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## RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS AND SATISFACTION OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MATE SELECTION ATTITUDE AND MEANING OF MARRIAGE\*

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### Abstract

Initiating and maintaining a romantic relationship is at the center of developing individuals' life in the process of transition to adulthood. Therefore, an important dimension of university students' experiences includes romantic relationships and romantic interests. In this study, it is aimed to investigate the mediating role of the meaning of marriage and attitudes about romance and mate selection in the relationship between irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction. Analysis were done within the framework of Structural Equation Model. The data were collected by "Personal Information Form", "Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire", "Relationship Satisfaction Scale", "Attitudes about Romance and Mate Selection Scale" and "The Scale of the Meaning of Marriage" from 466 university students. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Path Analysis and Bootstrapping Test were used to test the aims of the study. In the established structural equation model, it is seen that the meaning of marriage and attitudes about romance and mate selection has a partial mediator role in the relationship between irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction. According to the results of road analysis, the direct effect of irrational romantic relationship beliefs on relationship satisfaction is high, individuals with irrational romantic relationship beliefs had limited restrictive beliefs in the mate selection and the meaning they attributed to marriage. Besides, individuals with high irrational beliefs in romantic relationships and restrictive beliefs in the mate selection and the meaning they attributed to marriage, has lower relationship satisfaction. Consequently, the fit indices of the model tested are acceptable. It is thought that identifying the romantic relationship beliefs of university students will help to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviors of young people who have difficulties in romantic relationships.

**Keywords:** Relationship Beliefs, University Students, Relationship Satisfaction, Mate Selection, Marriage

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## INTRODUCTION

The romantic relationship, which is evaluated within the scope of intimate relationships, is a commitment that increases the self-confidence, strengthens the concept of individuality and enables individuals to develop more positive personalities by helping them mature emotionally (Pines, 2010). According to Sternberg (1986), intimate relationship represents an emotional commitment based on mutual understanding and communication. Romantic relationship is defined as a relationship made up of the combination of passion, consistency and intimacy that develops between a man and a woman. One of the primary variables that determines the quality of romantic relationships is relationship satisfaction. Randall and Bodenmann (2017) explains the relationship satisfaction as the correlation between the expectations of a person and the behavior of their partner. People with satisfactory relationships have been observed to feel happier and healthier (Dönmez, 2009). However, although a healthy romantic relationship is directly related to the satisfaction level of the relationship, when people cease to be satisfied with their relationships, they develop dysfunctional beliefs (Cheie & Miu, 2016). Therefore, it is important to investigate the factors that affect the level of satisfaction/contentment in relationships.

### *Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Satisfaction*

The related literature often emphasizes that the beliefs of individuals about romantic relationships affect the quality of the relationship; therefore, it is important to focus on fundamental beliefs (Moss & Willoughby, 2016). The beliefs about relationship also provide information about the content of future relationships of individuals (Duck & Wright, 1993). Romantic relationship beliefs are the perceptions and expectations of a relationship and they are classified as functional and dysfunctional beliefs (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). Relationship satisfaction was found to be related to future time orientation, talking, conflict resolution response, communication styles (Olderbak & Igueredo, 2009) and attachment styles (Towler & Stuhlmacher, 2013) in relationships.

In various studies conducted to determine the variables associated with relationship satisfaction, one of the most important variables predicting relationship satisfaction seems to be irrational beliefs about romantic relationships (Moss & Willoughby, 2016; Stackert & Bursik, 2003; Sullivan & Schwebel, 1995). Irrational beliefs are exaggerated, unrealistic and rigid beliefs that are resistant to change towards relationships and partners. These beliefs are irrational and resistant to change. In other words, restrictive beliefs about mate selection are personal beliefs that restrict and prevent individuals' choices about when and with whom to marry, their efforts to find suitable spouses, and the ability to produce different solutions to problems related to mate selection (Larson & Holman, 1994). Individuals with these kinds of beliefs have low levels of relationship satisfaction and more problems in their relationships (Christian, OLeary & Vivian, 1994). Non-functional relationship beliefs are related to cognitive schemas that individuals have and are based on false or distorted expectations and judgments (Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1992; Kurdek, 1992). These beliefs often develop through observing parents' relationships and other couples or through the media (Haferkamp, 1999; Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Non-functional romantic relationship beliefs in particular, have a significant impact on relationship satisfaction, loyalty and trust (Epstein & Eidelson, 1982). It causes various communication conflicts (Metts & Cupach, 1990), negative problem solving behavior (Knee, 1998) or low relationship satisfaction (Sullivan & Schwebel, 1995) in romantic relationships. In short, beliefs affect emotions and behavior, which in turn significantly affects the degree of satisfaction in the relationship (Cobb, Larson & Watson, 2003). Studies show that non-functional marital beliefs tend to reduce relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships (Körük & Kurt, 2019, 1982; Kurdek, 1993). Therefore, determining the romantic relationship beliefs of individuals makes it much easier to understand their explicit and conscious expectations about their subjective romantic relationships and social behavior (Miga, Hare, Allen & Manning, 2010).

### *Mate Selection Attitude and Meaning of Marriage*

The beliefs that individuals have about a relationship can be the determinant of how they will direct the relationship (Willoughby, Hall & Luczak, 2015). In this sense, one of the variables discussed in the study is the meaning attributed to marriage. In general terms, the concept of marriage is a process of unity where two people with different demands, needs and desires unite within the framework of social rules and laws and establish intimate relationships with one another (Koçyiğit & Kalkan, 2016). Beliefs and schemas the individuals develop with respect to marriage, affect the meaning they attribute to marriage and consequently their behavior in marriage (Mohammadi & Soleymani, 2017). After completing certain



developmental phases, individuals usually feel the need to share their lives with another individual and then marry someone they deem appropriate for themselves (Chen, Austin, Miller & Piercy, 2015; Ondaş, 2007). There are various opinions about the average age range in which individuals usually decide to marry. According to Arnett (2000), individuals go into adulthood between the ages of 18-25 and make their decisions to marry in these age ranges. In a study conducted with university students about marriage and choosing a mate in order to determine the function and importance of marriage (Özgül, 2009), 68% of the students answered the question of why marriage is necessary, by saying it's because of the desire to share their lives with another person. The percentage of answers which were also among the options such as having a child, not being alone in the future, the fact that sexual intercourse is allowed in marriage and familial pressure, were lower. 10% of the students stated that they do not believe that marriage is necessary. In a similar study, 84% of the students said that they considered getting married because they wanted to share their lives with a spouse, 11% because they did not want to be alone and due to traditions and 5% because they wanted to have children (Durmazkul-Dursun, 1991).

### *Romantic Relationships of University Students*

With regards to the developmental periods of university students, one of the most common reasons for university students to apply to university counseling and guidance centers was stated to be the difficulties they had experienced in romantic relationships. On the other hand, when the national and international literature is examined, there are many studies focusing on the non-functional relationship beliefs of married individuals, but a very limited number of studies on the non-functional relationship beliefs of university students (Küçükarslan, 2011). Especially the romantic relationships experienced during university years, which include the emerging adulthood, are very important in terms of determining the quality of partner relationships and mate choices in later years (Furman, 2002). The experiences pertaining to romantic relationships in this period have an important effect on the formation and maintenance of marriage (Sprecher & Regan, 2002). Greenberg & Nay (1982) emphasize that obtaining information about the beliefs of university students regarding marriage is important for three reasons. First, the beliefs students have about marriage are not currently known; second, individuals' beliefs about marriage affect their choice of partner, the age they will marry, their expectations from marriage, their behavior in marriage and ultimately their marital satisfaction. The third reason is, defining marital beliefs helps determine the content of family life education.

Based on these contexts, the aim of this study is to test the theoretical model developed for the mediating role of the meaning attributed to marriage and the restrictive belief with respect to mate selection, on the connection between university students' irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction. The following hypothesis was created in the model established in line with the main purpose of the study: "Do the meaning attributed to marriage and the restrictive belief with respect to mate selection have a mediating role in the relationship between the irrational romantic relationship beliefs and the relationship satisfaction of university students?" The structural model constructed in the research is presented in Figure 1

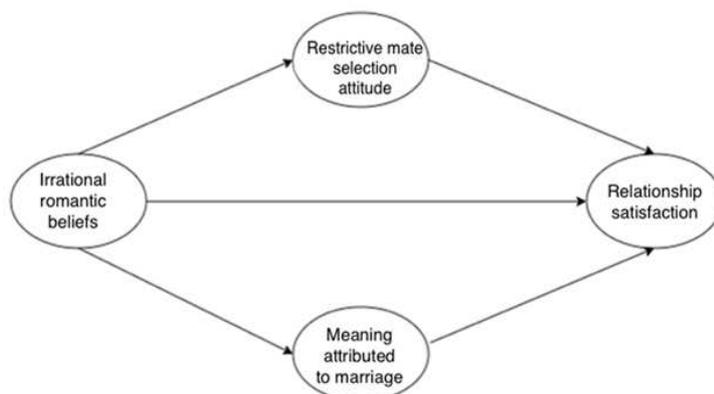


Figure 1. Hypothetical Model Related to the Study



## METHOD

### *Research Design*

The analysis of the study was carried out with the structural equation model. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is one of the comprehensive statistical techniques used to test the causal and correlational relationships between observed and unobserved (latent) variables (Hoyle, 1995; Yılmaz, 2004). In other words, the structural equation model combines the predictor structural relationship between the variables in the regression model and the latent factor structures in factor analysis in a comprehensive analysis (Sümer, 2000). In SEM, detailed presentation of all parameters related to the relationships between variables in the model is called model building (Şimşek, 2007). In this study, the review of Hooper et al. (2008) was taken into consideration for the evaluation of the fit indices. On the other hand, the Bootstrapping test was used to test whether the mediation was significant.

### *Sampling and Participants*

The related literature shows that romantic relationships constitute an important part of the lives of university students (Demir, 2008) and 65% of university students experience at least one romantic relationship during the course of their education (Collins, 2003). In line with this information, the sample of the study was selected from among university students and the study group consisted of students studying at public universities in Istanbul. A total of 466 students, 348 (68%) female and 118 (32%) male, participated in the study. The age range of the group was between 18-35 and the average was 20 years.

### *Research Instruments and Procedures*

Within the scope of the research, "Personal Information Form," "Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire," "Relationship Assessment Scale," "Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale" and "Meaning Attributed to Marriage Scale" were used as data collection tools.

*Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire:* The Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire (RBQ) was developed to measure basic non-functional relationship beliefs for romantic relationships. The Turkish adaptation and validity and reliability studies of the questionnaire were carried out by Gizir (2012). As a result of confirmatory factor analysis of the RBQ, the questionnaire was found to have been divided into 6 factors determined by 37 items. The minimum score to be obtained from the Turkish version of the RBQ, which uses a 5-point Likert-type rating, is 37 and the maximum score is 185. High scores on the questionnaire point to the existence of irrational romantic relationship beliefs. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients of the factors in the questionnaire according to the results of the reliability studies of the RBQ, range between .79 and .85. The Cronbach's alpha value obtained from the total score of the questionnaire is .95 and these values indicate that the RBQ has a high degree of reliability.

*Relationship Assessment Scale:* It is a seven-point 7-point Likert-type scale with 7 items developed to measure relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. The factor analysis showed that the scale was collected under a single factor. Internal consistency coefficient of RAS is .86. Two items of the scale are scored inversely. Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$  for parents, .87 for friends, and .90 for romantic partners. The increase in the total score obtained from the scale indicates an increase in relationship satisfaction.

*Attitudes About Romance and Mate Selection Scale:* This scale was developed by Cobb, Larson, and Watson (2003) to measure restrictive beliefs in mate selection. Turkish adaptation and validity and reliability studies of the scale were carried out by Güngör, Yılmaz and Çelik (2011). The scale consists of 32 items and 7 sub-dimensions, as it does in the original version. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be  $\alpha = .65$ . The internal consistency coefficients of the sub-scales of the ARMSS range between .33 and .98.

*Meaning Attributed to Marriage Scale:* This scale was developed by Özabacı, Körük and Kara (2018) in order to determine the meaning attributed to the concept of marriage by individuals. The scale consists of 31 items and 9 sub-dimensions and is a 5-point Likert-type scale. Two general total scores, as the score of positive and negative meanings attributed to marriage, are obtained from the scale and each factor is also scored within itself. If an individual gets higher than 69 points in the positive meaning score indicates that they generally attribute a positive meaning to marriage and if an individual gets higher than 24 points in the negative meaning score, it indicates that they attribute a negative meaning to marriage. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of ARMSS was determined as .80, and this value was found to range between .41 and .77 in the sub-factors. These values indicate that ARMSS has an acceptable level of reliability.



### Data Analysis and Interpretation

The theoretical model developed for the mediating role of the meaning attributed to marriage and the restrictive belief with respect to mate selection, on the connection between university students' irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction, was tested with the structural equation modeling in this study. Before the statistical analysis phase, the data were examined in terms of normality, loss values and the existence of extreme values and the skewness and kurtosis values of the variables were found to be between -1 and +1. After the data set was found to meet the assumptions in question, the relationships between the variables of "irrational romantic relationship beliefs, meaning attributed to marriage, mate selection attitudes and relationship satisfaction" were first tested with Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Technique and then the analyses of structural equation modeling and mediator variable were conducted.

Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria were taken into consideration while examining the role of the proposed variables. First, the relationship between independent and dependent variables should be significant. Second, the relationship between the mediating variable and the independent variable should be significant. Third, there should be a significant relationship between the independent variable, the mediating variable and the dependent variable. And finally, when the regression analysis is performed simultaneously on the mediator variable and the independent variable, the significant relationship between the independent and dependent variable should no longer be significant or the previous level of significance should be reduced. In the study, after these conditions were met, the comparison of the model fit started. Lastly, the Bootstrapping test was performed to examine the effect of mediator variables. SPSS 15 and Mplus 6.12 package software were used for the analyses of the study. The results of the analyses are presented in the findings section.

### RESULTS

In this part where the findings obtained as a result of statistical analyzes are given, the correlation between the variables was first analyzed with Pearson correlation test. All p values were considered to be two-sided and  $p < .01$  was considered to be significant. All correlation results were found to be on the theoretically expected direction and yielded significant results. The correlation values between the variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Values of Variables

Factor	Mean	Sd.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Satisfaction	32.54	9.53	1	.303**	-.087	-.213**	-.187**
2. Positive meaning	85.53	12.08		1	-.352**	.481**	.393**
3. Negative meaning	29.80	3.78			1	.156**	.141**
4. Irrational belief	105.27	30.11				1	.559**
5. Mate selection attitude	101.44	11.89					1

\*\* $P < .01$  significance level

In order to be able to conduct the analyses on the mediating role of the meaning attributed to marriage and the restrictive belief with respect to mate selection, on the connection between university students' irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction, which is the main purpose of the study, the correlation values should be appropriate. As can be seen in Table 1, there is a positive correlation between the relationship satisfaction of the participants and the positive meaning attributed to the relationship. In other words, as the positive meaning attributed to the relationship increases, the satisfaction received from the relationship also increases. On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and negative meaning attributed to relationship, irrational romantic relationship beliefs and restrictive mate selection attitude. In this context, as the negative meaning attributed to the marriage, the irrational romantic beliefs and the restrictive mate selection attitudes increase, the relationship satisfaction decreases. After these significant relationships, the testing phase of the model was started.



### Mediation Test with Structural Equation Modeling

The existence of the mediating role of the meaning attributed to marriage and the restrictive belief with respect to mate selection, on the connection between university students' irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction, was investigated with path analysis method. The established structural path analysis model was tested using Mplus 6.12 package software. Due to the fact that using structural equation modeling in mediation tests yields more reliable results than linear regression analysis (Meydan & Şeşen, 2011), a path analysis model was established in this research. The first model is presented in Figure 2.

Model 1. The Model Regarding the Correlation Between Irrational Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Relationship Satisfaction (\*\*p<.01).



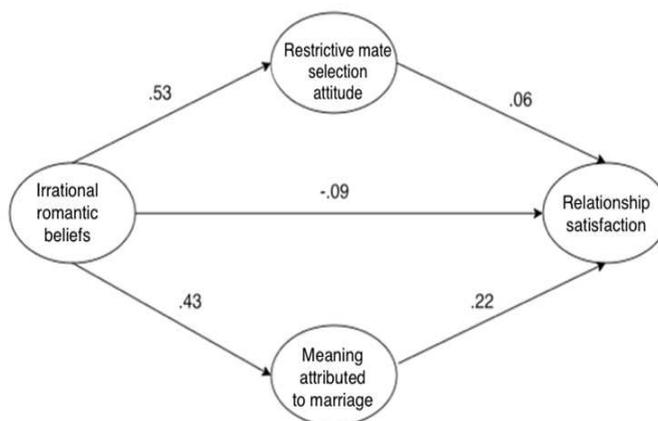
Upon examination of Model 1 the correlation between irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction was found to be significant ( $r=.21$ ;  $p<.001$ ). The compatibility values of this model are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Results Regarding Fit Values of Irrational Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Relationship Satisfaction Model

	Model	Excellent fit indicator criteria	Good fit indicator criteria
$\chi^2/sd$	3.62	$\leq 3$	$3 < \chi^2/sd \leq 5$
RMSEA	0.052	$\leq .05$	$.05 < RMSEA \leq .08$
GFI	.95	$\geq .95$	$.90 \leq GFI < .95$
NFI	.93	$\geq .95$	$.90 \leq GFI < .95$
CFI	.98	$\geq .95$	$.90 \leq GFI < .95$

As shown in the table, the fit values of the model are within acceptable limits [ $\chi^2/sd=3.62$ ;  $p<.01$ ;  $GFI=.95$ ;  $CFI=.98$ ;  $NFI=.93$ ;  $RMSEA=.052$ ]. Following this process, the model was re-established by including the variables of restrictive beliefs in the attitude of the mate selection and the meaning attributed to the marriage. Accordingly;

Model 2. Irrational Romantic Relationship Beliefs-Relationship Satisfaction- The Meaning Attributed to Marriage-Restrictive Belief in the Attitude of Mate Selection Structural Equation Modeling ( $p<.05^*$ )





In the second model, the meaning attributed to the marriage and the restricting belief in the attitude of the mate selection were included in the model as mediating variables. When the model was examined, both variables were seen to have partial mediator role effect. In this context, while in the first model the correlation was ( $r=.21$ ), due the mediator role of variables, it decreased to ( $r=.09$ ). Therefore, it is possible to say that restrictive belief in the attitude of the mate selection and the meaning attributed to the marriage have a partial mediator role effect on the correlation between irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction. The fit values of this model are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results Regarding Fit Values of Irrational Romantic Relationship Beliefs-Relationship Satisfaction-The Meaning Attributed to Marriage-Restrictive Belief in Attitude of Mate Selection Model

	Model	Excellent fit indicator criteria	Good fit indicator criteria
$\chi^2//sd$	3.49	$\leq 3$	$3 < \chi^2//sd \leq 5$
RMSEA	0.075	$\leq .05$	$.05 < RMSEA \leq .08$
GFI	.93	$\geq .95$	$.90 \leq GFI < .95$
NFI	.92	$\geq .95$	$.90 \leq GFI < .95$
CFI	.97	$\geq .95$	$.90 \leq GFI < .95$

As shown in the table, the fit values of the model are within acceptable limits [ $\chi^2/sd=3.49$ ;  $p<.01$ ;  $GFI=.93$ ;  $CFI=.97$ ;  $NFI=.92$ ;  $RMSEA=.075$ ].

Table 4. Bootstrapping of the Model

Model Paths			95% BCa Confidence Interval		
Model 2		Coefficient	Low	High	
Direct					
MAMS	RAS	.237	.141	.314	
RMSS	RAS	-.400	-.478	-.318	
RBQ	RAS	.213	.133	.293	
Indirect					
RBQ	MAMS-RMSS	RAS	.052	.011	.148

When Table 4 that shows the results of the bootstrapping process is examined, the total values of both directly and indirectly measured coefficients in the model prove to be significant (bootstrap coefficient model=.052, 95% G.A.= 011, .148). According to the results obtained, restrictive belief in the attitude of the mate selection and the meaning attributed to the marriage have a partial mediator role effect on the correlation between irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction.

## DISCUSSION

Human life is a complex and colorful process in which various decisions are made, some can be implemented and some disappear without implementation. School, profession and mate selection are some of the important that can affect the individuals' life in the long term. The basic decision to be made by the individual before choosing a mate is about whether to get married or not. Attitude is the learned tendency that leads the individual to certain actions against people, objects and situations. People are not born with attitudes, attitudes are learned later. While attitudes can be directed to many cases, the object of the attitude can be marriage. Thus, attitudes or attitudes about marriage arise (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2003). Especially demographic and social variables significantly affect young adults' meanings of marriage, beliefs about marriage and attitudes towards the marriage institution (Peters, 2018).



Social support resources such as family and school have an important role in learning values (Sarı, 2005). Individuals develop attitudes based on different experiences depending on the messages they receive. The influence of friends, teachers or managers is important in shaping the person's attitudes and behaviors (Tissington, 2008). In summary, university students who are young adults may receive different messages about marriage from various sources. These messages can be effective in shaping young adults' view of marriage. As it is known, young adults face developmental problems such as academic problems, personal, emotional and social adjustment; choice of profession, identity development, establishing close relationships with the opposite sex (Salmelo-Aro, Aunola & Nurmi, 2007). Among these problems, identity development and close relationship with the opposite sex are particularly striking. Because, romantic relationship is seen as a must-have experience for young adult individuals (Carver, Joyner & Udry, 2003). On the other hand, while university students take very different responsibilities and face various problems common in the university environment; they try to establish a close relationship with others. Since romantic relationships play a central role in the life and development of university students, young adults see romantic relationships as one of the most important experiences of their own lives (Shurts, 2004). The ability to establish and maintain such relationships is an important determinant of successful emotional adjustment and positive mental health among young adults. Messages received from different sources related to marriage may affect the relationship of young adults with the opposite sex, the health and duration of this relationship and whether the relationship will result in marriage (Collins, Cooper, Albino & Allard, 2002).

Romantic relationships in young adulthood have important effects for both the individual and the society. While successful romantic relationships increase the well-being, difficulties in such relationships can lead to both physical and emotional distress. In short, marriage attitude is not a structure that suddenly appears. It can be said that learning experiences are effective in the formation of marriage attitude, as in other attitudes. Healthy development of university students includes the development of successful close relationships. Students who fail to establish this close relationship may face the risk of experiencing a range of relational and mental health problems (Shurts, 2004). Learning experiences that are effective in the development of marriage attitude and messages received from the environment related to marriage can affect whether the individual marries and continues his marriage in a healthy way. Marriage, which is one of the forms of relationship that the individual can meet his needs, contributes to the fact that the person provides material and moral satisfaction, fulfills his social duties and adapts to the environmental environment in which he lives and becomes a useful individual (Çelik, 2006).

When the literature was examined, it was seen that each of the variables of this research was used in different studies; however, no research was found on the mediator role effect of restrictive belief in the attitude of the mate selection and the meaning attributed to the marriage on the correlation between irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction of university students. Based on these contexts, this study aims to test the theoretical model developed for the mediating role of the meaning attributed to marriage and the restrictive belief with respect to mate selection, on the connection between university students' irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction. The analysis of the study was carried out with the structural equation model. The participants of the research are students who continue their education in public universities in Istanbul. Upon examination of the study, it was seen that the number of female participants were bigger than male participants; it is possible to say that this is related to the male/female ratio in the faculties where the practices were carried out. When the reliability of the scales used in the study was examined, these values are important in terms of the reliability of the scales used in the study. The findings obtained as a result of the analyses conducted within the scope of the study were presented in relation to different studies using these variables.

For the main purpose of the study, the relationships between the variables were discussed one by one at first. In this direction, it was observed that the irrational romantic relationship beliefs, which were determined as predictor variables, had a negative effect on the relationship satisfaction, which was the predicted variable. In this context, it is seen that as irrational romantic beliefs of individuals increase, their relationship satisfaction decreases. In the study conducted by Romans and DeBord (1996), a number of irrational beliefs that affect the quality of a relationship were determined and expressed as "we must meet all the needs of each other," "we must do everything together," "we should always be open to each other." There are many studies in the literature that reveal the predictor power of dysfunctional beliefs on relationship satisfaction (Stackert & Bursik, 2003; Sullivan & Schwebel, 1995). When the literature is examined with respect to these results, it is seen that there is an inverse relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction, meaning that if one increases, the other decreases or one



decreases and the other increases (Yüzer, 2005). Therefore, it is possible to say that the findings of this study are similar to the literature (Küçükarslan & Gizir, 2013; Hamamcı, 2005; Saraç, Hamamcı & Güçray, 2015; Sarı, 2008).

According to the findings of the research conducted by Stackert and Bursik (2003), there was a negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and some of the relationship beliefs variables. In general terms, stronger commitment to irrational relationship beliefs was associated with decreased relationship satisfaction for both men and women. According to the findings of the study of Saraç, Hamamcı and Güçray (2015), "Thinking Differently" is the primary sub-dimension of the relationship beliefs scale that predicts the relationship satisfaction. In this study, it was found that as the score the students obtained from the Thinking Differently sub-dimension increased, the relationship satisfaction decreased. The second sub-dimension of the scale is "Excessive Expectations." Findings of this variable showed that as the scores obtained from the excessive expectations sub-dimension increase, the relationship satisfaction decreases.

On the other hand, in line with the analyzes conducted for the mediator role effect of restrictive belief in the attitude of the mate selection and the meaning attributed to the marriage on the correlation between irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction, which is the main purpose of the study, it was found that restrictive belief in the attitude of the mate selection and the meaning attributed to the marriage have a partial mediator role effect.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the findings of these studies carried out with variables that have similar dynamics, show us that the irrational romantic relationship beliefs, together with the negative meanings attributed to marriage and the restrictive beliefs about mate selection, are important determinants that decrease relationship satisfaction. In this context, it is thought to be important for the experts working in the mental health field to take into account the meaning attributed to relationships and marriage, the irrational romantic relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction while dealing with happiness and life satisfaction of individuals. In addition to this, on a healthy marriage and family, elective courses can be provided at universities to ensure that individuals receive correct and positive messages about marriage. In these trainings, taking into consideration that marriage attitudes are decisive for marriage, programs can be prepared to give correct and positive messages about marriage that will positively affect individuals' marriage attitudes. Also, individuals who will perform the training can be educated about their attitudes and marriage messages through in-service training activities.

## LIMITATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study's findings are limited with relationship beliefs, relationship satisfaction, marriage attitudes and the meaning attributed to marriage of university students. However, each of these variables is associated with many factors in one's life. Therefore, carrying out other studies dealing with the subject with different variables will surely enrich the area in question. It would be especially useful to conduct practical studies with different research methods and designs. Also, qualitative studies that determine the attitudes of the students and reveal their needs in this field are needed. The centers offer psychological support to students at universities, can focus on students' needs related to relationships and marriage attitudes and organize programs.

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