



Borderline Personality Traits, Love Myths, and Love Styles

Haydeh FARAJİ¹ Elif BAŞÇELİK YAVUZ²

Abstract

Individuals who show borderline personality traits but have not yet experienced these traits at the level of personality disorder patients might still have more destructive relationships compared to others in relation to their attitudes towards love ("passionate love (eros)," "altruistic love (agape)", "possessive love (mania)", "game playing love (ludus)," "friendly love (storge)", "pragmatic love (pragma)"). It is predicted that the destructive relationships that individuals with borderline personality traits establish in line with their attitudes towards love may be related to some love myths (for example, "people who are in love can hurt the ones they love," "love forgives everything"). The purpose of this study was to determine whether romantic love myths play a mediating role in the attitudes toward love held by people who exhibit a high degree of borderline personality traits (BPT). Therefore, 492 participants, 220 males (44.7%) and 272 females (55.3%) aged 18-45 years, living in Istanbul and voluntarily participated in the research, were given the Borderline Personality Scale, Romantic Love Myths Scale, Attitudes Towards Love Scale and a form with personal information created by researchers was submitted. The obtained data were analyzed by applying Pearson Correlation analysis and hierarchical regression analysis. As a result of the findings, it was seen that the relationship between BPT and attitudes towards love was mediated by romantic love myths. The results of the study are important in showing that a change can be achieved in romantic relationship styles by targeting unrealistic beliefs in psychotherapy processes in the field of romantic relationships, which is one of the areas where individuals with borderline personality traits have difficulty.

Keywords: Borderline Personality Disorder, Romantic Relationships, Romantic Love Myths, Love Attitudes

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Borderline Kişilik Özellikleri, Aşk Mitleri ve Aşk Biçimleri

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Öz

Borderline kişilik özellikleri gösteren fakat bu özellikleri henüz kişilik bozukluğu düzeyinde deneyimlemeyen bireylerin de, tıpkı kişilik bozukluğuna sahip olan bireyler gibi, aşka ilişkin tutumları ("tutkulu aşk (eros)", "özgeci aşk (agape)", "saplantılı aşk (mania)", "oyun gibi aşk (ludus)", "arkadaşça aşk (storge)", "pragmatic aşk (pragma") ile bağlantılı olarak yıkıcı ilişkiler kurabilmektedirler. Borderline kişilik özelliklerine sahip olan bireylerin aşka ilişkin tutumları doğrultusunda kurdukları yıkıcı ilişkilerin ise doğru kabul ettikleri bazı aşk mitleri (örneğin "seven insan sevdiğini incitir", "aşk her şeyi affeder" gibi) ile ilişkili olabileceği tahmin edilmektedir. Bu çalışmada borderline kişilik özellikleri yüksek olan bireylerin aşka ilişkin tutumlarında romantik aşk mitlerinin aracı rolünün incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda 2021 yılında İstanbul'da yaşayan, araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılan, 18-45 yaş arası 220 erkek (%44.7) ve 272 kadın (%55.3) olmak üzere 492 katılımcıya Borderline Kişilik Ölçeği, Romantik Aşk Mitleri Ölçeği, Aşka İlişkin Tutumlar Ölçeği ve araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanmış kişisel bilgi formu uygulanmıştır. Elde edilen veriler, Pearson Korelasyon analizi ve hiyerarşik regresyon analizi uygulanarak incelenmiştir. Ulaşılan bulgular sonucunda borderline kişilik özelliklerinin aşka ilişkin tutumlarla ilişkisine romantik aşk mitlerinin aracılık ettiği görülmüştür. Çalışma sonuçları borderline kişilik özelliklerine sahip bireylerin güçlük yaşadıkları alanların başında gelen romantik ilişkiler alanında gerçek dışı inançlarının psikoterapi süreçlerinde hedeflenmesiyle romantik ilişki biçimlerinde değişim sağlanabileceğini göstermesi adına önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Borderline Kişilik Bozukluğu, Romantik İlişki, Romantik Aşk Mitleri, Aşka İlişkin Tutumlar.

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Introduction

Scientific consideration of love and romantic relationships is very important because of the place and functions of love in the lives of individuals. When compared to other personality disorders, love, which can operate as a trigger for psychopathological disorders (Erol, 2009: 13), is more impaired, especially in those with high borderline personality traits (BPT). In the presence of BPT, serious dysfunctions occur in romantic relationships (Hill et al., 2008: 135; Zanarini, Frankenburg, Hennen, Reich & Silk, 2005: 24). People that have BPT and are distinguished by significant impairments in the functioning of the personality, inconsistent and non-holistic self-perception, and hypersensitivity to loneliness and real or imaginary abandonment, experience serious developmental problems in separation-individuation, cannot provide affective and impulse control when they reach adulthood, and experience serious attachment problems (American Psychiatric Association, 2013: 332). Borderline individuals, who often tend to have highly inconsistent relationships, display an attitude that alternates between idealizing and devaluing their partners. These individuals who have serious difficulties in emotion regulation (Faraji & Tezcan, 2022: 126) experience significant dysfunctions in romantic relationships (Tan, Ingram, Lau & South, 2022: 3) and they establish relationships that usually involve intense aggression and conflict (Lazarus et al., 2019: 1996). In addition to their unpredictable, confrontational and aggressive nature in relationships, they also tend to cling to their partners (Lazarus et al., 2018: 2). For all these reasons, BPT are associated with lower relationship satisfaction and more relationship problems (Lieb, Zanarini, Schmahl, Linehan & Bohus 2004: 1528; South, Turkheimer & Oltmanns, 2008: 9). BPT are closely related to individuals' attitudes towards love (Atak, 2012: 49). In current study, Lee's (1973) theory of love will be discussed. According to this theory, love, which is a "learning experience", is a multidimensional concept. Different forms of love are structures that can change over time and can be preferred, just like a kind of lifestyle. According to Lee's (1977) classification, there are basically three different forms of love: "Eros (passionate love)", "Ludus (game playing love)" and "Storge (friendly love)". In Eros, taking risks in relationships, physical attraction and sexuality are at the forefront. Individuals who prefer Eros give importance to physical attraction and are prone to secure attachment in relationships as they attach importance to communicating with their partners. In Ludus, the bonding is low and individuals are open to short-term and multi-partner relationships. In Storge, which arises from a good friendship in a sincere relationship, passion is low and it is essential that the partners meet each other's needs (Lee, 1988: 53).

According to Lee (1973), secondary love forms can occur when these three primal love styles come together in various combinations. These are defined as "Pragma (A type of love in which individuals prefer partners that can benefit them for the future. It is a combination of friendly love and game playing love)", "Mania (A form of love in which individuals display distrustful and suspicious attitudes towards their partners. It is a combination of passionate love and game playing love) and "Agape (a form of love in which individuals expect nothing for themselves and place the well-being of their partners above their own. It consists of both passionate love and friendly love)".

Love myths, a concept parallel to Lee's theory of love, consist of individuals' beliefs about love (Lara & Gomez-Urrutia, 2011: 12343). The concept of love myths, which is

used to express generalized beliefs about how relationships should be, what characteristics of relationships and the partner are satisfactory, and what can be expected from the partners, affects the thoughts and behaviors of individuals in their current relationships by being formed through social observation or in line with their past relationship experiences (Carrascosa, Cava, Buelga & Jesus, 2019: 122). It has been determined that love myths are associated with "love for partner", "romantic relationship styles", "relationship satisfaction", "marriage satisfaction" and "devotion" (Esen, Seymenler & Siyez, 2021: 71). Borderline personality disorder is a severe mental disease that has a significant social cost (especially on the healthcare system) and most devastate the close relationships of individuals. For this reason, the most basic problem in BPT is that individuals cannot establish long-term relationships and experience intense conflicts in relationships (Lieb et al., 2004: 1528). At this point, it is thought that determining the projection of BPT, especially in romantic relationships, will be beneficial for clinicians in conducting the treatment process. It is estimated that therapeutic interventions aimed at regulating the romantic relationships of individuals with BPT may prevent these traits from reaching the level of personality disorder and therefore reduce the public cost of BPT. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to provide more insight on the views of people with BPT towards love and their love myths. The first hypothesis of the study is that as the level of BPT increases, the negative attitudes of individuals towards love will also increase. As the level of BPT increases, it is expected that individuals will tend to have low loyalty, commitment and trust towards their partners, they will quickly bond with their partners and then experience destructive separations, and they will over idealize their partners by establishing relationships where passion is at the forefront. The second hypothesis proposes that as BPT rises, so does people's belief in love myths. According to this hypothesis, as BPT levels rise, so will the number of people who idealize love (for example, "True love can conquer any obstacle") and/or perceive violence as a part of love (for example, "Fight is the spice of love"). The third hypothesis is that as the levels of attitudes towards love increase, the level of love myths will also increase. Accordingly, as destructive attitudes towards love increase (low commitment, low trust, high idealization and devaluation), individuals are expected to idealize love and see abuse as a part of love. The final hypothesis suggests that love myths mediate the association between BPT and attitudes toward love.

Method

Universe and Sample

This study was carried out in the area of clinical psychology. The universe of the research is adults living in Turkey and the population of the research is adult individuals living in Istanbul. The study's sample (which was aggregated by "convenience sampling method") is made up of 492 people (272 women and 220 men) ranging from 18 to 45 years old who willingly participated in the study and lived in Istanbul in 2021.

A total of 492 people, 220 male (44.7%) and 272 female (55.3%) participants, aged 18-45 were included in the study. 2.2% of the participants in the sample graduated from primary school level, 16.9% from high school level, 75.4% from undergraduate level and 5.5% from the graduate level. The economic status of 8.5% of the sample is low, the economic status of 76.6% of them is medium, and 14.8% of them have high economic

status. 92.3% of the participants were raised by their parents, 6.5% by their first-degree relative, and 1.2% by a caregiver. Pregnancy of their mothers to them was planned for 74.6% of the participants and unplanned for 25.4%. 50% of the sample of the study have dreams about the loss of self-caregivers, and 50% do not. 46.1% of the sample have a romantic relationship, 11.6% are married, 1.4% are divorced, 40.9% have no relationship. 26.4% of the sample dreams about their past relationships or the loss of their current partner, 73.6% of them do not.

The mean age of the participants is ($\bar{X}=24$, $SD=6$). The number of siblings of the sample is at least 0 and at most 11, and the mean number of siblings is ($\bar{X}=3$, $SD=1$). The birth order of the sample was at least 1 and at most 11, and the mean birth order was ($\bar{X}=2$, $SD=1$).

Model of the Research

In the study, a "relational screening model" was used.

Procedure

After receiving approval from Istanbul Aydın University's Ethics Committee (Date: 09.07.2021, No: 2021/8), the participants were given the Borderline Personality Questionnaire (BPQ), Romantic Love Myths Questionnaire (RLMQ), The Love Attitudes Scale (LAS), and a personal information form. The scales were distributed to the participants via online platforms. In order to protect the privacy of the participants, no identity information was collected. It was accepted that the participants answered sincerely to all the questions in the applied scales. The average time to complete the scales was 15 minutes. Using the SPSS 25 package program, the scales' data was evaluated.

Measurement Instruments

Personal Information Form

The researchers' personal information form includes details on participants' ages, educational backgrounds, income levels, marital situations, etc.

Borderline Personality Questionnaire (BPQ)

BPQ is a self-assessment scale with 80 items that was created as a result of the research by Poreh et al. (2006) to evaluate the traits of borderline personality in accordance with the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria.

The scale has a separate subscale (9 subscales in total) to evaluate each diagnostic criterion in DSM-IV. The internal consistency coefficient of the BPQ ranged from 0.65 to 0.84, and the cronbach- α value for the entire test was found to be 0.94. Ceylan (2006) carried out the scale's Turkish standardization, validity, and reliability assessments. The Cronbach- α value of the Turkish version was calculated as 0.89. The correlation coefficient values obtained as a result of the two applications of the scale, which was re-applied for 28 days with the "test-retest" method, were 0.50 for the "Impulsivity" sub-dimension, 0.77 for "Emotional Instability" sub-dimension, 0.40 for "Abandonment" sub-dimension, 0.68 for "Relationships" sub-dimension, 0.72 for "Self Image" sub-dimension, 0.48 for "Suicide/Self-Injury Behavior" sub-dimension, "Feeling of

Emptiness" " sub-dimension, 0.74 for the "Intense Anger" sub-dimension, and 0.62 for the "Quasi Psychotic States" sub-dimension.

The Love Attitudes Scale – Short Form (LAS)

Based on Lee's (1973) classification of love, Hendrick et al. (1998) conducted studies on the short form of the scale. The scale measures six types of love as "passionate love (eros)," "altruistic love (agape)," "possessive love (mania)," "game playing love (ludus)," "friendly love (storge)," "pragmatic love (pragma)" and there are four items (24 items in total) to measure them. As a result, six distinct points are obtained, with the lowest four points and the greatest twenty points obtained from the subscales. An increase in the score from any subscale indicates that the relevant love style is selected. The cronbach- α coefficients of the subscales of the LAS-Short Form vary between 0.62 and 0.88. Büyükşahin and Hovardaoğlu (2004) conducted the scale's Turkish standardization, validity, and reliability assessments. Cronbach's alpha for the scale's Turkish adaptation was 70, and its two-half reliability was also found to be 70.

Romantic Love Myths Questionnaire (RLMQ)

The RLMQ, which was developed to measure romantic love myths, consists of two dimensions: "idealization" (4 items) and "love-abuse" (6 items). It's a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree," 5 = "strongly agree") (Lara & Gomez-Urrutia, 2021). The idealization dimension's Cronbach-coefficient was determined to be.73 and the love-abuse dimension's to be.82. Esen et al. (2021) carried out the scale's Turkish standardization as well as the scale's validity and reliability evaluations. For the idealization dimension and the love-abuse dimension, the Cronbach- coefficients for the Turkish version of the scale were 74 and 76; the test-retest resulted in cronbach-coefficients of.79 for idealization and.72 for love-abuse.

Results

Before starting the analysis, the data were transferred to the SPSS 25 program, and the normality distribution of the data was examined first. With reference to the research of George and Mallery (2010), the kurtosis and skewness levels of both scales and subscales were examined in this process. As a result, it was determined that the kurtosis and skewness values were in the reference range of -2 +2.

The correlation analysis revealed that BPQ and Eros ($r=-.28, p<0.01$), Storge ($r=-.16, p<0.01$), and Pragma ($r=-.14, p<0.01$) have a weak and negative association. It was discovered that BPQ and Ludus ($r=.52, p0.01$) and Mania ($r=.31, p0.01$) had a moderately positive relationship. Also it was found that there is a moderately positive relationship between BPQ and love-abuse ($r=.35, p<0.01$); a weak and positive relationship between BPQ and idealization ($r=.17, p<0.01$).

It was discovered that there is a weak and negative link between the impulsivity sub-dimension of the BPQ and Eros ($r=-.12, p0.01$) and Pragma ($r=-.11, p0.05$) as a consequence of the correlation analysis.

A moderately positive correlation between impulsivity and Ludus was discovered ($r=.45, p0.01$). Impulsivity and Mania ($r=.13, p0.01$) and Agape ($r=.10, p0.05$) were found to have a marginally favorable and significant association. Also, it was found that there is a moderately positive relationship between impulsivity and love abuse ($r=.31, p<0.01$).

A weak and negative relationship was found between affective instability sub-dimension of BPQ and Eros ($r=-.24, p<0.01$), Storge ($r=-.14, p<0.01$), and Pragma ($r=-.13, p<0.01$). It was seen that there is a moderately positive relationship between affective instability and Ludus ($r=.41, p<0.01$). Also, it was found that there is a weak and positive relationship between affective instability and Mania ($r=.30, p<0.01$), idealization ($r=.21, p<0.01$), and love-abuse ($r=.26, p<0.01$).

A weak and negative relationship was found between the abandonment sub-dimension of BPQ and Eros ($r=-.25, p<0.01$), Storge ($r=-.18, p<0.01$) and Pragma ($r=-.14, p<0.01$). It was found that there is a moderately positive relationship between abandonment and Ludus ($r=.45, p<0.01$). It was discovered that there is a weak and positive relationship between abandonment and Mania ($r=.27, p<0.01$). Also weak and positive relationship was found between abandonment and idealization ($r=.16, p<0.01$) and love-abuse ($r=.29, p<0.01$).

The correlation analysis revealed a weak and negative relationship between the self-image sub-dimension of the BPQ and Eros ($r=-.29, p<0.01$), Storge ($r=-.14, p<0.01$), and Pragma ($r=-.15, p<0.01$).

It was found that there is a moderately positive relationship between self-image and Ludus ($r=.46, p<0.01$). It was seen that there is a weak and positive relationship between self-image and Mania ($r=.30, p<0.01$). Also, a weak and positive relationship was found between self-image and idealization ($r=.15, p<0.01$) and love-abuse ($r=.29, p<0.01$).

A weak and negative correlation between the suicide/self-mutilation sub-dimension of the BPQ and Eros ($r=-.18, p<0.01$) was discovered by the analysis of Suicide/self-mutilation and Ludus ($r=.32, p<0.01$) were shown to be moderately and positively correlated. Also, a weak and positive relationship was found between suicide/self-mutilation and love abuse ($r=.28, p<0.01$).

The correlation analysis revealed a weak and negative relationship between the BPQ's emptiness sub-dimension and Eros ($r=-.28, p<0.01$), Storge ($r=-.15, p<0.01$), and Pragma ($r=-.17, p<0.01$). A moderately positive relationship was found between emptiness and Ludus ($r=.46, p<0.01$). Also, a weak and positive relationship was found between emptiness and Mania, ($r=.28, p<0.01$), idealization ($r=.15, p<0.01$), and love abuse ($r=.28, p<0.01$).

The correlation analysis revealed a weak and negative relationship between the BPQ's intense anger sub-dimension and eros ($r=-.14, p<0.01$). A moderately positive relationship was found between extreme anger and Ludus ($r=.40, p<0.01$). Also, a weak and positive relationship was found between intense anger and Mania ($r=.27, p<0.01$), idealization ($r=.19, p<0.01$), and love abuse ($r=.27, p<0.01$).

A weak and positive relationship was found between Ludus and idealization ($r=.24, p<0.01$); a moderately positive relationship was found between Ludus and love abuse ($r=.41, p<0.01$).

A moderately positive relationship was found between Mania and idealization ($r=.36, p<0.01$) and love-abuse ($r=.38, p<0.01$).

Table 1. Summary Table of Mediator Variable Analyzes of BPQ, LAS, and RLMQ

Predictive Variable	Moderation Variable	Predicted Variable
(BPQ)	(RLMQ)	(LAS)
BPQ	Idealization (Partial)	Ludus
BPQ	Idealization (Partial)	Mania
BPQ	Love-abuse (Partial)	Ludus
BPQ	Love-abuse (Partial)	Mania

Table 2. The Mediating Role of the Idealization Sub-scale in the Prediction of the BPQ's Ludus Sub-scale

Model	R	R ²	B	SH	β	T	p	Lower Bound	High Bound
(Constant)	.52	.27	7.21	0.28		25.66	0.000*	6.65	7.76
1 BPQ			0.10	0.01	0.52	13.61	0.000*	0.08	0.11
(Constant)	.55	.30	5.33	0.54		9.96	0.000*	4.28	6.38
BPQ			0.09	0.01	0.50	12.91	0.000*	0.08	0.11
2 Idealization			0.59	0.15	0.16	4.09	0.000*	0.31	0.88
Indirect Total			0.01	0.00				0.00	0.01
Impact (Moderation)									

* $p < 0.05$ Test used: PROCESS Macro 3.5

Figure 1. Beta Coefficients of the Mediator Role of the Idealization Subscale in the Prediction of the BPQ's Ludus Subscale

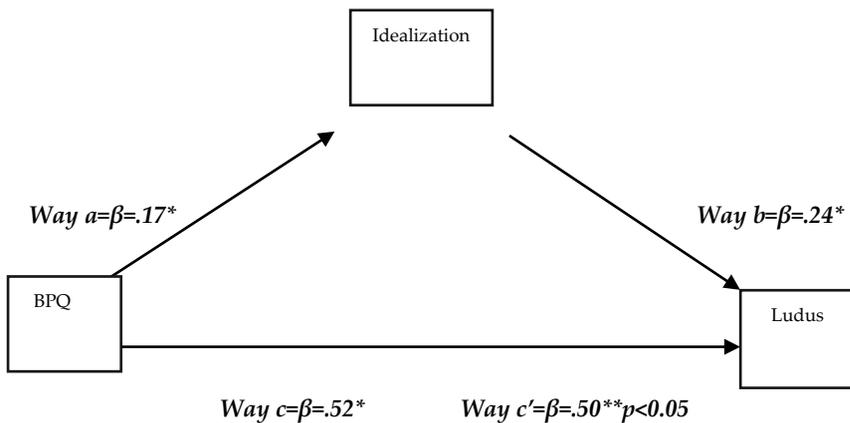


Table 3. The Mediating Role of the Idealization Subscale in Predicting Mania Subscale of the BPQ

Model	R	R ²	B	SH	β	T	p	Lower Bound	Higher Bound
(Constant)	.31	.10	9.58	0.34		28.59	0.000*	8.92	10.24
1 BPQ			0.06	0.01	0.31	7.26	0.000*	0.05	0.08
(Constant)	.44	.19	5.54	0.61		9.03	0.000*	4.34	6.75
BPQ			0.05	0.01	0.26	6.24	0.000*	0.04	0.07
2 Idealization			1.28	0.17	0.32	7.69	0.000*	0.95	1.61
Undirect Total Effect (Mediator)			0.01	0.00				0.01	0.02

**p*<0.05 Test used: PROCESS Macro 3.5

Figure 2. Beta Coefficients Regarding the Mediator Role of the Idealization Subscale in Predicting Mania Subscale of the BPQ

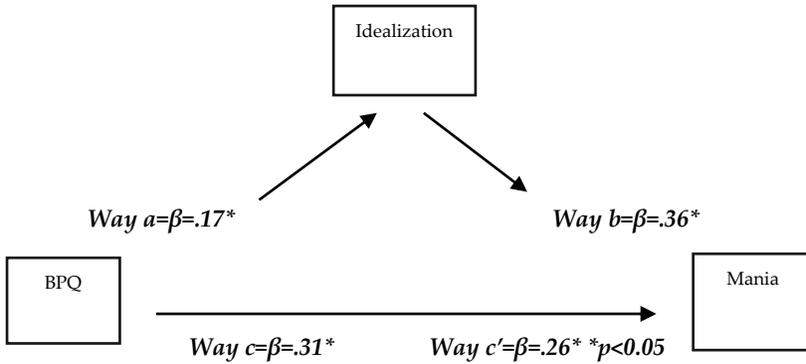


Table 4. The Mediator Role of the Love-Abuse Subscale in the Prediction of the BPQ's Ludus Subscale

Model	R	R ²	B	SH	B	T	p	Lower Bound	Higher Bound
(Constant)	.52	.27	7.21	0.28		25.66	0.000*	6.65	7.76
1 BPQ			0.10	0.01	0.52	13.61	0.000*	0.08	0.11
(Constant)	.58	.33	5.17	0.41		12.74	0.000*	4.37	5.97
BPQ			0.08	0.01	0.43	10.97	0.000*	0.07	0.10
2 Love-Abuse			1.00	0.15	0.26	6.70	0.000*	0.71	1.30
Undirect Total Effect (Mediat)			0.02	0.00				0.01	0.02

**p*<0.05 Test used: PROCESS Macro 3.5

Figure 3. Beta Coefficients on the Mediator Role of the Love-Abuse Subscale in the Prediction of the BPQ's Ludus Subscale

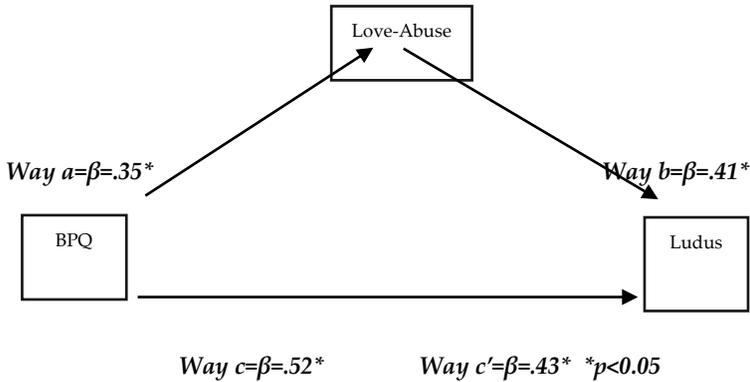
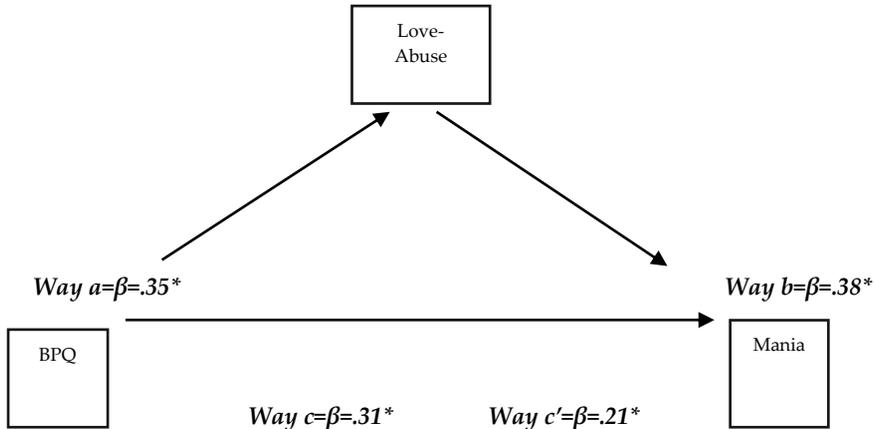


Table 5. The Mediator Role of the Love-Abuse Subscale in the Prediction of the BPQ's Mania Subscale

Model	R	R ²	B	SH	B	T	p	Lower Bound	Higher Bound
(Constant)	.31	.10	9.58	0.34		28.59	0.000*	8.92	10.24
1 BPQ			0.06	0.01	0.31	7.26	0.000*	0.05	0.08
(Constant)	.42	.18	7.07	0.48		14.64	0.000*	6.12	8.02
BPQ			0.04	0.01	0.21	4.70	0.000*	0.02	0.06
2 Love-Abuse			1.24	0.18	0.30	6.94	0.000*	0.89	1.59
Undirect Total Effect			0.02	0.00				0.02	0.03
(Mediator)									

* $p<0.05$ Test used: PROCESS Macro 3.5

Figure 4. Beta Coefficients Regarding the Mediator Role of the Love-Abuse Subscale in Predicting the Mania Subscale of the BPQ



* $p < 0.05$

Discussion

In many aspects, BPT reflects issues with the inability to maintain the required balance of dependency and autonomy in romantic relationships. In romantic relationships, individuals with high borderline traits may idealize their partners and demand their attention for a moment. Still, after a short while, they may devalue their partners and ignore them (APA, 2013: 332). On the other hand, individuals with high BPT have a painful sensitivity to events that may occur in relationships, such as separation. As a result, they are afraid of being abandoned and become agitated and angry when they are rejected, whether it is actual or perceived (Berenson, Downey, Rafaeli, Coifman & Paquin, 2011: 4). Individuals with high borderline traits struggle to operate in social situations, especially in their love relationships, and this makes them feel uneasy around their relationship partners (Miano, Fertuck, Roepke & Dziobek, 2017: 444). It is thought that the level of these characteristics of individuals with BPT, who are sensitive to perceived rejection and who both idealize and devalue their partners due to their emotional instability, may be related to their attitudes towards love, depending on their level of adoption of the romantic love myths. In this study, the relationship of these concepts with each other was examined.

Discussion of the Relationship Between BPT and Attitudes Towards Love

The current study determined that as the level of borderline personality traits increased, the level of "Eros (passionate love)", characterized by deep and secure bonding in romantic relationships and strong physical and emotional attraction, decreased. In addition, among the findings of this research, the increase in impulsivity, affective instability, fear of abandonment, non-holistic self-image, sense of emptiness, intense anger, self-mutilation, and suicidal tendencies in individuals with BPT also decrease the

level of Eros. People with BPT are typically subjected to traumatic experiences like physical and sexual abuse as children, and these encounters severely impair their ability to form safe attachments, leading to emotional shallowness and issues with impulse control (Faraji & Tezcan, 2022: 128). It is also known that this situation makes it difficult for individuals with high borderline traits to establish physical intimacy with romantic partners in adulthood (Löffler, Kleindienst, Neukel, Bekrater-Bodmann & Flor, 2022: 2). Individuals with more BPT tend to have significant problems in close and sexual relationships; it has been found that these problems are related to various sexual complaints such as increased sexual impulsivity, decreased sexual satisfaction, increased perception of sexuality as insipid, being more preoccupied with sexuality, and avoidance of sexuality (Stead, Brewer, Gardner & Khan, 2022: 16). In summary, this information supports this study's finding that an increase in BPT may reduce the likelihood of individuals experiencing passionate love (Eros), as it impairs the ability to establish stable and deep relationships.

This study's findings, show that as the level of BPT increased, the level of "Storge (friendly love)," in which friendship was at the forefront, decreased. In Storge, rather than passion, similarities between partners (harmony), consideration of each other, and sharing similar interests are essential (Lee, 1988: 42).

Another finding of this study is that the possibility of experiencing love in a friendly way decreases with the increase of affective instability, abandonment anxiety, non-holistic self-image, and sense of emptiness, which are the characteristics of BPT. According to a study in the literature, as the degree of harmony between couples rises, so does the level of friendly love; conversely, as the level of affective instability increases, so does the level of friendly love (Kaya & Karahasanolu, 2019: 59). Studies have shown that affective instability and impulsivity are the two most prominent features of Borderline personality (Trull & Durrett, 2005: 358); When at least one partner has high borderline traits, it has been determined that there is less mutual communication and more avoidance behavior in the relationship compared to control couples (Bouchard, Sabourin, Lussier & Villeneuve, 2009: 453). This suggests that as BPT levels rise, individuals' affective instability rises, mutual communication in partnerships declines, and the experience of creating friendly love declines. This information is consistent with the findings of this study.

According to the results of this study, it was determined that as the level of BPT increased, the level of "pragma (logical love)," which means the formation of the relationship in line with the presence of certain desirable features (high-level of education, financial opportunities, the status of the partner, etc.) in the partner, decreased. In addition, in current study, it was determined that BPT, such as impulsivity, affective instability, sensitivity to abandonment, non-holistic self-image and sense of emptiness, reduce the possibility of establishing romantic relationships in which logic is at the forefront. It is stated that BPT is related to the problems experienced, especially in the "reapprochement" phase in Mahler's separation-individuation theory (Kernberg, 1985: 69). According to Mahler (1971), the mental maturation process of individuals begins in the rapprochement phase, and thus individuation processes accelerate.

However, in the presence of unhealthy object relations, individuals have an intense desire to establish a symbiotic bond with the mother, even though they want to be

separated from their first object, the "mother." This unhealthy "push-pull" process is the basis of borderline psychopathology. Therefore, individuals who cannot pass the rapprochement phase in a healthy way cannot adequately experience mental maturation, which is an important skill in maintaining their adult life. This process is the source of the formation of BPT (Kernberg, 1985: 69). Another theory that parallels Mahler's views on the mental maturation processes of individuals is Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Piaget (1961) stated that individuals in the preoperational stage cannot simultaneously evaluate the contradictory aspects of an object, so they "divide" the contradictory aspects of the object into various features. This splitting state ends with the maturation of concrete operational thinking, which includes the development of object permanence in individuals who have established healthy object relations.

However, individuals with high borderline traits lack the capacity to remember and bring together the contradictory qualities of objects and, accordingly, the ability to experience ambivalence. For this reason, they cannot evaluate the positive and negative features of objects, self, and others at the same time (Van der Kolk, Hostetler, Herron & Fisler, 1994: 716). Therefore, individuals with high BPT have difficulty thinking logically, as they cannot experience the stages of developmental, mental maturation in a healthy way. For this reason, with the increase in the level of borderline traits, these individuals generally have poor judgment in choosing romantic partners (Bouchard et al., 2009: 446).

According to the findings of this study, as the degree of BPT rises, so does the degree of "ludus (game-playing love)," which lasts for a shorter time and is at the core of entertainment. In Ludus, there are relationships that last relatively short, and the entertainment is at the center of these relationships. Additionally, it has been found that people with BPT have higher rates of impulsivity, affective instability, sensitivity to abandonment, non-holistic self-image, sense of emptiness, extreme anger, suicidal and self-mutilation inclinations, and are more prone to view love as "a game."

" Individuals who experience love as a game can have relationships with more than one partner at the same time (Lee, 1988: 43). According to Kernberg (1985), BPT causes individuals' capacity to establish close and stable relationships either not at all or only weakly developed. BPT is characterized by impulsive behaviors and relationships and create risky sexual and romantic behaviors, including having multiple sexual partners (Zanarini, 2003: 234). According to Khan et al. (2017), both primary and secondary psychopathic qualities are linked to BPT in women, and primary psychopathic traits, in particular, are linked to multi-partnership. In light of this information, due to the nature of BPT, the capacity of individuals with these personality traits to establish long-term, stable, and deep bonds weakens, impulsive behaviors such as developing sexual and romantic relationships with multiple partners at the same time and attracting partners who already have romantic relationships come to the fore. Therefore, this information supports the results of this study. Individuals who experience possessive love maintain their relationships as in both game-playing love and passionate love, but they try to maintain their relationships with a compulsive effort even when their relationship acquires a very pathological quality (Kaya & Karahasanoğlu, 2019: 53). It has shown that as the borderline personality trait increases, the level of jealousy in romantic relationships (Faraji & Güler, 2021: 147) and the level of insecure attachment increase too (Yang et al., 2018: 6). Individuals with dominant BPT are highly susceptible to

abandonment because they develop a pathological dependence on their partners in romantic relationships. For this reason, they show an exaggerated effort and jealousy in order to prevent a real or potential abandonment; they often ask their partners to prove that they love them and that they will not leave them (Ançel, Durmuş & Doğaner, 2010: 134). Individuals with dominant BPT make an intense effort to achieve omnipotence in relationships due to their intense insecurity (Akyüz, 2018: 12). This information obtained from the literature is in line with this study's findings.

With this research, it was discovered that as BPT levels rise, so did the level of "Mania (possessive love)," which was defined by severe insecurity, jealousy, and the dread of losing a relationship. Additionally, it was found in the current study that when BPT traits like impulsivity, affective instability, sensitivity to abandonment, non-harmonic self-image, sense of emptiness, and intense anger increase, so does the likelihood that people will cling to their relationships.

Discussion of the Relationship Between BPT and Romantic Love Myths

It was discovered by this research that as the degree of BPT rises, so does the degree of love abuse, which is defined as violence in romantic relationships. In particular, when the levels of impulsivity, affective instability, abandonment, self-image, suicide and self-mutilation, sense of emptiness, and intense anger sub-dimensions of BPT increase, the level of love abuse also increases. Dating violence, which is considered one of the sub-types of violence, is accepted as an important public health problem (Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011: 1146).

Especially in patriarchal societies such as Turkey, many behaviors that fall under the scope of dating violence, such as jealousy and restraint, can be accepted as "signs of love" by individuals due to the gender roles adopted (Türk, Hamzaoğlu & Yayak, 2020: 78). However, although it is perceived as a sign of love by some, exposure to dating violence negatively affects physical and psychological health. People with high BPT are more sensitive to rejection than people with other mental disorders and healthy controls (Goodman, Fertuck, Chesin, Lichenstein & Stanley, 2014: 2). Sensitivity to rejection in individuals with high BPT has been found to be especially associated with dating violence (Armenti & Babcock, 2018: 3106), and it has been found that men with high borderline traits are more violent towards their partners (Ross & Babcock, 2009: 613). According to the findings, as the degree of BPT rises, so does the degree of idealization, which entails exalting the partners and the relationship to a level that does not correspond to reality. In particular, when the levels of affective instability, abandonment, self-image, sense of emptiness, and intense anger sub-dimensions of BPT increase, the level of idealization also increases.

According to Kernberg (1967), the division mechanism forms the basis of BPT. One of the antecedents of the division mechanism is idealization. Individuals with borderline traits tend to view these objects as "totally good" in order to prevent their aggressive impulses from harming external objects. The desire of individuals with high borderline traits to have a close relationship where their needs are always noticed and always satisfied is a result of the idealization mechanism.

Individuals who have been able to establish the primitive good object in a healthier and more integrated manner can continue to love the object despite its flaws, but the individuals who have not been able to establish the primitive good object in a healthy

way have a chronic idealization need in their close relationships. The idealized object is always prone to collapse because it is disconnected from reality (Faraji & Tezcan, 2022: 65). Therefore, idealization is a part of BPT, and the level of idealization increases with the increase in the level of BPT.

Discussion of the Mediator Role of Romantic Love Myths in Examining the Relationship Between BPT and Attitudes Towards Love

According to the findings of this research, the amount of idealization of the partners grows as the Ludus level increases. Parallel to that, it was shown that as BPT levels rise, so do the number of people who experience Ludus, which is a result of individuals with BPT's tendency to idealize their romantic partners.

Individuals with BPT who divide external objects into "good objects" and "bad objects" in order to feel safe idealize these good objects by exalting them. But basically, they do not have a genuine and sincere love or interest for the object they idealize (Kernberg, 2008: 45). They treat external objects ruthlessly because of their unconscious belief that external objects should be loyal to them and provide satisfaction (Köroğlu, Güleç & Şenol, 2007: 33).

Since the external objects they idealize can never fully meet what is expected of them in the real world, they are exposed to the devaluation of individuals with BPT in a short period of time. Therefore, individuals with high BPT, who establish relationships in order to get satisfaction and do not have a real love for the idealized object, always need to replace idealized objects with new ones in anticipation of meeting their demands (Faraji & Tezcan, 2022: 64). In other words, individuals with BPT, who are basically unable to establish close ties and emotionally shallow, idealize their partners in order to provide individual satisfaction in romantic relationships, but because of the narcissistic disappointment caused by the collision of this idealization with reality, they experience love as a game by switching from one existing partner to another.

In this research. The level of idealization was found to grow along with the level of Mania. In line with current findings, it has been observed that as the level of BPT increases, individuals experiencing more Mania are associated with the idealization of their partners. BPT is closely related to a preoccupied attachment style (Scott et al., 2013: 9). In romantic relationships, individuals with a preoccupied attachment style frequently view their partners as superior and worthwhile while viewing themselves as inadequate and undeserving. These individuals long for a symbiotic relationship with their irrationally "superior" partners. However, despite these wishes, they often question their partners' love and commitment in relationships because they have an intense fear of rejection, and they seek assurance that they will not be abandoned (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991: 234).

Individuals with BPT, who have almost all the features of an obsessive attachment style, also make an intense effort to gain the approval of their partners and even perceive having different opinions from their partners as a danger signal for abandonment (Ançel et al., 2010: 134). Therefore, as the level of BPT of individuals increases (associated with their preoccupied attachment styles), they idealize their partners more. It can be stated that as the level of this idealization increases, their anxiety about abandonment and insecurity also increases, and therefore, they experience more possessive love with their partners in order to prevent a possible separation.

The results of this study indicate a correlation between rising levels of Mania and rising levels of love abuse. Additionally, it was found that when people's levels of BPT rise, so does their level of love abuse, and this circumstance raises the likelihood that people with BPT may develop mania. As mentioned before, love abuse is characterized by perceiving violence as an ordinary part of romantic relationships (Lara & Gomez-Urrutia, 2021: 12352). Since BPT is associated with dysregulation in individuals' emotions, behaviors, thoughts, interpersonal relationships, and sense of self, individuals with BPT are more likely to engage in interpersonal violence (Hoffman, Fruzzetti & Buteau, 2007: 7).

It was discovered through research that the majority (73%) of people with high BPT engaged in violent behavior over the course of the researchers' one-year observation. In the same study, it was determined that these individuals did not only engage in self-harming behavior but also resorted to violence against other people with whom they had emotional closeness (Newhill, Eack & Mulvey, 2009: 541). Individuals with high BPT can be victims of violence as well as perpetrators. Studies have shown that individuals with BPT who have high rejection sensitivity also have a high probability of becoming a sexual abuse victim (Young & Furman, 2008: 306; Zanarini et al., 2005: 510) and engaging in sexually coercive behaviors in order to keep their partners in a relationship. (Stead et al., 2022: 17). Therefore, as the levels of BPT of individuals increase, it can be stated that the possibility of experiencing abusive love may increase, and in relation to this, they may experience more possessive love with their partners. Another finding from this research is that when Ludus increases, so does the likelihood of abuse of love.

Hence, it was found that as the degree of BPT rises, so does the degree of love abuse, which in turn raises the likelihood that those with BPT may experience Ludus. It was seen that although some couples seem to be quite connected to each other from the outside, they act with a strong desire to destroy everything about being a couple after a certain period of well-being. In the continuation of the research, it was determined that these individuals basically had a pathological level of object relations, and after a point, they started to deny their commitment to their partners (Frisch & Frisch-Desmarez, 2010: 325). In another study conducted by Epözdemir (2014), it was determined that individuals who have been married more than once have BPT, that they constantly establish sado-masochistic relationships with their partners due to their pathological relationship pattern, and that they repeat the same destructive cycle by changing partners frequently. Therefore, it can be said that as the levels of BPT increase, the probability of experiencing love-abuse may increase, and accordingly, the possibility of experiencing love with a lower level of commitment (Ludus) may increase too.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was determined that the level of BPT is associated with both romantic love myths and attitudes towards love, and also romantic love myths mediate the relationship between BPT and attitudes towards love. Individuals with BPT, depending on their degree of idealization of their partners and their degree of abusing love, either may experience love as a game (Ludus) or may experience a possessive love (Mania). The results of the study might be beneficial for psychotherapy interventions. Because they indicate that love myths of idealization and abuse of love affect love style. So if these myths will be searched and will be targeted to make a change on them, the new

and more functional way of thinking about love might open a way for more healthy and nourishing romantic relationships.

It can give a broader picture of beliefs and thoughts behind romantic styles if beliefs about themselves of individuals with borderline personality traits are investigated at the same time as their love myths. Cause it can show possible reasons for why they are prone to generate some love myths. The fact that the participants are limited to people with borderline personality traits and individuals with borderline personality disorder are not included is a limitation in that it prevents the determination of the change caused by the increase in the level of personality traits on love myths and love styles. Therefore, it is recommended for new researchers to include participants with a borderline personality disorder.

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