THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

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

BY

PERİM UYAR

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES, GUIDANCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

JULY 2023

Approval of the thesis:

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

submitted by **PERİM UYAR** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in Educational Sciences, Guidance and Psychological Counseling, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Hanife AKAR
Head of Department
Department of Educational Sciences

Assist. Prof. Dr. Funda BARUTÇU YILDIRIM
Supervisor
Department of Educational Sciences

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Ayhan DEMİR (Head of the Examining Committee)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Educational Sciences

Assist. Prof. Dr. Funda BARUTÇU YILDIRIM (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Educational Sciences

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazlı Büşra AKÇABOZAN KAYABOL
Bahçeşehir University
Department of Educational Sciences

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

Name, Last Name: Perim UYAR

Signature:

ABSTRACT

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

UYAR, Perim

M.S., The Department of Educational Sciences, Guidance and Psychological Counseling

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Kadriye Funda BARUTÇU YILDIRIM

July 2023, 82 pages

The current correlational study aimed to investigate the mediating role of self-efficacy in romantic relationships in the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction. The sample, recruited using convenience sampling, consisted of 505 (82 % female, 16.4% male, 0.8% other, and 0.8% not stated) university students in their emerging adulthood, involved in non-marital romantic relationships. The data were collected through the demographic information form, the Self-Compassion Scale, the Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships Scale, and the Relationship Assessment Scale. The reliability and validity of the scales were examined before the primary analyses and were confirmed for the current study. The hypothesized model was tested with Structural Equation Modeling and then, a simple mediation analysis was conducted. The findings implied that self-efficacy in romantic relationships fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction. A discussion on self-compassion and self-efficacy in romantic

relationships was stated. Lastly, the study's implications and suggestions for future research were given.

Keywords: self-compassion, self-efficacy in romantic relationships, romantic relationship satisfaction

ÖZ

ÖZ-ŞEFKAT VE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİDE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLERDE ÖZ-YETERLİLİĞİN ARACI ROLÜ

UYAR, Perim

Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Bilimleri, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kadriye Funda BARUTÇU YILDIRIM

Temmuz 2023, 82 sayfa

İlişkisel araştırma deseninin kullanıldığı bu çalışmanın amacı, öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkide romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliğin aracı rolünü araştırmaktır. Kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilen çalışma örneklemi, 505 evli olmayan (%82 kadın, %16.4 erkek, % 0.8 diğer ve % 0.8 belirtilmemiş) romantik ilişki yaşayan, beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki üniversite öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Veriler demografik bilgi formu, Öz-Anlayış Ölçeği, Romantik İlişkilerde Öz-Yeterlik Ölçeği ve İlişki Doyumu Ölçeği aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Ölçeklerin güvenilirliği ve geçerliliği incelenmiş ve bu çalışma için onaylanmıştır. Varsayılan model, Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi ile test edilmiş ve basit aracılık analizi uygulanmıştır. Bulgular romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye tam olarak aracılık ettiğini göstermiştir. Bulgular, romantik ilişkilerde öz-şefkat ve öz-yeterlik bağlamında tartışılmıştır. Son olarak, çalışmanın uygulamaya ve araştırmaya yönelik çıkarımları ile gelecekteki araştırmalar için önerilere yer verilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: öz-şefkat, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik, romantik ilişki doyumu

Dedicated to those crying alone listening to Radiohead, feeling unworthy of love and attention. You deserve everything you are willing to give to others. Like Rumi said, "Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to my thesis supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Funda Barutçu Yıldırım. Your kindness and belief in me have always motivated me to keep going when times were difficult. Your guidance during the thesis process and our small talks have been an invaluable contribution to my life. I would also like to thank Prof. Dr. Ayhan Demir and Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazlı Büşra Akçabozan Kayabol for their valuable contributions to my thesis, and their kind and encouraging attitude during my thesis defense. I would also like to thank my academic role model Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yeşim Çapa Aydın for her guidance in the analyses of this thesis and her encouraging and understanding attitude throughout my master's years. I want to thank Dr. Betül Bulut Şahin too, for our meaningful conversations and for helping me feel more belong and safe in academia.

My dear friend Azize, thank you for encouraging me to continue my academic journey in ODTÜ, and for your lovely attitude over the past 9 years. My dearest classmates Aylin, Nas and Hande, thank you for your support and sharing your knowledge with me. I always felt like we were there for each other, I feel lucky to do master's with you. My office mates Fadime and Elif, thank you for your supportive behavior and for answering my endless academic questions over the past three years. Büşra, thank you for being my mentor and my friend. As a newbie research assistant and graduate student, I really appreciate your support. My fellow statistics enthusiast Anıl, thank you so much for working by my side and encouraging me throughout the analyses. I also want to thank my other colleagues, especially Mert and Nureda for their support while I was writing this thesis. Merve and Özgür, I genuinely appreciate your comforting presence in my life, especially in the last 6 months. Ayda, Merve, Serhan, Gözde, Serra, Merve and Emre, thank you for making Ankara feel more like home.

Thank you, my dearests Hilal, Ayşe, Pınar, Simge, Tuğçe, Ayça, Tuğçe, Sabah and Sümeyye for your friendship since our Boğaziçi years. People as kind, mature and loving as you are rare, and I am glad that I got to experience college life beside you.

Çisem and İpek, you have been like sisters to me since our childhood, and I am thankful that I still enjoy life whenever I am with you. Dilşad and Ceylan, thank you for being like my other sisters who always have my back. Although we are not related, I see you as part of my family. Last but not least, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my friend Selin for answering the phone whenever I needed to calm down, and for being my pillow when my emotions were too heavy to carry by myself.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my family. Mom, you love me and believe in me more than I can ever love and believe in myself. Thank you for your patience with me and for shaping me into a person who expresses love and gratitude frequently, like yourself. I love you so much. Dad, thank you for your calmness and loving me in your own way, I feel closer to you and love you more each day too. Øystein and Muzo, thank you for your belief in me and bringing joy and energy into our family. My uncle Ali and My aunts Nur and Nur, thank you for giving me a warm place where I can still be a child, I love you deeply.

I don’t know what life will bring next but at this moment, I am grateful for all of you and all those I did not mention but who walked with me on this long and winding road. I hope that you find love and support whenever you need, and you always show compassion to yourself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM……..……..…iii

ABSTRACT……..……..iv

ÖZ……..…….....vi

DEDICATION……..……...….viii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS……..…….....ix

TABLE OF CONTENTS……..……..xi

LIST OF TABLES……..……..….xiv

LIST OF FIGURES……..……..xv

CHAPTERS

1. INTRODUCTION……..…..……1

1.1. Background to the Study…….…...1

1.2. Aim of the Study…….…...4

1.3. Research Question and Hypotheses…….…..4

1.4. Significance of the Study…….……..5

1.5. Definitions of Terms…….……7

2. LITERATURE REVIEW…….……...8

2.1. Self-efficacy and Social Learning Theory…….……8

2.1.1. Self-efficacy in Romantic Relationships…….……..10

2.2. Self-compassion…….…..13

2.2.1. Self-compassion in Romantic Relationships…….…....16

2.3. Self-compassion and Self-efficacy……...19

2.4. Romantic Relationship Satisfaction……..21

3. METHOD……..…….25

3.1. Design of the Study……..……..……..25
3.2. Participants……..…….....25
3.3. Data Collection Instruments……..…....27
3.3.1. Criteria for Evaluation of Reliability and Validity……..……....27
3.3.2. Demographic Information Form…….…....27
3.3.3. The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)……...…..28
3.3.4. Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships Scale (SERR)…….…....29
3.3.5. Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)…….……..…..30
3.4. Data Collection Procedure…….……....31
3.5. Description of the Variables…….…...……..32
3.5.1. Independent Variable (Predictor)…….……...32
3.5.2. Mediator Variable……...…....32
3.5.3. Outcome Variable…….……...32
3.6. Data Analyses…….……...32
3.7. Limitations of the Study…….……..…33
4. RESULTS…….……..….34
4.1. Preliminary Analyses…….……...34
4.1.1. Assumptions of SEM…….……...35
4.1.2. Descriptive Statistics…….……..…38
4.1.3. Bivariate Correlations Between Variables…….……..38
4.2. Primary Analyses…….…….38
4.2.1. Measurement Model…….…….…..39
4.2.2. Structural Model…….……....39
4.2.3. Indirect, Direct and Total Effects…….…….…..40
4.2.4. Hypothesis Testing…….…….……....40
5. DISCUSSION…….…43

5.1. Discussion on the Mediating Role of Self-efficacy in Romantic Relationships Relationships in the Relationship Between Self-compassion and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction…….……..….43

5.2. Implications of This Study…….…..…..46

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research…….….47

6. REFERENCES……..…….49

APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE.....62

B. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM……...…...63

C. SAMPLE ITEMS OF SELF-COMPASSION SCALE……...64

D. SAMPLE ITEMS OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS SCALE……..…….……...….65

E. SAMPLE ITEMS OF THE RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT SCALE……...…….....66

F. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET……...…….67

G. THESIS PERMISSION FORM/ TEZ İZİN FORMU……...…..81

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1. Demographics of the Participants ……....… 26

Table 3.2. Fit Indices of Self-Compassion Scale ……..... 29

Table 3.3. Fit Indices of Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships Scale …….…..... 30

Table 3.4. Fit Indices of Relationship Assessment Scale ……....…. 31

Table 4.1. Skewness and Kurtosis for Study Variables …….…..……. 36

Table 4.2. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables ……..…..…. 38

Table 4.3. Bivariate Correlation Among Variables ……...……..….. 39

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model ……..…....4

Figure 4.1. Histogram for Normality of Residuals ……..…....35

Figure 4.2. Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals …….……36

Figure 4.3. Partial Regression Plot ……..……...37

Figure 4.4. Partial Regression Plot ……..….. 37

Figure 4.5. Scatterplot for Homoscedasticity ……..... 37

Figure 4.6. Measurement Model with Standardized Estimates……..….41

Figure 4.7. Hypothesized Structural Model with Standardized Estimates……..…42

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Interpersonal relationships are crucial in people's lives from birth to death. Beginning from relationships within the family, even an infant’s life is filled with social interactions. People develop relationships with different environments such as school, neighborhood, and work as their communication skills improve. Some of these relationships, such as friendships and romantic relationships, are closer and can influence identity formation (Furman & Shaffer, 2003). Among these close interpersonal relationships, romantic relationships have a role in different stages of life. In early adolescence, people mostly form one short-term romantic relationship, and with the transition to middle adolescence, the number of romantic involvements increases, and relationships begin to take place in sexual and emotional contexts to a small degree (Meier & Allen, 2009). Afterward, in late adolescence, intimate relationships might take the form of a single committed relationship with a longer duration (Meier & Allen, 2009). Emerging adulthood, on the other hand, is characterized by identity exploration and going through changes before making long-lasting choices in life, such as marriage (Arnett, 2000). As discussed by Shulman and Connoly (2013), in this period, people may display sexual behaviors outside of a committed relationship and delay getting married. However, these tendencies change over time. In his psychosocial development theory, Erikson (1993) proposed that young adulthood is the period that the individual has now developed an identity and is willing to share it with a partner. In young adulthood, a person is ready to commit to someone and behave responsibly and ethically in the relationship. Therefore, ompared to other periods of life, especially during adulthood, romantic relationships play a more critical role in people's lives and are handled more sensitively.

One of the factors that determines the quality and continuity of romantic relationships, which gain importance in adulthood, is relationship satisfaction (Collins & Read, 1990; Zhan et al., 2022). Dissatisfied people are more inclined to change partners than to establish a stable relationship, and for this reason, satisfaction is the basis of a stable relationship for adults (Attridge et al., 1995). So, what factors in relationships result in satisfaction? To gain a deeper understanding, researchers investigated the factors related to satisfaction in romantic relationships, and they found several of them, such as self-efficacy (e.g., Julal Cnossen et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2008) and self-compassion (e.g., Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021; Neff & Beretvas, 2013).

According to Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1991), self-efficacy, whether people see themselves as competent in accomplishing a task, has four sources. These are physiological and emotional states, direct experience, verbal persuasion, and vicarious experience. Among them, verbal encouragement for increasing the belief in a person's capabilities is the easiest to provide because it is readily available without experience. It can be provided by others, or individuals can persuade themselves that they are capable of doing what they need to do. In order to achieve that, they should also be in a balanced emotional state. Having a balanced emotional state is essential because individuals experiencing considerable stress or anxiety are inclined to expect failure from their attempts. This unbalanced emotional state affects their performance negatively; thus, their self-efficacy is likely to decrease (Bandura, 1977).

Emotional balance and a supportive inner voice are characteristic of people with self-compassion (Neff & Davidson, 2016). In challenging times, people with high self-compassion feel less isolated in their experience, are kinder to themselves, and approach the difficulty in a mindful way (Neff, 2003a). Taken together, it is reasonable to conclude that individuals who are able to balance their emotions and support themselves as if they are encouraging a friend are likely to have high self-efficacy. Several studies provided evidence for this, with findings indicating that higher levels of self-compassion are associated with higher self-efficacy (e.g., Iskender, 2009; Kwan et al., 2009; Manavipour & Saaeidan, 2016; Tyer-Viola et al., 2014) Liao et al. (2021) argued that compassion toward oneself positively affects how someone behaves when facing a challenge or being unsuccessful. When individuals show compassion for

themselves during difficult times, their belief of being a failure is unlikely to be triggered. Since they go easy on themselves, their sense of self-efficacy is not diminished radically. Researchers pointed out that this is primarily rooted in the thought that everybody experiences these challenges at some point, and failing is a part of being human. Parallel with this argument, Manavipour and Saeeidan (2016) found that college students who maintain a mindful perspective toward their issues and do not feel isolated in that experience have higher levels of self-efficacy.

To this date, several studies provided evidence that self-compassion predicts self-efficacy in different domains like fertility (Pinto-Gouveia et al., 2012), academia (Iskender, 2009), and health (Sirois, 2015). Nevertheless, whether self-compassion predicts self-efficacy in romantic relationships has yet to be investigated. Therefore, in this study's model, self-compassion was included as the predictor of self-efficacy in romantic relationships.

Self-efficacy influences emotions in different contexts (Bandura, 1991), such as romantic relationships. Riggio et al. (2013) argued that how people evaluate their capability as a partner influences the quality of the relationship because it affects how they behave in the relationship. This evaluation can lead to adjustments in behaviors, such as how openly they express themselves and take how much responsibility for their relationship (Weiser & Weigel, 2016). Several studies show that partners with higher romantic relationship self-efficacy are more satisfied in their relationships (Weiser & Weigel, 2016; Yılmaz et al., 2023).

Lastly, self-compassion contributes to satisfaction in relationships (e.g., Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021; Neff & Beretvas, 2013). As Neff and Beretvas (2013) discussed, self-compassionate partners tend to be mindful when experiencing difficulties in relationships and therefore have a weaker tendency to overreact. Also, by holding a positive attitude toward themselves, partners may become more kind and loving in their relationships. This might reflect positively on their partners since it makes it easier to become more intimate with them. Consequently, self-compassionate partners experience higher relational well-being and higher satisfaction in the relationship (Neff & Beretvas, 2013).

1.2 Aim of the Study

The present study aims to investigate to what extent self-efficacy in romantic relationships mediates the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction of Turkish university students.

1.3 Research Question and Hypotheses

The research question of this study is: 'Does self-efficacy in romantic relationships mediate the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction?' Hypotheses regarding the direct relationships are as follows:

H_1: Self-compassion significantly predicts self-efficacy in romantic relationships (Path A).

H_2: Self-efficacy in romantic relationships significantly predicts romantic relationship satisfaction (Path B).

H_3: Self-compassion significantly predicts romantic relationship satisfaction (Path C').

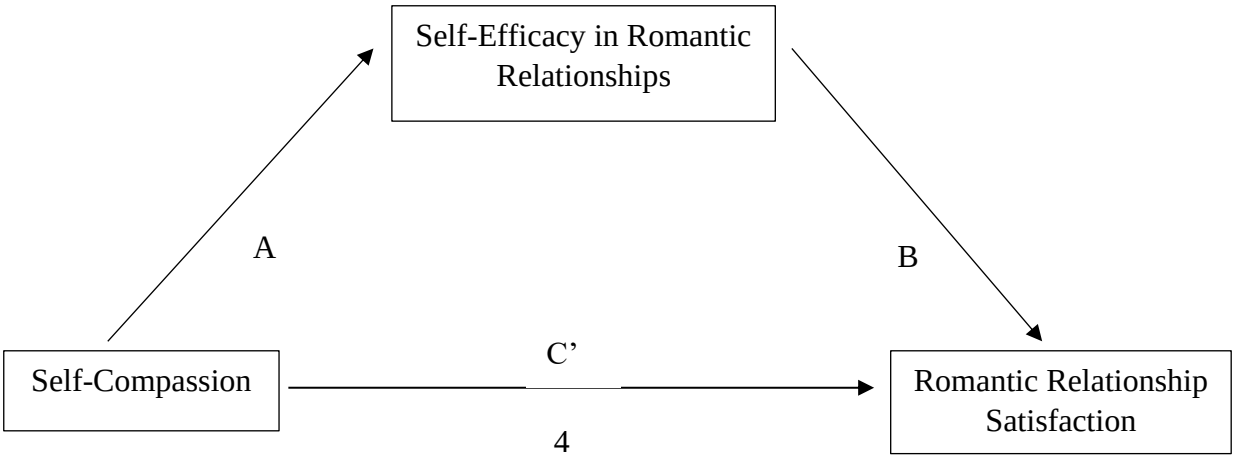
The hypothesis regarding the indirect relationship is as follows:

H_4: Self-efficacy in romantic relationships mediates the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction (Path C).

The hypothesized model displaying these relationships is provided in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Hypothesized Model



1.4 Significance of the Study

Romantic relationships are considered an important developmental task (Arnett, 2000) that serves as a context for personal growth (Gala & Kapadia, 2013). A growing body of findings also implies that romantic relationship involvement is a major contributor to physical and mental health. For instance, research conducted with 1621 undergraduate students proved that students in romantic relationships have fewer physical and mental health problems than single ones (Braithwaite et al., 2010). In another study, participants in a romantic relationship reported higher levels of emotional well-being than single participants (Adamczyk & Segrin, 2015). When the well-being and romantic involvement association was investigated, it was found that partners had a higher level of well-being when they showed effort for the relationship they were satisfied in but not when they showed effort for a dissatisfying relationship (Baker et al., 2013). Therefore, it can be concluded that how satisfying a relationship is also influences individuals' well-being.

According to Fincham and Cui (2010), romantic relationships especially gain importance during emerging adulthood. Compared to adolescence, emerging adulthood is signified as the time people want to establish a more intimate relationship with a significant other (Arnett, 2000). It is the period in which they gain relationship experience and explore what they want before getting married (Fincham & Cui, 2010). Since their relationship experience in this period substantially influences their life path, it is crucial that they can start and maintain a satisfying relationship (Fincham & Cui, 2010).

As discussed before, satisfaction is vital in maintaining a stable relationship such as marriage (Attridge et al., 1995). Therefore, the mechanisms underlying the establishment of a satisfying romantic relationship should be investigated thoroughly. One way to understand the factors contributing to a successful marriage is by investigating the romantic relationship patterns in emerging adulthood (Fincham & Cui, 2010). Fletcher et al. (2018) proposed that to understand how romantic relationships work, it is essential to examine how people think and feel about their social interactions. Therefore, this study investigated people's perceptions of themselves as partners to understand their experience in a romantic relationship.

Investigating the romantic relationship experience is also beneficial for professional helpers working with university students. In Türkiye, among problems such as family and mental health issues, relationship problems are the third reason university students apply for counseling services (Doğan, 2012). Considering the amount of help students wish to receive regarding their romantic relationships, understanding the contributors to the romantic relationship satisfaction of university students can provide practical advantages to professional helpers.

In addition to its influence on social relationships, self-efficacy contributes to people's well-being. For instance, findings of a study conducted with undergraduates implied that greater self-efficacy in romantic relationships is also linked with well-being indicators, namely high self-esteem, more happiness, and less psychological distress (Weisskirch, 2017). Also, similar findings were present in a recent study in Türkiye, with self-efficacy in romantic relationships predicting the psychological well-being of emerging adults (Aydemir, 2021). Self-compassion's association with the well-being of individuals was also investigated thoroughly and evidenced in a meta-analysis (Zessin et al., 2015). When the findings of 79 studies were examined, it was revealed that higher levels of self-compassion are associated with greater psychological and cognitive well-being. Also, participants of these studies with higher levels of self-compassion reported having higher positive and lower negative affection.

In addition to its practical implications, this study contributes to the existing literature in several ways. Firstly, although self-efficacy has been extensively studied in different fields, relatively few studies exist on self-efficacy in romantic relationships. Moreover, studies conducted with university students show that the association between self-compassion and self-efficacy is mostly examined in an academic context. For instance, Iskender (2009) found that more self-compassionate students are also more self-efficacious and believe their learning will produce favorable results. In another study with statistics course students, findings implied that students with greater levels of self-compassion also have greater self-efficacy toward mathematics (Salazar, 2018). However, to the researcher's knowledge, this relationship was not examined before in the context of romantic relationships. No study investigates whether self-compassion predicts self-efficacy in romantic relationships. This study aimed to fill this gap by

including self-compassion as the predictor in its model. In addition, although there are many studies on romantic relationship satisfaction and self-compassion, the number of studies investigating self-efficacy within the framework of romantic relationships still needs to be increased.

Secondly, according to the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study investigating the path from self-compassion through relationship self-efficacy to romantic relationship satisfaction. Creating such a structural model is advantageous since the findings shed light on the underlying mechanism of the dependent variable (Hayes, 2013), which is romantic relationship satisfaction. Thus, this study intended to understand how Turkish university students' levels of self-compassion affect their romantic relationship satisfaction through its effect on their self-efficacy in romantic relationships.

1.5 Definitions of Terms

According to Arnett (2014, p. viii), *emerging adulthood* refers to the period between 18 and 29 years old.

As defined by Neff (2003a, p.87), *self-compassion* is an umbrella term that involves "Being touched by and open to one's own suffering, not avoiding or disconnecting from it, generating the desire to alleviate one's suffering and heal oneself with kindness. Self-compassion also involves offering a nonjudgmental understanding of one's pain, inadequacies, and failures, so that one's experience is seen as part of the larger human experience."

Self-efficacy is defined as "The conviction that one can successfully execute the behavior required to produce the outcomes." (Bandura, 1977, p.193). Based on this, Riggio et al. (2011, p.602) defined *self-efficacy in romantic relationships* as "Broad perceptions of one's capabilities to act in response to task demands in romantic relationships effectively."

Romantic relationship satisfaction is defined as "positivity of affect or attraction to one's relationship" (Rusbult, 1983, p.102).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter included theoretical background and related empirical research for self-efficacy in romantic relationships, self-compassion, and romantic relationship satisfaction.

2.1 Self-efficacy and Social Learning Theory

Beginning from infancy, individuals develop a wide range of abilities to adapt to their world. These abilities vary from walking to effectively handling conflict and continuously alter because of lifelong learning. As people grow and their abilities change, they begin to develop a perception of their capabilities. This concept, which refers to self-efficacy, indicates an individual's belief about their ability to deal with the demands of tasks and also affects the amount and sustenance of the effort put into meeting those demands (Bandura, 1977). Social Learning Theory opposes the behavioristic view of seeing people's actions as a result of reward and punishment processes. It points out that individuals act for reasons like satisfying themselves or being proud of themselves (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1978), people have the cognitive ability to evaluate what behaviors will lead to what consequences, and they also evaluate their abilities required to perform such behaviors. This cognitive capacity also gives them the power to convince themselves that they are capable of exerting behaviors that they wish to (Bandura, 1978).

From the perspective of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), individuals can develop efficacy expectations through vicarious experience, performance accomplishments, emotional and physical arousal, or verbal persuasion. In other words, the source of these expectations can be intrapersonal, such as direct experiences or convincing oneself that one is capable of accomplishing the task. It can also come

from interpersonal sources, such as being verbally praised by others or through modeling.

Among these sources, direct experience is the strongest because whether the individual can perform a task is proven by first-hand experience (Bandura, 1997). However, it is essential to note that an accomplishment or a failure does not necessarily increase or decrease self-efficacy immediately. Attribution theory asserts that where an individual sees the cause of a success or a failure influences their behaviors and motivation level (Weiner, 1986). According to Bandura (1997), people's attribution of success and failure also adjusts their self-efficacy. If people believe they were successful just by chance, they will believe less in their capacity. If they think they failed due to an external factor like a weather event, their belief in their capacity may not weaken. Therefore, self-efficacy is affected not only by the experience but also by how the individual evaluates the outcome (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy can also be influenced by the interactions people make. Individuals realistically encouraged by their significant others can see themselves as more capable. In other words, their self-efficacy can arise from others' verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1997). Individuals might evaluate their capabilities concerning their observation of others. When someone sees another person accomplish a similar task, they compare their abilities with that person and evaluate their capability compared to their observations (Bandura, 1977).

According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy can also be affected by an individual's current physical and emotional state. For instance, if people are experiencing a considerable amount of stress before the task or are in pain, they are more likely to believe that they will not succeed. Also, they will probably get distracted because of the discomfort and lose focus on the task. As a result, their belief in their ability is affected.

Bandura asserted that (1977) efficacy beliefs are more influential than expectations of consequences in the execution of tasks because regardless of what the consequences are thought to be, one cannot perform the necessary action if he or she lacks the belief that he or she is capable of it. Even when there is no demanding task present,

individuals low in self-efficacy may feel anxious just by imagining how incapable they would be if there were a task. Therefore, it can be concluded that this perception of own capabilities affects individuals cognitively and emotionally. Lastly, it is essential to note that the relationship between self-efficacy and consequences is bidirectional. Just like self-efficacy affects the results of behaviors, those results can also increase or decrease self-efficacy (Bandura, 1978).

To this date, self-efficacy has been examined in different contexts like academia and romantic relationships. Studies conducted with university students mainly focus on academic outcomes and life satisfaction. For example, when university students' GPAs were examined, it was seen that students with higher academic self-efficacy were more successful than others (Cassidy, 2011). The findings of a study conducted with undergraduate students implied that disinhibited female students are less likely to violate academic honesty if they have a high level of self-efficacy (Baran & Jonason, 2020). Another study conducted with first-year students revealed that students with higher levels of self-efficacy had higher levels of life satisfaction (Coffman & Gilligan, 2002). In a study, Ekinci and Koç (2022) found that high self-efficacy increases university students' life satisfaction by increasing their hope.

2.1.1 Self-efficacy in Romantic Relationships

Maintaining romantic relationships require people to use abilities such as problem-solving, effective communication, and empathy. For instance, they might conflict with their partner and need to use communication skills to solve it, and the effectiveness of their communication is affected by their self-efficacy in romantic relationships (Cui et al., 2008). Lopez et al. (2007) identified relationship self-efficacy as a combination of differentiation, emotional control, and mutuality. Differentiation refers to perceiving oneself as assertive and setting healthy personal boundaries in the relationship. Emotional control refers to seeing oneself as capable of coping with negative emotions, such as sadness caused by the relationship or the partner. Lastly, mutuality refers to seeing oneself as capable of both giving and receiving care in a romantic relationship (Lopez et al., 2007). Various factors influence people's romantic relationship self-efficacy. The current romantic relationship status is one of them. Cohen (2018) found that participants currently involved in a romantic relationship had

higher levels of self-efficacy in their romantic relationships compared to those not in a relationship. She argued that this may be the case since participants face challenges throughout the relationship, and as they overcome those, their self-efficacy increases. On the other hand, if they were in a relationship before, their level of self-efficacy in the relationship may get lower due to negative experiences or reasons behind the termination of the relationship. Likewise, Julal Cnossen et al. (2019) argued that when the individual has never been in a relationship before, he or she may feel less competent in the current relationship due to a lack of direct experience, which is considered the primary source of self-efficacy according to Bandura (1971). However, Julal Cnossen et al. (2019) found no association between having a romantic experience and the level of self-efficacy in the relationship. The only significant association was between romantic experience and social self-efficacy (Julal Cnossen et al., 2019). In addition, gender differences in relationship self-efficacy were also found in the literature. However, there is an inconsistency. Some research results imply no significant differences between males' and females' romantic relationship self-efficacy levels (e.g., Ogan & Öz Soysal, 2021), whereas some show evidence favoring females (e.g., Ly, 2021; Sarı & Owen-Korkut, 2016).

According to Bandura (1990), whether people see themselves as efficacious impacts their behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. It affects how much they will put effort into accomplishing a task and how long they will maintain their efforts (Bandura, 1990). From this point of view, it can be expected that partners' self-efficacy would impact their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in their romantic relationships. Some of these productive behaviors in relationships are problem-solving (Doherty, 1981), self-disclosure (Horne & Johnson, 2018), and relationship maintenance behaviors, such as openness and positivity (Weiser & Weigel, 2016). For instance, the study conducted by Weiser and Weigel (2016) showed that partners with higher levels of relationship self-efficacy tend to behave in a way that helps maintain the relationship. They were more eager to open themselves to their partners and they took responsibility for their relationship. They include their partners and partners' community in their lives, showing that they want to maintain a close connection with their partners. The findings implied that when the behaviors mentioned above were present, individuals were more satisfied with their relationships. However, this relationship was not unidirectional.

Alternatively, findings also implied that when individuals are more satisfied with their relationship and behave that way, their self-efficacy toward romantic relationships also increases. Likewise, the findings of Horne and Johnson (2018) indicated that when partners have high relationship self-efficacy, they are more likely to talk about their feelings and thoughts with their partners.

Doherty (1981) discussed that when partners have high efficacy, they are more likely to put more effort into overcoming adversities since they see themselves as capable of it. Likewise, when partners have low efficacy, they tend to avoid facing problems and feel as if they have to live with those problems and suffer in the relationship, which may decrease the satisfaction they get from the relationship. From this point of view, it can be inferred that efficacy beliefs are important in maintaining the satisfaction partners experience in the relationship. For instance, Cui et al. (2008) found that a low efficacy expectation was related to more conflict in relationships, which in turn decreased satisfaction and happiness in romantic relationships. Similarly, Fincham and Bradbury's (1987) results revealed that a low efficacy expectation was related to feelings of helplessness, which predicts less relationship satisfaction (Braithwaite et al., 2011). The results of a study conducted in Türkiye pointed out that a partner's confidence in his or her ability to solve a problem is a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction (Eğeci & Gençöz, 2006). The findings of Julal Cnossen et al. (2019) also pointed out relationship self-efficacy as a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction via lowering levels of anxiety and avoidance. Relationship self-efficacy was also linked with sexual satisfaction because adults with high relationship self-efficacy experienced less shame and more excitement about sex and were more satisfied with it (Ly, 2021).

Considering the findings of the previous studies, it is reasonable to expect that self-efficacy in relationships has a role in maintaining the relationship. For instance, Cohen's (2018) study revealed that participants with high romantic relationship self-efficacy have a lower tendency to seek out other partners outside their relationships, indicating that romantic relationship self-efficacy plays a vital role in the relationship's success. Findings of another study revealed that romantic relationship self-efficacy and

relationship satisfaction both significantly predicted relationship maintenance and were positively associated with each other (Ogan & Öz Soysal, 2021).

Lastly, another influence of romantic relationship self-efficacy is its impact on creating a balance of power between partners. A recent study found that when university students in their emerging adulthood have higher self-efficacy in romantic relationships, they also have balance regarding power dynamics. In other words, when individuals have high self-efficacy in romantic relationships, they have less tendency to dominate their partner or be dominated by them (Whittington & Turner, 2022). However, research suggests that high relationship self-efficacy may be harmful in some situations. In a longitudinal study, Baker et al. (2016) found that partners with higher relationship self-efficacy tend to remain in relationships in which they experience situational intimate partner violence, probably due to the belief that they will be able to overcome conflictual situations in the future. However, this only was the case for partners involved in relationships longer than seven weeks.

2.2 Self-compassion

Gilbert (2015) defined compassion as being sensitive to our and others' suffering and attempting to lessen it or help prevent it from happening. In other words, being compassionate entails holding an empathic awareness toward the suffering surrounding us and being careful not to become the source of it. Considering this definition, it can be thought that having compassion can be beneficial in overcoming the difficulties people experience. As a form of compassion, self-compassion focuses on the feeling of compassion that is turned inwards (Neff, 2003a). Neff (2003a) argued that self-compassion is a concept consisting of three components. Firstly, it involves having a kind attitude towards oneself during difficult times, which is referred to as self-kindness. Secondly, it involves knowing that others go through similar experiences and that one is not alone in the suffering, referred to as common humanity. Lastly, it involves approaching the difficulty in a mindful manner, which is referred to as mindfulness. These three components are associated with each other and are all essential to having compassion toward oneself (Neff & Pommier, 2013). McGehee et al. (2017) argued that to show compassion to oneself, one must first acknowledge that they are suffering. This is not always easy, especially if the suffering comes from

within (through self-judgment). Often, individuals want to escape from situations or their emotions and then focus on the solution. Mindfulness is important because it is seen as a way of acknowledging the suffering yet not being absorbed. As argued by Neff and Davidson (2016), mindful individuals are the ones who hold a balanced view of the distressful situation instead of running away or constantly thinking about it.

When understanding self-compassion, there are several distinctions one must make to have a grasp of its true nature. As noted by Neff (2003a), it is important to distinguish it from self-centeredness. By definition, having a higher level of self-compassion means feeling more connected to others by knowing that we all experience similar difficulties and uncritically approaching ourselves when we are having a tough time. Through this acknowledgment and manner, we can find our will to care for others in their hard times (Neff, 2003a). Another distinction that was pointed out was between self-esteem and self-compassion. Neff (2011) proposed that although self-compassion and self-esteem are related, their sources differ. Self-compassion involves acknowledging that we are connected to all humans, but it does not lead us to compare ourselves to others. In other words, unlike self-esteem, self-compassion does not arise from seeing ourselves as inferior or superior to others. Instead, we accept our imperfections and thus create an emotionally safe environment to improve ourselves (Neff, 2011). Another thing to keep in mind is that self-compassion is a source of motivation when we need to take action for ourselves (Neff, 2003a). It is easier for self-compassionate people to be mindful of the painful situation and take the necessary actions to eliminate it.

A growing body of literature supports the idea that self-compassion is beneficial to overall well-being and health. For instance, Akın and Akın (2014) found that self-compassion significantly contributed to university students' happiness. For first-year university students, it was linked with less perceived stress and greater life satisfaction (Wayment et al., 2016). The experimental study by Neff et al. (2018) showed that self-compassion also predicted inflammatory activity and activated the sympathetic nervous system. Regarding health benefits, an increase in self-compassion level was associated with a decrease in smoking (Kelly et al., 2010) and a decrease in alcohol consumption (Brooks et al., 2012). In another study conducted with a sample of people

with celiac disease, it was found that participants with higher levels of self-compassion also followed their special diet more appropriately than others (Dowd & Jung, 2017).

Self-compassion was found to be negatively correlated with outcomes such as burnout and fatigue (Beaumont et al., 2016), depressive symptomatology and negative affect (López et al., 2017), and stress (Hall et al., 2013; Marshall & Brockman, 2016). For instance, a study conducted with a sample of undergraduates found that if students have high levels of self-compassion, their psychological well-being is impacted less by the academic burnout they experience (Kyeong, 2013). Similarly, Gunnel et al. (2017) found that first-year students whose self-compassion levels increased significantly in 5 months also reported higher satisfaction with their psychological needs. Through leading to an increase in satisfaction of psychological needs, higher self-compassion led to better psychological well-being. In an experimental study, Shapira and Mongrain (2010) experimented with volunteers aged 18 or higher. They were divided into three groups. The first group completed exercises that increased self-compassion. The second group completed exercises that increased optimism levels, and the third group did not complete any exercise. To see the long-term results, groups were measured four times (one week, one month, three months, and six months later). Initially, participants whose optimism levels were elevated showed fewer depressive symptoms compared to others. However, this trend changed after the first three months. In the last measurement, participants with the lowest depressive symptoms were the ones who did self-compassion exercises. Before the training and in the first week, participants who completed self-compassion exercises were the least happy among the three groups. However, beginning from the first month, a significant increase was detected in their happiness levels compared to those without exercise. The happiest participants were the ones who did optimism exercises. Overall, results implied that increased self-compassion was more effective in lessening depressive symptoms than increasing happiness. In their study, Lopez et al. (2017) found similar results. They evaluated psychological well-being by assessing individuals' negative and positive affect levels and depression symptoms. They only found significant associations with these domains of psychological well-being and self-compassion, not with compassion toward others. This finding pointed out that compassion toward

oneself was more effective in psychological well-being than people's compassion for others.

2.2.1 Self-compassion in Romantic Relationships

Since people with higher levels of self-compassion are less judgmental towards themselves, they are more likely to admit their faults and alter their unproductive behaviors accordingly (Neff, 2009). Based on this, partners with higher levels of self-compassion will likely engage in more productive behaviors, which may positively reflect on their intimate relationships and increase their relationship satisfaction. To this date, self-compassion in the context of romantic relationships has been investigated in various studies, and some differences regarding gender were revealed as well. For example, Baker and McNulty (2011) conducted a study with undergraduates in romantic relationships for at least three months. Their results indicated that as women's self-compassion levels increase, they are more motivated to correct their mistakes in the relationship. However, for men, this tendency depended on their conscientiousness levels. Among males with high conscientiousness, self-compassion was related to more eagerness to correct mistakes, whereas it was related to lower motivation among men with low conscientiousness. Also, compared to men, women were more eager to share their problems with their partners.

In addition to a motivation to correct mistakes, self-compassion was positively correlated with functional behaviors that lead to more satisfaction in romantic relationships, such as problem-solving (Tandler et al., 2021) and conflict behavior (Yarnell & Neff, 2012). The findings of Tandler et al. (2021) implied that self-compassion is associated with compromising and fewer attacks on the partner during the conflict, eventually leading to more satisfaction in the relationship. In other words, partners with high levels of self-compassion can hold a mindful perspective toward the challenging situation, expressing their thoughts and needs without insulting their partner. In another study, Yarnell and Neff (2012) found that males and females tend to compromise with their partners rather than subordinate themselves when they have a higher level of self-compassion. However, this tendency was more robust for male students since, unlike females who tend to compromise with their mothers, father, best friends, and romantic partners; males tend to compromise only with their best friends

or romantic partners. Self-compassion is also related to university students' caregiving and care-seeking behaviors (Hermanto & Zuroff, 2016). Results of the study implied that the individuals with the highest level of self-compassion are also seeking and giving high care. However, individuals with low self-compassion provide more care than they seek from others.

In addition to these behaviors, self-compassion is also associated with goals in romantic relationships (Crocker & Canavello, 2008). In their study, Crocker and Canavello (2008) investigated the types of goals university students have in their relationships. When discussing self-image goals, they implied that people wish to feel desirable and see interpersonal relationships as a source to have a better perception of themselves. In other words, they focus on what they can get from relationships. When discussing compassionate goals, they implied that partners want to support their partners and consider their needs, which in turn brings them closer. The authors also claimed that when compassion directed to the partner is present in the relationship, compassion directed inwards is also present. In line with their expectations, their results showed that compassionate goals in the relationship, such as showing empathy, compassion, and love to partners, were also associated with higher compassion towards oneself. In addition to conflict behavior, self-compassion was also related to relational well-being. According to the researchers, self-compassion may provide the basis for a stable emotional state that helps individuals constructively overcome the challenges of relationships. Self-compassionate people are more likely to express themselves authentically and compromise with their partner rather than prioritizing only themselves or their partners (Crocker & Canavello, 2008). Overall, it can be inferred from these results that self-compassionate partners tend to engage in constructive social behavior and have a more positive experience in the relationship.

Considering all these, we can conclude that self-compassion plays a part in troubling times in a romantic relationship. However, its role is not limited to it. Self-compassion also has a preventive role. The findings of Tendler and Petersen (2018) implied that highly self-compassionate individuals are also less jealous, both cognitively and emotionally. To put it differently, adults with high self-compassion are less likely to experience distress, fearing that their partner would get intimate with someone else.

Also, they are less jealous when there is no apparent possibility that their partner will cheat. According to Zhang and Chen (2017), self-compassion is also preventive in romantic relationships because of its role in the post-breakup period. They conducted three separate studies with 441 adults who experienced a breakup to investigate how their self-compassion levels are associated with romantic outlook, their motivation to improve themselves as a partner, and their appreciation of a future partner. Firstly, they found that among the partners who see themselves as responsible for the separation, those with greater self-compassion hold a more positive point of view about their future relationships and are more motivated to become a better partner. Secondly, their experiment showed that, compared to the control group, participants who were induced self-esteem or self-compassion by the researchers were more willing to appreciate their partner after the intervention.

Previous research has also shown that self-compassion is a predictor of relationship satisfaction. Self-compassion was found to be a predictor of marital satisfaction of nurses (Janjani et al., 2017) and a stronger predictor of satisfaction in marriage compared to forgiveness in couples who were married for one to ten years (Fahimdanesh et al., 2020). In their study with an undergraduate sample, Jacobson et al. (2018) found that higher levels of self-compassion predicted higher romantic relationship satisfaction. Similarly, Barutçu-Yıldırım et al. (2021) 's results indicated that self-compassion is a significant predictor of emerging adults' romantic relationship satisfaction.

In addition to the studies mentioned above, several experimental studies were conducted to see how increased self-compassion influences romantic relationship satisfaction. For instance, Suppes (2021) conducted a study that applied a five-session-long self-compassion-focused therapeutic intervention to four middle-aged (20 to 47) women involved in romantic relationships. Among them, three women who had been in the relationship longer had a steadier increase in satisfaction levels throughout the intervention. The findings implied that participants gained insight into their relationships, which was associated with having less anxiety toward the relationship's future or being more accepting of their partner's flaws. Throughout the intervention, even though their partners did not go through a change, how women perceived their

partners changed. This change eventually made them more satisfied with their relationships. In a similar study, Budzan and Van Vliet (2021) established a self-compassion program where participants got audio-guided lessons. Throughout the program, participants stated that while receiving the training, they gained insight into their feelings and thoughts when arguing with their partners. As they became less perfectionist and more accepting towards themselves and their partners, it was easier for them to deal with conflict.

2.3 Self-compassion and Self-efficacy

When individuals stay mindful of the challenging situation, they do not overgeneralize it and do not believe they are a failure (Neff & Germer, 2017). Put differently, even though they failed at the present, this does not necessarily mean they will always fail. In a way, their efficacy feelings are not affected by the experience of inefficacy. Neff and Davidson (2016) resemble being self-compassionate to being friends with oneself. When people act friendly to themselves, their approach is soothing and caring. They do not make harsh judgments about their inadequacies. In other words, how people evaluate their capabilities is associated with how much compassion they show for themselves (Neff & Davidson, 2016).

Several experimental and correlational studies have been conducted to demonstrate this association between self-efficacy and self-compassion. In a correlational study, Neff et al. (2018) measured 1519 individuals aged 18 to 80 in seven areas related to their self-concept. Results implied that self-compassion had strong positive associations with body appreciation and self-efficacy, whereas strong negative associations with maladaptive perfectionism and fear of failure. Overall, these findings indicated that high self-compassion was also linked with a more positive self-concept (Neff et al., 2018).

In a study conducted by Iskender (2009), how faculty of education students' self-compassion levels were related to their control beliefs and self-efficacy in learning was examined. Findings implied that students with higher levels of self-compassion also felt more in control of their learning process and perceived themselves as more competent in learning. Similarly, Manavipour and Seidan (2016) found that higher

levels of self-compassion were associated with higher levels of self-efficacy, and specifically, a high level of mindfulness predicted a high level of self-efficacy in learning among university students. Similarly, the findings of Babenko and Oswald's (2019) study implied that medical students with higher levels of self-compassion also had higher levels of general self-efficacy.

In an experimental study, Breines and Chen (2012) examined how people's self-compassion levels affect their motivation to improve themselves after a failure. In the first experiment, 69 undergraduates were asked to think about an event in which they thought they were weak. After that, they were divided into three groups. Participants of the first group were instructed to respond to themselves in a self-compassionate manner, and the second group in a self-validating manner. The third group did not receive any instructions. After it, they were asked what they thought the source of this weakness was and what efforts they made to eliminate it afterward. Results highlighted that the chosen weaknesses were predominantly about a social incident like a romantic relationship problem. Results of the first experiment implied that the group who believed the most that they could improve themselves were the ones who received self-compassion-focused instructions. In the second experiment, the results were similar. Participants with the highest motivation to improve themselves after an event that makes them feel guilty were the ones who received self-compassion-focused instruction. In the third experiment, the immediate effect of the instructions was measured by applying a difficult achievement test and then giving participants time to improve themselves on the subjects that were asked before conducting the test again. Then the instructions were given, and their perceptions of the test were measured. The difference in the increase in achievement among groups was not significant. However, it was observed that participants who received self-compassionate instructions were the ones who spent the most time improving their knowledge about the subjects in the test. In the fourth and final experiment, participants of each group were asked which type of person they would like to talk to about their weakness- someone who overcame it, someone having a similar weakness, or someone weaker than them. Participants who received self-compassionate instructions wanted to interact with people who overcame their weaknesses, and they were the most motivated group for self-

improvement. Taken together, the results of these experiments showed that students with elevated self-compassion levels were more motivated to improve themselves.

2.4 Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Until now, many studies highlighted that being in a relationship has benefits for individuals. For instance, Braithwaite et al. (2010) pointed out that compared to their single counterparts, university students who are in serious romantic relationships have better mental health. They are also less likely to use substances, have sexual diseases, or have weight problems. Similarly, Whitton et al. (2013) found that female university students in committed relationships showed fewer depression symptoms and had fewer issues with alcohol intake. In a longitudinal study, being in a romantic relationship was a protective factor from distress for homosexuals and black people (Whitton et al., 2018). In another study, a group of emerging adults in romantic relationships reported feeling more satisfied with their lives and less isolated than the single participants (Beckmeyer & Cromwell, 2019). Meyer et al. (2022) 's results indicated that compared to individuals in committed relationships, individuals who are single or not committed to their partners are less satisfied with their lives. In addition to all those proven benefits, being in a romantic relationship is also considered advantageous by university students. According to the participants, romantic involvement provides benefits such as becoming more competent in relationships, being sexually more satisfied, and feeling happier (Sedikides et al., 1994).

Whether individuals maintain a romantic relationship depends on their level of relationship satisfaction (Ogan & Öz Soysal, 2021). Romantic relationship satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of their relationship (Hendrick, 1988). Affected by the rapid shifts in culture and economics, it has been a subject of interest to researchers working in various fields since the 1920s (Fincham & Beach, 2006). To this date, romantic relationships have been an area of interest in different theories, such as Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) and Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). Using the classification of attachment styles proposed by Bowlby (1969), researchers focus on how attachment styles influence romantic relationships (e.g., Pistole, 1989). For example, Pistole (1989) 's results implied that students with a secure attachment style are more satisfied in their relationships than students who are

anxiously or avoidantly attached. In a study by Eğeci and Gençöz (2006), securely attached to a partner was linked with greater relationship satisfaction. Likewise, attachment style was found as a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction in a recent study conducted in Ankara (Taşkesen, 2022). In another study, Sarı and Korkut-Owen (2016) found that anxious and avoidant attachment were significant negative predictors of relationship satisfaction.

Developed based on the Social Exchange Theory, Rusbult et al. (2001) proposed the Investment Model in which they discuss the reason individuals stay in their current relationship. They suggest that if people believe their current partner is better than an alternative partner, they will maintain the relationship and not seek love elsewhere. Also, if the current relationship is satisfying, they are likelier to stay in it. Lastly, the more they invest in the relationship, the longer they will maintain it. To summarize, if this effort and satisfaction are present, a partner commits himself/herself to the relationship and remains a part of it. How this model works in romantic relationships was evidenced in an experiment by Rusbult (1980). A group of university students were asked to read a scenario about a relationship between a man and a woman and then to impersonate either one of them. This scenario provided different circumstances in which high or low investment was required to maintain the relationship or the relationship had high or low costs for the partners. After the impersonation, they were asked questions about the relationship. Individuals were more satisfied with the relationship if they perceived its low cost. However, satisfaction with the relationship did not differ depending on how much investment was made or depending on gender. With another sample, participants were asked to answer questions about their previous or current relationship. Parallel with the experiment results, the regression analysis showed that how a partner evaluates the benefits and costs of the relationship predicts relationship satisfaction.

Many factors are associated with romantic relationship satisfaction, such as forgiveness (Braithwaite et al., 2011), self-esteem levels (Erol & Orth, 2014), and communication style (Eğeci & Gençöz, 2006). The findings of Braithwaite et al. (2011) implied that in committed relationships, partners who have a higher tendency to forgive their partner also work more on their relationship. They are also more

constructive when communicating with their partners. These behaviors lead to a higher level of satisfaction in relationships. In the longitudinal study conducted by Erol and Orth (2014), analyses showed that married people's self-esteem levels and relationship satisfaction were positively associated with each other. Over time, partners whose self-esteem increased also reported that they became more satisfied in their relationship. In another study, Eğeci and Gençöz (2006) 's findings implied that in addition to being securely attached to their partner, students who believe that they can overcome the problems they face in the relationship and who engage in less conflict with their partners were more satisfied in their relationships. The results of another study revealed that the more emerging Turkish adults feel they have control over their life and hold the belief that they are capable of overcoming challenges in life, the more they are satisfied with their relationships (Çürükvelioğlu, 2012).

Personality has also been revealed as a correlate of romantic relationship satisfaction in several studies (e.g., Furler et al., 2014). In addition to how personality is related to satisfaction in relationships, the perception of it was also found a correlate with relationship satisfaction (Furler et al., 2014). In their study, Furler et al. (2014) measured how adult couples perceived their and their partner's personalities. Results indicated that how satisfied an individual is in the relationship is independent of how a partner evaluates their personality traits. However, being evaluated as more emotionally stable, agreeable, conscientious, extravert, and open to new experiences was associated with being more satisfied in the relationship. Another finding of the same study was that partners who are more satisfied in their relationships also think they have a similar personality to their partner. The authors proposed that such satisfaction would occur because partners would feel emotionally closer to someone like themselves. Gonzaga et al. (2007) took this investigation one step further. The result of their hypothesized model indicated that similarities in personality lead to similarities in emotions like sadness, sympathy, and amusement. This emotional likeness increases relationship satisfaction (Gonzaga et al., 2007).

In addition to those psychological constructs, some studies also revealed that demographics such as the relationship status (e.g., Saraç et al., 2015) or the number of relationships (e.g., Julal Cnossen et al., 2019) also predict satisfaction in romantic

relationships. Compared to dating students, students in committed or engaged relationships reported higher relationship satisfaction (Saraç et al., 2015; Weiser & Weigel, 2016). Regarding the number of partners, no relationship was found between having a romantic relationship experience and the relationship satisfaction level among women currently involved in a romantic relationship in their emerging adulthood years (Julal Cnosen et al., 2019). However, another study found that the number of past relationships significantly predicts women's relationship satisfaction level (Frazier & Esterly, 1990). In another study, Barutçu-Yıldırım et al. (2021) found that along with self-compassion, the importance attributed to the relationship and the number of relationships students had in the past are predicting relationship satisfaction in emerging adults.

The role of cognition in romantic relationship satisfaction has attracted the attention of researchers as well. Regarding irrational beliefs, some studies highlighted that they negatively correlate to satisfaction in romantic relationships (Stackert & Bursik, 2003; Sarı & Korkut-Owen, 2016). In their study with an undergraduate sample, Stackert and Bursik (2003) found that belief in gender differences and disbelief that a partner can change was associated with less satisfaction in romantic relationships. In addition, for females, belief in the destructiveness of disagreement, and for males, belief in sexual perfectionism was negatively associated with satisfaction in romantic relationships. However, Sarı and Korkut-Owen's (2016) results implied that having more extreme expectations and belief in gender differences were positive predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction.

Along with these, mindfulness is related to satisfaction in relationships. In Barnes et al.'s (2007) experimental study, the effect of mindfulness on relationship satisfaction was examined. Couples were led to engage in a conflicting discussion, and their emotional responses to it were evaluated afterward. Measurements showed that participants with a higher level of mindfulness acted less hostile toward their partner and were less anxious after an argument. Also, participants who have high trait mindfulness reported a high level of satisfaction in their relationships.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this chapter, the design of the study, participants, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, description of the variables, data analyses, and limitations of the study were presented.

3.1. Design of the Study

This quantitative research was conducted with a correlational design. In correlational design, the existing relationship between continuous variables is investigated without exerting any influence on the variables (Fraenkel et al., 2012). As correlational methods, simple mediation analysis and structural equation modeling are suitable when *how* a variable relates to the other is to be investigated (Hayes, 2013). Therefore, a simple mediation analysis was employed in the present study to understand the nature of the relationship between the predictor (self-compassion) and the outcome variable (romantic relationship satisfaction). In the simple mediation model of the present study, the mediator variable is self-efficacy in romantic relationships.

3.2. Participants

There were three inclusion criteria for being selected as a participant in this study: Studying at a Turkish university, being an emerging adult, and having a non-marital romantic relationship at the time of the study. Being married was an exclusion criterion for this study. The target population of this study consisted of all Turkish students studying in Türkiye, in the emerging adulthood period, and currently involved in a non-marital romantic relationship. The accessible population consisted of Turkish students studying in Türkiye, in the emerging adulthood period, and currently involved in a romantic relationship and to whom were forwarded the study link. The study

sample was recruited via the convenience sampling method, in which a group of easily accessible people for the research participated in the study (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

In total, 550 participants completed all of the questionnaires. Forty-five of them were excluded due to several reasons. Four were excluded because of their relationship status (one married and three single). One was not currently enrolled in a university, and two were not studying in Türkiye. One stated the birth year as 2022, and one provided incorrect data. Twenty-nine participants were excluded because they did not meet the age criteria. Lastly, seven were deleted due to their outlier status.

Data collected from 505 students from various universities were used in this study. These universities were located in 39 different cities. However, most participants were students in Ankara (46.5%, *n* = 235) or Istanbul (30.9%, *n* = 156). The demographics of the participants are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Demographics of the Participants

		N	%	*M*	*SD*
Gender	Female	414	82		
	Male	83	16.4		
	Other	4	0.8		
	Not stated	4	0.8		
Level of study	Associate degree	33	6.5		
	Bachelor	378	74.9		
	Master	83	16.4		
	Ph.D.	11	2.2		
Age		505		23.16	2.36
Relationship status	Flirting/Dating	493	97.6		
	Engaged	12	2.4		
Duration of the relationship (in months)		505		20.52	20.22
Significance of the current relationship		505		8.76	1.43

Out of 505 students, 414 were female (82%), 83 were males (16.4%), four stated their gender as other (0.8%), and four did not want to disclose their gender (0.8%). They predominantly were bachelor's degree students (*n* = 378, 74.9%) or master's degree

students (*n* = 83, 16.4%), and the rest were associate degree students (*n* = 33, 6.5%) and Ph.D. students (*n* = 11, 2.2%). Their age ranged from 19 to 29 (*M* = 23.16, *SD* = 2.36).

Among them, 493 identified their relationships as flirting or dating (97.6%), and 12 were engaged (2.4%). The duration of their relationship ranged from less than a month to 144 months (*M* = 20.52, *SD* = 20.22). Most of them were either in their first (*n* = 124, 24.6%) or second relationship (*n* = 136, 26.9%). Participants were also asked to rate the significance of their current relationship on a 10-point scale. The mean score was 8.76, with a standard deviation of 1.43.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, four instruments were used to collect data. These were the Demographic Information Form, The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS), Self-efficacy in Romantic Relationship Scale (SERR), and the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS).

3.3.1. Criteria for Evaluation of Reliability and Validity

Scales' internal reliability was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha, and values over .85 were accepted as good reliability (Pallant, 2020). For validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed; and goodness of fit indices were evaluated. For the comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), values higher than .90 are accepted as a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

For standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR), a value close to .08 indicates a good fit for the model (Hu & Bentler,1999). For the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), values below .08 are considered acceptable (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Lastly, normed chi-square (χ^2/df) values between 1 and 5 were considered as an indicator of good model fit according to the suggestions of Schumacker and Lomax (2004).

3.3.2. Demographic Information Form

The researchers created a form to gather demographic information from participants. The form included questions about the name of their university, gender, level of study, age, relationship status, the duration of their relationship, and the significance they placed on their relationship (see Appendix B).

3.3.3. The Self-Compassion Scale (SCS)

The Self-Compassion Scale was developed by Neff (2003b) to measure the self-compassion levels of people. The SCS is a self-report measure, which includes 26 items and six factors. Items are rated from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating 'almost never' to 5 indicating 'almost always.' Sample items for this scale are "I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like" and "When I fail at something that's important to me, I tend to feel alone in my failure." These factors are self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. Cronbach's alpha for the total scale was calculated as .92, and test-retest reliability was calculated as .93 (Neff, 2003b), indicating high internal consistency according to Nunnally (1978).

The scale was adapted to Turkish by Deniz et al. (2008). The Turkish version has 24 items and a single-factor structure. The overall higher scores indicate a higher level of self-compassion (see Appendix C).

The confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis results revealed that the Turkish version has a single factor. In this version, items numbered 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, and 23 are reverse coded, and a higher score indicates a higher level of self-compassion. To measure reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated as .89, and test-retest reliability was calculated as .83 (Deniz et al., 2008). According to the standards by Nunnally (1978), the scale has high internal consistency.

3.3.3.1. Psychometric Properties of SCS in the Present Study

CFA for the single-factor structure of SCS was conducted for construct validity. Results indicated a poor fit. The parceling technique was utilized to obtain better-fit indices, as suggested by Kline (2016). To create a parcel, the average scores of a set of homogenous items are calculated (Kline, 2016). Six parcels were created by randomly assigning four items to each parcel and calculating their average. After parceling, the results of the second model did not indicate a good fit (see Table 3.2 below). Therefore, covariances were added between parcels 1 and 4 and between parcels 5 and 1. Results of the final model indicated a good fit [(χ^2 (7) = 24.68, p = .00, χ^2/df = 3.57; CFI = .99, SRMR = .02; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .07)]. For reliability,

Cronbach's alpha was calculated as .94, indicating high internal consistency according to Nunnally (1978).

Table 3.2

Fit Indices of The Self-Compassion Scale

	χ^2/df	CFI	SRMR	TLI	RMSEA
Initial Model	7.61	.75	.08	.72	.11
2nd Model	10.1	.96	.03	.94	.14
Final Model	3.53	.99	.02	.98	.07

3.3.4. Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationship Scale (SERR)

Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships (SERR) was developed to measure people's self-efficacy level in their romantic relationships by Riggio et al. (2011). The scale has 12 items. Items are rated from 1 (indicating strongly disagree) to 9 (indicating strongly agree). Sample items for this scale is "I feel insecure about my ability to be a good romantic partner."

A high total score indicates having high self-efficacy in romantic relationships. SERR has two factors. The first factor is positively stated positive self-efficacy beliefs, and the second is negatively stated negative self-efficacy in romantic relationships. Due to the high correlation between the factors, constructors of the scale suggested that rather than looking at the factors separately, total self-efficacy in romantic relationships as a single construct should be measured with the scale. They chose to do so in their analysis of the validation study. Therefore, the main analysis was conducted with total SERR scores only in the present study. A high total score indicates high self-efficacy in romantic relationships.

In the initial development study with a sample of undergraduates, correlations between items and total scale varied between .35 and .72. Reliability was calculated using the Guttman split-half coefficient. It was found as .82 (Riggio et al., 2011).

SERR was translated into Turkish by Öz Soysal et al. (2019). Two-factor structure of the original scale was confirmed with a sample of 367 unmarried Turkish undergraduate students. Items numbered 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are reverse-

coded and belong to the negative self-efficacy factor. The remaining items (2, 3, and 5) belong to the positive self-efficacy factor (See Appendix D). Öz Soysal et al. (2019) found that test-retest reliability was .88. and Cronbach's alpha as an internal reliability coefficient was .90 for the total SERR (Öz Soysal et al., 2019), indicating high internal consistency according to Nunnally (1978).

3.3.4.1. Psychometric Properties of SERR in the Present Study

For construct validity, CFA for the unidimensional structure of SERR was conducted based on suggestions of constructors of the original scale. As seen in Table 3.2, the initial CFA results did not indicate a good fit. Therefore, a second model was created based on modification indices. In the second model, error term covariances were added between items 3 and 5, items 5 and 2, and items 6 (reversed) and 10 (reversed). Results of the second model indicated a good fit [(χ^2 (51) = 194.88, p = .00, χ^2/df = 4.04; CFI = .92, SRMR = .05; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .08].

Table 3.3

Fit Indices of Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships Scale

	χ^2/df	CFI	SRMR	TLI	RMSEA
Initial Model	5.44	.87	.07	.84	.09
2nd Model	3.82	.92	.05	.90	.08

For reliability, Cronbach's alpha for total SERR was calculated as .83, indicating high internal consistency according to Nunnally (1978).

3.3.5. Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

Developed by Hendrick (1988), RAS is a self-report scale measuring people's satisfaction with romantic relationships. It has a single-factor structure and consists of seven items. Items are answered on a 7-point rating scale. A higher total score refers to a higher level of relationship satisfaction. The fourth and seventh items are coded reversely. Sample items for this scale are "How good is your relationship compared to most?" and "How many problems are there in your relationship?". Cronbach alpha of this scale was calculated as .86, indicating high internal consistency according to Nunnally (1978). RAS was translated into Turkish by Curun (2001). Factor analysis results indicated a single factor for this scale (see Appendix E). Curun (2001)

calculated Cronbach's alpha as .86, indicating high internal consistency according to Nunnally (1978).

3.3.5.1. Psychometric Properties of RAS in the Current Study

CFA for the single-factor structure of RAS was conducted for construct validity. As seen in Table 3.4, the initial CFA results of the present study did not indicate a good fit. Therefore, a second model was created based on modification indices. In the second model, error term covariances were added between items 1 and 4 (reversed), 4 (reversed) and 7 (reversed), and 6 and 7 (reversed). The results of the final model indicated a good fit [(χ^2 (11) = 42.18, p = .00, χ^2/df = 3.75; CFI = .98, SRMR = .03; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .07)]. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated as .88, indicating high internal consistency according to Nunnally (1978).

Table 3.4

Fit Indices of Relationship Assessment Scale

	χ^2/df	CFI	SRMR	TLI	RMSEA
Initial Model	7.22	.95	.05	.92	.11
2nd Model	3.83	.98	.03	.97	.08

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The approval of the Middle East Technical University (METU) Ethics Committee (approval number: 0304-ODTUİAEK-2022) was obtained before data collection on 20 May 2022. Due to minor changes in the study, the approval was obtained again with a protocol number of 334- ODTUİAEK-2023 on 19 June 2023 (see Appendix A). After getting the approval, an invitation call including the researcher's name and contact information, the purpose of the study, the link to reach the instruments, and a QR code to reach the link were shared via social media accounts to reach university students in Turkey.

A pamphlet including the participation criteria, the purpose of the study, and a QR code to reach the link was created and distributed to students in METU. Data were collected online using the METU survey platform between May 2022 - January 2023. All participants were given an informed consent form before administering the

instruments and informed about their right to withdraw from the study and the confidentiality of the information they provided. Survey took around 7 minutes to complete.

3.5. Description of the Variables

3.5.1. Independent variable (predictor)

Self-compassion: Mean of the total score measured by the Self-Compassion Scale.

3.5.2. Mediator variable

Romantic relationship self-efficacy: Mean of the total score measured by the Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships Scale.

3.5.3. Outcome variable

Romantic relationship satisfaction: Mean of the total score measured by the Relationship Assessment Scale.

3.6. Data Analyses

Firstly, preliminary analyses were conducted using SPSS 28.0 (IBM Corp, 2021). Data were screened to identify participants who were not meeting the participation criteria. Then multivariate and univariate outlier analyses were conducted. Moreover, descriptive analyses were conducted using frequencies, means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values.

To test the factor structures, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for each of the scales. Afterward, internal reliability was calculated for each scale with Cronbach's alpha values.

The mediating role of romantic relationship self-efficacy in the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction was tested via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Before SEM, assumptions (univariate and multivariate normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity) were checked using SPSS 28.0 (IBM Corp, 2021). Reliability and validity analysis and SEM were conducted using R (R Core Team, 2022), RStudio (Posit Team, 2022), and the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012).

3.7. Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of this study. Because of the single-factor structure of the Turkish adaptation of the SCS (Deniz et al., 2008) used in this study, the results only provided information about the total self-compassion levels of participants. Data do not provide separate scores on self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness, defined as self-compassion components (Neff, 2003a). In addition, due to the correlational design of this study, results do not provide information about the causal relationships among variables.

Data were collected online and based on participants' self-reports, which can interfere with the answers' accuracy. Even though the participants remained anonymous during the data collection procedure, some of them might be inclined to provide data regarding their relationship that would be socially desirable. For instance, participants may have given socially desirable responses when asked about the importance they attributed to their relationships. Also, the environmental conditions or mood of the participants during data collection is unknown, which may have interfered with their responses. If participants conflicted with their partner when completing the questionnaire, their emotions, such as anger, might interfere with the accuracy of their responses regarding their general satisfaction in the relationship.

Since data were gathered through a non-random sampling method, the representativeness and generalizability of the results to the population of Turkish university students were low. Meta-analysis results showed that females' participation in studies in which data are collected online was significantly more than males' participation (Porter & Umbach, 2006). Similarly, in this study, the majority of the participants were females (82%). Therefore, the representativeness of the results for other genders can be considered low too. Also, since participants were mostly undergraduates and studying in Ankara or İstanbul, the representativeness of other educational degrees and cities is limited. Lastly, since data were gathered only at one point in time, results do not provide any information regarding long-term relationship satisfaction.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, preliminary and primary analysis results are provided. Data were first checked for missing values, univariate outliers, and multivariate outliers. Before the primary analyses, assumptions of SEM (multicollinearity, independence of error, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity) were checked. Descriptive statistics of data and correlations between variables are introduced. Afterward, the measurement model, structural model, and mediation results are given.

4.1 Preliminary Analyses

Collected data were transferred to SPPS version 28 (IBM Corp., 2021). In the survey, scale items were forced to be answered; therefore, there were no missing data after data screening for 550 participants. 38 of them were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria.

Afterward, data were checked for univariate and multivariate outliers following the guidelines proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). To identify univariate outliers, z-scores were calculated, and ones that exceeded the range between -3.29 and +3.29 were deleted. Multivariate outliers were detected by calculating Cook's distance values, Mahalonobis Distances, and their relevant probabilities. No Mahalonobis distance with a probability smaller than .001 was present, indicating the absence of multivariate outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In addition, Cook's distances were smaller than 1 for each participant, indicating the absence of multivariate outliers (Cook & Weisberg, 1982).

Seven participants were excluded from the study due to their univariate outlier status, and the analyses were conducted with the remaining 505 participants.

According to Kline (2016), a sample size larger than 200 is suitable when testing structural models. With 505 participants, this study met the sample size requirements of SEM.

4.1.1 Assumptions of SEM

4.1.1.1 Multicollinearity

To meet the multicollinearity assumption, tolerance values should be higher than .10, and variance inflation factors (VIF) should be lower than 5 (Hair et al., 2011). In this study, tolerance and VIF values were found as .91 and 1.10, respectively. These indicated the absence of multicollinearity.

4.1.1.2 Independence of error

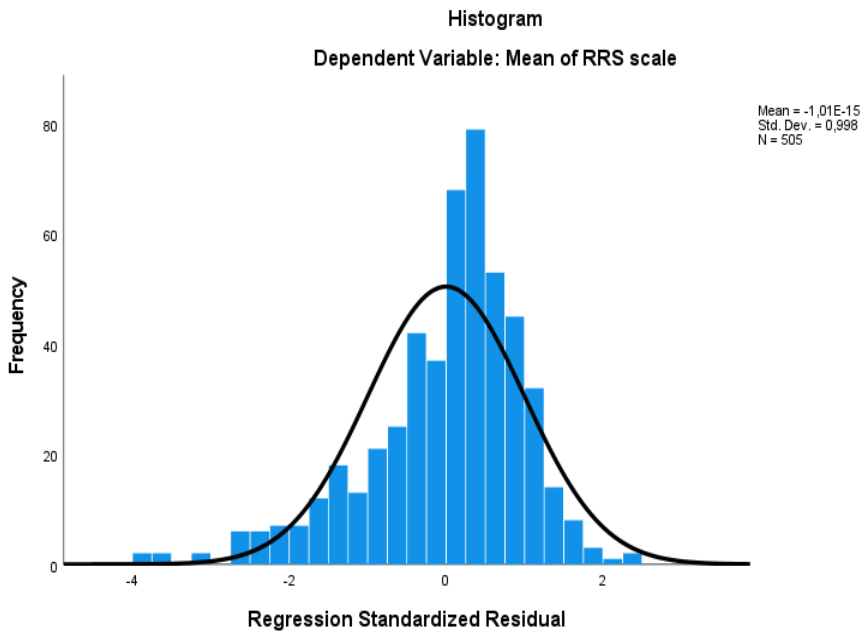
To assume errors are independent, the Durbin-Watson value should be between 1 and 3 (Durbin & Watson, 1951). In this study, it was calculated as 2.06, indicating independence of errors assumption was met.

4.1.1.3 Normality

Normality was examined with histogram and P-P plot of the distribution of residuals. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, residuals were almost normally distributed. Lastly, normality was checked with skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness and kurtosis values ranging from -3 to +3 indicate normal distribution (Kline, 2016). As seen in Table 4.1, values range from -1.21 to 1.29, so the normality assumption was not violated in this study.

Figure 4.1

Histogram for Normality of Residuals



The P-P plot indicated normal distribution for the residuals since the dots are close to the line (see Figure 4.2 below).

Figure 4.2

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

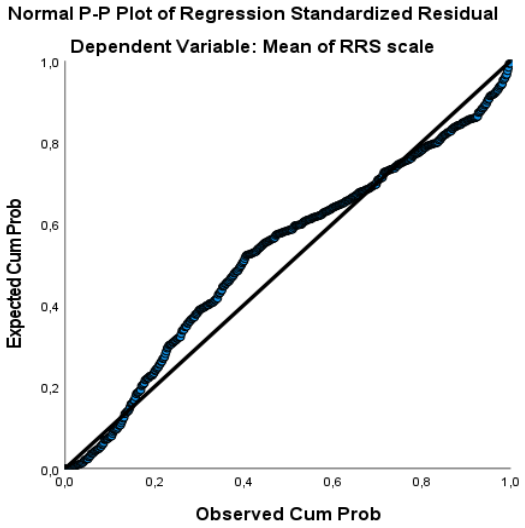


Table 4.1

Skewness and Kurtosis for Study Variables

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Skewness	SE	Kurtosis	SE
Self- compassion	-0.02	0.11	-0.46	0.22
Self-efficacy in romantic relationships	-0.88	0.11	0.44	0.22
Romantic relationship satisfaction	-1.21	0.11	1.29	0.22

4.1.1.4 Linearity

To check the linearity assumption, partial regression plots were created. The absence of a curvilinear pattern in the partial regression plot indicates that the linearity assumption is met (Hair et al., 2010). As seen in Figure 4.3 and Figure 4.4, the linearity assumption was met in this study.

4.1.1.5 Homoscedasticity

As seen in Figure 4.5, no apparent pattern was observed in the scatter plot, indicating no violation of homoscedasticity in the study, according to Hair et al. (2010).

Figure 4.3

Partial Regression Plot

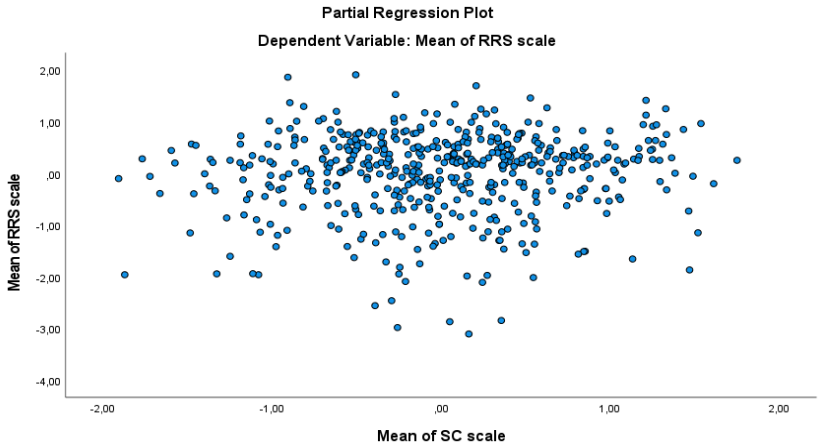


Figure 4.4

Partial Regression Plot

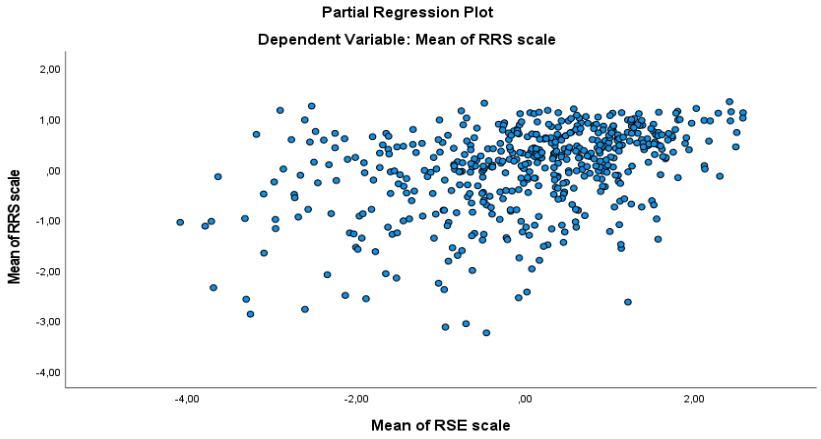
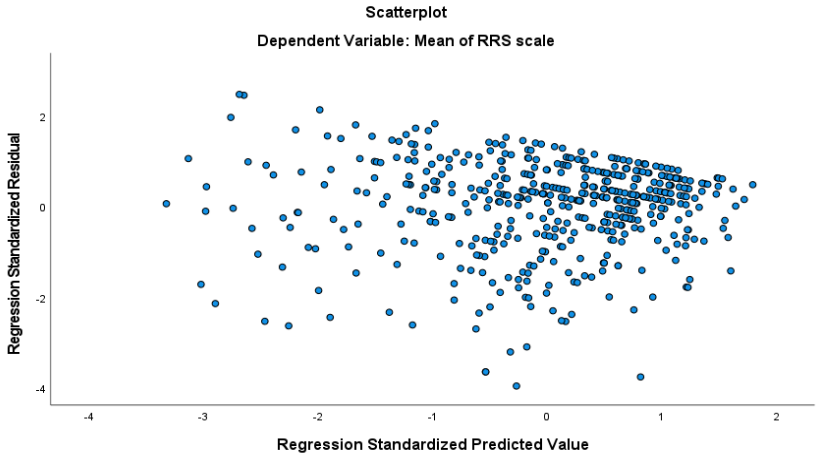


Figure 4.5

Scatterplot for Homoscedasticity



4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics regarding participants' self-compassion (M = 2.94, SD = .72), self-efficacy in romantic relationships (M = 6.66, SD = 1.34), and romantic relationship satisfaction (M = 5.94, SD = .87) are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

			Possible	
	M	*SD*	Range	Actual Range
Self-compassion	2.94	.72	1 - 5	1.17 - 4.75
Self-efficacy in romantic relationships	6.66	1.34	1 - 9	2.17 – 9.00
Romantic relationship satisfaction	5.94	.87	1 - 7	2.71 - 7.00

In addition, gender differences in romantic relationship satisfaction were measured using independent sample t-tests. As stated previously, the normality assumption was satisfied for romantic relationship satisfaction. Another assumption to satisfy is the homogeneity of variances, meaning that the samples are selected from populations with equal variances (Gravetter & Walnau, 2016). According to Levene's test results, the homogeneity of variances assumption was satisfied in this study (F_{Levene} = .00, p > .05). Results revealed that there was no significant difference between females and males regarding romantic relationship satisfaction, t (495) = 0.44, p > .05.

4.1.3 Bivariate Correlations Between Variables

Bivariate correlations among variables were calculated using Pearson correlations. Results revealed that self-efficacy in romantic relationships was moderately correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction (r = .43, p < .01) and self-compassion (r = .30, p < .01) according to standards suggested by Cohen (1988). Self-compassion was found to be weakly correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction (r = .19, p < .01) according to the standards suggested by Cohen (1988). Bivariate correlations among variables were displayed in Table 4.3 below.

4.2 Primary Analyses

The primary analyses of this study are structural equation modeling (SEM) and simple mediation analysis.

Table 4.3

Bivariate Correlation Among Variables

Variables	1	2	3
Self-efficacy in romantic relationships	1.00		
Self-compassion	.30**	1.00	
Romantic relationship satisfaction	.43**	.19**	1.00

Note. $^{**}p < .01$, one-tailed.

SEM can be performed to inspect the relationships among hypothetical constructs (latent variables) using indicators (observed variables in data) (Kline, 2016). Simple mediation is a technique in which the mediating role of a variable is investigated in the relationship between a predictor and an outcome variable.

In this study, primary analyses were conducted using the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012), lavaanPlot package (Lishinski, 2021), and mediate package (Tingley et al., 2014) in R statistical software (R Core Team, 2022).

4.2.1 Measurement Model

Before testing the hypothesized structural model, relationships between the study variables were tested with CFA using the lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) and lavaanPlot package (Lishinski, 2021) in R statistical software (R Core Team, 2022).

Latent variables in the model were self-compassion, self-efficacy in romantic relationships, and romantic relationship satisfaction. The goodness of model fit was evaluated with normed chi-square, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR values based on criteria discussed in section 3.3.1.

The measurement model indicated a good fit, [(χ^2 (264) = 608.80, p = .000, χ^2/df = 2.31; CFI = .95, SRMR = .05; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .05]. The model is represented in Figure 4.6 below.

4.2.2 Structural Model

The hypotheses of the study were tested with the structural equation model. Latent variables in the model were self-compassion, self-efficacy in romantic relationships, and romantic relationship satisfaction.

Based on the suggestion of Kline (2016), bootstrapping technique with 1000 bootstrapped samples was utilized to obtain a statistically more accurate result. The goodness of model fit was evaluated with normed chi-square, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR values based on criteria discussed in section 3.3.1.

The measurement model indicated a good fit, [(χ^2 (264) = 588.76, p = .000, χ^2/df = 2.23; CFI = .95, SRMR = .05; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .05]. The model is represented in Figure 4.7 below.

4.2.3 Indirect, Direct, and Total Effects

The mediating role of self-efficacy in romantic relationships between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction was tested with simple mediation analysis. The analysis was performed using the mediate package (Tingley et al., 2014) in R statistical software (R Core Team, 2022). The bootstrapping method with 1000 samples was utilized to obtain more statistically accurate results. Findings revealed that the total effect was significant (β = .23, p < .05, 95% CI [.13, .32]). The results of the average causal mediated effect (ACME) were significant as well (β = .15, p < .05, 95% CI [.10, .21]). The direct effect (ADE), on the other hand, was nonsignificant (β = .08, p > .05, 95% CI [-0.01, .17]). This indicates that self-efficacy in romantic relationships fully mediated the path from self-compassion to romantic relationship satisfaction.

4.2.4 Hypothesis testing

As mentioned below, the findings of the study supported three of the four hypotheses of this study:

H_1 was retained. Self-compassion significantly predicted romantic self-efficacy in romantic relationships.

H_2 was retained. Self-efficacy in romantic relationships significantly predicted romantic relationship satisfaction.

H_3 was rejected. Self-compassion did not significantly predict romantic relationship satisfaction.

H_4 was retained. Self-efficacy in romantic relationships fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction.

Figure 4.6

Measurement Model with Standardized Estimates

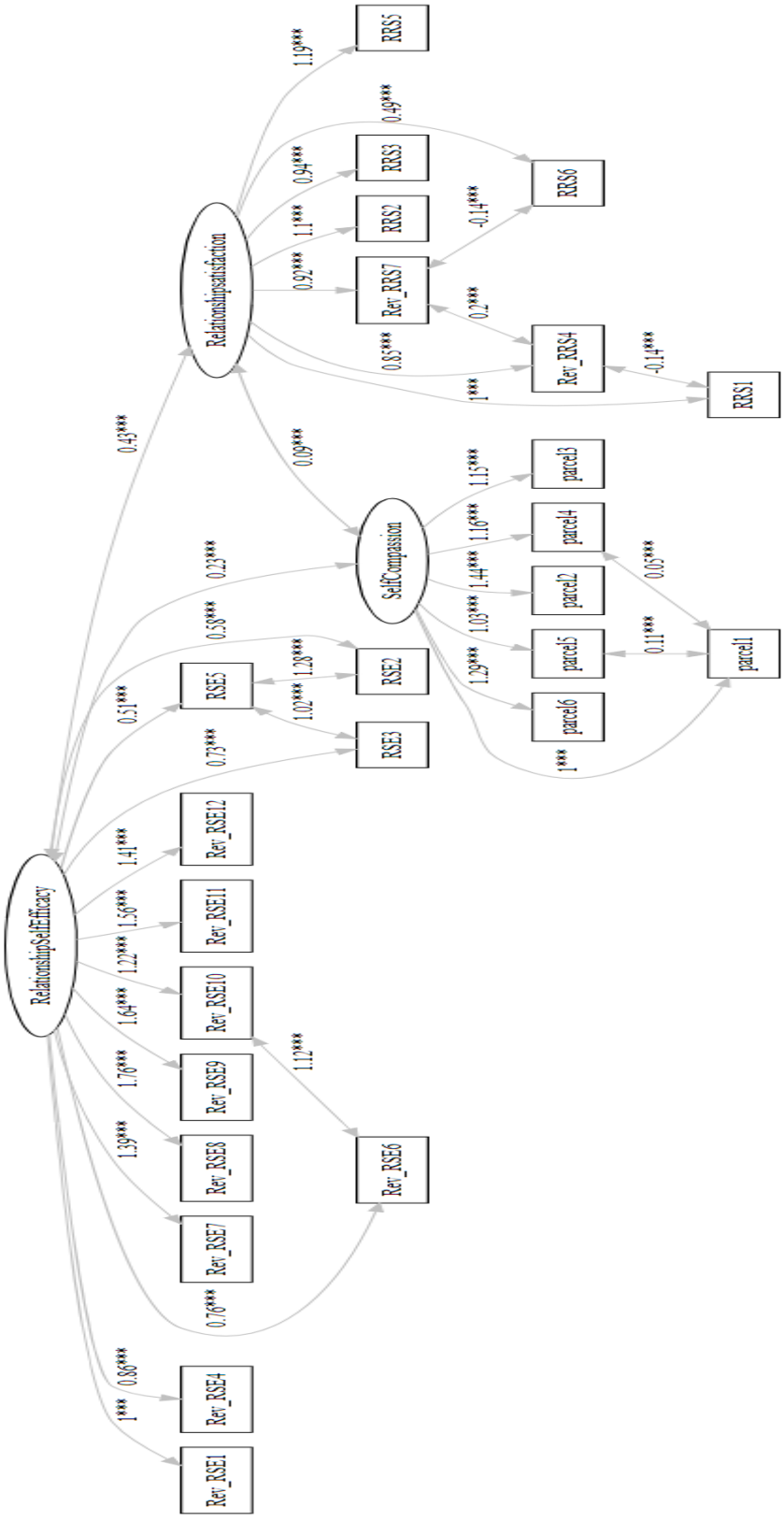
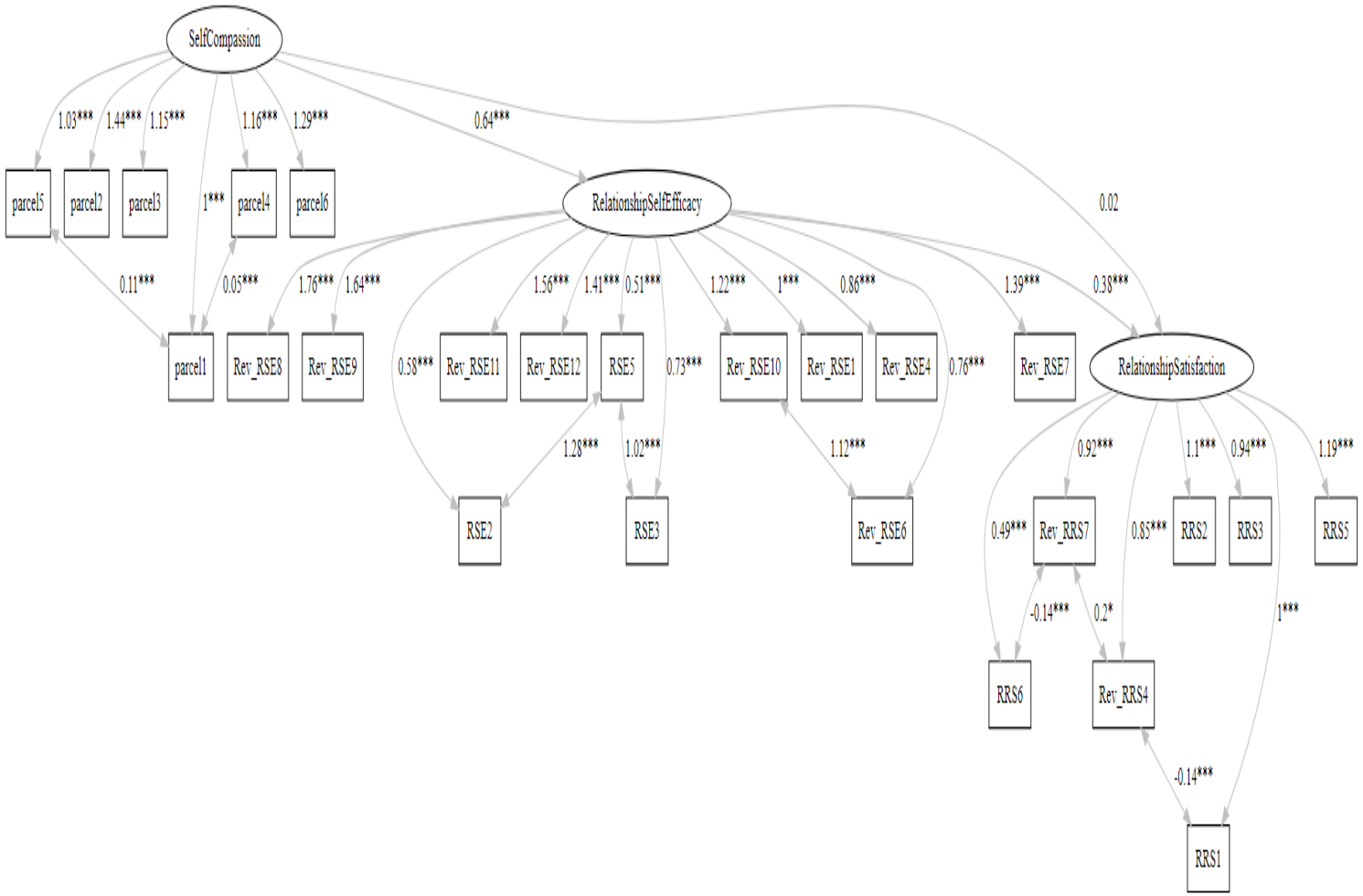


Figure 4.7

Hypothesized Structural Model with Standardized Estimates



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with a discussion on the mediator role of romantic relationship self-efficacy in the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction. Then, the implications of this study and suggestions for future research were presented.

5.1. Discussion on the Mediator Role of Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships in the Relationship Between Self-Compassion and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

This study aimed to understand some factors contributing to university students' romantic relationship satisfaction. A review of the studies conducted in the last two decades pointed out that self-compassion and self-efficacy in romantic relationships are among the predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction. They are constructs that have attracted the attention of researchers relatively recently.

The findings of this study indicated that self-compassion, self-efficacy in romantic relationships, and romantic relationship satisfaction were significantly associated with each other. Interestingly, self-compassion was not a significant predictor of romantic relationship satisfaction in this study. This finding contradicted the existing body of knowledge (e.g., Barutçu-Yıldırım et al., 2021; Fahimdanesh et al., 2020; Jacobson et al., 2018; Janjani et al., 2017; Neff & Beretvas, 2013). In addition, results revealed that self-efficacy in romantic relationships significantly predicts satisfaction in romantic relationships. This finding is consistent with the existing body of knowledge (e.g., Julal Cnossen et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2008; Lopez et al., 2007; Weiser & Weigel, 2016).

Even though a significant direct effect was not found, a significant indirect effect was detected in the results. Self-efficacy in romantic relationships fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction. One possible explanation is that without considering other factors that contribute to romantic relationship satisfaction, self-compassion alone does not predict romantic relationships by itself. However, the existing body of knowledge has demonstrated that self-compassion predicts self-efficacy (e.g., Babenko & Oswald, 2019; Benn et al., 2012; De Souza & Hutz, 2016; Muris et al., 2016; Smeets et al., 2014; St Charles, 2010; Ziemer, 2014). This study's findings were parallel to the literature since results revealed that self-compassion significantly predicted self-efficacy in romantic relationships.

Based on the conceptualization of self-compassion and self-efficacy, it is possible to discuss some possibilities on why they are related to each other. Considering that self-compassion involves self-kindness and mindfulness (Neff, 2003a), it can be expected that individuals with high self-compassion levels are more likely to make realistic evaluations of the situations and their abilities kindly. Self-compassionate people are more prone to have an understanding manner toward themselves in challenging times (Neff, 2003a). Self-compassion likely forms an emotionally secure base for the efficacy feelings to remain as they are in times of failure. Individuals who have compassion for themselves are more accepting of their flaws and are less likely to judge their abilities harshly (Liao et al., 2021). Individuals with high self-compassion were less likely to ruminate on difficulties (Neff, 2003a). So, another possible explanation is that rather than ruminating on the challenges, partners with a high level of self-compassion also focus on the positive sides of their relationship and their strengths. Put differently, self-compassion may lead to relationship satisfaction by shifting the mindset positively. Partners with a positive attitude in their relationship are more satisfied (Weiser & Weigel, 2016).

As discussed before, self-compassion also has a component called common humanity, which proposes that self-compassionate people acknowledge that they are surrounded by people who go through similar challenges and that they are not alone in it (Neff, 2003a). In other words, self-compassion involves social comparison but aims to

eliminate the feeling of loneliness in suffering. In Social Learning Theory, people are seen as social learners and tend to evaluate themselves compared to those they observe or take as role models (Wheeler & Suls, 2005). Schunk and Usher (2019) discussed that when people compare themselves with others, there are two possible outcomes related to this comparison. If they compare themselves with people who experienced similar difficulties, they might benefit from learning how to overcome the hardships and feel more motivated to overcome those themselves. Otherwise, if they compare themselves with people who have very different experiences or with unrealistic standards, they have in their minds, their feelings of competency may be damaged as a result (Schunk & Usher, 2019). Based on this, it is understood that self-efficacy is affected by the interpretations of interpersonal experiences. It is, therefore, reasonable to think that a person with a high level of self-compassion recognizes that others go through similar experiences, and they can be models in overcoming difficulties. This point of view leads to being more motivated to maintain the effort to meet the requirements of a task. In romantic relationships, this perspective can help partners avoid making unrealistic comparisons with the relationships in their environment.

As discussed before, in addition to interactions with the social environment, self-efficacy is influenced by the individual's emotional state (Bandura, 1991). When individuals experience a strong feeling, such as fear of failure, it may result in an adverse change in their efficacy expectations (Schunk & Usher, 2019). Applied to romantic relationships, it can be expected that if a partner intensely fears making a mistake in the relationship, it may lower their romantic relationship self-efficacy. By keeping in mind that making mistakes is a part of being human, self-compassionate individuals are more accepting of themselves. Based on this, it is reasonable to infer that individuals with higher self-compassion also have higher self-efficacy in their romantic relationships.

Regardless of individuals' knowledge and skills, their solid belief in their capabilities is essential because otherwise, they can easily become overwhelmed by the difficulties they face or the negative feedback they receive (Riggio et al., 2013). Therefore, according to Bandura (1991), the resiliency of these self-efficacy beliefs is vital throughout life. The self-efficacy feeling is very sensitive to how someone approaches

themselves after failing a task, especially individuals who think they are in complete control of the outcomes of their actions (Bandura, 1977). Also, it is sensitive to the nature of the experience, with negative experiences being more influential than accomplishments (Bandura, 1997). He argues that in times of failure, people who doubt their abilities can quickly believe they are incompetent (Bandura, 1991). However, to have a stable or increasing sense of self-efficacy, people need to overcome that self-doubt and maintain their efforts (Bandura, 1991) in their romantic relationships.

Rusbult (1983) proposed that people who invest in their romantic relationships, such as those who try to maintain their relationships, are more likely to remain committed to their partners. Bandura (1977) discussed that individuals with high self-efficacy are likelier to show effort in their lives. Applied to the context of romantic relationships, it can be speculated that partners high in self-efficacy are more likely to show the necessary effort to build a healthy relationship with their partner. Thus, the chances of them having a satisfying relationship might be high. The current study findings supported this speculation.

5.2. Implications of This Study

Present findings have implications for university students and mental health professionals. To begin with, university students who want to increase their satisfaction with their romantic relationships may benefit from the results of this study. The findings of this study indicated that students who are more compassionate towards themselves and who see themselves as more competent as a partner, experience greater levels of satisfaction they get from their relationship. Students unsatisfied with their relationships can review how they treat themselves and evaluate themselves as partners when they experience conflict-like difficulties. For example, when they realize that they cannot meet an expectation of their partner and their partner is discontent, this may upset them. In such a situation, instead of judging themselves harshly and seeing themselves as incompetent partners, they can think that everyone has difficulties in their relationships and that this does not make them nasty partners. Instead, they can stay aware that this is a temporary situation they can work through with their partner.

Secondly, the findings may benefit college counselors or mental health professionals who work on relationship problems. How compassionate students are to themselves and how they perceive themselves as partners may be evaluated in the session if they report dissatisfaction with their relationships. Moreover, professionals can also suggest practices such as self-compassion meditation. Online sources and printed materials can be provided to students that teach them ways to improve their self-compassion and self-efficacy in romantic relationships by college counseling centers. Also, these practices can be included in interventions targeted to improve the romantic relationship experiences of students.

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

Considering this study's limited nature, it is possible to make sample selection and research design recommendations. Firstly, since the participants of this research are unmarried individuals, future studies may extend this investigation by including cohabitating and married participants to understand how these associations occur in marital relationships as well. Participants of this study were mainly from Ankara (45.7%) and Istanbul (30.9%). In future studies, the distribution of participants by city may be more balanced. Also, since this study's sample predominantly consisted of females (82%), future studies can have a more balanced participant distribution of gender.

Secondly, results revealed that self-efficacy in romantic relationships fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and romantic relationship satisfaction. This hints that there might be other variables that explain the association between self-compassion and relationship satisfaction. More complex structural equation models can be created to understand this association better. Those models can include current conflict in the romantic relationship as a moderator, or problem-solving skills and relationship maintenance strategies as mediators. Also, components of self-compassion can be separately investigated in addition to total self-compassion.

The literature review pointed out that self-efficacy in romantic relationships has been examined in relatively few studies in Türkiye. Therefore, more studies can be

conducted about factors influencing self-efficacy in romantic relationships and their related outcomes.

Although the effects of self-compassion on romantic relationship satisfaction were investigated in experimental studies and found to have a positive effect on relationship satisfaction (Budzan & Van Vliet, 2021; Suppes, 2021), to the researcher's knowledge, no experimental study was conducted to understand how self-compassion affects self-efficacy in relationships. Thus, researchers may design experiments to investigate this effect. Moreover, additional research with a longitudinal design can be utilized to understand how changes in self-compassion and self-efficacy in romantic relationships lead to variations in romantic relationship satisfaction over time.

REFERENCES

Adamczyk, K., & Segrin, C. (2015). Perceived social support and mental health among single vs. partnered Polish young adults. *Current Psychology*, *34*, 82-96. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-014-9242-5

Akın, A. & Akın, U. (2014). An investigation of the predictive role of self-compassion on subjective happiness in Turkish university students. *Journal of Education Science and Psychology, 6*, 59-68.

Arnett J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*(5), 469–480. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.5.469

Arnett J. J. (2014). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*, (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Attridge, M., Berscheid, E., & Simpson, J. A. (1995). Predicting relationship stability from both partners versus one. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*(2), 254. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.2.254

Aydemir, E. (2021). *Irrational beliefs and self-efficacy in romantic relationships as predictors of psychological well-being among late adolescents*. [Master's Thesis]. Işık University.

Babenko, O., & Oswald, A. (2019). The roles of basic psychological needs, self-compassion, and self-efficacy in the development of mastery goals among medical students. *Medical Teacher, 41*(4), 478-481. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1442564

Baker, L. R., & McNulty, J. K. (2011). Self-compassion and relationship maintenance: The moderating roles of conscientiousness and gender. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*(5), 853–873. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021884

Baker, L. R., Cobb, R. A., Mcnulty, J. K., Lambert, N. M., & Fincham, F. D. (2016). Remaining in a situationally aggressive relationship: The role of relationship self-efficacy: Relationship self-efficacy and dissolution. *Personal Relationships, 23*(3), 591–604. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12145

Baker, L. R., McNulty, J. K., Overall, N. C., Lambert, N. M., & Fincham, F. D. (2013). How do relationship maintenance behaviors affect individual well-being? A contextual perspective. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 4*(3), 282-289. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550612452891

Bandura, A. (1971). *Social Learning Theory*. General Learning Press.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191–215. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191.

Bandura, A. (1978). Reflections on self-efficacy. *Advances in Behavior Research and Therapy, 1*, 237-269. https://doi.org/10.1016/0146-6402(78)90012-7

Bandura, A. (1990). Perceived self-efficacy in the exercise of personal agency. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 2*(2), 128-163. https://doi.org/10.1080/10413209008406426

Bandura, A. (1991). Social cognitive theory of self-regulation. *Organizational behavior and Human Decision Processes, 50(*2), 248-287. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90022-L

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H. Freeman.

Baran, L., & Jonason, P. K. (2020). Academic dishonesty among university students: The roles of the psychopathy, motivation, and self-efficacy. *PlosOne, 15*(8), Article e0238141. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238141

Barnes, S., Brown, K. W., Krusemark, E., Campbell, W. K., & Rogge, R. D. (2007). The role of mindfulness in romantic relationship satisfaction and responses to relationship stress. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 33*(4), 482-500. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2007.00033.x

Barutçu-Yıldırım, F., Aydın, G., & Sancak Aydın, G. (2021). Romantic relationship satisfaction in emerging adulthood. *Turkish Journal of Education*, 319–332. https://doi.org/10.19128/turje.874516

Beaumont, E., Durkin, M., Hollins Martin, C. J., & Carson, J. (2016). Measuring relationships between self-compassion, compassion fatigue, burnout and well-being in student counsellors and student cognitive behavioural psychotherapists: A quantitative survey. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 16*(1), 15–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12054

Beckmeyer, J. J., & Cromwell, S. (2019). Romantic relationship status and emerging adult well-being: Accounting for romantic relationship interest. *Emerging Adulthood, 7(*4), 304-308. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696818772653

Benn, R., Akiva, T., Arel, S., & Roeser, R. W. (2012). Mindfulness training effects for parents and educators of children with special needs. *Developmental Psychology, 48*(5), 1476–1487. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027537

Bowlby, J. (1969*). Attachment and loss, Vol. I: Attachment*. Basic Books.

Braithwaite, S. R., Delevi, R., & Fincham, F. D. (2010). Romantic relationships and the physical and mental health of college students. *Personal Relationships, 17*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2010.01248.x

Braithwaite, S. R., Selby, E. A., & Fincham, F. D. (2011). Forgiveness and relationship satisfaction: Mediating mechanisms. *Journal of Family Psychology, 25*(4), 551–559. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024526

Breines, J. G., & Chen, S. (2012). Self-compassion increases self-improvement motivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 38*(9), 1133-1143. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167212445599

Brooks, M., Kay-Lambkin, F., Bowman, J., & Childs, S. (2012). Self-compassion amongst clients with problematic alcohol use. *Mindfulness, 3*, 308-317. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-012-0106-5

Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. Testing structural equation models. In K.A. Bollen and J.S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136-162). Sage.

Budzan, B. N., & Van Vliet, K. J. (2021). The influence of a self-compassion training program on romantic relationship conflict: An exploratory multiple-case study. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy, 55*(3), 315–333. https://doi.org/10.47634/cjcp.v55i3.71052

Cassidy, S. (2011). Self-regulated learning in higher education: Identifying key component processes. *Studies in Higher Education, 36*(8), 989-1000. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2010.503269

Coffman, D. L., & Gilligan, T. D. (2002). Social support, stress, and self-efficacy: Effects on students' satisfaction. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 4*(1), 53-66. https://doi.org/10.2190/BV7X-F87X-2MXL-2B3L

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.

Collins, N. L., & Read, S. J. (1990). Adult attachment, working models, and relationship quality in dating couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58*(4), 644. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.4.644

Cook, R. D., & Weisberg, S. (Eds.). (1982). *Residuals and influence in regression*. Chapman and Hall.

Crocker, J., & Canevello, A. (2008). Creating and undermining social support in communal relationships: The role of compassionate and self-image goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*(3), 555-575. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.95.3.555

Cui, M., Fincham, F. D., & Pasley, B. K. (2008). Young adult romantic relationships: The role of parents' marital problems and relationship efficacy. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 34*(9), 1226–1235. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167208319693

Çürükvelioğlu, E. (2012). *Romantic relationship satisfaction in emerging adulthood: The role of self-concept clarity and personal agency* [Master's thesis], Middle East Technical University.

Curun, F. (2001). The effects of sexism and sex role orientation on romantic relationship satisfaction [Master's thesis], Middle East Technical University. OpenMETU. https://hdl.handle.net/11511/12102

De Souza, L. K. D., & Hutz, C. S. (2016). Self-compassion in relation to self-esteem, self-efficacy and demographical aspects. *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto), 26*(64), 181–188. https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-43272664201604

Deniz, M. E., Kesici, Ş., & Sümer, A. S. (2008). The validity and reliability of the Turkish version of the Self-Compassion Scale. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 36*(9), 1151–1160. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2008.36.9.1151

Dogan, T. (2012). A long-term study of the counseling needs of Turkish university students. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 90*(1), 91–96. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1556-6676.2012.00012.x

Doherty, W. J. (1981). Cognitive processes in intimate conflict: II. Efficacy and learned helplessness. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 9*(2), 35-44. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/01926188108250395

Dowd, A. J., & Jung, M. E. (2017). Self-compassion directly and indirectly predicts dietary adherence and quality of life among adults with celiac disease. *Appetite, 113*, 293–300. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2017.02.023

Durbin, J., & Watson, G. S. (1951). Testing for serial correlation in least squares regression. *II. Biometrika, 38*(1/2), 159–177. https://doi.org/10.2307/2332325

Eğeci, İ. S., & Gençöz, T. (2006). Factors associated with relationship satisfaction: Importance of communication skills. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 28*, 383-391. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10591-006-9010-2

Ekinci, N., & Koç, H. (2022). Grit, general self-efficacy, and life satisfaction: The mediating role of hope. *Journal of Community Psychology, 51*(3), 1288–1299. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22962

Erol, R. Y., & Orth, U. (2014). Development of self-esteem and relationship satisfaction in couples: Two longitudinal studies. *Developmental Psychology, 50*(9), 2291–2303. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037370

Fahimdanesh, F., Noferesti, A., & Tavakol, K. (2020). Self-compassion and forgiveness: Major predictors of marital satisfaction in young couples. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 48*(3), 221–234. https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2019.1708832

Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. (2006). Relationship satisfaction. In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 579–594). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511606632.032

Fincham, F. D., & Bradbury, T. N. (1987). The assessment of marital quality: A reevaluation. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 797-809. https://doi.org/10.2307/351973

Fincham, F. D., & Cui, M. (Eds.). (2010). Romantic relationships in emerging adulthood. Cambridge University Press.

Fletcher, G. J., Friesen, N. C., Myron, D., & Nicolls, C. L. (2018). Social cognition in romantic relationships. In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 230–242). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316417867.019

Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Frazier, P. A., & Esterly, E. (1990). Correlates of relationship beliefs: Gender, relationship experience and relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 7*(3), 331-352. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407590073003

Furler, K., Gomez, V., & Grob, A. (2014). Personality perceptions and relationship satisfaction in couples. *Journal of Research in Personality, 50,* 33-41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2014.02.003

Furman, W., & Shaffer, L. (2003). The role of romantic relationships in adolescent development. In P. Florsheim (Ed.), *Adolescent romantic relations and sexual behavior: Theory, research, and practical implications* (pp. 3–22). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Gala, J., & Kapadia, S. (2013). Romantic relationships in emerging adulthood: A developmental perspective. *Psychological Studies*, *58*(4), 406–418. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-013-0219-5

Gilbert, P. (2015). The evolution and social dynamics of compassion: The evolution and social dynamics of compassion. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *9*(6), 239–254. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12176

Gonzaga, G. C., Campos, B., & Bradbury, T. (2007). Similarity, convergence, and relationship satisfaction in dating and married couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*(1), 34. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.1.34

Gravetter, F. J., & Wallnau, L. B. (2016). *Statistics for The Behavioral Sciences*. Cengage Learning.

Gunnell, K. E., Mosewich, A. D., McEwen, C. E., Eklund, R. C., & Crocker, P. R. (2017). Don't be so hard on yourself! Changes in self-compassion during the first year of university are associated with changes in well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences, 107*, 43-48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.11.032

Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. & Anderson, R.E. (2010) *Multivariate data analysis*. (7th Ed.), Pearson.

Hall, C. W., Row, K. A., Wuensch, K. L., & Godley, K. R. (2013). The role of self-compassion in physical and psychological well-being. *The Journal of Psychology, 147*(4), 311–323. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2012.693138

Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach.* Guilford Press.

Hendrick, S.S. (1988) A generic measure of relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family 50*, 93-98. https://doi.org/10.2307/352430

Hermanto, N., & Zuroff, D. C. (2018). Experimentally enhancing self-compassion: Moderating effects of trait care-seeking and perceived stress. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 13*(6), 617–626. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2017.1365162.

Horne, R. M., & Johnson, M. D. (2018). Gender role attitudes, relationship efficacy, and self-disclosure in intimate relationships. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *158*(1), 37–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2017.1297288

Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *6*(1), 1–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118

IBM Corp. Released 2021. IBM SPSS statistics for Windows, Version 28.0. Armonk, IBM Corp.

Iskender, M. (2009). The relationship between self-compassion, self-efficacy, and control belief about learning in Turkish university students. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal, 37*(5), 711–720. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2009.37.5.711

Jacobson, E. H. K., Wilson, K. G., Solomon Kurz, A., & Kellum, K. K. (2018). Examining self-compassion in romantic relationships. J*ournal of Contextual Behavioral Science, 8*, 69–73. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2018.04.003

Janjani, P., Haghnazari, L., Keshavarzi, F., & Rai, A. (2017). The role of self-compassion factors in predicting the marital satisfaction of staff at Kermanshah University of medical sciences. *World Family Medicine Journal: Incorporating the Middle East Journal of Family Medicine, 99*(5489), 1-6. http://dx.doi.org/10.5742/MEWFM.2017.93020

Julal Cnossen, F. S., Harman, K. A., & Butterworth, R. (2019). Attachment, efficacy beliefs and relationship satisfaction in dating, emerging adult women. *Journal of Relationships Research, 10, Article* e19. https://doi.org/d10.1017/jrr.2019.14

Kelly, A. C., Zuroff, D. C., Foa, C. L., & Gilbert, P. (2010). Who benefits from training in self-compassionate self-regulation? A study of smoking reduction. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 29*(7), 727-755. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2010.29.7.727

Kline, R. B. (2016). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. (4th. ed.). The Guilford Press.

Kwan, V. S., Kuang, L. L., & Hui, N. H. (2009). Identifying the sources of self-esteem: The mixed medley of benevolence, merit, and bias. *Self and Identity, 8*(2-3), 176–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860802504874

Kyeong, L. W. (2013). Self-compassion as a moderator of the relationship between academic burn-out and psychological health in Korean cyber university students. *Personality and Individual Differences, 54*(8), 899-902. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.01.001

Liao, K. Y.-H., Stead, G. B., & Liao, C.-Y. (2021). A meta-analysis of the relation between self-compassion and self-efficacy. *Mindfulness, 12*(8), 1878–1891. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-021-01626-4

Lishinski, A. (2021). lavaanPlot: Path Diagrams for'Lavaan'Models via'DiagrammeR'. Comprehensive R Archive Network (CRAN).

Lopez, F. G., Morúa, W., & Rice, K. G. (2007). Factor structure, stability, and predictive validity of college students' relationship self-efficacy beliefs. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 40*(2), 80–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481756.2007.11909807

Ly, J. (2021). *Self-efficacy as a romantic relationship partner: Links with sexual outcomes* [Doctoral dissertation] California State University, Los Angeles.

Manavipour, D., & Saeedian, Y. (2016). The role of self-compassion and control belief about learning in university students' self-efficacy. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science, 5*(2), 121–126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2016.02.003

Marshall, E.-J., & Brockman, R. N. (2016). The relationships between psychological flexibility, self-compassion, and emotional well-being. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy, 30*(1), 60–72. https://doi.org/10.1891/0889-8391.30.1.60

McGehee, P., Germer, C. K., & Neff, K. D. (2017). Core values in mindful self-compassion. In *Mindfulness in behavioral health* (pp. 279–293). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64924-5_11

Meier, A., & Allen, G. (2009). Romantic relationships from adolescence to young adulthood: Evidence from the national longitudinal study of adolescent health. *The Sociological Quarterly, 50*(2), 308–335. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1533-8525.2009.01142.x

Muris, P., Meesters, C., Pierik, A., & De Kock, B. (2016). Good for the self: Self-compassion and other self-related constructs in relation to symptoms of anxiety and depression in non-clinical youths. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 25*(2), 607–617. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-015-0235-2

Meyer, D., Cohn, A., Robinson, B., & Zubatsky, M. (2022). Differences in life satisfaction and emotions by romantic coupling and sexual orientation. *Journal of Family Issues*, https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x221106737

Neff, K. D. (2003a). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity, 2*(2), 85–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309032

Neff, K. D. (2003b). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity, 2*(3), 223–250. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298860309027

Neff, K. D. (2009). The role of self-compassion in development: A healthier way to relate to oneself. *Human Development, 52*(4), 211–214. https://doi.org/10.1159/000215071

Neff, K. D. (2011). Self-compassion, self-esteem, and well-being. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 5*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00330.x

Neff, K. D., & Beretvas, S. N. (2013). The role of self-compassion in romantic relationships. *Self and Identity, 12*(1), 78–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2011.639548

Neff, K. D., & Germer, C. K. (2017). Self-compassion and psychological wellbeing. In J. Doty (Ed.), *Oxford handbook of compassion science* (pp. 371–386). Oxford University Press

Neff, K. D., & Pommier, E. (2013). The relationship between self-compassion and other-focused concern among college undergraduates, community adults, and practicing meditators. *Self and Identity, 12*(2), 160–176. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2011.649546

Neff, K. D., Long, P., Knox, M. C., Davidson, O., Kuchar, A., Costigan, A., Williamson, Z. H., Rohleder, N., Tóth-Király, I., & Breines, J. G. (2018). The forest and the trees: Examining the association of self-compassion and its positive and negative components with psychological functioning. *Self and Identity*, *17*(6), 627–645. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1436587

Neff, K., & Davidson, O. (2016). Self-compassion: Embracing suffering with kindness. In I. Ivtzan & T. Lomas (Eds.), *Mindfulness in positive psychology: The science of meditation and wellbeing* (pp. 37–50). Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group

Nunnally, J.C. (1978). An overview of psychological measurement. In Wolman, B.B. (Eds) *Clinical Diagnosis of Mental Disorders*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4684-2490-4_4

Ogan, S., & Öz Soysal, F. S. (2021). Romantic relationship satisfaction and self-efficacy in romantic relationship as predictors of relationship maintenance strategies among university students, *IBAD Journal of Social Sciences, 12,* 271-288. https://doi.org/10.21733/ibad.988829

Öz Soysal, F. S., Uz Baş, A., & Aysan, F. (2019). Validity and reliability study of the self-efficacy in romantic relationships scale. *Journal of the Human and Social Science Research, 8*(2), 1100–1110. https://doi.org/10.15869/itobiad.544395

Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using IBM SPSS.* McGraw-hill education.

Pinto-Gouveia, J., Galhardo, A., Cunha, M., & Matos, M. (2012). Protective emotional regulation processes towards adjustment in infertile patients. *Human Fertility, 15*(1), 27–34. https://doi.org/10.3109/14647273.2011.654310

Pistole, M. C. (1989). Attachment in adult romantic relationships: Style of conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 6*(4), 505–510. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407589064008

Porter, S., & Umbach, P. D. (2006). Student survey response rates across institutions: Why do they vary? *Research in Higher Education, 47*(2), 229–247. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-005-8887-1

Posit Team (2022). RStudio: Integrated development for R. RStudio, Inc. http://www.rstudio.com/

R Core Team (2022). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. https://www.R-project.org/

Riggio, H. R., Weiser, D. A., Valenzuela, A. M., Lui, P. P., Montes, R., & Heuer, J. (2013). Self-efficacy in romantic relationships: Prediction of relationship attitudes and outcomes. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 153*(6), 629–650. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2013.801826

Riggio, H. R., Weiser, D., Valenzuela, A., Lui, P., Montes, R., & Heuer, J. (2011). Initial validation of a measure of self-efficacy in romantic relationships. *Personality and Individual Differences, 51*(5), 601–606. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.05.026

Rosseel, Y. (2012). lavaan: An R package for structural equation modeling. *Journal of Statistical Software,* 48(2), 1–36. https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v048.i02

Rusbult, C. E. (1980). Commitment and satisfaction in romantic associations: A test of the investment model. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 16*(2), 172-186. https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(80)90007-4

Rusbult, C. E. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The development (and deterioration) of satisfaction and commitment in heterosexual involvements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45*(1), 101–117. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.45.1.101

Rusbult, C. E., Olsen, N., Davis, J. L., & Hannon, P. A. (2001). Commitment and relationship maintenance mechanisms. In J. Harvey & A. Wenzel (Eds.), *Close romantic relationships: Maintenance and enhancement* (pp. 87–113). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Schunk, D. H., & Usher, E. L. (2019). Social cognitive theory and motivation. In R. M. Ryan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of human motivation* (pp. 11–26). Oxford University Press.

Salazar, L. R. (2018). Examining the relationship between Math self-efficacy and statistics motivation in the introductory business statistics course: Self-compassion as a mediator. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education, 16*(2), 140–160. https://doi.org/10.1111/dsji.12149

Saraç, A., Hamamcı, Z., & Güçray, S. (2015). Predicting romantic relationship satisfaction of university students. *Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Journal, 5*(43), 69-81. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/200311

Sarı, T. & Korkut Owen, F. (2016). Examining the predictive role of irrational romantic relationship beliefs and attachment dimensions on relationship satisfaction. *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi , 1* (37) , 204-216 . https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/maeuefd/issue/19410/206447

Schumacker, R. E. & Lomax, R. G. (2004). *A beginner's guide to structural equation modeling.* Routhledge.

Sedikides, C., Oliver, M. B., & Campbell, W. K. (1994). Perceived benefits and costs of romantic relationships for women and men: Implications for exchange theory. *Personal Relationships, 1*(1), 5–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.1994.tb00052.x

Shapira, L. B., & Mongrain, M. (2010). The benefits of self-compassion and optimism exercises for individuals vulnerable to depression. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 5*(5), 377–389. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2010.516763.

Shulman, S., & Connolly, J. (2013). The challenge of romantic relationships in emerging adulthood: Reconceptualization of the field. *Emerging Adulthood, 1*(1), 27–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167696812467330

Sirois, F. M. (2015). A self-regulation resource model of self-compassion and health behavior intentions in emerging adults. *Preventive Medicine Reports, 2*, 218–222. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2015.03.006

Smeets, E., Neff, K., Alberts, H., & Peters, M. (2014). Meeting suffering with kindness: Effects of a brief self-compassion intervention for female college students. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 70*(9), 794–807. https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22076

St Charles, L. (2010). *The effects of mindfulness training on mindfulness, self-compassion, locus of control, and self-efficacy* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Pacific University

Stackert, R. A., & Bursik, K. (2003). Why am I unsatisfied? Adult attachment style, gendered irrational relationship beliefs, and young adult romantic relationship satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences, 34*(8), 1419–1429. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00124-1

Suppes, B. (2021). using self-compassion to influence romantic relationship satisfaction: A case study of women. *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy, 33*(3), 244–269. https://doi.org/10.1080/08952833.2021.1880185

Tabachnick, B. G. & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th ed.). Pearson Education

Tandler, N., Krüger, M., & Petersen, L.-E. (2021). Better battles by a self-compassionate partner?: The mediating role of personal conflict resolution styles in the association between self-compassion and satisfaction in romantic relationships. *Journal of Individual Differences, 42*(2), 91–98. https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001/a000333

Taşkesen, N. (2022). *Insecure attachment and relationship satisfaction: Testing the buffering roles of mindfulness, self- compassion, and cognitive defusion.* [Master's thesis], Middle East Technical University. OpenMETU.

Thibaut, J. W. & Kelley, H. M. 1959. *The social psychology of groups*. John Wiley.

Tingley, D., Yamamoto, T., Hirose, K., Keele, L., & Imai, K. (2014). Mediation: R package for causal mediation analysis. *Journal of Statistical Software, 59*(5), 1–38. https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v059.i05

Tyer-Viola, L. A., Corless, I. B.,Webel, A., Reid, P., Sullivan, K. M., & Nicholas, P. (2014). Predictors of medication adherence among HIV-positive women in North America. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing, 43*(2), 168–178. https://doi.org/10.1111/1552-6909.12288

Watson, G. S., & Durbin, J. (1951). Exact tests of serial correlation using noncircular statistics. *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, *22*(3), 446–451. https://doi.org/10.1214/aoms/1177729592

Wayment, H. A., West, T. N., & Craddock, E. B. (2016). Compassionate values as a resource during the transition to college: Quiet ego, compassionate goals, and self-compassion. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students In Transition, 28*(2), 93-114.

Weiser, D., & Weigel, D. (2016). Self-efficacy in romantic relationships: Direct and indirect effects on relationship maintenance and satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences, 89,* 152–156. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.10.013

Weisskirch, R. S. (2017). Abilities in romantic relationships and well-being among emerging adults. *Marriage & Family Review, 53*(1), 36-47. https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2016.1195471

Wheeler, L., & Suls, J. (2005). Social Comparison and Self-Evaluations of Competence. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation* (pp. 566–578). Guilford Publications.

Whittington, D., & Turner, L. A. (2022). Parental psychological control and self-efficacy as predictors of romantic relationship power dynamics. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 38*(3–4), 4486–4506. https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221117158

Whitton, S. W., Weitbrecht, E. M., Kuryluk, A. D., & Bruner, M. S. (2013). Committed dating relationships and mental health among college students. *Journal of American College Health, 61*(3), 176–183. https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2013.773903

Whitton, S. W., Dyar, C., Newcomb, M. E., & Mustanski, B. (2018). Romantic involvement: A protective factor for psychological health in racially-diverse young sexual minorities. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 127*(3), 265–275. https://doi.org/10.1037/abn0000332

Yarnell, L. M., & Neff, K. D. (2013). Self-compassion, interpersonal conflict resolutions, and well-being. *Self and Identity, 12*(2), 146–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2011.649545

Zhang, J. W., & Chen, S. (2017). Self-compassion promotes positive adjustment for people who attribute responsibility of a romantic breakup to themselves. *Self and Identity, 16*(6), 732-759. https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2017.1305985

Zessin, U., Dickhäuser, O., & Garbade, S. (2015). The relationship between self-compassion and well-being: A meta-analysis. *Applied Psychology, 7*(3), 340–364. https://doi.org/10.1111/aphw.12051

Zhan, S., Shrestha, S., & Zhong, N. (2022). Romantic relationship satisfaction and phubbing: The role of loneliness and empathy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.967339

Ziemer, K. (2014). *Self-Compassion and the expressive writing paradigm: A study of therapeutic effectiveness for chronic pain* (Publication No. 3643888) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park] Publishing

APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY
T: +90 312 210 22 91
F: +90 312 210 79 59
ueam@metu.edu.tr
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

19 HAZİRAN 2023

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr.Funda Barutçu YILDIRIM

Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Perim UYAR'ın ***"Öz-Şefkat ve Romantik İlişki Doyumu Arasındaki İlişkide Romantik İlişkide Öz-Yeterliliğin Aracı Rolü"*** başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek **334 ODTUİAEK-2023** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

Prof.Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye

Doç. Dr. Ali Emre Turgut
Üye

Doç. Dr. Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye

Doç.Dr. Murat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya OZCAN KABASAKAL
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

B. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİ FORMU

1. Cinsiyetiniz: ( ) Kadın ( ) Erkek ( ) Belirtmek istemiyorum ( ) Diğer……..

2. Doğum yılınız: ….

3. Öğrenim gördüğünüz seviye: ( ) Ön lisans ( ) Lisans ( )Yüksek lisans

( ) Doktora

4. Üniversiteniz:

5. a. Önlisans/Lisans öğrencisi iseniz, yüksek okulunuz/fakülteniz

b. Lisansüstü öğrencisi iseniz, bağlı olduğunuz enstitünüz:

6. Şu anda romantik ilişkiniz var mı? ( ) Evet ( ) Hayır (**ankete devam etmeyiniz**)

7. Önceki soruya cevabınız evet ise ilişki sürenizi belirtiniz (ay olarak): ….

8. Romantik ilişki durumunuz: ( ) Flört/sevgili ( ) Sözlü/Nişanlı ( ) Evli

9. İlişkinizin sizin için önemi

Hiç önemli değil 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Çok önemli

10. Kaçıncı ilişkiniz olduğu:

C. SAMPLE ITEMS OF THE SELF-COMPASSION SCALE

ÖZ-ANLAYIŞ ÖLÇEĞİ

ZORLUKLAR KARŞISINDA KENDİME GENEL OLARAK NASIL DAVRANIYORUM? Yanıtlamadan önce her bir ifadeyi dikkatle okuyunuz. Her bir maddede belirtilen durumun sizin için ne sıklıkla geçerli olduğunu aşağıda verilen 5'li derecelendirme ölçeğini kullanarak belirtiniz. 1 = Hemen hemen hiçbir zaman 2 = Nadiren 3 = Ara sıra 4 = Çoğu zaman 5 = Hemen hemen her zaman					
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde, kötü olan her şeye takılma eğilimim vardır.					
2. İşler benim için kötü gittiğinde zorlukların yaşamın bir parçası olduğunu ve herkesin bu zorlukları yaşadığını görebilirim.					
3. Yetersizliklerimi düşünmek kendimi daha yalnız ve dünyadan kopuk hissetmeme neden olur.					
4. Duygusal olarak acı yaşadığım durumlarda kendime sevgiyle yaklaşmaya çalışırım.					
5. Benim için önemli bir şeyde başarısız olduğumda, yetersizlik hisleriyle tükenirim.					
6. Kötü hissettiğimde, dünyada benim gibi kötü hisseden pek çok kişi olduğunu kendi kendime hatırlatırım.					

D. SAMPLE ITEMS OF THE SELF-EFFICACY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS SCALE

ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLERDE ÖZ YETERLİK ÖLÇEĞİ

AÇIKLAMA: Aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi size verilen 9'lu derecelendirme ölçeğini kullanarak, her maddenin başında belirtilen alana yazınız.

Kesinlikle			Ne katılıyorum				Tamamen
katılmıyorum			Ne katılmıyorum				katılıyorum
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

__1. Ben, romantik bir ilişki partneri olarak iyi olmayan biriyim.

__2.Romantik ilişkilerdeki başarısızlık, beni yalnızca daha fazla çabalamam konusunda istekli yapar.

__3.Romantik ilişkilerimle ilgili plan yaptığım zaman bu planı kesinlikle uygulayabilirim.

__4.Romantik ilişkilerimde önemli konulara odaklanmakta güçlük yaşarım.

__5.Bir romantik ilişkimde, ilk seferde bir şeyi yapamazsam, yapana kadar denemeye devam ederim.

__6.Romantik ilişkilerimde ortaya çıkabilecek birçok sorunun üstesinden gelme yeteneğini kendimde görmüyorum.

E. SAMPLE ITEMS OF THE RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT SCALE

İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ÖLÇEĞİ

Bu bölümdeki soruları okuduktan sonra size en uygun seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

---

1. Sevgiliniz ihtiyaçlarınızı ne kadar iyi karşılıyor?

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Hiç karşılamıyor						Çok iyi karşılıyor

---

2. Genel olarak ilişkinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Hiç memnun değilim						Çok memnunum

---

3. Diğerleri ile karşılaştırdığınızda ilişkiniz ne kadar iyi?

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦
Çok daha kötü						Çok daha iyi

F. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET
ÖZ-ŞEFKAT VE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİDE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLERDE ÖZ-YETERLİLİĞİN ARACI ROLÜ

1. GİRİŞ

Kişilerarası ilişkiler, doğumdan ölüme kadar insanların hayatında çok önemlidir. Aile içi ilişkilerden başlayarak, bir bebeğin hayatı bile sosyal etkileşimlerle doludur. İnsanlar iletişim becerileri geliştikçe okul, mahalle, iş gibi farklı ortamlarla ilişkiler geliştirir. Bunların arasında arkadaşlıklar ve romantik ilişkiler, daha fazla yakınlık kurulan ve kimlik oluşumunu etkileyebilen ilişkilerdir (Furman ve Shaffer, 2003). Romantik ilişkiler, yaşamın farklı aşamalarında farklı rollere sahiptir. Erken ergenlik döneminde insanlar çoğunlukla kısa süreli tek bir romantik ilişki kurar, orta ergenliğe geçişle birlikte romantik ilişkilerin sayısı artar ve ilişkiler az da olsa cinsel ve duygusal bağlamlarda gerçekleşmeye başlar (Meier ve Allen, 2009). Daha sonra, geç ergenlik döneminde, yakın ilişkiler daha uzun süreli tek bir bağlılık ilişkisi şeklini alabilir (Meier ve Allen, 2009). Öte yandan, beliren yetişkinlik, kimlik arayışının olduğu ve evlilik gibi uzun soluklu seçimler yapmadan önce değişimlerin yaşandığı bir dönemdir (Arnett, 2000). Shullman ve Connoly'e (2013) göre, bu dönemde kişiler bağlılık içeren bir ilişki haricinde de cinsel davranışlar sergileyebilir ve evlenmeyi erteleyebilirler. Ancak bu eğilimler zaman içinde değişmektedir. Erikson (1993) psikososyal gelişim kuramında, genç yetişkinliğin bireyin artık bir kimlik geliştirdiği ve bunu bir partnerle paylaşmaya istekli olduğu dönem olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Genç yetişkinlikte kişi birine bağlanmaya ve ilişkide sorumlu davranmaya hazırdır. Bu nedenle, hayatın diğer dönemlerine kıyasla, özellikle yetişkinlik döneminde, romantik ilişkiler insanların hayatında daha kritik bir rol oynar ve daha hassas bir şekilde ele alınır.

Kişilerin hayatında gittikçe önemi artan romantik ilişkilerin kalitesini ve sürekliliğini belirleyen faktör ilişki doyumudur (Collins ve Read, 1990; Zhan vd., 2022). Peki ilişkide doyumu sağlayan faktörler nelerdir? Yapılan araştırmalara göre romantik

ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik (örn., Julal Cnossen vd., 2009; Cui vd., 2008) ve öz-şefkat (örn., Barutçu-Yıldırım vd., 2021; Neff ve Beretvas, 2013) bunlardan ikisidir.

Sosyal Öğrenme Teorisine (Bandura, 1991) göre, insanların bir görevi yerine getirmede kendilerini yetkin görüp görmedikleri anlamına gelen öz-yeterliliğin dört kaynağı vardır. Bunlar fizyolojik ve duygusal durumlar, doğrudan deneyim, sözel ikna ve dolaylı deneyimdir. Bunlar arasında, bir kişinin yeteneklerine olan inancını artırmaya yönelik sözlü teşvik, deneyim olmaksızın kolayca elde edilebildiği için sağlanması en kolay olanıdır. Sözel teşvik başkaları tarafından verilebilir ya da bireyler yapmaları gereken şeyi yapabileceklerine kendilerini ikna edebilirler. Bunu başarabilmek için de dengeli bir duygusal durum içinde olmaları gerekir. Dengeli bir duygusal duruma sahip olmak çok önemlidir çünkü önemli ölçüde stres veya kaygı yaşayan bireyler girişimlerinden başarısızlık beklemeye meyillidir. Bu dengesiz duygusal durum performanslarını olumsuz etkiler; dolayısıyla öz-yeterliliklerin azalması muhtemeldir (Bandura, 1977).

Duygusal denge ve destekleyici bir iç sese sahip olmak, öz-şefkat sahibi kişilerin karakteristik özellikleridir (Neff ve Davidson, 2016). Neff'e göre (2003a) öz-şefkati yüksek olan kişiler, zor zamanlarda deneyimlerinde daha az yalnız hissederler, kendilerine karşı daha naziktirler ve yaşadıklarına bilinçli bir farkındalıkla yaklaşabililirler. Bunlar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, duygularını dengeleyebilen ve kendilerini arkadaşlarını cesaretlendiriyormuş gibi destekleyebilen bireylerin öz-yeterliliklerinin yüksek olacağı sonucuna varmak mantıklıdır. Öz-şefkatin öz-yeterlilikle pozitif yönde bir ilişkiye sahip olduğunu gösteren birçok çalışma bu görüşü desteklemektedir (örneğin, İskender, 2009; Kwan vd., 2009; Manavipour ve Saaeidan, 2016; Tyer-Viola vd., 2014) Liao vd. (2021), kişinin kendisine karşı şefkat duymasının, bir zorlukla karşılaştığında veya başarısız olduğunda nasıl davrandığını olumlu yönde etkilediğini savunmaktadır. Bireyler zor zamanlarda kendilerine şefkat gösterdiklerinde, kendilerini bir başarısızlık timsali olarak görme ihtimalleri düşüktür. Kendilerine karşı anlayışlı davrandıkları için de öz-yeterlilik duyguları radikal bir şekilde azalmaz. Araştırmacılara göre bu durumun temelinde, herkesin bir noktada bu tür zorluklarla karşılaştığı ve başarısızlığın insan olmanın bir parçası olduğu düşüncesi yatmaktadır. Buna paralel olarak Manavipour ve Saeeidan (2016), yaşadıkları sorunlara bilinçli farkındalıkla yaklaşan ve bu deneyimde kendilerini yalnız

hissetmeyen üniversite öğrencilerinin öz-yeterlilik düzeylerinin daha yüksek olduğunu bulmuştur.

Öz-yeterlilik, romantik ilişkiler gibi farklı bağlamlarda duyguları etkiler (Bandura, 1991). Riggio vd. (2013), insanların bir partner olarak yeteneklerini nasıl değerlendirdiklerinin ilişkinin kalitesini etkilediğini, çünkü ilişkide nasıl davrandıklarını etkilediğini de savunmaktadır. Bu değerlendirme, kendilerini ne kadar açık ifade ettikleri ve ilişkileri için ne kadar sorumluluk aldıkları gibi davranışlarda değişikliklere yol açabilir (Weiser ve Weigel, 2016). Birçok araştırmada da bulunduğu üzere, romantik ilişki öz-yeterliliği yüksek olan partnerler, ilişkilerinde daha fazla doyum almaktadır (Weiser ve Weigel, 2016; Yılmaz vd., 2023).

İlişki doyumuna katkıda bulunan bir diğer faktör kimi zaman öz-anlayış olarak da ifade edilen öz-şefkattir (örneğin, Barutçu-Yıldırım vd., 2021; Neff ve Beretvas, 2013). Neff ve Beretvas'ın (2013) tartıştığı gibi, öz-şefkatli partnerler ilişkilerinde zorluklar yaşarken daha bilinçli olma eğilimindedir ve bu nedenle aşırı tepki verme eğilimleri daha zayıftır. Ayrıca, partnerler kendilerine karşı olumlu bir tutum sergileyerek ilişkilerinde daha nazik ve sevgi dolu olabilirler. Bu durum, partnerleriyle daha samimi olmayı kolaylaştırdığı için partnerlerine olumlu yansıyabilir. Sonuç olarak, öz-şefkatli partnerler ilişkilerinden daha fazla doyum alırlar (Neff ve Beretvas, 2013).

1.1. Araştırmanın Amacı ve Sorusu

Bu çalışmanın amacı, beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki Türk üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişkilerdeki öz-yeterliklerinin, öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye ne ölçüde aracılık ettiğini araştırmaktır. Bu sebeple çalışmanın araştırma sorusu "Romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlik, öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık eder mi?"dir.

1.2. Araştırmanın Önemi

Romantik ilişkiler, önemli bir gelişim görevi olarak kabul edilir (Arnett, 2000) ve aynı zamanda kişisel gelişim için bir bağlam görevi görürler (Gala ve Kapadia, 2013). Yapılan araştırmalar romantik ilişkilerin fiziksel ve ruhsal sağlığa önemli bir katkı sağladığına işaret etmektedir. Örneğin, lisans öğrencileriyle yapılan bir araştırma, romantik ilişki yaşayan öğrencilerin bekarlara kıyasla daha az fiziksel ve ruhsal sağlık

sorunu yaşadığını ortaya koymuştur (Braithwaite vd., 2010). Bir başka çalışmada, romantik ilişki içindeki katılımcıların, bekar katılımcılara göre daha yüksek düzeyde duygusal iyi oluşa sahip olduğu görülmüştür (Adamczyk ve Segrin, 2015). İyi oluş ve romantik ilişkide olmanın arasındaki bağlantı incelendiğinde, partnerlerin doyum aldıkları bir ilişki için çaba gösterdiklerinde daha yüksek düzeyde iyi oluşa sahip oldukları, ancak doyum almadıkları bir ilişki için çaba gösterdiklerinde daha düşük düzeyde iyi oluşa sahip oldukları bulunmuştur (Baker vd., 2013). Bundan yola çıkarak ilişkilerden alınan doyumun da iyi oluşu belirlemede rol oynadığı çıkarımında bulunulabilir.

Fincham ve Cui'ye (2010) göre, romantik ilişkiler özellikle beliren yetişkinlik döneminde önem kazanmaktadır. Ergenliğe kıyasla beliren yetişkinlik, insanların kendileri için önemli kişilerle daha yakın bir ilişki kurmak istedikleri bir zaman dilimidir (Arnett, 2000). Bu dönem, kişilerin ilişki deneyimi kazandıkları ve evlenmeden önce ilişkilerde ne istediklerini keşfettikleri bir dönemdir (Fincham ve Cui, 2010). Bu dönemdeki ilişki deneyimleri, gelecekteki yaşam yollarını önemli ölçüde etkilediğinden, tatmin edici bir ilişki başlatabilmeleri ve sürdürebilmeleri kritiktir (Fincham ve Cui, 2010).

Daha önce de belirtildiği üzere, evlilik gibi istikrarlı bir ilişkinin sürdürülmesinde ilişki doyumu hayati önem taşımaktadır (Attridge vd., 1995). Bu nedenle, tatmin edici bir romantik ilişkinin kurulmasını sağlayan faktörleri araştırmak önemlidir. Başarılı bir evliliğe katkıda bulunan faktörleri anlamanın bir yolu, beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki romantik ilişki deneyimini incelemektir (Fincham ve Cui, 2010). Fletcher vd.'ye (2018) göre, romantik ilişki deneyimini anlayabilmek için insanların sosyal etkileşimler bağlamında nasıl düşündüklerini ve hissettiklerini incelemek gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada insanların romantik bir ilişkideki deneyimlerini anlamak için kendilerini partner olarak nasıl algıladıkları araştırılmıştır.

Romantik ilişki deneyiminin araştırılması, üniversite öğrencileriyle çalışan profesyoneller için de faydalıdır. Türkiye'de aile ve ruh sağlığı sorunları gibi sorunlar arasında ilişki sorunları, üniversite öğrencilerinin danışmanlık hizmetlerine başvurma nedenleri arasında üçüncü sırada yer almaktadır (Doğan, 2012). Bu ihtiyaç göz önünde bulundurulduğunda üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişki doyumuna katkıda

bulunan faktörleri incelemenin ruh sağlığı çalışanlarına pratik avantajlar sağlayacağı söylenebilir.

Öz-yeterlilik, sosyal ilişkiler üzerindeki etkisinin yanı sıra, insanların iyi olma hallerine de katkıda bulunur. Örneğin, üniversite öğrencileriyle yapılan bir çalışmanın bulguları, romantik ilişkilerde daha yüksek öz-yeterliliğin, yüksek öz saygı ve daha fazla mutlulukla bağlantılı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (Weisskirch, 2017). Türkiye'de yakın zamanda yapılan bir çalışmada da benzer bulgular elde edilmiş ve romantik ilişkilerde öz yeterliliğin, beliren yetişkinlerin psikolojik iyi olma halini yordadığı bulunmuştur (Aydemir, 2021). Öz-şefkatin bireylerin iyi olma hali ile ilişkisi de kapsamlı bir şekilde araştırılmış ve bir meta-analizde kanıtlanmıştır (Zessin vd., 2015). Yapılan 79 çalışmanın bulguları incelendiğinde, yüksek öz-şefkat düzeylerinin yüksek psikolojik ve bilişsel iyi oluş düzeyleri ile ilişkili olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, öz-şefkat düzeyi yüksek olan bu çalışmaların katılımcıları daha yüksek olumlu ve daha düşük olumsuz duygulanım bildirmişlerdir.

Pratik çıkarımlarına ek olarak, bu çalışma, alanyazına çeşitli şekillerde katkıda bulunmaktadır. İlk olarak, öz-yeterlilik farklı alanlarda kapsamlı olarak çalışılmış olsa da romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik üzerine nispeten az sayıda çalışma mevcuttur. Ayrıca, üniversite öğrencileri ile yapılan çalışmalar, öz-şefkat ve öz-yeterlik arasındaki ilişkinin çoğunlukla akademik bağlamda incelendiğini göstermektedir. Örneğin, İskender (2009) yüksek öz-şefkate sahip öğrencilerin aynı zamanda daha öz-yeterli olduklarını ve öğrenmelerinin olumlu sonuçlar doğuracağına inandıklarını bulmuştur. İstatistik dersi alan öğrencilerle yapılan bir başka çalışmada, öz-şefkat düzeyi daha yüksek olan öğrencilerin matematiğe yönelik öz-yeterliklerinin de daha yüksek olduğu bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır (Salazar, 2018). Ancak bu ilişkinin daha önce romantik ilişkiler bağlamında incelendiği bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Bu yüzden bu çalışma, öz-şefkati modeline yordayıcı olarak dahil ederek bu boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamıştır. Ayrıca, alanyazın incelendiğinde, romantik ilişki doyumu ve öz-şefkat üzerine çok sayıda çalışma olmasına rağmen, öz-yeterliliği romantik ilişkiler çerçevesinde inceleyen çalışmaların sayısının artırılması gerektiği dikkat çekmektedir.

İkinci olarak, bilindiği kadarıyla bu çalışma, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliğin öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkideki aracı rolünü inceleyen ilk

çalışmadır. Böyle bir yapısal model oluşturmak avantajlıdır çünkü bulgular bağımlı değişkenin altında yatan mekanizmaya ışık tutmaktadır (Hayes, 2013).

2. METOT

2.1.Araştırma Deseni

Bu çalışmada değişkenler arası ilişkilerin korelasyonlarının hesaplandığı nicel bir araştırma deseni uygulanmıştır.

2.2 Katılımcılar

Araştırmaya 550 kişi katılmıştır ancak bunlardan 45'i çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı (ilişki durumu kriterini karşılamama vb.) örnekleme dahil edilmemiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'de üniversite okuyan beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki 505 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır.

Katılımcıların 414'ü (%82) kadın, 83'ü (% 16.4) erkektir. Dördü (% 0.8) cinsiyetini kadın veya erkek olmadığını belirtirken dördü (% 0.8) de cinsiyetine dair bir bilgi sunmamıştır. Katılımcılar 19 ile 29 yaş arasındadır (*ort* = 23.16, *SS* = 2.36).

Katılımcıların 378'i lisans öğrencisi (% 74.9), 83'ü yüksek lisans öğrencisi (% 16.4), 33'ü önlisans öğrencisi (% 6.5) ve 11'i doktora öğrencisidir (% 2.2). Çalışmaya 39 şehirden katılan öğrencilerin çoğu Ankara (% 45,7) ya da İstanbul'da (% 30.9) okumaktadır.

Katılımcıların ortalama ilişki süreleri 20.52 aydır (*SS* = 20.22). 493 katılımcı (% 97.6) ilişki durumunu flört/sevgili olarak, kalan 12 katılımcı ise sözlü/nişanlı (% 2.4) olarak belirtmiştir. Katılımcıların çoğu şu andaki ilişkilerinin ilk romantik ilişkisi (*n* = 124, % 24.6) ya da ikinci romantik ilişkisi (*n* = 136, %26.9) olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Katılımcıların şu andaki ilişkilerine verdikleri değeri bir ile on arasında değerlendirmeleri istendiğinde katılımcıların ortalaması 8.76 (*SS* = 1.43) olarak bulunmuştur.

2.3.Veri Toplama Araçları

Bu çalışmanın verileri, araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen demografik bilgi formu, Öz-Anlayış Ölçeği, Romantik İlişkilerde Öz-Yeterlik Ölçeği ve İlişki Doyumu Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmıştır.

2.3.1 Demografik Bilgi Formu

Demografik bilgi formunda katılımcılara okudukları üniversitenin adı, cinsiyetleri, eğitim düzeyleri, yaşları, ilişki durumları, ilişkilerinin süresi ve ilişkilerine verdikleri önem 1 (hiç önemli değil) ile 10 (çok önemli) arasında değişen skalada sorulmuştur.

2.3.2. Öz-Anlayış Ölçeği (SCS)

Öz-Anlayış Ölçeği, Neff (2003b) tarafından kişilerin öz-şefkat düzeylerini ölçmek amacıyla geliştirilmiştir. Ölçek 26 maddeden oluşmaktadır ve maddeler 1'den (neredeyse hiçbir zaman) 5'e (neredeyse her zaman) kadar derecelendirilir. Ölçek altı faktörlü bir yapıya sahiptir. Bu faktörler öz nezaket, öz yargılama, ortak insanlık, izolasyon, farkındalık ve aşırı özdeşleşmedir. Ölçeğin toplam Cronbach alfa değeri .92, test-tekrar test güvenirliği ise .93 olarak hesaplanmıştır (Neff, 2003b) ve Nunnally'e (1978) göre yüksek iç tutarlılık göstermektedir.

Ölçeğin Türkçe uyarlaması Deniz vd. (2008) tarafından yapılmıştır. Türkçe versiyonu 24 maddeden ve tek faktörlü bir yapıdan oluşmaktadır. Bu versiyonda 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22 ve 23 numaralı maddeler ters kodlanmıştır ve daha yüksek puan daha yüksek öz-şefkat düzeyine işaret etmektedir. Güvenirliği ölçmek için Cronbach's alpha .89, test-tekrar test güvenirliği ise .83 olarak hesaplanmıştır (Deniz vd., 2008). Bu çalışmada Cronbach alpha değeri .94 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Bu değerler Nunnally'e (1978) göre yüksek iç tutarlılığa işaret etmektedir. DFA sonuçlarına göre ise bu çalışmada ölçek iyi uyum göstermiştir [(χ^2 (7) = 24.68, p = .00, χ^2/df = 3.57; CFI = .99, SRMR = .02; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .07)].

2.3.3. Romantik İlişkilerde Öz-Yeterlilik Ölçeği (SERR)

Romantik İlişkilerde Öz-yeterlik Ölçeği, Riggio vd. (2011) tarafından kişilerin romantik ilişkilerindeki öz-yeterlik düzeylerini ölçmek amacıyla geliştirilmiştir. Ölçek 12 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Maddeler 1'den (kesinlikle katılmıyorum) 9'a (kesinlikle katılıyorum) kadar derecelendirilmektedir. Ölçeğin iki faktörü vardır. Birinci faktör, pozitif olarak ifade edilen pozitif öz-yeterlik inançları, ikincisi ise negatif olarak ifade edilen romantik ilişkilerde negatif öz-yeterliktir. Faktörler arasındaki yüksek korelasyon nedeniyle, ölçeği geliştirenler faktörlere ayrı ayrı bakmak yerine, romantik

ilişkilerde toplam öz-yeterliliğin tek bir yapı olarak ölçülmesini önermişlerdir (Riggio vd., 2011). Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada analiz sadece toplam ölçek puanı kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Ölçekten alınan yüksek toplam puan, romantik ilişkilerde yüksek öz-yeterliliğe işaret etmektedir. Ölçeğin Cronbach alpha değeri .89 olarak hesaplanmıştır ve bu Nunnally'e (1978) göre yüksek iç tutarlılığa işaret etmektedir.

Ölçek, Öz Soysal vd. (2019) tarafından Türkçeye çevrilmiştir. Orijinal ölçeğin iki faktörlü yapısı çalışmanın örneklemi ile doğrulanmıştır. 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 ve 12 numaralı maddeler ters kodlanmıştır ve negatif öz-yeterlilik faktörüne aittir. Kalan maddeler (2, 3 ve 5) pozitif öz-yeterlilik faktörüne aittir. Öz Soysal vd. (2019) ölçeğin Cronbach alfa değerini .90 olarak bulmuşlardır. Bu çalışmada Cronbach alpha değeri .83 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Bu değerler Nunnally'e (1978) göre yüksek iç tutarlılığa işaret etmektedir. DFA sonuçlarına göre ise bu çalışmada ölçek iyi uyum göstermiştir [(χ^2 (51) = 194.88, p = .00, χ^2/df = 4.04; CFI = .92, SRMR = .05; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .08].

2.3.4. İlişki Doyumu Ölçeği (RAS)

İlişki Doyumu Ölçeği, kişilerin romantik ilişkilerden duydukları doyumu ölçmek için Hendrick (1988) tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Ölçek 7 maddeden oluşmaktadır ve maddeler 1'den 7'ye kadar değerlendirilmektedir. Daha yüksek bir toplam puan, daha yüksek bir ilişki doyumunu ifade etmektedir. Dördüncü ve yedinci maddeler ters kodlanmıştır. Bu ölçeğin Cronbach alfa değeri .86 olarak hesaplanmıştır ve Nunnally'e (1978) göre yüksek iç tutarlılığa işaret etmektedir.

İlişki Doyumu Ölçeği, Curun (2001) tarafından Türkçe'ye çevrilmiştir. Ölçek tek faktörlü bir yapıya sahiptir. Curun (2001) Cronbach alfa değerini .86 olarak hesaplamış ve bu çalışmada ise Cronbach alfa değeri .88 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Bu değerler Nunnally'e (1978) göre yüksek iç tutarlılığa işaret etmektedir. DFA sonuçlarına göre ise bu çalışmada ölçek iyi uyum göstermiştir [(χ^2 (11) = 42.18, p = .00, χ^2/df = 3.75; CFI = .98, SRMR = .03; TLI = .97; RMSEA = .07)].

2.4. Verilerin Toplanması

Veriler toplanmadan önce Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ) Etik Kurulu'ndan onay (onay numarası: 0304-ODTUİAEK-2022) alınmıştır. Onay alındıktan sonra

Türkiye'deki üniversite öğrencilerine ulaşmak için sosyal medya hesapları üzerinden çalışma daveti paylaşılmıştır. Ayrıca katılım kriterlerini, çalışmanın amacını ve bağlantıya ulaşmak için okutulan QR kodunu içeren bir broşür hazırlanmış ve ODTÜ'deki öğrencilere dağıtılmıştır. Veriler, Mayıs 2022 - Ocak 2023 tarihleri arasında çevrimiçi ortamda toplanmıştır. Araçları uygulamadan önce tüm katılımcılara bilgilendirilmiş onam formu verilmiş, çalışmadan çekilme hakları ve sağladıkları bilgilerin gizliliği konusunda bilgilendirilmişlerdir. Anketin tamamlanması yaklaşık 7 dakika sürmüştür.

2.4.Verilerin Analizi

Birincil analizler SPSS 28.0 (IBM Corp, 2021) kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Katılım kriterlerini karşılamayan katılımcıları belirlemek için veriler taranmıştır. Ardından aykırı değerler saptanmış ve betimleyici analizler yapılmıştır.

Ölçekler için doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapılmıştır ve Cronbach alfa değerleri ile iç güvenilirlik hesaplanmıştır. Çalışmanın varsayımsal modelinin uyumu Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) ile test edilmiştir. YEM öncesinde SPSS 28.0 (IBM Corp, 2021) kullanılarak varsayımlar (tek değişkenli ve çok değişkenli normallik, eş varyans, çoklu bağlantı) kontrol edilmiştir. Güvenilirlik ve geçerlilik analizleri ile YEM, R (R Core Team, 2022), RStudio (Posit Team, 2022) ve lavaan paketi (Rosseel, 2012) kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki aracılık rolü basit aracılık analizi ile test edilmiştir. Bu modelde öz-şefkat yordayıcı, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik aracı ve romantik ilişki doyumu sonuç değişkenidir. Analiz, R istatistik yazılımında (R Core Team, 2022) mediate paketi (Tingley vd., 2014) kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir.

2.5. Araştırmanın Sınırlılıkları

Bu çalışmanın çeşitli sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada kullanılan Öz-Anlayış Ölçeği'nin (Deniz vd., 2008) Türkçe uyarlamasının tek faktörlü yapısı nedeniyle, sonuçlar sadece katılımcıların toplam öz-şefkat düzeyleri hakkında bilgi vermektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmanın korelasyonel tasarımı nedeniyle sonuçlar, değişkenler arasındaki nedensel ilişkiler hakkında bilgi vermemektedir.

Veriler çevrimiçi ortamda katılımcıların kendi beyanlarına dayalı olarak toplanmıştır, bu da cevapların doğruluğunu olumsuz yönde etkileyebilir. Veri toplama sırasında katılımcılar anonim kalsa da, bazıları ilişkileri hakkında sosyal olarak arzu edilen verileri verme eğiliminde olabilir. Örneğin, katılımcılara ilişkilerine atfettikleri önem sorulduğunda sosyal olarak arzu edilen yanıtlar vermiş olabilirler. Ayrıca, katılımcıların veri toplama sırasındaki çevresel koşulları ya da ruh halleri bilinmemektedir ve bu durum yanıtlarını etkilemiş olabilir. Katılımcılar anketi doldururken partnerleriyle çatışma yaşayıp öfke gibi yoğun duygular içindelerse bu, ilişkideki genel doyuma ilişkin yanıtlarının doğruluğunu etkileyebilir.

Veriler tesadüfi olmayan bir örnekleme yöntemiyle toplandığından, sonuçların Türk üniversite öğrencileri popülasyonunu temsil gücü ve genellenebilirliği düşüktür. Bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların çoğunluğu kadındır ve lisans öğrencisidir. Bu nedenle, sonuçların erkek katılımcılar ve diğer öğrenim düzeyleri için de temsil gücünün düşük olduğu düşünülebilir. Son olarak, veriler yalnızca tek bir zamanda toplandığından, sonuçlar uzun vadeli ilişki doyumuna ilişkin herhangi bir bilgi sağlamamaktadır.

3. BULGULAR

3.3. Betimleyici İstatistik Bulguları

Katılımcıların öz-şefkat (*ort* = 2.94, *SD* = .72), romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik (*ort* = 6.63, *SS* = 1.34) ve romantik ilişki doyumuna (*ort* = 5.92, *SS* = .88) ilişkin betimleyici istatistikler aşağıdaki Tablo 4.2'de sunulmuştur.

Tablo 4. 1.

Değişkenler için Betimleyici İstatistikler

Değişkenler	*Ort*	*SS*	Olası Aralık	Gerçek Aralık
Öz-şefkat	2.94	.72	1 - 5	1.17 - 4.75
Romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik	6.66	1.34	1 - 9	2.17 – 9.00
Romantik ilişki doyumu	5.94	.87	1 - 7	2.71 - 7.00

3.4. Değişkenler Arası Korelasyonlar

Değişkenler arasındaki korelasyonlar Pearson korelasyonları kullanılarak hesaplanmıştır. Sonuçlar, Cohen (1988) tarafından önerilen standartlara göre romantik

ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin romantik ilişki doyumu (r = .44, p <.01) ve öz-şefkat (r = .31, p <.01) ile orta düzeyde ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Cohen (1988) tarafından önerilen standartlara göre öz-şefkatin romantik ilişki doyumu (r = .19, p <.01) ile zayıf korelasyon gösterdiği bulunmuştur.

3.4 Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli Bulguları

Varsayılan yapısal modeli test etmeden önce, çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkiler R yazılımında (R Core Team, 2022) lavaan paketi (Rosseel, 2012) lavaanPlot paketi (Lishinski, 2021) kullanılarak DFA ile test edilmiştir. Ölçüm modeli iyi bir uyum göstermiştir, [(χ^2 (264) = 608.80, p = .000, χ^2/df = 2.31; CFI = .95, SRMR = .05; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .05].

Araştırmanın hipotezleri ise yapısal eşitlik modeli ile test edilmiştir. Modelde yer alan örtük değişkenler öz-şefkat, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlik ve romantik ilişki doyumudur. Kline'ın (2016) önerisine dayanarak, istatistiksel olarak daha doğru bir sonuç elde etmek için 1000 örneklem ile yeniden örnekleme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Bulgular ölçüm modelinin iyi bir uyum gösterdiğine işaret etmektedir, [(χ^2 (264) = 608.80, p = .000, χ^2/df = 2.31; CFI = .95, SRMR = .05; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .05].

3.5. Dolaylı, Doğrudan ve Toplam Etkiler

Romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki aracılık rolü basit aracılık analizi ile test edilmiştir. Bu modelde öz-şefkat yordayıcı, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik aracı ve romantik ilişki doyumu sonuç değişkenidir. Bulgular toplam etkinin anlamlı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (β = .23, p <.05, %95 GA [.13, .32]). Ortalama nedensel aracılı etkinin sonuçları da anlamlıdır (β = .15, p <.05, %95 GA [.10, .21]). Öte yandan, doğrudan etki anlamlı bulunmamıştır (β = .07, p> .05, %95 GA [-0.02, .17]). Bu bulgu, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin, öz-şefkatle romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye tam olarak aracılık ettiğini göstermektedir.

4. TARTIŞMA

4.3. Romantik İlişkilerde Öz-Yeterliliğin, Öz-Şefkatle Romantik İlişki Doyumu Arasındaki İlişkideki Aracı Rolü

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, öz-şefkat, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlik ve romantik ilişki doyumunun birbirleriyle anlamlı düzeyde ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. İlginç bir

şekilde, öz-şefkat bu çalışmada romantik ilişki doyumunun anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olmamıştır. Bu bulgu literatürle çelişmektedir (örneğin, Barutçu-Yıldırım vd., 2021; Fahimdanesh vd., 2020; Jacobson vd., 2018; Janjani vd., 2017; Neff ve Beretvas, 2012). Buna ek olarak, sonuçlar romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin romantik ilişki doyumunu önemli ölçüde yordadığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu bulgu ise literatürle tutarlıdır (örneğin, Julal Cnossen vd., 2019; Cui vd., 2008; Lopez vd., 2007; Weiser ve Weigel, 2016).

Her ne kadar anlamlı bir doğrudan etki bulunamamış olsa da, sonuçlarda anlamlı bir dolaylı etki saptanmıştır. Romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik, öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye tam olarak aracılık etmektedir. Bunun olası bir açıklaması, kendilerine karşı şefkatli ve nazik olan bireylerin partnerlerine karşı da bu şekilde davranma olasılığının yüksek olduğu ileri sürülse de (Jacobson vd., 2018), öz-şefkatin başkalarına karşı şefkatle ilişkisinin zayıf olması olabilir (Lopéz vd., 2018). Öz-şefkat daha çok insanların kendileriyle olan ilişkileriyle ilgilidir. Bu bakımdan, aynı tutumu partnerlerine de kesin olarak gösterecekleri anlamına gelmemektedir. Bununla birlikte, var olan çalışmalar öz-şefkatin öz yeterliliği yordadığını göstermiştir (örneğin, Babenko ve Oswald, 2019; Benn vd., 2012; De Souza ve Hutz, 2016; Muris vd., 2016; Smeets vd., 2014; St Charles, 2010; Ziemer, 2014). Bu çalışmanın bulguları, öz-şefkatin romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliği anlamlı bir şekilde yordadığını ortaya koyduğu için literatürle paralellik göstermektedir.

Öz-şefkat ve öz-yeterliliğin kavramsallaştırılmasından yola çıkarak, birbirleriyle neden ilişkili olduklarına dair bazı olasılıkları tartışmak mümkündür. Öz-şefkatin öz nezaket ve farkındalık içerdiği düşünüldüğünde (Neff, 2003a), öz-şefkat düzeyi yüksek bireylerin durumları ve kendi yeteneklerini gerçekçi bir şekilde değerlendirmeye daha yatkın olmaları beklenebilir. Öz-şefkatli insanlar zorlu zamanlarda kendilerine karşı anlayışlı bir tutum sergilemeye daha yatkındırlar (Neff, 2003a). Öz-şefkat muhtemelen kişilerin öz-yeterliliklerinin başarısızlıktan kötü etkilenmemesi için duygusal olarak güvenli bir zemin oluşturmaktadır. Kendilerine karşı şefkat duyan bireyler kusurlarını daha fazla kabul ederler ve yeteneklerini sert bir şekilde yargılama olasılıkları daha düşüktür (Liao vd., 2021). Ayrıca, öz-şefkati yüksek olan bireylerin zorluklar üzerine ruminasyon yapma olasılığı da daha düşüktür (Neff, 2003a). Dolayısıyla, bir başka olası açıklama da, yüksek düzeyde öz-şefkate

sahip partnerlerin yalnız zorluklara odaklanmak yerine ilişkilerinin güçlü yönlerine de odaklanmaları olabilir. Başka bir deyişle, öz-şefkat düşünce yapısını olumlu yönde değiştirerek ilişki doyumuna katkıda bulunabilir. İlişkilerinde olumlu bir tutuma sahip olan partnerler daha fazla doyum sağlamaktadır (Weiser ve Weigel, 2016).

Rusbult (1983) romantik ilişkileri için çaba sarf eden kişilerin partnerlerine bağlı kalma olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Bandura'ya göre (1977), yüksek öz-yeterliliğe sahip bireylerin yaşamlarında çaba göstermeye daha yatkındır. Romantik ilişkiler bağlamına uyarlandığında, öz-yeterliliği yüksek partnerlerin, partnerleriyle sağlıklı bir ilişki kurmak için gerekli çabayı gösterme olasılığı daha yüksektir. Dolayısıyla, tatmin edici bir ilişki yaşama şansları yüksektir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları da bu görüşü desteklemektedir.

4.4.Araştırmanın Çıkarımları

Elde edilen bulguların üniversite öğrencileri ve ruh sağlığı uzmanları için çıkarımlarından bahsetmek mümkündür Öncelikle, romantik ilişkilerinden duydukları doyumu artırmak isteyen üniversite öğrencileri bu çalışmanın sonuçlarından faydalanabilirler. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, kendilerine karşı daha şefkatli olan öğrencilerin aynı zamanda kendilerini bir partner olarak daha yetkin gördüklerini ve bunun da ilişkilerinden aldıkları tatmini artırdığını göstermiştir. İlişkilerinden memnun olmayan öğrenciler, çatışma benzeri zorluklar yaşadıklarında kendilerine nasıl davrandıklarını ve kendilerini partner olarak nasıl değerlendirdiklerini gözden geçirebilirler. Örneğin, partnerlerinin bir beklentisini karşılayamadıklarında ve partnerlerinin memnuniyetsiz olduğunu fark ettiklerinde bu durum onları üzebilir. Böyle bir durumda, kendilerini sert bir şekilde yargılamak ve beceriksiz bir partner olarak görmek yerine, herkesin ilişkilerinde zorluklar yaşadığını, bu deneyimleri yaşamanın onların kötü partner olduğu anlamına gelmediğini düşünebilirler. Yaşadıklarının partnerleriyle birlikte üstesinden gelebilecekleri geçici bir durum olduğunun farkında olabilirler.

İkinci olarak, bulgular, ilişki sorunları üzerinde çalışan ruh sağlığı uzmanlarına fayda sağlayabilir. Öğrencilerin kendilerine karşı ne kadar şefkatli oldukları ve kendilerini partner olarak nasıl algıladıkları, ilişkileriyle ilgili memnuniyetsizlik bildirmeleri halinde oturumda değerlendirilebilir. Ayrıca, profesyoneller danışanlarına öz-şefkat

meditasyonu gibi uygulamalar da tavsiye edebilirler. Üniversite danışmanlık merkezleri tarafından öğrencilere öz-şefkat ve öz-yeterliliklerini geliştirmenin yollarını öğreten çevrimiçi kaynaklar ve basılı materyaller sağlanabilir. Ayrıca, bu uygulamalar öğrencilerin romantik ilişki deneyimlerini iyileştirmeyi hedefleyen müdahalelere dahil edilebilir.

4.5.Gelecek Araştırmalar İçin Öneriler

Bu çalışmanın sınırlı yapısı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, örneklem seçimi ve araştırma tasarımına ilişkin önerilerde bulunmak mümkündür. İlk olarak, bu araştırmanın katılımcıları evli olmayan bireyler olduğundan, gelecekteki çalışmalar bu bağlantıların evlilik ilişkilerinde de nasıl ortaya çıktığını anlamak için evli katılımcıları da dahil ederek bu araştırmayı genişletebilirler. Bu çalışmaya ağırlıklı olarak Ankara (%45,7) ve İstanbul'dan (%30,9) öğrenciler katılmıştır. Gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalarda katılımcıların şehirlere göre dağılımı daha dengeli olabilir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmanın örneklemi ağırlıklı olarak kadınlardan (%82) oluştuğu için, gelecekteki çalışmalarda cinsiyet açısından daha dengeli bir dağılım sağlanması önerilebilir.

İkinci olarak, sonuçlar romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin öz-şefkat ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye tam olarak aracılık ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu durum, öz-şefkat ve ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklayan başka değişkenlerin de olabileceğine işaret etmektedir. Bu ilişkiyi daha iyi anlamak için daha karmaşık yapısal eşitlik modelleri oluşturulabilir. Bu modellerde çatışma moderatör değişken olarak ya da problem çözme ve ilişki sürdürme becerileri romantik ilişki doyumunu yordayan aracı değişkenler olarak yer alabilir. Ayrıca, toplam öz-şefkat seviyesinin yanı sıra öz-şefkatin bileşenlerinin ayrı olarak romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliği ve romantik ilişki doyumunu yordayıp yordamadığı da araştırılabilir.

Alanyazın taraması, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliğin Türkiye'de nispeten az sayıda çalışmada incelendiğine işaret etmiştir. Bu nedenle, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliği etkileyen faktörler ve bunların ilgili sonuçları hakkında daha fazla çalışması önerilebilir.

Deneysel çalışmalarda öz-şefkatin romantik ilişki doyumu üzerindeki etkileri araştırılmış ve ilişki doyumu üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğu bulunmuş olsa da (Suppes, 2021; Budzan ve Van Vliet, 2021), araştırmacının bilgisi dahilinde, öz-

şefkatin ilişkilerde öz-yeterliliği nasıl etkilediğini anlamak için deneysel bir çalışma yapılmamıştır. Dolayısıyla, araştırmacılar bu etkiyi araştırmak için deneyler tasarlayabilirler. Ayrıca, romantik ilişkilerde öz-şefkat ve öz-yeterlilikteki değişikliklerin zaman içinde romantik ilişki doyumunda nasıl değişikliklere yol açtığını anlamak için boylamsal çalışmalar da tasarlayabilirler.

G. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Natural and Applied Sciences ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences ☒

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Applied Mathematics ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences ☐

YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Uyar
Adı / Name : Perim
Bölümü / Department : Eğitim Bilimleri, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık / Educational Sciences, Guidance and Psychological Counselling

TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (**İngilizce** / English): THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-COMPASSION AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

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

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

***** *Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir. / A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.*

Yazarın imzası / Signature ..... **Tarih** / Date .....
(Kütüphaneye teslim ettiğiniz tarih. Elle doldurulacaktır.)
(Library submission date. Please fill out by hand.)

Tezin son sayfasıdır. / This is the last page of the thesis/dissertation.