



**THE MEDIATING ROLE OF RELATIONAL
SELF-CHANGE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
PERCEIVED PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE AND
ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION**

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Thesis for the Master's Program in Clinical Psychology

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ETHICAL DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have conducted my work in accordance with academic rules and ethical behavior at every stage from the planning of the thesis to its defense. I confirm that I have cited all ideas, information and findings that are not specific to my study, as required by the code of ethical behavior, and that all statements not cited are my own.

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ABSTRACT

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The main aim of the study was to investigate the mediating role of relational self-change on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and romantic relationship satisfaction. The sample consisted of 209 participants whose ages were between 18-51 years old. Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) short forms, The Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale (TSCRRS), The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) were used to collect data. Relational self-change has four subscales: self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, and self-adulteration. According to the results, both maternal acceptance and paternal acceptance were found positively correlated with self-expansion, self-pruning and relationship satisfaction. In addition, relationship satisfaction was found positively correlated with self-expansion, self-pruning and self-adulteration. Moreover, self-expansion and self-pruning subscales of relational self-change mediated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. Thus,

these models were found to have partially mediator roles. The findings of the present study were discussed in the light of the relevant literature, and suggestions for future studies were presented.

Keywords: parental acceptance, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, self-adulteration, relationship satisfaction.



ÖZET

ALGILANAN EBEVEYN KABULÜ VE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİDE İLİŞKİSEL BENLİK DEĞİŞİMİNİN ARACI ROLÜ

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Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, algılanan ebeveyn kabulü ve romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkide ilişkisel benlik değişiminin aracı rolünü incelemektir. Örneklem 18-51 yaş arası 209 katılımcıdan oluşmuştur. Veri toplamak için Yetişkin Ebeveyn Kabul-Red Ölçeği, Türkçe Romantik İlişkilerde Benlik Değişimi Ölçeği ve İlişki Doyumu Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. İlişkisel benlik değişiminin dört alt boyutu vardır; benlik genişlemesi, benlik daralması, benlik budanması ve benlik kirlenmesi. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre hem anne kabulü hem de baba kabulü, benlik genişlemesi, benlik budanması ve ilişki doyumu ile pozitif ilişkili bulunmuştur. Ek olarak, ilişki doyumunun benlik genişlemesi, benlik budanması ve benlik kirlenmesi ile pozitif ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, ilişkisel benlik değişiminin benlik genişlemesi ve benlik budanması alt boyutları, algılanan ebeveyn kabulü ile ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye ayrı ayrı aracılık etmiştir. Böylece bu modellerin kısmen aracı rollere sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Mevcut çalışmanın bulguları ilgili alanyazın ışığında tartışılmış ve gelecek çalışmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ebeveyn kabulü, benlik genişlemesi, benlik daralması, benlik budanması, benlik kirlenmesi, ilişki doyumu .





To my lovely family and my dearest sister Elif Yalman...

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

According to numerous theories (e.g., Freud, 1910; Bowlby, 1973; Rohner, 1986), there is no doubt that childhood experiences have a variety of effects on adulthood. Psychoanalytic theory (Freud, 1910), in particular, brought researchers and clinicians together to study how the parent-child relationship influences the psychological and social adjustment of individuals. Freud considered the relationship between mother and child to be very important and held that this relationship is the strongest relationship that occurs during life and that it is the prototype of all subsequent interpersonal relationships. Anna Freud and Burlingham (1944) also emphasized that the parent-child relationship is a model for all human relationships and that the perception of the child as a desired and loved being in relationship with his parents is extremely important for positive psychological development (as cited in Eryavuz, 2006). Klein (1984) also points out that children internalize the experiences of their parents; as a result, these parent-child relationships form mental representations of interpersonal relationships, which in turn affect adult social life. Consistent with Klein's theory, Bowlby (1980) suggests that childhood experiences shape individuals' mental representations of themselves. Hence, it is vital to address the physical and emotional requirements of children, along with fulfilling their needs from important individuals they are attached to, at the earlier stages of life. This plays a significant role in shaping their personality development and fostering securely attached interpersonal relationships in the future. Accordingly, the way a child bonds with their parents is reflected in their intimate relationships in adulthood and impacts their emotions, expectations, and satisfaction in their relationships (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Parental Acceptance and Rejection Theory (PARTheory), developed by Ronald P. Rohner (1986), is one of the many psychological theories that examine the effects of parent-child relationships. Specifically, it examines the influences of parental acceptance and rejection on individuals' emotional, behavioral, social-cognitive development and psychological adjustment.

There have been numerous studies showing the connection between this theory and romantic relationships in adulthood. Evidence has confirmed that remembered parental rejection from mother or father is very important for romantic relationship functioning. Moreover, studies have indicated that parental rejection is associated

with elevated levels of perceived rejection from partners within intimate relationships (Babuşçu, 2014; Chyung and Lee, 2008; Giaouzi and Giovazolias, 2015; Ki et al., 2018; Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005). Research has provided evidence to suggest that individuals who perceive rejection from their parents during childhood often experience lower levels of satisfaction in their romantic relationships during adulthood (Auslander et al., 2009; Eryavuz, 2006; Parade, Leerkes and Helms, 2013; Varan, 2005; Yalcinkaya, 1997). This correlation is further reinforced by another research, which indicates that maternal acceptance is connected to the extent of caregiving provided by the spouse, subsequently influencing the satisfaction experienced in the relationship by both partners (Finzi-Dottan and Schiff, 2022).

It has also been demonstrated that parental acceptance contributes to the development of a positive self-concept (Cournoyer et al., 2005). Self was defined as the sum of an individual's beliefs about themselves which is at the center of experiences (James, 1950). Baumeister and Tice (1986) mentioned four components of the self which are self-concept, the actual self, public self, and the ideal self. Parental acceptance was found connected to development of positive self-concepts (Cournoyer et al., 2005). Karaaslan (2022) found a positive relationship between perceived parental warmth and positive sense of self. As recently pointed out by McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski (2015), individuals experience some changes in their self-concept in intimate relationships and these changes are connected to relationship satisfaction. Additionally, evidence links parental responsiveness to adolescents' self-concepts which is positively related to their attitudes about intimate relationships (Chen et al., 2020). However, the specific relationship association parental acceptance-rejection and self-change within romantic relationships remains understudied. This study is going to focus on examining the mediating effects of relational self-change on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance-rejection in adulthood and romantic relationship satisfaction; aiming to make contributions to the literature and obtain guiding data for clinicians working in the area of couple and family therapy. In the introduction part of the current study, it is planned to present a literature review on PARTheory. In further sections, a brief background on the romantic relationship satisfaction and the association between perceived parental acceptance-rejection and romantic relationship satisfaction will be presented.

Afterwards, the relational self-change model and the construct of self-concept clarity will be explained. Then, the possible associations between parental acceptance-rejection, self-concept clarity and romantic relationship satisfaction will be emphasized. Finally, the aim and hypotheses of the current thesis will be mentioned.

1.1. Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PART)

For over a century, the influence of parents on their children's adult lives has been an important topic for theorists. Parental acceptance-rejection theory is one of Rohner's (1980) leading theories in the literature. The mentioned theory is a scientifically supported framework for understanding socialization and development throughout one's life stating that children's mental well-being is impacted by the attitudes and behaviors exhibited by their parents. According to this theory, parental acceptance-rejection in childhood plays a significant role in shaping the psychological, behavioral, and socio-cognitive development of individuals as they transition into adulthood. (Rohner, 1980).

PART theory is divided into three subtheories; the personality subtheory, the coping subtheory, and the sociocultural subtheory. The personality subtheory highlights the notion that individuals possess an innate emotional requirement for receiving positive responses from their parents or other attachment figures, which is rooted in biological factors. The requirement for positive responses encompasses an emotional longing and desire for various forms of care, comfort, support, and similar aspects (Khaleque and Rohner, 2012). If this need is not met by significant others, they are predisposed to develop negative behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dispositions such as negative self-esteem, aggression, hostility, emotional unresponsiveness, adopting a negative worldview, emotional instability, dependence or defensive independence, and feelings of inadequacy. Dependence can be explained as the tendency to have heightened need to replace the feelings of anxiety and insecurity with positive responses from significant attachment figures. Dependence and independence are placed at the two ends of a continuum. As a result, when their needs are adequately fulfilled, individuals with an independent personality tend to exhibit a lesser intensity of longing for positive responses. High levels of perceived rejection from significant attachment figures, can also lead individuals to become defensively independent (Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005). Defensively independent individuals still need warmth and

affection, but are sometimes unaware of their needs. Because of feelings of rejection, they usually deny these needs (Rohner, 2004). In addition, parental rejection can also lead to negative self-sufficiency, lowered self-esteem, and a negative worldview. According to the PARTheory, individuals who experience rejection tend to develop a perception of the world as unreliable and dangerous (Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005). A negative worldview and some other personal dispositions are important elements that produce cognitive distortions and negative mental representations about self and others (Ibrahim et al., 2015). Mental representation refers to the manner in which individuals perceive themselves, others, and the world around them. These representations play a crucial role in shaping their responses to new experiences. Moreover, individuals who have experienced rejection, often develop mental images or perceptions of personal relationships as being unpredictable and untrustworthy (Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005). It follows that individuals' perceptions of themselves, others and the world, are closely linked to their psychological adaptations (Ibrahim et al., 2015).

The other subtheory of the PARTheory is the coping subtheory. According to coping subtheory, not all rejected individuals are severely affected by parental rejection, some remain unaffected (Rohner, 1980). The coping subtheory focuses mainly on how some rejected individuals cope with parental rejection without experiencing psychological problems, as do most individuals who experience rejection. It emphasizes social cognitive skills such as self-determination and depersonalization. Self-determination means having the power to control life events through one's own efforts. Depersonalization allows individuals to deal with interpersonal problems without tending to "take things personally". According to the PARTheory, there are two types of copers; affective copers and instrumental copers. Affective copers have comparatively psychologically healthier, despite experiencing rejection by their significant caregivers in earlier stages of life. Whereas instrumental copers, are successful in their professional lives even though they have mental health problems. The sociocultural systems subtheory aims to provide an explanation for the impact of parental acceptance-rejection on the development of individuals' personality and possible reasons for parental acceptance-rejection with the relationship between individuals and their social environment. Therefore, the subtheory focuses on the link between parental acceptance-rejection and expressive parts of society such as religious

traditions, artistic preferences or career choices (Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005). In this study; it has been studied regarding personality subtheory. The impact of parental acceptance on their romantic relationships in later life were investigated, and at the same time, the self-changes experienced by individuals in their romantic relationships were evaluated in terms of the mediator role.

There are two dimensions of PARTheory. The warmth dimension of parenting refers to the emotional closeness, affection, and positive regard that parents exhibit towards their children. It is characterized by the presence of nurturing, supportive, and responsive behaviors. Another dimension of parenting is the control dimension. Parenting styles that fall on the extremes of the warmth dimension were either overly permissive or overly restrictive (Rohner, 1980). The control dimension of parenting was not included in this study.

1.1.1. The Warmth Dimension of Parental Acceptance-Rejection

One of the most basic needs that a child needs in its development is parental love. The warmth dimension of parenting consists of both parental acceptance and rejection. The warmth dimension of parenting is a continuum ranging from parental acceptance, characterized by emotional closeness and positive regard, to parental rejection, characterized by emotional distance and lack of support. According to PARTheory, parents who show their children love, affection, care, nurturing, or support both physically and verbally are considered accepting parents.

Parental rejection, in contrast, refers to lack of warmth and affection and the fact that children experience a range of physically and psychologically harmful behaviors from important attachment figures. Parents may reject their children through any combination of the following four main forms of expression: (1) cold and unaffectionate, (2) hostile and aggressive, (3) indifferent and neglecting, and (4) undifferentiated rejecting (Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005). Hostility refers to feelings of anger, resentment, and hatred and to children's experience of hostile and abusive words and behaviors from their parents, whereas indifference is characterized by a lack of interest in children and by not giving them the appropriate amount of attention, ignoring them, and not meeting their needs (Rohner, 1980). Undifferentiated rejection is the idea that children believe their parents do not love or care about them,

even when there are no outward signs of love or dislike from their parents (Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005).

Given this theory, there is no doubt that how children are approached affects how they relate to their partner later in life. Furthermore, childhood experiences, such as the perception of parental acceptance, can significantly affect romantic relationships. Therefore, romantic relationships will be discussed in the next section.

In this study, since it was planned to investigate the effect of parental acceptance on relationship satisfaction, the study focused on parental acceptance of the PARTheory.

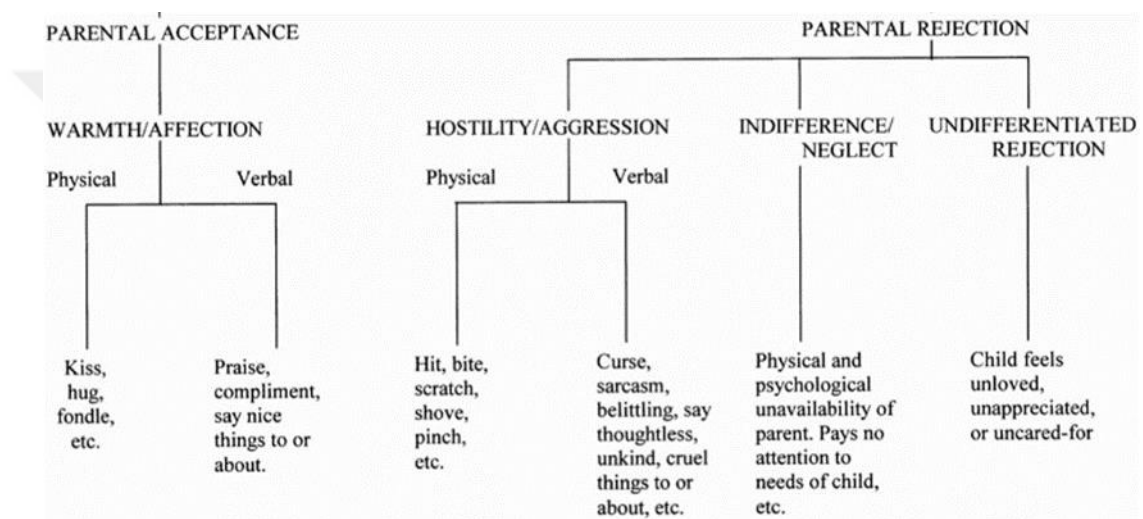


Figure 1. The warmth dimension of parenting (Source: Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2005)

1.2. Romantic Relationships

Humans are living beings that cannot live alone, can share their lives with others, and develop close relationships with each other. Human lives are reliant on them, but they are quite complex and interconnected. Erikson (1968) mentioned the importance of close relationships in psychosocial development theory, pointing out that the establishment and maintenance of emotional relationships is an important step in the development of the individual in the "intimacy versus isolation" stage, which corresponds to the age between 17 and 30 years. The first way individuals build relationships begins in the family they are born into, and then develops and diversifies in environments such as school and the workplace. Relationships come in many forms such as romantic, friendship, marital, etc. (Hepper and Karnelley, 2012). Nevertheless,

particularly romantic relationships were studied in this study.

Adolescence is considered a preparatory period for building and developing close relationships, and when the individual reaches adulthood, he or she builds emotional, sexual, and social intimacy with the opposite sex and experiences romantic relationships (Onur, 2014). According to Ercan and Eryılmaz (2010), with the experience of love, young adults discover themselves in romantic relationships and define the feeling of love in their own subjective world. In particular, romantic relationships that develop in young adulthood affect the social, sexual, and personal development of individuals. The relationships experienced during this period, affect and play an important role in shaping the individual's relationships, choice of spouse, and expectations of relationships in adulthood (Furman, 2002).

From what has been written, it is clear that the romantic relationship begins precisely in young adulthood. The person who enters into a romantic relationship has three basic developmental tasks: identity formation, development of relationship skills, and healthy management of sexual impulses (Saraç, Hamamcı and Güçray, 2015). Establishing healthy romantic relationships during adolescence boosts individuals' self-confidence and makes an important contribution to their psychosocial development (Gizir, 2013). It is accepted that partners in a romantic relationship have some duties that must be mutually fulfilled. This helps to develop a sense of responsibility in partners (Garcia and Soriano, 2017).

Connolly and Goldberg (1999) stated that the romantic relationship begins to be experienced with the stage of 'initial infatuation'. In this stage, the physical characteristics and attractiveness of the person in a romantic relationship are the primary focus for the individual. In the second stage, individuals go through the 'affiliative romantic relationships' stage. In this stage, individuals in romantic relationships contribute to the development of their romantic relationships by participating in various activities with the opposite sex in friend groups. In the third stage, there is the 'intimate romantic relationships' stage. In this stage, people begin to flirt and sexual intimacy occurs, accompanied by intense mutual feelings. The 'committed romantic relationships' is the last stage of romantic relationships. This phase is a long process. In this phase, there is a mutual physical attraction between the

partners and the desire of them to be close to each other. Marriage may occur during this phase.

Close relationship or love is sometimes used to explain a personal relationship, sometimes a special element or characteristic of personal relationships, and sometimes a special feeling that one person develops toward another (Rotenberg, Shewchuk and Kimberley, 2001). Even though, romantic relationship is generally defined as love; it also includes elements such as support, belonging and attachment (Terzi and Özbay, 2016). According to Duck (1994), partners co-create meaning together in a personal relationship. Similarly, romantic relationships are based on mutual recognition and willingness to interact between the partners (Collins, 2003).

Literature defines a romantic relationship according to various criteria. According to Sternberg (1988), a romantic relationship is made up of intimacy, passion, and commitment. A romantic relationship is intimate when it is characterized by feelings of closeness, belonging and connectedness. Further, passion encompasses physical attraction, romantic drives, and sexual attraction. Besides that, commitment is also defined as the desire to stay in a relationship for the long term.

According to Rubenstein and Shaver (1982), a romantic relationship is clearly based on honesty. Two people reveal themselves to each other, displaying behaviors such as sincerity, self-sacrifice, compassion, caring, respect, mutual support, protection and care, refraining from defense in a relationship, and devotion to the other. An emotional exchange takes place between these two people, and an emotional bond is formed. When a separation situation occurs in the relationship process, people feel great sadness.

In their 1993 study, Moss and Schwebel identified five dimensions of romantic relationships. Firstly commitment signifies the determination to maintain the relationship in response to experiences throughout the relationship. Second, emotional intimacy involves sharing the innermost feelings of partners and understanding each others' emotions. Intimacy on the cognitive level is the third dimension. As an individual's cognitive level evolves, cognitive intimacy becomes evident. Physical intimacy refers to physical interaction as the fourth dimension. Finally, mutuality

mentions interactions and efforts performed by a couple to continue their relationship. People come into contact with many people during their lives, find many of them attractive, but only select a small number of them to have romantic relationships with. Studies have been conducted that several psychological factors have been identified by Snell, Schicke and, Arbeiter (2002) as having an impact on romantic relationships. Relational-esteem refers to identifying oneself positively during romantic relationships. A second factor is relational preoccupation , which is continuous thinking about relationships. A third factor is internal relational control, which is the idea that one's relationships are determined by their behavior. Relational consciousness also plays a role in how people perceive positives and negatives in relationships. The fifth factor is relational motivation, which consists of the wish to participate in romantic relationships. Another element is relational anxiety. Those who suffer from relational anxiety also tend to feel uncomfortable and anxious in their relationships. In terms of relational assertiveness, it means acting assertively in intimate relationships. Another factor is relationship depression, which is characterized by feeling dissatisfied or frustrated in relationships. In external relational control, a person believes that chance or other external forces are in charge of relationships. Additionally, relational monitoring entails being aware of what one's relationship says about one. An intimate relationship fear is another factor. It refers to anxiety associated with getting engaged to someone. As a final factor, relational satisfaction represents happiness and positive opinions about a romantic relationship.

Furthermore, it has been stated that there are three principles of romantic relationships. These are the experience of feelings of attachment, love, and affection, the satisfaction of psychological needs, and the realization of interdependence (Berscheid and Peplau, 1983). According to Orlofsky (1981), romantic partners interact with each other, and this interaction is a process supported by trust and commitment. It is important for romantic partners to be able to open up to each other, to have sincere feelings and thoughts, to have and share common living spaces, and to experience their own individual characteristics.

Physical changes also occur in people when a romantic relationship is entered into. It is said that neurotransmitters are particularly effective in romantic relationships. Neurotransmitters related to amphetamines come into play in the early stages of the

process, allowing individuals to experience intense excitement. At this point, for some people, relationships can be lived with long-term commitment and peace, and the neurotransmitter processes in the brain act like a powerful drug (Kail and Cavanaugh, 2015). It is known that the hormone oxytocin is also effective in romantic relationships. The release of this hormone causes men to find their wives more attractive compared to other women (Carter and Porges, 2012). At the same time, it is also indicated that serotonin levels in women's blood increase during a biologically romantic relationship (Langeslag, Van Der Veen and Fekkes, 2012).

In addition to neurological and hormonal effects of romantic relationships, psychological factors also help explain why couples have romantic relationships with each other (Kail and Cavanaugh, 2015). According to Hatfield, individuals involved in a romantic relationship demonstrate diverse attributes in the domains of cognition, emotion, and behavior, and the existence of such a relationship has an impact on their behaviors, patterns of thinking, and emotional experiences (1988). He defined romantic relationships as the process of exploring how two people think, feel, and act similarly and differently. He also noted that individuals display particular characteristics in relationships. Cognitive characteristics are characterized by self-disclosure. People feel comfortable sharing information about themselves in relationships. Moreover, relationships are emotionally characterized by deep connection between two people, including a lot of love and care for each other. Furthermore, behavioral characteristics include the touching and physical interactions and feelings of enjoyment when partners are close to each other.

As Kağıtçıbaşı (1998) stated, considering the fact that culture impacts human behavior, it's reasonable to suggest that romantic relationships will be influenced by culture. In a Turkish research, it was found that reciprocally protecting one another and the wish to make the other feel good were the key factors in defining a relationship as romantic. In Turkish culture, mutuality and voluntariness are considered as crucial components of romantic relationships (İmamoğlu, 2009). Eryılmaz and Atak (2009) proposed five factors influencing the start of intimate relationships in Turkish cultures. A behavioral indicator of intimacy is spending time with or getting a telephone number from the person you are interested in. Affective and cognitive intimacy is referred to as the second one. It means individuals are able to be aware of their cognitive and emotional

abilities. The third indicator is romantic verbalization which includes poetry or meaningful words spoken to someone you are interested in. Self perception, which is a judgment of one's intelligence, attractiveness, is a fourth indicator of the beginning of romantic relationships. The last indicator, referred to as self knowledge, includes consideration for the emotions and viewpoints of others.

1.2.1. Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Hendrick (1988) maintains that relationship satisfaction is among the important areas of relationship assessment. A number of different terms have been used to describe it, including marital satisfaction, relationship happiness, or relationship quality, and satisfaction of unmarried couples (Kluwer, 2010). There is no doubt that relationship satisfaction is the most comprehensively studied and effective variable when it comes to romantic relationships (Graham, Diebels and Barnow, 2011). Based on their definition of satisfaction, a satisfying relationship is characterized by positive affect and attraction to a person's relationship, according to Rusbult, Johnson and Morrow (1986). According to Arriaga (2001), relationship satisfaction can be defined as perceived evaluation of a partner of the positive happenings occurring in a relationship. As reported by Sabatelli (1988), relationship satisfaction is the relationship between the expectations of the individual and the behavior of the partner.

A person's satisfaction with their relationship is affected by their perceptions of love attitudes of their partners, empathy, self-disclosure, and competence in relation to the partner (Meeks, Hendrick and Hendrick, 1998). They also pointed out the importance of the way conflict is handled in the context of relationship satisfaction. It refers to how partners attempt to resolve conflicts. Satisfaction in a close relationship occurs when partners meet each other's needs, are satisfied with the relationship, think that their relationship works better than others, love each other, and there are lesser problems in their relationships (Hendrick, 1988). According to Canary and Cupach (1988), the approaches used by non-stressed couples to address particular relationship difficulties contribute to happiness in relationships. Huston and Chorost (1994) found that the use of expressions of love between couples can prevent negative behaviors and enhance satisfaction in romantic relationships.

Buunk (2001) holds that a satisfying relationship is characterized by rewarding interactions with the partner. In the Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959), partners attempt to make the most of the benefits and decrease the costs of being in a significant relationship; in order to maximize their satisfaction out of it. A similar claim is made by the investment model (Rusbult, 1980), which suggests that degree of commitment, effort amount, and the comparison with the level of effort of the other partner influence the maintenance of romantic relationships. A theory called Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger and Calabrese, 1975) also proposes that uncertain interpersonal relationships increase anxiety. As a result, individuals have a tendency to decrease uncertainty in interpersonal relationships. İmamoğlu and Aydın (2009) also supported these theories by suggesting that individuals establish and maintain close relationships when their own interests coincide with the interests of another individual.

Relationship satisfaction can be described in five dimensions by Collins (2003); involvement, partner selection, content, quality, and cognitive-emotional processes. When talking about involvement, it is meant that the frequency and how long the relationship has lasted. The selection of partners refers to the qualities of a partner and their implications for developmental tasks. The quality of a romantic relationship is another important factor. In this context, it refers to the positive experiences that the relationship provides. Content includes the things that take place in the relationship, what partners do together, and what activities they engage in. As a last component, cognitive and emotional processes refer to perceptions, expectations, and attributions concerning oneself, one's partner, and one's romantic relationship.

Berscheid (1999) argues that all functional relationships, including romantic relationships, have positive effects on the health, well-being, and psychological well-being of individuals. Kansky (2018) notes that a satisfied romantic relationship is closely associated with high levels of life satisfaction and happiness. A satisfied romantic relationship brings a healthier life, longer life expectancy, and better parenting performance (Allen et al., 2020). Gómez-López, Viejo and Ortega-Ruiz (2019) found that people who have a satisfied romantic relationship are also satisfied with their lives, are happier, have fewer problems with mental and physical illnesses, and have high self-esteem. On the other hand, the importance of relationship

satisfaction becomes even more apparent when one considers that couples who do not experience romantic relationship satisfaction may have problems such as social phobia, alcohol addiction, panic disorder, major depression, and generalized anxiety disorder (Whisman, 1999).

Numerous variables might have been related to romantic relationship satisfaction in literature like sexuality. In studies of relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction, sexual conflict was reported to have a negative correlation with both relationship and sexual satisfaction (Lewandowski and Schrage 2010). Uzun (2021) also found a significant correlation between sexual satisfaction and perceived relationship satisfaction among individuals in romantic relationships, indicating that as sexual satisfaction increases, so does perceived relationship satisfaction. Accordingly, Peck, Shaffer and Williamson (2005) also investigated related subjects. They found that a low level of communality in a relationship leads to an increase in sexual and relationship satisfaction. According to another study by Lavalekar, Kulkarni, and Jagtap (2007), men's satisfaction in romantic relationships increases when they are sexually satisfied, feel understood by their partners, and believe their partners are loyal to them.

Problems in communication between partners also affect relationship satisfaction. While communication problems cause problems in all types of relationships, this is an issue that requires more attention in romantic relationships. Miscommunication between romantic individuals can lead to communication problems and conflicts, and in this case, negatively affect relationship satisfaction (Atak and Taştan, 2012). Researchers found that styles of attachment, conflict, and humor with relationship satisfaction are interrelated. Conflict styles and humor styles were found to mediate the relationship satisfaction effect with attachment style (Cann, Norman, Welbourne and Calhoun, 2008). Additionally, according to Eğeci and Gençöz's (2006) study, relationship satisfaction was correlated with communication skills. Couples who are satisfied in their relationship are able to engage in problem-solving interactions with their partners in more positive ways (Johnson, 2005). In addition, it is known that couples who spend time together, make decisions together, care for each other, and make efforts to resolve conflicts achieve high levels of satisfaction with their romantic relationship (Kail and Cavanaugh, 2015). In Ledbetter's (2017) study, watching

television with a romantic partner, romance, and other forms of relationship maintenance behaviors were suggested to be positive indicators of relationship satisfaction.

Looking at the relationship between satisfaction in a romantic relationship and behaviors, it appears that couples who are dissatisfied in their relationship tend to engage in dysfunctional behaviors such as criticism, whining, hostility, and diminished interaction compared to couples who are satisfied (Fincham and Beach, 2006). Therefore, a decline in relationship satisfaction can lead to outcomes such as arguments, alienation, separation, and divorce between spouses (Yoosefi et al., 2010). While positive attributions of partners to each other strengthen the relationship, negative attributions, on the other hand, lead to undesirable feelings in the relationship. Therefore, referring negatively to one's partner in a negative situation decreases relationship satisfaction, whereas assuming that the cause of the negative situation is an external situation that is not caused by the partner increases relationship satisfaction (Bradbury, Fincham and Beach, 2000).

Studies also have investigated the relationship between attitudes toward love and satisfaction in romantic relationships as well. The results of a study by Franiuk, Cohen, and Pomerantz (2002) demonstrate that giving importance to finding the right partner anticipated relationship satisfaction and relationship persistence more than the work-it-out theory, which focuses on effort in romantic relationships. According to Beştav (2007), passionate love played the largest role in relationship satisfaction across love types, attachment styles and irrational relationship belief systems. Moreover, partners' emotional support for each other is effective for couples' high satisfaction with their romantic relationship (Holm, Werner-Wilson, Cook and Berger, 2001).

Aydoğdu (2010) investigated intimate relationships in relation to personality characteristics. There was a positive correlation between relationship satisfaction and scores of extraversion in the study. Looking at the studies on relationship satisfaction in the literature, it is seen that the gender variable is also much discussed with relationship satisfaction. When examining the first studies on this topic, it is found that men have a higher relationship satisfaction than women (Peterson, 1990). Women's high relationship satisfaction, on the other hand, is found related to how supportive

their partners are and how much they communicate with their partners about their relationship. At the same time, they have high levels of relationship satisfaction when they feel that their partners are loyal to them, and feel emotionally connected to their partners (Bradbury, Campbell and Fincham, 1995).

1.2.2. Parental Acceptance-Rejection and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

The relationship between parental rejection and romantic relationship satisfaction has been the subject of numerous studies. In one of these studies, perceived parental rejection was found to be related to higher perceived partner rejection in adult romantic relationships (Babuşçu, 2014). In addition, Varan's (2006) study found that individuals are less satisfied in their relationships if they experienced higher levels of rejection in both their current intimate relationship and their relationship with their parents as children. There was evidence that, individuals who perceived parental acceptance, experienced higher levels of relationship satisfaction in their romantic relationships as adults (Auslander, 2009). Another study supported this relationship by suggesting that maternal acceptance related to spousal care was associated with relationship satisfaction (Finzi-Dottan and Schiff, 2022). Moreover, Eryavuz (2006) found a positive association between romantic relationship satisfaction and parental acceptance. Similar to this study, Yalçınkaya (1997)'s study also found a significant relationship between remembered paternal acceptance of Turkish women who were in a romantic relationship and their relationship satisfaction. In another study, the researchers investigated the connection between adults' marital satisfaction and their perception of parental acceptance or rejection. (Meth, 1999). The study found that men who reported increased levels of parental rejection also reported decreased levels of relationship satisfaction in their current romantic relationships. Finally, a study conducted among Turkish and Turkish Cypriot newlyweds found a statistically significant relationship between the level of maternal acceptance perceived by husbands and the marital satisfaction reported by their wives (Eralp, 2021).

1.3. Relational Self-Change

Self-concept is explained as a person's beliefs about themselves and refers to their perceptions of their behaviors and characteristics (Daffin and Lane, 2021). The self influences an individual's attitudes and behaviors. It controls the way individuals perceive themselves, the world, and their values (Markus and Kitayama, 2003).

Recently, growing research on the self-concept emphasizes that the self-concept has a multidimensional, multifaceted dynamic structure (Markus and Wurf, 1987).

		Direction of Self-Change	
		Subtraction of Content	Addition of Content
Valence	Positive Content	Self-Contraction	Self-Expansion
	Negative Content	Self-Pruning	Self-Adulteration

Figure 2. Two-dimensional model of relational self-change (Source: McIntyre et al., 2015)

Recent studies, particularly in collectivist societies, focus on the idea that the self is affected by significant others and groups (Cross, Morris and Gore, 2002). Moreover, many theorists assume that self-concept is shaped through social experiences and interactions (Carmichael et al., 2007). It is frequently discussed in social psychology that being in a close relationship can affect the self-concept of individuals. Romantic relationships, one of the social relationships developed by individuals, are closely related to self-concepts. Romantic relationship changes the selves of individuals, two separate selves experience change and transformation together (Berscheid and Reis, 1998). This change can be in two ways, positive and negative. Due to the absence of a comprehensive conceptualization that can account for the various changes in self-concept, Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre (2014) developed "Two Dimensional Model of Relational Self-Change" to explain these changes. The two-dimensional self-change model proposes that individuals' selves experience positive or negative changes in a particular direction and valence during the romantic relationship. The direction of self-change represented by the columns in Figure 1 refers to the increase and decrease in the content, size and/or diversity of the self-concept. For example, it is possible to say that an individual who realizes he/she enjoys opera because of being with her romantic partner or who feels more altruistic experiences an increase or expansion in her self-concept.

Nevertheless, individuals may also undergo a decrease in their self-concept when their relationship leads to the loss or compromise of certain aspects of their identity or personality. For example; a person may reduce skiing if his/her partner dislikes the activity, or may become less outgoing if their partner discourages it.

The valence of self-change, on the other hand, refers to whether that content is positive or negative for the person. For example, an individual may change their "workaholic" identity by limiting the time they spend at home to work at their partner's request. This situation can be interpreted subjectively by different individuals. Individuals who think that extra work is stressful and boring evaluate this situation as positive. Conversely, some individuals may also perceive this situation negatively as it does not fit their "hardworking" image of themselves (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). In other words, according to the two-dimensional relational self model, self-change takes place over two dimensions, namely direction and valence, and occurs in four different ways which are self-expansion, self-adulteration, self-contraction and self-pruning (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014; McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski 2015). Each subcategory will be explained below.

1.3.1. Self-Expansion

Self-expansion refers to an expansion in the positive content of the self. The fundamental concept of the self-expansion model is the individual's effort to expand his self-understanding by expanding his physical and social resources, acquiring new perspectives and identities, and thereby increasing his potential capabilities (McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski 2015). As long as the romantic relationship continues, the way in which the self-expansion of the individual is seen can be summarized as follows (1) new resources, attitudes, behaviors and skills are added to the individual's self; (2) an individual's newly acquired features enrich their existence; (3) as the individual's self develops, other features of him or her, beyond the relationship, also expand; (4) a romantic relationship involves individuals having similar characteristics to the other individual. Self-expansion is triggered when a person develops different perspectives depending on him or her relationship and partner, starts engaging in novel and interesting activities, broadens him or her range of skills and competencies, and acquires new resources (Sprecher, Aron and Aron, 1988). Research on the Michelangelo phenomenon suggests that relationship partners can play a significant

role in fostering and supporting the development of positive self-esteem, thereby facilitating individuals in their pursuit of becoming their ideal selves (Drigotas, Rusbult, Wieselquist and Whitton, 1999). Sprecher, Aron and Aron (1988) suggest that people prefer being around people who are able to enrich and expand them. The two basic principles of the self-expansion model in intimate relationships are summarized as follows by Aaron and Aron (1996) (1) expansion of oneself is one of human nature's basic motivations; (2) in order to experience such expansion, people often form close relationships with one another. This allows them to incorporate the other into themselves. For example, people who have a partner who plays a sport may show interest in the sport to impress their partner. Even if the goal is different in the first place, over time they may feel a close connection to the sport apart from their partner. Because now, regardless of the partner, they can get interested and enjoy this sport. They can also try to get information from different sources on the subject and improve their skills in this area. Thus, an interest may become a feature that individuals incorporate into themselves.

1.3.2. Self-Contraction

Self-contraction is the reduction of positive qualities in the self-concepts of romantic partners. In other words, an individual in a close relationship experiences self-contraction when their positive self-concept is diminished or suppressed. For instance, when a partner does not enjoy a hobby, an individual may become less interested in the hobby over time, until finally the hobby is no longer considered a part of their self-concept (McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski 2015). Similarly, an individual might neglect valued friendships, if a romantic partner dislikes the individual's friends, or become distrustful of others after a partner commits infidelity. The self-concept of individuals may further shrink as a result of such experiences (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). Self-contraction has also been shown to occur after the end of a positive relationship. Researchers found that partners with an increased level of self-expansion experienced an increased rate of self-contraction after the relationship ended. Because after the separation, certain characteristics that bring variety and enrich the self-concept may disappear or weaken. (Lewandowski et al., 2006).

1.3.3. Self-Pruning

Self-pruning refers to the process of reduction or elimination of negative aspects of one's self-concept. In self-pruning, negative attributes are eliminated or removed, thereby the self-concept is influenced positively. Self-pruning can occur in the context of romantic relationships, as being married or in a committed partnership can reduce feelings of loneliness compared to individuals who are not in such relationships. However, it can also come into being the Michelangelo phenomenon when the self of the person who experiences a decrease of negative qualities through the relationship with his or her partner approaches his or her ideal self. For example, if a person who smokes frequently leaves this trait under the influence of the partner during the romantic relationship process, this situation has a positive effect on the person's self-concept. The romantic relationship that the individual has while giving up this trait appears as a supporting factor (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014).

1.3.4. Self-Adulteration

Self-adulteration happens when negative content is added to the self-concept in the relationship or leading to an increase in negative characteristics. For example, for non-drinker individuals, alcohol may start to have an important place in their lives due to the influence of their partners in romantic relationships. It can significantly affect their lives in terms of health and other aspects and can reduce their quality of life. This situation is reflected in the concept of self-adulteration. It can be observed that partners who perceive negative experiences in their self-concept and whose negative traits increase often use expressions such as "I don't like the person I have become in this relationship", "I am not the person I used to be". Dating relationships can sometimes involve self-adulteration in the earlier times. For example, singles are found more likely to support negative traits when a promising and charming partner shares those traits. As a result of the study, it was found that individuals are willing to include the negative characteristics of a desired romantic partner in their self-concept, and the degree of inclusion is directly proportional to the desire for the partner. The results of the study show that individuals incorporate the negative characteristics of the potential partner into their self-concept "with the goal and willingness to enter into a romantic relationship." At the same time, a person who feels controlled by their partner's drug addiction and begins to harm themselves or internalizes insults from their abusive partner may also be experiencing self-adulteration (Mattingly, Lewandowski and

McIntyre, 2014).

1.3.5. Parental Acceptance-Rejection, Self-Concept and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Substantive evidence suggests that relationships with parents in childhood affect romantic relationships in adulthood. Walper and Wendt (2015) compared adolescents' relationships with their parents and their relationships with their partners. Emotional insecurity with the mother was found to be associated with all aspects of the adolescent's romantic relationship in the broadest sense. Eşici (2014) examined the relationship between university students' attachment, early maladaptive schemas, psychological needs and romantic relationship quality, and found that psychological needs were the strongest predictors of the model explaining romantic relationship satisfaction. In the study, it was also found that psychological needs were the mediating variable in the relationship between anxious and avoidant attachment and romantic relationship satisfaction.

Accordingly, the effect of perceived parental acceptance on romantic relationships has been a topic of significant interest in the existing literature. It was found that perceived parental rejection linked to higher perceived rejection from partners in the adult romantic relationship (Babuşçu, 2014). Women's memories of their paternal acceptance during childhood were found to act as a partial mediating element, linking their psychological adjustment to their perception of partner acceptance within their romantic relationships (Rohner, Melendez and Kraimer-Rickaby, 2008). According to Giaouzi and Giovazolias (2015), individuals who perceive rejection from their parents tend to experience social anxiety in adulthood, and this association is partially explained by perceiving rejection from their intimate partners (Giaouzi and Giovazolias, 2015). Studies in Turkish culture also support these findings. Parental acceptance-rejection was found to be significantly correlated with acceptance-rejection of romantic relationship partners in adulthood in a Turkish study (Varan, 2005). Additionally, evidence supports the conclusion that, individuals who perceived parental acceptance, experience higher relationship satisfaction in adult romantic relationships (Auslander, 2009). The results of another study suggested that maternal acceptance was linked to spousal caregiving which is correlated with relationship satisfaction as well (Finzi-Dottan and Schiff, 2022).

Parental acceptance has also been found to be related to the development of a positive self-concept (Cournoyer et al., 2005). According to Karaaslan (2022), parental warmth was positively associated with a positive sense of self. In their study, Dekovic and Meeus (1997) investigated the relationship between parents and adolescents and adolescent peer relationships. In their study, the researchers examined 508 families with adolescents aged 12 to 18 years old. They hypothesized that the quality of the parent-child relationship has an impact on the adolescent's self-concept, which, in turn, influences the adolescent's level of social integration within peer groups. They found that the relationship between a mother's parenting style and the adolescent's peer involvement is mediated by the adolescent's self-concept. Positive self-concept strongly mediated by maternal acceptance; indicating that mother-child relationships play a significant role in developing adolescents' positive self-concepts. There are studies in the literature that show that the mother-child relationship affects development of self-concept clarity as well as a positive sense of self. In a study conducted by Becht et al. (2017), focusing on adolescents aged 13 to 18 years, the researchers investigated the connections between self-concept clarity, the quality of parent-adolescent relationships, and the quality of friendships. The study revealed a positive association between higher levels of self-concept clarity in adolescents and greater maternal support.

Romantic relationships can also change an individual's self-concept, which in turn affects their level of satisfaction with their relationship (Mattingly, 2015). Kalkan and Aydoğan (2019) concluded that a differentiated self contributes positively to satisfaction in a marital relationship. Based on their research findings, it was found that people with a clear and autonomous self-concept, who can relate to others rather than being dependent on them, are more likely to have a satisfied marital relationship. However, it can be said that ignoring the need for autonomy and acting in accordance with the spouse's expectations will negatively impact marital relationship satisfaction. Moreover, McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski (2017) reported a correlation between increased rates of self-concept clarity and satisfaction with romantic relationships.

According to the study by Gündüz and Karataş (2020), relationship satisfaction is positively related to the sub-dimensions of relational self-change which are self-

expansion and self pruning, whereas other dimensions such as self-contraction and self-adulteration negatively correlated. The study by Aron, Paris, and Aron (1995) indicates that individuals who have fallen in love in the past two weeks report significantly higher self-esteem, self-efficacy and more characteristics in response to the question "Who are you today?" which is an indicator of the construct of self-expansion. As a consequence, self-expansion is linked to higher levels of relationship satisfaction. Moreover, self-pruning is positively related to relationship satisfaction, as individuals' negative self-content decreases and this promotes partners' personal development. When individuals in romantic relationships perceive their partners as supportive and believe they are bringing themselves closer to their ideal selves, they experience high levels of subjective well-being (Drigotas, 2002). Individuals move away from their ideal selves, on the other hand, as a result of the process of self-adulteration, by acquiring undesirable qualities or by reinforcing these qualities through romantic relationships and being with a romantic partner. This situation negatively affects romantic relationship satisfaction, resulting in the individual not being satisfied with their romantic relationship (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). Additionally, research has shown that parental responsiveness is connected to adolescents' self-concept, and this, again, influences their attitudes toward romantic relationships (Chen et al., 2020). In light of these, it is assumed that individuals who have higher parental acceptance have a more positive and consistent self-concept, which has a positive effect on their relationship satisfaction. Parental acceptance is also estimated to increase the tendency for positive self-concept changes during a romantic relationship, which in turn increases relationship satisfaction.

1.4. Aim of the Present Study

As mentioned earlier, parental acceptance and relational self-change have been two of the focused topics separately in the field of psychology (Rohner, Melendez and Kraimer-Rickaby, 2008; Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). Considering the relevant literature, it can be concluded that both variables are related to relationship satisfaction (Auslander et al., 2009; Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). Parental acceptance was found significantly and positively related to romantic relationship satisfaction (Auslander et al., 2009). Consistently, experience of rejection from parents during childhood is linked to lower levels of satisfaction in romantic relationships in adulthood (Auslander et al., 2009; Eryavuz, 2006; Parade, Leerkes and

Helms, 2013; Varan, 2005; Yalcinkaya, 1997). Furthermore, relationship satisfaction is positively associated with the self-expansion and self-pruning dimensions of relational self-change, while self-contraction and self-adulteration dimensions have a negative correlation (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). Unfortunately, the relationship between parental acceptance and self-change in intimate relationships have never been the subject of prospective research. Research examining this relationship comprehensively, including romantic relationship satisfaction, is scarce as well. Therefore, this study will make a contribution both to international literature and to Turkish literature by examining the mediating roles of relational self-change on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance in adulthood and romantic relationship satisfaction. All these considerations lead to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Significant positive relationship is expected between perceived parental acceptance and self-expansion and self-pruning which are the two positive sub-dimensions of relational self-change and significant negative relationship is expected between perceived parental acceptance and self-contraction and self-adulteration which are the two negative sub-dimensions of relational self-change.

Hypothesis 2: Significant positive relationship is expected between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: Significant positive relationship is expected between relationship satisfaction and self-expansion and self-pruning which are the two positive sub-dimensions of relational self-change and significant negative relationship is expected between relationship satisfaction and self-contraction and self-adulteration which are the two negative sub-dimensions of relational self-change.

Hypothesis 4: Parental acceptance, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning and self-adulteration will significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: It was expected that self-expansion would mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who reported more perceived parental acceptance would experience more self-expansion, which in turn would be related to more relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 6: It was expected that self-contraction would mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who reported less perceived parental

acceptance would experience less self-contraction, which in turn would be related to less relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 7: It was expected that self-pruning would mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who reported more perceived parental acceptance would experience more self-pruning, which in turn would be related to more relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 8: It was expected that self-adulteration would mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who reported less perceived parental acceptance would experience less self- self-adulteration, which in turn would be related to less relationship satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

2.1. Participants

In the present study, the study sample consisted of 209 volunteer subjects who participated through a convenience sampling method. Sixty two percent (62.7%) (N = 131) of the subjects were females and thirty six percent (36.8%) (N = 77) of them were males whose age ranged from 18 to 51. Participants were required to respond to all questions, with the exception of those requesting personal information, in an online tool (Google Forms). The inclusion criteria were as follows (1) being in a romantic relationship that has been going on for at least a month (2) having parents as alive (3) having undivorced parents. Therefore, the study excluded 12 individuals who did not meet the required relationship duration, 8 individuals who had experienced parental loss, and 19 individuals with divorced parents. The mean age of the participants was 26.18 (SD = 6.62) and the average relationship duration of the participants were 25.52 months (SD = 17.69). Twenty five percent (11%) of the sample graduated from Master's or Doctorate level, 78.5% from university level, 9.6% from secondary school and 1% from middle school. The majority of the participants were living with their families (59.3%).

2.2. Instruments

Instruments used in this study included an Informed Consent Form, a Demographic Information Form, Adult Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (Adult PARQ) mother and father short forms, Turkish Scale of Self-Change in Romantic Relationships and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS).

2.2.1. Informed Consent Form

The informed consent form was used to explain to the participants, purpose and duration of the study and the researcher's contact information. It also gives information about confidentiality and their rights to reject participation (see Appendix B).

2.2.2. Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form was used to gather personal information from participants including their age, gender, education and income level, current relationship status, the length of their romantic relationship, mental health conditions,

the number of siblings and information about the livingness of their parents (see Appendix C).

2.2.3. The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) - Short Form

Perceived parental acceptance-rejection level of the participants were measured using the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) short forms (Rohner, 1978). The scale consists of 48 items in total so as to be 24 items for the mother version and 24 items for the father version. Both versions have four subscales; 8 items belong to warmth/affection subscale, 6 items to hostility/ aggression subscale, 6 items to indifference/neglect subscale and 4 items to undifferentiated rejection subscale.

Each item is responded to on a 4-point Likert-type scale and scored as “almost always true” (4 points), “sometimes true” (3 points), “rarely true” (2 points), and “almost never true” (1 point). Both forms’ Cronbach’s α coefficients were ranged from .86 to .99, indicating high levels of reliability. Sample items from the warmth/affection scale are “*My mother/father said nice things about me*” “*My mother/father was really interested in what I do*”. Items from the hostility/aggression subscale are “*My mother/father hit me, even when I did not deserve it*”, “*My mother/father said many unkind things to me*”. Item examples from the indifference and neglect subscale are “*My mother/father paid no attention to me*”, “*My mother/father paid no attention to me as long as I do nothing to bother her*”. Some item examples from the undifferentiated rejection subscale are “*My mother/father made me feel unloved if I misbehave*”, and “*My mother/father saw me as a big nuisance*” (see Appendix D and E).

Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Dedeler, Akün and DurakBatıgün (2017). Cronbach’s α values of both forms (mother and father) of the Turkish version of PARQ-S ranged from .75 to .96 and the test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .40 to .96 shows high internal reliability. In the present study, for the warmth/affection, indifference/neglect, hostility aggression and undifferentiated rejection subscales of PARQ Mother Version, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were .93, .87, .87 and .90, respectively. For the warmth/affection, indifference/neglect, hostility aggression and undifferentiated rejection subscales of PARQ Father Version, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were .93, .90, .91 and .92, respectively.

In this study, the total acceptance score was calculated by reversing the responses to the hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection subscales and adding them to the responses to the warmth/affection subscale questions.

2.2.4. The Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale (TSCRRS)

“The Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale (TSCRRS)” was used to collect data on participants' self-change. The scale was developed by Dinçer, Ekşi and Aron (2017), as a Turkish adaptation study of the Relational Self-Change Scale (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). The Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale (TSCRRS) consists of sixteen items and has four subscales. 5 items belong to self-expansion subscale, 5 items belong to self-contraction subscale, 3 items belong to self-pruning subscale and 3 items belong to self-adulteration subscale. Each item is responded to on a 7-point Likert-type scale which ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). The developers of the scale (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014) proposed that self-concept changes occur along two independent dimensions: direction (increase vs. decrease in content) and valence (positivity vs. negativity of content). These two dimensions combine to create four processes of relationship-induced self-concept change: self-expansion (increasing positive content), self-contraction (decreasing positive content), self-pruning (decreasing negative content), and self-adulteration (increasing negative content). An increase in the score obtained from the scale indicates that there is a high level of self-change in the type of self-change measured by the subscale. There is no reverse item in the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, and self-adulteration subscales were .80, .85, .74 and .61 respectively (see Appendix F).

2.2.5. The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

In order to measure participants' relationship satisfaction, the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) was used in this study (Hendrick, 1988). The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) is a 7 item and 7-point Likert-type scale which ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). An increase in the score indicates higher relationship satisfaction. Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .86 (Hendrick, 1988). Turkish adaptation study of the scale was conducted by Curun (2001).

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the Turkish version of RAS also showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$) (see Appendix G).

2.3. Procedures

Prior to data collection, permission was obtained by e-mail from the authors of the scales to use in the study. Later the ethics committee approval was obtained from İzmir University of Economics Ethical Committee. After that, the data was collected online via the online survey platform Google Forms. The link for the surveys was distributed via social media channels (e.g. wp groups, instagram). The aim of the study and the information regarding confidentiality and the voluntary participation were given to the participants via the Informed Consent Form (appendix). Firstly, the demographic information form was asked to fill out. Subsequently, the other instruments including The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) - Short Form, The Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale (TSCRRS) and The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) were presented to the participants. Completing the survey approximately took 10-15 minutes.

2.4. Statistical Analysis

In order to analyze the data, SPSS version 21 was used. Firstly, data was removed from missing values and univariate and multivariate outliers. Before the main analysis, normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were checked. Descriptive analyses and Pearson correlation analyses were also carried out between the study variables. Then, multiple regression analysis was performed to observe the relationships between study variables. Afterwards, in order to examine the mediating role of the relational self-change on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and romantic relationship satisfaction, series of mediation analyses were conducted. In total, four mediation analyses was performed for the four subscales of relational self-change.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in this chapter. SPSS version 21 was used to analyze the data. This chapter includes a description of the study variables, gender differences between groups, correlations between variables, and the main moderation analyses. In the descriptive statistics section, the mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values of the Parental Acceptance - Rejection Scale, Relational Self-Change Scale, and the Relationship Satisfaction Scale are reported. Pearson correlation coefficients are then used to analyze the relationship between the variables in the study. For the final part of the analysis, main moderation analyses are conducted to examine the moderating role of relationship satisfaction in the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and relational self-change.

3.1. Descriptive Statistics among Study Variables

Table 2 shows the mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum scores for parental acceptance, self-change in the relationship, and relationship satisfaction separately by subscale.

Table 1. The Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
Maternal Acceptance	209	63.78	9.98	35	86
Paternal Acceptance	209	65.80	9.82	24	85
Self-Expansion	209	21.55	9.28	5	35
Self-Contraction	209	13.27	7.05	5	35
Self-Pruning	209	10.21	4.68	3	21
Self-Adulteration	209	10.04	5.25	3	21

Table 1. (Continued) The Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Relationship Satisfaction	209	30.19	9.12	7	49
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3.2. Correlations between Study Variables

Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationships between the study variables: maternal acceptance, paternal acceptance, relational self-change, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, self-adulteration, and relationship satisfaction. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis presented in Table 4.

The results of the analysis show that maternal acceptance was positively correlated with paternal acceptance ($r = .57, p < .01$). In addition, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between maternal acceptance, self-expansion, self-pruning, and relationship satisfaction ($r = .26, r = .25, r = .31, p < .01$ respectively), indicating that as maternal acceptance increases, self-expansion, self-pruning and relationship satisfaction of the participants increases. Moreover, paternal acceptance was positively associated with relational self-change, self-expansion, self-pruning, and relationship satisfaction ($r = .26, r = .31, r = .21, r = .33, p < .01$ respectively). Lastly, relationship satisfaction scores were positively associated with self-expansion, self-pruning, and self-adulteration ($r = .65, r = .43, r = .32, p < .01$), respectively.

Table 2. Correlations among the Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Parental Acceptance	—					
2. Self-Expansion	.32**	—				

Table 2. (Continued) Correlations among the Study Variables

3. Self-Contraction	.13	.10	—			
4. Self-Pruning	.26**	.21**	.57**	—		
5. Self-Adulteration	.13	.11	.34**	.52**	—	
6. Relationship Satisfaction	.36**	.33**	.65**	.24	.43**	—

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

3.3. Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine whether variables (parental acceptance, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning and self-adulteration) successfully predicted individuals' relationship satisfaction. Before the main analysis, assumptions such as outliers, multicollinearity and singularity, linearity, normality, covariance and independence of residuals were checked and bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval calculated based on 2,000 bootstrap for unconfirmed assumptions.

Firstly, the model predicted relationship satisfaction ($R^2 = .470$, $F(5, 203) = 35.96$, $p = .000$). In other words, all the variables explained 47% of the variance in relationship satisfaction.

As shown in Table 3, parental acceptance and self-expansion were significantly predicted relationship satisfaction ($B = .084$, $SE = .028$, $t = 2.985$, $p < .05$) ($B = .542$, $SE = .063$, $t = 8.604$, $p > .05$). However, self-contraction ($B = .095$, $SE = .078$, $t = 1.221$, $p > .05$), self-pruning ($B = .045$, $SE = .129$, $t = .345$, $p < .05$), and self-adulteration ($B = .118$, $SE = .113$, $t = 1.043$, $p > .05$) did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 3. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Concerning Relationship Satisfaction

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95%CI
Constant	5.40	3.50	1.54	1.13	[-1,52,12,31]
Parental Acceptance	.08	.03	2.99	.003	[.03, .14]
Self-Expansion	.54	.06	8.6	.000	[.42, .67]
Self-Contraction	.10	.08	1.22	.223	[-.06, .25]
Self-Pruning	.05	.13	.35	.730	[-.21, .30]
Self-Adulteration	.12	.11	1.04	.298	[-.11, .34]

Note. * $p < .05$

3.4. Mediation Analyses

Mediation analysis was conducted to investigate the mediating role of relational self-change on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. In this analysis, parental acceptance was the predictor, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, and self-adulteration were the mediators, and relationship satisfaction was the outcome variable. The mediation analyses were run with model 4 of PROCESS version 4.0. Since PROCESS provides the opportunity to include predictors and outcome variables one by one, a total of four analyses were performed in order to examine four sub-dimensions of relational self-change. Firstly, the mediating role of self-expansion on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined (Model 1). Secondly, the mediating role of self-contraction on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined (Model 2). Thirdly, the mediating role of self-pruning on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was

examined (Model 3). Lastly, the mediating role of self-adulteration on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined (Model 4). Significance tests of indirect effects are conducted using 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals (BC 95% CI) from 5000 bootstrap samples (Hayes, 2013). Accordingly, indirect effects are considered significant if the 95% confidence interval does not contain zero.

3.4.1. Model 1: The Mediating Role of the Self-Expansion in Relation between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction

Mediation analysis was conducted in order to examine the mediating role of self-expansion on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. The results of mediation analysis showed that perceived parental acceptance positively predicted self-expansion, $\beta = .32$, $t = 4.88$, $p < .05$, %95 CI [0.101, 0.238]. Furthermore, self-expansion positively predicted relationship satisfaction, $\beta = .60$, $t = 11.02$, $p < .05$, %95 CI [0.483, 0.694]. The model explained 45% of the variance in relationship satisfaction, $R^2 = .45$, $F(2, 206) = 85.70$, $p < .05$. Both total effect and direct effect of perceived parental acceptance on relationship satisfaction was significant ($\beta = .36$, $t = 5.62$, $p < .05$), ($\beta = .17$, $t = 3.16$, $p < .05$). Therefore, self-expansion partially mediated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated the significant indirect effect of self-expansion $\beta = .19$, %95 CI [0.106, 0.277], on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. These results indicated that self-expansion played a significant intervening role in relation between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction.

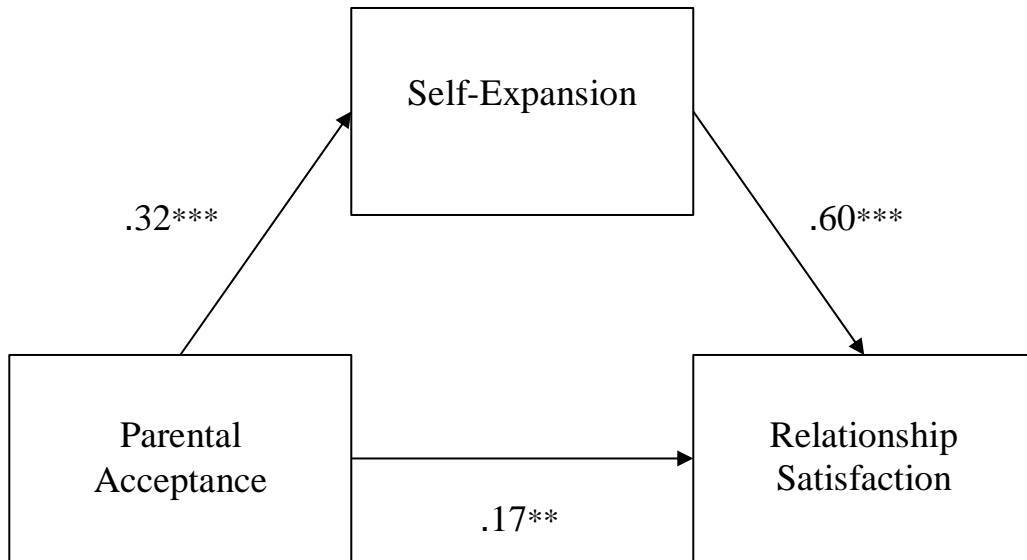


Figure 3. The Mediational Model of Self-Expansion on the Relationship between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction.

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

3.4.2. Model 2: The Mediating Role of the Self-Contraction in Relation between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction

Mediation analysis was conducted in order to examine the mediating role of self-contraction on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. The results of mediation analysis showed that perceived parental acceptance did not predict self-contraction, $\beta = .13$, $t = 1.90$, $p = .05$, %95 CI [-0.001, 0.107]. Furthermore, self-contraction positively predicted relationship satisfaction, $\beta = .20$, $t = 3.11$, $p < .05$, %95 CI [0.095, 0.421]. Both total effect and direct effect of perceived parental acceptance on relationship satisfaction were significant ($\beta = .36$, $t = 5.62$, $p < .05$), ($\beta = .34$, $t = 5.28$, $p < .05$). The results indicated that there was a nonsignificant indirect effect of self-contraction $\beta = .03$, %95 CI [0, 0.057], on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. These results indicated that self-contraction did not mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction.

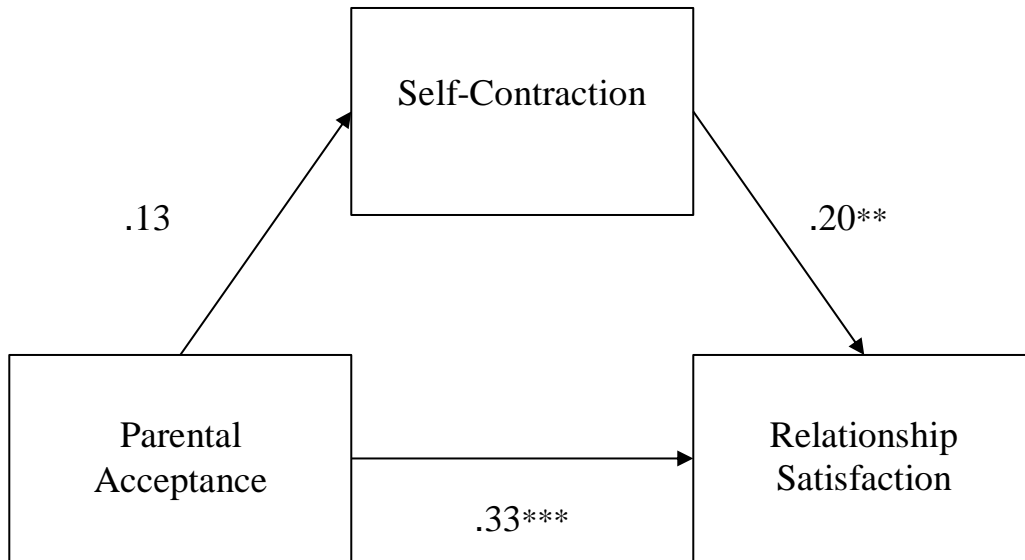


Figure 4. The Mediational Model of Self-Contraction on the Relationship between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction.

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

3.4.3. Model 3: The Mediating Role of the Self-Pruning in Relation between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction

Mediation analysis was conducted in order to examine the mediating role of self-pruning on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. The results of mediation analysis showed that perceived parental acceptance positively predicted self-pruning, $\beta = .26$, $t = 3.90$, $p < .05$, %95 CI [0.034, 0.105]. Furthermore, self-pruning positively predicted relationship satisfaction, $\beta = .36$, $t = 5.75$, $p < .05$, %95 CI [0.460, 0.939]. The model explained 25% of the variance in relationship satisfaction, $R^2 = .25$, $F(2, 206) = 34.82$, $p < .05$. Both total effect and direct effect of perceived parental acceptance on relationship satisfaction was significant ($\beta = .36$, $t = 5.62$, $p < .05$), ($\beta = .27$, $t = 4.33$, $p < .05$). Therefore, self-pruning partially mediated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated the significant indirect effect of self-pruning $\beta = .09$, %95 CI [0.045, 0.146], on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. These results indicated that self-pruning played a significant intervening role in relation between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction.

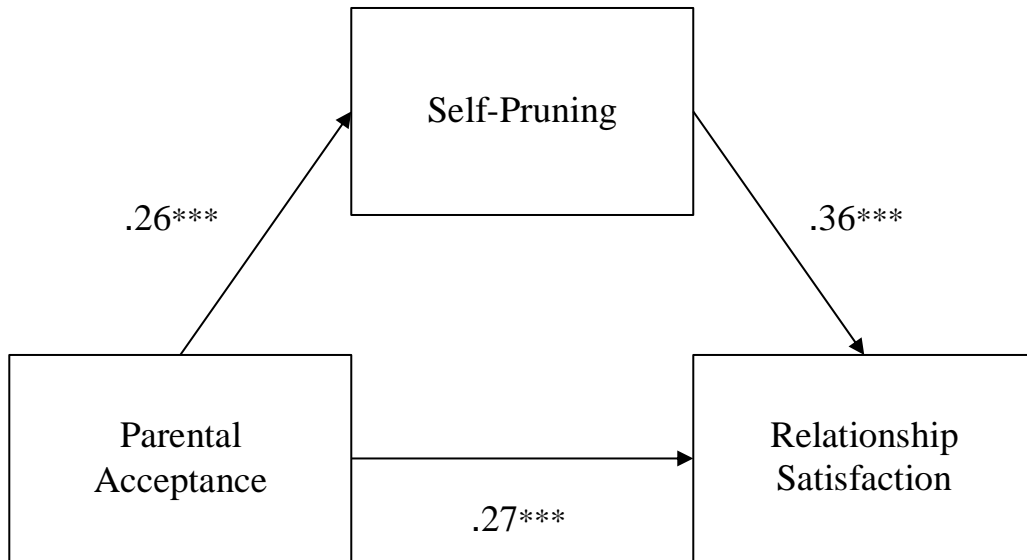


Figure 5. The Mediational Model of Self-Pruning on the Relationship between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction.

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

3.4.4. Model 4: The Mediating Role of the Self-Adulteration in Relation between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction

Mediation analysis was conducted in order to examine the mediating role of self-adulteration on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. The results of mediation analysis showed that perceived parental acceptance did not predict self-adulteration, $\beta = .13$, $t = 1.92$, $p = .05$, %95 CI [-0.001, 0.080]. Furthermore, self-adulteration positively predicted relationship satisfaction, $\beta = .28$, $t = 4.51$, $p < .05$, %95 CI [0.275, 0.702]. Both total effect and direct effect of perceived parental acceptance on relationship satisfaction was significant ($\beta = .36$, $t = 5.62$, $p < .05$), ($\beta = .33$, $t = 5.23$, $p < .05$). The results indicated that there was a nonsignificant indirect effect of self-adulteration, $\beta = .02$, %95 CI [0, 0.039], on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. Therefore, self-adulteration did not mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction.

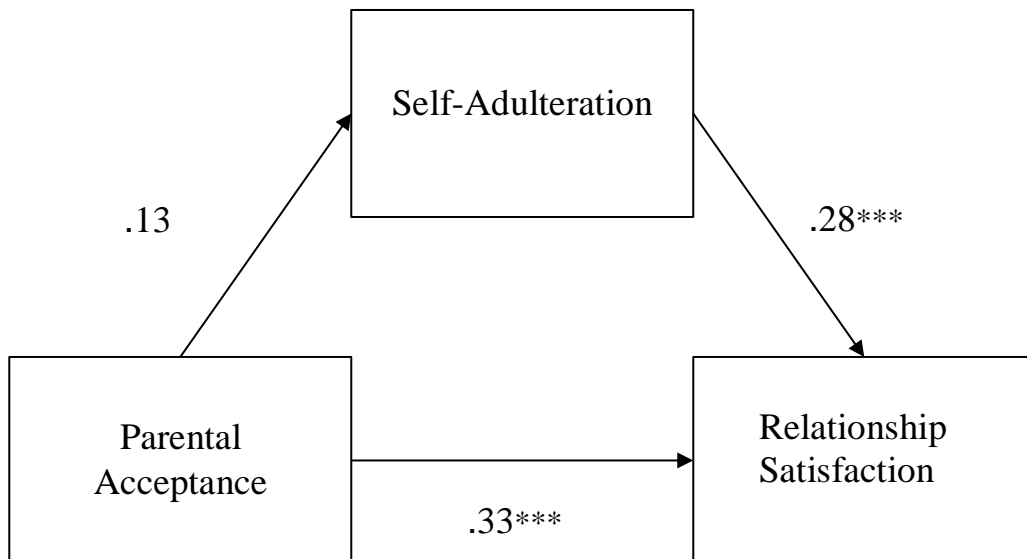


Figure 6. The Mediation Model of Self-Adulteration on the Relationship between Parental Acceptance and Relationship Satisfaction.

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to explore the association between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction, in the context of relational self-change. Thus, the aim was to examine the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction with the inclusion of relational self-change. Since the mediator variable of the study has four levels, four mediation models were examined. Firstly, the mediating role of self-expansion on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined. Secondly, the mediating role of self-contraction on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined. Thirdly, the mediating role of self-pruning on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined. Lastly, the mediating role of self-adulteration on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined. Based on results and literature, the following sections will review and discuss correlational analysis findings related to the study variables, and review the mediating role of relational self-change in the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. This chapter will also address the limitations of the present study and provide recommendations for future research.

4.1. Review of the Findings Related to Correlational Analysis of the Study Variables

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to explore associations between parental acceptance, relational self-change and relationship satisfaction. Analysis was performed for parental acceptance, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, and self-adulteration dimensions separately. As anticipated, there were notable connections found among certain variables, but others did not support the hypothesis. The results of this study will be discussed in further detail below, in light of the findings in the literature.

Parental acceptance was positively correlated with self-expansion and self-pruning as it was assumed. Although, there was no study that investigated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relational self-change directly, there are some studies which examined the relationship between parenting behaviors and

romantic relationships. In the study conducted by Chen et al. (2020), it was reported that parental responsiveness is associated with adolescents' positive self-concepts which again is positively related to their attitudes about intimate relationships. Moreover, another study demonstrated that individuals with low self-concept clarity showed less interest in self-expansion (Emery, Walsh, and Slotter, 2015). As mentioned before, since parental acceptance is positively related to self-concept clarity, it was assumed that it may be related to self-expansion and self-pruning in romantic relationships. It was also thought that parental acceptance is negatively related to self-contraction and self-adulteration. However, according to the results these hypotheses were not confirmed. The results showed that there was no relationship between parental acceptance, self-contraction, and self-adulteration. Thus, the results were a bit surprising, because self-contraction and self-adulteration were associated with negative relationship satisfaction, whereas parental acceptance was found related to positive relationship outcomes in studies (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014; Auslander, 2009; Finzi-Dottan and Schiff, 2022). Given that there is no study investigating the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relational self-change, future comprehensive research is needed using different scales.

In light of previous literature findings, we expected to find that participants who perceive themselves as accepted from their parents were more satisfied with their relationships. In the current study, in accordance with the hypothesis, it was found that parental acceptance was positively correlated with relationship satisfaction. The results of the current study are in line with previous findings, which indicated that participants who experience acceptance from their parents are more likely to experience satisfaction in their romantic relationships in adult years (Auslander, 2009; Babuşçu, 2014; Finzi-Dottan and Schiff, 2022; Eralp, 2021; Meth, 1999; Yalçınkaya, 1997). Moreover, Walper and Wendt (2015), conducted a study with 720 adolescents which indicated that adolescents' relationships with their parents in terms of relatedness, negative conflict, emotional insecurity and parental dominance predicts their romantic relationship quality one year later. Another study conducted with married individuals showed that husbands who received greater acceptance from their parents were likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction in their marriages (Meth, 1999). It can be said that these results are consistent with our findings on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction.

Compatible with the relevant literature, participants who experience self-expansion and self-pruning in their relationship; reported higher romantic relationship satisfaction. Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre (2014), reported that partners who experienced self-expansion and self-pruning in their relationships had high relationship quality and that they experienced intense love in their relationships. Moreover, Drigotas (2002) noted that when individuals in romantic relationships perceive their partners as supportive and think that they bring themselves closer to their ideal selves, they experienced higher levels of subjective well-being.

However surprisingly, results proved the opposite of the hypothesis about the relationship between self-adulteration and relationship satisfaction. That is, when participants reported higher levels of self-adulteration in their romantic relationships, experienced higher levels of relationship satisfaction. According to the literature, self-adulteration was found negatively related to relationship satisfaction (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). As reported by McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski (2015), individuals who have gained positive new traits through their relationships are likely to experience an increase in their self-concept, which will enhance their relationship satisfaction. Conversely, partners who feel that their positive characteristics have decreased and even acquired some negative characteristics and habits are likely to have a low level of satisfaction. Additionally, self-adulteration had a considerable impact on relationship satisfaction, indicating that people were less satisfied in their relationships when their partners experienced a decline in their self-concept, because of the relationship (McIntyre et al., 2020). Thus, it can be said that this result is unexpected for us to find. One explanation for this finding may be the misinterpretation of some questions in the Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale from participants. For instance, the item "I began to discover that I had some unpleasant traits and behaviors" which measures the self-adulteration sub-dimension of the scale, may have been perceived by the participants as a positive acquisition about discovery. Another explanation for these results could be the low reliability of the self-contraction and self-adulteration subscales. As mentioned earlier, the findings of the Turkish version of the relational self-change scale in romantic relationships are limited in the literature. However, inconsistent findings regarding the self-adulteration subscale were also demonstrated in previous studies. In previous studies, it was seen that self-adulteration subscale predicted the depth of a romantic

relationship positively (Tuncer, 2019; Dost and Aras, 2021). A critical view of the self-adulteration subscale can be gained from these results. Therefore, future research is needed by using different scales to measure relational self-change to assess whether these findings are consistent or not.

Lastly, we expected to find a significant negative relationship between self-contraction and relationship satisfaction. However, results indicated that there was no significant relationship between self-contraction and relationship satisfaction. This finding is a bit surprising too, because previous studies found that relationship satisfaction was negatively related with self-contraction (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014; Dinçer, 2017). Furthermore, Dost and Aras (2021), found that self-contraction leads individuals to perceive low social support and depth in relationships, while experiencing increased conflict. Again, these results can be explained by the participants' misinterpretation of the questions or the low reliability of the subscale.

4.2. Review of the Mediation Analyses of Relationship Satisfaction on the Relationship Between Parental Acceptance and Relational Self-Change

It was hypothesized that relationship satisfaction has a mediating role on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relational self-change. Thus, the mediating effects of dimensions of relational self-change were examined separately. Firstly, the mediating role of self-expansion on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined. Secondly, the mediating role of self-contraction on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined. Thirdly, the mediating role of self-pruning on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined. Lastly, the mediating role of self-adulteration on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction was examined.

Based on our fifth hypothesis, it was expected that individuals who reported more perceived parental acceptance would experience more self-expansion, which in turn would be related to more relationship satisfaction. Our hypothesis was partially supported. According to our results, self-expansion partially mediated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. Results indicated that the indirect effect and direct effect in the model were significant.

Based on literature review and previous studies, it was not found that relational self-change plays a mediator role between these two constructs. However, there are some studies which investigate the relationships between relationship satisfaction, perceived parental acceptance and relational self-change. We explain the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and self-expansion with the expected mediation effect of the construct of self-concept clarity. According to studies conducted to understand the effects of parental behaviors on participants' self-concepts, a child's perceived acceptance by their parents and parental warmth was found to be associated with development of positive self-concept (Deković and Meeus, 1997). It was also known that enhanced self-concept clarity in partners is linked to numerous positive outcomes in relationships (McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski, 2017). Therefore, self-concept clarity may be an important additional variable to better explain the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and positive sub-dimensions of relational self-change.

When examining findings related to the perceived parental behaviors and adult romantic relationships; it was seen that individuals whose perceptions about their parenting they experienced in childhood were positive, tended to have higher romantic relationship satisfaction (Dalton III, Frick-Horbury and Kitzmann, 2006). Consistently, perceived warmth and sensitivity from parents, was positively linked to similar behavior in romantic relationships and a secure attachment (Dinero et al., 2008). Moreover, the literature suggests that higher levels of insecurity to parents, predicted a more anxious romantic attachment style in adulthood (Pascuzzo, Cyr and Moss, 2013). Besides, Finzi-Dottan and Schiff (2022) indicated that maternal acceptance was related to responsive caregiving, which had an effect on their partner's relationship satisfaction. When evaluating the results related to perceived parental acceptance and romantic relationship satisfaction, the effect of attachment styles and spousal caregiving factors should be considered to understand this relationship comprehensively.

Findings related to the "relational self-change" showed that self-expansion was positively linked to relationship satisfaction (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). Moreover, self-expansion has been found to have a positive effect on social

support and relationship depth - both regarded as favorable qualities in relationships- and tends to reduce conflict (Dost and Aras, 2021).

Furthermore, experience of self-expansion in a romantic relationship and a motivation of personal self-expansion found related to relationship commitment which was related to relationship satisfaction (Hughes, Slotter and Emery, 2022; Rusbult, Johnson and Morrow, 1986). Fivecoat and colleagues (2014) studied 58 couples who received active or passive support messages from their partners during self-expanding or stressful instances. They found that individuals who received active partner support for self-expansion were more satisfied with their dating relationships. Consistent with the literature, in this study self-expansion was positively predicted relationship satisfaction. Additionally, in the present study it was found that the increased levels of parental acceptance influenced self-expansion and led to experience higher levels of romantic relationship satisfaction, consistent with the literature. Considering this context, it can be thought that the mediating role of self-expansion to the effect of parenting attitudes on romantic relationship satisfaction becomes more important.

According to our sixth hypothesis, it was expected that self-contraction would mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who reported less perceived parental acceptance would experience less self-contraction, which in turn would be related to less relationship satisfaction. Results indicated that self-contraction partially mediated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. However, surprisingly, we found that self-contraction positively predicted relationship satisfaction. According to the literature, self-contraction was found negatively related to relationship satisfaction (Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre, 2014). Again, this may be because of the misinterpretation of the items asked through Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale that measure relational self-change in intimate relationships.

In our seventh hypothesis, we expected to find that self-pruning would mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who reported more perceived parental acceptance would experience more self-pruning, which in turn would be related to

more relationship satisfaction. Our hypothesis was partially supported. Results indicated that self-pruning partially mediated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. According to results, self-pruning positively predicted relationship satisfaction as supported by the literature. Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre (2014), suggested that self-pruning was positively related to relationship satisfaction. In their study with 300 married individuals who have at least one stressful life condition participated in the study, Aydoğın and Dinçer (2019), found a significant direct relationship between self-pruning and relational resilience, with satisfaction from sacrifice partially influencing this relationship. The relationship between perceived parental acceptance and self-pruning, on the other hand, can be explained through the factor named self-concept clarity. As mentioned earlier, parental warmth was found related to positive self-concept (Deković and Meeus, 1997). In addition, it was assumed that positive sub-dimensions of relational self-change including self-pruning was related to self-concept clarity (McIntyre, Mattingly and Lewandowski, 2017). Considering this context, it is believed that the mediating role of self-pruning to the effect of perceived parental acceptance on relationship satisfaction should be considered and re-examined in terms of the mediating effect of self-concept clarity.

In the eighth hypothesis, it was expected that self-adulteration would mediate the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction. More specifically, it was expected that individuals who reported less perceived parental acceptance would experience less self-adulteration, which in turn would be related to less relationship satisfaction. However, surprisingly, we found that self-adulteration positively predicted relationship satisfaction. According to Mattingly, Lewandowski and McIntyre (2014), there was a negative relationship between self-adulteration and relationship satisfaction. Additionally, Dost and Aras (2021), found that self-adulteration positively predicts conflict in romantic relationships. Once again, this may be attributed to how the participants interpreted the relevant questions and the reliability of the subscale. Thus, the relationship between self-adulteration and relationship satisfaction might be worth reexamining in future studies.

4.3. Limitations and Further Suggestions

It is important to take into consideration the limitations of this study when assessing its findings. Moreover, considering the limitations could offer suggestions to be evaluated for future research. Since there is limited research in the literature examining the role of relational self-change on the relationship between parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction, there is a need for further research, to go beyond speculations and to determine consistent patterns between these variables.

Secondly, data was acquired through an online instrument instead of a face-to-face interaction. As a result, those people whose names were not included in the online mail groups or who could not be reached via social media were excluded. This situation also causes drawbacks in terms of the reliability of the data. The data was collected through self-report questionnaires, where participants chose the most appropriate responses for them. Therefore, responses are analyzed with the assumption that participants provided accurate and consistent answers. Hence, the self-report nature of the study was considered as a potential limitation of the current research.

Another limitation is related to the sample size. Even if the sample size of the study is sufficient enough to provide robust results, more participants who are in a romantic relationship should be included in future studies. Moreover, the study included 77 male and 131 female participants, the number of male participants is notably fewer than female participants. To make the results more generalizable, it's advisable to conduct a study with a more balanced number of male and female participants.

Lastly, in the parental acceptance-rejection scale, there are some sensitive questions regarding the participants' parental rearing behaviors. Therefore, it is possible that some participants had difficulty answering these questions resulting in biased results. Given that the parental acceptance-rejection questionnaire has a retrospective structure, memory bias is an additional limitation of this study. Particularly, recall bias can be an issue because participants' ability to recall their parents' acceptances and rejections can be influenced by their current relationship with them. It is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies to determine the long term effects of parental acceptance as part of further research in this area. Limitations of the current research also include participants' reporting biases to the relational self-change scale, given that

the self-adulteration subscale had low reliability. Therefore, future research may use different instruments to assess relational self-change.



CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The aim was to investigate the mediator role of relational self-change on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction in adult romantic relationships.

In order to understand the relationships between study variables, the correlations between perceived parental acceptance, subscales of relational self-change and relationship satisfaction were examined. Perceived parental acceptance includes maternal acceptance and paternal acceptance; relational self-change includes self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, and self-adulteration. Results indicated that both maternal acceptance and paternal acceptance had significant positive relationships with self-expansion, self-pruning and relationship satisfaction. Moreover, relationship satisfaction had significant positive relationships with self-expansion, self-pruning and self-adulteration. It also examined the differences in variables based on gender. Results indicated that self-contraction scores of male participants were significantly higher than females. There was found no statistically significant difference between female and male participants, in terms of perceived maternal and paternal acceptance, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, self-adulteration, and relationship satisfaction. The findings regarding the mediation analysis indicated that relational self-change had a mediating role on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction in all four dimensions, self-expansion, self-contraction, self-pruning, and self-adulteration.

5.1 Implications

The current study focused on the mediating role of relational self-change on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and relationship satisfaction in adult romantic relationships. The study findings presented here contribute to the existing literature as this particular relationship has not been previously investigated.

Additionally, the current research enhances our comprehension of how fulfilling emotional needs during childhood can impact romantic relationships in a more comprehensive manner. This study provides insight to parents regarding how their parenting practices impact their children's fundamental emotional needs and how the

satisfaction of these needs can influence the dynamics of adults' romantic relationships.

It is recommended that clinicians who work with children provide psychoeducation to families regarding the significance of meeting emotional needs. Therapists can be a model for families in this aspect, and promote essential parenting practices. The present study can also be useful for therapists to comprehend their clients' romantic relationship patterns in the context of the relationship between the satisfaction of emotional needs during childhood and adult relationships.

In the light of the findings of this study, couples therapists can also develop interventions to improve positive self-change during romantic relationships in the therapy process and use techniques to increase the satisfaction of clients' romantic relationships. Moreover, development of intervention strategies aimed at preventing negative self-change experiences during the romantic relationship process is believed to be beneficial. In this way, individuals can become more aware of the relational self-change process and develop healthier relationships.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Permission of the The Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale

APPENDIX B

Ethics Committee Approval

SAYI : B.30.2.İEÜ.0.05.05-020-262

25.01.2023

KONU : Etik Kurul Kararı hk.

Sayın Prof. Dr. Falih KÖKSAL ve Hazal Yalman,

“Algılanan Ebeveyn Kabul Reddinin Yetişkinlik Dönemindeki Romantik İlişkilerde Benlik Değişimi ile İlişkisi: İlişki Doyumunun Aracı Rolü” başlıklı projenizin etik uygunluğu konusundaki başvurunuz sonuçlanmıştır.

Etik Kurulumuz 25.01.2023 tarihinde sizin başvurunuzun da içinde bulunduğu bir gündemle toplanmış ve Etik Kurul üyeleri projeleri incelemiştir.

Sonuçta 25.01.2023 tarihinde **“Algılanan Ebeveyn Kabul Reddinin Yetişkinlik Dönemindeki Romantik İlişkilerde Benlik Değişimi ile İlişkisi: İlişki Doyumunun Aracı Rolü”** konulu projenizin etik açıdan uygun olduğuna oy birliğiyle karar verilmiştir.

Gereği için bilgilerinize sunarım.

Saygılarımla,



Prof. Dr. Murat Bengisu

Etik Kurul Başkanı

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

KATILIMCI BİLGİLENDİRME VE ONAM FORMU

Değerli katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Hazal YALMAN tarafından Prof. Dr. Falih KÖKSAL danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir. Bu araştırma, bireylerin romantik ilişkilerinde deneyimlediği bazı değişkenleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışmaya katılmak gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışmada sizden beklenen, sorulara samimi bir şekilde sizi en iyi yansıtan cevaplar vermenizdir. Cevaplarınız ve kişisel bilgileriniz gizli tutulacak olup sadece akademik araştırma için kullanılacaktır. Katılım sırasında herhangi bir nedenden dolayı rahatsızlık duyarsanız çalışmadan ayrılma hakkına sahipsiniz. Çalışmaya yönelik daha detaylı bilgi almak isterseniz araştırmacıya numaralı telefon ve mail adresinden ulaşabilirsiniz.

Katkılarınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılmayı kabul ediyorum ve verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

EVET

HAYIR

APPENDIX D

Demographic Information Form

Yaş :

Cinsiyet : Kadın Erkek Diğer

Eğitim seviyesi : İlkokul Ortaokul Lise Üniversite
Yüksek Lisans Doktora

Çalışıyor musunuz? : Evet Hayır

Meslek :

Gelir düzeyi : Düşük Orta Yüksek

İlişki durumu : Var Yok

Cevabınız var ise birlikteliğiniz ne kadar süredir devam ediyor? (Ay olarak yazınız)

Belirtiniz:

Medeni durum : Evli Bekar Diğer

Sizle birlikte kaç kardeşsiniz?

Belirtiniz:

Herhangi bir kronik rahatsızlığınız var mı?

Evet Belirtiniz: Hayır

Herhangi bir psikiyatrik bir tanı aldınız mı?

Evet Belirtiniz: Hayır

Ailenizde psikiyatrik hastalık öyküsü var mıdır?

Evet Belirtiniz: Hayır

Son 3 ayda herhangi bir psikiyatrik ilaç kullandınız mı?

Evet Belirtiniz: Hayır

Son 3 aydır psikoterapi aldınız mı?

Evet Belirtiniz: Hayır

Anneniz hayatta mı?

Evet Belirtiniz: Hayır

Hayatta değilse kaybettiğinizde kaç yaşındaydınız?

APPENDIX D

Babanız hayatta mı?

Evet

Belirtiniz:

Hayır

Hayatta değilse kaybettiğinizde kaç yaşındaydınız?

Belirtiniz:

Eğer anne babanız hayatta ise;

Birlikteler

Ayrılar

Anneminizin eğitim durumu : İlkokul Ortaokul Lise Üniversite

Yüksek Lisans Doktora

Babanızın eğitim durumu : İlkokul Ortaokul Lise Üniversite

Yüksek Lisans Doktora

Anne ve babanızla birlikte mi yaşıyorsunuz?

Evet

Hayır

Cevabınız hayır ise ne kadar süredir ailenizden ayrı yaşıyorsunuz? (Yıl olarak yazınız)

Belirtiniz:

APPENDIX E

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) short form mother

Yetişkin EKRÖ: Anne

Aşağıda annelerin çocuklarına karşı sergiledikleri davranışlarla ilgili bazı cümleler bulunmaktadır. Her cümleyi dikkatlice okuyun ve okuduğunuz cümlenin, siz çocukken annenizin size karşı göstermiş olduğu davranışları ne kadar iyi anlattığını düşünün. Cevaplarınızı, çocukken annenizden beklediğiniz davranışlara göre değil, annenizin size gerçekte gösterdiği davranışlara göre verin. Lütfen her soruyu cevaplayın.

		Her zaman doğru	Bazen doğru	Nadiren doğru	Hiç doğru değil
1	Benim hakkımda güzel şeyler söylerdi.				
2	Bana hiç ilgi göstermezdi.				
3	Benim için önemli olan şeyleri anlatabilmemi kolaylaştırırdı.				
4	Hak etmediğim zaman bile bana vururdu.				
5	Beni büyük bir baş belası olarak görürdü.				
6	Kızdığı zaman beni çok kötü cezalandırırdı.				
7	Sorularımı cevaplayamayacak kadar meşguldü.				
8	Benden hoşlanmıyor gibiydi.				
9	Yaptığım şeylerle gerçekten ilgilenirdi.				
10	Bana bir sürü kırıcı şey söylerdi.				
11	Ondan yardım istediğimde beni duymazlıktan gelirdi.				

12	Bana istenilen ve ihtiyaç duyulan biri olduğumu hissettirirdi.				
13	Bana çok ilgi gösterirdi.				
14	Beni kırmak için elinden geleni yapardı.				
15	Hatırlaması gerekir diye düşündüğüm önemli şeyleri unuturdu.				
16	Eğer kötü davranırsam, beni artık sevmediğini hissettirirdi.				
17	Bana yaptığım şeylerin önemli olduğunu hissettirirdi.				
18	Yanlış bir şey yaptığımda beni korkutur veya tehdit ederdi.				
19	Benim ne düşündüğüme önem verir ve düşündüklerim hakkında konuşmamdan hoşlanırdı.				
20	Ne yaparsam yapayım diğer çocukların benden daha iyi olduğunu düşünürdü.				
21	Bana istenmediğimi belli ederdi.				
22	Beni sevdiğini belli ederdi.				
23	Onu rahatsız etmediğim sürece benimle ilgilenmezdi.				
24	Bana karşı yumuşak ve iyi kalpliydi.				

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Adaptation by M. Dedeler, E. Akün, A. Durak Batıgün (2017).

APPENDIX F

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) short form father

Yetişkin EKRÖ: Baba

Aşağıda babaların çocuklarına karşı sergiledikleri davranışlarla ilgili bazı cümleler bulunmaktadır. Her cümleyi dikkatlice okuyun ve okuduğunuz cümlenin, siz çocukken babanızın size karşı göstermiş olduğu davranışları ne kadar iyi anlattığını düşünün. Cevaplarınızı, çocukken babanızdan beklediğiniz davranışlara göre değil, babanızın size gerçekte gösterdiği davranışlara göre verin. Lütfen her soruyu cevaplayın.

		Her zaman doğru	Bazen doğru	Nadiren doğru	Hiç doğru değil
1	Benim hakkımda güzel şeyler söylerdi.				
2	Bana hiç ilgi göstermezdi.				
3	Benim için önemli olan şeyleri anlatabilmemi kolaylaştırırdı.				
4	Hak etmediğim zaman bile bana vururdu.				
5	Beni büyük bir baş belası olarak görürdü.				
6	Kızdığı zaman beni çok kötü cezalandırırdı.				
7	Sorularımı cevaplayamayacak kadar meşguldü.				
8	Benden hoşlanmıyor gibiydi.				
9	Yaptığım şeylerle gerçekten ilgilenirdi.				
10	Bana bir sürü kırıncı şey söylerdi.				

11	Ondan yardım istediğimde beni duymazlıktan gelirdi.				
12	Bana istenilen ve ihtiyaç duyulan biri olduğumu hissettirirdi.				
13	Bana çok ilgi gösterirdi.				
14	Beni kırmak için elinden geleni yapardı.				
15	Hatırlaması gerekir diye düşündüğüm önemli şeyleri unuturdu.				
16	Eğer kötü davranırsam, beni artık sevmediğini hissettirirdi.				
17	Bana yaptığım şeylerin önemli olduğunu hissettirirdi.				
18	Yanlış bir şey yaptığımda beni korkutur veya tehdit ederdi.				
19	Benim ne düşündüğüme önem verir ve düşündüklerim hakkında konuşmamdan hoşlanırdı.				
20	Ne yaparsam yapayım diğer çocukların benden daha iyi olduğunu düşünürdü.				
21	Bana istenmediğimi belli ederdi.				
22	Beni sevdiğini belli ederdi.				
23	Onu rahatsız etmediğim sürece benimle ilgilenmezdi.				
24	Bana karşı yumuşak ve iyi kalpliydi.				

APPENDIX G

The Turkish Self-Change in Romantic Relationships Scale (TSCRRS)

TÜRKÇE ROMANTİK İLİŞKİLERDE BENLİK DEĞİŞİMİ ÖLÇEĞİ

Partnerinizin sözü geçen deneyime ne derece katkıda bulunduğunu belirtmek üzere her bir madde için lütfen aşağıdaki ölçeği kullanınız.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
Hemen hemen hiç Çok fazla

SEVDİĞİM KİŞİ HAYATIMA GİRDİĞİNDEN BERİ...

... kendimin başka olumlu yönlerini, özelliklerini, becerilerini keşfettim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... kendi yeterliliklerime ya da becerilerime daha az güvenmeye başladım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... arkadaşlarımla eskiden olduğundan daha az zaman geçirmeye başladım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... (din, dil, ırk, etnik köken, kişilik özellikleri vb. açısından) bana benzemeyen insanlarla ilgili önyargılarım azaldı.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... hoş olmayan yeme, içme, eğlenme vb. alışkanlıklarım azaldı.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... daha bağımlı bir insan haline geldiğimi hissediyorum	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
... daha yoğun bir şekilde kıskançlık hissetmeye başladım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX H

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ÖLÇEĞİ

Lütfen her bir maddenin size uygunluğunu belirtmek üzere aşağıdaki ölçeği kullanınız.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7

Hemen hemen hiç

Çok fazla

1	Sevgiliniz ihtiyaçlarınızı ne kadar iyi karşılıyor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Genel olarak ilişkinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Diğerleri ile karşılaştırıldığında ilişkiniz ne kadar iyi?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Ne sıklıkla ilişkinize hiç başlamamış olmayı istiyorsunuz?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	İlişkiniz ne dereceye kadar sizin başlangıçtaki beklentilerinizi karşılıyor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Sevgilinizi ne kadar seviyorsunuz?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	İlişkinizde ne kadar problem var?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7