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Social Interest and Contact Disturbances as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction in Romantic Relationship

Romantik İlişkilerde İlişki Doyumunun Yordayıcıları Olarak Sosyal İlgi ve Temas Engelleri

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine the predictive effects of social interest and contact disturbances on relationship satisfaction. Study group consists of 405 university students. Data were collected by the "Premarital Relationship Assessment Scale", the "Adlerian Social Interest Scale-Romantic Relationship Form", and the "Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale". According to the results of Multiple Regression Analysis, social interest, contact, and full contact predict relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships significantly. "Social interest" predicts relationship satisfaction in the first place, "full contact" predicts in the second place, and "contact" predicts in the third place. These three variables together explain 31% of the relationship satisfaction. According to the results of One-Way MANOVA, social interest, contact disturbances, and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships differ significantly by gender. While social interest and relationship satisfaction levels of females are significantly higher; contact, full contact, and final contact levels of males are significantly higher.

ÖZET

Araştırmanın amacı romantik ilişkisi olan üniversite öğrencilerinde sosyal ilgi ve temas engellerinin romantik ilişkilerde ilişki doyumu üzerindeki yordayıcı etkilerini belirlemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 405 üniversite öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada veriler "Evlilik Öncesi İlişkileri Değerlendirme Ölçeği", "Romantik İlişkilerde Adlerian Sosyal İlgi Ölçeği" ve "Gestalt Temas Engelleri Ölçeği" aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Çoklu regresyon analizi sonucuna göre, romantik ilişkilerde sosyal ilgi, temas ve tam temasın romantik ilişkilerde ilişki doyumunu anlamlı olarak yordadığı belirlenmiştir. Romantik ilişkilerde ilişki doyumunu birinci sırada "sosyal ilgi", ikinci sırada "tam temas" ve üçüncü sırada ise "temas" yordamaktadır. Bu üç değişken, ilişki doyumunun %31'ini açıklamaktadır. Tek Yönlü MANOVA sonucuna göre, romantik ilişkilerde sosyal ilgi, temas engelleri ve ilişki doyumu, cinsiyete göre anlamlı düzeyde farklılık göstermektedir. Kadınların sosyal ilgi ve ilişki doyumları, erkeklerin ise temas, tam temas ve temas sonrası puanları anlamlı ölçüde daha yüksektir.

Ethical Statement: This study was completed in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration. In line with this, the study was permitted by Ondokuz Mayıs University, Social and Humanities Ethics Committee.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals have development tasks they have to perform specific to the developmental periods they are in during their lives. Close relationships individuals experience has a complementary effect in healthy execution of these developmental tasks (Gizir, 2012). According to Havighurst, the period between 18 to 35 years of age is called young adulthood (Onur, 1995). This period, which coincides with the university years, includes tasks such as choosing a partner and learning to live with the chosen partner. Erikson (1968) defined this process as "isolation against proximity" and emphasized the importance of the individual's ability to live an open and supportive romantic relationship without the fear of losing identity during this period in order to be able to overcome this developmental crisis.

Erikson (1968) states that being in a romantic relationship in which the individual can get satisfaction is important for the psychological health of the individual, for the foundation of healthy relationships that the individual will build in the future and especially for the healthy identity development of individuals. Developing romantic relationships is closely related with the satisfaction the individual gets from the relationship the individual experiences. The concept of relationship satisfaction, which expresses the feelings, thoughts, and behaviours of individuals about their relationship emphasizes the satisfaction one gets from the relationship (Fincham & Beach, 2006; Hendrick, 1988). Individuals tend to make assessments about the romantic relationships they have, and this has a positive or negative effect on their relationship satisfaction (Hinde, 1997). Relationship satisfaction strengthens individuals' survival mechanisms (Fletcher, Simpson, Campbell, & Overall, 2015). Besides, in addition to being among the most important relationship types which both contribute to individuals' social development and also provide social support, romantic relationships during university years also affect individuals' partner choice and quality of relationship in the future (Collins, 2003; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992).

Studies conducted show that relationship satisfaction is associated with positive behaviours such as acceptance, compromise, and appreciation (Feeney, 2002; Gill, Christensen, & Fincham, 1999). It has also been found that individuals with high relationship satisfaction have less neuroticism symptoms such as anxiety, hostility, and depression (Watkins, 1994), high self-confidence and sense of self (Kalkan & Yalçın, 2012) and less sources of stress (Abakay, 2015). In addition, epidemiological studies suggest that the satisfaction individuals get from romantic relationship can protect them from early death (mortality) and diseases (morbidity) (Holt-Lunstad, Birmingham, & Jones, 2008).

Cooperation and partnership in romantic relationships which are considered as the biggest challenge in life tasks (Logan, Kern, Curlette, & Trad, 1993) have been accepted by Adler (2000) as a prerequisite of not only marriage but also for the happiness of all humanity. The individual who prioritizes the happiness of all humanity takes into account the needs of others in his/her behaviours. Thus, with such a developed sense of social interest, it is also possible for the individual to do his/her best to comfort and enrich his/her romantic partner's life because romantic couples can be happy when they feel that they are important for each other, needed by their partner and accepted as a real friend by their partner.

This feature, which is expressed as social interest, was addressed by Adler as mental health criterion (Bickhard & Ford, 1991) and conceptualized as a criterion with which all actions could be evaluated in terms of the potential of social benefit and contribution (Ansbacher, 1991a). Social interest

is an innate potential, ability and behaviours which do not work and which do not contribute to anything for the benefit of the society, and useless personality traits such as selfishness and arrogance have a direct negative effect on social life (Ansbacher, 1991b). Adler also expressed that cooperation problem was the basis of all problems that occurred in romantic relationships (Adler, 1978). Inadequate cooperation in romantic relationships will cause a decrease in relationship satisfaction for both partners. Adler (2002) defined individuals with high social interest as individuals who act more courageous against problems, who believe that they can overcome these problems, and who are prone to cooperation.

When studies on social interest in romantic relationships were examined in literature, it was found to be positively associated with displaying a tolerant sexual attitude (Leak & Gardner, 1990), romantic relationship (Logan et al., 1993) and marital adjustment (Markowski & Greenwood, 1984). Kalkan (2010) found that social interest was a significant predictor of problem solving in romantic relationships. Tekin-Çatal and Kalkan (2018) found a positive association between interpersonal relations nourishing style and social interest level in romantic relationships, while they found a negative association between poisoning style and social interest level in romantic relationships.

In this context, it is thought that social interest will also affect romantic relationship satisfaction. It is expected that characteristics of social interest such as partnership, solidarity, putting oneself in the partner's place, sharing, reconciliation, and being constructive also affect relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships.

It is thought that contact disturbances, another variable of the study, which affect individuals' developing healthy relationships with themselves, others, and the environment can also affect satisfaction in romantic relationships because while defining their identity and character, individuals use socially qualifying expressions which are in social relationship matrix. This shows the importance of the need for interpersonal contact in life. The approach focusing on the concept of contact is Gestalt Approach. Gestalt Approach explains this situation with the concept of "interpersonal contact" (Kuyumcu, 2011). Interpersonal contact starts with the individual needing others to define himself/herself, and to make sense of his/her existence (Perls, 1982).

It is stated that contact styles are influenced by the state of discerning and rejecting changes/differences and while one contact style supports growth and development, another contact style does not. Contact styles begin to form in childhood and they are shaped by the family environment individuals are raised in. Contact disturbances can occur in children who are living in families in which their needs/wants are ignored, who try to force themselves into their families and in families who have strict rules or too many expectations and these disturbances create risks in adulthood (cited from: Tagay, 2010).

Human beings contact with their environment by using their five senses, in other words, by hearing, touching, smelling, seeing, tasting, talking, and moving. Relationship distortions may occur or contact may change direction when contacting self and others. The resulting relationship distortions or changes in the direction of contact are called contact disturbances. Contact disturbances are relationship distortions or changes in the direction of contact while contacting.

Contact disturbances are indicated as healthy in some cases, while they are indicated as unhealthy in others (Voltan-Acar, 2006). In case of contact disturbance, in other words, when

unhealthy contact disturbances are used, the harmony of individuals with themselves and with other individuals, especially their romantic partners, may be impaired.

Studies conducted on contact disturbances show that full contact disturbance predicts abuse perceived in romantic relationships significantly in a positive way (Mutlu-Tagay, Çalışandemir, & Ünüvar, 2018). Clarkson (1994) and Kirchner (2000) showed that high contact disturbance has a negative effect on individuals' self-assessment and that these individuals are not autonomous, they have an accusatory tendency in interpersonal relationships and also, they are individuals who do not take responsibility.

As a result, it is thought that acting with social interest and contact styles will affect romantic relationships and increase relationship satisfaction. It is expected that showing the association between satisfaction individuals obtain from their romantic relationships and social interest will be a guide in finding out the effect of contact styles and planning preventive-protective interventions to provide for young people who have romantic relationship. From this point of view, the present study examines the association between social interest and contact disturbances in romantic relationships. The aim of this study is to find out the predictive effects of social interest and contact disturbances on relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships in university students who have romantic relationship. Accordingly, answers were sought to the following questions:

1. Is there an association between the social interest, contact disturbances in romantic relationships, and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships?
2. Are social interest and contact disturbances in romantic relationships significant predictors of relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships?
3. Do social interest, contact disturbances in romantic relationships, and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships show significant difference in terms of gender?

METHOD

Research Model

The present study is a correlational study. The correlational survey models aim to determine whether there is a co-variation between two or more variables and the degree of co-variation if there is (Karasar, 2009). Within the scope of this model, the association between social interest in university students who have romantic relationship and relationship satisfaction between romantic relationships will be examined.

Study Group

The study group consists of 405 university students who were studying at Ondokuz Mayıs University and who had a romantic relationship. The study group was chosen with simple random sampling method. Simple random sampling method is a method in which the units chosen are taken in the sampling by giving equal probability of being chosen to each choice of sample (Çıngı, 1994). For simple random sampling, the units in the population should be known and listed. After this, units should be chosen from the list until the predetermined sample size is reached (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2019). Accordingly, by considering the number of students studying in different faculties, their distribution by their year of study and gender was taken into consideration. For sample size, the criterion of total number of items in the scales x 5 was used

(MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999). Since the data were collected from university students who had romantic relationship, students from different faculty and years of study were reached until a sufficient sample size was reached. 222 (54,8%) of the university students in the study were female, while 183 (45,2%) were male. 25,2% of the participants were in their first year of study; 24,9% were in their second year; 24,4% were in their third year, and 25,4% were in their fourth year. It was found that 28,4% of the participants did not have any previous romantic relationship, while 29.9% had one and 41,7% had more than one previous romantic relationship. In addition, 33,8% of the participants had their current romantic relationship for less than a year; 31,6% had their current romantic relationship for 1-2 years, and 34,6% had their current romantic relationship for more than two years. The participants' ages varied between 18 and 32 average age was found as 20.98.

Ethical Statement

This study was completed in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration. In line with this, the study was permitted by Ondokuz Mayıs University, Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (REF: 2018/1-26).

Data Collection Tools

In the study, the data were collected with the "Premarital Relationship Assessment Scale (PMRAS)", the "Adlerian Social Interest Scale-Romantic Relationship Form (ASIS-RR)", and the "Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale (GCDS)".

Premarital Relationship Assessment Scale (PRAS). The scale, which was developed by Kalkan and Kaya (2007), is used to find out the individuals' perceptions about their existing partners and relationships, and the existing and possible problems in the relationship. This 5-Likert type scale has 34 items. The lowest score one can get from the scale is 34, while the highest score is 170. A high total score taken from the scale shows that the individual has high happiness level for his/her existing relationship and has high positive thoughts about the relationship. According to the results of factor analysis conducted to find out the construct validity of the scale, 5 factors explaining the 42.9% of the variance was found. The sub-dimensions of the scale are religious values, communication, friend relationships, family relationships, and sexual compatibility. Its correlation with Happiness in Relationships Scale was calculated for validity with similar scales (Tutarel-Kışlak, 2002), and it was found as .48. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found as .84, and its test-retest reliability coefficient was found as .72 (Kalkan & Kaya, 2007). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found as .81.

Adlerian Social Interest Scale-Romantic Relationship Form (ASIS-RR). It was developed by Kalkan (2009) to measure individuals' social interest levels in their romantic relationships. This 5-Likert type scale has 24 items. The lowest score one can get from the scale is 24, while the highest score is 120. A high total score taken from the scale shows that social interest level is high. According to the results of factor analysis conducted to find out the construct validity of the scale, a single factor explaining the 34.1% of the variance was found. Its correlation with Social Interest Scale was calculated for validity with similar scales (Soyer, 2004), and a high correlation was found between the scales (r=.64). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was found as .90, and its test-retest reliability coefficient was found as .93 (Kalkan, 2009). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found as .85.

Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale (GCDS). It was developed by Tagay and Voltan-Acar (2012) to find out individuals' contact disturbances. This 5-Likert type scale has 24 items. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the construct validity of the scale, and a 4-factor structure explaining the 42.3% of the variance was found. The sub-dimensions of the scale are contact, full contact, dependent contact, and final contact. The scale does not have a total score. The scores taken from the sub-dimensions show the contact disturbances individuals use. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients were found as .61, .79, .75 and .60, respectively for the sub-dimensions of contact, full contact, dependent contact, and final contact. Test re-test reliability coefficients were found as 74, .77, .69 and .65, respectively (Tagay & Voltan-Acar, 2012). For the present study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients were found as .80, .75, .71 and .70, respectively for the sub-dimensions of contact, full contact, dependent contact, and final contact.

Personal Information Form. The form prepared by the researchers has questions about the participants' demographic characteristics, parents' educational status, place of residence, parental attitudes and the duration of the romantic relationship.

Process

First of all, necessary permissions were taken from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (Number of decisions: 2018/1-26). The data were collected from university students studying in different faculties of Ondokuz Mayıs University during lesson hours. Verbal consent was taken from the students who volunteered to participate in the study. Before starting the application, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the questions asked about the study and/or data collection instruments were answered by the researchers. It took about 25 minutes to apply the scales.

Data Analysis

Firstly, the data with extreme values were determined by calculating Mahalanobis distance. Mahalanobis distance shows the distance of one subject from the centre of the other subjects (average of all variables) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). According to this, 4 data were found with extreme values. These data were excluded and the analysis was conducted with 405 data.

In order to be able to conduct multivariate analyses, normality and co-variance assumptions should be tested (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2018). For multivariate normality, each variable should first meet univariate normality assumption (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). In the analysis of univariate normality distribution, calculation of Kurtosis and Skewness coefficients is described as descriptive methods (Abbott, 2011). Kurtosis and Skewness coefficients within the limits of $\pm 1,5$ is considered as the evidence of the presence of normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Kurtosis and Skewness values were calculated as .66 and -.84 for relationship satisfaction; as .80 and -.67 for social interest; as -.68 and .34 for contact; as .12 and .45 for full contact; as -.52 and .004 for dependent contact, and as -.31 and .43 for final contact. In line with this information, it was found that the data met univariate normality assumption.

Following this, multivariate normality assumptions were tested. According to this, all sub-sets of the variable sets (all paired combinations) should have multivariate normality. Bivariate normality means that the scatter diagrams of each variable pair is in the shape of ellipsis (Mertler & Vannatta,

2005). Scatter diagrams of all binary variable combinations were examined, and it was found that all of them were found to be elliptical or close to elliptical.

Of the multivariate normality assumptions, co-variance was examined last. Box's M test was conducted to find out whether covariance matrices of groups were equal, in other words, whether the variances were homogenous. The fact that the value obtained exceeds the significance level shows that variance-covariance matrices are homogeneous (Çokluk et al., 2018). According to the results of Box's M test, it was found that homogeneity of variances assumption was not met (Box's M= 108.83, p= .00). However, covariance assumption for multivariate analyses is not one of the critically significant assumptions for analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Thus, it was decided that multivariate analyses could be made.

In the analysis of data, first of all Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated to find out the association between social interest, contact styles, and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships in university students who had romantic relationship. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to find out the variables predicting relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. Multiple regression analysis aims to predict the dependent variable based on two or more independent variables (predictive variables) related with the dependent variable (Büyüköztürk, 2018).

One-Way MANOVA was conducted to find out whether social interest, contact disturbances, and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships differed in terms of gender. MANOVA (Multivariate ANOVA) is used to test whether the groups formed according to one or more factors differ in terms of more than one dependent variable. Depending on the number of factors observed on the dependent variable, it is called one-way or two-way (Büyüköztürk, 2018). The data obtained from the study were analyzed by using SPSS 22 program. Significance of the data obtained was tested at .05 level.

RESULTS

Is there an association between social interest, contact disturbances in romantic relationships and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships?

Table 1 shows the arithmetic means, standard deviation and Pearson correlation coefficients of the variables of social interest, contact disturbances in romantic relationships, and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation coefficients

	Social Interest	Contact	Full contact	Dependent contact	Final contact	Relationship satisfaction
Social Interest	1	-.15**	-.10*	.17**	-.06	.49**
Contact	-	1	.37**	.25**	.45**	-.26**
Full contact	-	-	1	.19**	.35**	-.27**
Dependent Contact	-	-	-	1	.25**	.004
Final Contact	-	-	-	-	1	-.20**
Relationship Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	1
Mean	98.33	14.80	19.58	24.45	12.12	136.77
Standard deviation	10.35	4.72	5.65	4.83	3.38	16.34

*p<.05, **p<.01

As can be seen in Table 1, there is a positive moderate association between social interest in romantic relationships and relationship satisfaction (r=.49, p<.01); while a negative weak association was found between contact and relationship satisfaction (r=-.26, p<.01); full contact and relationship satisfaction (r=-.27, p<.01); and final contact and relationship satisfaction (r=-.20, p<.01). No significant association was found between dependent contact and relationship satisfaction (r=-.004, p>.05). A correlation coefficient between .70 and 1.00 between two variables shows strong association, while a correlation coefficient between .70 and .30 shows moderate association and a correlation coefficient between .30 and .00 shows weak correlation (Büyüköztürk, 2018).

Are social interest and contact disturbances in romantic relationships significant predictors of relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships?

Regression analysis was conducted to find out the variables predicting relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. As a prerequisite for regression analysis, it is stated that there should be statistically significant correlations between the variables (Büyüköztürk, 2018). As a result of the Pearson Correlation Analysis conducted (Table 1), significant correlations were found between the variables of social interest, contact, full contact, final contact and relationship satisfaction. For this reason, Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted on these correlated variables. Standard method and stepwise method were used in Multiple Regression Analysis. In standard method, all variables are taken regardless of whether they have a significant contribution to the explained variance in dependent variable, and the common effect of all variables on the dependent variable is examined. In stepwise regression analysis, only variables which are significant predictors of the dependent variable are taken in the regression. The variable which has the highest correlation with the dependent variable is processed first and then the variable which brings less contribution to the variance is added in the procedure (Büyüköztürk, 2018). In the present study, first standard multiple regression analysis was performed (Table 2) and significant predictors of relationship satisfaction were found. Following this, stepwise regression analysis was conducted (Table 3), and only independent variables which are significant predictors were processed.

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis results

Predictive variable	Reg. coeff.	St. Error	β	t	p	Paired r	Partial r
Fixed	83.84	7.57	-	11.07	.00	-	-
Social interest	.72	.06	.46	10.94	.00	.49	.48
Contact	-.33	.16	-.09	-2.01	.04	-.26	-.10
Full contact	-.47	.13	-.16	-3.59	.00	-.27	-.17
Final contact	-.33	.23	-.06	-1.46	.14	-.20	-.07

R= .56 R^2= .31
F (4, 400) = 45.72   p=.000

When the paired and partial correlations between the predictive variables and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships variable in Table 2 were examined, a positive and moderate association was found between social interest and relationship satisfaction (r=.49); however, when the other variables were controlled, the correlation between two variables was found to be r=.48. Based on these results, it can be said that as social interest in romantic relationships increases, relationship satisfaction also increases. A negative weak association was found between contact and relationship satisfaction (r=-.26); however, when the other variables were controlled, the correlation between two variables was found to be r=-.10. While there was a negative weak association between full contact and

relationship satisfaction (r=-.27), when the other variables were controlled, the correlation between two variables was found to be r=-.17. While there was a negative weak association between final contact and relationship satisfaction (r=-.20), when the other variables were controlled, the correlation between two variables was found to be r=-.07.

When the results of the t-test associated with the significance of regression coefficients were examined, it was found that social interest (t=10.94, p=.000), contact (t=-2.01, p=.04) and full contact (t=-3.59, p=.000) predicted relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships significantly, while final contact did not predict relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships significantly (t=-1.46, p=.14). Stepwise regression analysis was carried out to determine the power of the predictive variables in predicting relationship satisfaction. Since final contact variable did not predict relationship satisfaction significantly, it was not included in the stepwise regression analysis. The results of the analysis carried out with the other three variables are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Stepwise regression analysis results

Predictive variable	Reg. coef.	St. Error	β	t	R	R²	F_{reg}	F_{change}	ΔR²
Fixed	59.60	6.74	-	8.83**	.49	.24	132.29**	132.29**	.24
Social interest	.78	.06	.49	11.50**					
Fixed	76.10	7.21	-	10.54**					
Social interest	.74	.06	.47	11.24**	.54	.29	84.97**	28.60**	.05
Full contact	-.65	.12	-.22	-5.34**					
Fixed	82.07	7.48	-	10.96**					
Social interest	.72	.06	.45	10.91**	.55	.31	60.08**	7.54*	.01
Full contact	-.51	.13	-.18	-4.00**					
Contact	-.42	.15	-.12	-2.74*					

*p<.01, **p<.001

The variable of "social interest" examined in the first step of the stepwise regression analysis predicts 24% of relationship satisfaction (R²=.24, F_{reg}(1,403)=132.29, p=.000). "Full contact" variable entered in the second step of stepwise regression analysis. "Social interest" and "full contact" variables together explain 29% of relationship satisfaction significantly (R²=.29, F_{reg}(2,402)=84.97, p=.000). "Full contact" variable contributes with a rate of 5% to total variance (ΔR²=.05, F_{change} (1,402)=28.60, p=.000). "Contact" variable entered in the last step of stepwise regression analysis. When the other variables affecting relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships were kept fixed, it was found that "social interest, full contact, and contact" variables together predicted 31% of relationship satisfaction significantly (R²=.31, F_{reg}(3,401)=60.08, p=.000). "Contact" variable contributes with a rate of 1% to total variance (ΔR²=.013, F_{change} (1,401)=7.54, p=.006). According to β, R², ΔR², F_{Reg} and F_{change} values of the variables, it was found that "social interest" significantly predicted relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships in the first place, while "full contact" significantly predicted relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships in the second place, and "contact" significantly predicted relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships in the third place.

Do social interest, contact disturbances in romantic relationships and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships show significant differences in terms of gender?

One-Way MANOVA was conducted to find out whether social interest, relationship satisfaction, and contact disturbances in romantic relationships differed significantly by gender and the results are given in Table 4.

Table 4. One-Way MANOVA results

Variable	Source	n	M	SD	Df	F	p
Social interest	Female	222	100.90	7.23	1	32.57	**.000****
	Male	183	95.21	12.52			
Relationship satisfaction	Female	222	140.60	12.39	1	28.84	**.000****
	Male	183	132.12	19.15			
Contact	Female	222	14.21	4.70	1	7.87	**.005***
	Male	183	15.52	4.66			
Full contact	Female	222	18.46	5.25	1	20.15	**.000****
	Male	183	20.94	5.82			
Dependent contact	Female	222	24.55	4.55	1	.23	.632
	Male	183	24.32	5.15			
Final contact	Female	222	11.67	3.25	1	8.75	**.003***
	Male	183	12.66	3.46			

(λ =.87, $F_{(6, 398)}$= 9.409, p= .000)
*p<.01, **p<.001

According to One-Way MANOVA results, the basic effect of social interest, relationship satisfaction, and contact disturbances scores were found to be significant (λ =.87, $F(6,398)$= 9.409, p<.001). Social interest score averages of university students who were found to have romantic relationship showed significant differences between male and female students [$F(1,403)$=32.57, p<.001]. According to the results, it can be said that female students had significantly higher social interest levels when compared with male students. It was also found that relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships differed significantly by gender [$F(1,403)$=28.84, p<.001], and female students had significantly higher relationship satisfaction level than male students. Significant differences were found in the sub-dimensions of "contact" [$F(1,403)$=7.87, p<.01]; "full contact" [$F(1,403)$=20.15, p<.001] and "final contact" [$F(1,403)$=8.75, p<.01] in terms of gender, and it was found that male students had significantly higher score averages when compared with female students.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

The present study researches whether social interest levels and contact disturbances of individuals are significant predictors of relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. First of all, a positive and moderately significant association was found between social interest and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. When the variables' predicting relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships were examined, it was found that social interest, contact, and full contact significantly predicted relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships, while final contact did not. "Social interest" predicts relationship satisfaction in the first place, while "full contact" predicts relationship satisfaction in the second place and "contact" predicts relationship satisfaction in the third place. These three variables together explain 31% of relationship satisfaction.

It is expected for partnership, solidarity, putting oneself in the partner's place, sharing, reconciliation, and being constructive to affect relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. Similar to this finding of the study, Rennebohm, Seebeck, and Thoburn (2017) found that couples with high social interest level also had high compatibility in romantic relationships. While these results can

be interpreted as individuals with high social interest having more satisfaction from the relationship, it can also be said that healthy relationships which give satisfaction increase individuals' social interest levels.

On the other hand, a weak negative association was found between full contact and relationship satisfaction, and between final contact and relationship satisfaction. However, no significant relationship was found between dependent contact and relationship satisfaction. When the literature was reviewed, no study was found which examined the association between contact disturbances and romantic relationship satisfaction. For this reason, the related results were discussed in the light of conceptual explanations. In the contact stage, projection contact disturbance is generally used. In projection, individuals attribute the characteristics they cannot accept in themselves to others, run away from responsibility and accuse others (Tagay, 2010). A healthy and satisfactory relationship is expected to include the feeling of responsibility. For this reason, in romantic relationships, couples are expected to require a contact process which includes responsibility within relationship satisfaction.

In the full contact stage, introjection, and deflection contacts boundaries are generally used. Full contact is the stage in which individuals choose the option that they consider as the most suitable for themselves (Tagay, 2010). Contact boundaries that can be seen at this stage are introjection and deflection (Tagay & Voltan-Acar, 2012). Individuals who use introjection frequently accuse themselves all the time. In addition, these individuals also have self-pity feelings accompanying guilt. They make plans all the time and think about the consequences of their behaviours. Obsessive efforts to control the results make the person unresponsive after a point. They do not go into risky situations that they think they will lose control. They tend to blunt even expectations such as getting attention and love. For this reason, they can become individuals who are afraid to contact other people (Kepner, 1982). Their fears prevent them from conveying their feelings, thoughts and wishes. They cannot act or meet their needs because they keep these inside (Daş, 2006). However, romantic relationship satisfaction requires couples' love and affection, and sometimes the type of relationship in which anger is properly expressed. Thus, the negative association between full contact and relationship satisfaction is in parallel with the related literature.

Deflection contact disturbance is a situation in which the individual moves his/her energy away from a specific target. This way, the individual will be able to prevent the stimuli coming from the environment and direct them to another area or direction from the contact in order to avoid the strong effects caused by the existing contact (Polster & Polster, 1973: cited from. Gürdil, 2014). With deflection, the individual provides a kind of isolation and provides protection against situations that will disturb himself/herself by preventing a word or action aimed for him/her from reaching him/her (Philippson, 2001). Deflection is usually done by speaking too much, making jokes all the time, not making eye contact, coughing frequently, giving abstract answers to questions, focusing on irrelevant details, expressing feelings by alleviating or exaggerating them, talking about the past or future but not talking about the present, yawning or itching (Kepner, 1982; Polster & Polster, 1974). When the way deflection is done is considered, it shows the pattern of communication that can harm a relationship and cause the relationship to dissolve. Studies conducted show that the style of communication with the aforementioned characteristics decreases relationship satisfaction (Anders & Tucker, 2000; Olderbak & Figueredo, 2009). Therefore, the negative association between full contact and relationship satisfaction is in parallel with the literature. From this point of view, it can be said that individuals with

nourishing communication style can increase their relationship satisfaction because they adopt open and respectful relationship.

The contact disturbances in final contact stage are withdrawal and isolation. This concept which can also be expressed as seclusion is a very suitable concept to express withdrawal process. Withdrawal is sometimes used for getting away from the environment, listening and digesting what has happened previously, and sometimes for drawing boundaries. Besides this withdrawal which is considered as healthy withdrawal, the withdrawal the individual is not aware of is considered as unhealthy withdrawal (Voltan-Acar, 2006). Unhealthy withdrawal contact disturbance can present with behaviours such as dullness, fatigue, saturation, slow movements and loss of eye contact (Jacobs, 2007). This result can be interpreted as the proximity and communication in relationships will increase the warmth and sharing of couples, which will in turn increase relationship satisfaction.

No significant association was found between dependent contacts and relationship satisfaction. Dependent contact consists of absence of boundaries and contact disturbances of auxiliary syndrome. It is the factor in which items preventing individualization and differentiation occur (Tagay & Voltan-Acar, 2012). According to Voltan-Acar (2006), in lack of boundary contact disturbance, the difficulties of individual experiences in determining the boundaries between himself/herself and others. Its assisting syndrome is treating people the way you want to be treated. It is an expected result for these people to have unrealistic beliefs such as sharing everything in their relationship and having extreme expectations both materially and spiritually. Dependence on others is mentioned in this contact disturbance. Thus, considering that individuals who have higher expectations from the relationship are more dependent, it is expected from them to be more willing to leave their own benefits aside in order to prevent relationships from being resolved (Rusbult, 1980). Thus, a significant association between relationship satisfaction and dependent contact types was expected. However, the fact that these variables do not show a significant association according to the results of the study brings to mind that mediator variables affecting relationship satisfaction should also be taken into consideration.

Finally, it can be seen that female university students who had romantic relationships had significantly higher social interest score averages when compared with male students. The results of studies conducted in literature are different. While some of the studies show that social interest level differs significantly by gender in romantic relationships (Johnson, Smith, & Nelson 2003; Kaplan 1991), others show that there are no significant differences by gender (Tekin-Çatal & Kalkan, 2018). Similarly, women have been shown to have significantly higher relationship satisfaction when compared with men. Results of studies conducted in literature are different. While different results have been found in studies conducted to find out whether relationship satisfaction differs by gender, it has been shown in general that gender does not have a decisive role (Cihangir-Çankaya, 2009; Saraç, Hamamcı, & Gürçay, 2005; Satıcı & Deniz, 2018). However, there are also research results that are similar to this finding (Kaura & Lohman, 2007; Rosen, Bailey, & Muise, 2017).

It is thought that this difference occurs in favour of women regarding relationship satisfaction because women are more concerned about their relationship and women experience their feelings more intensely. On the other hand, significant differences were found by gender in contact, full contact, and final contact sub-dimensions of contact disturbances, and men were found to have significantly higher score averages when compared with women. Results of studies conducted in literature are not

consistent with each other. Tagay (2010) found that women had significantly lower scores when compared with men in dependent contact sub-dimension. Yazıcı and Şahin (2018) found difference in terms of gender in the sub-dimension of desensitization and male students had significantly higher desensitization contact disturbance scores when compared with female students. However, Tümlü-Ülker and Voltan-Acar (2017) did not find any significant difference between genders in terms of contact and dependent contact. It is thought that these different results are due to different characteristics of the sample groups on which the studies are conducted.

As a conclusion, social interest, contact, and full contact are significant predictors of relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. It can be said that acting with social interest and contact styles will affect romantic relationship. It is thought that this result will be a guide in planning preventive-protective intervention methods to be provided to young people who have romantic relationship.

Although the study shows significant results, it also has some limitations. The sample of this study consists of university students. This situation does not provide data about how relationship satisfaction of married individuals explains social interest and contact disturbances. Thus, this brings to mind the necessity of conducting further studies on married individuals. In addition, the results of this study can enable psychological counsellors who aim to increase relationship satisfaction of their clients to plan individual or group works to decrease contact disturbances. Based on the fact that establishing a close relationship with the opposite sex is an important developmental task in terms of university years, it is thought that developing intervention programs based on healthy contact disturbances in order to eliminate possible problems about contact disturbances, and testing their efficiency will make significant contributions to literature.

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Author Contributions

This study was conducted by all the authors working together and cooperatively. All of the authors substantially contributed to this work in each step of the study.

Conflict of Interest

It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interest.

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This study was completed in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration. In line with this, the study was permitted by Ondokuz Mayıs University, Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee.

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