

COMMITMENT IN LONG DISTANCE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS: THE
ROLE OF PERCEIVED RESPONSES TO CAPITALIZATION ATTEMPTS AND
PERCEIVED MATTERING

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THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED RESPONSES TO CAPITALIZATION
ATTEMPTS AND PERCEIVED MATTERING**

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ABSTRACT

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This research examined the role of perceived mattering and the perceived responses to capitalization attempts in predicting the romantic relationship commitment of emerging adults in long-distance relationships after controlling for satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investment size (Investment Model variables), gender, and the total relationship duration. The participants were 217 Turkish individuals (%55.8 female, 44.2%, male) who were currently engaged in a long-distance romantic relationship that had lasted for at least six months. The Personal Information Form, the Relationship Stability Scale, the Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts Scale, and the Mattering to Romantic Others Questionnaire were used to gather data. In this correlational design study, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to analyze data. Based on the findings, it was observed that gender, the duration of the relationship, satisfaction, investment size, and perceived mattering were found to be significant predictors of the variability in commitment, accounting for 53.4% of the variance. The findings were interpreted considering the existing empirical evidence. In light of the findings, theoretical and practical implications and recommendations for further research were subsequently discussed.

Keywords: Investment Model, Perceived Matterings, Perceived Responses to Capitalization, Long Distance Relationship, Emerging Adulthood.



ÖZ

UZAK MESAFE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLERDE BAĞLILIK: MUTLULUK PAYLAŞIMI VE ÖNEMSENME ALGISININ ROLÜ

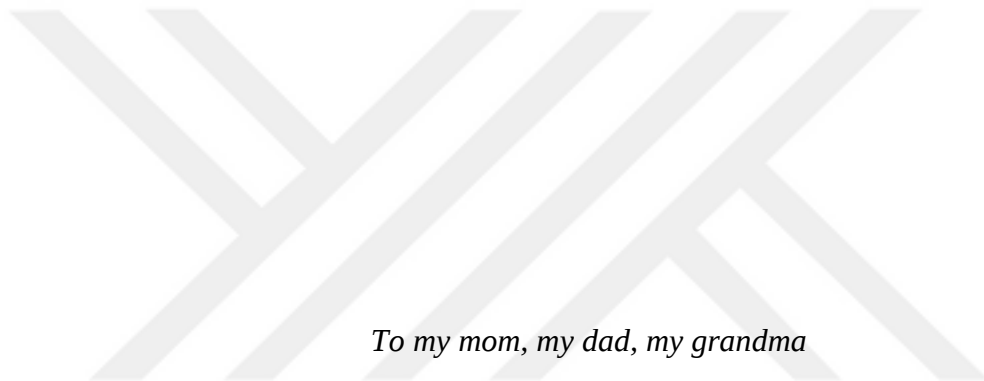
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Bu araştırma, ilişki doyumu, alternatiflerin kalitesi, yatırım büyüklüğü (Yatırım Modeli değişkenleri), cinsiyet ve toplam ilişki süresi kontrol edildikten sonra, uzak mesafe romantik ilişkisi olan beliren yetişkinlerin, romantik ilişki bağlılığını yordamada, önemsenme algısı ve mutluluk paylaşımı girişimlerine karşı algılanan tepkilerin rolünü incelemiştir. Katılımcılar, en az altı aydır uzak mesafeden yürüttükleri bir romantik ilişki içinde olan 217 Türk bireyden (%55,8 kadın, %44,2 erkek) oluşmaktadır. Veri toplamak için Kişisel Bilgi Formu, İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeği, Mutluluk Paylaşımı Ölçeği ve Önemsenme Algısı Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Korelasyonel desenli bu çalışmada, verileri analiz etmek için hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Bulgulara göre, cinsiyet, ilişki süresi, memnuniyet, yatırım büyüklüğü ve algılanan önemsenmenin bağlılıktaki değişkenliğin anlamlı yordayıcıları olduğu ve varyansın %53,4'ünü açıkladığı görülmüştür. Bulgular, mevcut görgül kanıtlar göz önünde bulundurularak yorumlanmıştır. Bulgular ışığında, teorik ve pratik çıkarımlar ve gelecek araştırmalar için öneriler tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yatırım Modeli, Önemsenme Algısı, Mutluluk Paylaşımı, Uzak Mesafe İlişki, Beliren Yetişkinlik.



*To my mom, my dad, my grandma
and to my grandpa whose presence I feel even from afar*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ	vi
DEDICATION	vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiv
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background to the Study	1
1.2. Purpose of the Study	10
1.3. The Research Question of the Study	10
1.4. Significance of the Study.....	11
1.5. Definitions of Terms	12
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	15
2.1. Long Distance Relationships	15
2.1.1. Empirical Findings on Long-Distance Relationship.....	16
2.1.2. Empirical Findings on Long- Distance Relationships in Türkiye	18
2.2. Social Exchange Theory and The Interdependence Theory: A Fundamental Framework of the Investment Model	22
2.2.1. Components of the Investment Model.....	26
2.2.2. Commitment	29
2.2.3. Investment Model and Long-Distance Relationships	34
2.3. Capitalization	37
2.3.1. Capitalization and Commitment.....	42
2.3.2. The Importance of Capitalization in Long-Distance Relationships	44
2.4. Perceived Mattering	46

2.5. Summary of the Literature Review	52
3. METHOD.....	54
3.1 Research Design.....	54
3.2. Participants of the Study	54
3.2.1. Demographic and Relational Characteristics of the Participants.....	55
3.3. Data Collection Instruments.....	58
3.3.1. Demographic Information Form	58
3.3.2. The Relationship Stability Scale (RSS).....	58
3.3.3. Mattering to Romantic Others Questionnaire (MTROQ)	60
3.3.4. Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts Scale (PRCA).....	61
3.4. Data Collection Procedure	63
3.5. Description of Variables	63
3.6. Data Analyses.....	64
3.7. Limitations	65
4. RESULTS.....	68
4.1. Preliminary Analyses of the Study	68
4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables	69
4.3. Bivariate Correlation Matrices of the Variables	70
4.4. Testing Assumptions for Hierarchical Multiple Regression.....	72
4.5. Findings of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis	75
4.6. Summary of the Results	77
5. DISCUSSION.....	79
5.1. Prediction of Perceived Mattering and Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts through the Investment Model Perspective.....	79
5.2. Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice	87
5.3. Recommendations for Future Studies.....	88
REFERENCES	92
APPENDICES	
A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE	115
B. CONSENT FORM IN TURKISH.....	116
C. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM IN TURKISH	117
D. SAMPLE ITEMS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP STABILITY SCALE IN TURKISH	120

E. SAMPLE ITEMS FOR THE MATTERING TO ROMANTIC OTHERS QUESTIONAIRE IN TURKISH	121
F. SAMPLE ITEMS FOR THE PERCEIVED RESPONSES TO CAPITALIZATION ATTEMPTS SCALE IN TURKISH	122
G. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET	123
H. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU	140



LIST OF TABLES

Table 3. 1. Demographics and Relational Characteristics of Participants (n=217).....	55
Table 4. 1. Descriptive Statistics of Predictor and Criterion Variables (N=217).....	69
Table 4. 2. Bivariate Correlation Matrix Between Variables (n=217)	70
Table 4. 3. The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Commitment	76

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4. 1. Histogram showing the normality of residuals.....	73
Figure 4. 2. Plot showing the distrubution of the standardized residuals.....	73
Figure 4. 3. Distribution of the homoscedasticity of residuals	74



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The impact of satisfying romantic relationships on psychological well-being, physical well-being, and quality of life has been extensively studied and questioned from multiple perspectives (Gómez-López et al, 2019; Impett et al, 2020; Khaleque, 2004; Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001; Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007; Robles, 2014). In light of the escalating prevalence of divorce and premarital break-ups, numerous studies have also been conducted to examine the dynamics of sustaining and terminating intimate relationships (Fletcher et al; 2019; Le & Agnew, 2003). The basic assumption is that couples are more likely to stay in a relationship if they are in love with one another or are happy together. This assumption makes some sense since, if the favorable feelings exceed the bad ones, couples will want to remain in their relationship.

On the other hand, other studies argue that crediting a high degree of happiness or satisfaction alone for the reason of persistence is oversimplifying the situation (Rusbult et al., 1998). Rusbult and her colleagues (1998) thus addressed three aspects that happiness/satisfaction cannot explain. The first aspect is that some partnerships continue even when there is dissatisfaction. Second, it is a well-known fact that some fulfilling partnerships terminate, and couples may break up from their fulfilling relationships. The third one is deciding whether to stick with a relationship through its ups and downs or walk away from pleasant partnerships because of charming alternatives. Satisfaction levels can become unstable and attractive alternatives might pose a danger to even the most stable partnerships. In such situations, it is interesting to investigate how certain relationships resist ups and downs while others do not (Rusbult et al., 1998).

Romantic relationships, during the phase of emerging adulthood which can be characterized as a distinct developmental phase that bridges the gap between adolescence and adulthood, assume a crucial role as developmental objectives (Arnett, 2000; Erickson, 1968; Rosenthal, et al, 1981). For individuals in the stage of emerging adulthood, a romantic partnership encompasses more than just sexual and emotional intimacy. It serves as a means of exploring and uncovering one's values, beliefs, preferences, and productivity. According to Arnett (2000) and Gómez-López et al. (2020), the establishment of a healthy identity for emerging adults is most significantly achieved through the initiation and maintenance of a romantic relationship. During the emerging adulthood years, individuals are still dependent and unaware of their responsibilities; in other words, both adolescent and adult characteristics are present. Since the traits of emerging adulthood are linked to those of earlier and later stages, they cannot be seen independently from other developmental phases. By making choices and going through difficulties, people begin to construct their identities. In other words, people from that era make judgments about love, career, and worldview that impact their lives, which began in their adolescence. However, in contrast to adolescence, romantic relationships last longer in emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004). Emerging adults begin to experience cognitive, social, and emotional changes as a result of romantic interactions, which are crucial to forming a person's identity and character. People's ability to adjust to a new way of life is also facilitated by their romantic connections (Furjman & Schaffer, 2003; LeFebvre et al., 2020; Tillman et al., 2019).

Although the precise age range for the emerging adulthood period is not usually agreed upon, it often includes late adolescence, the 20s, and sometimes even the early 30s. Various age ranges have been suggested by academics to define emerging adulthood. According to Arnett (2000), the concept of emerging adulthood pertains to the age range of 18 to 29. Similarly, according to the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (SSEA) (2022), the ideal age range to define emerging adulthood is between 18 and 29. Nevertheless, various studies conducted in different countries have indicated varying age ranges for the occurrence of emerging adulthood. For instance, in Argentina, emerging adulthood has been observed to take place between the ages of 25 and 27 (Facio & Micocci, 2003), while in Israel, this

developmental stage occurs between the ages of 20 and 24 (Mayseless & Scharf, 2003). Similarly, in Türkiye, emerging adulthood has been found to span from ages 19 to 26 (Atak & Çok, 2010). It is crucial to recognize that these age ranges are flexible and not generally recognized. Emerging adulthood is a relatively new idea, and continuous study is helping us understand this stage of life better as the transition from adolescence to adulthood is significantly influenced by cultural and personal variables as well.

Today, the dynamic nature of contemporary living conditions and the growing opportunities for travel and relocation resulting from globalization have greatly facilitated the prevalence of long-distance relationships (LDRs), long-distance relationships are becoming more and more common (Maucione, 2023; Pisor; 2022). Some romantic relationships may need to withstand being distant throughout emerging adulthood. This trend can be attributed to various factors such as work-related commitments (Erdem, 2018), career prospects (Arditti & Kauffman, 2004), and military service (Carter & Renshaw, 2015). Since between 25% and 40% of romantic relationships among college students are LDRs (Merolla, 2010), researchers have turned their attention to investigating the factors that support the sustainability of LDRs. Considering the emerging adulthood stage, people may become very focused on goals like completing their higher education, building a career, and improving oneself. As a result, couples may wind up living in separate towns, nations, or even continents and might choose to maintain romantic relationships far away from each other for several reasons (Guldner, 2003; Maucione, 2023).

One of the characteristic features of LDRs is the physical distance between the partners' residences (Dellmann-Jenkins et al., 1994; Sahlstein, 1996). Distance serves as a metric for the various elements that may influence a connection, and such factors might differ based on individual preferences, dynamics within the relationship, and the subjective perceptions of the persons involved. The topic of mileage limits in long-distance relationships has been subject to varying perspectives among relationship professionals, psychologists, and researchers (Dellmann-Jenkins et al., 1994; Sahlstein, 1996). Upon reviewing the relevant research, Gerstel and Gross (1984) and Jehn et al. (1997) found that the average distance between the couples of

long-distance is 800 kilometers. In the studies conducted in the USA, it is seen that the lowest distance between couples was 40 kilometers and the highest was 4320 kilometers (Jehn, 1997; Gerstel & Gross, 1984; Groves & Horm-Wingerd, 1991; Rhodes, 2002). Compared to Türkiye's border with the United States, even if in terms of surface area of Türkiye is smaller in comparison, in this study, the distance between the participants and their partners was at least 40 kilometers.

LDRs may have both negative and positive consequences in relationships. There have been conflicting and inconsistent findings about the relational quality of LDRs compared to geographically close relationships (GCRs) (Dargie et al., 2015; Kelmer et al., 2013). Studies showed that the physical separation of partners can have negative effects both on relational and individual extent. Compared to couples who are physically close, people in LDRs report lower levels of relational quality (Cameron & Ross, 2007). People in LDRs have not just the typical issues of love relationships but also extra pressures associated with communication, distance, and uncertainty management. There are also some studies showing that people in LDRs report greater levels of relational and individual stress (DuBois et al., 2016), and they point to relationship uncertainty as a major source of stress (Maguire & Kinney, 2010). In situations when in-person communication is difficult, partners may wonder if their significant other is genuinely invested in the relationship, if they can be trusted, and whether they will ever live near one other. As a result, ambiguity may significantly impact the commitment that takes place in LDRs.

However, some facilitating factors compensate for the difficulties associated with physical separation. For example, partners may try to compensate for physical distance by improving and increasing communication between themselves in LDRs (Mietzner & Lin, 2005). In some studies, LDRs are considered advantageous in terms of partners appreciating each other, idealizing their relationship more, being in a satisfying relationship when they come together again, and being more optimistic about the future (Stafford & Reske, 1990). Occasional breaks between partners in GCRs contribute to the development of the relationship by bringing a novelty to the relationship, and even if couples do not have LDRs, being away from each other for short periods (for example, going on business trips or going out with friends

separately) increases individual happiness and relationship satisfaction (Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2013). In addition, couples in LDRs can add more novelty and variety to the relationship by experiencing more unusual and exciting activities when they come together, as the time they spend together is more limited, thereby improving their relationship quality (Bao & Lyubomirsky, 2013). It is known that partners resorting to the support of technological tools (such as telephone, and e-mail) to ensure communication when they are not face-to-face supports relationship maintenance behaviors (such as openness, social networks), relationship satisfaction, and commitment (Dainton & Aylor, 2002). While LDRs do have certain advantages pointed out in the literature, it is safe to claim that they may require more effort compared to relationships where partners are physically close. Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the dynamics of LDRs to be able to understand which attitudes or behaviors of the individuals are beneficial for their commitment to the relationship regardless of some challenges of the nature of the long distance, and which ones are becoming a reason for the end.

On the other hand, according to some researchers, LDRs are just as high-quality as GCRs, if not higher. According to Kelmer et al. (2013), compared to couples in GCRs, long-distance couples reported better levels of relationship adjustment, affection for their partner, enjoyment with their partner, and conversational quality. There was no significant difference in relational satisfaction between LDRs and GCRs, according to DuBois et al. (2016). In addition, people in LDRs report reduced levels of sadness and anxiety. According to Stafford (2010), there is typically no significant difference between relational stability and trust in LDRs and GCRs. Furthermore, there was a lower likelihood of problematic communication and a sense of being stuck in the relationship among long-distance relationship couples. According to Kelmer et al. (2013), people in LDRs are less likely to experience the inconveniences of daily living together, so they strive to concentrate on good interactions and make the most of their time together when they can.

When the related literature is reviewed, it is seen that especially during the past 40 years, researchers have been working to understand why some relationships can survive while others deteriorate and come to an end. According to the related

literature, commitment is one of the key factors for relationships that determines a person's inclination to participate in actions that support stable and healthy relationships (Rusbult et al, 1994). Moreover, it has been found that this phenomenon is associated with a multitude of factors which include but are not limited to: the endurance of relationships and the willingness to make sacrifices (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Kölemen, 2022), positive interpretations that lean towards a more favorable direction (Morry & Sucharyna, 2016), the act of devaluing alternative options (Rodrigues et al., 2017; Smith, 2015), increased support from both parents and friends for the current relationship (Rodrigues et al., 2017). Therefore, the present investigation directs its attention towards commitment, a multifaceted construct within the realm of romantic relationships, serving as the dependent variable to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. As per the scholarly work of Rusbult and Buunk (1993), commitment can be described as a subjective state encompassing both cognitive and emotional elements, which has a direct impact on a variety of behaviors within the context of a continuous relationship. Commitment also reflects a long-term perspective and the intention to maintain relationships through good times and bad. The current investigation sought to explore the construct of commitment by employing the investment model, which has attracted considerable attention in recent years as a valuable framework for elucidating various phenomena within interpersonal relationships (Regan, 2011).

Within scholarly discourse, gender has been repeatedly recognized as a significant variable in the context of romantic relationship commitment. However, there has been some discrepancy in the research findings about how gender affects relationship commitment. This discrepancy is especially noticeable when examining the results of research that used meta-analysis. Women typically appear to be slightly more committed in relationships than men, according to the research, which implies that gender differences in relationship commitment tend to be very small. Nonetheless it is crucial to remember that, as Jackson et al. (2014) showed, the inclusion of clinical samples is primarily responsible for the importance of these findings.

The variable of total relationship duration has also been examined in the context of the Investment Model. In their study, Le and Agnew (2003) analyzed 52 research and

categorized the relationship duration into two groups as less than 18 months and more than 18 months. Their findings indicated that there was no significant difference in commitment levels between these two categories of relationship duration. Whereas Rusbult (1980, 1983) emphasized that a greater duration of the relationship indicated a significant investment in the relationship and was positively associated with higher levels of commitment. On the other hand, according to Beşikçi (2008), there was no significant correlation found between the duration of a relationship and the level of commitment among university students. Similarly, according to the findings of Kaynak (2014), the duration of a relationship did not have any statistically significant impact on the variables examined in her study. According to Rusbult (1983), longitudinal analysis revealed a large increase in satisfaction, investment, and commitment, while the quality of alternatives showed a considerable drop over time within relationships. Supporting this finding, according to Weigel et al. (2003), there is a positive correlation between the duration of a relationship and the amount of commitment. Also, the duration of a relationship has been identified as a key predictor of relationship satisfaction for women (Bilecen, 2007) and overall investment (Büyükşahin, 2006).

When the related literature is examined, it is seen that another factor known to be associated with the factors that are closely related to relationship commitment (e.g. satisfaction, investment) is Perceived Mattering (PM). The concept of PM was conceptualized about four decades ago and refers to the individual's questioning and perception of how important the individual is to the people around him or her (Mak & Marshall, 2004). PM indicates how much individuals think the people around them care about them and express how much they are satisfied with the attention of others towards the individuals (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981). Individuals need to know whether their significant others care about them, think about their benefits, and show interest when they need it. In cases where the individual's need for mattering is not satisfied, the individual begins to question even the basis of his or her very existence (Elliott et al., 2004). On the other hand, when the sense of mattering is satisfied, it has been shown to have a protective function for the individual's well-being (Taylor & Turner, 2001). Also, it is important for the individual to feel mattered to maintain both his or her individual and relational well-being (Rosenberg

& McCullough 1981; Schlossberg, 1989). In an American study involving 173 young adults in romantic relationships, researchers found that respondents felt more important when their partner gave them more attention compared to what they received from others. Higher mattering levels, in turn, increased relationship investment and satisfaction. Remaining invested in a romantic relationship can be facilitated by feeling important to one's partner. On the other hand, mattering may decrease, and investment may decline if the romantic partner's attention is thought to be less significant than attention from other sources (Mak & Marshall, 2004).

To sum up, PM is a concept that refers to the degree to which a person feels important, valuable, and meaningful to a significant other. This concept often includes an individual's perceived impact on their own life, relationships, and environment. LDRs can naturally be associated with some difficulties and dynamics in commitment due to physical distance. PM can be a determining factor in commitment in such relationships. In LDRs, trust and commitment between partners are important. PM can help one feel valued in the relationship and therefore increase the level of commitment. When the partner feels valued and important in each other's life, it can strengthen the sense of commitment. PM can also encourage partners to invest emotionally in the relationship. When a person sees themselves as an important part of the relationship, they may show more motivation and effort to maintain the relationship. PM may increase relationship satisfaction and harmony between partners. This, in turn, may support relationship stability in LDRs. PM can also increase communication and strengthen the emotional support network between partners. This can create a more solid foundation for LDRs. For these reasons, PM is thought to have a role in explaining the level of commitment in LDRs and should be investigated as a predictor of the commitment in these relationships. Such studies may be important to understand the dynamics of these relationships and to support couples.

In the related literature, there is another concept that has been shown many times to be related to closely related concepts of relationship commitment (e.g. satisfaction, investment, and relationship quality). People's sharing of their positive experiences with their partners and the responses given by their partners to these sharings can be

considered as one of the basic components of romantic relationships called capitalization (Gosnell & Gable, 2013). Gable and Reis (2010) emphasized that studies on positivity have important contributions to making sense of normative processes in interpersonal interactions, and therefore it is important to understand the effects of individuals sharing their positive experiences with others in their relationships. In a study conducted by Gable et al. (2004) with 154 undergraduate students (56 male, 98 female), 70.8% of the participants stated that they felt the need to share the positive events that they had experienced and found important with their significant others. One's perception of the reaction of his/her partner after telling him/her about a good event that happened to them is called Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts (PRCA) in the literature. Perceiving one's partner's reactions as positive and supportive can both support the person's well-being and can in turn have a positive effect on the individual's enjoyment of their relationships (Gable et al., 2004). Considering these results, it can be thought that sharing positive experiences is an important component that affects people's daily lives and the dynamics of their relationships. Maintaining an LDR requires more effort than relationships in which partners are physically close. In the setting of LDRs, establishing improved communication and mutual appreciation become crucial to navigating the problems that come with being apart, such as the absence of physical presence (Mietzner & Lin, 2005). Furthermore, positive outcomes can be fostered, strengthening the connection and encouraging greater commitment between partners, by seeing a partner as supportive and responsive when sharing positive happenings with them.

To conclude, LDRs have become prevalent among emerging adults engaged in dating due to a multitude of causes. LDRs are a form of relationship that allows the investigation of romantic relationships, the behavior of individuals to maintain their relationships, the quality of communication between the partners in the relationship, the perception of being cared for by their partner (PM) in the relationship and their partners' reactions to individuals' sharing positive experiences (PRCA). Considering the very nature of LDRs, the quality of the communication between the partners, the feeling of being cared for and valued in the relationship, and the feeling mattered to the romantic partner can be very important in increasing commitment to the

relationship. The Investment Model is a widely accepted theoretical framework for comprehending the factors that contribute to individuals' commitment to their relationships. Consequently, individuals who exhibit heightened levels of positive affect towards their relationship, experience increased levels of satisfaction, invest more resources into the relationship, and perceive no superior alternatives to their current partner are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of commitment to their current romantic relationship.

Moreover, experiencing a sense of importance within the context of their romantic partnership and perceiving their partner as being responsive and supportive when they desire to share positive experiences may enhance their commitment to the relationship and diminish their perception of the quality of alternative options. For this reason, in the current study, the role of the perceived mattering (PM) and individuals' perception of their partners' reaction towards capitalization attempts (PRCA) in predicting the commitment of Turkish emerging adults who have LDRs was examined.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

Using Rusbult's Investment Model framework, this study aimed to investigate the role of perceived mattering and the perceived responses to capitalization attempts in predicting the romantic relationship commitment of emerging adults in long-distance relationships in Türkiye after controlling for satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investment size (Investment Model variables), gender, and the total relationship duration.

1.3. The Research Question of the Study

The research question of the current study was as follows:

To what extent do perceived mattering and perceived responses to capitalization attempts of the participants who were engaged in LDRs in Türkiye predict their level of commitment after satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investment size, gender, and the duration of the relationship are controlled?

1.4. Significance of the Study

People in long-distance marriages have typically been the focus category of studies analyzing romantic relationships in the national literature (e.g., Akçaboza Kayabol et al., 2022; Ceylaner, 2019; Erdem, 2018). This study is significant in this regard since it examines the relationship features of long-distance relationships, which are also common in Türkiye. There is not any national or international research looking at the relationship between perceived mattering, capitalization, and long-distance relationships, and the available ones have not been conducted with participants who are engaging in LDRs. Examining the interactions between capitalization and perceived mattering offers important insights into how these elements function in this particular setting.

In recent years, long-distance relationships have become increasingly prevalent. However, it is noteworthy that the existing body of research on this topic remains rather restricted, with a lack of comprehensive investigations into the dynamics of long-distance relationships, both within domestic contexts and across borders worldwide. For a variety of reasons, including education, employment, military service, migration, and imprisonment, couples in romantic relationships must spend a considerable amount of time apart. As the prevalence of geographic distance in relationships rises, more research on this topic is needed (Merollo, 2010).

When the relevant literature was examined, it was observed that the Turkish literature on the perceived mattering that individuals perceive in their relationships with their romantic partners is quite limited, and only one study related to this subject has been found (Kırimer, 2014). Similarly, although there are studies on sharing negative experiences with the partner in romantic relationships (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2001), only two studies have been found investigating the effect of the response received after sharing positive experiences on the dynamics of relationships in the Turkish literature; one conducted with married couples (Kırimer, 2014) and one conducted on same-sex friendships (Kuzgun et al., 2023). Also, although perceived responses to capitalization attempts and perceived mattering have been studied in the international literature in various relational fields such as friendship, romantic, and

family relationships (Gable et al., 2004; Reis et al., 2004), it is seen that only married couples have been studied in the Turkish literature in terms of romantic relationship (Kırimer, 2014). Thus, this research broadens our knowledge of perceived mattering and perceived responses to capitalization attempts in a particular demographic by performing it with emerging adults who have LDRs.

In non-marital romantic relationships, commitment, trust, and satisfaction between partners can also be shaped by the feeling of being cared for, in other words, mattering. Similarly, supporting each other's achievements and sharing their happiness and joy can contribute to strengthening the relationship, increasing commitment, and deepening the emotional bond between partners. Providing information about these concepts in the literature may guide clinicians working in the field in their work with unmarried couples in long-distance relationships.

It is believed that the present investigation makes significant theoretical, practical, and research contributions within the domain of long-distance romantic relationships, focusing on the concepts of perceived mattering, and capitalization. The present study seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature by carrying out a complex relationship between the responses displayed by romantic partners after the sharing of positive experiences, and the subjective sense of mattering experienced within the context of their relationships. This study employs the Investment Model as a theoretical framework to enhance comprehension of the details inherent in long-distance relationships, as well as the elements that influence their commitment levels. Overall, the importance of this study stems from its ability to expand theoretical frameworks, give practical insights for couples in long-distance relationships, and add to the literature on perceived mattering and capitalization in the Turkish setting. It closes a gap in the literature and offers new possibilities for study into the elements that influence commitment in long-distance romantic relationships.

1.5. Definitions of Terms

Emerging Adulthood: The transition from adolescence to adulthood, identity formation, and exploration characterize the distinct developmental stage known as

emerging adulthood. People in this developmental stage which lasts from the late teens to the late 20s, seek independence, make important decisions about their lives, and negotiate their relationships, education, careers, and personal ideals. People go through an extended transition during which they are released from the constraints of adolescence but have not yet fully assumed adult duties (Arnett, 2000).

Long-Distance Relationships (LDRs): Long-distance relationships are romantic relationships that take place between individuals who are physically separated from one another (Maguire & Kinney, 2010) and have no less than 40 kilometers distance between couples (Groves & Horm-Wingerd, 1991; Jehn, 1997; Rhodes, 2002). For the current study, individuals who have at least 40 kilometers of distance between their partners were recruited.

Commitment: The commitment represents one's feelings of devotion to the relationship as well as the desire to keep it going (Rusbult, 1983). According to the Investment Model (Rusbult, 1980, 1983), relationship satisfaction, perceived quality of alternatives, and individual investment size, all predict individual commitment both collectively and individually.

Relationship Satisfaction: Satisfaction refers to one's favorable feelings and attraction to a connection, as well as the partnership's satisfying of one's needs, such as intimacy, a sense of belonging, security, or sexuality (Greene & Britton, 2015; Rusbult et al., 1986)

Quality of Alternatives: The evaluation of the alternatives to the current partner that are more desirable and attractive to the individual is referred to as the Quality of Alternatives (Le & Agnew, 2003).

Investment Size: Any sources that the individuals invest in the relationship, whether intrinsically or extrinsically are referred to as investment size (Rusbult, 1980).

Perceived Mattering: The psychological tendency to see oneself as important to a specific other person is defined as perceived mattering (Marshall, 2001).

Capitalization: The process of sharing with another person about the occurrence of a personal happy event and thereby getting further benefit from it has been defined as capitalization (Gable et al., 2004).



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature on study variables and the theoretical framework are presented in this chapter. The chapter presents the Investment Model, commitment, and the definitions of long-distance relationships, capitalization, and perceived mattering, as well as empirical studies of these concepts. Finally, a summary of the literature review and the reasons for studying these variables together are provided.

2.1. Long Distance Relationships

Understanding what a long-distance relationship is is essential before diving into the study of long-distance relationships. Unfortunately, there has not yet been a consensus on what exactly defines a long-distance relationship. In fact, long-distance relationships "defy precise definitions," according to Stafford (2005, p.7). Early studies on long-distance relationships evaluated the impact of military deployments abroad, which frequently required both partners to be apart for several months while maintaining little contact (Carlson & Carlson, 1984; Hunter, 1982). The geographic distance between the partners' cities (Helgeson, 1994), the time and distance required for travel between the partners (Daniel, & Barantley, 2002; Knox et al., 2002), and the miles separating the couple (Carpenter & Know, 1986; Holt & Stone, 1988) are some of the more recent methods used by researchers to differentiate long-distance relationships from geographically close relationships. Some studies suggested that the number of nights spent together each week could serve as a proxy for long-distance relationships. For instance, Holmes (2004) defined distance relationships as those in which a couple spends two or more nights apart on average during the week. In contrast, long-distance relationships were referred to as "commuter relationships" by Rabe (2001). The fact that the couples spent four or more nights apart in a normal week served as her basis for characterizing these relationships.

Additionally, Cameron and Ross (2007) verified and distinguished between long-distance and geographically close ties using the telephone area codes of the participants. Researchers can obtain an objective assessment of a relationship by asking participants about metrics like the number of nights spent together, travel time to their partner, or physical distance from them. However, these metrics might not always indicate to the couple that they are truly in a long-distance relationship. As an example, individuals have stated that they are in geographically close relationships even when they live 40 kilometers apart (Groves & Horm-Wingerd, 1991, Jehn, 1997; Rhodes, 2002), 80 miles apart (Dellmann-Jenkins et al., 1994) or 250 miles apart (Van Horn et al., 1997). One of the most popular techniques for determining whether someone is in a long-distance relationship is to ask participants if they think their relationship is "long distance" (Aylor, 2003). This helps to address this problem and streamline the classification of long-distance relationships. To categorize a relationship, questions such as "Do you consider this a long-distance relationship?" have been frequently used (Van Horn et al., 1997, p. 27) or, conversely, "My partner lives far enough away from me that seeing them every day would be difficult or impossible" (Guldner & Swensen, 1995, p. 316; Stafford & Merolla, 2007).

2.1.1. Empirical Findings on Long-Distance Relationship

Several reasons, including the pursuit of career opportunities or educational goals, military service or deployment, imprisonment, immigration restrictions, and parental or familial obligations, can result in a geographical separation between romantic partners (Kelmer et al., 2013). In addition to the issues of trust and disclosure that GCRs confront, these relationships also struggle with the absence of the closeness that comes with in-person interaction and conversation. People in LDRs now have access to various mediated communication options to enhance their connection with their romantic partners, thanks to the swift improvements in communication technology such as text messaging, chat rooms, Skype, and others.

According to Merolla (2010), 40% of college students report being in an LDR. However, being geographically separated is not a university-specific occurrence; a growing number of people experience separation due to military deployment, work

demands, family responsibilities, and other circumstances. LDR is one in which the partners live sufficiently far from one another to make daily in-person interactions challenging or impossible (Guldner & Swensen, 1995). As technology has made it easier for people to meet and build relationships over great distances, it has also made it easier for LDR couples to communicate and work on maintaining their relationships.

LDRs are characterized by a geographic distance that restricts the partners' daily physical togetherness and keeps them from spending as much time together as they would like (Pistole & Roberts, 2010). Relationship maintenance becomes difficult because of geographic distance. Maintaining LDRs is more challenging than GCRs (Aylor, 2003). Separations can pose risks to couples and impact both the relationship and the individuals; maintaining LDRs may present unique obstacles not found in GCRs. Individuals miss out on everyday talks, shared free time, and physical intimacy when they do not contact each other face-to-face (Schwebel et al., 1992). LDRs were reported to have lower levels of relationship quality by specific investigations (Cameron & Ross, 2007; Van Horn et al., 1997). Although numerous studies have looked into the difficulties of long-distance dating relationships, some have found favorable results.

Individuals in LDRs have the same levels of relationship satisfaction, intimacy, trust, and commitment as those in close geographical relationships (Guldner & Swensen, 1995). According to Stafford et al. (2006), individuals profit from separation since they can focus on school or work when apart and subsequently on their relationship when reunited. Although separation can be unpleasant for couples, it can also allow for the growth of autonomy, which leads to feelings of loneliness being overcome and focus being directed to other connections, such as friends and family (Guldner, 1996). Improving their communication is another way that couples can strengthen their bond (Arditti & Kauffman, 2004). Those in LDRs must learn alternative methods of sustaining their relationship, such as phone conversations, letters, emails, and instant messaging apps, due to the lack of in-person encounters and physical touches. According to Dainton and Aylor (2002), using the phone and the Internet was favorably correlated with feelings of commitment, satisfaction, trust, and decreased jealousy.

When face-to-face communication is difficult, couples may question whether their spouse is genuinely invested in their relationship, whether they can be trusted, and whether they will ever be living close to one another. Therefore, uncertainty could significantly affect the commitment made to LDRs. Partners in LDRs report feeling stronger love and commitment from one another when their voice calls are longer and more frequent, according to Jin and Peña (2010). As a result, technology may facilitate high levels of disclosure among those in LDRs, lowering feelings of confusion about oneself, one's partner, and one's relationship while raising feelings of satisfaction and trust.

According to Stafford (2005), restricted communication may also facilitate idealization. When couples came together, Dainton and Aylor (2002) discovered that they would behave well, which allowed idealization to persist. When reunited, couples typically stay clear of conflicting situations so as not to waste their valuable time together (Sahlstein, 2004). Idealization turns into a unique strategy for keeping long-distance couples together.

When a long-distance dating relationship becomes unavoidable, it might be beneficial for partners to discuss what separation means. According to Kauffman's (2000) research, couples feel that their relationship benefits from separation, and considering the significance of the break is more significant than its practical features (visitation frequency and degree of contact). Individuals who place a high importance on academic or professional accomplishments may see the separation as a necessary investment in their future (Arditti & Kauffman, 2004). Li (2008) investigated whether couples being apart for an extended period enhances their commitment to one another, and he reported that they are ready to put up with the challenges and wait patiently for their future. Consequently, although most couples find LDRs challenging, they can gain from them by learning what it means to be apart from one another.

2.1.2. Empirical Findings on Long- Distance Relationships in Türkiye

There are very few studies on LDRs in the Turkish context. Only one of them was conducted with non-married and married individuals together (Ceylaner, 2019), and

the other four were conducted with married individuals (Erdem & Özdemir, 2020; Kayabol et al., 2022; Tomar et al., 2023). However, the samples of all studies on LDRs conducted in the Turkish context are different from the sample and variables of the current study. In the context of Turkey, where the data for the current study was also collected, the findings of these studies are summarized as they are thought to shed light on the nature of LDRs, even though their samples and the phenomena they investigate are different. While summarizing the research findings in the Türkiye context on LDRs (mainly long-distance marriages), the parts of the findings that may be relevant to romantic partnership are highlighted. The findings related to being married, being a parent, and the role of a spouse were not mentioned because they are not relevant to the current study.

In a qualitative study conducted by Akçaboza-Kayabol et al., (2020), the researchers aimed to examine long-distance marital relationship dynamics and characteristics. In this study, 15 married individuals (10 women and five men) who had been in a long-distance marriage for about four years participated. The study's results revealed that factors such as effective communication, use of technology, constructive conflict resolution strategies, positive personality traits, and relational resources supported the maintenance of emotional intimacy between spouses despite long distances. One of the study's findings that may shed light on the current study is the part in which participants in long-distance marital relationships evaluated their relationships' positive and negative aspects. The themes mentioned by the participants were analyzed into two sub-themes: personal and relational advantages and disadvantages. It was observed that the participants talked more about the advantages of long-distance marriage and less about the disadvantages. When the themes under personal advantages are examined, it is seen that the participants consider long-distance marriage as an opportunity to spare time for themselves and to improve themselves. In this context, the prominent code under this theme is that the participants supported their well-being by being alone, spending time on their hobbies, feeling stronger and happier, learning to be patient, and gaining self-confidence. In addition, the participants also mentioned other personal benefits of long-distance marriage, such as spending time with the social environment, supporting career development, providing order in individual life (being more

planned and scheduled), gaining new perspectives and habits, and gaining new life skills. Under relational advantages, factors such as increased love and longing, understanding the spouse's value, spending quality time together, being in constant communication, and decreased frequency of conflicts, which significantly increase the relationship's quality and prolong its lifespan, stand out. On the other hand, as a personal disadvantage of long-distance marriage, the difficulties of being far away and traveling were emphasized, such as difficulties related to traveling. In addition, negative personality traits were also considered personal disadvantages.

The study by Erdem and Özdemir (2019) investigated the problems experienced by women who have been separated for at least eight months due to their husbands' work. This study used a qualitative research method, and interviews were conducted with 17 participants. As a result of the findings, women's problems were categorized and explained under the titles of physical distance, duration of separation, meaning of physical absence of the spouse, social problems, parenting problems, housework, and economic problems as the most challenging aspects of long-distance marriage. The problems experienced by women were categorized under the themes of social and parenting problems. Although this study was conducted with married women and was not related to the current study in terms of focus and sample, it was included in the literature review as it is one of the few studies on LDRs in the Turkish sample. The study's findings showed that women in long-distance marriages experience various difficulties. More parallel to the current study, when the findings of this study conducted by Erdem are evaluated, putting aside the findings regarding the husband-wife and parent roles specific to the marital relationship, the problems experienced by the participants in the role of romantic partners are expressed as follows: Participants stated that they were deprived of many social activities because they had to live separately from their spouses. Participants stated that being physically separated from their spouses affected them emotionally negatively. It is possible to say that this process affects newly married couples more. Considering these findings, it can be thought that participants in long-distance romantic relationships, the sample of the current study, may have similar experiences when they are away from their partners.

Another study was conducted by Ceylaner (2019) with people in LDRs and GCRs in Türkiye. Within the scope of this study, it was aimed to determine the roles of autobiographical memory characteristics and functions in the relationship between attachment orientations and perceived relationship value in adults in both long-distance and close-distance relationships. For this purpose, a sample of 212 participants consisting of women ($n = 128$) and men ($n = 84$) aged 18–65 who have been in a romantic relationship for more than 6 months and are in LDRs or GCRs was reached. Of all the participants, 68.9% were dating ($n = 146$), 22.6% were married ($n = 48$), and 8.5% were engaged ($n = 18$). Although the sample of this study was quite different from the sample of the previous study, the research findings were worth mentioning in terms of the comparison of LDRs and GCRs in the Turkish context. As a result of the analysis, the deprivation of details such as the partner's body posture, smell, and touch, which constitute the perceptual richness of an experience of one's partner, creates a situation that may negatively affect the quality of memories. In addition, in LDRs, being able to see only the face or a certain part of the partner's body from only one frame (a video call) is a limiting factor in terms of the perceptual details of the memory. However, when the study results were evaluated regarding the closeness functions of the participants' autobiographical memories of their partners, there was no significant difference between the groups experiencing long-distance and geographically close relationships.

In another recent study conducted by Tomar et al. (2023), married couples residing in another region who had been in a long-distance relationship for at least 6 months and who were away from their homes at least three nights a week were included in the sample. This correlational study examines the role of individuals' perceptions of self-sacrifice on their own marital satisfaction (the actor effect) and their spouses' marital satisfaction (the partner effect) in long-distance marriages. The study sample consisted of 101 couples ($n = 202$ individuals) between the ages of 21 and 49. The study results show that the involuntary, obligatory, and unintentional sacrificing behaviors of couples living in long-distance marital relationships reduce both their and their partners' satisfaction with their marriages. When couples make involuntary sacrifices, they are negatively affected as a couple, and their marital relationship becomes more conflictual. On the other hand, the voluntary and reciprocal sacrificial

behaviors of couples in long-distance marital relationships increase marital satisfaction for both themselves and their spouses. This result shows that the reciprocal sacrifice behaviors shown by couples living in long-distance marital relationships provide satisfaction for both of them and are effective in developing feelings of "we" as a couple.

2.2. Social Exchange Theory and The Interdependence Theory: A Fundamental Framework of the Investment Model

This section provides a comprehensive examination of the model's background, explanations, and components and a thorough analysis of the relevant research findings. These topics are covered in detail within sub-sections.

The Investment Model has its foundations in the Interdependence Theory proposed by Thibaut and Kelley in 1959. The Interdependence Theory is a highly comprehensive theory that examines interpersonal structures. It posits that dependence plays a crucial role in these structures and contributes to maintaining relationships (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). In contrast to the majority of psychological theories that center on individual behavior influenced by personality traits, personal experiences, or cognitive processes, the Interdependence Theory places equal importance on the relationship between individuals and the individuals themselves (Rusbult, 2007). The proposed theory posits that two individuals in a relationship are interconnected, such that their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors mutually influence each other's outcomes. Typically, individuals are unable to achieve their optimal outcomes on their own. Instead, they must strive for mutually beneficial outcomes and adapt their relationship as it progresses to attain satisfactory results together (Regan, 2011).

When assessing their relationship outcomes, individuals typically consider two criteria: the comparison level and the comparison level for alternatives. The term comparison level pertains to the criteria or expectations of individuals regarding their level of satisfaction or attractiveness within a relationship (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). It encompasses assessing the costs and rewards obtained from the relationship

(Rusbult, 1980). When an individual's outcomes fall below the established standards, they tend to experience dissatisfaction. Conversely, they will likely feel satisfied if their outcomes exceed the comparison level (Le & Agnew, 2003). According to Rusbult (1980), individuals tend to develop stronger attraction toward their relationships when they experience greater rewards and fewer costs while lowering their expectations. In this context, costs are defined as the negative aspects an individual dislikes, whether from their partner or the relationship itself. These may include financial responsibilities or arguments, or in the current study's context, long-distance related issues such as lack of physical contact. On the other hand, rewards are the positive elements that bring satisfaction to the individual, such as social support or sexuality (Impett et al., 2001) and feeling significant to the loved one (Mak & Marshall, 2004).

In contrast, the comparison level for alternatives refers to the assessments made by individuals regarding the various options available to them, excluding their current partner. If partners perceive that they can obtain more desirable outcomes from alternatives outside of the relationship, and if their current outcomes fall below the comparison level for alternatives, the relationship will likely end (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). This concept elucidates why individuals who are dissatisfied with their relationship choose to remain in it, as they perceive no other viable options that meet their standards as determined by their comparison level for alternatives (Regan, 2011). According to Interdependence Theory, individuals who experience greater positive outcomes than they anticipated (low comparison level) and subsequently feel more satisfied with their relationships while also having fewer alternative options compared to their current relationship (low comparison level for alternatives) are more likely to exhibit higher levels of dependence and a willingness to sustain the relationship (Regan, 2011; Rusbult et al., 1998).

In conclusion, the Interdependence Theory offers valuable insights into understanding the dynamics of interpersonal relationships from a two-way perspective. The initial step involves conducting separate analyses on satisfaction and relationship maintenance. This approach aims to address the inquiry regarding the strategies employed by individuals who are dissatisfied with their relationships

but continue to sustain them. Furthermore, according to the theory, the outcomes of a relationship are influenced not only by internal factors between partners but also by external factors, including more appealing alternatives or sociocultural influences (Regan, 2011).

Previous studies have demonstrated that individuals who are engaged in a committed romantic partnership experience enhanced physiological and psychological well-being compared to those who are not (Pierce et al., 1996). Sustaining a romantic relationship, whether conducted from a distance or nearby, necessitates the adoption of a "leap of faith" mindset. This entails the firm conviction that one's partner will consistently prioritize their partner's well-being and interests (Murray et al., 2001, p.334). Individuals possess diverse requirements to sustain their interpersonal connections. Initially, the individual must believe that both parties involved in the relationship possess the motivation to sustain the relationship. Furthermore, it is crucial for both individuals involved in a partnership to actively demonstrate certain behaviors that indicate their motivation to sustain the relationship. For instance, individuals in a committed relationship are generally advised to refrain from pursuing other potential partners simultaneously (Murray et al., 2006). Individuals who hold this belief exhibit a heightened perception of relationship security, display more pronounced behaviors in their efforts to sustain the relationship, and demonstrate a decreased likelihood of terminating the relationship. Conversely, individuals who harbor uncertainties regarding their partner's level of affection towards them and possess lower levels of confidence in the longevity of their relationships are more inclined to invest fewer resources in their relationships, view alternative options more favorably, and ultimately end their relationships.

To sum up, the Interdependence theory, proposed by Kelley and Thibaud (1978) and Thibaud and Kelley (1959), arose from social exchange theory, as did other relationship maintenance theories. Like social exchange theory, interdependence theory is grounded in the premise that individuals remain in relationships by evaluating the ratio between the advantages of engaging in interactions within the relationship. The fundamental attribute of interdependence theory pertains to the dynamic interaction through which individuals exert influence over their partners'

choices and alternatives. Through interpersonal interactions, individuals can experience either favorable or unfavorable consequences. Indeed, positive outcomes can be characterized as advantageous consequences encompassing tranquility, happiness, and accomplishment. Conversely, adverse outcomes can be perceived as detrimental repercussions, encompassing emotions such as anger, discomfort, and disappointment. To enhance comprehension of interdependence theory, it is imperative to explain several pivotal concepts. The concept of outcome value is crucial in the interdependence theory as it pertains to the subjective assessment of the relationship's quality. When assessing the quality of a relationship, individuals employ the main principle of social exchange theory, which highlights the significance of the ratio between rewards and costs. In particular, individuals tend to remain in relationships when the benefits, such as joy, comfort, and success, outweigh the costs, such as time, energy, and discomfort (Regan, 2011; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1999). Conversely, there are instances where individuals opt to remain in relationships despite their dissatisfaction with the extent of the benefits derived from the relationship. The issue at hand can be elucidated through interdependence theory, which posits two evaluative standards employed by individuals: the comparison level and the comparison level for alternatives. Comparison level, a measure that previous experiences can influence, and social comparison are utilized to assess the connections and the desired attributes of outcomes that individuals seek to encounter within relationships. The concept of comparison level for alternatives, which serves as a criterion for individuals to assess the viability of their relationships, pertains to the minimal outcomes required to fulfill one's needs. This includes seeking fulfillment through alternative relationships, support from friends and family, or individual efforts. The construct of comparison level is associated with the experience of satisfaction, while the construct of comparison level for alternatives is associated with the experience of dependence.

The assessment of satisfaction level can be ascertained by the degree to which the relationship outcomes surpass the comparison level. For example, when outcomes of the relationship surpass the comparison level, an individual perceives their relationship as fulfilling. However, as noted by Kelley and Thibaut (1978), mere satisfaction with a relationship, which pertains to one's happiness, does not suffice as

a sole determinant for the continuation of the relationship. Individuals engage in the process of evaluating various options, which subsequently influence their level of commitment to a particular relationship, thereby informing their decision-making process regarding their relationships. When the results of a relationship surpass the critical level of alternative options, it leads to an increase in interdependence among individuals and a greater likelihood of relationship persistence. Nevertheless, if the outcomes of a relationship do not meet the criteria of the comparison level for alternatives, the level of dependence between the individuals diminishes, thereby increasing the possibility of choosing to terminate the relationship.

The core ideas of the interdependence theory have now been described. According to Rusbult and Arriaga (1999), it should be noted that these concepts are not inherently stable and have the potential to change the course of a relationship. Individuals engaged in enduring romantic partnerships often tend to perceive their relationship as a given, leading to a potential decline in their overall level of satisfaction. Therefore, individuals in interpersonal partnerships employ diverse cognitive strategies to mitigate the decline in relationship satisfaction and reliance on a continuing relationship. The development of the investment model was based on the interdependence theory (Rusbult, 1980; 1983) to comprehend the factors that influence the longevity of relationships.

2.2.1. Components of the Investment Model

Rusbult (1980, 1983) developed an Investment Model based on the fundamental ideas of Interdependence Theory by looking at the variables influencing relationship persistence. Like the Interdependence Theory, the Investment Model distinguishes between the concepts of satisfaction and dependence and emphasizes the importance of both satisfaction and the quality of alternatives in determining whether or not to stay in a relationship (Rusbult, 1983). However, the research on relationship sustainability lacked an explanation for the perseverance of certain relationships when an appealing alternative exists and the connection's results fall below expectations (Rusbult et al., 1994). Rusbult added a third component that affected commitment to address the shortcomings of the interdependence hypothesis and tried

to explain why these partnerships endure despite the odds against them. More specifically, the investment model focuses on commitment level, which comprises satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size aspects to explain relationship stability (Rusbult, 1980, 1983). The investment model is one of the best frameworks for analyzing relationship dynamics, according to recent empirical research employing various participants and methodologies (Regan, 2011). The central concepts of this model are described in detail in the following paragraphs.

The concept of commitment level pertains to the degree of psychological attachment and the intention to sustain a relationship over an extended period (Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Prior research has extensively documented the positive correlation between commitment and persistence in interpersonal relationships (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Etcheverry et al., 2013). As proposed by Rusbult (1980, 1983), the investment model posits that commitment can be understood through the lens of three key determinants: satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investments. In the context of interpersonal relationships, it has been observed that when an individual experiences a sense of contentment within the relationship, possesses limited alternative options, and has made substantial investments, their level of commitment tends to escalate.

The satisfaction level refers to the degree of positive emotions and affective states experienced by individuals, influenced by the degree to which their significant needs are fulfilled within a partnership. According to Rusbult et al. (1998), individuals tend to experience a sense of contentment when the perceived value of their relationship surpasses their comparison level. In order to attain a state of contentment, it is imperative to address a range of significant requisites, which may manifest themselves in tangible or intangible forms and can be classified as either subjective or objective. Examples of these crucial needs include sexual satisfaction, a well-developed sense of humor, and a pleasing physical appearance. Conversely, while observing enduring relationships that exhibit satisfactory qualities is prevalent, it is crucial to acknowledge that mere satisfaction does not suffice as a determinant for predicting commitment (Rusbult, 1980). According to the scholarly work of Rusbult and Buunk (1993), it has been observed that relationships characterized by

satisfaction, but a lower level of commitment are more likely to come to an end. Furthermore, it is reasonable to perceive individuals involved in such relationships as potentially engaging in other relational pursuits despite their lack of satisfaction. Recent scholarly investigations exploring the relationship between satisfaction and commitment have revealed compelling evidence that satisfaction emerges as the most robust predictor within the various components of commitment (Etcheverry et al., 2013; Rodrigues et al., 2017; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2013; Tran et al., 2019).

The concept of quality of alternatives pertains to the quality of potential options available to individuals beyond the limits of their current relationship. The potential alternatives encompass a range of possibilities, including but not limited to seeking a different partner, engaging in social activities with friends, or embracing solitude. These alternatives might potentially yield more satisfying results compared to the present relationship. In light of the explanations mentioned earlier, Rusbult and Buunk (1993) posit that an increase in the quality of available alternatives may lead to a decrease in the level of commitment toward the relationship.

The dimension of investment size is pivotal in elucidating commitment and relates to the magnitude of resources associated with the relational context. Investments may be delineated as either extrinsic or intrinsic resources that an individual allocates towards a given relationship, with the potential consequence of devaluation or loss should the relationship come to an end (Rusbult, 1980). Moreover, it is worth noting that investments can be classified into two distinct categories, namely direct and indirect investments. The allocation of temporal resources, effort of physical and mental energy, disclosure of personal information, and cognitive effort within the context of a relational dynamic may be classified as explicit investments. Conversely, the presence of shared acquaintances, offspring, and joint possessions can be categorized as implicit investments, as per the conceptualization put forth by Rusbult et al. (1994). Because of the amount of time spent with a partner and the amount of effort one individual makes, time and mental effort are the two resources most frequently utilized to describe the significance of investments in commitment. The intrinsic value of experiences established within relationships remains irreplaceable, even during relationship termination. Therefore, it can be suggested

that situations like these could increase the degree of commitment to the relationship, appearing as barriers that keep the person inside the partnership. As a result, such situations may have a more significant impact on a person's commitment to the relationship by acting as obstacles or pitfalls that keep the individual in the relationship. In other words, the termination of a romantic partnership means giving up emotional, temporal, and potentially financial resources allocated towards its sustenance and development. As a result, investing more resources in the relationship also increases the likelihood that someone will suffer more losses if the partnership ends.

In summary, commitment is a construct encompassing three key dimensions: satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. Given what has already been said, it is essential to emphasize that the commitment level is trending upward in parallel with the satisfaction level and investment size increases. On the other hand, there is an inverse relationship between the degree of commitment and the quality of the alternatives. The critical factor in deciding whether to stay in a relationship or end it is commitment, which is best described as one's assessment of how dependent they are on their partner. To comprehensively assess an individual's level of commitment, it is crucial to consider both adverse and favorable circumstances that contribute to this phenomenon. In alternative terms, commitment may arise not solely due to affirmative influences but rather due to adverse influences that subsequently engender a sense of entrapment within the relational context (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Because of how commitment and the application of Interdependence Theory interact with relationship phenomena, it is beneficial to use Interdependence Theory as a theoretical framework for this study in addition to the investment model.

2.2.2. Commitment

The concept of commitment within the context of romantic relationships has received significant attention from scholars, resulting in the formulation of various definitions by multiple researchers. The commitment term can be conceptualized as an individual's intention to engage in a particular course of action persistently. In

interpersonal relationships, relationship commitment can be understood as the sustained dedication to maintaining a partnership with one's significant other. Tran et al. (2019) described commitment as a conceptual framework encompassing the partners' desire to sustain the relationship, coupled with a psychological bond to their partner, and establishing long-term objectives for the relationship. Additionally, *satisfaction* was defined as a subjective evaluation of the partners' encounters within the relationship, whether positive or negative. Hence, commitment can be conceptualized as a construct that pertains to how individuals uphold their relationships and persist in their partnerships (Agnew, 2009). To clarify, commitment within romantic relationships has been conceptualized as the deliberate and enduring intention to sustain the partnership with one's significant other over time (Johnson, 1973; Rusbult, 1980; Stanley et al., 2010). The concept of commitment encompasses multiple definitions, and within the context of romantic relationships, commitment can be understood as the deliberate intention to maintain and remain in the relationship. According to Stanley et al. (2010), commitment refers to the deliberate decision to maintain a relationship, the mutual anticipation of a shared future, and the establishment of a collective identity within the partnership.

According to Johnson (1973), commitment is a multifaceted concept encompassing two distinct meanings. The initial aspect pertains to an individual's devotion towards matters that align with a specific course of action, commonly called personal commitment. In the alternative interpretation, commitment arises due to a restriction, prompting the individual to persist in a particular course of action, regardless of personal inclination. This form of commitment is referred to as behavioral commitment. Behavioral commitment is characterized by a lack of interest in the behavior itself, with the focus instead placed on the consistency of the behavior. Moreover, behavioral commitment comprises two fundamental components: social commitment and cost commitment. Social commitment is observed when an individual initiates a course of action that is publicly acknowledged, thereby creating an expectation for the individual to persist in that particular course of action. These expectations may arise from cultural norms or personal expectations within a collective social setting. Social commitment is closely related to an individual's awareness of societal norms, their interpersonal connections with those who uphold

these norms, and their subjective evaluation of the legitimacy of these norms. In contrast, cost commitment refers to the cost individuals face if they deviate from the anticipated course of action. The potential outcomes resulting from the incurred expenses may include the discontinuation of the activity, alterations in the individual's lifestyle, and a loss of the individual's invested resources. In contrast, Heere and Dickson (2008) provide a psychological definition of commitment as an internal cognitive state in which an individual experiences a sense of dedication or loyalty towards a particular object or entity.

According to Arriaga and Agnew (2001), commitment to a relationship can be understood through three distinct components: psychological attachment, long-term orientation, and intention to persist. The authors further categorized these components as affective, cognitive, and conative. There is a significant correlation between commitment and the longevity of relationships. Commitment encompasses the various elements influencing an individual's decision to remain in a relationship. A committed partner can be characterized as possessing the intention to sustain the relationship, experiencing emotional attachment to their partner, perceiving a moral duty to remain in the relationship, harboring long-term relationship aspirations with their partner, prioritizing their partner over other aspects of their life, and lacking superior alternatives in comparison to their current partner. Hence, commitment was recognized as a construct with multiple dimensions. Additional distinctions are made regarding the factors associated with commitment. One key differentiation regarding the commitment process lies in its origin, specifically whether it arises internally within the relationship or is externally imposed upon it. When commitment arises within the confines of a relationship, it is referred to as endogenous commitment. Exogenous commitment refers to a form of commitment that is imposed upon a relationship from external sources. The forces mentioned earlier could include interpersonal pressure exerted by individuals nearby and potential financial challenges that may arise in the event of a relationship dissolution. The second distinction pertains to the factors of commitment, specifically whether they are most effectively comprehended through objective indicators that are observable by external parties, such as wedding vows, or through subjective perceptions held by couples regarding the longevity of their relationship. The third aspect of commitment

pertains to the factors that contribute to the endurance of a relationship, specifically the psychological state of the individuals involved.

In their study, Stanley et al. (2010) examined two critical aspects related to relationship commitment. Firstly, they explored the significance of commitment in maintaining stability within romantic attachments. Secondly, they investigated the processes involved in the development of commitment within romantic relationships. The commitment was delineated into two distinct dynamics, namely dedication and constraint, as stated by Stanley and Markman (1992). Dedication can be characterized as a voluntary inclination to remain committed, while constraint can be defined as an obligatory necessity to remain in a particular situation. The commitment model proposed by Stanley and Markman (1992) exhibits similarities to Levinger's cohesiveness theory (1965), which also incorporates the concepts of attraction and barrier forces. Dedication encompasses the desire to sustain a relationship and enhance its quality through acts of sacrifice, investment, and prioritization of the partner's well-being.

However, constraint commitment pertains to the various factors or limitations that compel individuals involved in a partnership to uphold and sustain their relationship. The concept of constraint commitment can be categorized into two distinct forms: structural and moral. On the other hand, constraints refer to the factors that deter individuals from terminating a relationship despite their unhappiness. This reluctance to leave a partner can be attributed to the high costs associated with such a decision, as posited by the Investment Model proposed by Rusbult in 1980.

In their study, Rhoades et al. (2010) sought to examine the predictive powers of commitment components about the stability of interpersonal relationships. Their sample consisted of 1184 individuals who were actively engaged in romantic relationships. In order to achieve this objective, the researchers employed Stanley and Markman's (1992) commitment framework, which emphasizes the factors of dedication and constraints (both perceived and material) as the primary determinants of commitment. The researchers undertook an investigation utilizing a substantial cohort of unmarried adults to ascertain the predictive efficacy of commitment

components concerning the durability of interpersonal bonds. Based on the findings presented, dedication, material resources, and perceived constraint exhibit a positive correlation with commitment, while felt constraint demonstrates a negative correlation. Furthermore, these variables assume a predictive function about the stability of the interpersonal bond. Furthermore, Büyükşahin and Hovardaoğlu (2007) conducted a study that investigated the various factors influencing the level of commitment among individuals. This investigation was carried out within the framework of the investment model and utilized a sample consisting of individuals who were dating ($n= 100$), engaged ($n= 74$), and married ($n= 76$). The findings of their study indicated that except for the variable quality of alternatives, there was no significant difference between genders regarding investments, satisfaction levels, and commitment among the participants. Furthermore, when considering the participants' dating status (whether they are dating, engaged, or married), it was observed that individuals in a dating relationship reported the least satisfaction in their relationships compared to those who were engaged or married.

The research undertaken by Impett et al. (2001) involved an examination of the investment model related to commitment and stability within relationships, specifically focusing on married couples, in the context of a longitudinal study. The researchers discovered empirical evidence favoring the investment model, a theoretical framework that suggests the influence of three key factors on relationship commitment: satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size. The study's findings revealed a significant association between satisfaction with the relationship and commitment. Specifically, it was observed that individuals who expressed greater levels of relationship satisfaction exhibited a heightened tendency for commitment toward their partners. The previously mentioned discovery underscores the significance of upholding satisfaction to cultivate dedication within intimate partnerships. The study also presented that the quality of alternatives, indicating the perceived desirability of prospective alternative partners, negatively impacted commitment. The findings of this study indicate that individuals who possess a greater perception of superior alternatives are more inclined to exhibit diminished levels of commitment toward their current partners. The preceding observation posits that perceiving alternatives that are deemed attractive can reduce the level of

commitment within the context of a marital relationship. Moreover, the researchers discovered that the magnitude of investment, encompassing temporal, cognitive, and material resources allocated to the interpersonal bond, positively impacted the level of commitment. The findings of this study indicate that individuals who have made considerable investments in their marital relationships exhibit elevated levels of commitment. This observation suggests that the degree of dedication can be subject to the degree of personal investment in the interpersonal bond. The authors posit that interventions designed to augment relationship satisfaction and diminish the perceived attraction of alternative options have the potential to reinforce commitment and foster stability within relationships.

2.2.3. Investment Model and Long-Distance Relationships

When evaluating relationship satisfaction, a paradox arises between long-distance relationships and geographically close couples. Stafford and Melorra (2007) find that couples in long-distance relationships frequently report higher satisfaction than geographically proximate couples despite the ambiguity and uncertainty generally associated with long-distance relationships (Lydon et al., 1997).

This result might be explained by higher degrees of relationship idealization. Despite certain societal and professional norms that suggest a couple need to live close to one another to have a satisfied relationship (Stafford, 2005), many researchers reported finding long-distance relationship satisfaction as either equal to or greater than the satisfaction derived from geographically close relationships (Guldner & Swensen, 1995; Lydon et al., 1997, Schwebel, et al., 1992; Van Horn et al., 1997).

The reasons why long-distance couples report high or equal levels of relationship satisfaction have been investigated by researchers. For instance, Gardner (2006) investigated the impact of cognitive dissonance on relationship satisfaction in long-distance and close-by partnerships. Gardner discovered that over time, people in long-distance relationships who had more cognitive dissonance saw fewer declines in their degree of satisfaction. However, neither the control condition (no/low dissonance groups) nor the people in physically close relationships found these changes significant.

In contrast, Lee and Pistole (2012) discovered that idealization predicted relationship satisfaction overall in both LDRs and GCRs. According to Lee and Pistole, idealization and contentment were influenced by the interaction between a person's attachment type and the closeness of their connection. However, there were no variations in the idealization and satisfaction predictive associations for individuals in long-distance or close-to-home relationships. Moreover, a relationship is more likely to terminate when a person goes from a long-distance to a close-quarters relationship and becomes more idealistic about their partner (Stafford & Melorra, 2007).

While commitment and persistence in a relationship are predicted by satisfaction, this relationship is diminished by the quality of attractive alternatives (Le & Agnew, 2003). The temptations associated with being physically close to someone should be the biggest threat to a partner's commitment in a long-distance relationship when there are geographically close alternatives. The more nearby alternative partners there are, the more tempting it is to end the relationship. DeWall and colleagues (2011) discovered, for example, that individuals with avoidant attachment styles in physically close relationships were more likely to be open to exploring other options and to support adultery positively. It makes sense to believe that a greater physical separation could encourage an "out of sight, out of mind" mentality and raise the likelihood of infidelity or ending the relationship. However, Drigotas et al. (1999) found that a person's assessment of appealing alternatives decreases as commitment levels rise. Drigotas and associates further speculated that while people in long-distance relationships have more chances to cheat on their spouses, the commitment they have with one another may lessen the chance of them doing so.

Although there is a chance that this diminished evaluation of alternatives is partially caused by an exaggerated idealization of one's current partner (Stafford, 2005), long-distance relationships do not seem to be particularly afflicted by infidelity or the temptation to cheat on one's partner (Gerstel & Gross, 1982; Guldner, 1996). According to findings by other researchers, the association between commitment and fewer cheating behaviors is strengthened and mediated by missing one's partner (Le et al., 2010).

One of the antecedents to commitment is an investment in the relationship, which assesses both the observable and abstract components of the relationship that would be threatened or handed over entirely if the relationship were to end (Le & Agnew, 2003; Rusbult, 1980). Investment in the relationship, for example, points out efforts and pro-relationship behaviors such as making compromises for one's partner and being ready to sacrifice (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Kölemen et al., 2023). Investments also encompass the interconnection of one's identity and the identity of one's partner, as well as shared interests and friends (Agnew et al., 1998). If the relationship ended, the partner would not only sacrifice the time and potential financial investments for the relationship (Rusbult et al., 1994), but they would also jeopardize their identity and friendships. Investments in long-distance relationships offer a unique dynamic because, compared to physically closer couples, studies have shown that higher relationship investments are associated with higher relationship stability (e.g., relationship persistence and fewer relationship terminations) (Stafford, 2005).

As LDR couples have fewer daily interactions, it may be reasonable to suppose they will have fewer opportunities to invest in their relationship, considering their physical separation. Supporting this view, Duck and Pittman (1994) argue that routine daily exchanges between partners are essential in relationships for a connection to have a mutual meaning. The partners' desire to invest in the relationship and how much they value it are also essential aspects of this shared meaning. Also, studies have revealed that couples in LDRs view their relationship's financial and logistical costs—such as time spent on phone conversations, travel time, and related expenses—as significant investments. The limited and tangible investments made by physically intimate connections may be compensated by these intangible time investments in LDRs (Magnuson & Norem, 1999; Sahlstein, 2004). Furthermore, LDR couples claim to have experienced noticeably higher objective and subjective costs (Gardner, 2006). One subjective cost could be missing time with close friends to talk to one's partner on the phone. Increased travel costs could be considered as an objective cost.

Ultimately, a person's basic need to relate to the other person drives them to invest in a relationship (O'Brien et al., 2009). Researchers have rarely examined the direct association between investments and commitment in long-distance relationships.

Pistole et al. (2010) conducted a study to use the whole investment model to evaluate long-distance partnerships. For long-distance couples, they discovered that commitment was significantly predicted by relationship satisfaction and investments, even after adjusting for avoidant attachment style, anxiety, sensitivity, and collaboration. Remarkably, the couples' evaluation of the quality of alternatives did not predict the level of commitment in their relationships. Pistole and colleagues discovered that alternatives negatively predicted commitment and satisfaction positively predicted it when they applied the sample analysis to couples that live geographically close to one another. Remarkably, among couples close in the distance, a commitment was not predicted by investment in the relationship. Even though their observed variations for the investment model are encouraging to investigate further, they note that their sample size was relatively small (61 participants in geographically close relationships and 77 participants in long-distance relationships) and that more research should be done to examine the generalizability of their findings.

Considering the findings related to the investment model and LDRs, it can be seen that investments are significant in partners' commitment to LDRs. These investments, especially intangible ones, are a chance for people in LDRs to increase their relationship commitment. In the context of LDRs, partners face subjective and objective costs (Gardner, 2006). These costs, especially the subjective ones, can be considered compensated by the investments that partners make in their relationships. When the related literature is examined, the time that people allocate to their partners who are far away can also be considered as a relationship investment. Investing time to make their partner feel matters by prioritizing them, celebrating, and being supportive when their partner shares a positive experience with them can also be considered investments in romantic relationships. The following two variables that are thought to predict commitment in LDRs are perceived responses to capitalization attempts and perceived mattering.

2.3. Capitalization

Individuals utilize their social connections to reduce the effects of negative events and stressors. They find relief by expressing their emotions, exchanging personal

experiences, and receiving social support from others. Previous research has demonstrated that sharing daily negative experiences improves individual, social, and relational well-being (e.g., Pagani et al., 2015; Sarason et al., 1997; Smith & Reis, 2012; Uchino et al., 1996). However, it is also essential to comprehend the significance of sharing positive events with others, despite the well-supported claim that negative events have a higher impact on people's lives than happy events (Baumeister et al., 2001). Gable and Reis (2010) note that the study of positivity has also significantly advanced our understanding of common processes in social interaction. In close relationships, positive experiences far outnumber negative ones.

Consider the scenario in which someone eventually receives the acceptance letter he/she had been waiting for his/her doctoral application at an international university. According to theoretical perspectives and empirical research, this person will likely inform members of her social network, such as a close acquaintance, about this significant event. This phenomenon is capitalization and can be defined as informing another individual about a positive personal event to gain additional benefits (Gable et al., 2004). Even after controlling for the positive or negative nature of the event itself, research indicates that individuals are happier when they share positive events with significant others (Gable et al., 2004; Langston, 1994).

Positive occurrences take place daily in people's lives. Certain favorable occurrences are regular, such as completing a task in the workplace or receiving admiration from one's superior. Other major occurrences may include significant events, such as gaining acceptance to an occupation that has been pursued for a long time or receiving notification that a loved one has been declared free of cancer. Prior research has demonstrated that a crucial mechanism by which individuals respond to favorable occurrences is through the act of sharing their positive news with others, which is commonly referred to as capitalization (Langston, 1994). According to the related literature, in a study conducted with 59 heterosexual couples who had been dating for an average of 14 months, individuals also sought to obtain support for favorable occurrences in their lives, and very similar to their pursuit of support for unfavorable events, they predominantly seek it from their proximal social network (Gable et al., 2004). According to Gable et al. (2004), in a study conducted with 154

undergraduates (56 men and 98 women), ages ranging from 17 to 26 years, individuals tend to share positive events predominantly with their close social circle, including friends, romantic partners, and family members, with a frequency of 97%. Conversely, sharing such events with non-close others, such as acquaintances or coworkers, occurs only 3% of the time.

Gable and colleagues (Gable et al., 2006, 2004; Gable & Reis, 2010) assert that perceiving the friend's responses as positive and supportive, including recognizing and validating the event's significance, is equally important in determining the benefits derived from this process. Studies conducted with participants whose ages ranged between 18 to 27 in the USA indicate that individuals' psychosocial outcomes are enhanced when they perceive their loved ones' responses as understanding, validating, and caring (Laurenceau et al., 1998; Maisel et al., 2008; Reis et al., 2004; Reis & Shaver, 1988).

The study by Laurenceau et al. (1998) examined the function of self-disclosure, partner disclosure, and perceived partner responsiveness in the context of intimacy in interpersonal relationships. The study conducted with 69 undergraduate students from the USA (48 female and 21 male) revealed a positive correlation between self-disclosure and partner disclosure with perceived partner responsiveness. This implies that individuals who exhibit higher levels of self-disclosure and have partners who engage in more disclosure are inclined to perceive their partners as more responsive. The aforementioned finding underlines the significance of the transparent and mutual exchange of information in promoting closeness. In other words, the study revealed that individuals who perceived their partners as responsive reported experiencing greater levels of intimacy. Thus, it highlights the significance of perceived responsiveness as a crucial mechanism by which self-disclosure impacts the establishment of intimacy. Furthermore, the research emphasizes that those who perceive their partners as responsive tend to share personal information, which can result in a mutual cycle of intimacy enhancement in the relationship.

According to Langston's (1994) proposal, capitalization attempts serve three marking functions: enhancing personal memory, communicating with others, and amplifying

the importance of events. Also, as noted by Langston (1994), one of the goals of capitalization endeavors is to maximize the event's significance to the individual. When capitalization attempts are successful, the personal value of the targeted events may increase. Nearly all theories of self-evaluation posit that validating (i.e., knowledgeable and approving) feedback from others can enhance self-evaluation and desired identities (Crocker & Park, 2004; Gable & Reis, 2006; Tesser, 1986). For instance, positive regard from others signals increased self-worth assessments (Leary & Baumeister, 2000), particularly when the positive regard is associated with intrinsic aspects of the self (Schimel et al., 2001).

Research has also indicated that sharing the good news with a partner in romantic relationships can result in personal and interpersonal benefits (Gable et al., 2004). However, the recipient's reaction is crucial in determining the outcomes for both the sharer and the relationship. According to Gable and Reis (2010), the reason for this is that the reaction to a disclosure of a positive event provides two significant pieces of information to the individual who is disclosing the positive event. It reflects the respondent's evaluation of the event itself, including its impact on the disclosing party. The second aspect, which is expected to have a similar level of influence, is reflected in the response that demonstrates the extent to which a conversational partner exhibits a keen interest in and finds satisfaction in the personal development and welfare of the individual disclosing information.

Using prior research on responses to conflict within close relationships (e.g., Rusbult & Bunk, 1993), Gable and her colleagues (e.g., Gable et al., 2004) have identified four distinct types of reactions to attempts at capitalization: active-constructive (AC), passive-constructive (PC), active-destructive (AD), and passive-destructive (PD). AC capitalization attempts responses involve exhibiting enthusiastic and supportive reactions. PC responses include subtle or modest forms of assistance. AD responses involve devaluing the occurrence's significance and pointing out its potential associated problems. Finally, PD responses involve exhibiting apathy and disregarding the event entirely. The following example illustrates these numerous types of responses. Suppose someone informs his/her romantic partner that he/she has received an acceptance letter. If the partner says, "That is fantastic news! I am

sincerely happy for you. Let us celebrate together.", this can be categorized as an active constructive response. Alternately, s/he could respond passively and constructively by smiling and saying, "That is great to hear.". Also, the partner could respond with an active-destructive remark such as, "I have heard that universities accept anyone, so it is not really a significant accomplishment." The partner's passive-aggressive response could be to say, "Great, I have plans with my friends tonight," thereby demonstrating disinterest in the teller's news.

Research conducted with 79 dating couples (Gable et al., 2004) and 21 married couples from the USA (Gable et al., 2006) revealed that one's partner habitually responds in an active-constructive manner was linked to increased levels of relationship satisfaction, trust, and intimacy. Additionally, this behavior was associated with higher levels of daily relationship satisfaction, engagement in positive activities, and a lower frequency of daily conflicts. Consistently negative correlations were observed between the positive outcomes and the act of reporting one's partner's typical response style as passive-constructive, active-destructive, or passive-destructive (Aron et al., 2000; Gable & Reis, 2001; Gable et al., 2004).

When perceived response is responsive to the self, it predicts more positive outcomes, whereas when perceived support is unresponsive to the self, it predicts more negative outcomes. In a study conducted with 67 cohabiting couples from the USA, Maisel and Gable (2009) discovered that receiving both visible and invisible support during a stressful event was associated with positive outcomes for the recipient and the close relationship when the support was perceived or intended to be responsive- understanding, validating, and compassionate. Carson's study, conducted with 223 individuals who were in long-term relationships (31.4% men and 68.6% women) and whose ages ranged from 19 to 74 (69.5% married, 30.5% cohabitating) in 2015, looked into the effects of promotion predominance on mood, interaction quality, and active-constructive (AC) support in the context of capitalization talks between close friends. The results showed that partners offering more AC assistance reported higher interaction quality and positive emotions. In contrast, limited responsiveness in support was associated with no benefits or even negative outcomes. On the other hand, active-constructive capitalization responses

communicate comprehension, validation, and care (i.e., responsiveness) and are regarded as supportive and effective. Passive or destructive responses to attempts at capitalization are neither responsive nor supportive and are, therefore, ineffective.

Capitalization, or the sharing of happy occurrences, is one of the healthy relationship practices and is thought to improve the quality of the relationship (Langston, 1994). The act of capitalization itself, as well as the positive and enthusiastic response to capitalization attempts, provide advantages for both individuals and foster relationship well-being (e.g., Gable et al., 2004; Otto et al., 2015). The term capitalization derives from Langston's (1994) theory, which proposes that individuals benefit from sharing positive occurrences. Gable and other researchers have highlighted the importance of a partner's response to the capitalization attempts of the other (Gable et al., 2004, 2006). According to their research conducted with 112 married couples, perceiving increased responsiveness from a partner during capitalization is associated with various positive outcomes related to the quality of the marital relationship. This includes increased relationship satisfaction, feelings of trust, and decreased daily relational conflict. Also, in another study conducted with 79 dating couples (Gable et al., 2004), perceiving increased responsiveness is associated with improved relationship quality, satisfaction, and commitment in married couples (Gable et al., 2006). In addition, other studies have linked capitalization to greater intimacy and well-being (Otto et al., 2015), greater trust, affection, and closeness (Gable & Reis, 2010), and greater marital satisfaction (Logan & Cobb, 2016). The study conducted by Kashdan and colleagues (2013) revealed that individuals who reported providing supportive responses to their significant others also reported experiencing higher levels of long-term relationship satisfaction and commitment.

2.3.1. Capitalization and Commitment

Rusbult (1980, 1983) established the investment model of commitment to explain relational dependence and relationship maintenance based on interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). The model posits that the level of commitment to a relationship is contingent upon several factors, including but not limited to the degree

of satisfaction and reward experienced by the parties involved, the quality of available alternatives, and the amount of investment made in the relationship. The model posits that couples who exhibit a high level of commitment are more inclined to participate in behaviors conducive to maintaining and enhancing their relationship. The maintenance of high levels of functioning and satisfaction in a relationship is facilitated by this phenomenon, as posited by Rusbult et al. (2001, 2012).

According to Reis and Shaver's (1988) proposal, the validation process plays a crucial role in establishing intimacy after self-disclosure. The model proposed by the authors is substantiated by various experiments and diary studies, such as those conducted by Laurenceau et al. (1998), Laurenceau et al. (2005), Lin (1992), and Reis (2007). The model suggests that the perception of understanding and validation by a listener indicates their recognition, appreciation, and awareness of fundamental aspects of the self that are disclosed during the act of self-disclosure. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that efforts to capitalize on positive events are more likely to enhance personal significance when the recipient's feedback is perceived as providing specific and positive reinforcement for the event. Also, according to Hatfield et al. (1994), Reis and Gable (2003), and Rime (2007), informing someone of positive news is likely to trigger a sequence of interactions that result in the sharing and experiencing of additional positive emotions. This process can help fulfill an individual's need for belonging and relatedness.

For capitalization attempts to yield positive outcomes, the recipient's reaction must be perceived as acknowledging and valuing the favorable news and its importance to the communicator. Perhaps that is not always the case. Discussing one's good fortune has been found to potentially elicit envy among individuals (Scinta & Gable, 2005; Tesser et al., 1988). Additionally, such discussions may reveal or exacerbate conflicts of interest between oneself and one's partner (Carmichael, 2005) or provide an occasion for partners to demonstrate indifference or emotional distance. The advantages of sharing good news with others will, therefore, probably rely on how the listener perceives the response.

According to Aron and Aron (1997), individuals in close relationships may exhibit cognitive and behavioral interdependence by incorporating their partner's positive

news into their self-concept, a phenomenon known as "basking in reflected glory." The phrase "basking in reflected glory" refers to seeking social approval and improving one's sense of self by aligning with or being connected with successful people, groups, or things (Cialdini et al., 1976, p. 278). Following this line of reasoning, the study conducted by Gable et al. (2004), participated by 79 dating couples from the USA, revealed that romantic relationships exhibited greater levels of commitment, satisfaction, trust, intimacy, and daily positive activities between partners while experiencing lower levels of daily conflict when partners perceived each other to be actively supportive of personal good fortune, as opposed to being passive, disinterested, or disparaging.

Perceived partner responsiveness refers to the perception that one's partner is attentive, supportive, and aware of important aspects of the self in close relationships (Reis et al., 2004). While examining perceived partner responsiveness often centers around conflicts of interest and other unfavorable circumstances, it is also important to consider positive events. Such events allow partners to demonstrate their attentiveness and readiness to provide support, both verbally and through actions, towards their significant other's aspirations and objectives (Reis, 2007; Rusbult et al., 2005). This act of showing the partner that they are validated is vital in the context of LDRs and can be considered one of the compensations (Duck & Pittman, 1994). As was previously indicated, research has shown that LDR couples view several behaviors as costs of their relationship, including time spent on phone calls, travel, and associated fees. Also, they view these costs as substantial investments. These intangible time investments in long-distance relationships can compensate for the limited investments made by physically close interactions between LDR couples (Magnuson & Norem, 1999; Sahlstein, 2004). Moreover, such effort in giving a partner a responsive and supportive response during capitalization attempts can be regarded as an investment.

2.3.2. The Importance of Capitalization in Long-Distance Relationships

The extant literature on capitalization has encompassed diverse cohorts such as college students, dysphoric women, and couples, as well as various categories of

disclosed events, including but not limited to receiving a compliment from a superior or gaining admission into a graduate program (Gable & Reis, 2010). However, to the best of our knowledge, no empirical investigation has yet been conducted to examine the potential advantages of capitalizing on positive experiences in the context of long-distance romantic relationships.

Theories of self-psychology may provide additional justification for sharing positive events as a fundamental aspect of perceived partner responsiveness. Kohut (1971) proposed that humans possess a fundamental requirement for validation from significant others to confirm the intra-psychic processes involved in constructing meaning. This need is believed to emerge in infancy and persist throughout the lifespan. The concept of mirroring, as coined by Kohut, pertains to the active expression of admiration and engagement by empathic caregivers toward the accomplishments of the self. According to Fonagy et al. (2002), mirroring can promote a positive self-concept and elicit cognitive representations of oneself as valued by others. Individuals tend to cultivate favorable meta-perceptions, which refer to the perception of how others view them, by observing the emotional and linguistic reactions toward their needs, aspirations, and achievements (Kenny, 1994). Several studies involved with emotional communication, such as emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 1994), rapport (Levenson & Ruef, 1997), and mirror neurons and attunement (Gallese et al., 2007), indicate that these mechanisms are encompassing and carry significant influence in social interactions, though typically functioning beyond conscious awareness.

The researchers Gable et al. (2012) utilized the analogy of a "red button" on a smoke detector to describe the positive interactions that are a component of the process of stress buffering in a relational context. Having a smoke detector in the house is an excellent idea, but how can we test it to ensure it is functioning properly without starting a fire? It would be simple, safe, and risk-free to press the red "Test" button. Activating the smoke alarm in a non-emergency situation ensures that it will function properly in the event of a true fire. When close others consistently respond to our needs during the ups and downs of daily life, it establishes a solid foundation of trust in their accessibility during the lows. Positive occurrences can be seen as the occasions to press the "red button."

As mentioned earlier, people in LDRs do not have the physical closeness readily available in GCRs. Moreover, they face various factors inherent in long-distance relationships, such as the lack of frequent contact, the limitation of meetings in online forms, and the sharing of information through non-face-to-face ways. To cope with the challenges of long-distance relationships and compensate for them, people need to develop various skills and strengthen their communication with their partners. As mentioned, positive and constructive responses to capitalization attempts not only validate the sharer but also mean that the listener gives time, attention, and importance to the relationship, which can be considered a relationship investment that can be thought to predict relationship commitment.

2.4. Perceived Mattering

It is crucial for individuals to figure out the level of concern, solicitation, and interest shown by their significant ones towards their well-being, as well as their willingness to offer assistance or guidance when required. According to Elliott et al. (2004), individuals may question the fundamental nature of their existence if their sense of mattering is unfulfilled. From this perspective, the absence of fulfillment of the need for mattering through assessing others' actions may lead to a diminished overall welfare state. On the other hand, in their longitudinal study, a sample consisted of individuals between the ages of 18 and 55 residing in Toronto, Canada ($n = 1,300$) and with a sample of 3,415 participants between the ages of 18 and 61, Taylor and Turner (1991) found that when the feeling of significance is fulfilled, it operates as a protecting element for an individual's welfare. In summary, the perception of positive mattering is crucial in sustaining personal and relational happiness.

Moreover, it is essential to investigate the factors linked to the concept of mattering in intimate relationships to gain insight into its precise influence on the functioning of such relationships. Prior studies have suggested that mattering and loneliness are perceived as distinct dimensions of intimate relationships (Chang, 2012). The concept of mattering is distinct from emotional dependence, autonomy, and mastery, conferring a singular attribute to interpersonal relationships. According to Taylor and Turner's (2001) proposal, the concept of mattering is associated with social support

furnished by significant others, such as spouses or romantic partners. Although mattering and social support are predictors of psychological well-being, they are considered separate constructs. (Demir et al., 2011; Marshall, 2001). The concepts of mattering and social support exhibit a close association but are distinct indicators of intimate relationships.

Mattering is also anticipated to increase happiness in all kinds of intimate relationships, including friendships and romantic relationships. Demir et al.'s (2011) research, conducted with 212 college students (144 female and 68 male), supported this, and discovered that perceived friendship quality was connected to perceived mattering among close and best friends. Other investigations revealed that perceived mattering was linked to the quality of relationships during adolescence and early adulthood stages, as reported by Dixon-Rayle and Chung (2007) depending on their study conducted with 533 undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 23 (170 male, 363 female) and from Marshall's study conducted with 110 undergraduate students majoring in Social Sciences, (17 female, 39 male) from Canada, between the ages of 18 to 25 (2001). According to Mak and Marshall's (2004) study, conducted with 173 young adults in romantic relationships and college students from the U.S, there was a positive correlation between mattering and both romantic relationship satisfaction and investment size, while a negative correlation was found between mattering and quality of alternatives among undergraduate participants. These studies have demonstrated that the perceived mattering holds significant importance in functioning interpersonal relationships.

Several research studies have been carried out to investigate the variances in personal characteristics related to perceived mattering and its impact on several individual outcomes. According to Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) study conducted with adolescents in various grade levels and from various parts of Canada (472 females and 319 males), an increase in perceived mattering was associated with decreased psychological distress and increased self-esteem among adolescents. According to Taylor and Turner's (2001) research ($n = 1,300$), the experience of mattering was found to be associated with a decrease in depressive symptoms among women. Studies on mattering have typically been carried out during the stages of adolescence

and early adulthood to investigate the impact of mattering on various personal outcomes, such as self-esteem (Rosenberg & McCullough, 1981), overall well-being (Dixon-Rayle, 2005), academic achievement, and stress (Dixon-Rayle & Chung, 2007), anxiety, depression (Dixon & Kurpius, 2008; Flett et al., 2020), suicidal ideation (Elliott et al., 2005), and happiness (Demir, et al., 2011). Also, some studies have been conducted on individuals in late adulthood (Dixon, 2007) and parenthood (Marshall & Lambert, 2006; Marshall et al., 2010). Thus, perceived mattering can be assessed as a psychological disposition that facilitates the maintenance of individual well-being.

Several academic inquiries have investigated the factors associated with the perception of mattering. The concept of mattering has been identified as a safeguard against anxiety, depression, and suicide within the clinical context, as evidenced by several studies (Dixon et al., 2009; Edwards & Neal, 2017; France & Finney, 2009; Joiner et al., 2009; Olcoń et al., 2017; Taylor & Turner, 2001). Insecure attachment has been negatively associated with mattering from a developmental standpoint (Raque-Bogdan et al., 2011). Furthermore, extant literature suggests a positive association between self-compassion and self-efficacy with mattering, as evidenced by studies conducted by Joeng and Turner (2015), Raque-Bogdan et al. (2011), and Gruber et al. (2009).

Individuals may encounter concerns regarding how significant they feel to the other party in specific scenarios within an intimate relationship. Individuals may experience uncertainty regarding their perceived significance and the extent of their significant other's concern towards them. The emotional experiences are addressed by the concept of interpersonal mattering, as noted by Dixon Rayle (2005) and Rosenberg (1985). The concept of mattering to significant others has been a subject of theoretical interest among scholars from diverse fields for several decades, leading to the development of conceptual definitions by researchers. According to Marshall (2001), interpersonal mattering refers to the psychological predisposition to view oneself as important to particular individuals.

There have been two central debates concerning the conceptualization of mattering. The primary point of discussion concerns the difficulty in measuring the notion of

matterings. Various methodologies have been suggested to evaluate the subjective perception of significance to particular persons. According to Rosenberg and McCullough's (1981) theory, matterings is a complex concept comprising four distinct subfactors: attention, importance, dependence, and ego-extension. Conversely, Elliot, et al., (2004) contend that matterings is a universal personal characteristic, and that each person has a comprehensive rating that reflects their perceived level of importance to others. They developed a measurement tool comprising three subscales to capture the constructs of awareness, importance, and reliance. Marshall (2001) posits that matterings is a psychological predisposition that encompasses all the subfactors, as mentioned earlier, thereby constituting a cohesive construct. Marshall's study investigates matterings in diverse relationship categories and age cohorts, ultimately determining that matterings is a singularly dimensional construct. According to Marshall (2001), it can be inferred that individuals possess a unique matterings score for each individual in their social circle.

As a result, scholarly inquiries have initiated an exploration of the effects and outcomes related to psychosocial well-being that arise from the perception of matterings to individuals who hold significant importance. The preceding decade's theoretical and empirical investigations concerning the perception of matterings to significant others can be condensed into three fundamental points. The concept of matterings to another individual depends on the individual's perception of their significance to the other party rather than the overall quality of the relationship. The concept of matterings pertains to a perception of being part of a group and having connections with others and underscores the emotions of importance and pertinence to particular persons (Demir et al., 2011; Marshall, 2001). According to Marshall (2001), individuals acquire a sense of matterings to significant others through their past relationship encounters. Elliott et al. (2004) suggest that this is achieved by comparing the level of attention received from the person with the attention given to other activities, friends, and objects. Additionally, Demir et al. (2011), Dixon Rayle (2005), and Dixon Rayle and Chung (2007) propose that various relationship encounters also contribute to the development of this sense of matterings.

The study by Santos and Muñiz-Rivas (2014) investigated the perceived matterings of romantic partners to each other and examined the daily experiences of matterings

within the framework of romantic relationships. The study revealed that the perceived mattering of one's romantic partner to oneself had a noteworthy impact on their day-to-day encounters. Individuals who perceived themselves as important to their partners reported elevated positive affect, relationship satisfaction, and general well-being. On the contrary, individuals who perceived lower levels of mattering reported experiencing negative affect and lower satisfaction in their relationships. These findings underscore the significance of the perceived sense of importance in influencing the day-to-day emotional encounters and relational excellence of individuals in a romantic partnership. Furthermore, the authors outline the plausible mechanisms by which perceived mattering impacts individuals' day-to-day encounters. The authors suggest that the perception of mattering could potentially augment an individual's self-esteem, amplify their sense of being acknowledged and assisted, and foster a sense of affiliation within the context of the relationship. These mentioned processes can potentially impact individuals' emotional well-being and satisfaction in their relationships.

During the process of developing a sense of mattering towards a particular individual, individuals engage in making comparisons, as noted by Marshall (2001). Parents assess their perceived level of mattering to their children by comparing the amount of attention their children give them versus the attention they give to others, such as friends or objects, such as toys or television (Marshall et al., 1998). Making comparisons about how much attention someone gets from their romantic partner is important because it helps people figure out how important they are to their partners. For example, individuals who perceive that they hold a higher level of importance to their friends compared to their romantic partner may consequently experience a lower sense of significance in their relationship with their partner than their friendships. A romantic partner may be perceived as less significant than friends, resulting in a decrease in time and effort devoted to the relationship and an increase in personal resources directed towards alternative relationships, such as friendships or maybe other alternatives. This may lead to a shift in priorities and potentially devalue the romantic relationship.

Mattering helps people socially place themselves (Josselson, 1994), generating a sense of relatedness and assurance about their position with others. Previous studies

conducted from a pool of 5,272 undergraduates (3,994 Caucasian and 1,278 students of color and 714 undergraduates (512 female and 202 male) have indicated that college students who experience lower levels of mattering may also experience feelings of marginality (Gossett et al., 1998; Schlossberg, 1989). According to Marshall (2001), adolescents who perceive being valued by their parents and peers tend to experience a sense of belonging with their families and social circles. The degree of connectedness and certainty regarding one's position within a relationship, which is associated with increased levels of mattering, may impact an individual's level of investment, satisfaction with and commitment to the relationship. According to research on college students, when individuals feel important to the college community, they are more involved, invested, and satisfied with the college environment (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Schlossberg, 1989; Schlossberg et al., 1989). Drawing upon the existing literature, it can be inferred that individuals are inclined towards investing in a dyadic relationship when they believe they are significant to their romantic partners. It is difficult to see someone investing in a romantic connection without the feelings of mattering unless the investment is an attempt to develop a feeling of significance to the partner. Lower levels of mattering towards a partner or a possible partner can result in hesitancy to commit to the relationship due to insufficient cognitive and affective information necessary for individuals to organize and comprehend their social standing. The sensation of being valued by a romantic companion can potentially impact an individual's dedication to invest in and sustain the relationship.

Considering the literature regarding the relationship between perceived mattering and Investment Model variables, the presence of mattering has been observed to have a partially decreasing effect on the magnitude of the association between the quality of alternatives and the level of satisfaction in a relationship. Individuals who perceive a higher degree of attention from their romantic partner than attention from others tend to report a greater sense of mattering. A greater sense of mattering positively correlates with increased satisfaction and commitment towards the relationship. According to the study, the perception of being significant to a romantic partner can contribute to continued investment in the relationship. When an individual perceives a decrease in attention from their partner compared to attention received from other

sources, it may reduce mattering, ultimately leading to a decrease in investment. Individuals who have dedicated their time and resources to a relationship may experience a favorable sense of significance to reduce cognitive dissonance. A reciprocal relationship may exist between mattering and investment. To gain a deeper understanding of the nature of these connections, the study's authors suggested that longitudinal investigations may offer valuable insights (Dixon-Rayle & Chung, 2007; Marshall, 2001).

2.5. Summary of the Literature Review

The prevalence of long-distance relationships has increased significantly, particularly among individuals in their emergent adulthood years, due to career prospects, professional obligations, and military enlistment. Physical separation in relationships can have positive and negative effects, including lower satisfaction and reduced stability. However, compensatory factors can mitigate these effects, such as increased communication between partners, heightened appreciation for one another, and occasional breaks that LDRs afford.

The Investment Model, an extension of the Interdependence Theory, was examined to identify the factors that influence the stability of relationships. The model incorporates commitment as a significant factor that influences the stability of a relationship, with three key determinants: satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. Commitment includes elements of dedication and constraint, which significantly impact the stability of relationships and can be used to predict an individual's intention to remain in a relationship. It can originate from internal sources within a relationship, or it can be externally enforced.

The concept of perceived mattering was also explored, highlighting its correlations with the Investment Model variables: Satisfaction, investment, and quality of alternatives in intimate relationships. Existing literature suggests that individuals are more inclined to engage in and maintain a romantic relationship when they perceive themselves as valued and significant by their partner.

The literature also revealed the importance of capitalization, which involves individuals sharing positive events in their lives with others to obtain additional

benefits and improve their overall well-being (Pagani et al., 2015). In the realm of interpersonal relationships, sharing positive experiences can be compared to activating a symbolic "red button," serving as a signal of trust and support, fostering stronger connections between individuals during ups and downs. Overall, the Investment Model components along with perceived mattering and capitalization provide valuable insights into the dynamics and factors that influence commitment to romantic relationships, particularly in long-distance relationships.



CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The research design of the present study is provided in the initial section. The method of reaching participants, collecting data, and the participant's demographics were described in the second section. The instruments used were described in the section on instruments for data collection. The fourth part described the methods used to gather data and get ethical approvals. The operational descriptions of the variables of the study were explicated in the fifth section. The employed statistical techniques were explicitly defined within the section dedicated to data analysis. Finally, an examination of the study's limitations was presented.

3.1 Research Design

The aim of this study was to examine the role of perceived mattering and perceived responses to capitalization attempts in predicting commitment in romantic relationships among emerging adults who have long-distance relationships in Türkiye. This research study also sought to explore the influence of various components of the investment model, including satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment, while controlling for gender and total relationship duration. In scientific and social science research, correlational design is a kind of research design that is used to look at the relationship between two or more variables (Tabachnick, 2007). In accordance with the mentioned aim, the research study employed a correlational design.

3.2. Participants of the Study

The study focused on a specific demographic, namely emerging heterosexual adults who were engaged in long-distance romantic relationships for a minimum duration of

six months. A total of 292 individuals filled out the data collection instruments. The study exclusively adopted individuals within the age range of 18 to 29 who had engaged in long-distance romantic relationships lasting a minimum of six months. As a result, 75 people were disqualified and excluded from the data set because they did not meet the sampling criteria, which included age group (19 people aged 30, 5 people aged 31, 6 people aged 32), relationship status (32 engaged), geographic distance (9 people whose partners lived within 40 kilometers of each other), and frequency of meetings (4 people who said their frequency of face to face meetings is every day). Following the completion of the data cleaning process, a total of 217 individuals who had been involved in a romantic relationship for a minimum duration of six months from a long-distance and fell within the age range of 18 to 29 were selected as participants for the subsequent data analysis phase.

3.2.1. Demographic and Relational Characteristics of the Participants

As shown in Table 3.1, the study's participants included a total of 217 individuals. The gender distribution of the participants was slightly skewed towards females, with 121 participants (55.8%) female, while 96 participants (44.2%) were male. Participants were informed in the research announcement text that heterosexual participants were being sought, and the entire research sample consisted of participants in long-distance heterosexual romantic relationships. Individuals who participated in the study aged 18 to 29 years ($M = 25.7$, $SD = 2.4$).

Table 3. 1. *Demographics and Relational Characteristics of Participants (n=217)*

Variable		N	%
Gender	Male	96	44.2
	Female	121	55.8
	Total	217	100.0
Age	18-24 years	64	29.5
	25-29 years	153	70.5
	Total	217	100.0
Education Level	High school	47	21.7
	Undegraduate	110	50.7
	Graduate	60	27.6
	Total	217	100.0

Table 3.1. (continued)

Relationship (Total)	Duration	6-12 months	51	23.5
		13-24 months	45	20.7
		25-36 months	38	17.3
		37-48 months	37	17.1
		49-60 months	18	8.3
		61-72 months	18	8.3
		73-84 months	6	2.8
		85-96 months	3	1.4
		97-102 months	1	0.5
		Total	217	100.0
Long Distance Relationship Duration		6-12 months	95	43.8
		13-24 months	68	31.3
		25-36 months	26	12.0
		37-48 months	13	6.0
		49-60 month	14	6.5
		61-72 months	1	.5
		Total	217	100.0
Communication (weekly)	Time	2-20 hours	141	65.0
		21-40 hours	50	23.0
		41-60 hours	18	8.3
		61-80 hours	8	3.7
		Total	217	100.0
Distance		50-500 km	102	47.0
		501-1000 km	78	35.9
		1001-1500 km	6	2.8
		1501-2000 km	10	4.6
		Above 2000 km	21	9.7
		Total	217	100.0
Relationship Beginning		Started as proximal	129	59.7
		Started as long-distance	88	40.6
		Total	217	100.0
Frequency of Face to Face Meetings		Once in a Week	9	4.1
		Once in a Month	32	14.7
		More Than Once in a Month	31	14.3
		Once in a Couple Months	100	46.1
		Once or Twice in a Year	37	17.1
		Never	8	3.7
		Total	217	100.0
Frequency of Audio Calls		Couple of Times in a Day	109	50.2
		Once in Day	61	28.1
		Once or Twice in a Week	4	1.8
		Once in a Week	37	17.1
		More Than Once in a Month	2	.9
		Once in a Month	2	.9
		Never	2	.9
		Total	217	100.0
Frequency of SMS/Apps/Written Communication		Once in a Day	6	2.8
		Couple of Times in a Day	209	96.3
		More Than Once in a Week	2	.9
		Total	217	100.0

Table 3.1. (continued)

Frequency of Video Calls	Once in a Day	32	14.7
	Couple of Times in a Day	25	11.5
	More Than Once in a Week	76	.9
	Once in a Week	22	35.0
	More Than Once in a Month	34	15.7
	Once in a Month	9	4.1
	Once in a Couple Months	11	5.1
	Once or Twice in a Year	2	10.1
	Never	6	2.8
	Total	217	100.0

The participants reported a total relationship duration ranging from 6 months to 102 months ($M = 32.91$, $SD = 21.75$), and reported the duration of their long-distance relationships, which ranged from 6 months to 62 months ($M = 21.24$, $SD = 15.2$). Out of the total number of participants, 47 individuals, constituting 21.7% of the sample, had a high school diploma. Moreover, 110 participants, accounting for 50.7% of the total number of participants, held a bachelor's degree, while 60 individuals, representing 27.6% of the respondents, had a graduate degree.

When how often participants meet with their partners asked, the distribution of frequency of getting together (face to face) for “Once in a month” is 32 participants (14.7%), for “more than once in a month” is 31 (14.3%), for “once in a couple of months” is 100 (46.1%), for “once in a week” is 9 (4.1%), for “once or twice in a year” is 37 (17.1%), and for “never” is 8 (3.7%).

When how often participants have a phone call with their partners asked, the distribution of frequency of having an audio call “Couple of times in a day” is 109 of participants (50.2%), for “Once or twice in a week” is 37 (17.1%), for “once in a day” is 61 (28.1%), for “once in a week” is 4 (1.8%), for “once in a month” is 2 (0.9%), for “more than once in a month” is 2 (0.9%), and for “never” is 2 (0.9%).

When how often participants have communicated with their partners with SMS or through applications asked, the distribution of frequency for “Couple of times in a day” is 209 participants (96.3%), for “more than once in a week” is 2 (0.9%), for “once in a day” is 6 (2.8%). Moreover, when how often participants have a video call with their partners asked, the distribution of frequency of having a video call “More

than once in a week” is 76 of participants (35.0%), for “more than once in a month” is 34 (15.7%), for “once in a day” is 32 (14.7%), for “couple of times in a day” is 25 (11.5%), for “once in a couple months” is 11 (5.1%), for “once in a month” is 9 (4.1%), for “never” is 6 (2.8%) and for “once or twice in a year is 2 (0.9%).

Participants were asked about their weekly contact time with their partners and the average weekly contact time with their partners was found to be 20 hours ($SD = 19$). While the minimum response to this question was 2 hours, the maximum response was 80 hours in a week. The distance between respondents and their partners ranged from 50 kilometers to 8407 kilometers ($M = 846$, $SD = 967$).

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

The following section provides a comprehensive overview of the data collection instruments employed in the study. The present study employed four instruments to collect data: The Demographic Information Form created by the researcher (see Appendix C), the Relationship Stability Scale, also known as The Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998; Büyükşahin et al., 2005, see Appendix D), the Mattering to Romantic Others Questionnaire (Mak & Marshall, 2004; Kırimer, 2014, see Appendix E), and the Perceived Responses to Capitalization Scale (Gable et al., 2004; Kırimer, 2014, see Appendix F).

3.3.1. Demographic Information Form

The Demographic Information Form which was developed by the researcher seeks information about the participant’s gender, age, educational status, frequencies and the types of communication, duration of the relationship, and physical closeness of the current partner.

3.3.2. The Relationship Stability Scale (RSS)

Rusbult et al. (1998) created the Investment Model Scale to measure the relationship's current status based on factors like satisfaction, the quality of the alternatives, and the amount invested, which predicts the relationship's level of

commitment, as stated in Rusbult's Investment Model from 1980. There are 37 items in total in the original version of the scale, of which 10 measure people's satisfaction with their relationships, 10 measure the quality of alternatives, 10 measure people's investment in their relationships, and 7 measure people's commitment to their relationships. There are 2 reversed items ("I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future" and "It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year"). Apart from the commitment subscale, there are both facet and global items in the other three subscales. The first 5 items of each 3 subscales consist of facet items and are evaluated with a 4-point Likert Scale. For global items, there is a 9-point Likert Type rating (1 corresponds to "Completely Wrong" and 9 corresponds to "Completely Correct"). Rusbult (1998) stated that the facet items in the scale were not taken into consideration, they were only included in the scale to mentally prepare the participants for the global items and activate the relevant region in their memory. While scoring the scale, only the average of the answers given by the participants to the global items in each subscale is taken, and higher scores indicate higher relationship satisfaction, relationship investment, commitment, and quality of alternatives.

To test the validity and reliability of the original scale, three studies were conducted by Rusbult et al. (1998), and the internal consistency of the scale was computed for the satisfaction sub-scale as $\alpha = .92$ to $.95$, for investment subscale as $\alpha = .82$ to $.84$, for the quality of alternatives as $\alpha = .82$ to $.88$, and for the commitment sub-scales as $\alpha = .91$ and to $.93$. The scale was translated and adapted into Turkish by Büyükşahin et al. (2005). They conducted a study in which they applied the scale to 325 university students who had a romantic relationship for the validity and reliability analysis of the scale. The reliability of the subscales was reported as $\alpha = .90$ for satisfaction, $\alpha = .84$ for the investment, and $\alpha = .84$ for the quality of alternatives. After the first adaptation, the scale was re-evaluated by Büyükşahin and Taluy (2008) and a 7-item for the commitment sub-scale was added. In the study conducted by Büyükşahin and Taluy (2008), in which 403 university students participated, the Cronbach's alpha values of the scale were reported as $.93$ for the satisfaction, $.83$ for the quality of alternatives, $.83$ for the investment, and $.91$ for the commitment sub-scales.

In the current study, Cronbach alpha values of the scale were computed as .71 for satisfaction, .69 for quality of alternatives, .77 for investment, and .81 for commitment subscales. The total Cronbach alpha value of the scale was reported as .75.

3.3.3. Mattering to Romantic Others Questionnaire (MTROQ)

Marshall (2001) aimed to measure the sense of importance that adolescents perceive from their interactions with people who are important to them, with the “Mattering to Others Questionnaire” that he developed. In 2004, Marshall and Mak adapted this scale and named it the “Mattering to Romantic Others Questionnaire” to measure the sense of importance that individuals perceived from their interactions with their romantic partners. In the study conducted in 2004, the items of the scale were revised considering the dynamics of romantic relationships. The internal consistency of the scale was reported as .83 in this original study. In the current study, Cronbach alpha values of the scale were reported as .77.

The validity and reliability analyses of the scale which was adapted into Turkish by Kırimer conducted in 2014. One-hundred and twelve married couples participated in this study and as a result of principal component analysis used to test the factor structure of the Turkish form of the scale, it was seen that the scale was a single factor scale that explained 40.74% of the overall variance, taking into account Cattell's scree plot. In the study performed by Kırimer, the internal consistency of the scale was reported as .90 for both partners of the married couples (female and male partners).

The MTROQ features a one-factor structure and 17 questions, four of which are reversed coded and measure positive mattering, such as "I feel important to my spouse." For fifteen items, a five-point scale was employed (1 = not true for me, 5 = true for me). For the next two questions, participants were asked to rate themselves on a five-point scale from one to five (for example, "If your spouse made a list of all the things s/he cares about, where do you think you would be on his/her list?"). While the minimum score that can be obtained from the scale is 17, the maximum

score that can be obtained from the scale is 85, and high scores indicate a high perception of mattering. Some of the scale items are "I feel that my partner needs me", "My partner respects my thoughts and opinions", and "My partner cares about me". As a result of the principal component analysis used to test the factor structure of the Turkish form of the scale, it was seen that the scale was a single factor scale that explained 40.74% of the overall variance, taking into account Cattell's scree plot (Kırimer, 2014). In the study performed by Kırimer (2014), the internal consistency of the scale was reported as .90 for both partners of the married couples (female and male partners).

In the current study, Cronbach's alpha value has been calculated as .79 and this means the scale has an acceptable reliability coefficient.

3.3.4. Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts Scale (PRCA)

The Perceived Responses to Capitalization Scale was developed to measure how people perceive their partners' reactions after sharing a positive individual experience with their romantic partners. The scale was developed by Gable et al. (2004) and consists of four subscales and 12 items. In the scale, there are 3 statements in each subscale. The participants are asked to evaluate each item and choose the appropriate 7-point Likert-type option (1 = "not at all true" and 7 = "very true"), taking into account the root "When I tell my partner about a good thing that happened to me...". On a 7-point Likert-type scale, 1 was determined as "not at all true" and 7 as "very true".

Gable and colleagues proposed a 2-dimension and 4-sub-group typology while developing the scale. In the proposed typology, the responses perceived as "active-constructive" (AC) indicate that the feedback received by the partners after the sharing is perceived as appropriate support. (e.g., "My partner often shows his sincere interest in the good thing by asking lots of questions."). The feedback perceived as "passive constructive" (PC) by the individuals, on the other hand, includes responses similar to listening silently (e.g., "My partner says very little, but I know he is happy for me."). Reactions that are thought to be categorized as "active-

destructive” (AD) by the individual are those that deliberately invalidate the individual's sharing of happiness (e.g., “My partner reminds me that every good thing has a bad side.”). Finally, the answers suggested by the individual to be categorized as “passive-destructive” (PD) are the answers that can be deduced that the positive event shared by the individual is completely ignored by the partner (e.g., “My partner doesn't really mind me.”). To calculate the final score that individuals receive from the scale, the mean score of the PC, AD, and PD are calculated and subtracted from the AC score. Higher scores obtained by individuals from the scale indicate that the reactions they receive from their partners are perceived as more positive when there are attempts at capitalization in their relationships.

Gable and colleagues reported that each subscale received a satisfactory reliability score in their study conducted with 59 heterosexual couples (who had been dating for an average of 14 months) in 2004. In the active-constructive subscale (AC), $\alpha = .84$ for female partners, $\alpha = .74$ for male partners, in the passive-constructive subscale (PC), $\alpha = .87$ for female partners, $\alpha = .66$ for male partners, in the active-destructive subscale (AD), $\alpha = .71$ for female partners, $\alpha = .78$ for male partners, and on the passive-destructive subscale (PD), $\alpha = .72$ for female partners and $\alpha = .80$ for male partners has been reported.

The Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts Scale was translated into Turkish by Kırimer (2014). Explanatory factor analyses were performed, and the result was obtained that 3 factors explained 55.56% of the variance. To obtain a positive score from the Perceived Responses to Capitalization Scale, the average scores of the items belonging to the passive-constructive, active-destructive, and passive-destructive subscales are subtracted from the score obtained by the individual from the active-constructive subscale. For this reason, the same scoring method used by Gable (2004) was used to calculate the final score of the scale. The entire scale had an acceptable reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .79$ for female partners, $\alpha = .77$ for male partners).

In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha values have been calculated in the active-constructive subscale (AC) as $\alpha = .81$, in passive-constructive subscale (PC) as α

=.79, in active-destructive subscale (AD) as $\alpha = .73$, and in the passive-destructive subscale (PD) as $\alpha = .75$, and for the total scale as $\alpha = .72$ which means the entire scale has an acceptable reliability coefficient.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the beginning of data collection, a series of procedures were carefully complied with. Initial permission to use the instruments was obtained by contacting the authors of the instruments. The researcher obtained approval from the Middle Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee to ensure that the research complied with the appropriate protocols (Appendix A). Following the acquisition of ethical approval, the various instruments utilized in this study were subsequently transferred to an online survey platform known as Google Forms. The link that had been prepared was shared through various social media platforms, including Facebook Groups, WhatsApp, and Instagram, with a specific focus on targeting users within the relevant age group. The primary objective of implementing a hyperlink was to facilitate convenient access for potential participants. The provided hyperlink facilitated access for prospective participants to the Google Forms platform. The initial stage of the study involved the presentation of a consent form to the participants. This document provided comprehensive details regarding the study, emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation and the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. Participants were assured that their responses would solely be utilized for research purposes and that their involvement would remain anonymous. To access the research instruments, participants were required to confirm their consent by acknowledging and approving the related area on the consent form. The data recorded in Google Forms were limited to only the individuals who completed each instrument. The study was attended by a total of 292 participants between the dates of 10th of February and 10th of May, 2023.

3.5. Description of Variables

The criterion variable of this study was the commitment score derived from the Commitment subscale of the RSS (Relationship Satisfaction Stability Scale) by

computing the average scores for each participant. The total score ranged from 1 to 9.

The study also assessed other investment model variables, as predictor variables, including satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size. The satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size scores were obtained from the relevant subscales of the RSS (Relationship Stability Scale) by computing the average scores for each participant. The total score that can be obtained from each subscale also ranged from 1 to 9.

Another predictor variable of this study was perceived responses to capitalization attempts score. It was derived from the Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts scale by calculating the mean score of the PC, AD, and PD (i.e., Passive Constructive Subscale, Active Destructive Subscale, and Passive Destructive Subscale) and subtracting it from the AC (i.e., Active Constructive Subscale) score of each participant. The total score ranged from -18 to +18.

Another predictor variable of this study was perceived mattering. In the study, the total score obtained from the Mattering to Romantic Others Questionnaire (MTROQ) was computed by summing and averaging all items. The total score ranged from 17 to 85.

In the present study, the Demographic Information Form was used to collect information about the participants' gender and the duration of the relationship. Gender refers to the biological sex of the participants as a categorical variable. For hierarchical multiple regression analysis, it was dummy coded as 0 = male; 1 = female. The duration of the relationship refers to the total length of the relationship with the participants' current partners. As a continuous variable, it ranged from 6 to 102 months.

3.6. Data Analyses

This section presents an overview of the analysis conducted on the main data. The first step in the research process involved conducting data screening to evaluate the

suitability of the data for analysis. Reverse items in the instruments have been re-coded. Before analyses, scores for each RSS subscale were computed and assumption checks were accomplished. In alignment with the aim of this study, Hierarchical Multiple Regression analysis was conducted to examine the extent to which perceived mattering and perceived responses to capitalization attempts predicted commitment, after controlling for gender, total relationship duration, and the investment model components (satisfaction, investment size, and quality of alternatives).

The analyses in this study were conducted using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 2022, Version 28.0) for Windows. The alpha level, which determines the significance criteria, was set at .05.

3.7. Limitations

This section aims to highlight the limitations that should be considered when examining the study's findings. It is crucial to acknowledge these limitations to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research outcomes. By recognizing these constraints, researchers and readers can make informed interpretations and draw valid conclusions based on the available evidence. The initial step in this study involved implementing purposive sampling techniques to ensure the inclusion of individuals within the desired age group and relationship status. It is important to note that the participants were not randomly selected but based on specific criteria through convenience sampling. Utilizing these specific methods in the study may introduce certain characteristics to the sample; however, it is essential to note that this could potentially limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of emerging adults in long-distance relations in Türkiye. Moreover, since the study's data were collected through convenience sampling, it may consist of individuals selected based on a certain level of convenience and access. For example, individuals from different socio-economic levels, age groups, or cultural backgrounds may be present in long-distance relationships. However, in convenience sampling, researchers usually select individuals to whom they have easy access. This can result in the sample being heavily weighted towards individuals of a particular

type or geographical area. This can limit the ability of the results to generalize and represent diversity.

Another limitation of this study is related to the participants' beginning of their relationships. The study may have overlooked possible differences between the dynamics of couples who started their relationship at a distance and those who started at a close distance and then moved to a long-distance relationship. This means that the findings may not present a complete picture. Differences in the initial conditions of the relationship (whether it started close or long distance) may create variations in the factors and dynamics affecting the relationship. For example, initial distance may affect couples' communication styles, attachment styles, and relationship expectations. Therefore, not including this variable in the study may limit the general validity of the results and prevent a more comprehensive understanding of relationship dynamics.

The data collection process involved utilizing online surveys, which eliminated the presence of a researcher to address participant inquiries or exert control over their responses during the completion of the survey instruments. The potential for participants to interpret instrument items differently is a significant consideration in research studies. Thus, this should be noted as one of the limitations of the study. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider that the collection of data through online means may have led to a decrease in the overall response rate. The total number of participants in this study was 292, and it is thought that the length of the survey could lead some participants to give up before completing it. Additionally, the instruments employed in this study were exclusively based on self-report measures. Since answering questions about personal relationships might be delicate, the responses might be untrue. Participants may be inclined to provide answers to questionnaires that differ from what they did if social desirability bias is considered.

Another limitation of the present study is the physical distance between participants and their partners is very different from each other. In other words, Both the participant who lives 50 km away from his/her partner and the participant who lives 8407 km away consider their relationship as a long-distance relationship. Although

this wide range allows for the examination of different dynamics of long-distance relationships, it should also be kept in mind that this variability may affect the research results and bring some limitations in generalizing the findings. A sample with a more homogeneous distance range may be helpful in future studies to understand the dynamics of the relationship in more depth.

Furthermore, the fact that the frequency of contact of participants in long-distance relationships should have been included in the analysis may lead to significant shortcomings in the research. This may reduce the capacity to provide a complete picture in understanding and interpreting relationship dynamics. Interview frequency is important in determining critical elements such as communication styles, emotional attachment, and couples' commitment to each other (Jin & Pena, 2010). This shortcoming may limit the generalizability of the research results and the ability to understand different dimensions of the relationship. Therefore, the omission of interview frequencies should be noted as an important limitation that must be considered to fully understand relationship dynamics.

In the study, the minimum distance criteria were set at 40 kilometers. However, participants who confirmed this distance were excluded from the study because they stated they regularly met "every day" with their partner. This shows that despite applying the minimum distance criterion, some participants were, in fact, couples who saw each other frequently. Although the minimum distance criterion in the dataset has increased to 50 kilometers with the exclusion of these 4 participants, it should be emphasized that this distance may still not be sufficient to consider a relationship as long distance. This can be cited as one of the study's limitations because there may be different understandings of the precise definition of a long-distance relationship, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. In particular, in cases where the definition of a long-distance relationship differs between participants, the effects of this on the study's results should be considered. Furthermore, the research design was correlational, meaning no cause-and-effect relationship could be established.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Within the confines of this particular chapter, the results of the study were presented. The results chapter begins with the preliminary analyses. These consist of reverse item recoding, excluding irrelevant data, and normality testing. Then, descriptive statistics for the variables are shown. Bivariate correlations between variables are shown in the third section. Then, assumption checks of the data for the hierarchical multiple regression and findings about commitment prediction are presented.

4.1. Preliminary Analyses of the Study

Before conducting the main analysis, a careful review of the data was undertaken to ascertain the absence of any mistakes that may have occurred during the data entry process. To achieve this, an analysis was conducted on the frequencies, as well as the minimum and maximum values for the variables encompassing gender, duration of the relationship, satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investment, commitment, perceived mattering, and perceived responses to capitalization attempts. This analysis was undertaken to ensure that the data fell within a plausible range of values. To identify data outliers, z-scores were computed for each variable. The z values for each case ranged from -3.12 to 2.47 (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2015). Subsequently, a re-coding procedure was implemented for the reverse items, specifically items 3 and 4, within the Relationship Stability-Commitment Subscale and items 4, 8, 9, and 15 within the Mattering to Romantic Others Questionnaire.

Since the purpose of the research was to examine dating relationship commitment in emerging adulthood whose relationships are long-distance relationships, 30 participants did not meet the required age range (18 to 29), 4 participants said their

face-to-face meeting frequency is every day, 32 participants said that they were presently "engaged" and 9 participants whose geographical distance between their partners less than 40 kilometers were excluded from the study.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Means, standard deviations, ranges, and minimum-to-maximum values of the variables were computed. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1. *Descriptive Statistics of Predictor and Criterion Variables (N=217)*

Variables	M	SD	Potantial Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Total Relationship Duration (Months)	32.91	21.75	6- 102	1.29	.77
Satisfaction	7.06	1.83	1-9	-1.23	.80
Quality of Alternatives	4.72	2.02	1-9	.16	-.84
Investment	4.99	1.53	1-9	.08	-.41
Commitment	6.03	.92	1-9	-.35	.57
PRCA	2.25	4.26	1-7	-.44	-.71
PM	4.01	.62	1-5	-.90	.00

Note. PCRA= Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts. PM= Perceived Mattering

Based on the findings presented in Table 4.1, the study included participants who reported varying durations of dating, ranging from 6 to 102 months. The average dating duration among participants was found to be 32.91 months, with a standard deviation of 21.75. Furthermore, the data about the mean scores of the participants in this study revealed that in terms of satisfaction, the mean score of the participants was found 7.06 ($SD = 1.83$) and the mean score of commitment was found 6.03 ($SD = .92$). The means score of the quality of alternatives appears to be 4.72 ($SD = 2.02$), and the mean score of investment was found to be 4.99 ($SD = 1.53$). In terms of perceived mattering of the the participants, the mean score of the participants was found 4.01 ($SD= .62$) and the mean score of PCRA was found 2.25 with a standard deviation of 4.26.

The normality assumption was also examined. To demonstrate a normal distribution, values for skewness and kurtosis between -3 and +3 are deemed acceptable (George

& Mallery, 2010; Kline, 2011). The research variables' skewness and kurtosis values varied from -1.23 to 1.29 and -.84 to .80, respectively, as shown in Table 4.1, indicating that there is no violation of normality for these variables. Taking into account the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality assumptions, all variables failed to support the assumption of normality ($p < .05$). However, social desirability is a consequence of research in social sciences in which individuals fill out questionnaires about themselves. Higher scores were anticipated, indicating that the breach of normality is not seen to be a major problem (Siebert & Siebert, 2018). Instead, Q-Q plot analysis showed that the data were more likely to be normally distributed.

4.3. Bivariate Correlation Matrices of the Variables

Table 4. 2. *Bivariate Correlation Matrix Between Variables (n = 217)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Relationship Duration	-	.19*	-.06	.20**	.03	-.06	-.11
2.Satisfaction		-	-	.29**	.68**	.81**	.59**
			.58**				
3. Quality of Alternatives			-	-	-	-	-
				.41**	.49**	.48**	.30**
4.Investment				-	.37**	.19**	.20**
5. Commitment					-	.53**	.44**
6. Perceived Mattering						-	.72**
7.PRCA							-

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ PRCA= Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts

To investigate the association between criterion and predictor variables, the study employed the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients. The results were displayed in Table 4.2 and were analyzed using Cohen's (1988) guidelines for interpreting correlation coefficients. According to Cohen, correlations ranging from .10 to .29 indicate weak associations, correlations ranging from .30 to .49 indicate moderate associations, and correlations ranging from .50 to 1.00 indicate strong associations. In accordance with Cohen's (1988) criteria, it was observed that all significant correlations pertaining to the duration of relationships were characterized as weak.

Based on the findings of the study, it was observed that there exists a significant and positive correlation between the duration of relationships and the levels of satisfaction experienced by the individuals involved ($r = .19, p < .05$). Furthermore, a similar positive association was found between relationship duration and the extent of investment made by the individual ($r = .20, p < .01$). On the other hand, the significant relationship was not observed between the duration of the relationship and the quality of alternatives.

The study's findings also demonstrated a significant correlation among all components of the investment model. The study found that satisfaction was significantly and positively associated with investment ($r = .29, p < .01$) and commitment ($r = .68, p < .01$). On the other hand, the negative correlation between the quality of alternatives and satisfaction, investment, and commitment components was observed ($r = -.58, p < .01$; $r = -.41, p < .01$; $r = -.49, p < .01$). The study revealed a positive correlation between commitment and investment ($r = .37, p < .01$). The results indicated that commitment had the strongest positive relationship with satisfaction ($r = .68, p < .01$).

The results of the study showed that there was a significant positive correlation between satisfaction and perceived mattering ($r = .81, p < .01$), and perceived responses to capitalization attempts ($r = .59, p < .01$). On the other hand, there was a significant negative correlation between the quality of alternatives and perceived mattering ($r = -.48, p < .05$), and perceived responses to capitalization attempts ($r = -.30, p < .01$). There was a positive correlation observed between investment and perceived mattering ($r = .19, p < .01$), and perceived responses to capitalization attempts ($r = .20, p < .01$). As anticipated, there was a positive correlation between commitment and perceived mattering ($r = .53, p < .01$), and perceived responses to capitalization attempts ($r = .44, p < .01$).

Perceived mattering was positively correlated with satisfaction ($r = .81, p < .01$), investment ($r = .19, p < .01$), and commitment ($r = .53, p < .01$), PRCA ($r = .44, p < .01$) while negatively correlated with quality of alternatives ($r = -.48, p < .01$). A significant positive correlation was observed between the participants' PRCA and

their levels of satisfaction ($r = .59, p < .01$), investment ($r = .20, p < .01$), commitment ($r = .44, p < .01$), and perceived mattering ($r = .72, p < .01$). Furthermore, it was observed that there exists a negative correlation between the participants' PRCA and the quality of alternatives ($r = -.30, p < .01$).

4.4. Testing Assumptions for Hierarchical Multiple Regression

Prior to conducting the regression analysis, a thorough examination of the assumptions was undertaken. The process of conducting hierarchical regression analysis necessitates the evaluation of several assumptions, including sample size, outliers, multicollinearity, and singularity of the independent variables. Additionally, it is important to assess the normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2015).

To commence, Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) proposed the utilization of the formula $N \geq 50 + 8m$, where m denotes the number of independent variables, as a means to compute the suitable sample size. Therefore, it is recommended that the current study's sample size be a minimum of 114, considering the inclusion of seven independent variables. A collective sum of 217 individuals in this research study satisfied this condition.

In this study, it was examined a set of predictor variables consisting of gender and relationship duration. Additionally, it was considered a separate set of predictor variables, namely perceived mattering, perceived responses to capitalization attempts, satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size, and a dependent or criterion variable, commitment. These variables were also continuous and quantitative in nature. Furthermore, the gender variable was encoded using dummy coding, where the value 1 represents female and the value 0 represents male. This coding was implemented before including the variable in the model as a predictor.

The normal probability plot and histogram of regression scaled residuals were examined to evaluate residual normality (Field, 2009). In the analysis presented in Figure 4.1, the histogram displayed a slightly positively skewed distribution. This

observation suggests that there were no significant deviations from normality for the criterion variable, which in this case was the commitment score. In a similar vein, the analysis conducted in Figure 4.2 revealed a normal P-P plot wherein the majority of data points were observed to align closely with a relatively straight line. This observation suggests that the residuals followed a normal distribution. The assumption of normally distributed errors was found to be satisfied.

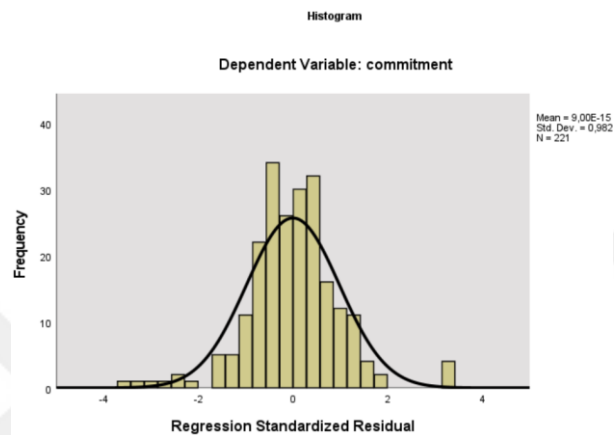


Figure 4. 1. Histogram showing the normality of residuals

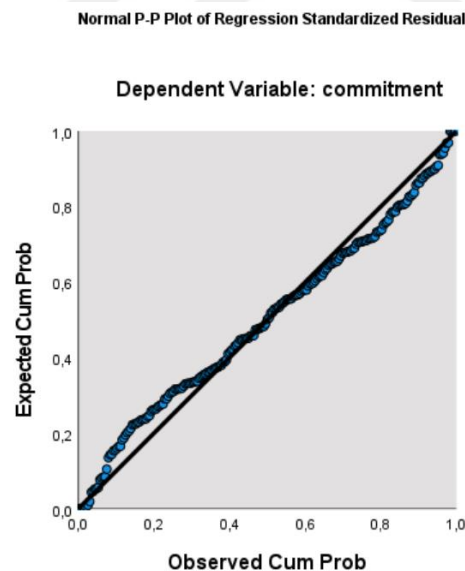


Figure 4. 2. Plot showing the distrubution of the standardized residuals

Multivariate outliers, the normality of the residuals, the independence of the errors, the type of variable linearity, and the lack of multicollinearity were all tested for homoscedasticity (Field, 2009).

In order to assess the validity of the assumption of independence of errors, which necessitates the absence of correlation among errors, the Durbin-Watson statistic was examined (Field, 2009). According to existing literature, the Durbin-Watson statistic is a commonly used measure in statistical analysis to assess the presence of autocorrelation in a regression model. It is widely accepted that the ideal range for Durbin-Watson values lies between 1.50 and 2.50. This range is considered optimal as it indicates a moderate level of autocorrelation, striking a balance between excessive positive and negative autocorrelation. Consequently, values falling within, in order to avoid violating the assumption, it is recommended that the value be maintained at a proximity of 2 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013). In the current investigation, the Durbin-Watson value was determined to be 1.90 thereby suggesting the absence of any violation.

In order to examine the assumption of homoscedasticity, an analysis was conducted by inspecting the scatter plot of regression standardized residuals against regression standardized predicted values, as suggested by Field (2009). In the analysis presented in Figure 4.3, the focus was on the commitment score. Scatter plots were utilized to examine the distribution of residuals. The observations indicated that the residuals exhibited a random dispersion pattern around zero. This finding suggests that there was no evidence of a violation of the homoscedasticity assumption.

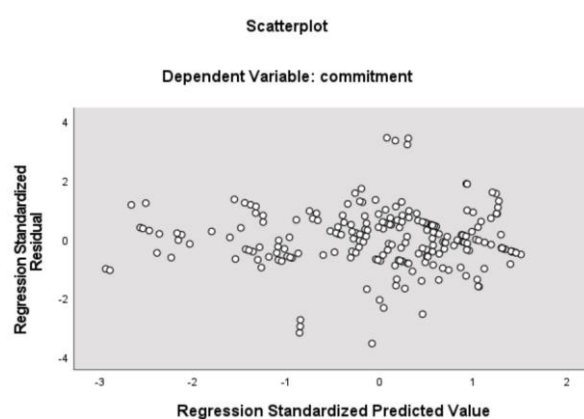


Figure 4. 3. Distribution of the homoscedasticity of residuals

The linearity assumption is a crucial aspect of statistical analysis, as it requires a linear relationship between predictor variables and the criterion variable (Field, 2009). To assess this assumption, partial plots were examined for each predictor

variable with respect to the criterion variable. Additionally, bivariate scatter plots were inspected to observe the relationship between these pairs of variables. The analysis of scatter plots demonstrated a clear and direct linear relationship between each predictor variable and the criterion variable. In light of the available data, it is evident that there is a lack of evidence supporting the violation of the assumption of linearity.

In order to assess the presence of multicollinearity, the examination focused on the intercorrelations among the independent variables. The observed correlation coefficients did not exceed the threshold of 0.7, indicating the absence of multicollinearity among the predictors. Furthermore, in order to ascertain the fulfillment of the multicollinearity assumption, the Tolerance and VIF values were carefully monitored, ensuring that they were below 1.0 and above 1.0, respectively (Cohen et al., 2003). Furthermore, according to Bowerman (2004), it is recommended that the VIF should not exceed the threshold of 2.5, while the Tolerance value should not fall below the minimum threshold of 0.40. The criteria for multicollinearity were satisfied by all the values for Tolerance and VIF. Specifically, the variable Satisfaction exhibited a Tolerance value of .66 and a VIF value of 1.53. Similarly, the variable Quality of Alternatives demonstrated a Tolerance value of 0.59 and a VIF value of 1.70, while the variable Investment displayed a Tolerance value of 0.76 and a VIF value of 1.31.

The verification of the homoscedasticity assumption was conducted by means of employing scatter plots in the context of the regression analysis. Based on the analysis conducted, the distances of Mahalanobis and Cook were examined, leading to the determination that no violation of the assumption was observed. As a result, the Mahalanobis and Cook's distances were found to be 23.54 and .02, respectively, suggesting that the current research is not encountering any significant problems. The results of the study suggest that there is no evidence to suggest a violation of the primary assumption of the hierarchical regression analysis.

4.5. Findings of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis

The findings of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4. 3. *The Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Commitment*

Variables	B	SE	β	t	R ²	ΔR^2	Adjusted R ²
Model 1					.028*	.028	.019
Gender	.30	.13	.17	2.47*			
Relationship Duration	.000	.003	.01	.16*			
Model 2					.510*	.481	.498
Satisfaction	.29	.03	.58	9.7**			
Quality of Alternatives	-.04	.03	-.09	-1.47			
Investment Size	.10	.03	.16	2.87*			
Model 3					.543*	.033	.534
PCRA	.01	.01	.06	.81			
Perceived Mattering	.15	.14	.10	1.06*			

Note. $p < .05^*$, $p < .001^{**}$; PCRA=Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts; for gender: 1=female, 0=male

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted to find out whether perceived mattering and perceived responses to capitalization attempts predicted total commitment score after controlling for gender, total relationship duration, relationship satisfaction, investment size, and quality of alternatives scores. In the context of hierarchical regression analysis, it is imperative for researchers to carefully determine the sequence in which variables are included in the model. This decision should be guided by their theoretical knowledge and insights, as well as by previous empirical evidence documented in the relevant scholarly literature (Field, 2017; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2015; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Consequently, the variables of gender and the relationship duration were included in the analysis as model 1 to account for the role of these demographic factors in the prediction of commitment. After that, in Model 2, the investment model variables, namely, satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size were included. In the last model, perceived mattering and perceived responses to capitalization attempts variables were included to see the power of explaining variance in the commitment of the participants.

Table 4.3 presents the findings of the regression analysis. Model 1 accounted for 0.3% of the variance in commitment and was statistically significant, $F(2, 214) = 3.11, p < .05$. In this model, gender ($\beta = .17, p < .05$) was significant, and positively related to commitment and indicating females were more committed than males. Also, the duration of the relationship ($\beta = .01, p < .05$) was positively related to commitment.

After controlling for gender and duration of the relationship, the Investment Model variables, namely satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size were added in Model 2. The inclusion of the three components of the Investment Model resulted in an increase of 48.1% in the explanation of the variance in commitment, after accounting for the influence of gender and relationship duration. This change was significant, $F(3, 211) = 69.07, p < .001$. Satisfaction ($\beta = .58, p < .001$) and investment size ($\beta = .16, p < .05$) significantly predicted commitment. Both were positively related, showing that the more the participants were satisfied with their romantic relationships and the more they invested in them, the more committed they got to their relationships. On the other hand, the quality of alternatives was not found as a significant predictor of commitment.

In Model 3, the construct of perceived mattering and perceived responses to capitalization attempts were added to the existing model. These variables accounted for an additional 3.3% of the variability in commitment. This change was also statistically significant, $F(2, 209) = .61, p < .05$. Perceived mattering ($\beta = .10, p < .05$) predicted commitment whereas perceived responses to capitalization attempts was not significant. Perceived mattering was positively related to commitment, indicating that as people in long-distance relationships feel more mattered by their partners, their relationship commitment also increases. Overall, the model explained 53.4% of the variation in commitment with satisfaction as the most salient predictor followed by investment and perceived mattering.

4.6. Summary of the Results

The main goal of the study was to find out the role of perceived responses to capitalization attempts and perceived mattering in predicting the commitment of the

participants who were in a long-distance romantic relationship for at least six months, controlling the demographic variables (gender and relationship duration) with the unique contribution of the Investment Model variables namely satisfaction, quality of alternatives and investment size. According to the results, the model explains 53.4% of the variation in the criterion variable. Among the predictors, gender, relationship duration, satisfaction, investment, and perceived mattering were found to be significant predictors. However, the quality of alternatives and perceived responses to capitalization attempts were not significant predictors in the model.



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter comprises three distinct sections. Firstly, the present study's findings were discussed and interpreted in relation to the existing literature and previous research findings. Secondly, the study findings were accompanied by a discussion of the possible implications. Finally, recommendations for future research were suggested.

5.1. Prediction of Perceived Matterings and Perceived Responses to Capitalization Attempts through the Investment Model Perspective

The current study found that the relationship's duration positively and significantly predicted the commitment level of the participants who were in LDR. Supporting this finding, Büyükşahin (2006) found that the relationship duration strongly and positively predicts the variance in the commitment of dating couples. According to Weigel et al. (2003), a longer relationship length resulted in higher commitment among university students. In her longitudinal study, Rusbult (1983) discovered that the degree of satisfaction, investment, and commitment increased while the quality of alternatives deteriorated over time. On the other hand, inconsistent with the current study's findings, Le and Agnew (2003) found that the commitment level of participants did not differ significantly based on the length of the relationship. Given that the Investment Model presents investment as one of the components of commitment and that it was anticipated that the amount invested in a relationship would increase over time, the present study's finding shows that the longer a relationship lasts, the more powerful the duration of relationship's influence in explaining commitment becomes.

According to Fincham et al. (2011), most emerging adults want to be married or be in a committed romantic relationship. The current study's findings indicated that

participants' commitment increases with time, and this may be connected to their developmental stages. Because emergent adulthood is a spectrum, it is essential to consider where the participants are in this spectrum. The results relating to the length of the relationship can be explained by the participants' varying motivations since their reasons for staying in the relationship may differ in the early and late phases of emerging adulthood. Furthermore, the age of first marriage for males is 28,1, and for women, it is 26, according to the most recent data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (2023). These national statistics may help give meaning to the current study's findings.

The current study's bivariate correlations also support the regression findings. The relationship duration appears to be positively correlated with the degree to which individuals are satisfied with their relationships and the investment size, such as the amount of time and effort they have invested in their partnerships.

Similarly, Rusbult (1986) stated that relationship commitment tends to grow as time progresses. Additionally, Rhoades and his colleagues (2010) found that as the relationship endures, there is an increase in relationship stability. Also, in studies conducted with emerging adults, relationship duration was a major predictor of satisfaction (Bilecen, 2007), investment, and commitment (Büyükşahin, 2006). The current study's positive associations between relationship duration and commitment confirm the findings of Rusbult et al. (1986), who found that relationship duration was strongly associated with commitment. In her longitudinal study, Rusbult (1983; 1986) showed that the degree of satisfaction, investment, and commitment increased while the quality of alternatives declined over time. As expected by the relevant literature, the duration of the relationship was observed to enhance commitment in this current study considerably. Thus, one may conclude that people are more willing to put in more as their relationships last, including time, money, effort, and emotional investment. The cumulation of shared experiences, deeper emotional ties, and the creation of plans and aspirations might all be contributing factors to this greater involvement. Particularly when it comes to the length of the relationship, the rise in investment may indicate that people become more likely or driven to engage more in the relationship with time than when it first starts.

In Model 1, the results also indicated that being female has a predictive role in commitment. In a study comparing how men and women view their partners, the results showed that women in romantic relationships are more likely to idealize their partners from the beginning of the relationship and to interpret their relationship more positively when compared to other possible partners and relationships. In contrast, men in romantic relationships begin to interpret their female partners more positively only after they develop a certain level of commitment one year after the relationship begins (Murray, 1996). This study, which found a positive correlation between a more positive interpretation of one's partner and commitment, may be supported by the fact that being female predicts commitment in the current study. Considering the results of the current study, females' level of commitment is likely to increase over time as the duration of the experience in long-distance relationships lasts. This can also be explained by the adjustment of separation and the ability to gain new relational skills over time (Akçabozan Kayabol et al., 2022; Neustaedter & Greenberg, 2012).

In Model 2, satisfaction and investment emerged as significant predictors of the participants' level of commitment. The addition of Investment Model variables in Model 2 accounted for 48.1 % of the variance in commitment, showing that in long-distance relationships, satisfaction, and investment have a predictive power on the commitment levels of the individuals. These findings are also consistent with several previous research findings. For example, a study by Pistole et al. (2010) with people in long-distance and geographically close relationships showed that for long-distance couples, the commitment of the individuals was significantly predicted by investment and satisfaction. Similar findings are found in other research studies conducted with individuals engaging in long-distance relationships (Kelmer et al., 2013; Knox et al., 2002; Merolla, 2010). These findings emphasize the importance of variables such as satisfaction and investment in determining commitment in long-distance relationships and are consistent with the present study findings.

On the other hand, in Model 2, the quality of alternatives was not significant in predicting commitment. Several studies contradicting and supporting this result were found in the related literature. In the international literature, in the studies conducted

with long-distance relationship participants, it has been observed that people's perception of the quality of alternatives predicted their relationship commitment (Agnew, 2009; Rusbult et al., 1986). Likewise, Eichler (2014) reported that relationship investments, alternatives' quality, and satisfaction predicted commitment in a sample of long-distance couples. The current study's findings revealed differences between the findings and those of Eichler, as in the current study, the quality of alternatives was not found significant in predicting commitment. Although no study was found examining the commitment in long-distance romantic relationships in the national literature, studies conducted with samples of emerging adults engaging in geographically close relationships yielded similar results (Müezzinoğlu, 2014). On the other hand, as the results of the current study demonstrated, Pistole et al. (2010) discovered that in their sample of participants in long-distance relationships, only investment and satisfaction—not the quality of alternatives—significantly predicted commitment, as it was found in the current study.

The findings of the current study's bivariate correlations also supported the results obtained from regression analysis. In terms of investment model variables, according to the findings of bivariate correlations, the participants' satisfaction is significantly and positively correlated with investment size and commitment. The current study confirms numerous additional findings in the literature's positive associations between relationship satisfaction and investment and commitment. For example, in some studies involving Turkish university students, satisfaction was found to be positively correlated with investment and commitment (Anlatan, 2019; Büyükşahin et al., 2005; Büyükşahin & Hovardaoğlu, 2007). Similar to the results of the study conducted in Türkiye, the studies conducted abroad show a positive correlation between participants' relationship satisfaction and the investment size and commitment they make in their relationships. Based on these findings, in the current study, it can be concluded that the level of commitment of young adults in long-distance relationships increases as their relationship satisfaction and investment in their relationships increase.

In Model 3, the variable of perceived responses to capitalization attempts and perceived mattering were added to the model. However, in the current study,

perceived responses to capitalization attempts' predictive power on commitment was not significant. Even if in both the international and national literature, there was no research studying all Investment Model variables with perceived responses to capitalization attempts (PRCA), some studies found a relationship between some of the components of the Investment Model and PRCA. For example, one study has provided evidence indicating that individuals' interpretations of their partner's reaction to the disclosure of a positive event positively and significantly influence the discloser's overall experience, satisfaction, and duration of the relationship. The individuals who experienced enthusiastic and positive peer reactions indicated greater relationship satisfaction (Gable & Reis, 2010). Conversely, perceiving unenthusiastic or disinterested responses was generally associated with lower personal and interpersonal outcomes. This correlation was observed in studies conducted by Gable et al. (2004) and Reis et al. (2010). Similar findings were also reported in a study by Gable et al. (2006). The researchers discovered that individuals' perceptions of their partner's responsiveness during conversations about positive events, as evaluated by both the individuals sharing the information and independent observers, were linked to higher levels of self-reported relationship satisfaction and longer-lasting relationships. Even if, in the bivariate correlation analysis, there was a positive correlation between the perceived responses to capitalization attempts and satisfaction, investment size, and commitment and a negative correlation with the quality of alternatives, in the regression analysis, perceived responses to capitalization attempts was not found significant in predicting commitment.

Considering that the time spent side by side by people in long-distance relationships is limited and the sharing of positive events experienced during the day could be less frequent, it is possible that the results of the studies conducted with couples who are geographically close have not have been found in this study (Knox et al., 2002; Maucione, 2023). Even if people experience positive events during the day, since the time they spend in communication with their partners may also be limited (Pistole et al., 2010), it is expected that the frequency of mentioning even small happy events during the day will be more limited than in geographically close couples. Moreover, the studies in the literature on capitalization attempts were conducted with

geographically close couples. Since these couples are more likely to meet face-to-face than couples in long-distance relationships, they are more likely to observe the reactions of the other party at the moment of sharing happy happenings. If communication is frequently made through voice or written conversations even if sharings are positive, people are less likely to observe their partner's reactions than geographically close couples. Moreover, the descriptive statistics of the current study reveal that the participants frequently use phone calls and written communication tools to communicate with their partners who live far away. This may be one of the reasons why the perceived responses to capitalization attempts was not significant in predicting commitment in the current study.

Moreover, it is possible that partners may not see every incident that is considered individually favorable as positive. When asked to recall a personally happy occasion, participants may have evaluated their partners' responses appropriately because they believed that some particular occasions were not welcomed by their partners. Giving an example can help to clarify this statement. While the partner can feel thrilled with related news of an acceptance to a job or adopting a cat, the same partner might not be pleased to learn that one of the friends of the sharer will come to visit for a week, even if this visitation might make the sharer happy, for several reasons, the partner of the sharer might not find this new pleasant. However, both events are gratifying for the sharer. As a result, capitalization levels should be evaluated considering the events' contextual aspects and emotional repercussions (Gentzler et al., 2010).

Another variable added in Model 3 was the perceived mattering. In the final model, it was found that perceived mattering has 3.3% additional power in predicting commitment. In both international and national literature, any study can be found investigating the relationship between perceived mattering and commitment. For this reason, in the following part, the findings of the studies which are closely related to the variable of commitment will be provided to make inferences related to commitment as depending on the literature as we know that satisfaction and investment have a predicting power in commitment in various types of romantic relationships (Agnev, 2009; Aslan-Döken, 2014; Büyükşahin, 2006; 2008; Impett, 2001; Kurdek, 2008; Le & Agnew, 2003).

Individuals in close relationships may have concerns about how significant they feel to the other person under certain situations. Individuals may be unsure about their value and the level of their significant other's concern for them. Dixon Rayle (2005) and Rosenberg (1985) state that interpersonal mattering addresses emotional experiences. In an American study with individuals in intimate relationships, researchers discovered that the respondents felt more significant when their spouse showed them more attention than they got from others. In consequence, higher mattering levels raised relationship satisfaction and investment. Feeling valuable to one's partner might help one stay invested in a love relationship. However, mattering and investment may drop if the romantic partner's attention is viewed as less important than attention from other sources (Mak & Marshall, 2004). Furthermore, this occurrence may increase the quality of alternatives in a partner's eyes. As the bivariate correlation results of the present study also confirmed, there was a negative and significant relationship between the quality of alternatives and perceived mattering and other investment model variables, namely satisfaction, investment, and commitment.

Mattering is expected to positively impact satisfaction within many types of intimate connections, such as friendships and romantic partnerships. For example, Santos and Muiz-Rivas (2014) researched romantic partners' perceived mattering to each other and analyzed everyday experiences of mattering within the context of romantic partnerships. The study found that the perceived mattering of one's romantic partner significantly influenced their day-to-day interactions. Individuals who thought they mattered to their partners had higher positive affect and relationship satisfaction levels. Individuals who experienced lower levels of mattering, on the other hand, expressed negative affect and reduced satisfaction in their relationships. This study demonstrates the impact of perceived mattering in determining the day-to-day emotional experiences and relational excellence of persons in love relationships. According to a study by Mak and Marshall (2004), the concept of mattering was found to have a positive correlation with both romantic relationship satisfaction and investment size among undergraduates. Also, in the same study, they found that comparisons of attention from the romantic partner with attention from other sources (e.g., alternative partners, friends) contribute to a sense of mattering. When attention

from the partner was greater than from others, respondents reported higher levels of mattering. Higher levels of mattering enhanced satisfaction with and investment in the relationship. However, in this study, they did not make any inferences related to commitment.

Additionally, mattering was found to negatively correlate with the perceived quality of alternative options in romantic relationships. They suggested that experiencing a sense of significance within a romantic partnership can contribute to continuing investment in the relationship. Suppose the level of attention received from a romantic partner is regarded to be lower than the attention obtained from other sources. In that case, the sense of mattering may be diminished, leading to a decrease in investment and an increase in the perceived quality of the alternatives. The studies mentioned have collectively demonstrated that the perception of mattering plays a crucial role in satisfaction and investment size, and as it is known from the related literature, satisfaction, and investment size have a predictive power in commitment.

To conclude, the findings indicated that the level of commitment in romantic relationships among Turkish emerging adults involved in long-distance relationships lasting over six months was predicted by the total relationship duration, gender, components of the investment model including satisfaction, investment, and perceived mattering. The final model elucidated 53.4% of the variances in commitment in long-distance relationships. Uncertainty is a significant issue with LDRRs (Maguire & Kinney, 2010). Individuals may, for example, doubt their function in the relationship, how committed their partner is to their romantic relationship, how important the person is to the significant other, and whether the relationship is worth investing in and making an effort. More precisely, women who are engaged in fulfilling relationships, who have a profound belief that they hold significance in the eyes of their romantic partner, and those who demonstrate a substantial level of investment in their relationships and feel more satisfied with their relationships tend to display a higher degree of commitment to their romantic partnership. Thanks to the efforts to show a partner that they matter and allow people to know how much their significant other cares about them, individuals in LDRRs demonstrating to their partners how important they are to them and affirm their

feelings are better at compensating the expenses associated with physical separation (Cameron & Ross, 2007).

5.2. Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

Long-distance relationships share similarities with relationships that are geographically close in various aspects. However, despite physical separation, they possess distinct characteristics that set them apart, particularly in sustaining communication and emotional intimacy. The lack of consistent physical proximity and in-person interactions in long-distance relationships makes this particular form of relationship more challenging than the geographically close ones. In light of these mentioned challenges, mental health professionals working with clients in long-distance relationships can focus on how clients feel more valued and cared for in long-distance relationships. Counselors and therapists in couples therapy with long-distance couples can explore what it means to feel important to their clients, help them understand their language of caring, help them find their way of showing that their partner matters to them, and help them recognize their partner's way of showing them that they are mattered. In a counseling context, counselors can use their knowledge of the particular difficulties long-distance relationships present to provide couples with individualized assistance. Counselors can stress how important it is for partners in long-distance relationships to communicate well to show their partners that they matter.

Furthermore, relationship counseling and therapy practitioners may benefit from these findings of the study, as it was shown that the Investment Model also applies to long-distance dating individuals (McAnulty & Brineman, 2007). Clients worried about being committed to their relationships may find it helpful to understand the distinct contribution of investments in the relationship and the fact that satisfaction is not the only element influencing an individual's commitment to their romantic connection. The Investment Model offers valuable insights for therapists and couple counselors. These concepts help shed light on why certain individuals choose to maintain their relationships despite experiencing dissatisfaction and how they would increase their satisfaction from the investment they made in their relationship.

This research has the potential to make a valuable contribution to practical applications by informing the development of intervention programs. Counselors and therapists can offer insights into the impact of individuals' perceptions on their commitment to a relationship. This includes examining both their intrinsic and extrinsic investments in the relationship. Additionally, professionals can explore how individuals' perceptions of being valued by their significant other can influence a couple's relationship satisfaction, commitment, and investment level. Considering these findings and applying these insights, couples can proactively nurture their relationship, create a more supportive and satisfying environment, and build a stronger foundation for mutual growth and satisfaction. Consistent efforts to support and appreciate each other to make each other feel validated and mattered are key elements individuals can actively incorporate into their relationships based on the current study findings. In essence, by actively fostering a sense of mattering and investing in the relationship, individuals can significantly enhance the satisfaction within their romantic relationships. These insights provide actionable strategies for fostering deeper connections and creating a more fulfilling partnership.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Studies

Future studies could more comprehensively assess the patterns of interaction in long-distance relationships by examining the relationship dynamics between the actor and the partner in more detail. This may be important for understanding the variables in the relationship and their effects on both parties (Ledermann et al., 2011).

Conducting a study with a small number of participants can substantially impact the findings' generalizability. To address this, future research efforts aimed at broader participant inclusion should consider collaborative efforts with multiple institutions. Researchers can pool resources, get access to varied participant pools, and enhance sample sizes across multiple areas or demographics by forming partnerships or associations. Using official associations' online platforms and social media to recruit a broader and more diverse sample can also help. Incentives or pay mechanisms for participation may also draw a more diverse and representative participant base, creating a solid foundation for generalizing the study's findings to a larger community.

For future researchers, examining long-distance relationships from a qualitative perspective can bring a new depth to research in this field. Qualitative research allows us to understand individuals' experiences in long-distance relationships better (Creswell, 2015). Such studies can provide a rich insight into understanding participants' emotional experiences, communication practices, challenges, and coping strategies. Furthermore, qualitative research can help us better understand these relationships' cultural, social, and psychological dynamics (Creswell, 2015). Qualitative studies are an ideal tool for revealing the complexity and diversity of long-distance relationships and can provide an important foundation for future research.

Demographic data collected on whether the relationship started as a close relationship and turned into a long-distance relationship or started as a long-distance relationship were not included in the present study analysis. This demographic information may effectively explain the difference in the dynamics of long-distance relationships. Future researchers may consider comparing these two groups by collecting data from both groups.

Furthermore, the characteristics and motivations of those at the beginning and those at the end of the emerging adulthood developmental stage may differ in several ways, especially when exploring commitment from a romantic relationship perspective. Although the period called emerging adulthood varies from culture to culture (Arnett, 2000; Atak & Çok, 2010; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Mayseless & Scharf, 2003), in this study, the age range was determined as 18-29 years, considering the concern of reaching the sufficient number of participants. However, since the romantic relationship experiences and perspectives of 18-year-old and 29-year-old participants may be different from each other, future studies may obtain more generalizable results if they design their research questions in a way that they can compare the experiences of the participants or if they choose the age limit of the participants to be closer to each other.

In addition, the data on the total weekly communication time and the frequency of face-to-face meetings were not included in the analyses because the data were not

normally distributed. However, several studies show that the frequency of face-to-face meetings and the time devoted to communication impact relationship dynamics (Duck, 1994; Duck & Pittman, 1994). Therefore, future research is still needed to elaborate on the roles of these variables in explaining commitment in long-distance romantic relationships.

In future studies, it may be important to assess various dimensions to identify the factors influencing capitalization to better collect participant data. The existing body of literature has predominantly examined the measurement of individuals' responses to negative happenings within relationships. However, it is worth noting that, on average, individuals encounter three times as many positive events as negative events in their everyday contacts (Gable et al., 2004). Given this perspective, examining how individuals react to favorable circumstances is crucial. In addition to the interpersonal advantages, sharing pleasant events and news with others has been found to enhance individuals' ability to fully enjoy and appreciate positive experiences in life (Gable & Reis, 2010; Gable et al., 2004). For example, what one person perceives as "good news" may not generate the same joy for another person. Understanding the reasons behind this may be critical in understanding people's emotional reactions and the factors that influence the capitalization process. Especially in long-distance relationships, positive news for one partner may trigger emotional complexities for the other partner, such as separation or anxiety. For example, an opportunity for one partner to study abroad for one more year can be a source of joy for the one who gives the news. However, it can also trigger feelings of separation anxiety and self-interest for the other partner who, for example, is expecting to get back together soon. These situations offer important clues for understanding the capitalization process' personal, relational, and emotional dynamics. Thus, in future research, if one wants to have a better understanding of the role of capitalization in commitment, it might be a good idea of asking questions to the participants about their understanding of "good news" related to their partner or about the way they evaluate their partner's reactions as "supportive," "destructive," or "passive ." Since how partners support each other may differ in long-distance relationships than in geographically close relationships, researchers working with long-distance relationships can ask their participants about their partners' ways of

affirmation beforehand. This might give the researchers a chance to confirm and support their findings.



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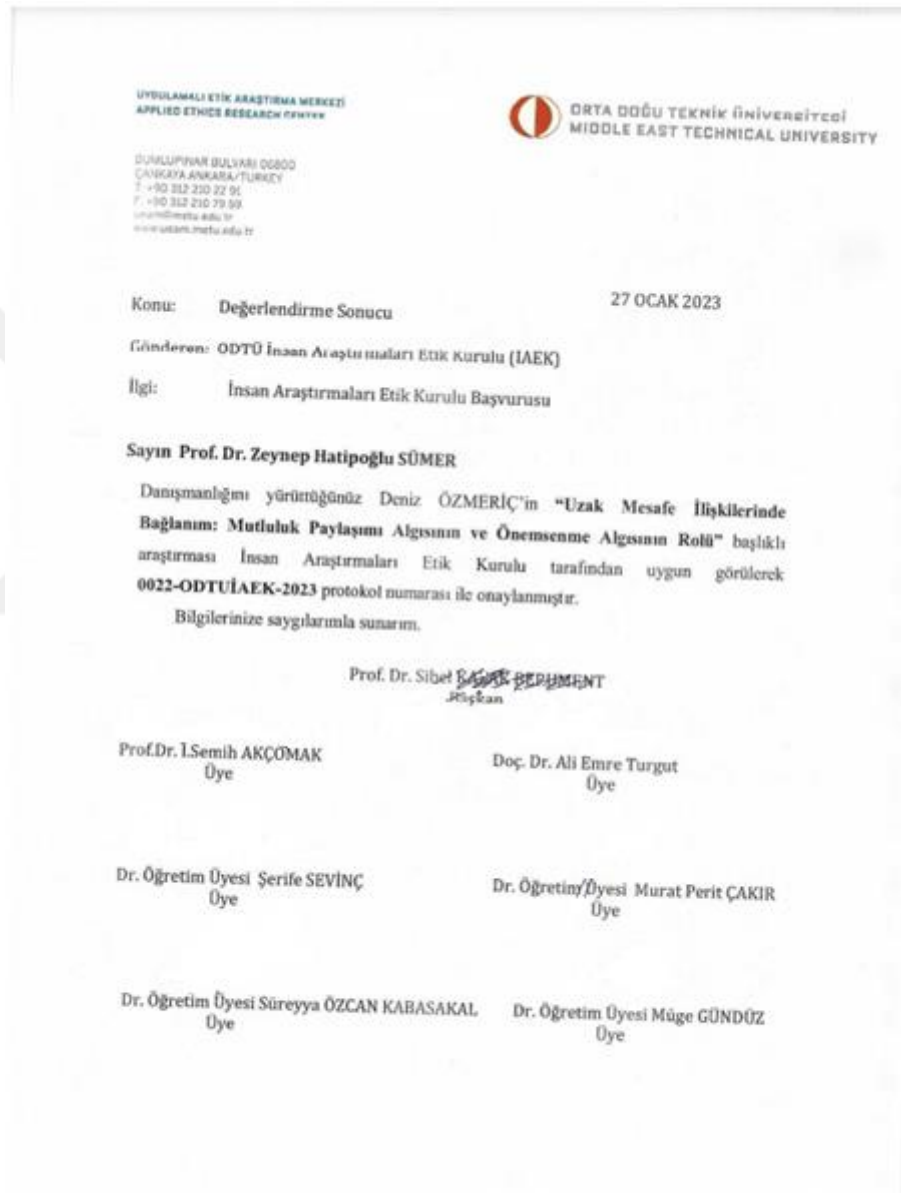
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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE



B. CONSENT FORM IN TURKISH

Bilgilendirilmiş Gönüllü Onam Formu

Değerli katılımcı; Bu çalışma, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Deniz Özmeriç tarafından, Prof. Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu Sümer danışmanlığında yürütülen yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında gerçekleştirilmektedir. Çalışmanın temel amacı uzak mesafeden yürütülen (heteroseksüel) romantik ilişkilerde bağlanma boyutlarının romantik ilişki içerisindeki mutluluk paylaşımlarına partner tarafından verilen tepkilerin algılanması ve romantik ilişki içerisinde önemsenmeye yönelik algı bağlamında incelenmesidir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, bazı ölçme araçları aracılığıyla sizden bazı değerlendirmeler yapmanızı istenmektedir. Her ölçme aracının nasıl cevaplanacağı konusunda, ilgili bölümün başında bilgi verilmiştir.

Tüm soruların cevaplanması yaklaşık 20 dakika sürmekte olup, herhangi bir süre kısıtlaması bulunmamaktadır.

Bu araştırmaya katılım tamamıyla gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Genel olarak, size kişisel bir rahatsızlık yaşatabilecek sorulara yer verilmemiştir. Ancak katılım sırasında herhangi bir sebeple kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz araştırmadan ayrılabilirsiniz.

Bu araştırma esnasında elde edilen kişisel bilgiler gizli kalacak, verdiğiniz bilgiler tamamen araştırma amacıyla kullanılacaktır. Toplanan veriler toplu olarak değerlendirilecek, kişiye özel analiz ya da bireysel bir inceleme yapılmayacaktır.

Araştırma hakkında daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç duyarsanız, araştırmacı ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

Deniz Özmeriç Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Yüksek Lisans Programı.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Toplanan verilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.



C. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM IN TURKISH

(This form is prepared in Google Forms.)

○ **Cinsiyetiniz: (Lütfen Seçiniz)**

- Kadın
- Erkek

○ **Yaşınız: _____**

○ **Eğitim durumunuz (En son mezun olduğunuz okul derecesini işaretleyiniz.)**

-İlkokul

-Ortaokul

-Lise

-Ön Lisans/ Yüksek Okul

-Lisans/ Üniversite

-Lisans Üstü (Yüksek Lisans/ Doktora)

○ **Şu an devam etmekte olan romantik bir ilişkiniz var mı?**

- Evet
- Hayır

○ **Romantik İlişki Durumunuz:**

-Flört

-Sevgili

-Nişanlı/ Sözlü

○ **Partnerinizle ilişkinizin başlangıcından bugüne kadar geçen süre (Lütfen yıl ve ay olarak belirtiniz.) _____**

○ **Romantik ilişkiniz nerede başladı?**

-Aynı şehirde ikamet ederken başladı.

-Farklı şehirlerde ikamet ederken başladı.

○ **İlişkiniz aynı şehirde ikamet ederken başlamış ve sonradan uzak mesafe ilişkisine dönüşmüşse, lütfen ilişkinizin ne kadarlık bir süresini aynı şehirde ikamet ederken geçirdiğinizi belirtiniz. (Lütfen yıl ve ay olarak belirtiniz.)**

***Eğer hiç aynı şehirde yaşamadıysanız ve ilişkiniz başından beri uzak mesafe ilişkisi olarak devam ediyorsa bu soruya “0” yazarak cevap veriniz. _____**

Partneriniz ile sizin yaşadığınız yer arası ortalama kaç kilometredir? (Yaklaşık bir değer olabilir, sayısal değer olarak belirtiniz) _____

- **Partneriniz ile sizin yaşadığınız yer arası ortalama kaç kilometredir? (Yaklaşık bir değer olabilir, sayısal değer olarak belirtiniz) _____**
- **Partnerinizle ilişkinizi ne kadar süredir uzak mesafeden yürütüyorsunuz? (Lütfen ay ve yıl olarak belirtiniz.) _____**
- **Partnerinizle yüz yüze görüşme sıklığınızı belirtiniz.**
 - Neredeyse Her Gün
 - Haftada birden fazla
 - Haftada Bir Kez
 - Ayda Birden Fazla
 - Ayda Bir Kez
 - Birkaç Ayda Bir
 - Yılda Bir-İki Kez
 - Hiç
- **Partnerinizle telefonda sesli görüşme sıklığınızı belirtiniz.**
 - Günde Bir Kaç Kez
 - Her Gün Bir Kez
 - Haftada birden fazla
 - Ayda Birden Fazla
 - Ayda Bir Kez
 - Birkaç Ayda Bir
 - Yılda Bir-İki Kez
 - Hiç

Partnerinizle kısa mesaj ya da uygulamalar aracılığıyla yazışarak görüşme sıklığınızı belirtiniz.

- Günde Bir Kaç Kez
- Her Gün Bir Kez
- Haftada birden fazla
- Ayda Birden Fazla
- Ayda Bir Kez
- Birkaç Ayda Bir
- Yılda Bir-İki Kez
- Hiç
- **Partnerinizle çevrimiçi ortamda görüntülü görüşme sıklığınızı belirtiniz.**
 - Günde Bir Kaç Kez
 - Her Gün Bir Kez
 - Haftada birden fazla
 - Ayda Birden Fazla
 - Ayda Bir Kez
 - Birkaç Ayda Bir
 - Yılda Bir-İki Kez
 - Hiç
- **Haftada ortalama kaç saatinizi partnerinizle iletişim kurmak için harcarsınız? (Yüz yüze, telefonda, mesajla, uygulamalar aracılığıyla geçirilen toplam süre, yaklaşık olarak sayısal bir değer ile belirtiniz)**
- **Romantik partneriniz coğrafi olarak uzakta (40 km ve daha uzakta), görüşmeyi güçleştiren bir konumda yaşıyorsa buna uzak mesafe ilişkisi denilir. Mesafe görüşme engeli değilse bu ilişkiye yakın mesafe ilişkisi diyebiliriz.**

Siz kendi ilişkinizi nasıl deęerlendirirsiniz? (Sadece bir seeneęi iřaretleyiniz.)

-Uzak Mesafe İliřkisi

-Yakın Mesafe İliřkisi



**D. SAMPLE ITEMS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP STABILITY SCALE IN
TURKISH**

İLİŞKİ İSTİKRARI ÖLÇEĞİ

İlişkimiz benim için doyum verici.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Tamamen yanlış

Tamamıyla doğru

Birlikte olduğum kişi dışında bana çok çekici gelen insanlar var.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Tamamen yanlış

Tamamıyla doğru

İlişkimize öyle çok yatırım yaptım ki, eğer bu ilişki sona erecek olursa çok şey kaybetmiş olurum

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Tamamen yanlış

Tamamıyla doğru

İlişkimizin çok uzun bir süre devam etmesini istiyorum.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Tamamen yanlış

Tamamıyla doğru

**E. SAMPLE ITEMS FOR THE MATTERING TO ROMANTIC OTHERS
QUESTIONNAIRE IN TURKISH**

	1 Hiçbir Zaman	2 Nadiren	3 Bazen	4 Sık Sık	5 Her Zaman
1. Partnerim için önemli olduğumu hissederim.					
4. Partnerim benimle pek ilgilenmez.					
6. Partnerim beni ilginç bulur.					
8. Farklı yerlerde olduğumuzda, partnerimin pek aklına gelmem.					
16. İnsanların günlük hayatta yaptıkları birçok faaliyet vardır. Eğer partneriniz, bu faaliyetleri bir liste haline getirseydi, siz bu listenin neresinde olacağınızı düşünüyorsunuz? 1 2 3 4 5 Listenin Başı Listenin Ortası Listenin Sonu					
17. Eğer partneriniz, önemseydiği konular hakkında bir liste yapsaydı, siz bu listenin neresinde olacağınızı düşünüyorsunuz 1 2 3 4 5 Listenin Başı Listenin Ortası Listenin Sonu					

**F. SAMPLE ITEMS FOR THE PERCEIVED RESPONSES TO
CAPITALIZATION ATTEMPTS SCALE IN TURKISH**

Partnerime, başıma gelen güzel bir olaydan bahsettiğim zaman.....

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Hiçbir zaman			Bazen			Her zaman
1. Partnerim, güzel haberime genellikle coşkuyla tepki verir.							
3. Partnerim sıklıkla olayla ilgili bir sorun bulur.							
6. Partnerim başıma gelen güzel şeyleri genellikle sessizce destekler.							
7. Partnerim bana her iyi şeyin bir de kötü yanı olduğunu hatırlatır.							
9. Partnerim sıklıkla bir sürü soru sorarak iyi olay hakkındaki samimi ilgisini gösterir.							
12. Partnerim çoğunlukla ilgisiz görünür.							

G. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

UZAK MESAFE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLERDE BAĞLILIK: MUTLULUK PAYLAŞIMI VE ÖNEMSENME ALGISININ ROLÜ

1. GİRİŞ

Tatmin edici romantik ilişkilerin psikolojik iyi oluş, fiziksel iyi oluş ve yaşam kalitesi üzerindeki etkisi kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmiş ve birçok açıdan sorgulanmıştır (Burman ve Margolin, 1992; Khaleque, 2004; Kiecolt-Glaser ve Newton, 2001; Proulx vd., 2007; Robles, 2014). Ergenlik ve yetişkinlik arasındaki boşluğu dolduran farklı bir gelişim evresi olarak nitelendirilebilecek beliren yetişkinlik evresinde romantik ilişkiler, gelişimsel hedefler göz önüne alındığında önemli bir rol üstlenmektedir (Arnett, 2000; Erickson, 1968; Rosenthal vd., 1981;). Beliren yetişkinlik evresindeki bireyler için romantik bir birliktelik, cinsel ve duygusal yakınlıktan daha fazlasını kapsar. Kişinin değerlerini, inançlarını, tercihlerini ve üretkenliğini keşfetme ve ortaya çıkarma aracı olarak hizmet eder. Arnett'e (2000) göre, beliren yetişkinler için sağlıklı bir kimliğin oluşturulması, romantik bir ilişkinin başlatılması ve sürdürülmesi yoluyla sağlanır.

Günümüz yaşam koşullarının dinamik yapısı ve küreselleşmenin bir sonucu olarak artan seyahat ve yer değiştirme fırsatları, uzak mesafe ilişkilerinin yaygınlaşmasını büyük ölçüde kolaylaştırmıştır. Bu durum, evli çiftlerin uluslararası sınırlar da dahil olmak üzere önemli mesafelerle fiziksel olarak ayrı olmalarına rağmen ilişkilerini sürdürebildikleri yaygın bir duruma yol açmıştır (Bergen vd., 2007; Jackson vd., 2000; Pistole vd., 2010). Mevcut alanyazın, uzak mesafe evliliklerin yaygınlığında bir artış olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu eğilim, işle ilgili taahhütler (Erdem, 2018), kariyer beklentileri (Arditti ve Kauffman, 2004), askerlik hizmeti (Carter ve Renshaw, 2015) gibi çeşitli faktörlere bağlanabilir.

Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Teorisi, kişilerarası ilişkilerin dinamiklerine iki yönlü bir bakış açısıyla değerli içgörüler sunmaktadır. İlk adım, ilişki doyumu ve ilişki

sürdürmeüzeline ayrı analizler yapılmasını içermektedir. Bu yaklaşım, ilişkilerinde tatminsiz olan ancak ilişkilerini sürdürmeye devam eden bireylerin kullandıkları stratejilere ilişkin sorgulamayı ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, teoriye göre, bir ilişkinin sonuçları sadece partnerler arasındaki iç faktörlerden değil, aynı zamanda daha cazip alternatifler veya sosyokültürel etkiler gibi dış faktörlerden de etkilenmektedir (Regan, 2011).

İlgili literatür incelendiğinde, romantik ilişki doyumu ve ilişki bağlanımı davranışı ile ilişkili olduğu bilinen bir diğer faktörün de algılanan önemsenme (perceived mattering) olabileceği görülmüştür. Algılanan önemsenme kavramı yaklaşık kırk yıl önce kavramsallaştırılmış olup, bireyin çevresindeki insanlar için ne kadar önemli olduğunu sorgulamasını ve algılamasını ifade etmektedir. Algılanan önemsenme, bireylerin çevrelerindeki insanların kendilerini ne kadar önemsediklerini düşündüklerini ve başkalarının bireylere yönelik ilgisinden ne kadar memnun olduklarını ifade eder (Rosenberg ve McCullough, 1981). Bireyler, onlar için değerli olan kişilerin, kendilerini önemseyip önemsemediklerini, çıkarlarını düşünüp düşünmediklerini ve bireyin ihtiyacı olduğunda ilgi gösterip göstermediklerini bilmeye ihtiyaç duyarlar. Önemsenme ihtiyacının karşılanmadığı durumlarda, birey kendi varlığının temelini bile sorgulamaya başlayabilir (Elliott vd., 2004). Çeşitli çalışmalar, algılanan önemsenme ile alternatiflerin kalitesi arasında negatif korelasyonlar olduğunu göstermiştir (Mak ve Marshall, 2004). Öte yandan, önemsenme duygusu tatmin edildiğinde, bireyin iyi olma hali için koruyucu bir işlevi olduğu gösterilmiştir (Taylor ve Turner, 2001). Diğer bir deyişle, bireyin hem bireysel hem de ilişkisel iyi olma halini sürdürebilmesi için önemsendiğini hissetmesi önemlidir (Rosenberg ve McCullough 1981; Schlossberg, 1989).

İlgili alanyazında, kişilerin ilişki doyumuyla ilişkili olduğu birçok kez gösterilmiş bir başka kavram daha vardır. Kişilerin olumlu deneyimlerini partnerleriyle paylaşmaları ve partnerlerinin bu paylaşımlara verdikleri tepkiler romantik ilişkilerin temel bileşenlerinden biri olarak değerlendirilmiş ve mutluluk paylaşımı (capitalization) olarak adlandırılmıştır (Gosnell ve Gable, 2013). Gable ve Reis (2010) pozitiflik üzerine yapılan çalışmaların kişilerarası etkileşimlerdeki normatif süreçleri anlamlandırmada önemli katkıları olduğunu, bu nedenle bireylerin olumlu

deneyimlerini başkalarıyla paylaşımlarının ilişkileri üzerindeki etkilerini anlamının önemli olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Bu konuda 43 yüksek lisans öğrencisi ile yapılan bir araştırmanın sonuçları, yakın ilişkilerde olumlu olayların paylaşılma sıklığının olumsuz olaylara kıyasla daha yüksek olduğunu göstermiştir (Gable vd., 2000). İnsanların yaşadıkları kötü olayların hayatları üzerinde olumlu olaylardan daha güçlü etkileri olduğu desteklense de (Baumeister vd., 2001), olumlu deneyimlerin etkilerinin gücü de göz ardı edilmemelidir. Gable ve arkadaşları tarafından 2004 yılında 154 lisans öğrencisi (56 erkek, 98 kadın) ile yapılan bir çalışmada, katılımcıların %70.8'i yaşadıkları ve önemli buldukları olumlu olayları önemli kişilerle paylaşma ihtiyacı hissettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Kişinin partnerinin tepkilerini olumlu ve destekleyici olarak algılaması hem kişinin iyi olma halini desteklemekte, hem de bireyin ilişkilerinden keyif alması üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahip olmaktadır (Gable vd., 2004). Bu sonuçlar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, olumlu deneyimlerin paylaşılmasının kişilerin günlük yaşamlarını ve ilişkilerinin dinamiklerini etkileyen önemli bir bileşen olduğu düşünülebilir.

1.1. Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Rusbult'un Yatırım Modeli'ni kullanarak, algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımı'nın, Türkiye'de 6 aydan uzun süreli uzak mesafe ilişki yaşayan beliren yetişkinlerin romantik ilişki bağlılık düzeylerini yordayıp yordamadığını araştırmaktır. Spesifik olarak, çalışma bağlılığın çeşitli bileşenlerine (ilişki doyumu, alternatiflerin kalitesi, yatırım büyüklüğü) odaklanırken, cinsiyet ve ilişki süresini de hesaba katmıştır.

1.2. Araştırma Sorusu

Cinsiyet, ilişki süresi, ilişki doyumu, alternatiflerin kalitesi ve yatırım büyüklüğü kontrol edildikten sonra, algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımı katılımcıların romantik ilişki bağlılık düzeylerini ne ölçüde yordamaktadır?

1.3. Çalışmanın Önemi

Türkçe alanyazın, romantik ilişkilerin algılanan önemsenme ve paylaşılan olumlu deneyimlerin ardından alınan tepkiler üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeye sınırlı odaklanmıştır. Özellikle uzak mesafeli ilişkilerin dinamiklerine odaklanan

arařtırmaların sayısı olduka kısıtlıdır. Yatırım Modeli'nin baėlılık ve memnuniyeti anlamlandırmadaki önemi göz önüne alındığında, bu alıřma uzak mesafe iliřkilerinde olumlu deneyimlerin paylařılmasının ardından partnerlerin tepkileri ile algılanan önemsenmenin baėlılıėı yormadaki gücünü Yatırım Modeli baėlamında ele almaktadır. Bu arařtırma, uzak mesafe iliřkilerde yařanan dinamikleri ve baėlılık seviyelerini daha iyi anlamaya yönelik teorik ve pratik katkılarda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Elde edilen sonuçlar, uzak mesafe iliřkisi yařayan bireylerin iliřkilerinde daha saėlıklı baėlantılar kurmalarına ve ruh saėlıėı alanında alıřanlara rehberlik etmeye yardımcı olabilir. Bu alıřma, gemiřte evli iftlere odaklanan arařtırmaların aksine uzak mesafe romantik iliřkilerde baėlılık dinamiklerini incelerken alana farklı bir perspektif kazandırmaktadır.

2. YÖNTEM

Bu alıřmanın temel amacına uygun olarak, arařtırmada korelasyonel bir desen kullanılmıřtır.

2.1. Katılımcılar

alıřma, 18 ila 29 yař aralıėında olan toplam 217 katılımcıdan (121 kadın, 96 erkek) oluřmaktadır. Örneklemin seiminde en az altı aydır uzun mesafeli romantik iliřki içinde olmak, 18-29 yařları arasında olmak ve partnerinden fiziksel olarak en az 50 kilometre uzakta olmak üzere üç kriter kullanılmıřtır. alıřmaya toplam 292 kiři katılmıřtır. Ancak katılımcılardan 75 kiři örnekleme kriterlerini karřılamadıėı için veri analizlerinin dıřında bırakılmıřtır.

2.2. Veri Toplama Araları

Bu alıřmada kullanılan bařlıca ölme araları: Kiři sel verileri toplamak için Demografik Bilgi Formu (Ek-C), İliři İstikrarı Öleėi (Rusbult vd., 1998; Büyükařahin vd., 2005) (Ek- D), Önemsenme Algısı Öleėi (Marshall, 2001) (Ek-E) ve Mutluluk Paylařımı Öleėi (Gable vd., 2004) (Ek-F)'dir. Veriler, Google Forms aracılıėı ile toplanmıřtır.

2.3. Veri Toplama Süreci

Çalışma için Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi'nden gerekli izinler alınmış ve Mart 2023 ile Mayıs 2023 arasında veri toplanmıştır.

2.4. Demografik Bilgi Formu

Araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen bu formdaki maddeler katılımcının cinsiyeti, yaşı, eğitim durumu, iletişim sıklıkları ve türleri, ilişki süresi ve mevcut partnerin fiziksel yakınlığı hakkında bilgi edinmeyi amaçlamaktadır

2.4.1. İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeği

Rusbult ve arkadaşları (1998), Rusbult'un 1980 tarihli Yatırım Modelinde belirttiği gibi, ilişkinin bağlılık düzeyini yordayan ilişki doyumu, alternatiflerin kalitesi ve yatırım büyüklüğü gibi faktörlere dayalı olarak ilişkinin mevcut durumunu ölçmek için Yatırım Modeli Ölçeğini oluşturmuştur. Ölçüm aracı, toplam 37 maddeden ve dört farklı alt ölçekten oluşmaktadır. Bağlılık alt ölçeği haricinde, kalan üç alt ölçeğin ilk beş maddesi 4'lü Likert ölçeği kullanılarak ölçülürken, diğer maddeler 9'lu Likert ölçeği kullanılarak ölçülmektedir.

Orijinal ölçeğin geçerlilik ve güvenirliğini test etmek amacıyla Rusbult ve arkadaşları (1998) tarafından üç çalışma yapılmıştır. İlişki doyumu alt ölçeği için $\alpha = .92$ ile $.95$ arasında, yatırım alt ölçeği için $\alpha = .82$ ile $.84$ arasında, alternatiflerin kalitesi için $\alpha = .82$ ile $.88$ arasında ve bağlılık alt ölçeği için $\alpha = .91$ ile $.95$ arasında katsayılar bulunmuştur. Ölçek, 2005 yılında Büyüksahin ve arkadaşları tarafından Türkçeye çevrilmiş ve uyarlanmıştır. Ölçeğin geçerlilik ve güvenirlik analizi için romantik ilişki yaşayan 325 üniversite öğrencisine ölçeği uyguladıkları bir çalışma yürütmüşlerdir. Ölçeğin alt ölçeklerinin güvenirliği ilişki doyumu için $\alpha = .90$, yatırım için $\alpha = .84$ ve alternatiflerin kalitesi alt ölçeği için $\alpha = .84$ olarak rapor edilmiştir. İlk uyarlamadan sonra ölçek Büyüksahin ve Taluy (2008) tarafından yeniden değerlendirilmiş ve bağlılık alt boyutu için 7 madde eklenmiştir. Büyüksahin ve Taluy tarafından 2008 yılında yapılan ve 403 üniversite öğrencisinin katıldığı

çalışmada ölçeğin Cronbach alfa değerleri ilişki doyumu için .93, alternatiflerin kalitesi için .83, yatırım için .83 ve bağlılık alt ölçekleri için .91 olarak raporlanmıştır. Mevcut çalışmada ($n= 217$) ölçeğin Cronbach alfa değerleri memnuniyet için .71, alternatiflerin kalitesi için .69, yatırım için .77 ve bağlılık alt ölçekleri için .81 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Ölçeğin toplam Cronbach alfa değeri ise .75 olarak raporlanmıştır.

2.4.2 Önemslenme Algısı Ölçeği

Marshall 2001 yılında geliştirdiği "Mattering to Others Questionnaire" ile ergenlerin kendileri için önemli olan kişilerle etkileşimlerinden algıladıkları önem duygusunu ölçmeyi amaçlamıştır. Marshall ve Mak, 2004 yılında bu ölçeği uyarlayarak bireylerin romantik partnerleriyle olan etkileşimlerinden algıladıkları önemslenme duygusunu ölçmek için "Romantik Diğerlerine Göre Önemslenme Ölçeği"ni geliştirmiş ve "Mattering to Romantic Others (MTROQ)" olarak adlandırmışlardır. Ölçeğin maddeleri 2004 yılında yapılan çalışmada romantik ilişkilerin dinamikleri göz önünde bulundurularak uyarlanmıştır. Bu orijinal çalışmada ölçeğin iç tutarlılığı .83 olarak rapor edilmiştir.

Önemslenme Algısı Ölçeği (MTROQ) Kırimer tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlanmış (2014) ve ölçeğin geçerlilik ve güvenirlik analizleri yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmaya 112 evli çift katılmıştır. Ölçeğin Türkçe formunun faktör yapısını test etmek için kullanılan temel bileşenler analizi sonucunda, ölçeğin genel varyansın %40,74'ünü açıklayan tek faktörlü bir yapıda olduğu görülmüştür. Kırimer tarafından yapılan çalışmada ölçeğin iç tutarlılığı evli çiftlerin her iki partneri (kadın ve erkek partnerler) için .90 olarak rapor edilmiştir. Mevcut çalışmada ölçeğin Cronbach alfa değeri .79 olarak bulunmuştur.

MTROQ tek faktörlü bir yapıya ve dördü tersine çevrilmiş ve "Partnerim için önemli olduğumu hissediyorum" gibi olumlu önemsemeyi ölçen 17 soruya sahiptir. İlk on beş madde için beşli Likert tipi ölçek kullanılmıştır (1 = benim için hiç doğru değil, 5 = benim için çok doğru). Sonraki iki soru için katılımcılardan kendilerini birden beşe kadar beşli bir ölçekte derecelendirmeleri istenmiştir (örneğin, "Eğer partneriniz

önem verdiği şeylerin bir listesini yapsaydı, sizce onun listesinde kaçınıcı sırada olurdunuz?"). Ölçekten alınabilecek minimum puan 17 iken maksimum puan 85'tir ve yüksek puanlar yüksek önemseme algısına işaret etmektedir.

2.4.3 Mutluluk Paylaşımı Ölçeği

Mutluluk Paylaşımı Ölçeği, kişilerin romantik partnerleriyle olumlu bir bireysel deneyim paylaştıktan sonra partnerlerinin tepkilerini nasıl algıladıklarını ölçmek için geliştirilmiş bir ölçektir. Ölçek Gable ve arkadaşları tarafından 2004 yılında geliştirilmiş olup dört alt ölçek ve 12 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ölçekte her bir alt ölçekte 3 ifade yer almaktadır. Katılımcılardan her bir maddeyi değerlendirmeleri ve "Partnerime başıma gelen iyi bir şeyden bahsettiğimde..." cümle kökünü dikkate alarak uygun 7'li Likert tipi ölçekte (1 = "hiç doğru değil" ve 7 = "çok doğru") işaretlemeleri istenmektedir.

Gable ve arkadaşları, ölçeği geliştirirken, 2 boyutlu ve 4 alt gruplu bir tipoloji önermişlerdir. Önerilen tipolojide "aktif-yapıcı" (AC) olarak algılanan yanıtlar, paylaşım sonrasında partnerler tarafından alınan geri bildirimin uygun destek olarak algılandığını göstermektedir. (ör. "Partnerim genellikle çok sayıda soru sorarak iyi olana karşı samimi ilgisini gösterir."). Bireyler tarafından "pasif yapıcı" (PY) olarak algılanan geri bildirimler ise sessizce dinlemeye benzer tepkiler içermektedir (ör. "Partnerim çok az şey söyler ama benim için mutlu olduğunu bilirim."). Birey tarafından "aktif-yıkıcı" (AD) olarak kategorize edildiği düşünülen tepkiler, bireyin mutluluk paylaşımını kasıtlı olarak geçersiz kılan tepkilerdir (ör. "Partnerim bana her iyi şeyin bir kötü tarafı olduğunu hatırlatır."). Son olarak, "pasif-yıkıcı" (PD) olarak kategorize edilen cevaplar, bireyin paylaştığı olumlu olayın partner tarafından tamamen göz ardı edildiği sonucuna varılabilecek cevaplardır (ör. "Partnerim beni gerçekten umursamaz."). Bireylerin ölçekten alacakları nihai puanı hesaplamak için PC, AD ve PD'nin ortalama puanı hesaplanır ve AC puanından çıkarılır. Bireylerin ölçekten aldıkları yüksek puanlar, ilişkilerinde mutluluk paylaşımı girişimleri olduğunda partnerlerinden aldıkları tepkilerin daha olumlu olarak algılandığını göstermektedir.

Gable ve arkadaşları 2004 yılında 59 heteroseksüel çiftle (ortalama 14 aydır flört eden) yaptıkları çalışmada her bir alt ölçeğin tatmin edici bir güvenirlilik puanı

aldığını bildirmişlerdir. Aktif-yapıcı alt ölçekte (AC) kadın partnerler için $\alpha = .84$, erkek partnerler için $\alpha = .74$, pasif-yapıcı alt ölçekte (PC), kadın partnerler için $\alpha = .87$, erkek partnerler için $\alpha = .66$, aktif-yıkıcı alt ölçekte (AD) kadın partnerler için $\alpha = .71$, erkek partnerler için $\alpha = .78$ ve pasif-yıkıcı alt ölçekte (PD) kadın partnerler için $\alpha = .72$, erkek partnerler için $\alpha = .80$ olarak rapor edilmiştir.

Mutluluk Paylaşımı Ölçeği 2014 yılında Kırimer tarafından Türkçe'ye çevrilmiştir. Açıklayıcı faktör analizleri yapılmış ve 3 faktörün varyansın %55,56'sını açıkladığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Mutluluk Paylaşımı Ölçeği'nden olumlu puan elde edebilmek için bireyin aktif-yapıcı alt ölçekten aldığı puandan pasif-yapıcı, aktif-yıkıcı ve pasif-yıkıcı alt ölçeklere ait maddelerin ortalama puanları çıkarılmaktadır. Bu nedenle, ölçeğin nihai puanını hesaplamak için Gable (2004) tarafından kullanılan puanlama yönteminin aynısı kullanılmıştır. Ölçeğin tamamı kabul edilebilir bir güvenilirlik katsayısına sahiptir (kadın partnerler için $\alpha = .79$, erkek partnerler için $\alpha = .77$).

Mevcut çalışmada, Cronbach alfa değerleri aktif-yapıcı alt ölçekte (AC) $\alpha = .81$, pasif-yapıcı alt ölçekte (PC) $\alpha = .78$, aktif-yıkıcı alt ölçekte (AD) $\alpha = .72$ ve pasif-yıkıcı alt ölçekte (PD) $\alpha = .74$ ve toplam ölçek için $\alpha = .74$ olarak hesaplanmıştır.

2.5. Verilerin Analizi

Bu çalışmada, cinsiyet, ilişki süresi ve yatırım modeli bileşenleri kontrol edilerek, algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımlarına yönelik algılanan tepkilerin bağlılığı ne ölçüde yordayabileceğini görebilmek için Hiyerarşik Çoklu Regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışmadaki analizler IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 28.0 kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Anlamlılık kriterini belirleyen alfa düzeyi. 05 olarak belirlenmiştir.

2.6. Çalışmanın Sınırlılıkları

Bu çalışmanın ilk adımında, istenen yaş grubundaki ve ilişki durumundaki bireyleri içermeyi sağlamak için amaçlı örneklem tekniği uygulanmış ve katılımcılar rastgele seçilmediği için, belirli bir kriter doğrultusunda uygun örnekleme yöntemiyle

seçilmiştir. Bu yöntemin kullanımı, örnekleme belirli özellikler getirebilir; ancak kullanılan bu yöntem, bulguların Türkiye'deki uzak mesafe ilişki yaşayan popülasyona genellenme ve farklı çeşitlilikleri temsil etme potansiyelini sınırlamaktadır.

Bir diğer sınırlılık, katılımcıların ilişkilerinin başlangıcıyla ilgilidir. Çalışma, ilişkilerine uzak mesafeden başlayan çiftlerle, yakın mesafeden başlayıp daha sonra uzak mesafe bir ilişkiye geçen çiftler arasındaki olası farklılıkları göz ardı etmiş, bulguların tam bir resmini sunmamış olabilir. İlişkinin başlangıç koşullarındaki farklılıklar (ilişkinin yakın veya uzak mesafeden başlayıp başlamadığı), ilişkiyi etkileyen faktörlerde ve dinamiklerde çeşitlilik yaratabilir. Örneğin, başlangıçtaki mesafe, çiftlerin iletişim tarzlarını, bağlanma stillerini ve ilişki beklentilerini etkileyebilir. Bu nedenle, bu değişkenin çalışmaya dahil edilmemesi, sonuçların genellenebilirliğini sınırlamaktadır.

Veri toplama süreci çevrimiçi anketlerle sağlanmıştır. Bu da katılımcılar soruları yanıtlarken akıllarına takılan bir şey olması durumunda, soru sorabilecekleri bir araştırmacının olmaması anlamına gelmektedir. Katılımcıların soruları farklı yorumlama potansiyeli, araştırma sonuçlarını olumsuz etkilemiş olabilir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmada kullanılan ölçekler sadece öz bildirim ölçekleridir. Katılımcıların kişisel ilişkileri hakkındaki sorulara cevap vermesi zor olabildiğinden, yanıtlar tamamen doğru olmayabilir. Katılımcılar, sosyal beğenirlik eğilimini göz önünde bulundurarak ölçeklere farklı yanıtlar vermiş olabilirler.

Bir başka sınırlılık, uzak mesafe ilişkilerdeki katılımcıların partnerleriyle aralarındaki mesafenin geniş bir aralıkta değişiyor olmasıdır. Katılımcılar arasındaki uzaklık farkı 50 kilometreden 8000 kilometreye kadar uzanmaktadır. Bu geniş aralık, uzun mesafeli ilişkilerin farklı dinamiklerinin incelenmesine olanak tanırken, bu değişkenliğin araştırma sonuçlarını etkileyebileceği ve bulguların genelleştirilmesi konusunda bazı sınırlamalar getirebileceği akılda tutulmalıdır.

Katılımcıların uzak mesafe ilişkilerdeki iletişim sıklığı analize dahil edilmediği için, araştırmada önemli eksiklikler olabilir. Görüşme sıklığı, iletişim tarzları, duygusal

bağ ve çiftlerin birbirlerine olan bağlılığı gibi önemli unsurları belirlemede önemli bir rol oynar. Bu eksiklik, araştırma sonuçlarının genellenebilirliğini ve ilişkinin farklı boyutlarını anlama kapasitesini sınırlayabilir.

Çalışmada minimum mesafe kriteri 50 kilometre olarak belirlenmiştir ancak bu mesafenin bir ilişkiyi "uzak mesafe ilişkisi" olarak değerlendirmek için hala yeterli olmayabileceği düşünülmektedir. Farklı uzak mesafe ilişkii tanımlarının olması bulguların genellenebilirliğini etkileyebilir ve çalışmanın bir sınırlaması olarak düşünülebilir. Son olarak, araştırma tasarımı korelasyonel nitelikte olduğundan, neden-sonuç ilişkisi kurulmamıştır.

3. BULGULAR

Çalışmanın ikili (bivariate) korelasyon bulgularına göre, toplam ilişki süresi ile memnuniyet düzeyi arasında anlamlı ve pozitif bir korelasyon olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca, ilişki süresi ile birey tarafından yapılan yatırımın da benzer şekilde pozitif bir ilişki içinde olduğu bulunmuştur. Diğer yandan, ilişki süresi ile alternatiflerin kalitesi arasında anlamlı bir ilişki gözlemlenmemiştir. Çalışmanın bulguları, yatırım modelinin tüm bileşenleri arasında anlamlı bir korelasyon olduğunu göstermektedir. İlişki doyumunun, yatırım büyüklüğü ve bağlılık ile anlamlı ve pozitif bir ilişkisi olduğu bulunmuştur. Öte yandan, alternatiflerin kalitesi ile memnuniyet, yatırım büyüklüğü ve bağlılık bileşenleri arasında negatif bir korelasyon gözlemlenmiştir. Çalışma, bağlılığın memnuniyetle en güçlü pozitif ilişkiye sahip olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Çalışmanın sonuçları, ilişki doyumu ile algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımlarına verilen algılanan tepkiler arasında anlamlı ve pozitif bir korelasyon olduğunu göstermektedir. Diğer yandan, alternatiflerin kalitesi ile bu her iki değişken arasında anlamlı bir negatif korelasyon bulunmuştur. Yatırım büyüklüğü ile algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımına verilen algılanan tepkiler arasında pozitif bir korelasyon gözlemlenmiştir. Beklendiği gibi, bağlılık ile algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımına verilen algılanan tepkiler arasında da pozitif ve anlamlı bir korelasyon bulunmuştur. Katılımcıların mutluluk paylaşımı, ilişki doyumu, yatırım büyüklüğü, bağlılık ve algılanan önemsenme düzeyleri arasında anlamlı pozitif bir korelasyon olduğu gözlemlenirken,

mutluluk paylaşımı girişimlerine verilen tepkilerin algısı ile alternatiflerin kalitesi arasında negatif bir korelasyon olduğu gözlenmiştir.

Cinsiyet, ilişki süresi, ilişki memnuniyeti, yatırım büyüklüğü ve alternatiflerin kalitesi kontrol edilerek, algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımlarına yönelik algılanan tepkilerin ilişki bağlılığını ne ölçüde yordadığını incelemek için Hiyerarşik Çoklu Regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Model 1'e cinsiyet ve ilişki süresi değişkenleri demografik faktörlerin etkisini kontrol etmek amacıyla dahil edilmiştir. Daha sonra, Model 2'de, memnuniyet, alternatiflerin kalitesi ve yatırım büyüklüğü gibi yatırım modeli değişkenleri eklenmiş ve son modelde ise algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımına verilen tepkilerin algılanması değişkenleri katılımcıların bağlılık düzeyini açıklama gücünü görmek için dahil edilmiştir.

Regresyon analizi bulgularına göre, Model 1 bağlılıkta varyansın %0,3'ünü açıklamıştır ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Bu modelde cinsiyet ve ilişki süresinin bağlılıkla pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğu, kadınların ve artan ilişki süresinin ilişki bağlılığının anlamlı yordayıcıları olduğu bulunmuştur. Cinsiyet ve ilişki süresi kontrol edildikten sonra, Model 2'ye Yatırım Modeli değişkenleri eklenmiş ve bu değişkenlerin toplam bağlılık varyansında %48,1'lik bir artışa neden olduğu bulunmuştur. İlişki doyumu ve yatırım büyüklüğünün bağlılığı pozitif ve anlamlı bir şekilde yordadığı, yani katılımcıların romantik ilişki doyumlarındaki ve yatırım büyüklüklerindeki artışın ilişki bağlılıklarındaki artışla ilişkili olduğu gözlenmiştir. Alternatiflerin kalitesi ise bağlılığı anlamlı bir şekilde yordamamıştır.

Model 3'te ise, analize algılanan önemsenme ve mutluluk paylaşımına verilen tepkilerin algılanması değişkenleri eklenmiş ve bu değişkenler, bağlılıkta varyansın %3,3'ünü açıklamıştır. Algılanan önemsenme, bağlılığı anlamlı ve pozitif yönde yordarken mutluluk paylaşımına verilen tepkilerin algılanması değişkeni bu modelde anlamlı bulunmamıştır. Algılanan önemsenmenin bağlılıkla pozitif ilişkisi, uzak mesafe ilişkilerde, kişilerin partnerleri tarafından daha fazla değer gördüklerini hissettiklerinde, ilişki bağlılıklarının da yükseleceği yönünde yorumlanabilir. Özetle, hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi bulgularına göre, cinsiyet, ilişki süresi, ilişki doyumu, yatırım büyüklüğü ve algılanan önemsenme, bağlılıktaki varyansın %53,4'ünü açıklayan anlamlı yordayıcılar olarak bulunmuştur.

4. TARTIŞMA

Çalışmada, uzak mesafe ilişkisi yaşayan katılımcıların ilişki süresinin, bağlılık düzeyini olumlu ve anlamlı bir şekilde yordadığı bulunmuştur. Bu bulguyu destekleyen bir başka çalışmada Büyüksahin' (2006), çiftler arasındaki ilişki süresinin bağlılık üzerinde güçlü ve olumlu bir etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Weigel ve arkadaşları (2003) ise daha uzun süren bir ilişkinin üniversite öğrencileri arasında daha yüksek bir bağlılık seviyesine yol açtığını belirtmiştir. Rusbult'un (1983) bir çalışmasında, memnuniyet, yatırım büyüklüğü ve bağlılık derecesinin zaman içinde arttığı, alternatiflerin kalitesinin ise azaldığı gözlenmiştir. Ancak, Le ve Agnew (2003), katılımcıların bağlılık düzeyinin ilişki süresine bağlı olarak önemli bir farklılık göstermediğini bulmuştur. Bu durum, yatırım modelinin bağlılıkta bir bileşen olarak yatırımı sunması ve ilişkiye yapılan yatırımın zamanla artması beklentisiyle çelişmektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, ilişki ne kadar uzun süre devam ederse, ilişki süresinin bağlılığı açıklama gücünün de arttığını göstermektedir.

Fincham ve arkadaşlarının çalışma bulguları (2011) ise, katılımcıların bağlılıklarının zamanla arttığını ve bunun da katılımcıların gelişimsel aşamalarıyla bağlantılı olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu nedenle, ilişki süresine ilişkin bulgular, katılımcıların neden ilişkide kaldıklarına dair motivasyonlarının beliren yetişkinliğin erken ve geç aşamalarında farklılık gösterebileceği göz önüne alınarak değerlendirilmelidir. Ayrıca, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu'nun (2023) en son verilerine göre erkeklerin ilk evlenme yaşı 28,1, kadınlar için ise 26'dır. Bu ulusal istatistikler, bu çalışmanın bulgularına anlam katmada yardımcı olabilir.

Çalışmanın bivariate korelasyon bulguları, regresyon analizi sonuçlarını desteklemektedir. İlişki süresi, bireylerin ilişkilerinden ne kadar memnun oldukları ve yatırım miktarı ile yani ilişkilerine ne kadar zaman ve çaba harcadıkları ile pozitif bir şekilde ilişkilidir. Benzer şekilde, Rusbult (1986), ilişkilerde bağlılığın zamanla artma eğiliminde olduğunu belirtmiştir. Ayrıca, Rhoades ve arkadaşları (2010), ilişkinin devam etmesiyle ilişki istikrarında bir artış olduğunu bulmuşlardır. Bu çalışma, ilişki süresi ile bağlılık arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu doğrulayan Rusbult vd. (1986) bulgularını desteklemektedir.

Regresyon sonuçlarına göre, memnuniyet ve yatırım, katılımcıların bağlılık düzeyini anlamlı bir şekilde yordayan önemli değişkenler olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Yatırım Modeli değişkenleri, Model 2'de bağlılıkta varyansın %48,1'ini açıklamaktadır. Bu da uzak mesafe ilişkilerinde memnuniyet ve yatırımın bireylerin bağlılık seviyelerini yordamada güçlü bir etkisi olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bulgular, daha önceki araştırmalarla da uyumludur. Örneğin, Pistole ve arkadaşlarının (2010) yürüttüğü bir çalışma, uzak mesafe ilişkisi olan çiftlerin bağlılıklarının yatırım büyüklüğü ve memnuniyet tarafından anlamlı bir şekilde yordandığını göstermiştir. Diğer araştırmalar da uzak mesafe ilişkilerde memnuniyet ve yatırımın bağlılığı belirlemedeki önemini vurgulamıştır (Kelmer vd., 2013; Knox vd., 2002; Merolla, 2010). Öte yandan, Model 2'de alternatiflerin kalitesinin bağlılığı anlamlı olarak yordamadığı bulunmuştur. Uluslararası literatürde, uzak mesafe ilişkileri üzerine yapılan çalışmalarda, bireylerin alternatiflerin kalitesi algılarının ilişki bağlılıklarını yordadığı gözlemlenmiştir (Agnew, 2009; Rusbult vd., 1986). Ancak, mevcut çalışmanın sonuçları, alternatiflerin kalitesinin bağlılığı anlamlı bir şekilde yordamadığını göstermektedir. Bu durum, ulusal literatürde uzun mesafe romantik ilişkiler üzerine yapılan çalışmalarda ortaya çıkan sonuçlarla uyumludur (Müezzinoğlu, 2014). Ayrıca, Pistole ve arkadaşları (2010) uzak mesafe ilişki örneklerinde yürüttükleri bir çalışmada, alternatiflerin kalitesinin bağlılığı anlamlı bir şekilde yordamadığını bulmuşlardır ve bu da mevcut çalışmanın bulguları ile uyumludur. Çalışmanın bivariate korelasyon bulguları da regresyon analizi sonuçlarını desteklemektedir. Yatırım Modeli değişkenleri açısından bivariate korelasyon bulgularına göre, katılımcıların ilişki memnuniyeti ile yatırım miktarı ve bağlılık arasında anlamlı ve pozitif bir ilişki vardır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, Türk üniversite öğrencilerini içeren bazı çalışmalarda, memnuniyetin yatırım ve bağlılıkla pozitif bir şekilde ilişkili olduğunu gösteren çalışmaların bulgularıyla benzerlik (Anlatan, 2019; Büyükşahin vd., 2005; Büyükşahin ve Hovardaoğlu, 2007). Türkiye'de yapılan bu çalışmalardaki sonuçlar, katılımcıların ilişki memnuniyeti ve ilişkiye yaptıkları yatırım arttıkça bağlılıklarının seviyesinin de arttığını göstermektedir.

Ayrıca, bu çalışmada mutluluk paylaşımına verilen tepkilerin algılanmasının bağlılığı anlamlı bir şekilde yordamadığı bulunmuştur. Ulusal ve uluslararası literatürde, tüm

Yatırım Modeli faktörleri ile mutluluk paylaşımı değişkenini ilişkilendiren bir araştırma bulunmamakla birlikte, Yatırım Modeli bileşenlerinin bazılarının algılanan paylaşılan mutluluk olaylarına tepkilerle ilişkisini inceleyen çalışmalar vardır. Örneğin, partnerin olumlu bir olayın açıklanmasına verdiği tepkilerin, açıklayan kişinin genel deneyimi, ilişki memnuniyeti ve ilişki süresi üzerinde olumlu ve anlamlı bir etkisi olduğuna dair kanıtlar sunan çalışmalar yapılmıştır (Gable vd., 2004; Reis vd., 2010). Ancak, bu çalışmada paylaşılan mutluluk olaylarına verilen tepkilerin algılanmasının bağlılığı anlamlı bir şekilde yordamaması, uzak mesafe ilişkilerinde çiftlerin yüz yüze geçirdikleri zamanın sınırlı olması ve gün içinde yaşanan olumlu olayları paylaşmanın daha az olası olabileceği gerçeğinden kaynaklanabilir (Knox vd., 2002; Maucione, 2023). Kişiler gün içinde olumlu olaylar yaşasalar bile, bu olayları partnerleriyle iletişim kuracakları kısıtlı sürelerde dile getirmeyi unutabilirler (Pistole vd., 2010). Örneğin, katılımcıların, uzakta yaşayan partnerleriyle iletişim kurmak için telefon görüşmelerini ve yazılı iletişim araçlarını sıkça kullandıkları güncel çalışmada katılımcılardan alınan demografik bilgilerden anlaşılmaktadır. Bu, algılanan paylaşılan mutluluk olaylarına tepkilerin bağlılığı anlamlı bir şekilde yordamamasının bir nedeni olabilir.

Son modelde, algılanan önemsenmenin bağlılığı yordamada %3,3'lük ek bir güce sahip olduğu bulunmuştur. Hem uluslararası hem de ulusal literatürde, algılanan önemsenme ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiyi araştıran herhangi bir çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bağlılık değişkenine bağlı olarak çıkarımlar yapmak amacıyla, literatürde bağlılık değişkeni ile yakından ilgili olan çalışmaların bulguları incelenmiş, memnuniyet ve yatırımın çeşitli romantik ilişki türlerinde bağlılığı yordama gücü olduğu çeşitli araştırmalarda raporlanmıştır (Agnew, 2009; Aslan-Döken, 2014; Büyükşahin, 2006; 2008; Impett, 2001; Kurdek, 2008; Le ve Agnew, 2003).

Yakın ilişkilerdeki bireyler, belirli durumlarda diğer kişinin gözünde ne kadar önemli oldukları konusunda endişeler taşıyabilir. Bireyler, değerleri ve karşı tarafın kendilerine duyduğu ilginin seviyesi konusunda belirsizlik yaşayabilirler. Dixon Rayle (2005) ve Rosenberg'e (1985) göre, kişilerarası önem kavramı duygusal deneyimlere odaklanmaktadır. Amerika'da yürütülen bir çalışmada, bireylerin yakın

ilişkilerde eşlerinin diğerlerinden daha fazla ilgi göstermeleri durumunda, kendilerini daha önemli hissettikleri bulunmuştur. Sonuç olarak, daha fazla önem verilmesi, ilişki memnuniyetini ve yatırımı artırmıştır. Bir kişinin partnerine karşı değerli hissetmesi, romantik ilişkisine yatırım yapmaya devam etmesine yardımcı olabilir. Ancak, romantik partnerin ilgisinin kişinin diğer kaynaklardan algıladığı önemlilik duygusundan daha az görülmesi durumunda, yatırım düşebilir (Mak ve Marshall, 2004). Bu durum aynı zamanda, bir partnerin gözünde alternatiflerin kalitesini artırabilir. Bu çalışmanın bivariate korelasyon sonuçları da ayrıca göstermektedir ki, alternatiflerin kalitesi ile algılanan önem ve diğer yatırım modeli değişkenleri arasında negatif ve anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmaktadır.

Özellikle arkadaşlıklar ve romantik ilişkilerde, önemin memnuniyet üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olması beklenir. Örneğin, Santos ve Muiz-Rivas (2014) çalışmalarında, bir kişinin romantik partnerinin kendisi için ne kadar önemli olduğunu algılanmasının, günlük etkileşimlerine önemli bir etkisi olduğunu bulmuştur. Partnerlerince önemli olduklarını düşünen bireyler, ilişki memnuniyeti açısından daha yüksek doyum düzeyine sahiptir. Partnerlerince daha az önemsendiklerini düşünen bireyler ise negatif etki ifade etmiş ve ilişkilerindeki doyumun azaldığı görülmüştür. Bu çalışma, romantik ilişkilerde kişinin günlük duygusal deneyimlerini ve ilişki doyumunu belirlemede algılanan önemin etkisini göstermektedir. Mak ve Marshall'ın (2004) yürüttüğü bir çalışmaya göre, önem kavramının lisans öğrencileri arasında romantik ilişki memnuniyeti ve yatırım büyüklüğü ile pozitif bir korelasyona sahip olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, bu çalışmada, romantik partnerden alınan ilgiyi diğer kaynaklardan (örneğin, alternatif partnerler, arkadaşlar) alınan ilgi ile karşılaştırmanın önemsenme algısı ile ilişkisi olduğu gösterilmiştir. Partnerden alınan ilginin, diğerlerinden daha fazla olduğu durumda, katılımcılar daha yüksek düzeyde önem hissettiklerini rapor etmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak, önemin daha yüksek seviyede olması, ilişki memnuniyeti ve yatırımı artırmıştır. Ancak bu çalışmada bağlılık ile ilgili herhangi bir çıkarım yapılmamıştır. Ayrıca, romantik ilişkiler bağlamında mevcut alternatif seçeneklerin algılanan kalitesi ile önem arasında negatif bir korelasyon bulunmuştur. Araştırmacılar, romantik bir ilişki içinde anlam hissetmenin, ilişkiye yatırım yapma sürecine katkıda bulunabileceğini öne sürmüşlerdir. Bir romantik partnerden alınan ilginin, diğer kaynaklardan alınan

ilgiden daha düşük olarak değerlendirilmesi durumunda, anlam hissini azalabileceği ve ilişkiye yatırımın azalabileceği ve alternatiflerin algılanan kalitesinin artabileceği öne sürülmüştür. Yukarıda bahsedilen çalışmalar, algılanan önemin, memnuniyet ve yatırım büyüklüğü üzerinde kritik bir rol oynadığını göstermiştir ve literatürden bilindiği gibi, memnuniyet ve yatırım büyüklüğünün bağlılığı yordama gücü vardır (Mak ve Marshall, 2004).

Sonuç olarak, Türk belirgin yetişkinler arasındaki uzak mesafe ilişkilerinde, bağlılığın seviyesinin, cinsiyet, toplam ilişki süresi, ilişki doyumu, yatırım büyüklüğü ve algılanan önemsenme tarafından yordandığı bulunmuştur. Bu değişkenlerin tümü, uzak mesafe ilişkilerinde bağlılığın varyansının %53.4'ünü açıklamaktadır. Kişilerin, partnerlerinin romantik ilişkilerine ne kadar bağlı olduğu, kişinin diğer kişi için ne kadar önemli ve anlamlı olduğu konusunda, ilişkiye yatırım yapma ve çaba harcama konusunda şüpheleri olabilir. Daha açık bir ifadeyle, tatmin edici ilişkiler içinde olan, romantik partnerleri için kendilerinin ne kadar önemli olduğuna dair sağlam bir inançları olan ve ilişkilerine yatırım yapma konusunda daha memnun olan bireyler, romantik ilişkilerine daha yüksek bir bağlılık gösterme eğilimindedirler (Cameron ve Ross, 2007).

4.1. Kuram, Araştırma ve Uygulamaya Yönelik Çıkarımlar

Gelecek çalışmalar, uzak mesafe ilişkilerdeki etkileşim kalıplarını daha kapsamlı bir şekilde değerlendirerek aktör ve partner arasındaki ilişki dinamiklerini daha detaylı inceleyebilirler. Bu, ilişkideki değişkenlerin ve etkilerinin her iki taraf üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak açısından önemli olabilir (Ledermann vd., 2011). Gelecekteki araştırmalar ayrıca iletişim tarzları, duygusal bağlar ve destek sistemleri gibi faktörlere daha geniş bir perspektiften bakabilir. İletişimdeki güçlü ve zayıf yönleri anlamak ve bu unsurları geliştirmek, uzak mesafe ilişkilerde başarılı iletişim için önemlidir.

Az sayıda katılımcıyla yapılan bir çalışma, bulguların genellenmesi üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olabilir. Bu durumu ele almak için, daha geniş katılımcıyı hedefleyen gelecekteki araştırmalar, birden fazla kuruluşla işbirliği yaparak gerçekleştirilebilir.

Araştırmacılar, kaynakları birleştirebilir, farklı katılımcı havuzlarına erişebilir ve ortaklıklar veya dernekler aracılığıyla birden fazla alan veya demografik grup üzerinde örneklem büyüklüğünü artırabilirler. Resmi derneklerin çevrimiçi platformlarını ve sosyal medyasını kullanarak daha geniş ve çeşitli bir örneklem toplamak da yardımcı olabilir. Katılım için teşvikler veya ödeme mekanizmaları, daha çeşitli ve temsilci bir katılımcı tabanını çekebilir, çalışmanın bulgularının daha genellenebilir olması için daha sağlam bir temel oluşturabilir.

Ayrıca, uzak mesafe ilişkilerini nitel bir bakış açısıyla incelemek, bu alandaki araştırmalara yeni bir derinlik getirebilir. Nitel araştırma, uzak mesafe ilişkilerinde bireylerin deneyimlerini daha derinlemesine anlamamıza olanak tanır. Bu tür çalışmalar, katılımcıların duygusal deneyimleri, iletişim pratikleri, zorluklar ve başa çıkma stratejileri konusunda zengin bir içgörü sağlayabilir. Ayrıca, nitel araştırma, bu ilişkilerin kültürel, sosyal ve psikolojik dinamiklerini daha iyi anlamamıza yardımcı olabilir. Nitel çalışmalar, uzak mesafe ilişkilerinin karmaşıklığını ve çeşitliliğini ortaya çıkarmak için ideal bir araç olabilir ve gelecekteki araştırmalar için önemli bir temel oluşturabilir.

Mevcut çalışmanın analizlerinde, ilişkinin başlangıçta yakın bir ilişki olarak başlayıp uzak mesafeden yürütülen bir ilişkiye dönüşüp dönüşmediğine dair demografik veriler değerlendirmeye alınmamıştır. Bu demografik bilgi, uzak mesafe ilişkilerinin dinamiklerindeki farklılıkları açıklamak için etkili olabilir ve gelecekteki araştırmacılar bu iki grup arasında bağlılık açısından karşılaştırma çalışmaları yürütebilirler.

Ayrıca, gelecekteki araştırmacılar, beliren yetişkinlik döneminin başlangıç ve bitiş evresindeki katılımcıların özelliklerini ve ilişki motivasyonlarını inceleyebilir, özellikle romantik ilişki bağlılığı konusunda karşılaştırma çalışmaları yürütebilirler. Son olarak, haftalık iletişim süresi ve yüz yüze görüşme sıklığı verileri bu çalışmada analizlere dahil edilmemiştir çünkü bu veriler normal dağılıma sahip değildir. Ancak, yüz yüze görüşme sıklığı ve iletişim süresi gibi verilerin ilişki dinamiklerini etkilediğini gösteren çalışmalar bulunmaktadır (Duck, 1994; Duck ve Pittman, 1994). Dolayısıyla, gelecekteki çalışmalarda bu değişkenlerin ilişki bağlılığıyla ilişkileri incelenebilir.

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