



**THE RELATION BETWEEN EMERGING ADULTS'  
ATTACHMENT STYLES AND REJECTION  
SENSITIVITY: THE INTERVENING ROLE OF  
EMOTION REGULATION**

**BEYZA ZEBİL**

Thesis for the Master's Program in Clinical Psychology

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**BEYZA ZEBİL**

THESIS ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. DR. AYLİN KOÇAK

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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 behaviour at every stage from the planning of the thesis to its defence. 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 behaviour, and that all statements not cited are my own.

Name, Surname: Beyza Zebil

Date: 10.07.2023

Signature:

# ABSTRACT

## THE RELATION BETWEEN EMERGING ADULTS' ATTACHMENT STYLES AND REJECTION SENSITIVITY: THE INTERVENING ROLE OF EMOTION REGULATION

Zebil, Beyza

Master's Program in Clinical Psychology

Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Aylin Koçak

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Although the relationship between emerging adults' attachment styles and rejection sensitivity is well-known, there is still a dearth of knowledge about the possible intervening mechanisms. Therefore, the present study aims to test the intervening role of emotion regulation in the relation between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity in emerging adults. The sample consisted of 373 participants whose ages were between 18-29 years old ( $M_{age} = 22.80$  years,  $SD = 2.55$ ; 85.5 % females). Data was collected via an online survey method. The Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale was used to identify emerging adults' attachment styles, the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale—Brief Form was used to examine the emotional regulation of emerging adults, and lastly, the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire was used to measure emerging adults' rejection sensitivity regarding their family and social relations. Results of the mediation analysis revealed that emotion regulation played a significant intervening role in the relationship between secure attachment style and

rejection sensitivity, however it did not play significant intervening role in the relationship between anxious-indecisive attachment style and rejection sensitivity as well as avoidant attachment style and rejection sensitivity. The study's results are addressed in relation to the relevant literature. Future research suggestions and the study's limitations were highlighted.

Keywords: Emerging Adulthood Period, Attachment Styles, Emotion Regulation, Rejection Sensitivity.



# ÖZET

## BELİREN YETİŞKİNLİK DÖNEMİNDEKİ BİREYLERİN BAĞLANMA STİLLERİ İLE REDDEDİLME DUYARLILIKLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ: DUYGU DÜZENLEMENİN ARACI ROLÜ

Zebil, Beyza

Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Aylin Koçak

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Beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki bireylerin bağlanma stilleri ile reddedilme duyarlılıkları arasındaki ilişki sıklıkla çalışılmış olmasına rağmen olası aracı mekanizmalar ile ilgili daha fazla çalışmaya ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki bireylerin bağlanma stilleri ile reddedilme duyarlılıkları arasındaki ilişkide duygu düzenlemenin aracı rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Örneklem 18-29 yaş arası 373 katılımcıdan ( $Ort_{yaş} = 22.80$ ,  $S = 2.55$ ; %85,5'i kadın) oluşmuştur. Veriler çevrimiçi anket kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki bireylerin bağlanma stillerini belirlemek için Üç Boyutlu Bağlanma Stilleri Ölçeği, duygu düzenlemelerini ölçmek için Duygu Düzenlemede Zorluklar Ölçeği—Kısa Form ve son olarak aile ve sosyal ilişkilerindeki reddedilme duyarlılıklarını ölçmek için Reddedilme Duyarlılığı Anketi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre hem kaygılı-kararsız bağlanma stili hem de kaçınan bağlanma stili ile reddedilme duyarlılığı arasındaki ilişkide duygu düzenlemenin anlamlı bir aracı

rolü bulunamazken, güvenli bağlanma stili ile reddedilme duyarlılığı arasındaki ilişkide duygu düzenlemenin anlamlı bir aracı rolü bulunmuştur. Çalışmanın sonuçları ilgili literatürle ilişkilendirilerek ele alınmıştır. Gelecek araştırma önerileri ve çalışmanın sınırlılıkları vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beliren Yetişkinlik Dönemi, Bağlanma Stilleri, Reddedilme Duyarlılığı, Duygu Düzenleme.





To my lovely family...



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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CAPS: Cognitive-Affective Processing System

DERS: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale

DERS-16: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale-Brief Form

SPSS: The Statistical Package for Social Sciences



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Attachment theory which stands out as one of the most complicated and elaborate theories (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1982) suggests that children create cognitive representations regarding themselves and other people, and those representations shape how they interact with others in the future. This viewpoint suggests that attachment types are crucial to an individual's development. Concerning studies of attachment theory, three categories of attachment styles in childhood have been identified.

These types were established by Ainsworth (1989) as secure, anxious-indecisive, and avoidant. Individuals who have had consistent and attentive caregiving demonstrate a higher probability of secure attachment, being at ease in intimate situations, knowing that others value them, and being able to rely on others for help (Collins and Feeney, 2000). On the other hand, anxious-indecisive attachment, which results from an individual's internalized emotion of low self-worth, expresses one's concern about being rejected or abandoned in a relationship. Third, avoidant attachment arises when both the child's physical and emotional demands (Bowlby, 1973, 1988; Lopez and Brennan, 2000) are either completely ignored or just partially addressed by parents who act less sensitively and inconsistently (Tüzün and Sayar, 2006). Avoidant attachment is characterized by traits including controllingly offering support, suppressing one's emotions, introversion, and avoiding or isolating oneself from social interactions because of a vulnerable self-concept (appearing confident but secretly doubting oneself) (Guler, 2022). In this study, the participants' attachment styles will be organized into categories by using the three-dimensional attachment styles.

Another concept that is found to be associated with Bowlby's attachment theory is rejection sensitivity. As postulated by attachment theory, the mental models that children develop of self-perceptions and relational dynamics encompass expectations regarding whether they will be satisfied, whether their needs will be met, and whether they will be rejected by those who are important to them (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001). The shift into adulthood presents distinctive chances to delve into unfamiliar social environments and affirm one's sense of self, but it also



presents challenges due to the numerous opportunities that involve initiating and cultivating new close connections or reevaluating and strengthening closeness and affection in established relationships (Coyne et al., 2019; O'Rourke, Halpern and Vaysman, 2018; Zimmer-Gembeck, 2002). Such encounters can jeopardize the well-being of teenagers and young adults suffering from rejection sensitivity (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Gao et al., 2017; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001; Marston, Hare and Allen, 2010). Rejection sensitivity is a cognitive-affective bias in which people have the propensity to overestimate, comprehend, and/or respond to unclear or overt indications of rejection (Downey and Feldman, 1996).

Previous research shows that individuals who indicate greater sensitivity to rejection have been identified to report increased ruminating on unpleasant experiences (Pearson et al., 2011), exhibit more social avoidance (Watson and Nesdale, 2012), greater repression (Gardner and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018), increased victimization for rejection (Zimmer et al., 2016) as well as emotional dysregulation (Gardner and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018) in cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. According to previous research (Kross et al., 2007; Velotti, Garofalo and Bizzi, 2015), those who are highly sensitive to rejection have difficulty regulating their emotions. In a follow-up study, Velotti et al., (2014) discovered a statistically significant positive correlation between rejection sensitivity and difficulties in emotional acceptance. These studies provide evidence that insufficient emotion regulation abilities are correlated with high levels of rejection sensitivity. Hence, this study will display that emotion regulation is a crucial component of socio-emotional development congruent with the research of Eisenberg et al., (2010) which is formed by a person's interactions with others (Calkins and Hill, 2007; Thompson et al., 2007). Acknowledged that in the literature attachment styles and rejection sensitivity are related (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Erözkan, 2009; Khoshkam, 2012). Nevertheless, despite being a relatively nascent field of research, it is widely acknowledged that in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of rejection sensitivity and attachment styles, it is imperative to investigate the role of emotion regulation. This is because it is believed that those who experience rejection sensitivity may also struggle with emotion regulation. Therefore, guided by the attachment theory, the current research aims to test how the regulation of emotions plays an intervening role in the connection in relation to attachment styles and the sensitivity to rejection among emerging adults. Consequently, the attachment

theory and attachment styles grounded in it are mentioned in the following part. Also, the article reviews the literature on how attachment styles affect a person's rejection sensitivity as well as emotion regulation.

## ***1.1. Attachment Theory***

### ***1.1.1 The Founding Principles of Attachment Theory***

According to Maslow (1954), "the need for love and belonging" is the crucial phase for self-realization. Maslow believes that one wants intimacy and acknowledgment to feel liked and included, and these desires are the main drivers of social bonding. Based on people's need for social bonding, Bowlby (1969, 1973) created the attachment theory. Attachment theory is an evolutionary psychological theory of human development that was developed from the combined contributions of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. It contends that people form remarkably constant points of view of themselves and others in intimate relationships based on early life experiences (Ainsworth and Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1982). Using the expression "attachment" to describe a healthy relationship bond, Bowlby has shown that parental accessibility is particularly valuable for maintaining children's feelings of security (Bowlby 1969, 1973, 1977, 1980). The definition of the attachment bond is a two-way, reciprocal relationship between the baby and the caregiver (Ainsworth, 1978, 1989; Bowlby, 1979). Harlow's research made an impression on Bowlby as he developed attachment theory. According to Harlow (1959), the link between a mother and child is created when the mother attends to the infant's primary needs, such as nourishment and hydration. In his experiment, two monkey mothers that were physiologically equivalent were used. The amount of milk consumed and the weight gained by the monkeys in both groups were the same. Nevertheless, the monkeys in both groups spent more time over the mother's cloth covering. Additionally, according to Harlow's study conducted in 1959, solely for the purpose of nourishment, they would approach the wire mother figure, but once they were done feeding, they would return to the cloth-covered mother. Consequently, it is presumed that the mother provides warmth, comfort, and closeness in addition to meeting essential needs. Therefore, it can be said that Harlow's research laid the groundwork for Bowlby to introduce the idea of proximity seeking (Akdağ, 2011).

The initial development of attachment theory by Bowlby has greatly inspired and guided much empirical research in this field (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Bowlby's fundamental intention was to comprehend why and how infants form emotional bonds with their primary caregivers and undergo emotional pain when they aren't with them (Bowlby, 1977). The goal-directed behavioral system known as the attachment behavioral system, which Bowlby proposed had evolved through natural selection to protect newborns from danger by monitoring proximity to attachment figures, is one of the most crucial elements of attachment theory (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2003). Bowlby's perspective on the attachment system effectively presents the following fundamental query: The attachment figure is close by, reachable, and alert. When a child thinks the answer is "yes," they will feel loved, safe, and secure. The child will be likelier to play with other children, be friendly, and investigate the environment. If the child believes that the answer is "no," they may get anxious and act out more frequently, displaying behaviors like visual searching and verbal signaling more. These actions won't stop until the child creates proximity to the caregiver again (Bowlby, 1977). Since then, attachment researchers have hypothesized that this mechanism aims to achieve a "sense of security," rather than just physical proximity (Bretherton, 1985, p. 6). The attachment system is still active throughout life even though over time people create internal representations that depict external attachment figures (Bowlby, 1988). Effective interpersonal functioning and mental health both thoughts to depend on one's capability to establish deep emotional connections amongst others (Bowlby, 1988).

### ***1.1.2. Bowlby's Internal Working Models of Attachment***

The establishment of the infant's "internal working model" depends on the early caretaker-infant connection (Bowlby, 1969). In Bowlby's attachment theory, internal working models play a crucial role. "The self-model" and "the other-model" are the two segments of the internal working model. The responsiveness and availability of the caregiver influence the development of internal working models of attachment (Bowlby, 1973). Internal working models represented in a child's mind their perceptions of their lovability and competence (self-model) and the reliability and confidence of others (other-model) (Cassidy, 1999; Sümer, 2006). The caregivers' consistent actions taken in response to the infant's distress indications cause him to

form certain beliefs and habits in relation to his own sense of self and the outside world (Cassidy and Shaver, 1999). The infant establishes healthy beliefs about "self" and "others" when the caregiver regularly attends to the infant's needs (Bowlby, 1980, 1988). In other words, the infant develops more positive images the more responsive the world is to him (Cassidy, 1988; Hazan and Shaver, 1994). The infant forms beliefs regarding his own identity as "worthy" and "lovable" when he observes the caregiver responding positively to his needs. On the contrary, if the caregiver figure does not attend to the infant's necessities, the infant may come to believe that he is "unlovable" and "worthless" (Morsümbül and Çok, 2011). The person's perception and interpretation of the events are influenced by internal working models exhibiting a diminished feeling of self-worth and mistrust of others. For instance, having a low sense of one's worth motivates self-defeating ideas like "I am not a person worth loving" and "Others will not assist me in times of need and may not possess the reliability necessary for dependable support." (Bowlby, 1973). According to Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), there is a potential for these internal models to be divided into positive and negative categories. For instance, a person might have positive or negative self- and other-models, or even both positive and negative models. As the underlying structure upon which the attachment patterns are built (Berman and Sperling, 1994) and the behavioral manifestations of the internal models (Rothbard and Shaver, 1994), these internal models are closely related to attachment patterns.

To sum up, the primary and consequential determinant of the child's future relationships is the history of their interactions with the caregiver (Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985; Bretherton, 1985). Throughout their lifespan, individuals gradually become aware of and encounter reflections of themselves within the relationships they have constructed since birth, and this process widens as they advance in age (Çatık, 2021).

### ***1.1.3. Ainsworth's Attachment Styles***

Although Bowlby initially built attachment theory as a comprehensive theory of personality development, research in this field has concentrated on various types or patterns of attachment in early childhood and infancy (Bretherton, 1985). Ainsworth et al. (1978) found a notable relationship between the development of various

attachment styles and the caregiver's ability to recognize and appropriately address the infant's signals throughout the early years of life.

The strange situation test, a laboratory paradigm for examining infant-parent attachment, was created by Ainsworth et al. (1978). By dint of this technique, Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) classified three distinct attachment styles. One of the most important contributions of Ainsworth's Strange Situation method is the spotlight on understanding the value of distinct dissimilarities in attachment relationships during the early period of infancy (Simonelli and Parolin, 2016).

The strange situation includes two brief separations from the caregiver and an increasing amount the range of stress experienced by the infant, varying from mild to moderate, which may arise from factors like an unfamiliar laboratory environment and interaction with unfamiliar adults (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The objective is to engage and reinforce the child's attachment behavioral system, simultaneously emphasizing the unique differences in expectations regarding the caregiver's accessibility and the balance between exploratory and attachment behaviors (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The study specifically investigates whether and how the infant can utilize the caregiver, perceived as being available, sensitive, and responsive, as a secure and dependable foundation for exploration, with the intention of returning to seek comfort when necessary. Consequently, the observation focuses on the equilibrium between the attachment and exploration systems. (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Almost 60% of children get angry when their caretakers leave the room, but when they return, they actively seek them out and are quickly reassured. Secure attachment is a behavior pattern that corresponds to this description (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Secondly, children who engage in avoidant relationships (i.e., approximately 20%) don't request assistance from their caregivers or use them to regulate their emotions. They don't seem overly distressed and actively avoid contacting their parent after being reunited with their caretaker (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Last but not least, kids who are labeled as anxious-indecisive exhibit inconsistent, conflicted, and reluctant behavior that seems to be a reflection of underlying uncertainty about the caregiver's availability and level of support (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

#### ***1.1.4. Adult Attachment Styles***

Almost exclusively, early attachment theorists concentrated on newborn experiences. The idea that attachment theory can provide a useful lens through which to view adult behavior, particularly in the setting of intimate and romantic relationships, was initially investigated by Hazan and Shaver (1987). Based on Hazan and Shaver's (1987) findings, the attachment behavioral system, which establishes the emotional connection between infants and their caregivers, similarly plays a role in cultivating the emotional attachment between adult romantic partners. Attachments seem to be important interactions in both childhood and emerging adulthood for maintaining ongoing security and, by extension, emotional stability. (e.g., Weiss, 1991). Ainsworth's (1978) attachment styles—secure, anxious-indecisive, and avoidant—were rephrased by Hazan and Shaver (1987) as more compatible styles for adult relationships. They discovered that as was to be expected, how adults' view of intimate relationships varies as a result of different attachment patterns. As opposed to a person who has an insecure attachment pattern that is neglected, rejected, criticized, and devalued by the caregiver (Engels et al., 2001), a securely attached person who experiences love, acceptance, appreciation, and value from his or her caregiver tends to establish healthy motives like trust, confidence, and resilience (Collins and Feeney, 2000; Karen, 1990). According to research, secure attachment is strongly associated with psychological and physical well-being, emotional adjustment, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-respect, while insecure attachment patterns such as anxious-indecisive and avoidant are associated with negative emotion regulation, lower levels of self-confidence and self-esteem, more dysfunctional anger, poor social and personal adjustment, and heightened presence of internalizing symptoms (Allen et al., 1998; Engels et al., 2001; Karen, 1990). Additionally, gender disparities were discovered in the literature, particularly in anxious-indecisive and avoidant attachment styles. To be clear, it has been found in some research that females are more anxiously attached than males. Males were also shown to be more avoidantly attached than females (Gugova and Heretik, 2011; Simpson, 1990), whereas females report less avoidance and more attachment anxiety than males (e.g., Feeney, 1998). However, research guided by the attachment theory does not expressly predict gender differences (e.g., Van Ijzendoorn and Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2010) and there are some inconsistencies related to the gender differences. Given that most of these studies have been handled in Western

cultures, research conducted in non-Western cultures such as Turkey will shed light on the potential gender differences in an under investigated non-Western culture and will contribute to the literature in terms of the generalizability of the gender assumptions of the attachment theory. Therefore, in this study, gender will be considered a covariance variable and controlled in the tested models.

According to attachment theory, how one person perceives rejection is guided by their attachment styles. For instance, children acquire the understanding that expressing their need for acceptance may lead to rejection due to previous encounters where their parents dismissed their expressed desires (e.g., anxious-indecisive and avoidant) (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Downey et al., 1994; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001). They consequently start to regard rejection avoidance highly. When they disclose their needs and vulnerabilities to close friends and loved ones, they experience anticipatory anxiety. They are extremely watchful for indications of rejection because they anticipate rejection. Additionally, anger, animosity, despair, withholding of support, jealousy, and improper attempts to regulate the conduct of close relationships are just a few of the affective and behavioral overreactions that can result from perceived rejection (Erözkan, 2004). Therefore, in the upcoming section, we will begin by elucidating the concept of rejection sensitivity, followed by an exploration of the link among attachment styles and rejection sensitivity.

## ***1.2. Rejection Sensitivity***

### ***1.2.1. Understanding Rejection Sensitivity***

One of the accepted basic human motives is the need for belongingness, that is, maintaining significant relationships (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). The social connection appears to provide important reproductive and survival benefits (Sariso, 2017). In a world with few resources, a group's members will undoubtedly have a greater chance than an individual to obtain food, shelter, and protection (Sariso, 2017). As per Baumeister and Leary's (1995) findings, the pursuit of social connection is a universal drive that propels individuals towards goal-directed behaviors. In addition, humans may exhibit negative behaviors when formed bonds are in danger. Downey and Feldman (1996) describe rejection sensitivity as the inclination to

anxiously anticipate, rapidly identify, and excessively react to indicators of rejection, as perceived through a cognitive-affective processing system (CAPS) lens. Within this processing system, the interplay of cognitive and affective processes is influenced by situational characteristics, factors such as encoding, beliefs, expectations, goals, and self-regulation strategies come into play, and these situational elements mediate an individual's behavior (Mischel and Shoda, 1995). As per the assertion this technique produces "if..then" patterns that mold a person's personality (Mischel and Shoda, 1995; Sarisoy, 2017). Thereby, it can be concluded that the CAPS framework stresses how a person's response is affected by their environment. According to the CAPS framework's model of rejection sensitivity, an individual's increased sensitivity to indicators of rejection is the consequence of a process of learning (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001). Early in childhood, when rejection is experienced frequently, people learn to expect it from others (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001).

Along with familial circumstances, peer and intimate relationships also have an implication for the level of rejection sensitivity (Downey, 1998). Hence, rejection expectations are emotionally charged since these encounters typically involve significant others (Sarisoy, 2017). According to Ainsworth et al. (1978), the formation of acceptance and rejection schemas initiates in the earliest stages of life, from the very first days of infancy. Therefore, it can be said that past rejection experiences have an impact on how people mentally picture relationships and may cause them to expect rejection defensively. Individuals exhibiting rejection sensitivity tend to possess heightened vigilance towards cues of potential rejection, as they remain uncertain about when the expected rejection might transpire. The presence of rejection cues evokes anxious anticipation in them (Pietrzak, Downey and Ayduk, 2005). As rejection sensitivity is established, the person becomes susceptible to reading negative connotations into even unintended signals in interpersonal interactions (Bozkuş and Araz, 2015). As a result, they may hastily interpret an ambiguous scenario as rejection. Subsequently, rejection-related feelings and ideas like rage or worry quickly surface (Pietrzak, Downey and Ayduk, 2005) According to what was said, different persons may employ various strategies for avoiding rejection or dealing with it (Sarisoy, 2017). Some people become irate and act aggressively, while others may experience worry and stay away from situations where they might be rejected, while still, others may



make a conscious effort to win over others or completely withhold their support (Pietrzak, Downey and Ayduk, 2005). It is also supported by Zimmer-Gembeck's (2015) research, which found that rejection-sensitive people may react anxiously and retreat when they anticipate rejection. In accordance with rejection sensitivity models, the perception of rejection can instigate a self-fulfilling prophecy, wherein individuals with elevated levels of rejection sensitivity may respond emotionally and behave in manners that not only reinforce and perpetuate negative emotions but also contribute to additional instances of rejection (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Gao et al., 2017).

Furthermore, there is evidence in the literature suggesting the existence of gender differences when it comes to considering rejection sensitivity. Downey (1997) stated that women typically exhibit greater rejection sensitivity than men. Women often overreact to their partners' ambivalent behavior because of this propensity (Downey et al., 1998). The results of previous research (Ayduk et al., 2000; Creasey and Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Downey and Feldman, 1996; Erözkan, 2004, 2005) showed that women are more vulnerable than men to developing rejection sensitivity. Not only gender but also attachment styles were found as significant associated of rejection sensitivity. For example, Erözkan (2009) discovered that there was a positive association between rejection sensitivity and insecure attachment styles (e.g., anxious-indecisive and avoidant), though negatively correlated with secure attachment style. Attachment theory emphasizes the significance of these relationships as a holistic substructure for understanding the nature and consequences of perceived rejection. From this perspective, the dynamics of human bonding and the individual variations observed when the integrity of such bonds is perceived to be jeopardized can be comprehensively elucidated through attachment concepts (Erözkan, 2009; Sroufe, 1990). Hence, in the following part, the association among attachment styles and rejection sensitivity will be described.

### ***1.2.2. Attachment Styles and Rejection Sensitivity***

As attachment involves explicit behaviors through which a child seeks to maintain physical proximity to the mother or primary caregiver, it follows that attachment styles can exert a substantial influence on rejection sensitivity (Erözkan, 2009). According to the rejection sensitivity model, the foundation of rejection sensitivity is early and

repeated rejection experiences. Due to the internalization of these early experiences, the person becomes sensitive to rejection (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Downey, Khouri and Feldman, 1997; Feldman and Downey, 1994; Pietrzak, Downey and Ayduk, 2005). It has been consistently highlighted in the literature that attachment theory is one of the applicable models which addresses the variables influencing the relationship between early rejection experiences and later interpersonal functioning (Bowlby, 1973, 1980, 1982). As stated before, Bowlby (1973, 1980, 1982) contends that early interactions with primary caregivers help children form internal working models. Therefore, in early childhood, when rejection is experienced frequently, people learn to expect it from others (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001). Furthermore, as previously discussed, when the caregiver demonstrates sensitivity to the child's necessities, the child forms internal working models that encompass the belief that others will embrace and provide assistance, thereby fostering the development of a secure attachment pattern (Bowlby, 1980, 1988; Morsümbül and Çok, 2011). On the other hand, the child will develop insecure internal working models, including worries and concerns about whether other people would accept and support them if the caregiver tends to ignore the child's demands (Bowlby, 1973). In this way, rejection sensitivity, which evolved as a defense mechanism against the parent's early rejection of the child's needs, serves an adaptive purpose. However, since it causes incorrect behaviors in adults, it is maladaptive (Downey and Feldman, 1996). In their investigation into the connection between early exposure to domestic violence, rejection sensitivity, and attachment styles, Feldman and Downey (1994) found that participants who identified as avoidant or anxious-indecisive were more sensitive to rejection than those who identified as securely attached. In their study, they investigated whether anxious expectations of rejection emerge from parental rejection. First, the participants' levels of rejection sensitivity were determined. The individuals were then questioned about their childhood family interactions. According to the study's findings, university students who experienced frequent, severe family violence when they were a child, acquired more fearful expectancies of being rejected in their current relationships. Furthermore, they found that those who anticipate anxious rejection strongly exhibit more anxious-avoidant and anxious-indecisive attachment styles. Moreover, the investigation of the link between early experiences of rejection and the anticipation of subsequent rejections is explored in a separate study conducted by Downey, Bonica and Rincon (1999). Students in the

fifth, sixth, and seventh grades had been tested on their rejection sensitivity levels during the study's initial phase. Then, the primary caregivers of these adolescents were observed, and it was determined whether they acted in a hostile or rejecting manner toward their own children. One year later, the measurements were taken once more. The study's findings revealed that harsh parenting styles of primary caregivers indicate an increase in children's fearful rejection expectancies. The results of this study corroborate the notion that early parental attitudes and expectations of rejection influence children's feelings, beliefs, and behaviors in subsequent relationships (Bozkuş, 2014). In addition, according to Özen, Sümer and Demir (2011), rejection sensitivity plays a part in the connection between attachment and friendship quality. A notable association was observed among rejection sensitivity, anxious- indecisive attachment, and avoidant attachment, as indicated by their findings.

As previously mentioned, rejection expectations are emotional since significant others are typically involved in these rejection encounters (Sarısoy, 2017). According to Ainsworth et al., (1978), the formation of mental constructs related to acceptance and rejection initiates within the initial days of life. Additionally, in the rejection sensitivity model, past rejection experiences have an impact on how people see their relationships and may cause them to expect rejection defensively. Hence a cognitive-emotional information processing framework serves as the foundation for the understanding and perceiving of the circumstance (Romero-Canyas et al., 2010). The subsequent part will delve into the intricate cognitive and emotional components involved in the process of rejection sensitivity.

### ***1.2.3. The Cognitive-Emotional Components of Rejection Sensitivity***

The rejection sensitivity hypothesis (Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001) states that rejection sensitivity arises when human cravings to join are recurrently unfulfilled which leads to continuous expectations of rejection. The indicated expectations are triggered in circumstances when rejection is a feasible outcome, making people easily mistake innocent indications for rejection. These expectations may also elicit negative feelings such as anxiety and anger (i.e., anxious and angry expectations). A self-fulfilling prophecy in which genuine rejection is evoked can result from such emotional responses, which enhance the likelihood of maladaptive behaviors and can

obstruct the acquisition of competence in adaptive coping and the resolution of interpersonal issues (Preti et al., 2020). Therefore, following the principles of the rejection sensitivity model (Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001), rejection sensitivity is an interpreting disposition that includes both a cognitive component (i.e., the expectation of rejection) and emotional stimulation (i.e., anxiety and anger) (see Figure 1).

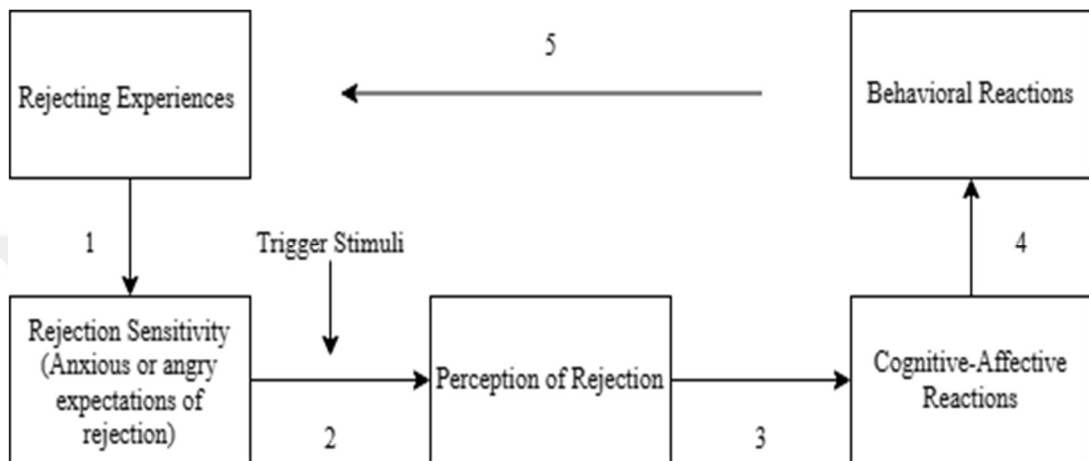


Figure 1. The Rejection Sensitivity Model (Source: Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001)

Prior to delving into the cognitive-emotional model of rejection sensitivity, it is pertinent to provide a concise overview of Mischel and Shoda's (1995) characterization of the cognitive-emotional information processing system. Downey and Feldman (1996) intended to understand how this fundamental system of cognitive and emotional information processing affects a relationship in order to construct their model of rejection sensitivity. Mischel and Shoda (1995) state that the role of an individual's cognitive traits and environmental traits in personality development is referred to as the cognitive-emotional information that goes through the processing system. They suggest five cognitive and emotional components regarding how information is comprehended. Every cognitive characteristic affects behavior and how an individual engages with their surroundings. The five cognitive-emotional components are encoding (how information is gathered, organized, and used), beliefs/expectations (what inferences the person makes about other people's behavior), purpose/values (life goals and gratifications for behavior), emotion (how the person reacts emotionally), and abilities/self-regulation (intelligence, knowledge, and skills) (Mischel and Shoda, 1995; Şirvanlı- Özen and Güneri, 2018).

According to Downey and Feldman (1996), at the core of the rejection sensitivity concept is that people form specific cognitive and emotional frames in their minds as a result of prior experiences with acceptance or rejection of others. Every time a person enters a social setting in cases where there are indications of acceptance or rejection, due to the cognitive-emotional model that has developed in their mind, they feel alert and exhibit a variety of coping mechanisms and act to avoid being rejected in the setting (Şirvanlı- Özen and Güneri, 2018). While explaining rejection sensitivity, people develop the expectation that others would reject them continually when their demands are not met consistently and are even frequently rejected by significant others as shown in Figure 1. Fear of rejection encourages hypervigilance for rejection indicators, making even innocent social encounters susceptible to being mistaken for "intentional rejection" (Link 2 of Figure 1) (Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001; Leary, 2001).

The fundamental tenet of the rejection sensitivity model is that people with high levels of rejection sensitivity predict more rejection in their relationships (Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001). This process over time raises the likelihood of really getting rejected (Preti et al., 2020). According to Levy and his colleagues (2001), there are two emotional reactions a person can give to these rejection expectations. Anger and aggression are the first groups of them. Anxious expectations are the second. What they both have is that a person feels alerted and interprets a high level of threat in the face of rejection. People who experienced constant rejection in the past react to even the smallest hint of rejection in one of these two ways (Bozkuş, 2014).

Anger and anxiety are felt (Link 3 of Figure 1) once significant others' acts are seen as rejection, and inappropriate responses are then offered to the circumstance (Link 4 of Figure 1) (Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001; Leary, 2001). A self-fulfilling prophecy in which actual rejection is evoked can result from such emotional responses, which enhance the likelihood of maladaptive behaviors and can obstruct the development of competence in adaptive coping and the resolution of interpersonal issues (Preti et al., 2020). Additionally, negative reactions to the behaviors of people they care about serve to strengthen individuals' false perception of rejection (Link 5 of Figure 1). (Leary, 2001; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001). Pietrzak, Downey and Ayduk (2005) found that among people with high sensitivity to rejection, core beliefs about rejection

developed through childhood trigger automatic thoughts even at the tiniest possibility of rejection.

Although the relationship between rejection sensitivity and attachment styles has been investigated before in light of Bowlby's attachment theory, limited knowledge exists regarding the intermediate mechanisms that might explain these associations. Since both attachment styles and rejection sensitivity are known to be emotionally charged (Sariso, 2017), guided by the literature, this study aims to examine the intervening role of emotion regulation in the association among attachment styles and rejection sensitivity. In the following section, emotion regulation which is believed to play a significant part in this connection is going to be covered.

### ***1.3 Emotion Regulation***

#### ***1.3.1 Understanding Emotion Regulation***

The exploration of emotions in the field of psychology has a rich and extensive history, spanning nearly as long as the discipline itself. Consequently, numerous scholars have endeavored to articulate a comprehensive understanding of emotions (Sariso, 2017). For example, Darwin (1890) emphasized the role of emotions in ensuring survival. Darwin's hypothesis holds that emotions have developed to alter behavior, assisting people in adapting to the demands of the outside environment. For instance, fear will produce the right reaction when someone encounters a snake, increasing their likelihood of surviving. James (1884) proposed a different paradigm. He proposed that physical responses to an event are perceived as emotions. Subsequent to these preliminary depictions, attempts have been made to eliminate the mystery behind emotions. The adaptive and signaling role of emotional reactions has been highlighted by James (1884, 1894) and he defined emotion as a flexible response sequence in the face of considerable environmental change. Although early ideas focused on the beneficial and survival roles of emotions, they can also be harmful when they are inappropriate for the circumstance, when they occur at the wrong time, or when they are seen with an excessive amount of intensity (Gross and Jazaieri, 2014). According to Thompson (1994), for an emotion to be functional, it must improve performance, adjust swiftly to changing demands, be flexible, and be situation-specific. Although

the importance of emotions as tools for adaptation and survival was underlined by both Gross and Thompson (2007), their usefulness depends on effective regulation.

The examination of emotion regulation is not a recent inquiry, as it has been investigated through various conceptual frameworks such as psychological defenses (Freud, 1936), coping strategies (Lazarus, 1966), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), and self-regulation processes (Mischel, Shoda and Rodriguez, 1989). Similar to the subject of emotion, several studies have attempted to characterize emotion regulation from many angles (Sariso, 2017). One of the definitions that has gained considerable popularity and extensive usage of emotion regulation was presented by Thompson (1994), who stated that

*"Emotion regulation consisted entirely of the extrinsic and intrinsic processes in charge of tracking, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive and temporal characteristics, to achieve one's goals"*

An alternative definition that extensively utilize done by Gross (1998) is that emotion regulation is the mechanism that enables us to control the emotions we experience when those emotions occur, and how those emotions express.

Several types of research have shown that managing emotions has an impact on mental health. According to Gross and Levenson (1997), Freud introduced us the idea that controlling emotive impulses is essential for maintaining psychological health. Similar statements were made by Thompson (1991) and Cicchetti, Ackerman and Izard (1995) that effective functioning and well-being are heavily dependent on emotional control. Hence, it can be asserted that the trait of emotional adaptability has garnered considerable attention as the foremost characteristic due to its implication for the capacity to regulate emotions (Gross, 2010). On the basis of earlier findings, Gratz and Roemer (2004) hypothesized that the capacity to regulate emotions consists of a variety of components to understand them more thoroughly. These elements have been described as the capacity to employ appropriate strategies for regulating emotions in a flexible manner, allowing for the modification of emotional reactions based on personal preferences and the objective of meeting individual objectives and contextual requirements. Furthermore, it encompasses the abilities of recognizing,

comprehending, and accepting emotions, as well as effectively managing impulsive behaviors and engaging in desired interpersonal interactions during unpleasant emotional states (Gratz and Roemer, 2004).

Gross and Thompson (2007) used an example to highlight another aspect of emotion regulation. As mentioned before, they asserted that there are two types of emotion regulation which are intrinsic and extrinsic emotion regulation. Extrinsic emotion regulation denotes to the control of emotions by other people, on the contrary intrinsic emotion regulation highlights an individual's efforts to manage their own emotions (Sariso, 2017). According to Thompson (1994), throughout the first few years of life, other people play a substantial role in controlling an infant's emotions. In the first few years of life, parents and other caregivers watch, analyze, and modify their infant's emotions by comforting, nursing, and cuddling (Thompson and Calkins, 1996). Direct interventions are used in conjunction with these indirect strategies after language acquisition (Thompson and Calkins, 1996). Through this process, children learn to modify their emotions according to cultural norms, aiding in maintaining their emotional health (Sariso, 2017). Regarding a person's psychological health and functioning, effective regulation of emotional abilities is crucial (Berking and Whitley, 2014; Bridges, Denham and Ganiban, 2004). However, the inability to understand, perceive, and regulate emotions can cause people to experience or suffer from emotional or psychological issues (Cicchetti, Ackerman and Izard, 1995); Gratz and Roemer, 2004; Gross and Jazaieri, 2014; Kring et al., 2004; Werner and Gross, 2010). More specifically, it has been demonstrated that emotion regulation difficulties are linked to depression (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema and Schweizer, 2010; Berking et al., 2014; Ehring and Quack, 2010), anxiety disorders (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema and Schweizer, 2010; Bardeen and Fergus, 2014; Mennin et al., 2005; Mennin, McLaughlin and Flanagan, 2009; Salters-Pedneault et al., 2006), self-harm (Gratz and Roemer, 2004; Gratz and Roemer, 2008), borderline personality disorder (Gratz et al., 2006; Linehan, 1993), post-traumatic stress disorder (Ehring and Quack, 2010; Tull et al., 2007).



### ***1.3.2. Emotion Regulation Difficulties***

Emotion regulation difficulties (Gratz and Roemer, 2004) refer to the decrease or absence of a set of processes that involves monitoring, evaluating, and modification of emotional responses according to their severity and characteristics. When a person has trouble understanding, recognizing, and accepting their feelings, it is said that they have difficulty regulating their emotions. Additionally, it can be said that if a person experiences a strong emotion, their ability to control their impulses declines, and they have trouble forming goal-directed behavioral patterns, they are said to be struggling with emotion regulation (Gratz and Roemer, 2004). Hence it is known that as indicated by Gratz and Roemer (2004), emotion regulation is a six-dimensional construct that includes the following skills: the capacity to accept one's emotions rather than suppress them (acceptance), emotional awareness, emotional clarity, the capacity to act in a goal-directed manner when one is experiencing negative emotions (goals), and the capacity to employ situationally appropriate emotion regulation strategies, they highlighted that the absence or deficiency of any of these abilities can pose challenges in effectively regulating emotions (Gratz and Roemer, 2004). It can be concluded that Gratz and Roemer's theory on emotion regulation posits that individuals may confront difficulties in effectively managing their emotions when confronted with intense emotional states. During such circumstances, their capacity to restrain impulses becomes compromised, thereby impeding the development of goal-oriented behaviors. This theory underscores the significance of comprehending and addressing emotion regulation difficulties among individuals grappling with heightened emotional experiences. Additionally, depending on their differences in attachment styles, people exhibit various emotion regulation methods, when they encounter stressful events (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2019). Therefore, it is important to measure the level of emotion regulation that people have by considering attachment theory. Bjureberg et al. (2016) revisited the concept of emotion regulation and stated that it is a multidimensional construct including clarity, goals, impulse, strategies, and non-acceptance. In their definition the DERS-16 is a brief self-report test that is accurate and reliable for assessing general difficulties with emotion regulation (Bjureberg et al., 2016) Moreover, based on their findings, the absence of the emotional awareness subscale in the DERS may not be pertinent to the wider concept of difficulties in regulating emotions (Bardeen et al., 2012; Bjureberg et al., 2016). Therefore, in this

study, the conceptualization of Bjureberg et al. was used.

Considering that emotion regulation has been proposed as a potential mediator in the association between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity, the subsequent sections will elucidate the connection between emotion regulation difficulties and attachment styles, as well as the link between emotion regulation difficulties and rejection sensitivity.

### ***1.3.3. Emotion Regulation Difficulties and Attachment Styles***

In line with the attachment theory, people's regular use of emotional regulation techniques is tied to their repeated interactions with caregivers during their early years of life (Winterheld, 2016). The caregiver devotes a significant amount of time and effort to calming and soothing the child because the infant has a limited number of regulatory sources, such as gaze shifting (Thompson and Calkins, 1996). Infants are said to progressively assimilate the strategies and techniques of regulating emotions, despite their considerable dependency on others in this area (Diamond and Aspinwall, 2003). Individuals evolve internal cognitive representations, known as internal working models, of relationships influenced by their perceived quality of interactions these models manifest as adult attachment orientations and play a significant role in shaping expectations, emotions, defensive mechanisms, and relational behavior within all close relationships (e.g., Bartholomew, 1990, 1993; Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985; Shaver and Hazan, 1988; Weiss, 1982).

The ability to regulate emotions, experiencing difficulties related to emotion regulation, and regulating behaviors of people with different attachment styles differ from one another, according to studies on the subject (Jordyn, 2004). In agreement with Creasey, Kershaw and Boston, (1999), respondents who report being securely attached report having higher self-efficacy when it comes to emotion regulation (Bandura et al., 2003). In addition, as stated in the emotion regulation paradigm (Gross, 2001, 2008), secure individuals tend to employ cognitive reappraisal (which can be classified as adaptive) more frequently than their insecure counterparts. Also, according to Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema and Schweizer, (2010) and Sheppes, Suri and Gross, (2015), they frequently employ more productive and healthier emotion-

regulation techniques and have greater self-assurance in one's capacity to handle difficulties and threats (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2016, 2019). Furthermore, individuals with a strong sense of security do not rely on defensive deactivating or hyperactivating strategies to manage their emotions. Therefore, it can be inferred that securely attached individuals possess a greater capacity to adapt their perspectives on emotionally charged situations and reevaluate them in a manner that diminishes their impact on the well-being of their relationships (Collins, 1996; Mikulincer, 1998).

On the other hand, avoidance and anxiety which are considered as insecure attachment patterns are two relatively independent measures to assess adult attachment orientations (Brennan, Clark and Shaver, 1998; Simpson, Rholes and Phillips, 1996). Individuals who exhibit high avoidance scores have lower confidence in others' willingness to fulfill their needs and invest more effort in maintaining psychological distance and control within relationships. When it comes to managing their emotions, avoidantly attached persons tend to downplay their emotional experiences, seeking assistance, and dismiss attachment-related necessities (Cassidy and Kobak, 1988; Fraley and Shaver, 1997; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2003). Furthermore, individuals who have high levels of anxiety dimension frequently worry about losing relationships, worry about their needs not being satisfied, and yearn for emotional closeness. Those that are anxious-indecisive tend to employ hyperactivating emotion regulation techniques, such as excessive self-focus, expressing negative feelings to evoke responses from partners, and persistently seeking out others' support to keep their attention (Kobak and Sceery, 1988; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2003). Therefore, it can be assured that the interpersonal component of insecure attachment results in uncontrollable feelings and the having of emotion regulation difficulties. This propensity might make emotional issues worse. Indeed, most theories of emotion emphasize the need for emotion regulation (e.g., Lazarus, 1991).

From the preceding descriptions, it is clearly shown that people's emotional experiences and used regulation strategies in specific attachment patterns are crucial to our comprehension of the construct. Thereby, it can be concluded that anxious-indecisive and avoidant attachment styles encourage the having emotion regulation difficulties.

#### ***1.3.4. Emotion Regulation Difficulties and Rejection Sensitivity***

As previously explained, researchers (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Levy, Ayduk and Downey, 2001), created a thorough rejection sensitivity model to concurrently encompass both the negative impressions of others and the self, as well as the negatively skewed expectations and adverse reactions that result from rejection sensitivity. According to this hypothesis, after experiencing interpersonal rejection, it is anticipated that rejection sensitivity will emerge and subsequently give rise to progressively more negative emotional and behavioral reactions towards situations that can potentially perpetuate or amplify the experience of rejection. On the subject of rejection sensitivity, emotion regulation is regarded to be important. According to previous research (Kross et al., 2007; Velotti, Garofalo and Bizzi, 2015), those who are highly sensitive to rejection struggle to regulate their emotions. Velotti et al. (2014) discovered a statistically significant positive correlation between rejection sensitivity and difficulties in emotional acceptance. Research exploring the rejection sensitivity model in adolescents and young adults reveals heightened levels of maladaptive coping and difficulties in emotion regulation. These difficulties refer to unfavorable emotional and behavioral responses or strategies that increase the likelihood of psychopathological outcomes in individuals reporting higher levels of rejection sensitivity. Both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies consistently demonstrate that individuals with greater rejection sensitivity exhibit increased tendencies for rumination on negative events, heightened social avoidance, difficulties in emotional regulation and suppression, as well as an increased inclination towards self-blame and blaming others for experiences of rejection (Pearson, Watkins and Mullan, 2011; Watson and Nesdale, 2012; Gardner and Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018).

In summary, in light of the literature, it can be said that self-related ideas about oneself, such as whether or not they are likable, desirable, or acceptable, may be associated with rejection sensitivity. Furthermore, rejection-sensitive individuals may have greater interpersonal issues if they are unable to regulate their unexpectedly emerging negative emotions. Thus, drawing upon attachment theory and relevant scholarly works, it is hypothesized that a notable association exists between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity. Furthermore, this relationship is expected to be mediated by emotion regulation in a sample of emerging adults.

Since it is known that emerging adulthood is a time of significant cognitive, social, and emotional changes, during which identity exploration occurs. (Eryilmaz and Ercan, 2010), age and developmental needs have an impact on the nature of the relationships that people create with one another the present study focuses on the emerging adulthood period while considered the intervening role of emotion regulation in relation to attachment styles and rejection sensitivity. In the following section, emerging adulthood is explained.

#### ***1.4. Emerging Adulthood***

Emerging adulthood is the stage of life, which typically occurs between the ages of 18 and 25, and marks the passage from adolescence to adulthood. However, according to Arnett (2014) emerging adulthood period consists of the 18–29-year-old age period. The time period known as emerging adulthood is between the ages of 18 and 25 when most people begin progressing toward making the commitments that constitute adult life, marriage (or a long-term partnership), parenthood, and a permanent job. Arnett stated that he occasionally uses the terms 18-25 and 18-29 interchangeably because emerging adulthood's end is so unexpected. Nothing significant happens at age 25 to put an end to it (Arnett, 2014, pp. 7-8). In addition, internationally, the 18–29 age range also makes the most sense because the median age of marriage and parenthood in all other industrialized nations is typically around age 30 (Arnett, 2014).

Emerging adulthood is a developmental stage marked by the exploration of identity, instability, self-oriented pursuits, and a sense of being in a transitional phase. It is often conceptualized as a period of opportunities and possibilities (Arnett, 2018). Although most emerging adults have left home and have grown more independent of their parents than they were as teenagers, they have not yet taken on the steady, persistent responsibilities that are characteristics commonly associated with adulthood, such as establishing a stable career, entering into long-term relationships such as marriage, and assuming parental responsibilities (Arnett, 2014). Although researchers centered on adolescents to study identity formation and the process of developing an identity in both love and career starts in adolescence but becomes more intense as an emerging adult (Arnett, 2014).

In the past 30 to 40 years, Turkey has seen changes alike the demographic and social changes in America and Europe mentioned above (Atak et al.,2016). For instance, in Turkey, the average age at marriage has climbed by five years over the past thirty years, the average age at which one completes their schooling has increased by four years, and the average age at which one becomes a parent has increased by five years over the same period (Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies, 2014) More specifically, according to TUIK the age at first marriage increased for men as well as women when the average age at first marriage was broken down by years. In 2022, the average age of getting married for the first time for men was 28.2, whereas it was 25.6 for women (TUIK, 2023). In addition, while the percentage of those 25 and older individuals who have successfully completed educational programs leading to associate's, bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees was 9.8% in 2008, it reached 23.9% by 2022. While the percentage of people in the aforementioned age group who completed primary school and other higher education levels was 81.1% in 2008, it increased to 92.5% by 2022 (TUIK, 2023). It is true that these and other demographic shifts lengthen the transition to adulthood and alter its nature. Despite the lack of research on emerging adulthood in Turkey, Çok and Atak (2015) claimed that people in the city between the ages of 19 and 26 are thought to be in emerging adulthood. In Atak et al. (2016) 's study, which considers rural, urban, and urban-based groups together in terms of the progression into adulthood, it has been found that educated urban individuals view the transition to adulthood as a process close to that described for emerging adulthood. Hence the era of finishing school, securing a stable career, getting married, having children, and owning a home expanded into the late twenties. As already stated, Levinson (1986) and Arnett (2014) contend that crucial stages of life, such as marriage, parenthood, and beginning a career, occur between the ages of 20 and 30, at the earliest. These shifts are being seen in both industrialized civilizations like those in America and Europe and developing nations like Turkey. It might be said that these demographic shifts both lengthen and alter the transition to adulthood.

Relationship qualification, and more particularly the attachment patterns formed with significant others, are major factors in emerging adults' transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2000; O'Connor et al., 1996). Given that the emerging adulthood period includes the ability to form meaningful and emotionally fulfilling bonds with friends

and romantic partners creating a new form of relationships with secure bonds that become important (Allen and Land 1999). Hence, successful transitions to adulthood are facilitated by secure attachments that are marked by autonomy, trust, and support (Shulman, Kalnitzki and Shaha, 2009). While interacting with different significant people around them regulation of their emotions becomes important and compared to adolescence regulate their emotions well compared to adolescents (Zimmermann, 1999; Roisman et al., 2004).

In adolescence and early adulthood, research has indicated that rejection sensitivity tends to remain consistent and stable over relatively short periods of time (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Downey et al., 1998; London et al., 2007), but no studies have specifically looked into the whether rejection sensitivity showing relatively consistent levels over during emerging adulthood. Additionally, most studies investigating emotion regulation tend to concentrate on either childhood and adolescence or adulthood. Nevertheless, considering the intensified emotional experiences and rapid developmental transitions, adolescence and emerging adulthood hold equal significance as developmental periods for understanding emotion regulation (Zimmermann and Iwanski, 2014)

Since studies on emerging adulthood in Turkey are scarce and it is thought that it is important to examine attachment theory and rejection sensitivity along with emotion regulation in this context, the emerging adulthood period was used in this study as a sample.

### ***1.5. Aim of the Present Study and Hypotheses***

Guided by the attachment theory and in accordance with prior research, it is thought that attachment styles and rejection sensitivity are emotionally charged and individuals' emotion regulation levels also affect them. Although there are some researches examining the relationship among rejection sensitivity and attachment styles (e.g., Downey and Feldman, 1996; Erözkan, 2009; Khoshkam et al., 2012), the possible intervening role of emotion regulation in the relationship between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity in the emerging adulthood period has not been studied yet. Given that numerous influential theorists, including Bowlby (1988), Erikson

(1959), and Horney (1937), encouraged the idea that attachment patterns (whether it is secure or insecure) are the primary cause of rejection sensitivity and prior studies consistently demonstrated a significant relationship between secure as well as insecure attachment styles and rejection sensitivity in a variety of cultures (Feldman and Downey, 1994; Khoshkam et al., 2012; Natarajan, Somasundaram and Sundaram, 2011), including Turkish culture (Erözkan, 2009; Erözkan and Kömür, 2006), it was deemed important to examine the stated relation among Turkish emerging adults by considering the possible intervening role of emotion regulation.. The choice of emerging adulthood as the sample for the aim of this study is grounded in several important considerations. First, the period of emerging adulthood represents a critical phase of transition, where individuals navigate the challenges of becoming autonomous and forming meaningful relationships with friends and romantic partners (Arnett, 2000; Allen and Land 1999; O'Connor et al., 1996). Understanding the attachment patterns that emerge during this developmental stage is essential, as they play a significant role in shaping individuals' transition to adulthood. Second, successful transitions to adulthood are facilitated by secure attachments characterized by autonomy, trust, and support (Shulman, Kalnitzki and Shahar, 2009). Exploring the attachment patterns and their impact on emotion regulation within the context of emerging adulthood provides valuable insights into how individuals navigate these formative relationships and regulate their emotions during this pivotal phase of life (Zimmermann and Iwanski, 2014). Third, while previous research has examined attachment and emotion regulation in childhood, adolescence, and adulthood separately (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Downey et al., 1998; London et al., 2007), the study aims to bridge this gap by focusing on emerging adulthood. This period is marked by intensified emotional experiences and rapid developmental transitions, making it a crucial time for understanding emotion regulation processes.

By focusing on emerging adulthood as the sample for this study, a more comprehensive understanding of attachment patterns, rejection sensitivity, and emotion regulation can be gained in a developmental period that holds equal significance to both adolescence and adulthood. This research contributes to filling the existing knowledge gap and sheds light on the unique dynamics and challenges faced by individuals during this important life stage.



Therefore, the aim of the current study was to investigate the mediating role of emotion regulation difficulties in the relationship between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity in the emerging adulthood period.

In coherence with the literature and the aim of the study, the direct and indirect hypotheses of the current study have been listed below.

H1: Secure attachment style (H1a) will negatively, and anxious-indecisive (H1b), and avoidant (H1c) attachment styles will positively predict rejection sensitivity.

H2. Secure attachment style (H2a) will negatively and anxious-indecisive (H2b) and avoidant (H2c) attachment styles will positively predict emotion regulation difficulties.

H3: Emotion regulation difficulties will positively predict rejection sensitivity.

H4: Emotion regulation difficulties will significantly mediate the relationship between secure attachment style and rejection sensitivity (H4a), between anxious-indecisive attachment style and rejection sensitivity (H4b), and between avoidant attachment style and rejection sensitivity (H4c).

## CHAPTER 2: METHOD

This chapter provides information regarding the participants' demographics, the measures utilized, the data collection procedure, and the statistical analysis conducted.

### *2.1. Participants*

Participants were 373 university students (85.5% of them were female) between the ages of 18 and 29 years old ( $M_{age} = 22.80$ ,  $SD = 2.55$ ). Related to participants, 6.7% of them were English Preparatory Program students, 21.4% were freshmen, 17.2% were sophomores, 14.7% were juniors, 18.2% were seniors, and 21.7% were postgraduate students. The majority of participants (79.4%) had married and cohabiting parents. The largest proportion of emerging adults was living with their families (50.9%), 21.4% were living in a student house, 22.6% were in a university dormitory, and 5.1% were in other places.

In regard to the income level of the participants, 40 (10.7 %) of the participants reported that they had a low level of income, 155 (41.6 %) of the participants had a moderate level of income, 83 (22.3%) of the participants perceived themselves in the lower middle-income group while 87 (23.3%) of the participants perceived themselves in the upper middle-income group, lastly 8 (2.1 %) of the participants had a high level of income. Detailed information about the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1. The Demographical Information of the Participants

Variable	Levels	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	319	85.5
	Male	53	14.2
	Not specified	1	0.3
Grade Level	English Preparatory Program	25	6.7
	Freshman	80	21.4
	Sophomore	64	17.2
	Junior	55	14.7
	Senior	68	18.2
	Postgraduate	81	21.7
Income Level	Low	40	10.7
	Lower middle	83	22.3
	Middle	155	41.6
	Upper middle	87	23.3
	High	8	2.1
Family Status	Parents are married, live together	296	79.4
	Parents are married, live separately	6	1.6
	Parents are divorced, living together	5	1.3
	Parents are divorced, living separately	40	10.7
	Mother passed away	4	1.1
	Father passed away	21	5.6
	Other	1	0.3
Place they live	Family home	190	50.9
	Student house	80	21.4
	University dormitory	84	22.6
	Other	19	5.1

## **2.2. Measures**

In this study, a demographic information form, The Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale, The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale—Brief Form, and The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire were used as measures.

### **2.2.1. Demographic Information Form**

A demographic information form was prepared by the researcher to get information about the age, gender, grade level, place they live, their family status, and perceived socioeconomic status of the participants.

### **2.2.2. The Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale**

The Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale which was created by Erzen (2016), will be used to identify people's attachment styles. The scale comprises 18 items divided into three subscales: secure attachment style (e.g., "I have a good relationship with my parent (mother, father, or caregiver)."), avoidant attachment style (e.g., "If there is a problem, it is usually because the people in front of me have their own issues."), and anxious-indecisive attachment style (e.g., "I worry that getting too close to someone could lead to problems."). Participants rate their responses on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). In the adaptation study, the item-total correlation values of the scale were between .49 and .75 with the item remainder analysis varying from .96 to .98. The Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients were .80 for the avoidant attachment style subscale, .69 for the secure attachment style subscale, and .71 for the anxious-indecisive attachment style subscale, respectively. In this study, Cronbach's coefficient was found as .55 for the secure attachment style subscale, .83 for the anxious-indecisive attachment style subscale, and .77 for the avoidant attachment style.

### **2.2.3. The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale—Brief Form**

The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale—Brief Form was created by Bjureberg et al. (2016) from the original version called The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation

Scale (DERS; Gratz, and Roemer, 2004). Based on the scale's clinical value, functionality, and efficacy in designing treatments for various psychopathologies, this 16-item version of the scale (DERS-16) included five subscales namely clarity, non-acceptance, strategies, impulse, and goals (Awareness subscale was removed in this brief version) and 16 items (there were 36 items in the original version). The 16-item scale is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = "almost never" to 5 = "almost always"). A higher score indicates higher emotion regulation difficulties. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Yiğit and Guzey Yiğit (2019) and used to examine emerging adults' levels of difficulty in emotion regulation. The internal consistency coefficients of the Turkish version of the scale were found to be .92 for the overall emotion regulation scale, .84 for the clarity subscale, .84 for the goals subscale, .87 for the impulse subscale, .87 for the strategies subscale, and .78 for non-acceptance subscale (Yiğit, and Guzey Yiğit, 2019). In this study, Cronbach's coefficient was found as .93 for the total scale and ranging from .80 to .89 for the subscales.

#### ***2.2.4. The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire***

The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire, initially formulated by Downey and Feldman (1996), underwent a translation into Turkish by Özen, Sümer and Demir (2011) with the purpose of measuring an individual's sensitivity to rejection. The original questionnaire consists of 18 hypothetical situations. In the Turkish adaptation study, eight items tapped into typical Turkish situations (e.g., "You tell your friend that you are going to visit his/her town and ask if you could stay with him/her for 10 days") since was hypothesized that rejection expectancies could vary by culture were added. Therefore, the Turkish version has a total of 26 items ( $\alpha = .86$ ), including subscales for rejection concern (e.g., "How concerned or anxious would you be over whether or not the person would want to lend you his/her notes?";  $\alpha = .91$ ) and acceptance expectancy (e.g., "I would expect that the person would freely give his/her notes.";  $\alpha = .92$ ). The respondents scored items over a 6-point Likert type scale (1 = "Very unlikely" to 6 = "Very likely") as well as the rejection concern items over the same scale (1 = "Very unconcerned" to 6 = "Very concerned"). Initial reverse coding is used to reflect the inverse of the expected acceptance score when calculating the rejection sensitivity score. The reversed score is then multiplied by the anxiety regarding circumstances score. The rejection sensitivity scores for each situation are then added

up, and the final rejection sensitivity score is determined by dividing it by the entire number of items (e.g., 26), or the total number of situations. A higher score shows greater sensitivity to rejection. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found as .87 for the total scale.

### ***2.3. Procedure***

The data collection was handled online by using the Qualtrics program. Prior to data collection, ethical permission was taken from the Izmir University of Economics Ethics Committee (B.30.2.İEÜ.0.05.05-020-247). The online form included the informed consent form, demographic information form, and study measures. Afterward, the survey link was posted on social media (e.g., WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). Participants were first provided an informed consent form throughout the application process, which included information about the study's objectives, general procedures, and voluntary participation. All participants received assurances of the study's confidentiality, the anonymity of their responses, and their freedom to withdraw at any moment. The participants who freely decided to take part in the study continued to respond to the questionnaires, which included questions about demographics like age and gender, as well as the questionnaire set including The Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale, The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale—Brief Form, and The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire. All scales were presented in Turkish. The completion of the questionnaires lasted approximately 20 minutes.

### ***2.4. Statistical Analyses***

First, the data cleaning was handled. A total of 719 university students took part in the study. However, 346 participants were excluded from data analysis for the following reasons: 308 of them did not complete the study, 37 of them did not meet the age criteria which is between the 18-29 age period, and lastly, one participant identified as an outlier. Among the 719 recorded participants, only 373 of them completed 100% of the scale and met the requested criteria. After obtaining the data set, the sample's characteristics were investigated.

Second, descriptive statistics of among study variables were calculated. In order to verify the adequacy of data collection and assess the probability of the underlying random variable in the dataset following a normal distribution, normality tests were employed. To accept the normality assumption, the values for skewness and kurtosis must fall within the range of +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). All study variables were considered as being normally distributed based on the normality analysis.

Third, gender differences were investigated using *t*-test analyses to check whether study variables differ as a function of gender of the participants. Fourth, to check the relations between the study variables, a Pearson correlation analysis was handled and the link between attachment styles (secure attachment style, anxious-indecisive attachment style, and avoidant attachment style), emotion regulation difficulties, and rejection sensitivity were examined.

Finally, simple mediation analyses were carried out using PROCESS version 4.2 by Andrew Hayes (Hayes, 2022) to evaluate the main mediation hypotheses by considering the possible mediating role of emotion regulation in the relationship between attachment styles, and rejection sensitivity. The basic mediation model 4 was employed for completing the analysis. A randomly multiplied sample is provided by the bootstrapping approach, which is employed in PROCESS Macro. Therefore, the assumption of a normal distribution is no longer required when using the Bootstrap approach. Additionally estimated within the bootstrapped confidence intervals are the indirect effects. The determination of the significance of the indirect effect relies on whether the bootstrap confidence interval encompasses zero. A result is considered significant if the confidence interval does not include zero, as per the criterion established by Preacher and Hayes (2004). Conversely, if the confidence interval includes zero, the result is deemed non-significant.

## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

In this chapter, the study results will be reported. Firstly, descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation and minimum and maximum values of the study variables will be displayed. The findings of an independent *t*-test that compares the impact of gender on the study variables will then be presented. The association between secure attachment, anxious-indecisive attachment, avoidant attachment, rejection sensitivity, and emotion regulation difficulties as well as age was further investigated by correlation analysis. Finally, using simple mediation analysis by PROCESS version 4.2 by Hayes (2022) in SPSS manifest variables (secure attachment, anxious-indecisive attachment style, avoidant attachment style, emotion regulation difficulties, and rejection sensitivity), the main hypotheses were examined.

### *3.1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables*

The results of the descriptive statistics analysis of study variables were given in Table 2.

Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

	N	MIN	MAX	M	SD
Rejection Sensitivity	373	1	23	8.67	3.33
Secure Attachment Style	373	2	5	3.82	0.54
Anxious-Indecisive Attachment Style	373	1	5	2.75	0.81
Avoidant Attachment Style	373	1	4.33	2.11	0.58
Emotion Regulation Difficulties	373	19	77	42.74	13.59



## **3.2 Preliminary Analysis**

### **3.2.1 Results of *t*-test Regarding Females and Males**

To investigate gender differences in the main study variables, including rejection sensitivity, secure attachment style, anxious-indecisive attachment style, avoidant attachment style, and emotion regulation difficulties, was done using independent samples *t*-test.

Related to gender differences in participants' rejection sensitivity scores, the analysis's findings showed that there was no significant gender difference in the participants' rejection sensitivity scores,  $t(370) = 0.27, p = .79$  between female ( $M = 8.69; SD = 3.21$ ) and male ( $M = 8.56; SD = 4.04$ ) participants.

Additionally, related to gender differences in attachment styles, for secure attachment style; no statistically significant difference was found between the female ( $M = 3.82; SD = 0.54$ ) and male ( $M = 3.80; SD = 0.53$ ) participants  $t(370) = 0.25, p = .80$ ; for anxious-indecisive attachment style, there was no statistically significant difference between female ( $M = 2.78; SD = 0.82$ ) and male ( $M = 2.58; SD = 0.73$ ) participants  $t(370) = 1.69, p = .09$  as well as for avoidant attachment style, no statistically significant difference was found between the female ( $M = 2.10; SD = 0.57$ ) and male ( $M = 2.14; SD = 0.61$ ) participants  $t(370) = -0.45, p = .65$ .

However, there was a significant difference between emotion regulation difficulties for female ( $M = 43.34; SD = 13.87$ ) and male ( $M = 38.98; SD = 11.28$ ) participants  $t(80.59) = 2.52, p = .01$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that female individuals had more difficulties regulating their emotions than male participants.

In conclusion, the analysis's findings showed that participants' attachment styles and rejection sensitivity levels did not differ based on gender however there was a significant difference between female and male participants for emotion regulation difficulties. Compared to the male participants, female participants had more difficulty regulating their emotions. As a result of the significant finding related to the results of the preliminary analysis investigating the gender differences among study variables,

gender was added as a covariate to the main mediation models.



Table 3. Independent Sample *t*-test Results Comparing Participants according to Gender

Variables	Female			Male			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Rejection Sensitivity	319	8.69	3.21	53	8.56	4.04	0.27	.79	.04
Secure Attachment Style	319	3.82	.54	53	3.80	.53	0.25	.80	.04
Anxious-Indecisive Attachment Style	319	2.78	.82	53	2.58	.73	1.69	.09	.03
Avoidant Attachment Style	319	2.10	.57	53	2.14	.61	-0.45	.65	.07
Emotion Regulation Difficulties	319	43.34	13.87	53	38.98	11.28	2.52	.01*	.34

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

### 3.2.2. Correlation Analysis among Study Variables

The following information relates to the relationship between rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and emotional regulation difficulties. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis were displayed in Table 4.

Results of the correlation analysis showed that rejection sensitivity correlated negatively with secure attachment style ( $r = -.33, p < .01$ ) on the contrary positively correlated with anxious-indecisive attachment style ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ) and emotion regulation difficulties ( $r = .21, p < .01$ ). However, there was no significant correlation between rejection sensitivity and avoidant attachment style ( $r = -.09, p = .09$ ). Therefore, results showed that participants with greater sensitivity to rejection displayed less attachment security and greater anxious-indecisive attachment as well as emotion regulation difficulties.

Moreover, secure attachment style was negatively correlated with anxious-indecisive attachment style ( $r = -.29, p < .01$ ), avoidant attachment style ( $r = -.17, p < .01$ ), and emotion regulation difficulties ( $r = -.37, p < .01$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that participants who were securely attached have less emotion regulation difficulties and as the levels of secure attachment increase, the rate of showing insecure attachment patterns decreases.

When the correlations between anxious-indecisive attachment style are investigated it was found that avoidant attachment style ( $r = .24, p < .01$ ), and emotion regulation difficulties ( $r = .51, p < .01$ ) positively correlated. Thus, it can be interpreted people who have an anxious-indecisive attachment style have emotion regulation difficulties in their level of compliance with this attachment pattern, and its relationship with another insecure attachment style, avoidant attachment, is more compatible than a secure attachment style.

Correlation analysis showed that avoidant attachment style positively correlated with anxious-indecisive attachment ( $r = .24, p < .01$ ). However, there was no significant relationship avoidant attachment and rejection sensitivity as well as emotion regulation difficulties. Just as with the anxious-indecisive attachment style, people with an

avoidant attachment style have a more compatible relationship with another insecure attachment style.

Lastly, the age of the participants was associated negatively with anxious-indecisive attachment ( $r = -.22, p < .01$ ) and were significantly negatively correlated with avoidant attachment style ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ) as well as emotion regulation difficulties ( $r = -.19, p < .01$ ). It can be concluded that the age of participants gets older, decreased rate of experiencing emotion regulation difficulties, and the adaptation to the anxious-indecisive attachment style decreases as well as avoidant attachment style pattern.

In conclusion, according to the correlation analysis, rejection sensitivity, attachment styles, and emotion regulation difficulties scores all showed significant associations. However, there was no association between avoidant attachment and rejection sensitivity as well as avoidant attachment and emotion regulation difficulties.

Based on the significant gender differences in emotion regulation difficulties and significant correlation of the age with anxious-indecisive attachment style, avoidant attachment style, and emotion regulation difficulties, both age and gender were examined in the main mediation models as covariances.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Rejection Sensitivity	373	8.67	3.33	-				
2. Secure Attachment Style	373	3.82	0.54	-.33**	-			
3. Anxious-Indecisive Attachment Style	373	2.75	0.81	.29**	-.29**	-		
4. Avoidant Attachment Style	373	2.11	0.58	-.09	-.17**	.24**	-	
5. Emotion Regulation Difficulties	373	42.74	13.60	.21**	-.37**	.51**	.09	-
6. Age	373	22.8	2.55	-.01	.07	-.22**	-.19**	-.19**

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

### 3.3. Main Analyses

#### 3.3.1. The Intervening Role of Emotion Regulation in the Relationship Between Secure Attachment Style and Rejection Sensitivity

To determine the possible intervening role of emotion regulation in the association between secure attachment and rejection sensitivity, a simple mediation analysis was performed (see Figure 2).

As stated in hypothesis 1a, the mediation analysis results showed that secure attachment style negatively predicted rejection sensitivity even with the emotion regulation difficulties in the model  $b = -1.78, t = -5.43, p < .001$ . The model explained 12% of the variance in the rejection sensitivity ( $R^2 = .12, F(4, 368) = 12.089, p < .001$ ). Additionally, when the emotion regulation difficulties variable was not in the model secure attachment style significantly predicted rejection sensitivity  $b = -2.02, t = -6.62, p < .001$  with a negative direction. According to the  $R^2$  value, the model explained 11% of the variance in rejection sensitivity,  $R^2 = .11, F(3, 369) = 14.630, p < .001$ . These results indicating that emerging adults with secure attachment style have less rejection sensitivity.

Furthermore, consistent with hypothesis 2a, secure attachment style negatively predicted emotion regulation difficulties  $b = -9.15, t = -7.63, p < .001$ , indicating that emerging adults with secure attachment style displayed less difficulty in regulating their emotions. The model explained 17% of the variance,  $R^2 = .17, F(3, 369) = 25.720, p < .001$ .

Additionally, in accordance with hypothesis 3, emotion regulation difficulties positively predicted rejection sensitivity  $b = .03, t = 2.02, p = .044$ , indicating that emerging adults who have emotion regulation difficulties displayed more rejection sensitivity. The model explained 12% of the variance in the rejection sensitivity ( $R^2 = .12, F(4, 368) = 12.089, p < .001$ ).

Furthermore, gender ( $b = -3.84, t = -2.16, p = .032$ ), and age ( $b = -.83, t = -3.28, p = .001$ ) were also included in the model as covariates and both of them negatively

predicted emotion regulation difficulties significantly. However, as for the demographics, gender and age did not significantly predict rejection sensitivity.

The indirect effect of emotion regulation difficulties in the relationship between secure attachment style and rejection sensitivity was significant,  $b = -.24$ , 95% BCa CI [-.502, -.016]. Furthermore, a test of indirect effect with a bootstrap based on 5000 replications indicated that the standardized indirect effect was  $b = -.04$ , 95% BCa CI [-.080, -.003]. Since bootstrapped confidence intervals did not contain zero, it can be concluded that emotion regulation played a significant mediating role in the relationship between attachment security and rejection sensitivity.

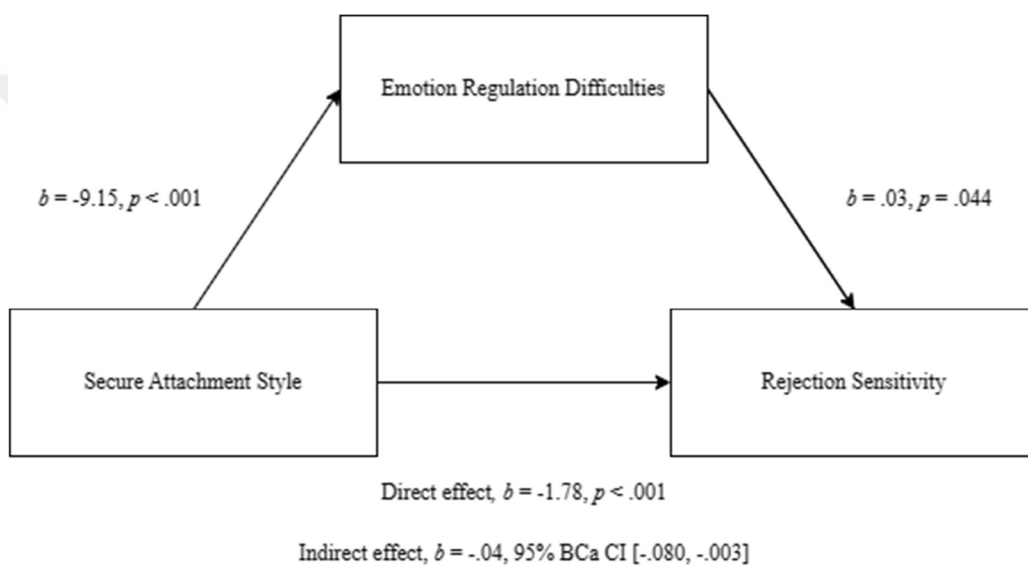


Figure 2. The intervening role of emotion regulation in the relationship between secure attachment style and rejection sensitivity.

*Note.* The model includes the unstandardized beta values. Gender and age were controlled in the model but were not shown for the sake of clarity.

### ***3.3.2. The Intervening Role of Emotion Regulation in The Relationship Between Anxious-Indecisive Attachment Style and Rejection Sensitivity***

Figure 3 shows the findings of the intervening role of emotion regulation in the association between anxious attachment style and rejection sensitivity.

Consistent with hypothesis 1b, the mediation analysis results showed when emotion regulation difficulties variable was present, the anxious-indecisive attachment style



positively predicted rejection sensitivity significantly  $b = 1.06, t = 4.40, p < .001$ . The model explained a 9% variance in the rejection sensitivity  $R^2 = .09, F(4, 368) = 9.44, p < .001$ . In addition, when emotion regulation difficulties did not present in the model, anxious-indecisive attachment style positively predicted rejection sensitivity  $b = 1.25, t = 5.91, p < .001$ . In the absence of the mediator in the model, 9% of the variance was explained in the rejection sensitivity,  $R^2 = .09, F(3, 369) = 11.701, p < .001$ . These results showed that emerging adults who have anxious-indecisive attachment style have more rejection sensitivity.

Furthermore, consistent with hypothesis 2b, anxious-indecisive attachment style positively predicted emotion regulation difficulties  $b = 8.26, t = 10.76, p < .001$ . Specifically, 27% of the variance was explained by anxious-indecisive attachment style,  $R^2 = .27, F(3, 369) = 45.79, p < .001$ . It can be said that emerging adults with anxious-indecisive attachment style have greater emotion regulation difficulties.

However, in contrast with hypothesis 3, emotion regulation difficulties did not significantly predict rejection sensitivity  $b = .02, t = 1.58, p = .114$ . The model explained a 9% variance in the rejection sensitivity  $R^2 = .09, F(4, 368) = 9.44, p < .001$ .

Additionally, age and gender were also added to the model as covariances, however, they did not significantly predict emotion regulation difficulties as well as rejection sensitivity.

Furthermore, the present study further examined whether the indirect paths were significant, according to the results, the indirect effect of anxious-indecisive attachment style on rejection sensitivity through emotion regulation difficulties was  $b = .19, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [-.038, .397]$ . Additionally, a test of indirect effect with a bootstrap based on 5000 replications revealed that anxious-indecisive attachment style was not significantly associated with rejection sensitivity through emotion regulation difficulties, hence bootstrapped confidence intervals contain zero ( $b = .05, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [-.009, .097]$ ).

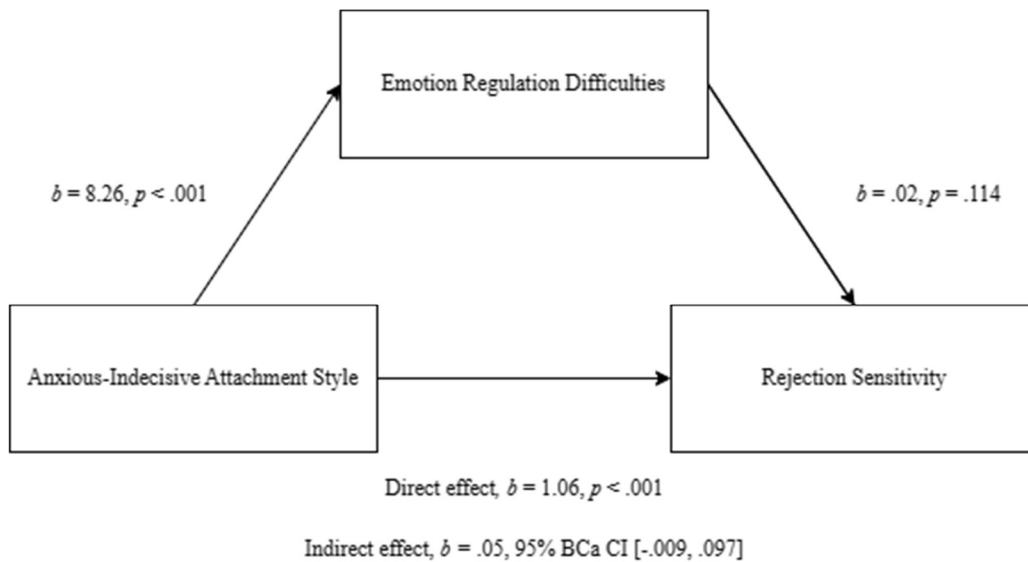


Figure 3. The intervening role of emotion regulation in the relationship between anxious-indecisive attachment style and rejection sensitivity.

*Note.* The model includes the unstandardized beta values. Gender and age were controlled in the model but were not shown for the sake of clarity.

### 3.3.3. *The Intervening Role of Emotion Regulation in The Relationship Between Avoidant Attachment Style and Rejection Sensitivity*

Figure 4 demonstrates the findings related to the intervening role of emotion regulation in the association between avoidant attachment style and rejection sensitivity.

Inconsistent with the hypothesis 1c, avoidant attachment style significantly predicted rejection sensitivity in a negative direction with the presence of emotion regulation difficulties in the model  $b = -.62, t = -2.08, p = .038$ . In addition, the level of avoidant attachment style accounted for 6% of the variation in rejection sensitivity,  $R^2 = .06, F(4, 368) = 5.51, p < .001$ . Furthermore, avoidant attachment style did not significantly predict rejection sensitivity  $b = -.55, t = -1.79, p = .075$  while emotion regulation difficulties did not include the model. However, based on the direct results of the analysis it can be interpreted as emerging adults with avoidant attachment style have less rejection sensitivity.

Unexpectedly, inconsistent with the hypothesis 2c, the mediation analysis results indicated that avoidant attachment style did not significantly predict emotion

regulation difficulties  $b = 1.38, t = 1.13, p = .260$ . The model explained 5% of the variance in emotion regulation difficulties  $R^2 = .05, F(3, 369) = 5.92, p = .001$ .

Furthermore, in line with hypothesis 3 emotion regulation difficulties significantly predicted rejection sensitivity  $b = .05, t = 4.31, p < .001$  with positive direction. Indicates that emerging adults with emotion regulation difficulties have displayed more rejection sensitivity.

Additionally, age and gender were also added to the model as covariates, the age of the participants significantly predicted emotion regulation difficulties  $b = -.90, t = -3.27, p = .001$  with a negative direction, however age did not significantly predict rejection sensitivity. In addition, gender did not significantly predict emotion regulation difficulties and rejection sensitivity.

Lastly, according to the investigation of whether indirect paths were significant, the indirect effect of avoidant attachment on rejection sensitivity through emotion regulation difficulties was not significant  $b = .08, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [-.063, .222]$ . That is, avoidant attachment style was not significantly associated with rejection sensitivity through emotion regulation difficulties, as shown by a test of indirect effect using a bootstrap based on 5000 replications; hence, bootstrapped confidence intervals contain zero ( $b = .01, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [-.011, .038]$ ).

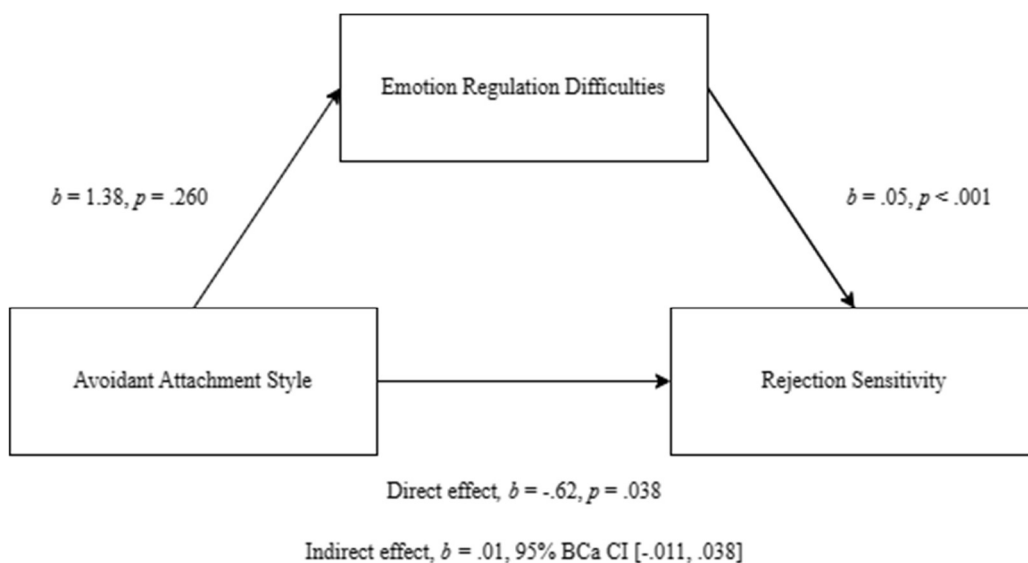


Figure 4. The intervening role of emotion regulation in the relationship between avoidant attachment style and rejection sensitivity.

*Note.* The model includes the unstandardized beta values. Gender and age were controlled in the model but were not shown for the sake of clarity.



## CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study was to examine how emotion regulation may act as an intervening role in the connection between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity. By gathering a sample from a non-Western cultural context, I deemed it important to test the assumptions of attachment theory with a Turkish sample and generalize those assumptions with such a sample. The results showed that emotion regulation significantly mediated the relationship between secure attachment style and rejection sensitivity. Nevertheless, it did not serve as a significant mediating factor in the relationship between anxious-indecisive attachment style and rejection sensitivity and between avoidant attachment style and rejection sensitivity.

In the following section, each of the hypotheses and related findings will be discussed, and then the limitations of the current study and directions for future research will be stated.

### *4.1. The Explication of Mediation Analysis*

#### *4.1.1. The Intervening Role of Emotion Regulation in the Relationship Between Secure Attachment Style and Rejection Sensitivity*

The purpose of this study was to determine whether emotional regulation play a significant intervening role in the relationship between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity. The outcomes of the mediation analysis will be covered in this section of the study. The findings of this study supported the hypothesis 4a, demonstrating a significant mediating role of emotion regulation in the relationship between secure attachment style and rejection sensitivity. That is, securely attached emerging adults shows less emotion regulation difficulties and in turn, more sensitivity to rejection.

It is well-known from the previous research that people who are exposed to inconsistent and rejecting behaviors from their early caretakers as children tend to become more sensitive to rejection. As a result, they think that they will be rejected. This idea becomes deeper as one age, making one anticipate rejection across entire

close relationships (Downey and Feldman, 1996). As was beforehand said, attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and emotion regulation are all related (Velotti, Garofalo and Bizzi, 2015). People with high rejection sensitivity often exhibit strong negative emotional reactions when they sense any threat in a social setting. To control their emotions, people with high rejection sensitivity frequently suppress their unpleasant feelings (Gardner, Zimmer-Gembeck and Modecki, 2020). To our knowledge, there were no studies incorporating all three of these features at the same time in the emerging adulthood period. Therefore, in the following section, some highly related previous research findings with similar variables will be described.

Downey and Feldman (1996) indicated rejection sensitivity is the propensity to "anxiously expect, readily perceive, and overreact" to rejection signs. There are parallels in traditional interpersonal theories of personality (e.g., Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; Erikson, 1950; Horney, 1937; Sullivan, 1953) for the claim that rejection sensitivity, beginning in childhood rejection, explains interpersonal issues. Hence, usually researches on rejection sensitivity and attachment has focused on insecure attachment and found a significant positive relationship between them (e.g., Bowlby, 1988; Erikson, 1959; Erözkan, 2009; Erözkan and Kömür, 2006; Khoshkam et al., 2012). However, Natarajan, Somasundaram and Sundaram (2011) also found that more securely attached participants show less rejection sensitivity. Additionally, Feldman and Downey (1994) also found that securely bounded individuals were much less vulnerable to rejection than their avoidant or ambivalent counterparts. Based on this literature, it is hard not to think that secure attachment style will negatively predict rejection sensitivity, therefore consistent with hypothesis 1a of the present research results showed that secure attachment style negatively predicted rejection sensitivity. It can be assumed that individuals who are securely attached are more resistant to rejection sensitivity than who have insecure attachment patterns.

In line with the hypothesis 2a of the present study, it is stated also by Scharf et al., (2014) adolescents with a secure attachment style, with the impression of security which helps them regulate their emotions better. They may also confide in and seek support from their loved ones when they are in need. Consequently, more goal-oriented executive functions might be made possible. Hence, early interactions are expected to have an impact on the later ability to regulate emotions onward early transition of

emotion is assumed to develop initially from a caregiver and newborn's dyadic control of emotion (Schoore, 2003; Goodall, Trejnowska and Darling, 2012). Additionally, on the condition that the infant is able to engage positively with the caregiver from an early age, he or she will be able to regulate their emotions while dealing with challenging circumstances (Çalışır, 2009). To be able to stay close to the attachment figure, the infant has to figure out how to regulate their emotions. (Thompson, 1994). Similarly, the more effectively the attachment figure regulates the infant's emotions that are present when the infant is with the caretaker, the better they can handle stress and distance (Türköz, 2007). Moreover, based on the research conducted by Diamond, Hicks and Otter-Henderson (2006) as well as Powers et al. (2006), it has been proven that possessing a secure attachment has shown a positively related with various measures of emotional regulation. These measures encompass reduced stress response, diminished physiological reaction to stimuli that challenge one's self-esteem, and the ability to regulate one's behavior effectively. The present study's result also parallels these findings that emerging adults who have a secure attachment style are less presumably to have difficulty regulating their emotions.

As stated in hypothesis 3, it was found that emotion regulation difficulties positively predict rejection sensitivity. In accordance accompanied by hypothesis 3 and the findings of this study, individuals with rejection sensitivity encounter difficulties regulating their emotions (Kross et al., 2007; Velotti, Garofalo and Bizzi, 2015; Sarısoy, 2017). Individuals who have strong regulation of emotions can maintain their composure in social situations. In contrast, individuals with high levels of rejection sensitivity who are unable to control their emotions may find it challenging to fit into social situations (Varlı, 2022). According to research on the association among rejection sensitivity and emotion regulation, individuals who have trouble controlling their emotions are said to have emotion regulation difficulties or emotion dysregulation (Velotti, Garofalo and Bizzi, 2015; Gardner, Zimmer-Gembeck and Modecki, 2020). Additionally, Gardner, Zimmer-Gembeck and Modecki (2020) dedicated that, young adults who are more sensitive to rejection experience more emotion regulation difficulties and repression. They assessed young individuals' levels of anxiety, sadness, sensitivity to rejection, and emotional regulation difficulties in their study. Moreover, those who reported greater emotion regulation difficulties also indicated greater levels of rejection sensitivity. Furthermore, Velotti and colleagues

(2014) examined the relationship among emotional regulation difficulties and rejection sensitivity. Besides, Velotti et al. (2014) were interested in determining whether aggression and rejection sensitivity were related. They chose male criminals who had received violent punishment for this reason. The study's findings showed that the impulse control subscale of emotion regulation difficulties specifically increased as rejection sensitivity rose. These information and present study's findings lead to the conclusion that emotional regulation difficulties and rejection sensitivity are related.

Additionally, gender and age were also included in the model in the mediation analysis of the present study as covariates and both of them negatively predicted emotion regulation difficulties significantly. The findings of the analysis align with the existing literature, firstly, when gender differences in emotion regulation difficulties are examined., in line with the results of the present study other studies of regulating emotions across gender also have shown that women typically report having greater difficulties with emotions and emotion regulation than males (Anderson et al., 2016). Women have reported utilizing emotion regulation techniques more frequently than males do (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema and Aldao, 2011), a difference that has been seen across a variety of emotion regulation techniques (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012). Evidence as a whole indicates that men and women describe various processes and strategies for regulating their emotions differently. It can be also interpreted as female participants had more difficulties regulating their emotions than male participants. Nevertheless, these variances could be accounted for by studies indicating that females display a greater inclination to express their emotions compared to males (Brody, 1993), and exhibit a stronger interpersonal orientation in comparison to men (Feingold, 1994, Hyde, Mezulis and Abramson, 2008). To sum up, women's heightened propensity to report and characterize more emotional events than males do is likely to have an impact on self-report evaluations of emotional constructs, which frequently result in gender-based performance differences (e.g., Barrett et al., 2000).

Secondly, when the age and emotion regulation difficulties are examined., other studies also shown similar results with the present study. According to Orgeta (2009), while acceptance and knowledge of emotional responses did not change between young and older adults, younger adults scored higher than older adults overall, indicating difficulty regulating their emotions. Older persons reported having more



control over goal-directed behavior and controlling impulsive emotional reactions. There was a positive association between age and enhanced utilization of emotion regulation strategies as well as greater emotional clarity. Furthermore, during middle adulthood, particularly around the age of 50, individuals tend to exhibit traits of emotional stability and heightened self-control in their personality, displaying lower levels of neuroticism and higher levels of conscientiousness (Soto et al., 2011). As a result, individual emotion regulation becomes increasingly focused on long-term goals, incorporating executive functions, cognitive complexity, and emotional comprehension. This progressive development in emotion regulation, from early childhood to adolescence, involves a more sophisticated ability to monitor and assess one's emotional responses (Thompson, 2011). Thus, throughout adolescence and the transition to adulthood, emotion regulation could get more adaptive due to improvements in the consistency of identifying and comprehending one's own and other people's feelings, the potential selectivity of one's own perceptions and assessments, and an awareness of one's own emotion-related behaviors (Zimmermann, 1999). These improvements also were reported by Saarni et al., (2006). In the stage of emerging adulthood, there are significant shifts in the pursuit of goals, particularly an emphasis on long-term objectives and a heightened level of selectivity, which play a crucial role in emotion regulation (Arnett, 2001). These adaptive changes become even more pronounced during the latter half of one's life, as highlighted by Carstensen, Fung and Charles (2003). Emerging adults compared to middle adolescents have higher competence in regulating their own and other people's emotions, which is ultimately linked to the accomplishment of developmental tasks involving the development of stable relationships (Roisman et al., 2004). There is growing evidence that as people age, emotion regulation becomes more focused and efficient (Carstensen, Fung and Charles, 2003). Based on the evidence, it can be inferred that individuals' difficulties in regulating emotions diminish as they progress in age.

However, as for the covariances in the model, gender and age did not significantly predict rejection sensitivity. Rejection sensitivity has been discovered to be generally consistent over short time periods in the teenage and early adulthood periods (Downey and Feldman, 1996; Downey et al., 1998; London et al., 2007). However, according to results of the Norona and colleagues (2018), over the course of the transition into adulthood, there was a general trend of decline in rejection sensitivity. In their research

they aimed to explore the connections between initial levels of rejection sensitivity and changes in rejection sensitivity during the ages of 16 to 23. Specifically, the study examined how these factors relate to individuals' involvement in relationships, the quality of their relationships, and their ability to cope with relationship-related stress. By investigating these aspects, the study sought to gain insights into the impact of rejection sensitivity on individuals' romantic experiences and their ability to navigate and cope with relationship challenges (Norona et al., 2018). In conclusion, based on the findings of this study, there was no significant association observed between age and rejection sensitivity. These results align with the existing body of research, which presents divergent findings regarding the stability of rejection sensitivity over time. While some studies suggest that rejection sensitivity remains relatively stable over shorter time periods, others have found evidence of changes or declines in rejection sensitivity during certain developmental stages. Therefore, the current study adds to the complexity of this topic by highlighting the lack of association between age and rejection sensitivity. Further research is warranted to elucidate the factors contributing to the variability in rejection sensitivity over time and its implications for individuals' emotional experiences and interpersonal relationships. Additionally, in line with the present study results some research also (e.g., Ibrahim et al., 2015) reported no discernible gender differences in rejection sensitivity.

While not directly pertaining to the specific subject of our study, these findings align with the notion that emotional regulation plays an intervening role in the connection among secure attachment and rejection sensitivity. The outcomes of the straightforward mediation analysis further support existing literature on this matter.

#### ***4.1.2. The Intervening Role of Emotion Regulation in the Relationship Between Anxious- Indecisive Attachment Style and Rejection Sensitivity***

Considering the intervening role of emotion regulation in relation to attachment styles and rejection sensitivity, contrary to hypothesis 4b, it was found that it did not significantly mediate the relationship among anxious-indecisive attachment style and rejection sensitivity. This finding suggests that while emotion regulation did not significantly mediate the relationship between anxious-indecisive attachment style and rejection sensitivity, there may be other contributing factors or mechanisms such as

self-esteem (Khoshkam et al., 2012) or interpersonal vulnerability (Pietrzak, Downey and Ayduk, 2005) at play. It is crucial to consider alternative mediating variables or moderating factors that may better capture the dynamics of this relationship. Furthermore, the specific characteristics of the sample and the measurement instruments used should be taken into account, as they could have influenced the results. Replication studies involving diverse samples are warranted to validate and generalize these findings. Additionally, it is important to consider that the items on the relevant scales may not have been well understood by participants, or they may withhold their true opinions and feelings due to concerns about how others perceive them could have affected the results. For instance, the item “The people in front of me are not as valuable as me” in the three-dimensional attachment scale. Furthermore, the possibility of a non-representative population or the influence of contextual factors and individual differences as well as the time of the data was collected should be acknowledged as potential factors that might have influenced the observed results.

However, consistent with hypothesis 1b of the present research results showed that the anxious-indecisive attachment style positively predicted rejection sensitivity significantly. The existing literature aligns with the findings of the current study. Being accepted by the society in which one lives and avoiding rejection is essential human desires, as was already mentioned. Although everyone exhibits this inclination, different people have different responses to the potential for rejection. While some people are not excessively concerned with the possibility of rejection, others might be. This propensity entails anxiously anticipating rejection and overreacting to that circumstance, as described in the description of rejection sensitivity. (Downey and Feldman, 1996). Numerous important theorists, like Bowlby (1988), Erikson (1959), and Horney (1937), endorse the idea that parental insecurities (e.g., anxious- indecisive attachment) are the primary cause of rejection sensitivity. In addition, a body of previous studies has consistently demonstrated an affirmative relationship between insecure attachment and rejection sensitivity across a range of Asian cultural contexts, encompassing Turkish societies (Erözkan, 2009; Erözkan and Kömür, 2006), Iranian cultures (Khoshkam et al., 2012), and Indian cultures (Natarajan, Somasundaram and Sundaram, 2011). Specifically, in their study, Khoshkam et al. (2012) sought to determine whether there is a relationship between the two anxious attachment types—fearful and preoccupied attachment and rejection sensitivity—and whether this

relationship is significant. According to of the study's findings, anxious preoccupied, anxious attachment styles, and rejection sensitivity are significantly associated. Additionally, they concluded that children who experience parental rejection—whether explicit or implicit—may come to expect anxiously about rejection in new situations as well as to misinterpreting social cues that lack clarity as indications of rejection. As a result, they may find it difficult to form strong bonds with others. Therefore, in light of the result of the present study lends credence to the idea that anxious-indecisive attachment may contribute to rejection sensitivity.

Coherent with the hypothesis 2b, findings of the current study demonstrated that anxious-indecisive attachment style positively predicted emotion regulation difficulties. Due to the internal working models, they have formed as a result of their initial attachment interactions, individuals with anxious-indecisive attachment style struggle with emotional regulation greater than other attachment styles do in adulthood (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Hence, early interactions are expected to have an impact on the later ability to regulate emotions since initial modulation of emotion is believed to originate initially from collaborative management of emotion between a caregiver and newborn (Schorre, 2003). When the child views the caregiver as inconsistent and unpredictable, an anxious-indecisive attachment style could emerge to take hold. Negative emotions are heightened and reinforced by the infant in order to get the attention and interaction they crave from their caregivers (Cassidy and Berlin, 1994; Mikulincer, Shaver and Pereg, 2003). Therefore, it is believed that maintaining unpleasant feelings is consistent with attachment goals as opposed to deactivation. Hyperactivity which includes excessive ruminating and sensitivity to perceived dangers to oneself and one's connections (Cassidy, 1994; Goodall, Trejnowska and Darling, 2012), and which involves the elevation of emotions, is a hallmark of the anxious-indecisive attachment style (Mikulincer, Shaver and Pereg, 2003). Additionally, the anxious-indecisive attachment style is linked to impulsive behavior, an exaggerated sensitivity to distress and threats, an impression of helplessness and emotion regulation difficulties, and a propensity to rely excessively on others (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2005; Fuendeling, 1998) Based on these literature and results of this investigation it can be concluded that individuals with anxious-indecisive attachment style have more emotion regulation difficulties.

On the other hand, on the contrast with hypothesis 3, it was found that emotion regulation difficulties did not positively predict rejection sensitivity. This result contradicts the existing literature. As explained in the previous section, many studies have found a link between rejection sensitivity and difficulties in emotion regulation. (e.g., Kross et al., 2007; Velotti, Garofalo and Bizzi, 2015; Velotti et al., 2014).

Additionally, age and gender were also added to the model as covariances, however, they did not significantly predict emotion regulation difficulties as well as rejection sensitivity. As mentioned earlier, there is compelling evidence indicating that as individuals age, there is an association with an enhanced capacity for regulating emotions (Gross et al., 1997; Lawton et al., 1992; McConatha, Leone and Armstrong, 1997). To illustrate, older adults tend to exhibit an improved ability to effectively handle emotionally challenging situations (Carstensen, Hanson and Freund, 1995) and demonstrate a decrease in dwelling on adverse emotional events (McConatha, Leone and Armstrong, 1997). Gross and colleagues (1997) propose that accumulated life experiences may contribute to this improved emotion regulation, leading to a reduced frequency of experiencing negative emotions among older adults. Furthermore, some researchers also found gender disparities in terms of emotion regulation difficulties (Anderson et al., 2016; Nolen-Hoeksema and Aldao, 2011; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012). Additionally, despite numerous studies examining the connections between rejection sensitivity and individual and relationship characteristics, most of these studies employ cross-sectional designs (e.g., Besikci, Agnew and Yildirim, 2016; Galliher and Bentley, 2010; Göncü and Sümer, 2011; Romero-Canyas and Downey, 2013). There is a scarcity of research that explores the longitudinal relationships of rejection sensitivity. To our current understanding, only a single study (Hafen et al., 2014) has examined the influence of rejection sensitivity on romantic relationships across a span of time. This study assessed rejection sensitivity at the age of 16 and investigated its connection with relationship characteristics at the age of 22. They found that individuals who reported greater levels of rejection sensitivity during their adolescence, specifically at age 16, were more likely to be without a romantic partner by the time they reached age 22. Furthermore, those individuals who had high rejection sensitivity at age 16 but were in relationships at age 22 reported heightened anxiety and avoidance when interacting with their partners. They also displayed behaviors that impeded their partners' autonomy and interdependence, and exhibited submissive

tendencies within their romantic relationships (Hafen et al., 2014). This lasting influence of rejection sensitivity can be understood through the lens of attachment theory, which suggests that relational patterns and beliefs are carried forward into future relationships (Sroufe and Fleeson, 1986). This interpretation highlights how attachment-related schemas continue to shape and affect individuals' experiences in their subsequent relationships. Besides some researchers found gender differences considering rejection sensitivity (Richter and Schoebi, 2021) some of them did not find any gender disparities (e.g., İbrahim et al., 2015).

In conclusion, there is a need for further research to enhance our comprehension of the intricate dynamics at play. Specifically, it is crucial to investigate these variables by incorporating the anxious-indecisive attachment variable. This approach will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between rejection sensitivity, emotion regulation difficulties, age, gender, and their impact on individuals' experiences and relationships. By delving deeper into these complex dynamics, we can gain valuable insights that will advance our knowledge and inform strategies for supporting individuals in regulating their emotions and navigating their interpersonal connections.

#### ***4.1.3. The Intervening Role of Emotion Regulation in the Relationship Between Avoidant Attachment Style and Rejection Sensitivity***

Considering the intervening role of emotion regulation in relationship attachment styles and rejection sensitivity, in contrast with the hypothesis 4c, it emerged that it did not significantly mediate the relationship between avoidant attachment style and rejection sensitivity. Result of the main analysis highlight the complexity of the relationship between attachment styles, emotion regulation, and rejection sensitivity. Future research should investigate alternative mediating or moderating variables that could provide insights into the mechanisms driving the association between attachment styles, emotion regulation, and rejection sensitivity such as negative self-beliefs (Boldero et al., 2009) or impact of family violence (Feldman and Downey, 1994).

Additionally, inconsistent with the hypothesis 1c, avoidant attachment style negatively

predicted rejection sensitivity. The results of the present study contradict the existing literature. Downey et al. (1998) discovered that individuals exhibiting an avoidant attachment style were more prone to displaying elevated levels of rejection sensitivity. Furthermore, Romero-Canyas and colleagues (2010) further provided evidence of a positive association between rejection sensitivity and the avoidant attachment style. According to the study, people who had higher degrees of avoidant attachment showed more sensitivity to signs of rejection. Additionally, researchers discovered that people who reported having an avoidant attachment style had higher levels of rejection sensitivity, indicating that these people were able to perceive rejection even under uncertain conditions (Wei et al., 2005). Therefore, the present study hypothesized that an avoidant attachment style will positively predict rejection sensitivity, however, the results of the analysis suggest that individuals with an avoidant attachment style exhibit lower levels of sensitivity to rejection. This implies that individuals with avoidant attachment tendencies may possess a higher degree of emotional resilience or a reduced need for external validation in the face of potential rejection. Overall, this study highlights the importance of challenging existing assumptions and theories within attachment research. The unexpected negative relationship between avoidant attachment style and rejection sensitivity suggests that additional factors and individual differences may play a role in shaping emotional responses to rejection. Further investigation is necessary to refine our understanding of these complex dynamics and their implications for psychological well-being.

Furthermore, inconsistent with the hypothesis 2c, the current study's findings showed that avoidant attachment style did not positively predict emotion regulation difficulties. This results also contradictory with the literature. It is known that attachment avoidance may stem from the perception of a caregiver's unavailability, leading individuals to employ deactivating strategies as a means of safeguarding themselves against undesirable emotions such as pain or yearning for caregivers who are distant and rejecting. These deactivating strategies encompass the regulation of emotions to lower their intensity (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005) and the diversion of attention away from potential threats, thereby diminishing the discomfort associated with perceived rejection from others (Cassidy, 2000; Fuendeling, 1998). Individuals with an avoidant attachment style often encounter distress within close relationships, resulting in challenges pertaining to self-disclosure and the expression of affectionate

emotions towards others (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2010). There is a need for future studies specifically on avoidant attachment and emotion regulation difficulties, as studies on this subject generally address the concept of insecure attachment as a whole.

In line with the hypothesis 3 of the present study revealed that emotion regulation difficulties positively predicted rejection sensitivity. Additionally, in a study conducted by Peters, Smart and Baer (2015), the objective was to investigate the connection between rejection sensitivity and borderline personality disorder (BPD). The findings unveiled that a significant portion of the association between BPD and rejection sensitivity can be attributed to difficulties in emotional regulation (Sarısoy, 2017). In a similar vein, Velotti, Garofalo and Bizzi (2015) assessed the levels of rejection sensitivity in both a community sample and a group of psychiatric patients, while also examining the mediating role of emotion dysregulation in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and mindfulness. The findings of their study indicated that the patient group, compared to the population sample, exhibited lower levels of mindfulness and higher levels of emotion regulation difficulties and rejection sensitivity. Furthermore, they identified that diminished levels of emotion regulation difficulties and mindfulness significantly contributed to rejection sensitivity, both in the general sample and the patient group (Sarısoy, 2017). The combined evidence strongly supports the idea that heightened levels of rejection sensitivity are positively linked to in emotion regulation difficulties.

Additionally, gender and age were also included in the model in the mediation analysis of the present study as covariates; the age of the participants negatively predicted emotion regulation difficulties, this result also consistent with the literature. In a three-year study by Silvers et al. (2012), The researchers examined the process of emotional regulation development in adolescents. The results showed that older adolescents had improved their capability to regulate their emotions more than their younger counterparts. In conclusion, these findings collectively support the conclusion that age plays a role in the development of better emotion regulation skills and a reduction in difficulties associated with regulating emotions. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that individual variations and contextual elements can also impact the association between age and emotion regulation difficulties. Consequently, additional research is required to comprehensively understand these dynamics.



However, age did not significantly predict rejection sensitivity. As previously mentioned, there are lack of longitudinal studies (e.g., Hafen et al., 2014). Conceptually, one might question whether relational schemas undergo changes from early developmental stages to early adulthood and whether individuals who have a heightened sensitivity to rejection also improve their perspectives and interactions with age. In support of this notion, Hafen and colleagues (2014) revealed that a decline in the sensitivity to rejection throughout the transition from adolescence to early adulthood, indicating that young individuals may acquire coping mechanisms or develop alternative perspectives that alter their perception of interactivities. These observed changes are consistent with studies on the progression of personality traits over the course of a person's life, indicating that individual characteristics undergo transformations during adulthood. (Donnellan, Hill and Roberts, 2015; Specht et al., 2014). Throughout the period of transitioning into adulthood, individuals tend to exhibit increased social dominance, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. They demonstrate an increased openness to exploring new experiences and exhibit decreased defensiveness (Roberts, Walton and Viechtbauer, 2006). As proposed by Arnett (2015), when young individuals approach the verge of adulthood and contemplate their roles as romantic partners and professionals pursuing meaningful careers, their personalities and adaptive capabilities undergo expansion to accommodate the demands of new responsibilities. Additionally, as mentioned above the present study's findings indicated that age negatively predicted emotion regulation difficulties, suggesting that as individuals grow older, they may develop enhanced abilities to regulate their emotions and gain insight into their own needs and desires. These developmental changes may contribute to alterations in relational schemas, potentially including a reduction in rejection sensitivity (Davila and Lashman, 2016). In addition, gender did not significantly predict emotion regulation difficulties and rejection sensitivity. A discrepancy in the existing literature regarding this topic has been noted, highlighting the need for further investigation through future studies.

As was previously mentioned, there are present relationships among the variable pairs even when there isn't evidence for a direct relationship among all the variables in question. Despite not being directly related to our study's topic, these results agree with the idea that emotion regulation mediates the association of anxious-indecisive attachment style and rejection sensitivity and as well as avoidant attachment style and

rejection sensitivity. It is therefore unexpected that our result was not significant. Stated differently, our results are in contradiction with the literature. However, the majority of the sample used in the research can be considered securely attached, considering that more than half of the population falls into this category in studies conducted on this subject (e.g., Compos et al., 1983; Keller, 2018). Consequently, the lack of significant results regarding anxious-indecisive and avoidant attachment styles, which are associated with insecure attachment patterns, can be attributed to the predominance of secure attachment within the sample. These results highlight the importance of considering the attachment style distribution within a population when examining the impact of attachment styles on various outcomes. Further research with a more diverse sample might shed additional light on the relationship between insecure attachment styles (e.g., anxious-indecisive and avoidant patterns) and outcomes.

Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, no specific research has been conducted on the association between attachment styles, emotion regulation, and rejection sensitivity throughout the emerging adulthood phase. The non-significant results may be attributed to the sort of sample used in our study, which exclusively consisted of emerging adults. In order to more precisely evaluate the impact of age, researchers may compare findings across various age groups in their future work.

#### ***4.2. Strengths and Clinical Implications***

The present study, according to our knowledge, is the first ever to investigate intervening role of emotion regulation between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity specifically in emerging adulthood period. Furthermore, the examination of emerging adulthood within the Turkish sample is a valuable contribution to the existing literature in Turkey, as this aspect has not been extensively explored before.

According to current results, it can be said that emerging adults who are attached securely will be less develop rejection sensitivity as well as have less difficulty in emotion regulation. Since it has been discovered that emotion regulation plays a mediating role in the relationship between these variables, it can be said that emotion regulation is very important in people's lives, especially in interpersonal relationships. Given that enhancing an individual's capacity to regulate their emotions could be the

ultimate objective of therapy, the findings of the current study have potential applications within a therapeutic context as well by recognizing the influence of attachment patterns on emotion regulation, clinical psychologists can incorporate attachment-based interventions into their therapeutic approaches. This may involve fostering secure attachments through therapeutic relationships, promoting autonomy, trust, and support within the therapeutic context, and equipping individuals with effective emotion regulation strategies.

Moreover, the results of this study emphasize the need for early detection and intervention during the emerging adulthood period. By targeting individuals in this developmental stage, professionals can address attachment-related issues, enhance emotion regulation skills, and mitigate the potential long-term consequences of rejection sensitivity. Overall, the clinical implications of the present study suggest that interventions focused on promoting secure attachments and strengthening emotion regulation abilities can significantly contribute to the well-being and resilience of individuals in emerging adulthood. By addressing these factors, clinicians have the potential to foster healthy emotional development, prevent the negative effects of rejection sensitivity, and ultimately support individuals in their successful transition to adulthood. Additionally, the current study supplied light on rejection sensitivity. Since rejection sensitivity studied with attachment mostly there are limited information about what other mechanisms exist between these two.

The present study had additional parenting-related consequences. Since, the current results indicated that emerging adults with more secure attachment and, in turn, are less sensitive to rejection and may have less difficulties in emotion regulation. Possible explanation of these results that children whose families respond to their needs more regularly and securely are more advantageous in emotion regulation, and they also have less expectation against rejection because the internal models they develop are also positive. Caretakers may strive to be more attentive, caring, and may try to show their positive feelings to their children more frequently in order to minimize rejection sensitivity to some extent because it was discovered to be associated to many psychological issues. Another crucial aspect to consider is the influence of caregivers on children's capacity to regulate their emotions. Care takers should not undervalue their impact on their child's emotional world because the ability to regulate emotions

is linked to psychological wellness (Sarısoy, 2017).

In conclusion, the current study contributes both practically and scientifically to the body of literature. It also offers advantages to therapists and academics who are looking into the dynamics of family and social processes in a non-Western population.

#### ***4.3. Limitations and Future Suggestions***

In addition to its contributions to the existing literature and clinical practice, this study possesses certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the findings cannot be generalized due to the unequal number of men and women. Therefore, larger representative samples with equal number of male and female participants should be used in future research to enable gender comparisons. Second, given that the current study is cross-sectional, no conclusions about causes and effects can be drawn. As a result, a longitudinal approach may be used in future investigations.

Next, future research may also examine parents' reports on attachment styles in addition to those from emerging adults. Comparing parents' reports with those of emerging adults can provide an opportunity for cross-validation. When multiple perspectives are taken into account, it enhances the reliability and validity of the findings. Inconsistencies or agreements between parents' reports and self-reports can offer valuable insights into the accuracy of individuals' self-perception and shed light on potential biases or discrepancies.

Given that this study did not aim to capture the distribution of the participants in three attachment categories, we speculate that our sample may highly represent securely attached individuals, and nonsignificant results related to insecure attachment styles may be driven by this inequality in the number of participants in each category. Therefore, future research may consider taking a closer look at this topic, focusing on the categories.

Furthermore, given that the current study is correlational in nature, the stated relations may be reciprocal. Therefore, future research may also test alternative models by

considering emotion regulation difficulties as an outcome or rejection sensitivity as a mediator. Moreover, the moderating role of these variable may also be considered. These examinations would enhance the understanding of the complex dynamics among attachment styles, emotion regulation, and rejection sensitivity.

Lastly, in the present study, the disorganized attachment type was excluded, the fourth category of infant attachment proposed by Main and Solomon (1990). According to Paetzold, Rholes and Kohn, (2015), this form of attachment is a distinct category that differentiates it from the other three attachment types, which are secure, anxious, and avoidant. In this study, the secure, anxious-indecisive and avoidance components of attachment were examined. Future research may include the disorganized attachment style as well to better understand the connection between all four attachment types and rejection sensitivity by evaluating the attachment construct with a different scale.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to investigate how emotion regulation plays an intervening role in the association of attachment styles and rejection sensitivity in the emerging adult period. Throughout the lifespan of an individual, the secure or insecure attachment between the parent and the child represents a significant developmental milestone. Bowlby (1969) asserted that children develop insecure attachments to their primary caregivers and other people they may interact with in the future when they could not receive adequate love, attention, and care from their caregivers during their childhood period. Research consistently shows that people who are insecurely attached (i.e., avoidant and anxious-indecisive attachment styles) frequently struggle with trust, have negative perceptions of others, and have a limited ability for empathy. As a result of their insecure relationships with their caretakers as children, these individuals frequently struggle with emotion regulation (Hiebler and Unterrainer, 2019; Burgkart et al., 2021) in their close relationships as well as sensitivity towards rejection compared to individuals with secure attachment (Downey et al., 1994). Hence, scientifically, the present study extends prior research by investigating the association of attachment styles and rejection sensitivity through the lens of emotion regulation in the emerging adulthood period.

Moreover, our emphasis on a sample from a non-Western cultural context will be another contribution to the literature because early parent-child interactions can differ depending on cultural background. Therefore, examining an underrepresented Turkish sample will allow us to make unique contribution to the literature as well as generalizations.

Furthermore, considering the scarcity of research investigating the regulation of emotions in emerging adults and its connection to attachment styles and rejection sensitivity, it is of high importance to include this age group in our analysis in order to deepen our comprehension of the associations between the variables under study and the interplay between them.

Last but not least, practically, the findings of the current study will present significant

practical and scientific contributions for both counselors and academicians who study and examine the dynamics of family and social relations of emerging adults. Specifically, the findings of this study will inform clinical psychologists who work with individuals dealing with rejection sensitivity by showing the importance of attachment security and emotion regulation on rejection sensitivity.

Overall, the study's findings offer a more thorough knowledge of the connection between attachment styles and sensitivity to rejection during the age of emerging adulthood. More specifically, by measuring rejection sensitivity's cognitive-emotional model using the notions of emotion regulation difficulties, this study helped us comprehend rejection sensitivity in more detail.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Ethics Committee Approval

**SAYI** : B.30.2.İEÜ.0.05.05-020-247

05.01.2023

**KONU** : Etik Kurul Kararı hk.

**Sayın Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Aylin Koçak ve Beyza Zebil,**

**“The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation in relation between Attachment Styles and Rejection Sensitivity in Emerging Adulthood Period”** başlıklı projenizin etik uygunluğu konusundaki başvurunuz sonuçlanmıştır.

Etik Kurulumuz 05.01.2023 tarihinde sizin başvurunuzun da içinde bulunduğu bir gündemle toplanmış ve Etik Kurul üyeleri projeleri incelemiştir.

Sonuçta 05.01.2023 tarihinde **“The Mediating Role of Emotion Regulation in relation between Attachment Styles and Rejection Sensitivity in Emerging Adulthood Period”** konulu projenizin etik açıdan uygun olduğuna oy birliğiyle karar verilmiştir.

Gereği için bilgilerinize sunarım.

Saygılarımla,

**Prof. Dr. Murat Bengisu**

**Etik Kurul Başkanı**

## Appendix B. Informed Consent Form

Bu çalışma, İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi bünyesinde, Klinik Psikoloji Tezli Yüksek Lisans programı kapsamında Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Aylin Koçak danışmanlığında, Beyza Zebil tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi çalışma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

### Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Bu çalışmanın amacı, üniversiteye devam eden bireylerin aile ve sosyal ilişkilerine yönelik genel tutumlarını incelemektir. Bu bağlamda sizlere bağlanma stilleri, duygu düzenleme ve reddedilme duyarlılığı ile ilgili sorular yöneltilecektir.

### Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olursunuz?

Bu aşamada, sadece 10-15 dakikanızı alacak kısa anketimizi doldurmanız istenecektir. Soruları kendi başınıza cevaplamanız ve cevaplarken samimi yanıtlar vermeniz çalışma sonuçlarının doğruluğu ve güvenilirliği açısından çok önemlidir. Bu sebeple lütfen sizin için en doğru olan yanıtı veriniz.

### Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Verdiğiniz yanıtlardan elde edilen bilgiler, tamamen gizli tutulacak, bu bilgilere yalnızca araştırmacılar ulaşabilecektir. Katılımcıların kimliğini gizli tutmak şartıyla elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek, sonuçlar ise öğrencinin tezinde, bilimsel yayınlarda veya eğitim amaçlı olarak kullanılabilir.

### Katılımınızla İlgili Bilmeniz Gerekenler:

Bu çalışmaya katılımınız tamamıyla gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Anket genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, soruları cevaplarken ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden dolayı kendinizi rahatsız hissetmeniz durumunda çalışmaya katılmayı reddedebilir, cevaplama işini yarıda bırakabilirsiniz.

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Tezli Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencisi Beyza Zebil ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Bu alıřmaya tamamen gnll olarak katılıyor ve istediđim zaman yarıda kesip ıkabileceđimi biliyorum. Verdiđim bilgilerin bilimsel amalı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

- Evet
- Hayır



## Appendix C. Demographic Information Form

\*Cinsiyetiniz

(Sadece bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

Erkek

Kadın

Belirtmek istemiyorum

\*Doğum yılınız (ör. 1979)

---

\*Şu an üniversite öğrencisi misiniz?

(Sadece bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

Evet

Hayır

\*Yukarıdaki soruya yanıtınız evet ise sınıfınızı seçiniz.

Hazırlık

1.sınıf

2.sınıf

3.sınıf

4.sınıf

Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

\*Aile durumunuz

(Sadece bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

Anne-baba evli, birlikte yaşıyor

Anne-baba evli, ayrı yaşıyor

Anne-baba boşanmış, birlikte yaşıyor

Anne-baba boşanmış, ayrı yaşıyor

Anne vefat etmiş

Baba vefat etmiş

Diğer

\*Nerede yaşıyorsunuz?

Okul yurdunda

Özel yurttta

Öğrenci evinde

Aile evinde

Diğer.....

\*Tam zamanlı ya da yarı zamanlı olarak herhangi bir işte çalışıyor musunuz?

(Sadece bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

Evet

Hayır

\*Kendinizi hangi gelir grubuna ait görüyorsunuz?

(Sadece bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz.)

Alt gelir grubunda

Ortanın altı gelir grubunda

Orta gelir grubunda

Ortanın üstü gelir grubunda

Üst gelir grubunda

## Appendix D. Three-Dimensional Attachment Style Scale

Lütfen her cümleyi dikkatle okuyup size uygun olanını işaretleyiniz.

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kısmen Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
1. Karşımdaki insanlar benim kadar değerli değiller.					
2. Birisiyle çok fazla samimi olduğumda sorun çıkabileceğinden kaygılanıyorum.					
3. Karar alırken kimseyi önemsemem.					
4. Sorunu olan birisini gördüğümde kendimi onun yerine koyabiliyorum					
5. Başkalarının benim kadar değerli olduklarını düşünmüyorum.					
6. İnsanlardan ne kadar uzak durursam o kadar az üzülürüm.					
7. Ebeveynimle (anne, baba veya benim bakımımı üstlenen bir başkası) iyi anlaşıyorum.					
8. İnsanlardan uzak duruyorum çünkü bana acı çektirebilirler.					
9. Bir sorun varsa bunun kaynağı genelde karşımdakilerin sorunlu olmasıdır.					
10. Kendimi mutlu bir insan olarak tanımlıyorum.					



11. Duygusal ilişki yaşadığım kişinin beni gerçekten sevmediğini düşünerek kaygılanıyorum.					
12. Yalnızca kendime değer veririm.					
13. Başkalarının üzüntülerini anlayabiliyorum.					
14. Duygusal ilişkilerden uzak duruyorum çünkü terk edilmek istemiyorum.					
15. İnsanların görüşleri benim için önemsizdir.					
16. Ebeveynlerime (anne, baba veya benim bakımımı üstlenen bir başkası) genelde kırıncı sözler söylemem.					
17. İnsanlardan ne kadar uzak durursam o kadar mutlu olurum.					
18. Başkaları çok da umurumda değildir.					

## Appendix. E. Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire

Aşağıdaki her bir madde genelde üniversite öğrencilerinin bazen diğer kişilerden talep ettiği şeyleri tanımlamaktadır. Lütfen, her bir durumda/koşulda bulunduğunuzu düşünün ve cevaplarınızı ona göre verin. Her bir soruda, sizin için uygun olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Maddeleri değerlendirirken, karşınızdaki kişinin (örneğin, bir hocanız veya bir arkadaşınızla ilgili olan maddelerde) lütfen belirli bir kişiyi değil, ortalama bir kişiyi düşünerek yanıt veriniz. Araştırma, özel kişilere karşı olan tutumlarınızı değil, genel tutumlarınızı incelemektedir. Her bir maddeyi aşağısında yer alan a) ve b) seçeneklerine göre yanıtlayınız.

### 1. Sınıftaki birine notlarını ödünç alıp alamayacağınızı soruyorsunuz.

a) Kişinin notlarını vermek isteyip istemeyebileceği ile ilgili olarak ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Bu kişinin notlarını bana isteyerek vermesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

## 2. Romantik partnerinizden sizinle aynı eve taşınmasını istiyorsunuz.

a) Romantik partnerinizin sizinle aynı eve taşınmayı isteyip istemeyeceği ile ilgili ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Romantik partnerimin benimle aynı eve taşınmayı istemesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

## 3. Yurtdışı gezisine gitmek için ebeveynlerinizden destek istiyorsunuz.

a) Ebeveynlerinizin size yardımcı olmayı isteyip istemeyebileceği ile ilgili ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Onların (Ebeveynlerimin) bana yardım etmek için istekli olmalarını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

#### 4. Yeni tanıştığınız birine çıkma teklif ediyorsunuz.

a) Kişinin sizinle çıkmak isteyip istemeyebileceği ile ilgili ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam					Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım

b) O kişinin benimle çıkmayı istemesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Çok küçük ihtimalle					Çok büyük ihtimalle

5. Romantik partneriniz bütün arkadaşlarla birlikte dışarı çıkmayı planlıyor, ancak siz geceyi sadece partnerinizle geçirmek istiyorsunuz, ve bunu ona söylediniz.

a) Romantik partnerinizin bu isteğinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği ile ilgili ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam					Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım

b) Romantik partnerimin bu isteğimi kabul etmeye istekli olmasını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Çok küçük ihtimalle					Çok büyük ihtimalle

**6. Günlük harcamalarınızı karşılamak için ebeveynlerinizden harçlığınızı arttırmalarını istiyorsunuz.**

a) Ebeveynlerinizin bu isteğinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Ebeveynlerimin yardımcı olmaya istekli olmalarını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**7. Derste yeni tanıştığınız birine birlikte kahve içmeyi teklif ediyorsunuz.**

a) Kişinin sizinle gelmeyi isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Diğer kişinin benimle gelmeyi istemesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**8. Yakın bir arkadaşınıza onu ciddi şekilde üzecek bir şey söyledikten ya da yaptıktan sonra, yaklaşıyor ve konuşmak istiyorsunuz.**

a) Arkadaşınızın bu durumda sizinle konuşmak isteyip istemeyeceği ile ilgili ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Hemen benimle konuşup sorunlarımızı çözmek istemesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**9. Dersten sonra hocanıza anlamadığınız bir konuda soru yöneltip size fazladan zaman ayırıp ayıramayacağını soruyorsunuz.**

a) Hocanızın size yardım etmeyi isteyip istemeyeceği ile ilgili ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Hocamın bana yardımcı olmak için istekli olmasını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**10. Okulunuzu bitirdikten sonraki yıllarda ailenizden para istiyorsunuz.**

a) Ebeveynlerinizin size para vermeyi isteyip istemeyebilecekleri konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Ebeveynlerimin para talebimi kabul etmek konusunda istekli olmalarını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**11. Okul tatilinde bir arkadaşınıza birlikte tatile gitmeyi teklif ediyorsunuz.**

a) Arkadaşınızın sizinle tatile gelmeyi isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Teklifimin memnuniyetle kabul edilmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**12. Çok kırıncı bir tartışmadan sonra romantik partnerinize telefon ediyor ve onu görmek istediğinizi söylüyorsunuz.**

a) Romantik partnerinizin sizi görmeyi isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Romantik partnerimin de beni görmeye istekli olmasını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**13. Arkadaşınıza ondan bir şeyini ödünç alıp alamayacağınızı soruyorsunuz.**

a) Arkadaşınızın size istediğiniz şeyi verip vermeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Arkadaşımın istediğim şeyi ödünç vermeye istekli olmasını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>



**14. Ebeveynlerinizden sizin için önemli ancak onlar için sıkıcı ve gelmesi zahmetli olabilecek bir etkinliğe sizinle beraber gelmelerini istiyorsunuz.**

a) Ebeveynlerinizin sizinle gelmeyi isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Ebeveynlerimin benimle gelmeyi kabul etmelerini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**15. Bir arkadaşınızdan size ciddi bir yardımda bulunmasını istiyorsunuz.**

a) Arkadaşınızın bu yardımı yapmak isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Arkadaşımın bu yardım isteğimi kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**16. Romantik partnerinize sizi gerçekten sevip sevmediğini soruyorsunuz.**

a) Romantik partnerinizin sizi gerçekten sevdiğini söyleyip söylemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam					Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım

b) Romantik partnerimin beni gerçekten çok sevdiğini söylemeye istekli olmasını beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Çok küçük ihtimalle					Çok büyük ihtimalle

**17. Bir partiye gidiyorsunuz ve odanın diğer köşesinde birini fark ediyorsunuz, sonra ona beraber dans etmeyi teklif ediyorsunuz.**

a) Dans etmeyi teklif ettiğiniz kişinin teklifinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam					Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım

b) Dans etmeyi teklif ettiğim kişinin bu teklifimi memnuniyetle kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Çok küçük ihtimalle					Çok büyük ihtimalle

**18. Ailenizle tanıştırmak üzere romantik partnerinizden sizinle eve gelmesini istiyorsunuz.**

a) Romantik partnerinizin ailenizle tanışmayı isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Romantik partnerimin ailemle buluşmayı memnuniyetle kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**19. Başka bir şehirde yaşayan bir arkadaşınıza evinde 10 gün kalmak istediğinizi söylüyorsunuz.**

a) Arkadaşınızın bu isteğinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Arkadaşımın evinde kalma isteğimi memnuniyetle kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**20. Yeni tanıştığınız bir hemcinsinize birlikte bir şeyler yapmayı öneriyorsunuz.**

a) Bu kişinin önerinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Arkadaşımın benimle dışarı çıkmayı memnuniyetle kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**21. Romantik partnerinizden sizi ailesiyle tanıştırmasını istiyorsunuz.**

a) Romantik partnerinizin sizi ailesiyle tanıştırmayı isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Romantik partnerimin bu isteğimi memnuniyetle kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**22. Evde arkadaşlarınızla parti yapmak için anne ve babanızın akşam için başka bir yere gitmelerini istiyorsunuz.**

a) Ebeveynlerinizin bu isteğinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Ebeveynlerimin bu isteğimi kabul etmelerini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**23. Ebeveynlerinize romantik partnerinizle tatile gitmek istediğinizi söylüyorsunuz.**

a) Ebeveynlerinizin bu isteğinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Ebeveynlerimin romantik partnerimle tatile çıkmamı kabul etmelerini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**24. Ebeveynlerinize mezuniyetten sonra onlardan farklı bir şehirde yaşamak istediğinizi söylüyorsunuz.**

a) Ebeveynlerinizin bu isteğinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Ebeveynlerimin kararımı kabul etmelerini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**25. Çok iyi yemek yapan bir akrabanızdan (hala, teyze, vb.) çok iyi yaptığı bir yemeği sizin için özel olarak yapmasını istiyorsunuz.**

a) Akrabanızın sizin için özel olarak yemek yapmayı isteyip istemeyebileceği konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Akrabamın bu isteđimi memnuniyetle kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**26. Sınavdan bir gün önce sizinle aynı sınava girecek olan bir arkadaşınızdan anlamadığınız konuları size anlatmasını istiyorsunuz.**

a) Arkadaşımın bu isteđinizi kabul edip etmeyebileceđi konusunda ne kadar endişe eder veya kaygı duyarsınız?

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Hiç endişelenmem / Kaygı duymam</b>					<b>Çok endişelenirim / Kaygı duyarım</b>

b) Arkadaşımın beni çalıştırmayı memnuniyetle kabul etmesini beklerdim.

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Çok küçük ihtimalle</b>					<b>Çok büyük ihtimalle</b>

**Appendix-F: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale—Brief Form**

Lütfen her cümleyi dikkatle okuyup size uygun olanını işaretleyiniz.

	Hemen hemen hiç (% 0 -% 10)	Bazen (% 11- % 35)	Yaklaşık Yarı yarıya (% 36- % 65)	Çoğu zaman (% 66- % 90)	Hemen hemen her zaman (% 91- % 100)
1. Duygularıma bir anlam vermekte zorlanırım.					
2. Ne hissettiğim konusunda karmaşa yaşarım.					
3. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde işlerimi bitirmekte zorlanırım.					
4. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde kontrolden çıkarım.					
5. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde uzun süre böyle kalacağına inanırım.					
6. Kendimi kötü hissetmenin yoğun depresif duyguyla sonuçlanacağına inanırım.					
7. Kendimi kötü hissederken başka şeylere odaklanmakta zorlanırım.					
8. Kendimi kötü hissederken kontrolden çıktığım korkusu yaşarım.					



<b>9. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde bu duygudan dolayı kendimden utanırım.</b>					
<b>10. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde zayıf biri olduğum duygusuna kapılırım.</b>					
<b>11. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde davranışlarımı kontrol etmekte zorlanırım.</b>					
<b>12. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde daha iyi hissetmem için yapabileceğim hiçbir şey olmadığına inanırım.</b>					
<b>13. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde böyle hissettiğim için kendimden rahatsız olurum.</b>					
<b>14. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde kendimle ilgili olarak çok fazla endişelenmeye başlarım.</b>					
<b>15. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde başka bir şey düşünmekte zorlanırım.</b>					
<b>16. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde duygularım dayanılmaz olur.</b>					

## ***Appendix G. Participant Information Form***

Çalışmamıza gösterdiğiniz ilgiden ve katkılarınızdan dolayı çok teşekkür ederiz.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, üniversiteye devam eden bireylerin aile ve sosyal ilişkilerine yönelik genel tutumlarını incelemektir. Bu bağlamda sizlere bağlanma stilleri, duygu düzenleme ve reddedilme duyarlılığı ile ilgili sorular yöneltilecektir.

Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için İzmir Ekonomi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Tezli Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencisi Beyza Zebil ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Katılımınız için tekrar çok teşekkürler.