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**INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF SENSORY
PROCESSING SENSITIVITY, NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY
AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES ON
RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION**

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INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY,
NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES ON
RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

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

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ABSTRACT

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTS OF SENSORY PROCESSING SENSITIVITY, NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

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There are few studies testing the associations between personality trait Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS) and interpersonal relationships and none of them specifically focuses on romantic relationship satisfaction. The current study aimed to determine whether SPS is a risk factor or a susceptibility marker in the context of romantic relationships. Two hundred six University students who have been in a romantic relationship at least for twenty-four months and who are not married filled out the Highly Sensitive Person Scale (HSPS), Revised-Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), Conflict Resolution Style Scale (CRSS), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) and Risky Families Questionnaire (RF-Q). Multiple Mediation Analyses indicated that both the negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style significantly mediated the association between the SPS and romantic relationship satisfaction. Moderated mediation analysis indicated that the two-way interaction between SPS and childhood environment on negative affectivity and the same interaction on negative conflict resolution style were not significant. The findings suggest that SPS is an independent risk factor beyond childhood environment for developing negative psychological symptoms. Finally, there were insignificant but positive association between SPS and romantic relationship satisfaction after controlling for negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style suggesting that two mediator variables are the major components decreasing the relationship satisfaction for Highly Sensitive People (HSP). The current study significantly contributed to the gap in the literature by showing which mechanisms play role between SPS and relationship satisfaction that differs HSP from non-HSP.

Keywords: Sensory Processing Sensitivity, Romantic Relationship Satisfaction, Negative Affectivity, Conflict Resolution Styles, Childhood Environment

ÖZ

DUYUSAL İŞLEMLEME HASSASİYETİ, NEGATİF DUYGULANIM VE ÇATIŞMA ÇÖZÜM STİLLERİNİN İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNİN İNCELENMESİ

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Duyusal İşleme Hassasiyeti (DİH) ve kişiler arası ilişkiler arasındaki bağlantıları inceleyen çok az çalışma vardır ve bu çalışmalardan hiçbiri romantik ilişki tatminini içermemektedir. Bu çalışma, romantik ilişkiler bağlamında DİH'in bir risk faktörü mü yoksa bir ayırıcı yatkinlik etkeni mi olduğunu belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. En azından 24 aydır devam etmekte olan romantik bir ilişki içerisinde olan ve evli olmayan iki yüz altı üniversite öğrencisi Duyusal İşleme Hassasiyeti Ölçeği (DİH), Yenilenmiş Çift Uyum Ölçeği (YÇUÖ), Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri Ölçeği (ÇÇSÖ), Pozitif ve Negatif Duygu Ölçeği (PANAS) ve Riskli Aileler Ölçeği'ni doldurmuştur (RAÖ). Çoklu Aracı Analizi sonuçları, negatif duygulanım ve negatif çatışma çözüm stiline DİH ile romantik ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkide anlamlı bir şekilde aracı değişken (mediator) olduklarını göstermiştir. Yönetici Aracı Analizi (Moderated Mediation) sonuçları, DİH ile çocukluk çevresi arasındaki iki yönlü etkileşimin negatif duygulanım ve negatif çatışma çözüm stili üzerindeki etkisinin anlamlı olmadığını göstermiştir. Bu bulgulara göre DİH, olumsuz psikolojik semptomlar geliştirmede çocukluk çevresinden öte tek başına bağımsız bir risk faktörüdür. Son olarak, negatif duygulanım ve negatif çatışma çözüm stili kontrol edildikten sonra DİH ile romantik ilişki tatmini arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamsız fakat pozitif yönlü bir ilişki olduğu gözlenmiştir. Bu bulgu, araştırmada yer alan aracı değişkenlerin Hayli Duyarlı Kişiler'in (HDK) romantik ilişki tatminini düşüren temel bileşenler olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışma HDK'leri HDK olmayanlardan ilişki tatmini açısından farklılaştıran, DİH ile romantik ilişki tatmini arasında yer alan mekanizmaları göstererek literatürdeki bu boşluğa anlamlı olarak katkıda bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duyusal İşleme Hassasiyeti, Romantik İlişki Doymu, Negatif Duygulanım, Çatışma Çözüm Stilleri, Çocukluk Çevresi

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. SPS: Sensory Processing Sensitivity
2. HSP: Highly Sensitive People
3. HSPS: Highly Sensitive Person Scale
4. RF-Q: Risky Families Questionnaire
5. CRSS: Conflict Resolution Styles Scale
6. RDAS: Revised Dyadic Adjustments Scale
7. PANAS: Positive/Negative Affect Schedule
8. BIS: Behavioral Inhibition System

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Aron & Aron (1997) introduced the term Sensory Processing Sensitivity (SPS) to define the human's innate predisposition of withdrawing from novel stimulations. This term is similarly used to describe biological responsivity in animals. In other words, SPS can be described as a temperamental trait that creates individual differences in processing both internal events like thoughts or emotions and external stimuli like temperature or brightness (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997). Those having high SPS, or Highly Sensitive People (HSP) have low sensory threshold and deeper cognitive processing than those having low SPS. Therefore, HSP are more likely to withdraw in novel situations due to ease of overstimulation, increased awareness of the subtle stimulation in the environment and raised emotional reactivity (Aron, 2010; E. N. Aron et al., 2012; Belsky & Pluess, 2009; Greven et al., 2019). As the name implies, HSP are more sensitive or responsive to the effects of environment (the nurture) due to their genetics (the nature) and HSP apply pause-and-check strategy that they non-consciously notice and change their behavior based on their previous similar experiences (E. N. Aron et al., 2012). Since 15 to 20% of the general population has been estimated as HSP (E. N. Aron, 2010; E. N. Aron et al., 2012; E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997; Boterberg & Warreyn, 2016), and SPS has acquired substantial popularity from the public, the media and the researchers in the last ten years, it is important to study this concept to extend and spread scientific knowledge which was lagged behind (Greven et al., 2019).

Personality traits has been studied as a contributor to the romantic relationship satisfaction for more than seven decades. Romantic relationship satisfaction refers to subjective evaluation of partners on how satisfied or happy they are in a relationship (Collins & Read,

1990). According to Bradbury & Karney (2004), what partners bring into relationship such as past experiences, family of origin or personality traits influences how partners adapt to stressful situations and how satisfied they are in a relationship. After conducting a meta-analysis of 19 samples Malouff and his colleagues (2010) specifically searched for the associations between Big Five Personality Traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and relationship satisfaction. They have reported that low neuroticism, high agreeableness, high conscientiousness, and high extraversion significantly associated with greater romantic relationship satisfaction (Malouff et al., 2010). Neuroticism has been consistently reported as a strong predictor of low relationship satisfaction but findings on introversion-extraversion dimensions are still mixed (Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002). Previously SPS has been found to be linked with both the neuroticism and the introversion (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997; Smolewska et al., 2006). Because SPS is related to personality variables and proposed as a trait that is genetically based, present at birth and placed at the central nervous system, it has been suggested that SPS could be a major contributor to the development of personality (Jerome & Liss, 2005). If SPS could be a genetic precursor of developing personality traits like neuroticism or introversion, then romantic relationship satisfaction should be associated with SPS as well. However, there is no study that tests the associations between SPS and romantic relationship satisfaction. The goal of the current study is to investigate this relationship for the first time and investigate it through variables like childhood environment, negative/positive affectivity, and conflict resolution styles.

If high neuroticism is a strong predictor of low relationship satisfaction, then it's important to ask, "Do all HSP are neurotic?" According to Aron & Aron (1997) only one third of HSP who have been experienced negative childhood events are prone to be high on neuroticism while two thirds of HSP were similar on other measures to general population except for the sensitivity scale. Therefore, it is crucial to include childhood environment to the

current study. Couple of studies reported that sensitivity interacts with negative childhood environment in predicting negative affectivity (E. N. Aron et al., 2005; Liss et al., 2005). Negative affectivity is one of the important elements describing neuroticism (Watson & Clark, 1984). Negative affectivity can be defined as a stable and pervasive characteristic that make individuals inclined to evaluate and experience the world and themselves in a more negative perspective. Individuals high on negative affectivity are more likely to experience discomfort, anxiety, depression, tension, sadness, nervousness, anger and have general dissatisfaction toward themselves and their relationships (Watson & Clark, 1984). In addition to that, Booth and her colleagues (2015) found that SPS interacts with negative childhood environment in predicting lower global life satisfaction. Global life satisfaction is a broad concept that includes different aspects of life such as health, work, family, or relationships. Thus, the interaction between SPS and childhood environment could predict romantic relationship satisfaction as well. The current study combines Aron & Aron's (1997) perspective on two groups of HSP (those who experienced negative childhood events and those who did not) and Booth and her colleagues' (2015) findings on global life satisfaction. Thus, one of the goals of the current study is to test whether if HSP who experienced negative childhood events are more likely to report increased negative affectivity, therefore if they are more likely to report lower romantic relationship satisfaction.

Besides past experiences and personality traits, how partners adapt to a stressful situation is one of the predictors of romantic relationship satisfaction (Bradbury & Karney, 2004). In every romantic relationship there are conflicts and conflicts are one of the major sources of stress. Most of the relationship therapies focus on how conflicts can be handled more efficiently rather than reducing conflicts (Gottman & Silver, 1999). According to Gottman & Krokoff (1989) disagreements among couples may not necessarily damage the relationship rather it may lead to improvement in the relationship satisfaction in the long run. The way how

couples handle conflicts is a more crucial factor that affects both individual well-being and romantic relationship satisfaction (Kurdek, 1995; Ozen et al., 2016). Conflict resolution styles are the strategies individuals engaged to resolve conflicts on their interpersonal relationships. Constructive conflict resolution styles like compromising or using humor has been consistently found to be linked with increased relationship satisfaction while destructive styles like avoiding or defensiveness has been consistently reported to be linked with decreased satisfaction (Kurdek, 1995). Both temperamental characteristics and family of origin experiences affect how individuals resolve conflicts (Mannarini et al., 2016; Wood & Bell, 2008). Recent meta-analysis reported that neuroticism trait was significantly negatively associated with integrating conflict resolution style which can be described as finding the best solution for everyone and having high concern for everyone including oneself (Tehrani & Yamini, 2020). In addition to that, positive relationship between neuroticism and avoiding conflict resolution style was one of the findings consistently reported in the literature (Tehrani & Yamini, 2020). Avoiding conflict resolution style describes low concern for both self and the others including difficulty on facing with conflicts. High avoiding and low integrating are the conflict resolution styles previously found to be associated with low relationship satisfaction (Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Kurdek, 1995). Since SPS is a trait associated with neuroticism when combined with negative childhood environment, high sensitivity should also be associated with destructive conflict resolution styles thus having low relationship satisfaction when interacted with negative childhood environment.

Aron (2010) suggests that due to overarousal component of SPS, HSP people tend to avoid conflict more and because they deeply experience emotions, thinking becomes cloudy and their conflicts generally become irrational and emotional. There is no study which directly tests assumptions of Aron (2010). However, Jerome & Liss (2005) demonstrated that SPS was positively associated with using a coping strategy that involves focusing more on emotions

rather than possible solutions in times of stress. Similarly, Brindle and her colleagues (2015) showed that increased awareness of the emotions, lack of acceptance of these emotions and lack of emotion regulation strategies mediate the relationship between SPS and negative affectivity. These findings imply that HSP seems like using more of emotional strategies for conflict resolution due to overarousal and emotional reactivity components. The current study aims to test these assumptions further by investigating whether HSP who experienced negative childhood environment are more likely to use avoiding and other negative conflict resolution strategies in their relationships and whether using these strategies leads to lower relationship satisfaction.

Relevant literature will be elaborated in the next three sections and overview of the current study along with the conceptual models of this study will be presented in the last section of this chapter.

1.1. SPS, Neuroticism and Introversion

Since SPS is closely related to constructs like emotional reactivity and ease of overstimulation, it has been confused with the neuroticism and introversion personality dimensions of Big Five Personality Traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Thus, it is important to differentiate SPS from these related constructs before going any further.

Since HSP are more easily become aware of the subtle stimulation around and are more easily overstimulated, they frequently experience negative affectivity in response to negative, highly stimulating, or novel situations (E. N. Aron et al., 2012; Jagiellowicz et al., 2011). HSP tend to experience anxiety, fear or stress due to negative affectivity, and therefore, they are incorrectly labelled as neurotic, shy or introverted (Şengül-İnal, 2014; Smolewska et al., 2006). Following a series of qualitative and quantitative research across various samples, Aron & Aron (1997) developed a valid, reliable, and one-dimensional tool; Highly Sensitive Person

Scale (HSPS), and found that 71% of the variance was not explained by Five Factor Scales. Both Aron & Aron (1997) and Smolewska and her colleagues (2006) demonstrated that moderate associations exist between neuroticism and SPS, but they are reasonably separable constructs. Furthermore, they have reported that SPS is more than a simple combination of neuroticism and introversion (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997) rather it is a personality trait related to both positive and negative affectivity (Aron, 1996).

According to five factor model, introversion is associated with lack of positive affect (E. N. Aron et al., 2012). Yet, SPS includes processing and responding to both positive and negative stimuli more deeply unlike introversion. fMRI evidence supported this notion by showing that HSP had more activation in areas related to visual perception, visual processing, visual detection and subtle discrimination of stimuli than non-HSP even when the effects of introversion and neuroticism were controlled for (A. Aron et al., 2010; Gerstenberg, 2012; Jagiellowicz et al., 2011). Aron & Aron (1997) reported that 30% of the HSP are extraverted. Furthermore, there was a positive correlation between openness trait of Big Five Personality and SPS (Smolewska et al., 2006). Conceptually, highly sensitive introverts may spend time alone or with a small circle of friends to recharge while highly sensitive extraverts choose to spend time in a large group in order to recharge but both highly sensitive introverts and highly sensitive extraverts become over aroused after a exhausting working day (Aron, 1996). HSP could be withdrawing themselves socially to decrease over arousal. Thus, they incorrectly perceive themselves as introverts. This could also be one reason because SPS is frequently confused with introversion (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997).

SPS is also positively correlated with Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS). BIS can be described as a warning system which is more active in novel and/or punishing situations (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997; Smolewska et al., 2006). BIS is a tendency to take time before acting to process stimuli especially in novel or punishing situations, and characterized by cautious

attentiveness, and avoidance (Gray, 1981). BIS and SPS have some conceptual overlap, however, Aron & Aron (1997) suggested that SPS is a broader term which encompasses BIS. Particularly, those high on SPS mostly have more active BIS as well, while those having more active BIS are not necessarily high on SPS. BIS has been proposed as a neural process associated with frontal lobe, brain stem and hippocampal system. Thus, it has been suggested that BIS is a neuropsychological component of SPS (Smolewska et al., 2006). Şengül-Inal et al.'s (2017) study also indicated that BIS strongly predicts SPS, showing that it's a distinct contributor to the SPS.

1.2. SPS: Risk or Susceptibility Factor?

Risk factors either biological, psychological, or social are the factors making individuals more vulnerable to the effects of the adverse environments especially in developing psychological problems (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994). Susceptibility markers (genetic, phenotypic or endophenotypic) are the moderators of the environmental factors resulting in an individual's carrying these markers are affected more from both nourishing environments and adverse experiences (Belsky & Pluess, 2009). Initially Aron & Aron (1997; 2019) introduced sensitivity as a neutral contributor to the personality which is like a plasticity marker that creates susceptibility to both nourishing and unhealthy environments (Belsky & Pluess, 2009). However, subsequent studies mostly focused on negative outcomes related to SPS such as internalizing problems like depression (Brindle et al., 2015; Liss et al., 2005), anxiety (Ahadi & Basharpour, 2010; Bakker & Moulding, 2012; Brindle et al., 2015; Liss et al., 2005, 2008; Neal et al., 2002), stress (Brindle et al., 2015; Gerstenberg, 2012), pessimism (Meyer & Carver, 2000), avoidant and borderline personality disorders (Meyer et al., 2005), autism/alexithymia symptoms related to inability to express emotions (Liss et al., 2008), diminished life satisfaction (Booth et al., 2015), interpersonal problems (Lee & Park, 2020), and neuroticism (Ahadi & Basharpour, 2010; Lionetti et al., 2019).

According to Elaine Aron (2010), HSP are predisposed to depression, anxiety, and shyness only if they have been experienced trouble during childhood. In line with this, in an earlier study, Aron & Aron (1997; 2004) have demonstrated only HSP who reported unhappy and adverse experiences in their childhoods also scored higher on introversion and emotionality measures. Furthermore, HSP those reported experiencing objective unhappy childhood memories like alcoholism or mental health illness in their family are more prone to report depression, anxiety and shyness than non-HSP and HSP without such childhoods over different measures and across two samples (Aron, 2004; Aron et al., 2005).

Several studies considered the effects of childhood environment and tested psychological outcomes of its interaction with the SPS. For instance, Liss et al. (2005) found that SPS interacts with parental care in predicting depression. They have suggested that SPS does not make individuals directly prone to negative affect but SPS together with adverse parenting makes a person vulnerable to depression. Low parental care was associated with depression among HSP not for non-HSP, but when the parental care was high there were no difference between HSP and non-HSP group in terms of depression scores. This result also supports the idea that SPS becomes a risk factor when family environment is inadequate. In another study, adverse childhood experiences together with high SPS predicted lower life satisfaction among adults but positive childhood experiences together with high SPS did not predict higher life satisfaction (Booth et al., 2015).

All studies mentioned above studied SPS as a risk factor and failed to detect benefits of being more sensitive to the environment. On the contrary, some studies demonstrated beneficial aspects of high SPS. For example, a neuropsychological study indicated that HSP showed more activation in brain areas involved in high-order visual processing and brain areas involved in spotting minor changes compared to non-HSP during change detection task (Jagiellowicz et al., 2011). Furthermore, in their study, for HSP it took significantly more time to spot minor

changes than major changes while non-HSP showed no difference indicating that HSP's awareness of subtle cues takes more time to process (Jagiellowicz et. al., 2011). Similarly, Gerstenberg's (2012) study demonstrated that HSP performed better on a visual search task than non-HSP. In addition to that, Acevedo et. al.'s fMRI research (2014) demonstrated that in a task which individuals were presented with photos of their partner or a stranger in either positive, negative or neutral facial expression, high SPS was correlated with activation in brain regions related to attention and action planning in all conditions. In addition to that, high SPS was correlated with brain areas involved in awareness, integration of sensory information, empathy, and action planning in response to happy and sad photographs. These findings imply that being highly sensitive could have cognitive and emotional advantages over non-HSP. Also, these advantages may potentially be associated with positive psychological outcomes especially when combined with positive environments.

Besides neuropsychological evidence, there are other studies supporting that high sensitivity could be a positive factor under positive environments. For example, Pluess & Boniwell (2015) demonstrated that school-based intervention for depression was more effective on highly sensitive girls than non-highly sensitive ones. Furthermore, in a longitudinal study with kindergarten children and their parents indicated that highly sensitive children's externalizing behaviors were diminished most when positive parenting was preserved but they increased most when negative parenting was preserved as compared to less sensitive children (Slagt et al., 2018). In an experimental study, students were either assigned to a difficult or an easy exam. Those high on SPS scored highest on negative affectivity during a difficult task while scored the lowest on negative affectivity during the easy task as compared to those low SPS (E. N. Aron et al., 2005). High SPS could has benefits as much as its drawbacks depending on the environment.

Biological evidence also supports the idea that sensitivity may be related to both negative outcomes under adverse environments and psychological benefits under nourishing environments. The 5-HTTLPR short/short genotype was associated with SPS (Licht et. al., 2011). Physiological features in carriers of 5-HTTLPR s-allele include (1) differential susceptibility depending on the environment, (2) heightened activation on brain in response to emotional stimuli and (3) elevated acoustic startle response and (4) increased level of cortisol when encountered with social evaluation (Licht et. al., 2011). Earlier, this genotype has been linked with the negative affectivity and differential susceptibility hypothesis which will be further explained in the next headline. After disclosing the associations between SPS and the 5-HTTLPR s-allele genotype, researchers have suggested that negative affectivity may not be the one which is directly related to differential susceptibility but it may be related to differential susceptibility through being substrate of SPS (Licht et. al., 2011; Slagt et al., 2018).

Previous findings regarding the nature of SPS and whether it is a risk factor, or a susceptibility marker are inconclusive. Originally Elaine Aron, has suggested that it is a neutral factor that determines how much a person is going to be affected from his/her environment (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997). Biological, neuropsychological, and therapeutic evidence supports this notion but at the present amount of research is inadequate to make precise conclusions. In contrast, some studies have demonstrated that SPS was a risk factor in the presence of a poor environment but these studies were unable to show that it has positive outcomes in a positive environment (Booth et al., 2015; Liss et al., 2005). The present study aims to indicate whether SPS is a risk factor or a susceptibility marker in the context of romantic relationships. The following sections will further elucidate SPS as a risk or susceptibility marker based on gene-environment interaction framework.

Gene x environment interaction refers to effects of genetic predispositions and effects of environmental variables reciprocally produce an interactional and/or an additional effect on the

outcome independent from their unique effects (Burmeister et al., 2008). There are three fundamental models proposed under gene x environment interaction theory: (1) Diathesis-Stress Model (Monroe & Simons, 1991), (2) Differential Susceptibility Hypothesis (Belsky, 1997), and (3) Vantage Sensitivity (Manuck, 2011).

Basic argument of Diathesis-Stress Model is that stress triggers the diathesis to bring out symptoms through activating the underlying potential (Monroe & Simons, 1991). Diathesis in this case may be a difference in genetic make-up, physiological or behavioral/temperamental characteristics which makes some individuals more vulnerable to the effects of the stressful environment (Belsky & Pluess, 2009). Vulnerable individuals are affected more adversely from stressful environments than others (Belsky & Pluess, 2009). On the other hand, basic premise of Differential Susceptibility Model is that some individuals are more susceptible to the effects of both positive and negative environments (Belsky & Pluess, 2009). This hypothesis expands diathesis-stress perspective and argues that susceptible individuals are not just affected more adversely from poor environments but they also benefit more from nourishing, enriching and positive environments (Belsky & Pluess, 2009). Vantage Sensitivity Model suggests that some individuals are more sensitive, and they benefit more than others from advantageous experiences (Pluess & Belsky, 2013). In all theories, advantageous/positive environments include sensitive parenting, high care, supportive relationships, and disadvantageous/negative/stressful environments contain insensitive parenting, neglect, isolation and as such adverse experiences.

1.3.SPS and Close Relationships

Personality traits has been studied for decades as a major contributor to the satisfaction in close relationships. It has been well-established that neuroticism is a negative contributor to the relationship satisfaction while conscientiousness trait was positively associated with

satisfaction (Sayehmiri et al., 2020). Findings on introversion and extraversion traits are controversial (Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002). As mentioned in the previous chapters, SPS is closely related to neuroticism, introversion, and shyness. Therefore, studying SPS and its relation to relationship satisfaction could contribute to this controversy.

Up to the present, several studies examined SPS in the context of close relationships within the framework of attachment theory. The main findings were as follows: Sensory sensitivity was associated with relationship anxiety and this relation was mediated by a coping strategy called “focusing on and venting on emotions”. This coping strategy refers to situations in which people focuses on the source of the emotional distress rather than possible solutions, and they communicate continuously about emotional distress to the others (Jerome & Liss, 2005). Likewise, sensory sensitivity was found to be associated with attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance among healthy adults indicating that people high on sensory sensitivity are more anxious and avoidant in their close relationships (Meredith et al., 2016). Sensory responsiveness which is a sensitivity to only sensory stimulations (SPS encompasses sensory responsiveness) was correlated with anxiety through attachment anxiety (Levit-Binnun et al., 2014). Furthermore, attachment anxiety and low registration (high sensory threshold; opposite of sensory sensitivity) were associated with interpersonal problems (Lee & Park, 2020). It has been widely accepted that secure attachments play crucial role in adult relationships. These results suggest that High sensitivity related to insecure attachment components such as anxiety, avoidance, emotion-focused coping in close relationships. Thus, it is important to study SPS in the context of adult romantic relationships. However, as variables of current study explained in the first section, attachment variables are beyond the scope of this current study, but model of this study may shed light into future research on this issue.

As mentioned in the previous sections, it has been known that SPS interacts with negative childhood environment in producing negative affectivity and neuroticism (E. N. Aron

et al., 2005; E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997; Liss et al., 2005). And both neuroticism and negative affectivity have been consistently reported as a strong predictor of decreased romantic relationship satisfaction (Fisher & McNulty, 2008; Malouff et al., 2010; Sayehmiri et al., 2020). Thus, SPS could be a genetic precursor underlying in the relationship between negative affectivity and relationship satisfaction. Theoretically SPS has been assumed to be antecedent to personality traits because it has been proposed as located in the central nervous system and based in genetics (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997). In a similar vein, conflict resolution styles have been studied as an important contributor to the relationship satisfaction (Bradbury & Karney, 2004; Kurdek, 1995). In which conflict resolution style is engaged in a relationship is determined by what partners bring into relationship such as childhood experiences and personality (Mannarini et al., 2016). SPS also could be a genetic precursor that interacts with childhood environment in predicting which conflict resolution style will be engaged in turn predicts relationship satisfaction. In addition to that, negative affectivity and conflict resolution styles showed to be linked previously (Fisher & McNulty, 2008; Sayehmiri et al., 2020). In the current study negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution styles are also expected to be associated. On the other hand, because SPS proposed as a neutral trait it's not expected to be associated with romantic relationship directly after controlled for childhood environment, negative affectivity, and conflict resolution styles. The current study not only test these associations in the context of negative childhood environment but also in the positive childhood environment. Measures of childhood environment, affectivity and conflict resolution styles are all chosen because all covering positive sides as well. In other words, positive childhood experiences, positive affectivity and positive conflict resolution styles are also covered in these measures. The reason behind that is the current study try to answer the question of "Is Sensory Processing Sensitivity a risk factor or a susceptibility marker?"

1.4. The Present Study

Considering previous literature, whether SPS is a risk factor, susceptibility marker or vantage point is still a debate. In addition to that, findings on SPS and romantic relationships are still limited to several studies. Combining these two perspectives, present study aims to test whether: (1) high SPS interacts with negative childhood environment in producing higher negative affectivity and higher negative conflict resolution style thus decreasing relationship satisfaction, (2) whether high SPS interacts with positive childhood environment in producing higher positive affectivity and higher positive conflict resolution styles thus increasing relationship satisfaction.

Based on previous findings and established correlations, following hypotheses were proposed in the current study:

When there is a negative childhood environment:

1. SPS will be predict negative affectivity (+ relationship) and
2. SPS will predict negative conflict resolution style (+ relationship)
3. Negative affectivity will predict relationship satisfaction (-)
4. Negative conflict resolution style will predict relationship satisfaction (-)
5. Negative affectivity will predict negative conflict resolution style (+)

When there is a positive childhood environment:

6. SPS will be predict positive affectivity (+ relationship)
7. SPS will be predict positive conflict resolution style (+ relationship)
8. Positive affectivity will predict relationship satisfaction (+)
9. Positive conflict resolution style will predict relationship satisfaction (+)
10. Positive affectivity will predict positive conflict resolution style (+)

11. Finally, there will be no direct relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction independent from affectivity and conflict resolution style. The conceptual models of this study presented below (Figure.1) and (Figure. 2).

Figure 1

Proposed Model-I of the Current Study

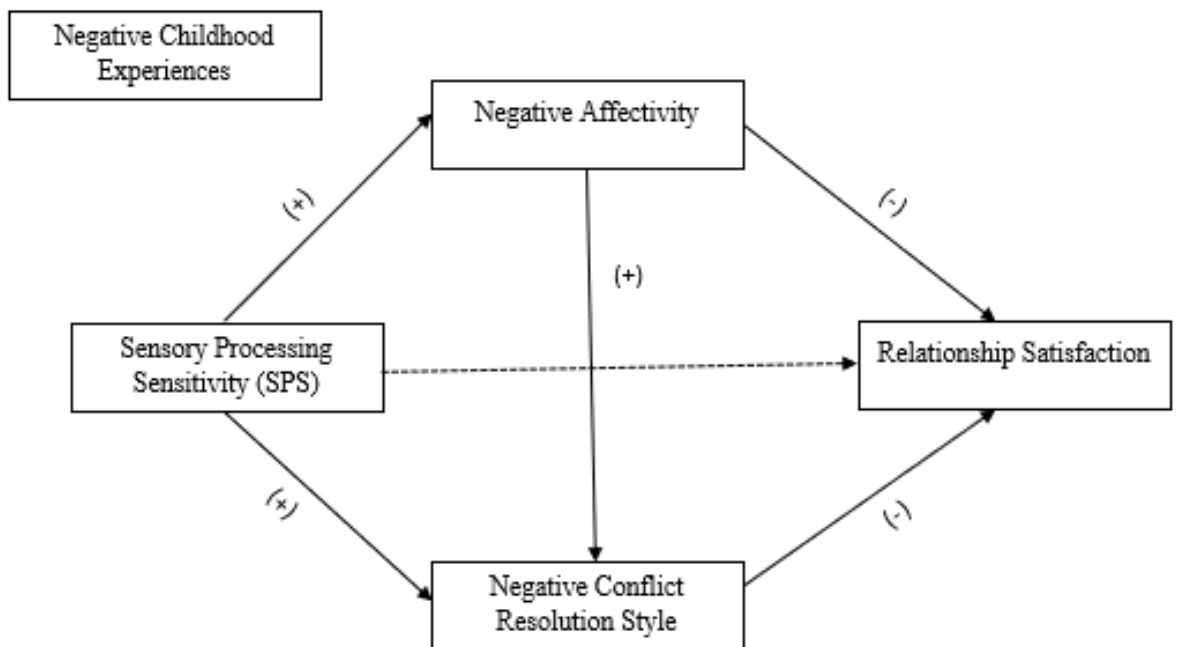
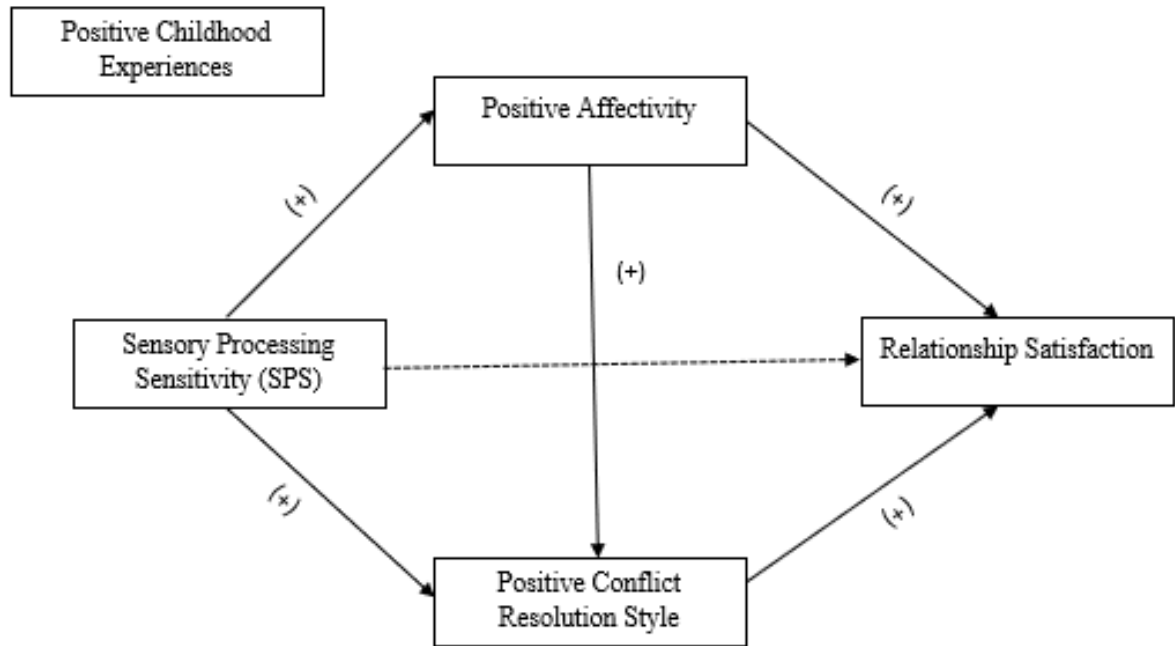


Figure 2

Proposed Model-II of the Current Study



CHAPTER II

METHOD

2.1. Method of the Study-I

This study was conducted to test the factor structure of Highly Sensitive Person Scale (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997) and compare the proposed alternative factor structures. In addition to that, Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (Ozen et al., 2016) is a relatively new measure compared to other questionnaires in the current study and factor loadings presented in the original study were mostly lower than .80 therefore fit of CRSS was tested again in the present study. Furthermore, Risky Families Questionnaire (Taylor et al., 2004, 2006) was translated to Turkish for the current study but it is an objective measure of childhood events thus some of its psychometric properties were tested as well. Study I was a preliminary study before testing the main hypotheses and the research questions.

2.1.1. Participants

A total of 265 participants participated to the study through an online survey. Convenience sampling method was used in this study. Among the participants, 71 were male (26.8%) and 191 were female (72.1%). Three participants (1%) chose to prefer not to answer the question. Participants' ages ranged from 18-25 ($M = 21$, $SD = 1.90$). The mean age for male participants was 20.8 ($SD = 1.98$) and 21.3 ($SD = 1.87$) for female participants. Of the participants, 261 (98.5%) were university students from at least 37 varying universities (but mostly from Hacettepe University [35.8%], TED University [8.7%] and Ankara University [4.5%.]) and from varying departments (but mostly from Mathematics [32.5%] and Psychology [14.7%] departments). In terms of psychiatric diagnosis 229 (86.4%) of them never diagnosed before in their lifetime.

2.1.2 Materials

Besides demographical information form, the survey comprised of three scales, namely Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (Ozen et al., 2016), Highly Sensitive Person Scale (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997) and Risky Families Questionnaire (Taylor et al., 2004). After participants filled out the demographical information, scales presented in a counterbalanced random order. Questions included in the demographical information form are age, gender, education status, university, and department that they are currently studying, previous psychiatric diagnosis, previous psychological referral and regular medication use information.

2.1.2.1 Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSSS)

Conflict resolution style was assessed with CRSS which was developed by Ozen and her colleagues (2016). CRSS was used in this study to be sensitive to effects of both culture and marriage status because it was developed by Turkish researchers in a Turkish sample and its reliability/validity analyses conducted on both dating couples and married couples. It is a self-report measure consist of 25 items on 6-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 6=strongly agree) and measuring negative conflict resolution style (e.g., “I say offending things when I get angry.”), positive conflict resolution style (e.g., “ I try to find a mutual solution during conflicts.”), subordination (e.g., “I try to calm my partner to prevent amplifying the problem.”) and retreat (e.g., “I run away from my partner when there is a conflict”). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were .82, .80, .73 and .74 for negative conflict resolution, positive conflict resolution, subordination, and retreat, respectively. In the current study Cronbach’s alpha values were .75, .76, .83 and .78 respectively. The items reflecting negative conflict resolution style are 6., 8., 1., 12., 14., 16., 25; positive conflict resolution styles are 9., 13., 5., 11., 22., 24;

items on subordination are 7., 2., 19., 4., 20., 17; items on retreat are 3., 23., 18., 21., 10., 15 (see Appendix E).

2.1.2.2 Highly Sensitive Person Scale (HSPS)

Sensory-processing sensitivity was assessed with HSPS which was developed by (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997). It is a 27-item self-report measure assessing, sensory threshold (e.g., “Are you made uncomfortable by loud noises?”), emotional reactivity (e.g., “Do you get rattled when you have a lot to do in a short amount of time?”) and aesthetic sensitivity (e.g., “Do you notice and enjoy delicate or fine scents, tastes, sounds, work of art?”) on a 7 point Likert scale (1= not at all, 7=extremely). Higher scores represented higher sensitivity for this scale (see Appendix C). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients are .87 (Aron & Aron, 1997) and .89 (Smolewska et. al., 2006). Sümer & Şengül-İnal (2017) adapted this scale to Turkish culture and demonstrated that four factor structure fitting better than alternative models. Cronbach’s alpha values are .81, .86, .68, and .55 for sensitivity to overstimulation, sensitivity to external stimulus, aesthetic sensitivity and harm avoidance respectively (Şengül-İnal & Sümer, 2017). In the current study, internal consistency coefficient value was .88 for the total score.

2.1.2.3 Risky Families Questionnaire (RF-Q)

Childhood environment was assessed with RF-Q which was originally developed by Felitti and his colleagues (1998). This scale was adapted to cover both positive and negative experiences and validated by Taylor and her colleagues (2004). It has 13 items measuring negative childhood experiences such as “How often did a parent or other adult in the household swear at you, insult you, put you down, or act in a way that made you feel threatened?” and positive childhood experiences such as “How often did a parent or other adult in the household make you feel that you were loved, supported, and cared for?” on a 5-point Likert scale (1=never, 5=most of the time). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is .86 (Taylor et al., 2004, 2006).

In the present study, Cronbach's alpha value was .88. Higher scores represented negative childhood while lower scores represented positive childhood experiences. Items; 1, 3, and 12 are reversely coded (see Appendix D).

2.1.3 Procedure

After getting approval from TED University Human Subjects Ethics Committee, Risky Families Questionnaire (RF-Q) translated into Turkish by the researcher and revised by the thesis advisor. Undergraduate and graduate students were recruited through online announcements via social media and e-mail lists. Voluntarily participated participants completed the demographical information form first, then they completed the scales in counterbalanced random order through Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, Provo, UT). All participants signed the informed consent at the beginning of the survey and at the end of the surveys, debriefing form was presented. Survey took approximately ten minutes to complete.

2.1.4. Results of the Study-I

A series of confirmatory factor analysis were run using IBM SPSS Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software version 24.0 (Arbuckle, 2014) to test previously mentioned three scales' factor structure and to compare alternative models.

2.1.4.1. Data Screening and Cleaning

Initially 265 participants participated to the study, 16 of them completed only one of the scales and 3 of them completed two scales. There were no missing data on any of the scales, each scale was fully completed. Therefore, 255, 254 and 251 participants included in the analysis of scales CRSS, RF-Q and HSPS respectively.

2.1.4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of CRSS

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS to ensure the fitness of the current data to the original factor model. Ozen et. al.'s (2016) four factor model (negative conflict resolution style [1], positive conflict resolution style [2], subordination [3] and retreat [4]) was tested. Model fit evaluated by goodness-of-fit statistics, chi-square (χ^2) statistics and χ^2 :df ratio. Ratio of χ^2 :df is a reasonable measure of fit when sample is large ($n > 200$) and variables are normally distributed (Kenny, 2020; Kline, 1998) which are the case in this study; The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .82 and Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2 [300] = 20.97, p = .000$). Ratio of χ^2 :df is expected to be lower than 5 to have an acceptable fit (Kelloway, 1998). Acceptable model fit determined by the following criteria: RMSEA ($\leq .08$); CFI, GFI, AGFI and TLI ($\geq .90$) (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 1998). After the initial analysis, item 16 excluded from the model because factor loading for this item was lower than .30. Item 24 excluded from the model because it was cross-loaded and difference between factor loadings were less than 1. Modification indices indicated that some items were highly correlated and correlations among errors of these items included one by one to the analysis. In the modified model, items 10 and 18 were excluded because of low factor loadings. Modified model showed better model fit in an acceptable range with decreased chi-square and χ^2 :df ratio ($\chi^2 [170] = 334.15, p \leq .001, \chi^2$:df= 1.97, RMSEA= .06, CFI= .90, GFI= .890, AGFI= .85, TLI= .87).

2.1.4.3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of HSPS

To investigate which previously proposed factor structure best fitted the current data, series of CFA were run. Originally, Aron & Aron (1997) proposed HSPS as a single factor construct. Therefore, alternative models compared in the following order: (1) 27-item unidimensional factor structure; (2) Evans & Rothbart's (2008) two-factor solution (negative

affect [1] and orienting sensitivity [2]); (3) Smolewska et. al.'s (2006) three-factor model (ease of excitation [1], aesthetic sensitivity [2] and low sensory threshold [3]); (4) Şengül-İnal & Sümer's (2017) four-factor solution (sensitivity to external stimuli [1], aesthetic sensitivity [2], harm avoidance [3] and sensitivity to overstimulation [4]). Goodness of fit indices presented below on Table 1. In order to make more reliable comparison among models, only those correlations among errors that are applicable to all models are drawn for each model. In other words, same correlations among same errors allowed in all four models.

Table 1

Comparison of CFA Fit Indices for Alternative Factor Structures of HSPS

| Models | χ^2 | df | $\chi^2:df$ | p | RMSEA | NFI | GFI | AGFI | CFI |
|----------------|----------|-----|-------------|------|-------|-----|-----|------|-----|
| Unidimensional | 722.99 | 317 | 2.28 | .000 | .072 | .63 | .80 | .76 | .74 |
| Two-factors | 596.61 | 267 | 2.23 | .000 | .070 | .67 | .82 | .78 | .78 |
| Three-factors | 541.64 | 265 | 2.04 | .000 | .065 | .68 | .85 | .82 | .80 |
| Four-factors | 543.16 | 313 | 1.74 | .000 | .054 | .72 | .86 | .83 | .85 |

Note. χ^2 , chi-square statistics; df, degrees of freedom; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; NFI, non-normal fit index; GFI, goodness of fit index; AGFI, adjusted goodness of fit index; CFI, comparative fit index.

For all four models, seven correlations among errors of items allowed (correlated items are 8-10, 10-22, 14-16, 14-26, 18-19, 20-21, 21-23). Unifactorial model, two-factor model and three factor model yielded relatively poor fit to the data: unifactorial model ($\chi^2 [317] = 722.99$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2: df = 2.28$, RMSEA = .072, CFI = .74, GFI = .80, AGFI = .76, TLI = .71), two-factor model ($\chi^2 [267] = 596.61$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2: df = 2.23$, RMSEA = .070, CFI = .78, GFI = .82, AGFI = .78, TLI = .76), three-factor model ($\chi^2 [265] = 541.64$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2: df = 2.04$, RMSEA = .065, CFI = .80, GFI = .85, AGFI = .82, TLI = .78). Four-factor model provided best fit compared to other models ($\chi^2 [313] = 543.16$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2: df = 1.74$, RMSEA = .054, CFI = .85, GFI = .86, AGFI = .83, TLI = .84). Allowing correlated errors in a four-factor model resulted improved

model fit in an acceptable range ($\chi^2 [303] = 467.55, p < .001, \chi^2: df = 1.54, RMSEA = .047, CFI = .90, GFI = .88, AGFI = .85, TLI = .88$).

2.1.4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of RF-Q

Since RF-Q translated into Turkish for the first time but items of RF-Q directly ask for what it meant to be measure, only CFA was conducted to examine whether the data fit with the nature of the construct. Unifactorial RF-Q yielded good fit to the data ($\chi^2 [54] = 83.48, p = .006, \chi^2: df = 1.55, RMSEA = .046, CFI = .98, GFI = .95, AGFI = .92, TLI = .97$). CFI, GFI and AGFI values greater than .90, TLI value greater than .95 and RMSEA score below .05, indicated that model provided conservatively good fit (or satisfactorily fit) to the data (Hu & Bentler, 1998; Kline, 2005).

2.2 Method of the Study-II

Study II was conducted to test the models and hypotheses proposed in the introduction chapter.

2.2.1 Participants

A sample of 208 participants participated to second study. Among participants, 49 were male (24%) and 158 were female (76%) and one participant did not specified gender. Participants were recruited by convenience sampling technique. Only those who met the following criteria were included in the study: (a) who are between ages 18-25 and (b) having a romantic relationship with the same partner at least for 24 months and (c) who are not married. Characteristics of the sample detailed in Table 2.

Young adults in between 18-25 are in emerging adulthood developmental stage which is characterized by frequent change and exploration (Arnett, 2000). This period is in between late teens and adulthood. Emerging adults have more independence than teens and have less

responsibilities than adults. In this period, life changing adult roles are not decided yet (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adults constitutes the target population of the current study due to convenience of the participants and due to it is relatively less studied developmental stage. Participants who are in a relationship at least for 24 months included to the study to be sure that partners knowing each other and how they handle conflicts well and the relationship pursued for some time to evaluate the perceived satisfaction. Another eligibility condition is to being not married because in Turkish culture, most people do not live together until getting married which may cause differences in evaluating and experiencing the romantic relationships.

Table 2

Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) of the Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

| | Male | Female | Total |
|---|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Number of Participants | 49 (24%) | 158 (76%) | 208 |
| Age | | | |
| Mean | 23,43 | 23,22 | 23,26 |
| SD | 1,69 | 1,59 | 1,61 |
| Range | 19-25 | 19-25 | 19-25 |
| Duration of Relationship (Month) | | | |
| Mean | 46,18 | 46,93 | 46,67 |
| SD | 26,47 | 24,69 | 25,02 |
| Range | 24-120 | 24-125 | 24-125 |
| Length in Acquaintance Before Relationship (Month) | | | |
| Mean | 11,72 | 17,12 | 15,76 |
| SD | 18,32 | 27,75 | 25,72 |
| Range | 1-84 | 1-144 | 1-144 |
| Living Status | | | |
| Together (%) | 8 (16,3%) | 10 (6,3%) | 18 (8,7%) |
| Apart (%) | 41 (83,7%) | 148 (93,7%) | 190 (91,3%) |
| Sexual Orientation | | | |
| Heterosexual (%) | 45 (91,8%) | 129 (81,6%) | 175 (84,1%) |
| Homosexual (%) | 2 (4,1%) | 6 (3,8%) | 8 (3,8%) |
| Bisexual (%) | 0 (0,0%) | 11 (7,0%) | 11 (5,3%) |

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Transsexual (%) | 0 (0,0%) | 0 (0,0%) | 0 (0,0%) |
| Asexual (%) | 1 (2,0%) | 1 (0,6%) | 2 (1,0%) |
| Not Specified (%) | 1 (2,0%) | 11 (7,0%) | 12 (5,8%) |

2.2.2. Measures

In addition to demographical information form, survey consisted of three scales used in the first study and 2 additional scales to measure affect and relationship satisfaction. Namely, Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (Ozen et al., 2016), Highly Sensitive Person Scale (E. N. Aron & Aron, 1997), Positive-Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al., 1988), Revised Dyadic Adjustments Scale (Spanier, 1976; Busby et al., 1995), and Risky Families Questionnaire (Taylor et al., 2004). All scales presented in a counterbalanced random order. Questions included in the demographical information form are, age, gender, education status, psychiatric diagnosis, romantic relationship status, marriage status, duration of the romantic relationship, length of acquaintance, living condition (apart/or together with the partner) and sexual orientation. Additional scales PANAS and RDAS that are not included in the first study will be explained further in the next section.

2.2.2.1. Positive/ Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

Negative affectivity was assessed with PANAS which was developed by Watson and his colleagues (1988) to measure positive and negative affectivity. It is a 20-item self-report measure, half of the items measuring negative affectivity and other ten are measuring positive affect on a 5-point Likert scale (1=not at all, 5=extremely). Items reflecting positive affect include enthusiastic, inspired, and attentive; items reflecting negative affect include nervous, upset, and irritable. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are ranging in between .86-.90 for positive affect and ranging in between .84-.87 for negative affect for different time instructions such as "at the moment, today, past few days, past few weeks, years or in general" (Watson et al.,

1988). In this study, “in general” instruction used to ensure that participants’ general affective attitude is being assessed. In the current study Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were .79 for the positive affectivity and .84 for the negative affectivity subscales.

2.2.2.2. Revised Dyadic Adjustments Scale (RDAS)

Relationship satisfaction was assessed with RDAS which was developed by Spanier (1976) to measure relationship quality of couples. It is a 32-item self-report measure assessing dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, and affectional expression in romantic relationships on 5-point Likert scale (first part: 1=always disagree, 5=always agree/second part: 1=never, 5=all the time). Higher scores on this scale represents higher relationship quality. Cronbach’s alpha scores are, .87, .80, .80, .74 for total score, dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, and dyadic cohesion respectively (Spanier, 1976). Busby and his colleagues (1995) shortened the revised version into 14 items which does not cover the affectional expression component but covering three others. Revised version used in this study because its time efficient and has better psychometric properties. Revised scale adapted to Turkish by Gündoğdu (2007) and Cronbach’s alpha value was .79 for the total scale. In the current study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the total score was .75.

2.2.3 Procedure

Research announced through e-mail lists and social media. Volunteer participants between ages 18-25 participated to online survey which takes approximately ten minutes to complete. Participants who are not currently in a romantic relationship and who are married directed to the end of the survey. Participants (N = 55) who are in a romantic relationship for less than 24 months excluded from the study before the analyses. All participants approved the informed consent and debriefed at the end of survey likewise in study 1 (see Appendix A and Appendix B).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

3.2. Results of Study-II

In this section, moderated mediation analysis conducted by using PROCESS macro v.3.5 (Hayes, 2013) to test the proposed models in the chapter one. Assumptions of linear regression and bivariate correlations among variables presented first.

3.2.1. Data Screening, Cleaning and Testing Assumptions

Before the analysis data were examined for missing values, accuracy of the data entry, normality of the variables and screened for univariate and multivariate outliers. Missing values in the data set were less than 5% and distributed randomly. Therefore, missing values replaced with the mean of the series. Univariate outliers were checked by using Z-Scores, there were two outliers at a scale measuring relationship satisfaction (case numbers were #88 and #195) which were beyond 3 standard deviations from the data (general rule of cutoff: 3,29). After excluding these two cases, the outcome variable relationship satisfaction distributed normally (which was relatively close to negatively skewed distribution before excluding these variables; skewness score was below 1 but it was greater than double of the standard error). Negative affectivity, negative conflict resolution style and childhood environment measures were positively skewed (skewness scores were below 1 but they were greater than double of the standard errors). Therefore, logarithmic transformation applied for these three variables to make them closer to fit normal distribution as much as possible. SPS and other variables were already distributed normally. Mahalonobis distance used to check multivariate outliers. There were no multivariate outliers in the data. Multiple regression analysis conducted with remained 206 subjects.

Assumptions of linearity, normality, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals were examined before the analysis. None of the correlation coefficients among variables were above .70 but multicollinearity assumption was tested by using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the sensory processing sensitivity, negative affectivity, positive affectivity, negative and positive conflict resolution styles, and childhood environment. VIF values were 1.14, 1.44, 1.32, 1.27, 1.20 and 1.15 respectively. All VIF scores were less than 10 so there was no multicollinearity among independent variables. Normal P-P plot and scatterplot showed that standardized residuals were normally distributed and there is homoscedasticity. All predictors except for SPS (X) and RF-Q (W) were significantly correlated with the outcome variable relationship satisfaction (Y). Bivariate correlations among variables presented at Table 3. Scatterplots shows a weakly negative linear relationship between SPS- Relationship Satisfaction and RFQ- Relationship satisfaction. In Conditional Process Analysis, it is still possible that mediators to be causally between X and Y when there is no association between X and Y (Hayes, 2009, pp. 8-11). Hayes (2009) states that there are other pathways that might not be a part of the proposed model but still included in the total effect. Pathways in opposite direction (positive/negative sign) may nullify the total effect. He states that precondition that there should be significant association between X and Y to test direct and indirect effects is false (Hayes, 2009, pp. 8-11).

Table 3*Bivariate Correlations Among Variables*

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|----------------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Predictors | | | | | | | |
| 1.HSPS | - | .30** | -.14* | .24** | .04 | .15* | -.07 |
| 2.Negative affectivity | .30** | - | -.37** | .40** | -.18** | .31** | -.29** |
| 3.Positive affectivity | -.14* | -.37** | - | -.19** | .37** | -.22** | .25** |
| 4.Negative CRS | .24** | .40** | -.19** | - | -.19** | .26** | -.30** |
| 5.Positive CRS | .04 | -.18** | .37** | -.19** | - | -.10 | .25** |
| 6.RF-Q | .15* | .31** | -.22** | .26** | -.10 | - | -.08 |
| Outcome | | | | | | | |
| 7.RelationshipSatisfaction | -.07 | -.29** | .25** | -.30** | .25** | -.08 | - |

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level; HSPS, Highly Sensitive Person Scale; CRS, Conflict Resolution Style; RF-Q, Risky Families Questionnaire

3.2.2. Statistical Analysis

Moderated mediation analysis was run based on Hayes' Model 84 (Hayes, 2013). That is, whether (1) SPS (X) interacts with negative childhood environment (W) and indirectly predicts relationship satisfaction (Y) through negative affectivity (M₁) and negative conflict resolution style (M₂), and whether (2) SPS (X) interacts with positive childhood environment (W) and indirectly predicts relationship satisfaction (Y) through positive affectivity (M₁) and positive conflict resolution style (M₂). Positive affectivity with negative affectivity and positive conflict resolution style with negative conflict resolution style are the subscales of the same measures. Therefore, two moderated mediation analyses were conducted separately for Model I and Model II (see *Figure 1.* and *Figure 2.* in first chapter). Both models tested by using bootstrapping approach to assess significance of moderated mediation based on 5.000 bootstrap

samples. Bootstrap confidence interval used as an index of moderated mediation which was shown to be superior to previous approaches (Hayes, 2015). If the confidence interval does not contain zero than the relationship between the moderator and the indirect association considered as significant (Hayes, 2015).

3.2.3. Testing the Model 1: Moderated Mediation

We hypothesized that negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style will mediate the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction. In addition to that we predicted that childhood environment will moderate the relationship between SPS and negative affectivity and the relationship between SPS and negative conflict resolution styles. Total model (*Figure 1.*) explained 13% of the variability in romantic relationship satisfaction ($F(3, 202) = 9.73, p = .0000$). There was a significant positive relationship between SPS and negative affectivity ($\beta = .04, SE = .01, t = 3.87, p = .0001; 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .06]$). There was a significant positive relationship between childhood environment and negative affectivity ($\beta = .24, SE = .06, t = 4.05, p = .0001; 95\% \text{ CI } [.12, .36]$). It is important to note that higher scores on childhood environment measure RF-Q indicates negative childhood experiences. There was no significant interaction between SPS and childhood environment on negative affectivity ($\beta = -.07, SE = .07, t = 1.08, p = .28; 95\% \text{ CI } [-.21, .06]$).

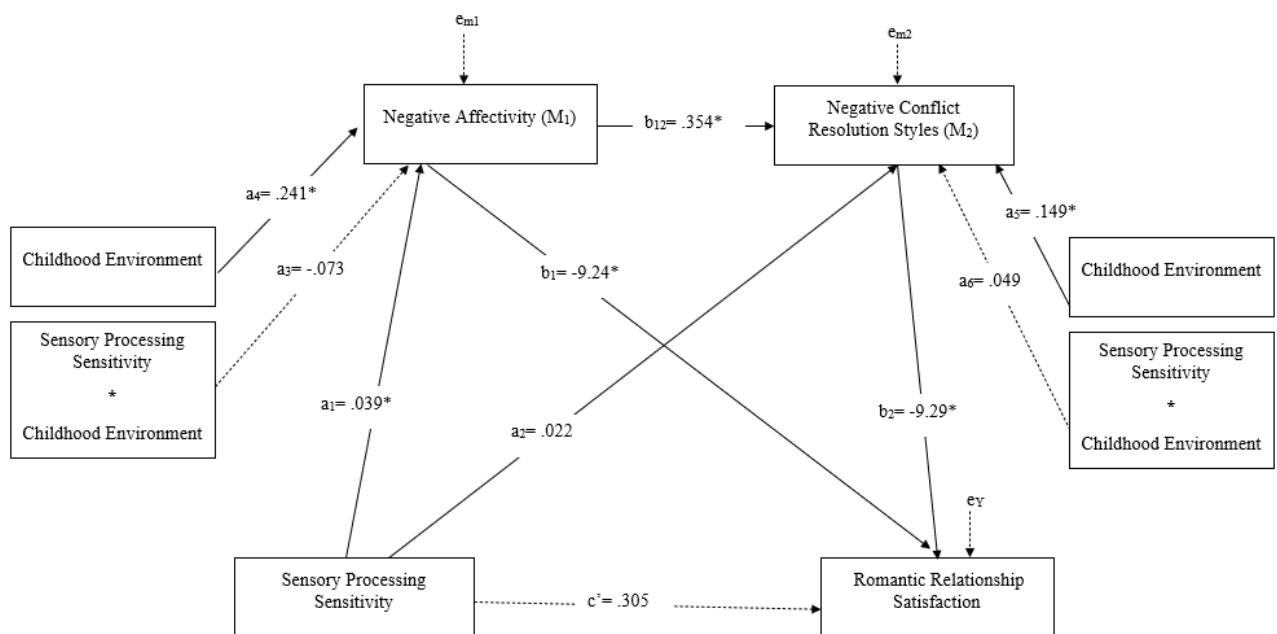
There was no significant relationship between SPS and negative conflict resolution style ($\beta = .02, SE = .01, t = 1.95, p = .0523; 95\% \text{ CI } [-.00, .04]$). Association between childhood environment ($\beta = .15, SE = .07, t = 2.20, p = .0290; 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .28]$) and negative conflict resolution style along with association between negative affectivity ($\beta = .35, SE = .08, t = 4.58, p = .0000; 95\% \text{ CI } [.20, .51]$) and negative conflict resolution style were significant. The interaction between SPS and childhood environment on negative conflict resolution style was not significant ($\beta = .05, SE = .07, t = .66, p = .51; 95\% \text{ CI } [-.10, .20]$).

The direct relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction was not significant ($\beta = .31$, $SE = .48$, $t = .64$, $p = .52$; 95 % CI [-.64, 1.3]). There was a significant negative relationship between negative affectivity and relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -9.24$, $SE = 3.28$, $t = -2.81$, $p = .0054$; 95% CI [-16, -3]). There was a significant negative relationship between negative conflict resolution style and relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -9.29$, $SE = 2.90$, $t = -3.21$, $p = .0015$; 95% CI [-15, -3]).

Index of moderated mediation was not significant for any indirect path. Childhood environment did not moderate (1) the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction through negative affectivity, (2) the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction through negative conflict resolution style and (3) the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction through negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style (statistical diagram of the model displayed as *Figure 3*).

Figure 3

Statistical Diagram of the Model-I



Note. * $p < .05$

3.2.4. Testing the Model 2: Moderated Mediation

We hypothesized that positive affectivity and positive conflict resolution styles will mediate the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction. In addition to that we predicted that childhood environment will moderate the relationship between SPS and positive affectivity and the relationship between SPS and positive conflict resolution styles. Total Model (*Figure 2.*) explained 12% of the variability in relationship satisfaction ($F(3, 202) = 9.56, p = .0000$). There was a significant negative relationship between childhood environment and positive affectivity ($\beta = -8.65, SE = 2.87, t = -3.01, p = .0029; 95\% \text{ CI } [-14, -3]$). There was no significant relationship between SPS and positive affectivity ($\beta = -.59, SE = .49, t = -1.20, p = .23; 95\% \text{ CI } [-1.56, .38]$). The interaction of SPS and childhood environment on positive affectivity was also not significant ($\beta = 4.48, SE = 3.27, t = 1.37, p = .17; 95\% \text{ CI } [-2, 11]$).

There was a significant positive relationship between positive affectivity and positive conflict resolution style ($\beta = .30, SE = .05, t = 6.00, p = .0000; 95\% \text{ CI } [.20, .40]$). The association between SPS $\beta = .53, SE = .35, t = 1.51, p = .13; 95\% \text{ CI } [-.16, 1.2]$ and positive conflict resolution style along with the association between childhood environment ($\beta = -1.63, SE = 2.08, t = -.78, p = .43; 95\% \text{ CI } [-5.7, 2.5]$) and positive conflict resolution style were not significant. Interaction of SPS*Childhood Environment was not significant as well ($\beta = -1.34, SE = 2.33, t = -.57, p = .57; 95\% \text{ CI } [-6, 3]$).

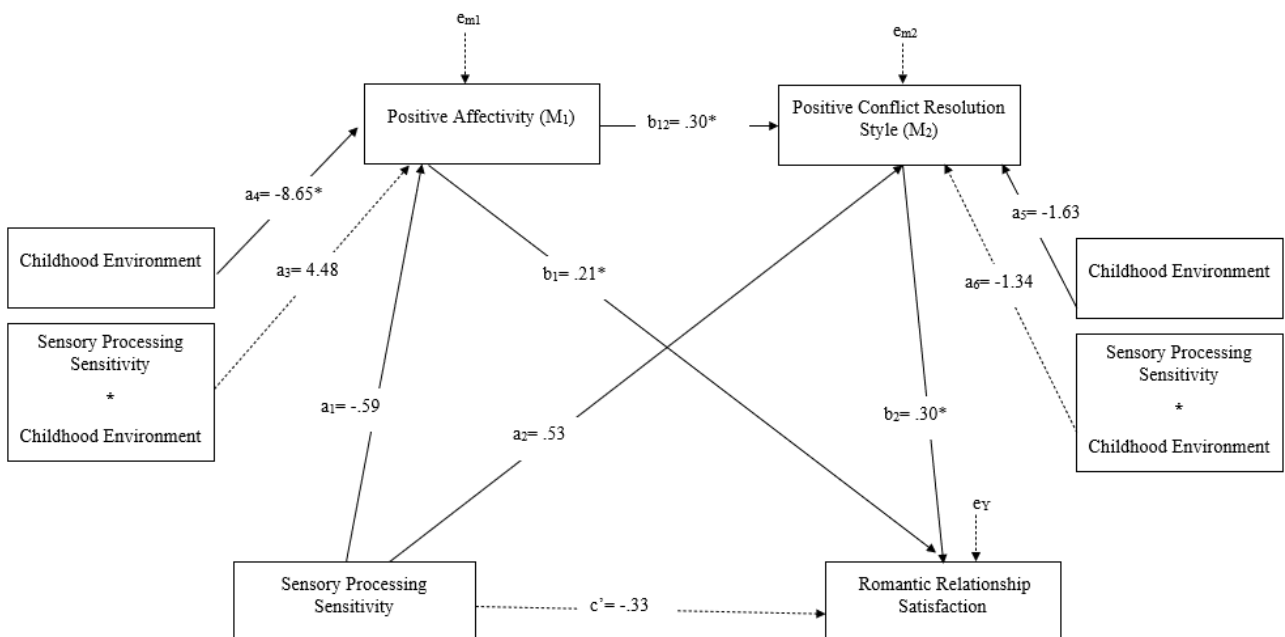
The associations between positive affectivity ($\beta = .21, SE = .08, t = 2.81, p = .0055; 95\% \text{ CI } [.06, .36]$) and relationship satisfaction along with the association between positive conflict resolution style ($\beta = .30, SE = .10, t = 2.95, p = .0035; 95\% \text{ CI } [.09, .49]$) and relationship satisfaction were positively significant. The direct relationship between SPS and

relationship satisfaction was not significant ($\beta = -.33$, $SE = .50$, $t = -.66$, $p = .51$; 95 % CI [-1, .65]).

Index of moderated mediation was not significant for any indirect path. Childhood environment did not moderate (1) the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction through positive affectivity, (2) the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction through positive conflict resolution style and (3) the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction through positive affectivity and positive conflict resolution style (statistical diagram of the model presented as *Figure 4*).

Figure 4

Statistical Diagram of the Model-II



Note. * $p < .05$

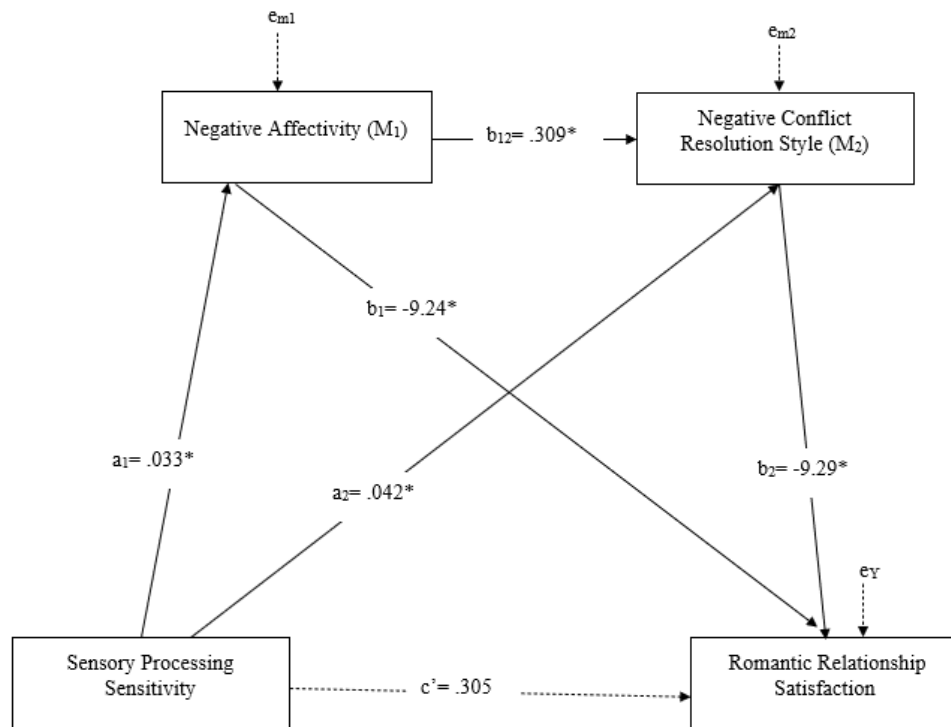
3.2.5. Testing without the Moderator: Serial Multiple Mediation

Since all interactions that include the moderator were not significant but the regression coefficients that link the indirect paths were significant in Model I (see Figure 3.), the model analyzed one more time without the moderator to further explore this mediation. In order to do that, Serial Multiple Mediation analysis was run based on Hayes' Model 6 (Hayes, 2013). Total model explained 13% of the variability in relationship satisfaction ($F(3, 202) = 9.73, p = .0000$). The direct association between SPS and relationship satisfaction was positive but not significant. The results indicated that the negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style mediate the relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction (total indirect effect = $-.81$; 95% CI: $[-1.396, -.362]$). Specifically, negative affectivity can mediate the association between SPS and relationship satisfaction (indirect effect = $-.30$; 95% CI: $[-.663, -.041]$); negative conflict resolution style can mediate the association between SPS and relationship satisfaction (indirect effect = $-.39$; 95% CI $[-.865, -.073]$); and the multiple mediation of negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style on the association between SPS and relationship satisfaction was significant (indirect effect = $-.12$; 95% CI $[-.287, -.019]$). Therefore, hypotheses 1-5 in the first chapter were supported without including the childhood environment (see Figure 5.).

Serial Multiple Mediation analysis was run for the second model (Figure 4.) either, however none of the indirect paths were significant (total indirect effect = $-.11$; 95% CI $[-.629, .317]$).

Figure 5

Statistical Diagram of the Model



Note. * $p < .05$

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Previous research on sensory processing sensitivity (SPS) were mainly focused on negative psychological outcomes that is related to this trait of sensitivity, such as anxiety, stress, pessimism, or neuroticism (Ahadi & Basharpour, 2010; Bakker & Moulding, 2012; Brindle et. al., 2015; Meyer & Carver, 2000). Then SPS has been studied as a risk factor which makes individuals more prone to psychological difficulties when it's combined with adverse experiences (Liss et. al., 2015; Booth et. al., 2015). Later research on SPS suggested that SPS could be a trait that creates differential susceptibility, in other words when sensitivity combined with positive experiences SPS becomes a vantage factor that makes individuals benefit more from nourishing experiences as well (Boniwell, 2015; Slagt et. al., 2018). Findings supporting this claim is limited to only few and question of "Whether SPS is a risk factor or a susceptibility marker" is still a debate. Besides, there are only few studies searching for the associations between SPS and interpersonal relationships and none of them focuses on romantic relationship satisfaction. For this reason, another question, that is "How SPS is related to interpersonal processes?" more specifically "Do Highly Sensitive People differ from non-HSP in terms of romantic relationship satisfaction? If so, how do they differ?" were another starting points of this study.

The present study investigated the associations between SPS and romantic relationship satisfaction for the first time and investigated it through childhood environment, affectivity, and conflict resolution styles. In this way, the present study not only looked for correlations between these variables for the first time but also it searched for mechanisms behind these relationships. The present study contributed to the literature by taking the first steps and

showing a broad picture of how highly sensitive people might differ in their romantic relationships and which mechanisms might play role among these variables.

In the following sections the main findings of the current study will be summarized and explained in the light of relevant literature. Then, clinical implications of the results will be discussed. Finally, limitations of the current study and suggestions for further research will be presented.

4.1. Main Findings

The results indicated that the interaction of SPS and childhood environment on negative affectivity and the interaction of SPS and childhood environment on negative conflict resolution style were not significant (Figure 3.) but both negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style significantly mediates the association between SPS and relationship satisfaction (Figure 5.). In other words, hypotheses of Model I (Figure 1.) were confirmed by the results of this study. However, these hypotheses were proposed as conditional to the moderator negative childhood environment, in this study these hypotheses confirmed irrespective of the degrees of the moderator. These findings are partially congruent with the literature because it has been consistently reported that SPS is associated with negative psychological symptoms either directly or indirectly (Brindle et. al., 2015; Bakker & Moulding, 2012; Liss et. al., 2005). However, some findings suggest that SPS is only associated with negative psychological symptoms when family environment is inadequate or adverse (Aron et. al., 2005; Liss et. al., 2005; Booth et. al., 2015). Interestingly, the current study failed to find the interaction between SPS and childhood environment on negative affectivity even when this interaction was tested as simple moderation model. One reason behind that could be a positivity bias observed in measurement of childhood environment. Positively skewed distribution of RF-Q scores indicates that most of the participants scored the minimum values on negative items

especially the ones including physical or verbal abuse. Another reason behind the insignificant interaction could be that RF-Q is a measure that covers both positive and negative parts of the childhood experiences. Using a measure covering only adverse childhood experiences (e.g., Childhood Trauma Questionnaire) may change the results by making distribution of scores closer to a normal distribution. Another reason for the insignificant interaction could be because childhood environment measured through retrospective self-measure might create a bias especially for highly sensitive people. That is, highly sensitive people are more likely to evaluate experiences from a more negative perspective. Another possibility congruent with the results of the current study can be that SPS could be an independent risk factor beyond childhood environment for developing negative psychological symptoms in accordance with the interpretation of Liss and her colleagues (2005). Our results did not support neither diathesis-stress nor differential susceptibility or vantage sensitivity because SPS did not interact with environment. In short, findings of current study suggests that SPS is a risk factor independent from the environment.

Most importantly, the results show that SPS indirectly predicts romantic relationship satisfaction through negative affectivity; and SPS indirectly predicts romantic relationship satisfaction through negative conflict resolution style; and SPS indirectly predicts romantic relationship satisfaction through negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style. These findings were answered our initial questions which are “Do Highly Sensitive People differ from non-HSP in terms of romantic relationship satisfaction? and If so, how do they differ?”. Finding of the current study indicate that the short answer is “Yes”. The long answer is that as sensitivity increases, negative affectivity increases as well therefore romantic relationship satisfaction decreases. Highly sensitive people reported that they feel more distressed, hostile, nervous or irritable in general and therefore they reported lower satisfaction in their relationship. This finding is congruent with the previous literature on SPS and

attachment. SPS was found to be associated with insecure attachment components (Jerome & Liss, 2005; Meredith et. al., 2016; Levit-Binnun et. al., 2014; Lee & Park, 2020) which could also be related with decreased satisfaction in romantic relationships but not tested yet. Jerome & Liss (2005) showed that as sensitivity increased coping strategy that involves focusing on emotions increased therefore relationship anxiety increased. Similarly in our study, as sensitivity increases, negative conflict resolution styles increase in a relationship therefore relationship satisfaction decreases. In other words, HSP use more of strategies included in negative subscale of CRSS such as raising their voice, shouting, yelling, saying upsetting things, confronting their partner's weaknesses even if it is irrelevant to the subject of matter, threatening their partner with ending the relationship or showing anger physically during conflicts with their partners therefore their satisfaction in relationship decreases. In addition to that highly sensitive people reported feeling more negative emotions in general. Therefore, they use more of negative strategies in conflicts with their partners due to feeling more negative affect, and relationship satisfaction declines for HSP.

Finally, our results showed that there is no direct association between SPS and relationship satisfaction after controlling for negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style. Up till now there were no study testing the associations between SPS and romantic relationship satisfaction. However, Elaine Aron mentioned in her book that she included SPS measure to couple of research on relationships and in line with our findings, she found that there is no direct association between SPS and relationship satisfaction after partialling out the neuroticism (Aron, 2010). Similarly, she did not found association of SPS with closeness, intimacy, or success of a relationship after controlling for neuroticism (Aron, 2010). In addition to that, in current study, the direct effect between SPS and relationship satisfaction was insignificant but positive ($\beta = .31$). This means that there could be other variables between SPS and romantic relationship satisfaction after controlling for negative

affectivity and negative conflict resolution style. Also, among these other variables the ones making this relationship positive are dominant after controlling for negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style. This finding supports the idea that SPS is not necessarily a risk factor, some components of SPS such as empathy, aesthetic sensitivity or awareness of sensory information could be the factors increasing satisfaction for highly sensitive couples. It also supports the idea that SPS is more than just combination of neuroticism and introversion because we did not control for these variables and there is still a positive relationship between SPS and relationship satisfaction. If SPS were just the combination of introversion and neuroticism we would expect a negative relationship. Thus, SPS has some unique components.

From a romantic relationship perspective, literature review suggests that neuroticism and introversion are personality factors that decrease the satisfaction. Therefore, our finding that SPS indirectly predicts relationship satisfaction through negative affectivity is congruent with it. Literature suggests that negative affectivity is an important contributor to the neuroticism and even some researchers agree on that they are the same variables. In addition to that, our findings are congruent with the theory suggesting that conflict resolution style both affected from personality traits and family environment (Mannarini et. al., 2016; Wood & Bell, 2008) because both childhood environment and SPS predicts negative conflict resolution style.

4.2. Clinical Implications

The most important finding of the present study was that SPS predicts negative affectivity and negative conflict resolution style independent from childhood factors therefore decreases the relationship satisfaction. The present study emphasizes the importance of considering SPS as a risk factor by clinicians. Understanding perspective of the sensitive client will contribute to the assessment and treatment of the client by creating better understanding toward the unique experience of the client and by strengthening the therapeutic relationship.

Exploring and expressing how sensitivity could play role in client's life more specifically in close relationships together with the therapist can help client to increase his/her insight and can facilitate the healing process.

Current findings suggest that HSP are more likely to experience negative emotions in general which can affect both how they approach conflicts and HSP's satisfaction in a relationship. HSP can benefit from learning coping skills such as meditation, sports, self-care routines, taking breaks during a difficult task and spending time in a nature for managing the negative emotions and dealing with overarousal. In addition to that, working on identifying and expressing the emotions in a more constructive and less avoiding ways can be beneficial.

The findings also suggest that highly sensitive people are more likely to use destructive strategies when handling conflicts in their romantic relationships. Gottman (1999) suggest that how conflicts are handled in a romantic relationship is crucial for the future of the relationship. Family counselling or couple therapies with HSP should focus on creating insight and working on how individuals can resolve conflicts in a more constructive way. Overall, current study suggests that while working on interpersonal relationships it is important to consider the trait of SPS.

Since high sensitivity is a risk factor in romantic relationships for young adults, it is important to focus on prevention methods as much as intervention methods. During emerging adulthood, individuals have chance to experience various romantic relationships, jobs, and educations (Arnett, 2000). Changes could be a source of increased emotional reactivity and overstimulation for highly sensitive people therefore it is important to take small steps during these changes, planning an anticipated change and having a social support to prevent the negative effects of arousal and emotionality (Aron, 2010).

4.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

All measures in the current study collected from one of the partners. However, especially the sensitivity and subjective evaluation of relationship satisfaction of the other partners in relationship are important as well. The current study was the first steps in this area giving idea about how might HSP differ in their relationships. Further research could consider including the other partner's sensitivity and satisfaction as well.

Results of the current study cannot be generalized to married couples, sample of the current study was comprised of young adults who are in a romantic relationship at least for 24 months and who are unmarried because of the target population. Future research could replicate the findings among married couples because as mentioned in the method section, most of the young adult couples in Turkey are living separately (see Table 2. for the frequency measures of the current study) and start living together only after marriage which could change the results of the current study. In Turkish culture, being married creates a different cultural context that may affect the results; therefore, hypotheses of the current study can be tested among married couples as well in the future.

In the present study interaction effects were not possible to observe. Previous research found that SPS was interacted with negative childhood environment in predicting negative affectivity (Aron et. al., 2005; Liss et. al., 2005). It is important to differentiate whether it is because of the measure that is used that created different results for the current study. The simple moderation model among SPS (X), negative affectivity (Y), and childhood environment (M) can be tested with another measure of childhood environment in Turkish sample. Another reason could be because childhood environment measured through retrospective self-report can create biases. Besides, due to availability of eligible participants through online channel, the sample size was not large enough which could be prevented us to detect interaction effects.

In addition to that data collected through online because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Face-to-face data collection can create more reliable results.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent for Pre-Participation



2009
Psikoloji Bölümü
Department of Psychology

TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ
TEDU UNIVERSITY
ANKARA-TURKEY

GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, TED Üniversitesi, Psikoloji Bölümü'nde yüksek lisans öğrencisi Melis Zorlular tarafından, yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, **olumsuz duygu durum, ilişki doyumu, çocukluk deneyimleri ve diğer bazı psikolojik değişkenler arası ilişkileri** incelemektir. Bu araştırmanın katılımcılarını 18-22 yaş aralığındaki bireyler oluşturmaktadır. Bu araştırmada katılımcılar, kendileri, çocukluk deneyimleri ve içinde buldukları romantik ilişkileri hakkında bir dizi soru yanıtlayacaktır. Araştırmaya katılım yaklaşık 20 dakika sürmektedir. Araştırmaya romantik ilişkinizdeki partnerinizin de katılımını sağlamak amacıyla sizden partnerinizin e-posta adresi ve bir rumuz istenecektir. Bu rumuz hiçbir şekilde bize verdiğiniz iletişim ve kimlik bilgileri ile eşleştirilmeyecektir. Bu araştırmada edinilen bilgiler bir bütün olarak değerlendirilecek, bireysel olarak rapor edilmeyecektir. Edinilen bilgiler araştırmacılar dışında üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılmayacaktır.

Bu formu, onayladığınız takdirde araştırma katılımcısı olacaksınız. Bu çalışma kapsamında verdiğiniz kişisel bilgiler veya kimlik bilgileri araştırma süresince ve sonrasında gizli tutulacak, izniniz dışında paylaşılmayacaktır. Bu araştırmada elde edilen bilimsel bilgiler sadece araştırmacılar tarafından bilimsel yayınlarda ve sunumlarda eğitim amaçlı kullanılacaktır. Toplanan veriler isimsiz olarak bilgisayarda şifreli bir dosyada tutulacaktır.

Bu çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Bu araştırma rahatsızlık verecek nitelikte değildir. Ancak katılımcı herhangi bir neden ötürü rahatsızlık duyar veya ayrılmak isterse, herhangi bir zamanda sebep belirtmeksizin araştırmayı yarıda bırakabilir. Araştırmayı yarıda bırakmanın katılımcı açısından hiçbir olumsuz sonucu yoktur.

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim. Araştırma hakkındaki tüm sorularınız için, bu araştırmayı yürüten Melis Zorlular (E-posta: _____ ve _____ Tuğba Uzer Yıldız (E-posta: _____ ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

Bu arařtırmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediđim zaman yarıda kesip ıkabileceđimi biliyorum. Bu proje kapsamında gereken öleklerin doldurulmasında yer alacađımı biliyorum. Verdiđim bilgilerin bilimsel amalı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

(Katılımcının Adı/Soyadı)

(Tarih)

(İmza)

Arařtırmaya katılımınız ve haklarınızın korunmasına yönelik sorularınız varsa ya da herhangi bir şekilde risk altında olduđunuza veya strese maruz kalacađına inanıyorsanız TED Üniversitesi İnsan Arařtırmaları Etik Kurulu'na eposta adresinden ulařabilirsiniz.

Appendix B: Debriefing Form for Post-Participation

KATILIM SONRASI BİLGİLENDİRME FORMU

Bu araştırma daha önce de belirtildiği gibi TED Üniversitesi Psikoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Melis Zorlular tarafından Tuğba Uzer-Yıldız danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir.

Katıldığınız araştırmanın amacı, içsel ve dışsal uyanları duysal işleme hassasiyeti yüksek olan bireylerin, çocukluk deneyimleri, olumsuz duygulanımları ve çatışma çözme stilleri aracılığıyla romantik ilişkilerinde deneyimledikleri doyumunu incelemektir. Literatürde duysal işleme hassasiyeti yüksek kişiler yani bir uyarını işleme eşiği düşük olan ve daha yoğun olarak işleyen kişiler olumsuz çocukluk deneyimlerinden hassasiyeti düşük kişilere oranla daha çok etkileniyorlar. Bunun sonucunda olumsuz duygu durumlarını daha çok deneyimlemeleri bekleniyor. Aynı zamanda duysal işleme hassasiyeti yüksek kişiler, görece düşük dozdaki uyarılmaya karşı kolaylıkla rahatsızlık duyabilmekte ve kaçınabilmektedirler. Bu nedenle, romantik ilişkilerinde olumsuz çatışma çözme stillerini ve/veya kaçınma stilini kullanmaları olasıdır. Bu çalışma, duysal işleme hassasiyeti yüksek kişilerin deneyimledikleri olumsuz duygulanım ve çatışma çözme stillerine bağlı olarak kendilerinin ve partnerlerinin ilişkiden aldıkları doyumun değişip değişmeyeceği incelenmektedir. Bu amaçla, yukarıda bahsi geçen psikolojik değişkenleri ölçmeyi amaçlayan bir dizi ölçek sunuldu.

Bu çalışmadan alınacak ilk verilerin Mayıs 2021 sonunda elde edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Elde edilen bilgiler sadece bilimsel araştırma ve yazılarda kullanılacaktır. Çalışmanın sağlıklı ilerleyebilmesi ve bulguların güvenilir olması için çalışmaya katılacağınızı bildiğiniz diğer kişilerle çalışma ile ilgili **detaylı bilgi paylaşımında bulunmamanızı** dileriz. Bu araştırmaya katıldığınız için tekrar çok teşekkür ederiz.

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

Melis Zorlular
Tuğba Uzer-Yıldız

Çalışmaya katkıda bulunan bir gönüllü olarak katılımcı haklarınızla ilgili veya etik ilkelerle ilgili soru veya görüşlerinizi TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'na iletebilirsiniz. E-posta:

Appendix C: Highly Sensitive Person Scale

Duyusal İşleme Hassasiyeti Ölçeği

| | 1=Bana hiç uymuyor | 2 | 3 | 4=Bana kısmen uyuyor | 5 | 6 | 7=Bana tamamen uyuyor |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Güçlü uyarıcılardan (örneğin parlak ışık, yüksek ses, yoğun koku) hemen rahatsız olurum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Çevremdeki fark etmesi zor detayları hemen fark ederim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Etrafımdaki insanların ruh hali beni etkiler. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Acı veya ağrıya karşı fazla duyarlıyım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Yoğun günlerimdeyken; yatağında, karanlık bir odada veya yalnız kalabileceğim ve huzur bulabileceğim herhangi bir yerde kabuğuma çekilme ihtiyacı hissederim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Kafeinin etkilerine karşı çok hassasım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Parlak ışıklar, yoğun kokular, kaba kumaşlar ya da yakınımnda çalan bir siren gibi şeylerden anında rahatsız olurum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Zengin ve karmaşık bir iç dünyam var. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Şiddetli gürültüden/sesten çok çabuk rahatsız olurum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 10. Sanat ya da m¼zik beni derinden etkiler. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Bazen sinir sistemim o kadar yıpranır ki kendimi toplamak için hemen başımı alıp gitmek zorunda kalırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. Dikkatli ve özenliyimdir. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. Beklenmedik ses ve hareketlerde kolayca irkilirim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. Kısa zamanda çok iş yapmam gerektiğinde elim ayağıma dolanır. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. İnsanlar buldukları fiziksel ortamdan rahatsız olduklarında, ortamı rahat hale getirmek için ne yapılması gerektiğini tahmin ederim (ışıkları ayarlamak ya da oturma yerlerini değiştirmek gibi). | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. İnsanlar beni aynı anda birçok şey yapmaya zorladıklarında sinirlenirim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. Hata yapmamak veya bir şeyleri unutmamak için çok çabalarım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 18. Şiddet içerikli filmleri ve TV programlarını izlemekten özellikle kaçınıyorum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. Etrafımda aynı anda birçok şey birden olduğunda fena halde rahatsız olurum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. Çok aç olmak bende konsantrasyonumun düşmesi veya ruh halimin bozulması gibi güçlü tepkilere yol açar. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. Hayatımda değişiklik olması beni fazlasıyla etkiler/sarsar. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. Güzel kokuları, tatları, sesleri ve sanat eserlerini hemen fark eder ve bunlardan keyif alırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. Aynı anda birçok şeyin olmasından hoşlanmam. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. Hayatımı, üzüntü veren ve beni bunaltan durumlardan kaçınacak şekilde düzenlemeye öncelik veririm. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. Yüksek ses ya da karmaşık ortamlar gibi kuvvetli uyarıcılardan rahatsız olurum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

26. Bir yarışmada olduğumda ya da bir görevi yaparken gözlemlendiğimde, o kadar gerilir ve etkilenirim ki normalde yapacağımdan daha kötü performans sergilerim.

27. Ben çocukken, ailem veya öğretmenlerim beni hassas ya da utangaç biri olarak görürlerdi.

Appendix D: Risky Families Questionnaire (RF-Q)

| | 1=Hiç | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5=Çok sıklıkla |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Ne sıklıkla ebeveynlerinizden biri ya da evdeki bir başka yetişkin tarafından sevildiğinizi, desteklendiğinizi ve ilgi gördüğünüzü hissettiniz? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Ne sıklıkla ebeveynlerinizden biri ya da evdeki bir başka yetişkin size küfretti, hakaret etti, aşağıladı ya da kendinizi tehdit altında hissettirecek biçimde davrandı? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Ne sıklıkla ebeveynlerinizden biri ya da evdeki bir başka yetişkin size fiziksel olarak sevgi (örneğin, kucaklaşmak ya da sıcaklık ve sevgi içeren diğer davranışlar) gösterdi? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Ne sıklıkla ebeveynlerinizden biri ya da evdeki bir başka yetişkin sizi itti, zorla tuttu, sert bir şekilde dürttü ya da tokat attı? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Ne sıklıkla ebeveynlerinizden biri ya da evdeki bir başka yetişkin bir aile üyesine ya da dışarıdan gelen bir misafire karşı şiddet gösterdi? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Ne sıklıkla ebeveynleriniz arasında anlaşmazlık, tartışma veya bağırışma olurdu? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. Ne sıklıkla siz ve ebeveynlerinizden biri arasında anlaşmazlık, tartışma veya bağırma olurdu?

8. Ne sıklıkla ebeveynlerinizden biri ve bir kardeşiniz arasında anlaşmazlık, tartışma veya bağırma olurdu?

9. Ne sıklıkla bir kardeşiniz ile sizin aranızda anlaşmazlık, tartışma veya bağırma olurdu?

10. İçinde büyüdüğünüz ev için ne derece kaotik ve düzensiz diyebilirsiniz?

11. Çocukluğunuzda alkolik veya uyuşturucu madde kullanan biri ile yaşadınız mı?

12. İçinde büyüdüğünüz evin ne derece düzenli ve başarıyla çekip çevrilen bir yer olduğunu söyleyebilirsiniz?

13. Büyürken ihmal edildiğinizi veya kendi kendinizi korumak durumunda kaldığınızı söyleyebilir misiniz?

Appendix E: Conflict Resolution Styles Scale

| | 1=Hiç uymuyor | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5=Tamamen uyuyor |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Tartışma esnasında konuyla ilgisiz de olsa zayıflıklarımı yüzüne vururum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2) Kavganın büyümemesi için onun istediği şeyleri yaparım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3) Çok sinirlenmişsem konuşmayı ertelerim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4) Sorun durumunda pek çok şeyi içime atabilirim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5) Sorunun uzamadan çözülebilmesi için kaynağını bulmaya çalışırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6) Sinirlendiğimde kırıcı şeyler söylerim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7) Problemi büyütmemek için onu sakinleştirmeye çalışırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8) Sesimi yükselterek beni dinlemesini sağlamaya çalışırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9) Tartışmada ortak bir çözüm noktası bulmaya çalışırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10) Çok büyük sorunlar yaşadığımız zaman ondan uzak durmaya çalışırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11) Sorun çözümlenmeden tartışmayı sonlandırmam. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

| | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 12) Bağırıp çağırarak istediğimi yaptırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13) Sorunun tüm yönlerini tartışma sırasında konuşmak isterim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14) Sevgilimi ilişkiyi bitirmekle tehdit ederim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15) Bana bağırdığında onun olmadığı bir odaya geçerim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16) Kavgalarımız sırasında kızgınlığımı fiziksel olarak gösteririm. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17) İlişkide sorun yaşanmaması için kendimden ödün veririm. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18) Sorun yaşadığımızda sevgilimin yanından uzaklaşıyorum. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19) Sorunun çözülmesine yardımcı olacağına inanırsam durumu alttan alırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20) Onun olumsuz tepkilerine karşılık vermeyerek problemin büyümemesini sağlamaya çalışırım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21) Çok gergin olduğumuzda susarım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22) Bir problem yaşandığında, konuyla ilgili düşündüğüm her şeyi açıklarım. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23) Eğer çok sinirlenmişsem, sinirim geçene kadar konuşmayı reddederim. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

24) Bir problem yaşandığında, kendimi sevgilimin yerine koyarak onun ne düşündüğünü anlamaya çalışırım.



25) Sürekli imalarda bulunurum.



Appendix F: Ethical Committee Approval

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 11/08/2020-1602



TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ

TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu

Sayı : 27535802-050.03.04/
Konu : İAEK Başvurunuz

Sayın Doç. Dr. Tuğba Uzer YILDIZ
Psikoloji Bölümü - Öğretim Üyesi

İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul kararımız ektedir.
Bilgilerinize sunarım.
Saygılarımla,

İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu
TİK Kararı Kararları

2020/05

TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK
KURULU
ETİK KURUL KARARLARI

Toplantı Tarihi 29.07.2020
Toplantı Sayısı 2020/05
Toplantı Yeri Dekanlık Toplantı Odası
Toplantı Saati 10:00
Toplantıya Katılanlar

Raporlar

Gönderen _____; Ted Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Toplantılarında COVID-19 salgını nedeniyle online toplantılar yapılarak kararlar toplu olarak yapıldı e-irada ile inceleme edilmiştir.

G.55 _____; TED Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Psikoloji Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi Doç. Dr. Tuğba Uzer YILDIZ'ın " Duyusal İşleme Hassasiyeti, Negatif Duygulanım ve Çabısma Çözüm Stratjilerinin İlişki Doyumu Üzerindeki Etkisinin İncelenmesi " başlıklı çalışmasının onay önerisi görülmüştür.

Karar 55 _____; TED Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Psikoloji Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi Doç. Dr. Tuğba Uzer YILDIZ'ın " Duyusal İşleme Hassasiyeti, Negatif Duygulanım ve Çabısma Çözüm Stratjilerinin İlişki Doyumu Üzerindeki Etkisinin İncelenmesi " başlıklı çalışmasının araştırma etiğine uygun olduğuna

UYBİRLİĞİ İLE KARAR VERİLDİ