracaaęı beklenmiřtir. Sonular bu alıřmada iliřkisel

paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın herhangi bir anlamı etkisi olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu durumun muhtemel açıklamaları şu şekilde sıralanabilir. Çalışmada yer alan katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğu demografik bilgi formunda ilişki tatminlerini yüksek olarak dile getirmişlerdir. Devam eden ilişkilerinde yaşadıkları tatmin duygusunu maruz kalma sonunda daha düşük dile getirmenin yaratacağı tutarsızlık, “bilişsel uyumsuzluk” kuramının da bahsettiği üzerinde katılımcıların kaçındığı bir durum olabilir. Buna ek olarak devam eden ilişkileri hakkında olumsuz yorumlarda bulunmak “sosyal beğenirlik etkisi” açısından da değerlendirildiğinde katılımcılar için zor olmuş olabilir. Benzer şekilde seçeneklerin niteliğinin değerlendirilmesi de çalışmada ilişkiler arası kıyas ile ilişkili bulunmamıştır. Bu durumda devam eden ilişkide başka seçeneklerin değerlendirilmesinin sosyal beğenirlik etkisi ile çelişmesi üzerinden açıklanabilir. Çalışmada katılımcıların paylaşımlara maruz kalma durumları da yetiştirme kuramında yer alan etkiyi yaratacak boyutta olmayabilir. Çalışma sosyal ağlar üzerinden yapılan ilişkisel paylaşımlara maruz kalmanın ilişki ile ilgili normları bozarak, ilişkisel karşılaştırmalar sonucunda ilişki değerlendirmelerini bozacağını ve ilişki tatminini olumsuz etkileyeceğini öngörülmüştür ancak maruz kalma süresi ilişki ile ilgili normları bozmaya yeterli olmamış olabilir. Ek olarak çalışmaya katılanların görsellerdeki çifti tanımıyor oluşu da ilişki kıyası yapma eğilimlerini azaltmış olabilir zira Festinger (1954) sosyal karşılaştırmaların bize benzeyenler üzerinden gerçekleşmesinin olası olduğundan bahseder.

Çalışmada kadın katılımcıların erkek katılımcılardan daha fazla ilişkisel karşılaştırma yaptıkları bulunmuştur. Bu durumu biyolojik faktörlerden ziyade sosyo-kültürel açıdan açıklamakta fayda olduğu kanaatindeyim. Toplumumuzda erkekler açısından ilişkilerinin kalitesini karşılaştırmak pek sık rastlanan bir durum değilken ilişkide elde edilen ekonomik kazançların karşılaştırıldığı bir başka durumda sonuçlar tam tersi yönde olabilir. Bu bakımdan çalışmadan elde edilen cinsiyet ile ilgili sonuçları dikkatle incelemek ve genelleme yapmamak gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Son olarak çalışmada bağlanma stilleri, ilişki süresi

ile ilişki yatırımı arasındaki etkileşimler ve kişilik özellikleri ile ilgili bulgular literatüre paralel ve beklendiği yönde bulunmuştur.

Çalışmanın belli sınırlılıkları da bulunmaktadır. İlk sınırlılık çalışmada ölçülen ilişki tatmini ve ilişkisel karşılaştırma gibi değişkenlerin sosyal beğenirlik etkisine maruz kalma ihtimalinin fazla olmasıdır. Çalışmada kullanılan görsellerin hesap sahibi ile ilgili sınırlı bilgi içermesi de bu çalışmanın bir diğer sınırlılığı olarak görülebilir. Son olarak çalışmada maruz kalma süresinin kontrol edilememesi yetiştirme kuramı açısından bir sınırlılık olarak görülebilir. Çalışmanın sınırlılıkları yanında nicel ve nitel yöntemleri birlikte kullanması, ilişki sosyal kıyas ölçeğini Türkçe 'ye kazandırması, yetiştirme kuramını sosyal ağlar üzerinden test etmesi gibi güçlü yönleri de bulunmaktadır. Gelecek çalışmalar sosyal ağların romantik ilişkiler üzerine etkilerini ölçmek için örtük tutum ölçme yöntemlerini kullanabilirler. Böylelikle çalışmalarda “sosyal beğenirlik” ve “bilişsel uyumsuzluk” etkilerinden uzak kalabilirler. Ek olarak gelecek çalışmaların maruz kalma süresini ve etkisini arttırmak adına kullanılan materyalleri yeniden düzenlemesinin faydalı olacağı kanaatindeyim.

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Soyadı / Surname : Gürsoy

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Bölümü / Department : Psychology

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English) :

Effect of Social Network Sites on Romantic Relationships

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: Yüksek Lisans / Master

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Doktora / PhD

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