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## ARAŞTIRMA

## Açık Erişim

**Revision Study of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS-RF)***Romantik İlişkiyi Değerlendirme Ölçeğinin Revizyon Çalışması (RİDÖ-RF)***Elvan Yıldız Akyol  & Kemal Öztemel ****Authors Information**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study includes a revision of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS; Kılınçer and Tuzgöl Dost, 2013). Personal Information Form, RRAS, and Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RSS) were used as data collection tools. Explanatory and confirmatory factor analyzes were performed on the RRAS. As a result of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), a structure consisting of 28 items and five sub-dimensions was obtained. When the first and second-level CFA results are evaluated together, it was seen that five sub-dimensions consisting of 28 items were supported. In order to provide evidence for the validity of the scale, its relationship with the RSS was examined. The results revealed a negative and statistically significant correlation between the revised form of RRAS and RSS. In addition, the reliability of the scale was examined in terms of internal consistency, and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient values of the dimensions were found to vary between .78 and .92.

**Article Information****Keywords**

Romantic relationship, Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale, abuse, revision, validity, reliability

**Anahtar Kelimeler**

Romantik ilişki, Romantik İlişkiyi Değerlendirme Ölçeği, istismar, revizyon, geçerlik, güvenilirlik.

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**ÖZET**

Bu çalışma Romantik İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği'nin (RİDÖ; Kılınçer & Tuzgöl Dost, 2013) revizyonunu içermektedir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Kişisel Bilgi Formu, RİDÖ ve İlişki Doyumu Ölçeği (İDÖ) kullanılmıştır. RİDÖ'nün üzerinde açıklayıcı ve doğrulayıcı faktör analizleri gerçekleştirilmiştir. Açıklayıcı faktör analizi (AFA) sonucunda 28 madde ve beş alt boyuttan oluşan bir yapı elde edilmiştir. Gerçekleştirilen birinci ve ikinci düzey DFA sonuçları birlikte değerlendirildiğinde; 28 maddeden oluşan beş alt boyutlu yapının araştırmanın çalışma grubu olan yetişkin bireylerde desteklendiği görülmüştür. Ölçeğin geçerliğine kanıt sağlamak amacıyla İDÖ ile ilişkisi incelenmiştir. Sonuçlar RİDÖ revize formu ve İDÖ'nün negatif yönde ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı şekilde ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca ölçeğin güvenilirliği Cronbach Alpha katsayısı ile iç tutarlılık bağlamında incelenmiştir ve boyutlara ait Cronbach Alpha katsayısı değerlerinin .78 ile .92 arasında değiştiği bulunmuştur.

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## INTRODUCTION

An intimate relationship is important for individuals' life satisfaction, overall well-being, and sense of safety. Intimate relationships form the foundation necessary for individuals' psychosocial development (Noam & Fischer, 1996). Fromm (1964) emphasizes that individuals' desire for intimacy and belonging is an existential need. Similarly, Maslow (1954) indicates that the desire to be loved and to belong results from their need to actualize themselves. A number of researchers have been trying to explain romantic relationships which are considered to be intimate relationship and their nature for years. Sternberg (1986) defines a romantic relationship as an emotional relationship that is created by the combination of passion, attachment, and intimacy among individuals. According to Collins (2003), a romantic relationship is a kind of voluntary relationship that both parties mutually accept. Especially romantic relationships that are experienced during young adulthood are of vital importance for individuals to develop their adult roles. Because of that reason, the romantic relationships people establish during their university years which include the young adulthood period influence the quality of the relationships they establish during adulthood and their choice of spouse in marriage (Fernet, Hebert & Paradis, 2016). In this context, while romantic relationship experiences mostly teach individuals to establish healthy relationships with the people around them, these experiences can also contain various negative behaviors called abuse from time to time (Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon & Shelley, 2002).

### Definition of Abuse in Romantic Relationships

Heise and Garcia-Moreno (2002) define abuse in romantic relationships as behaviours and attitudes exhibited by couples who are having an emotional intimacy between them to exert power or control over each other via mutual physical, psychological and sexual violence. Niolon et al. (2017) describe abuse in romantic relationships as being exposed to one or more the behaviours such as physical violence (e.g. hitting, pushing, punching...), psychological violence (e.g. shouting, embarrassing, giving a nickname...), sexual violence (e.g. abuse, rape...) and hunting (the following somebody in a way to cause fear and anxiety about safety) in a current or possible relationship. Furthermore, abuse in romantic relationships is described by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2013) as any physical violence, sexual assault, controlling, and emotional misbehaving in any flirting relationship.

Some other examples of abuse include punishing through deprivation, not giving importance, directing, threatening, exercising violence, exhibiting exploitative behaviours, and trying to control (Seçim, 2019). Physical abuse is defined as the intentional use of force among partners that can lead to getting hurt, injury, disability, or even death (Saltzman et al., 2002). Emotional/verbal abuse includes all kinds of words and actions that cause one of the partners to get scared, have lower self-confidence, and feel guilty (e.g. humiliating, isolating, depriving, threatening...). While physical abuse can be detected relatively more easily, it is difficult to detect and define emotional abuse (Murphy & Hoover, 1999). Sexual abuse refers to forcing the partner to have sexual intercourse, preventing birth control, forcing the partner to have oral or anal intercourse, and using physical violence on genitalia (Mouradian, 2000).

While abusive behaviours can cause damage in more than one area, a single abusive behaviour can include different types of abuse at the same time. For example, an individual who is exposed to sexual abuse by their partner can experience physical, emotional, and psychological abuse at the same time. Although there are different approaches to the types of abuse in the literature, most researchers agree that all kinds of abusive behaviours end with emotional abuse (Şahin & Tezel, 2014; Taner & Gökler, 2004).

## Impact of Abuse in Romantic Relationships on People's Physical and Psychological Health

In recent years, abuse in romantic relationships leading to short- and long-term physical and psychological problems has increasingly turned out to be a social health problem, and it has become widespread all over the world regardless of social, economic, religious, and cultural background (Angelone, Mitchell & Lucente, 2012; Silverman, Raj, Mucci & Hathaway, 2001; WHO, 2013). An abused individual starts to have problems in various domains of life. Therefore, this phenomenon is a process that brings about a number of individual and social problems and conflicts and has serious effects on people's future lives (Niolon et al., 2017). Related studies in the literature show that men and women can sometimes be unilateral agents or victims of abuse (Baker & Stith, 2008; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001), while they can sometimes mutually be the agent and victims of it (Caetano, Ramisetty-Mikler, & Field, 2005; Renner & Whitney, 2012). In the USA, one in every four women and one in every nine men are a victim of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and hunting by their partner (Breiding, Chen & Black, 2014).

The studies focusing on abuse in romantic relationships show that the rate of abuse carried out by men to women is higher than the rate of abuse carried out by women to men (Archer, 2000; Johnson, 2011; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg & Zwi, 2002). According to research conducted by the World Health Organization in more than 80 countries, abuse in romantic relationships is mostly exercised by the male partner to the female partner, and 35% of women, which means one in three women, all over the world are subject to physical and/or sexual abuse in romantic relationships by their partners (WHO, 2013). According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2014, one in three women is subject to physical abuse by her partner or husband throughout her life. In other words, it is possible to say that 4 in 10 women are abused by their partner or husband. The results of this study also reveal that 36% of women are exposed to physical violence, while 12% of them are exposed to sexual abuse in Turkey. When it comes to the level of emotional violence and abuse, 44% of the married women in Turkey have been exposed to at least one behaviour of emotional violence and abuse in their life (T.C. MFSP Directorate General on the Status of Women, 2015). Moreover, another study reveals that 12 women have been exposed to sexual violence in their life (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, Çavlin, Akadlı Ergöçmen, 2015).

Previous studies in the literature show that young adults are frequently exposed to abuse in their romantic relationships both by men to women and by women to men (Bott, Guedes, Goodwin & Mendoza, 2012; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Hickman, Jaycox, & Aronoff, 2004), and individuals who have been abused in their romantic relationships can also come across various acute and chronic health problems that prevent them from following their daily routine (Breiding et al., 2014). Those who are exposed to flirting violence can have some psychological and physical problems such as drinking alcohol, smoking, eating disorders, decrease in self-confidence, a burst of anger, depression, shame, guilt, suicidal intention or attempt, decrease in self-respect, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Silverman et al., 2001). The findings of this study reveal that abuse in romantic relationships is a risk factor for individuals' physical and psychological health. Because of that reason, it seems important to reveal the abuse in romantic relationships in order to protect individuals' physical and psychological health.

## The Need for Revision of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS)

The need to understand and measure the dynamics of abuse has brought about studies to develop scales for that purpose. In 2013, Kılınçer and Tuzgöl Dost developed Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS) in order to identify the abuse experienced by university students in their romantic relationships. This scale is important for being the first scale developed in Turkish culture in order to identify the level of abuse experienced by individuals in their romantic relationships. Despite this, we observed that there are situations that need to be revised on this scale. When the theoretical background of romantic abuse (e.g., Flowers, 2009; Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Niolon et al., 2017; Öztürk, Karabulut & Sertoğlu, 2018; Saltzman et al., 2002; Seçim, 2019; WHO, 2013) and the scales developed on romantic abuse in other cultures (e.g. Borjesson, Aarons & Dunn, 2003; Hegarty, Sheehan, & Schonfeld, 2017 ) were examined, it is possible to state that abuse by nature may appear in many different forms such as controlling the behavior of the partner and restricting the partners, as well as physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Because of that reason, the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale is expected to have a multi-factor structure.

The original form of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale is composed of 70 items and has only one factor. Despite the detailed and meticulous work of the researchers while preparing the data pool, we believe that some mistakes were made in the original scale analysis stage while performing the exploratory factor analysis. For this reason, it was decided to revise it again, assuming that the scale should be controlled statistically. Moreover, as RRAS has 70 items, it is quite a long scale, which makes it difficult for participants to respond to all items with the same motivation until the end, and it takes quite a long time to respond to all the items. As a result, there comes out a need to revise the scale both because of its one-factor structure, problematic statistical analysis, and the high number of items on the scale.

Consequently, this study aims at revising the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS). Due to the expectation of a multi-factor structure, statistical defects, and a high number of items, revising the scale is thought to contribute to the literature and future research on this issue in terms of identifying what kind of abuse individuals are exposed to and easy to conduct.

## METHOD

### Study Group

The current study has two different study groups for explanatory and confirmatory factor analyses in order to develop a revised form of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS).

**Study Group 1.** In the first phase of the study to conduct explanatory factor analysis, the study group included 460 adults (370 females and 90 males) who were reached by the researchers in line with the method of convenience sampling and who participated in the study on a voluntary basis. The participants were aged 18-59, and the average of their age was 27 ( $Ss = 6.51$ ).

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of the First Study Group in the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale Revision Process

Variables		N	%
Gender	Female	370	80.4
	Male	90	19.6
Employment Status	Student	152	33.0
	Working	263	57.2
	Not Working	45	9.8
State of Romantic Relationship	Dating	248	53.9
	Engaged	37	8.0
	Married	175	38.0
Duration of Romantic Relationships	Less than 1 month	17	3.7
	1- 6 months	55	12.0
	6 months - 1 year	46	10.0
	1- 2 years	76	16.5
	2- 4 years	90	19.6
	4- 6 years	66	14.3
	More than 6 years	110	23.9

**Study Group 2.** In the second phase of the study which aimed to conduct confirmatory factor analysis and examine criterion validity, the same method of convenience sampling was used to reach 303 adults (232 females, 71 males) who were aged 18-63, while the average of their ages was 28.98 ( $S_s = 7.41$ ).

**Table 2.** Demographic Characteristics of the Second Study Group in the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale Revision Process

Variables		N	%
Gender	Female	232	76.6
	Male	71	23.4
Employment Status	Student	82	27.1
	Working	189	6.4
	Not Working	32	10.6
State of Romantic Relationship	Dating	156	51.5
	Engaged	23	7.6
	Married	124	40.9
Duration of Romantic Relationships	Less than 1 month	15	5.0
	1- 6 months	54	17.8
	6 months - 1 year	28	9.2
	1- 2 years	45	14.9
	2- 4 years	39	12.9
	4- 6 years	35	11.6
	More than 6 years	87	28.7

Thus, while developing the revised form of the scale, the researchers collected data from 763 adults in total who were over the age of 18 and who had a romantic relationship at the time.

## Procedure

Within the framework of the current study, the researchers, first of all, got the necessary permission from the researchers who had developed the scale to create the revised version of it. They then received permission from the ethical commission of Gazi University before starting the data collection process. After completing the process of receiving legal permissions, they prepared the questionnaires to collect data on Google Forms. With the announcements made on various social media platforms, the purpose

of the study and the conditions of participation was announced to the individuals. Participants received a consent form online. With their consent, participants were recruited to the study and filled out the questionnaires online at Google Forms.

First, explanatory factor analysis was conducted in order to test the factor structure of the original RRAS scale and to remove the items from the scale due to having a factor load below .40 and giving load to more than one factor as well as those having a difference of factor load lower than .20 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Explanatory factor analysis is a kind of analysis that is conducted to clean out the items that are not functional in order to determine the construct validity of a scale which refers to the structure of factors (DeVellis, 2003; Kline, 2005).

After conducting explanatory factor analysis, the form obtained at the end of the explanatory factor analysis was implemented with a new sample in order to test the accuracy of the construct, and so confirmatory factor analysis was done with the collected data (DeVellis, 2003; Kline, 2011). At this phase, the correlations between the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS) and Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Curun, 2001) were calculated in order to test criterion validity. Moreover, at both stages, the researchers calculated the internal consistency coefficient of both sub-dimensions and the whole scale in order to get evidence for the reliability of the scale. They then evaluated the results of these analyses in accordance with the acceptable intervals necessary to appear in a scale, and they finalized the revised form of the scale.

### Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools in the current study are the Personal Information Form, Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (Kılınçer & Tuzgöl Dost, 2013), and Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Curun, 2001). The data collection tools are described in detail below.

**Personal Information Form.** The researchers developed the Personal Information Form to gather information about the participants' gender, age, employment status, state of a romantic relationship, and how long they have been in a romantic relationship.

**Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale Original Form.** In the current study, the researcher used the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS) developed by Kılınçer and Tuzgöl Dost (2013) in order to identify the abuse perceived by university students in their romantic relationships. An item pool was created after conducting a detailed literature review, examining similar scales, and receiving the opinions of experts. Then, a scale form consisting of 112 items was developed and presented for expert opinion. After receiving expert opinion, 39 items were removed from the scale and there were 73 items left in the form for pilot implementation.

Explanatory factor analysis for the scale was conducted with a sample of 426 university students who had a romantic relationship at the time or had had a romantic relationship in the last year. First of all, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was calculated in order to see if the data were enough to carry out factor analysis or not, and it was found to be .94. This figure showed that the data were rich enough to conduct factor analysis. Furthermore, the Barlett sphericity test was done to see if the inter-item correlations were appropriate for factor analysis or not, and the result was found to be statistically significant at a level of  $p < .001$ . Other results regarding factor analysis were examined based on these results. Factor loads were examined depending on the results of the first explanatory factor analysis. As a result of this examination

and expert opinion, three items were removed from the scale and a further factor analysis was carried out for the scale consisting of 70 items (Kılınçer & Tuzgöl Dost, 2013).

The second explanatory factor analysis showed that the scale had 13 dimensions having an eigenvalue larger than 1, and these values accounted for 64.89% of the total variance. The eigenvalue of the first factor was found to account for 33.50% of the total variance. The results also showed that there was a sharp decrease from the first eigenvalue to the second one, and the difference between the two values was more than four times, whereas there was no other sharp decrease among other eigenvalues. Considering this result, it was clear that the scale was one-dimensional, and it was possible to use the total score of the scale. In order to strengthen the evidence of the validity of the scale, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with responses from 411 university students. When the results of confirmatory factor analysis for RRAS were examined, the scale was found to provide the necessary criteria for the construct validity without any need for further modification (GFI/AGFI=.80/,79; NFI=.96, NNFI=1.00; CFI=1.00; RMSEA=.038; RMR=.05; SRMR=.046) (Kılınçer & Tuzgöl Dost, 2013).

The scale consisting of 70 items is a 5-point Likert-type scale and it is one-dimensional. There is no reverse item in the scale. On the scale, 1 refers to "never", 2 refers to "rarely", 3 refers to "sometimes", 4 refers to "often" and 5 refers to "very often". The lowest score can be 70, whereas the highest score can be 350. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .97 for Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale. The test-retest reliability coefficient for RRAS was found to be .89. In order to determine similar criterion validity, the researchers examined the relation between RRAS and Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Curun, 2001) which was thought to have an opposite construct, and it was found to be  $-.76$  ( $p < .001$ ). A high score on the scale points to a higher level of abuse in a romantic relationship (Kılınçer & Tuzgöl-Dost, 2013).

***The Relationship Satisfaction Scale.*** Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RSS) was developed by Hendrick (1988) in order to measure satisfaction in a romantic relationship. The scale is composed of seven items and it is a 7-point Likert-type scale. Hendrick (1988) conducted a factor analysis and found out that RSS had a one-factor construct, which accounted for 46% of the total variance, and it was clear that item-total correlation varied between .57 and .76. In that study which was conducted with a sample of flirting couples, the correlation between RSS and Dyadic Adjustment Scale was found to be .80. The scale was adapted into Turkish culture by Curun (2001) with a sample of 140 university students who had a romantic relationship at the time. The factor analysis showed that the scale had one factor as the original scale, and this factor accounted for 52% of the total variance. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be .86. Items 4 and 7 are reversed items, and a high score points to a high level of satisfaction in the relationship. In the current study, Cronbach Alfa's internal consistency coefficient for RSS was found to be .92.

## FINDINGS

### Validity of Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale – Revised Form

***Explanatory Factor Analysis (EFA).*** Although different researchers offer different views and criteria about the appropriate sample size to conduct factor analysis, it is widely accepted that the sample size should be 5-10 times more than the number of items in the scale (Kline, 2011; Clark & Watson, 1995). Considering this, 473 participants were included in the current study. First of all, the researchers examined

outlier values. 13 responses were removed from the data set as they were found to have multi-variate outlier values according to the z values and univariate Mahalanobis distance identified with boxplots. Then, the researchers conducted EFA with the remaining 460 responses (Table 1). EFA is used when there is no clear factor construct (DeVellis, 2003). The original form of RRAS is composed of 70 items and it has a one-factor construct. Literature review shows that abuse in a romantic relationship can appear in many various forms such as physical violence towards the partner, emotional neglect, sexual abuse, control, and restriction (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Niolon et al., 2017; WHO, 2013). In this context, abuse is expected to have a multi-factor structure by nature. In line with this expectation, explanatory factor analysis was conducted to remove the items from the scale due to having a factor load below .40 and giving load to more than one factor as well as those having a difference of factor load lower than .20 (Hair et al., 1998; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The researchers looked at Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) coefficient and Barlett Sphericity test the data if appropriate for EFA. The analysis showed that the KMO value was .91, while the Barlett Sphericity test resulted in a statistically significant value ( $\chi^2 = 19640.624$ ;  $p < .000$ ). As a result, the analysis showed that the data set was appropriate for EFA.

Explanatory factor analysis aims to identify under which factor the items fall in the original form by including all the items in the analysis freely. In the factor analysis of the current study, the researchers made use of Principal Axis Factoring, which is one of the methods to extract factors as well as the Promax spinning method, which is an inclined spinning method as it had already been identified that the items in the scale were related to each other theoretically (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

The results of the first-factor analysis showed that 70 items in the original RRAS were distributed among the 16 factors randomly. Besides, some items gave load to more than one factor, whereas the factor load of some other items was lower than .30. At the end of the factor analysis, the researchers removed the items that were not working, the items that gave load to more than one factors, the items with a factor load of lower than .40 and the items giving load to two factors with a difference of .20 (DeVellis, 2003), and they repeated the factor analysis after removing each item. Moreover, the items that were highly correlated with each other were removed from the scale in order to avoid the problem of multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

After removing the items in line with the aforementioned criteria, the researchers came up with a construct with five factors and 28 items. The form with 28 items was re-evaluated in terms of accuracy for EFA (Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). The results showed that the KMO value was .91, and the Barlett test result was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 6468.662$ ;  $p < .000$ ). These results showed that the scale items were appropriate to conduct explanatory factor analysis. A high level of explained variance refers to the strength of the factor construct of a scale. A value between 40% and 60% is considered acceptable in social sciences (Kline, 2011). The variance explained by this five-factor construct is found to be 61.02%. When the five-factor construct obtained at the end of the analysis was examined, it was clear that the items falling under each sub-factor were consistent with each other as an indicator of the type of abuse in theoretical terms (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Mouradian, 2000; Murphy & Hoover, 1999; Niolan et al., 2017; WHO, 2013; Öztürk et al., 2018; Saltzman et al., 2002). While naming these factors, the researchers examined how abuse can appear in a romantic relationship theoretically, identified behavioural indicators for each factor, and named the factors in accordance with these indicators. The behaviours that aim to cause physical injury such as “S/he throws me dangerous materials, s/he attempts

to hurt with wounding objects, s/he punches me, s/he hurts me with any object, s/he slaps me in the face, s/he twists my fingers or arms.” are called *physical abuse*; the behaviours that aim to isolate the partner from his/her social circle such as “s/he minds if I join a social event without him/her, s/he feels troubled when I join social events with my friends, s/he feels troubled when I make a friend of opposite sex, s/he prevents me meeting my friends, s/he interferes with my personal plans, s/he constrains me to the activities I like.” are called *social restriction*; the behaviours that aim to take the partner under control cognitively such as “s/he expects me to accept his/her wishes unconditionally, s/he gets angry when I make a decision that s/he does not approve, s/he gets very angry when I do not accept his/her views, s/he exercises power over me to get me accept his/her views, s/he insists that s/he knows the best for me, s/he commands me.” are called *cognitive suppression*; the behaviours that aim to ignore the partner emotionally such as “s/he does not show his/her love to me, s/he avoids using terms of affection to me, s/he does not show interest in my problems, s/he does not appreciate me enough, s/he does not try to keep his/her words to me, s/he lies to me.” are called *emotional neglect*; and lastly, the behaviours that are conducted without the permission of the partner such as “s/he forces me to display sexual behaviour that I do not want, s/he does not respect my sexual lines, s/he sees me as a sexual object, s/he touches my sexual organs although I do not want that.” are called *sexual abuse*.

Figure 1 shows the scatter diagram of the Romantic Relationships Assessment Scale-Revised Form, and Table 3 presents the factor loads of the remaining 28 items in the scale.

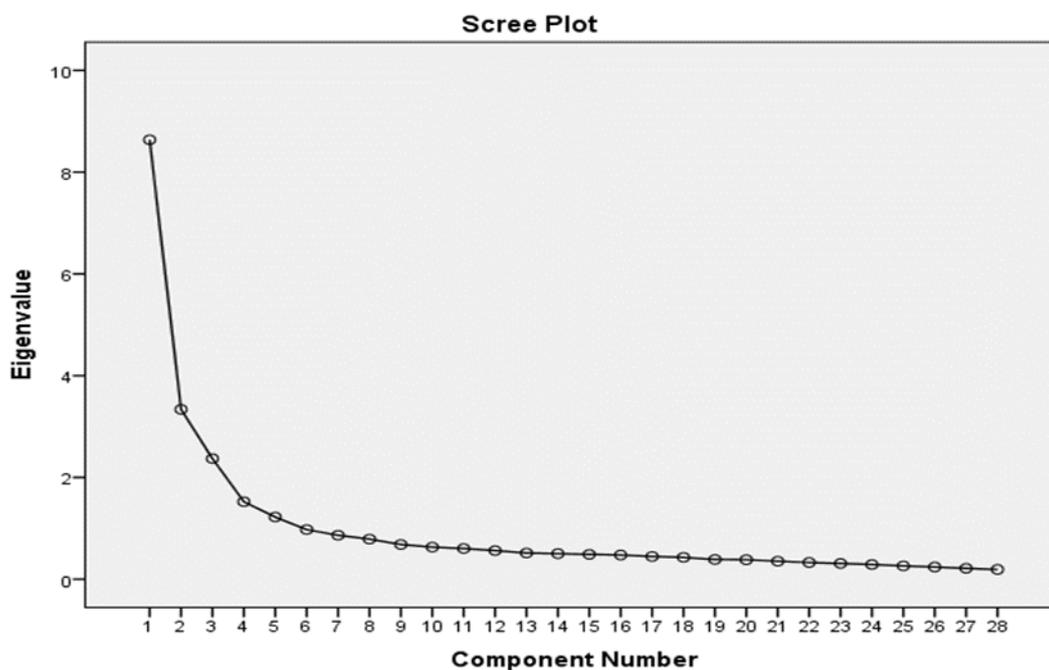


Figure 1. The Scatter Diagram of Romantic Relationships Assessment Scale-Revised Form

**Table 3.** Factor Load Values of Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale – Revised Form

No	Items	Physical Harm	Social Restriction	Cognitive Suppression	Emotional Neglect	Sexual Abuse
55	S/he throws me dangerous materials.	.862				
49	S/he attempts to hurt with wounding objects.	.839				
27	S/he punches me.	.772				
11	S/he hurts me with any object.	.759				
5	S/he slaps me in the face.	.753				
61	S/he twists my fingers or arms.	.745				
43	S/he minds if I join a social event without him/her.		.930			
9	S/he feels troubled when I join social events with my friends.		.813			
42	S/he feels troubled when I make a friend of the opposite sex.		.784			
47	S/he prevents me from meeting my friends.		.783			
38	S/he interferes with my personal plans.		.618			
57	S/he constrains me from the activities I like.		.618			
19	S/he expects me to accept his/her wishes unconditionally.			.802		
26	S/he gets angry when I make a decision that s/he does not approve of.			.782		
10	S/he gets very angry when I do not accept his/her views.			.778		
35	S/he exercises power over me to accept his/her views.			.773		
21	S/he insists that s/he knows the best for me.			.766		
32	S/he commands me.			.677		
68	S/he does not show his/her love to me.				.837	
14	S/he avoids using terms of affection to me.				.792	
36	S/he does not show interest in my problems.				.744	
60	S/he does not appreciate me enough.				.673	
63	S/he does not try to keep his/her words to me.				.639	
69	S/he lies to me.				.629	
6	S/he forces me to display sexual behaviour that I do not want.					.815
22	S/he does not respect my sexual lines.					.810
39	S/he sees me as a sexual object.					.786
56	S/he touches my sexual organs although I do not want that.					.559
Eigenvalue		8.636	3.337	2.370	1.522	1.221
Variance Explained		30.842	11.919	8.465	5.435	4.360
Total Variance Explained					61.022	

As is seen in Table 3, the sub-factor of physical harm is composed of six items whose factor loads vary between .75 and .86; the sub-factor of social restriction is composed of six items whose factor loads vary between .62 and .93, the sub-factor of cognitive suppression is composed of six items whose factor loads vary between .68 and .80, the sub-factor of emotional neglect is composed of six items whose factor loads vary between .63 and .84, the sub-factor of sexual abuse is composed of four items whose factor loads vary between .56 and .82. All the items in the scale account for 61.02% of the total variance. The sub-factor of physical harm accounts for 30.84% of the total variance, the sub-factor of social restriction accounts for 11.92% of the total variance, the sub-factor of cognitive suppression accounts for 8.47% of the total variance, the sub-factor of emotional neglect accounts for 5.44% of the total variance and the sub-factor of sexual abuse accounts for 4.36% of the total variance.

The researchers calculated the correlation coefficients among the factors in order to reveal the relations among the five sub-factors obtained at the end of the explanatory factor analysis, and the results are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Correlations Between Sub-Dimensions of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale-Revised Form

Sub-dimensions	Physical Harm	Social Restriction	Cognitive Suppression	Emotional Neglect	Sexual Abuse	Total
Physical Harm	1.00	.23**	.27**	.18**	.25**	.41**
Social Restriction		1.00	.66**	.41**	.29**	.82**
Cognitive Suppression			1.00	.52**	.39**	.88**
Emotional Neglect				1.00	.44**	.73**
Sexual Abuse					1.00	.56**
Total						1.00

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

As is clear in Table 4, the correlations among the sub-factors of the scale vary between .18 and .66, and they are statistically significant at a level of  $p < .01$ . According to the results, the sub-factors are correlated with each other at a statistically significant level.

### Item Validity

**Findings About the Item-Total Test Correlations.** Item-total correlations were calculated in order to see if each item in the revised form could measure the intended feature sufficiently or not. Table 5 gives the item-total correlations for each item.

**Table 5.** Item-Total Correlations for Items

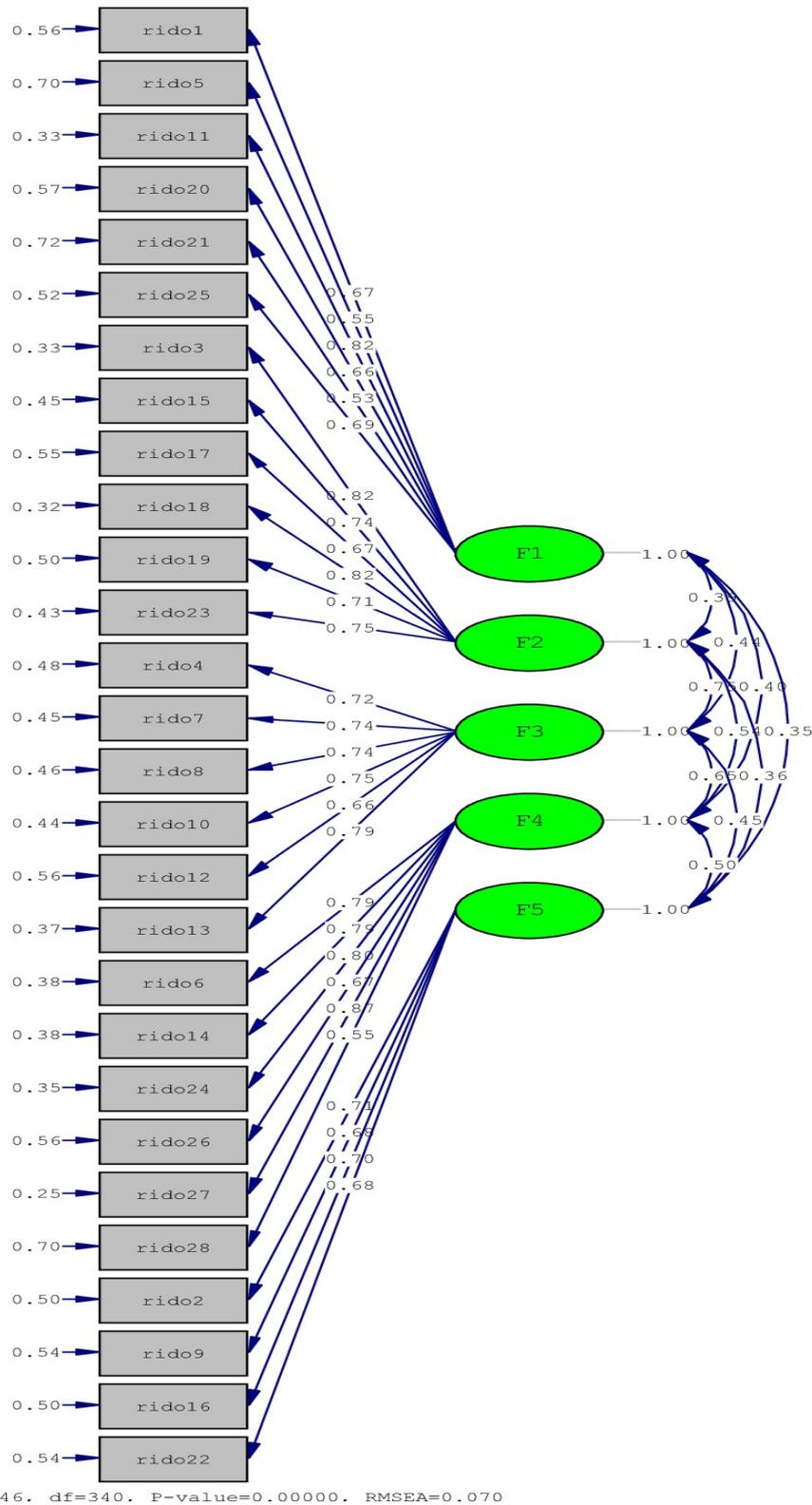
Dimensions	Items	$X_{ort}$	$Sd$	Item-total correlations
Physical Harm	55	1.03	.25	.751
	49	1.02	.17	.731
	5	1.07	.35	.673
	11	1.20	.42	.688
	27	1.03	.34	.610
	61	1.07	.45	.620
Social Restriction	43	1.69	1.00	.795
	9	1.83	1.03	.668
	42	2.29	1.28	.658
	47	1.36	.78	.724
	38	1.71	.89	.674
	57	1.33	.71	.585
Cognitive Suppression	35	1.49	.87	.685
	19	1.76	1.05	.724
	10	1.99	1.04	.709
	26	2.16	1.10	.745
	21	1.73	1.04	.617
	32	1.40	.78	.604
Emotional Neglect	68	1.37	.78	.696
	36	1.42	.76	.669
	14	1.44	.88	.531
	60	1.36	.74	.634
	63	1.41	.77	.536
	69	1.38	.76	.516
Sexual Abuse	6	1.15	.50	.594
	22	1.19	.66	.476
	39	1.14	.54	.563
	56	1.13	.51	.532

According to the results of item analysis given in Table 5, item-total test correlations of the items under the factor of physical harm vary between .61 and .75, item-total test correlations of the items under the factor of social restriction vary between .59 and .80, item-total test correlations of the items under the factor of cognitive suppression vary between .62 and .67, item-total test correlations of the items under the factor of emotional neglect vary between .52 and .70, and item-total test correlations of the items under the factor of sexual abuse vary between .48 and .59. Item-total test correlations that are equal to and higher than .30 are accepted to be evidence of the validity of the scale items (Field, 2005). The item-total test correlations of the current study show that this value is higher than .30 for each item. In this context, the results show that the items in this scale can really measure the intended feature.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The researchers conducted a first-level and second-level confirmatory factor analysis with a different sample group (Table 2) in order to gather evidence for the construct validity of the five-factor Romantic Relationships Assessment Scale – Revised Form (RRAS-R) obtained at the end of the explanatory factor analysis. These analyses were conducted with LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Before starting the confirmatory factor analysis, all the variables were checked for missing data, deviating data, outliers, and normality assumptions. At the end of this check, 7 out of 310 responses were removed from the data set, and CFA was conducted with responses from 303 participants.

**First-Level Confirmatory Factor Analysis.** Figure 2 gives the path diagram obtained at the end of the first-level CFA regarding the five-factor construct, and Table 6 presents the goodness of fit indices.



**Figure 2.** Path Diagram for First Level Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

**Table 6.** Fit Indices for First Level Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale - Revised Form

The goodness of fit indices.	$\chi^2 / df$	RMSEA	SRMR	NFI	NNFI/TLI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
Value	2.484	.070, CI[.064-.076]	.063	.93	.95	.96	.87	.85

When the goodness of fit indices regarding the model with 28 items obtained at the end of the first-level confirmatory factor analysis given in table 6 are examined, it is clear that RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, NFI, GFI, AGFI values are within the acceptable intervals, while  $\chi^2/df$  and TLI/NNFI have values of perfect fit (Kline, 2011, Marcoulides & Schumacher, 2001; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger & Müller, 2003).

**Second-Level Confirmatory Factor Analysis.** Figure 3 gives the path diagram obtained at the end of the second-level CFA conducted in order to test if it is possible to get a total score from the scale or not, and Table 7 presents the goodness of fit indices.

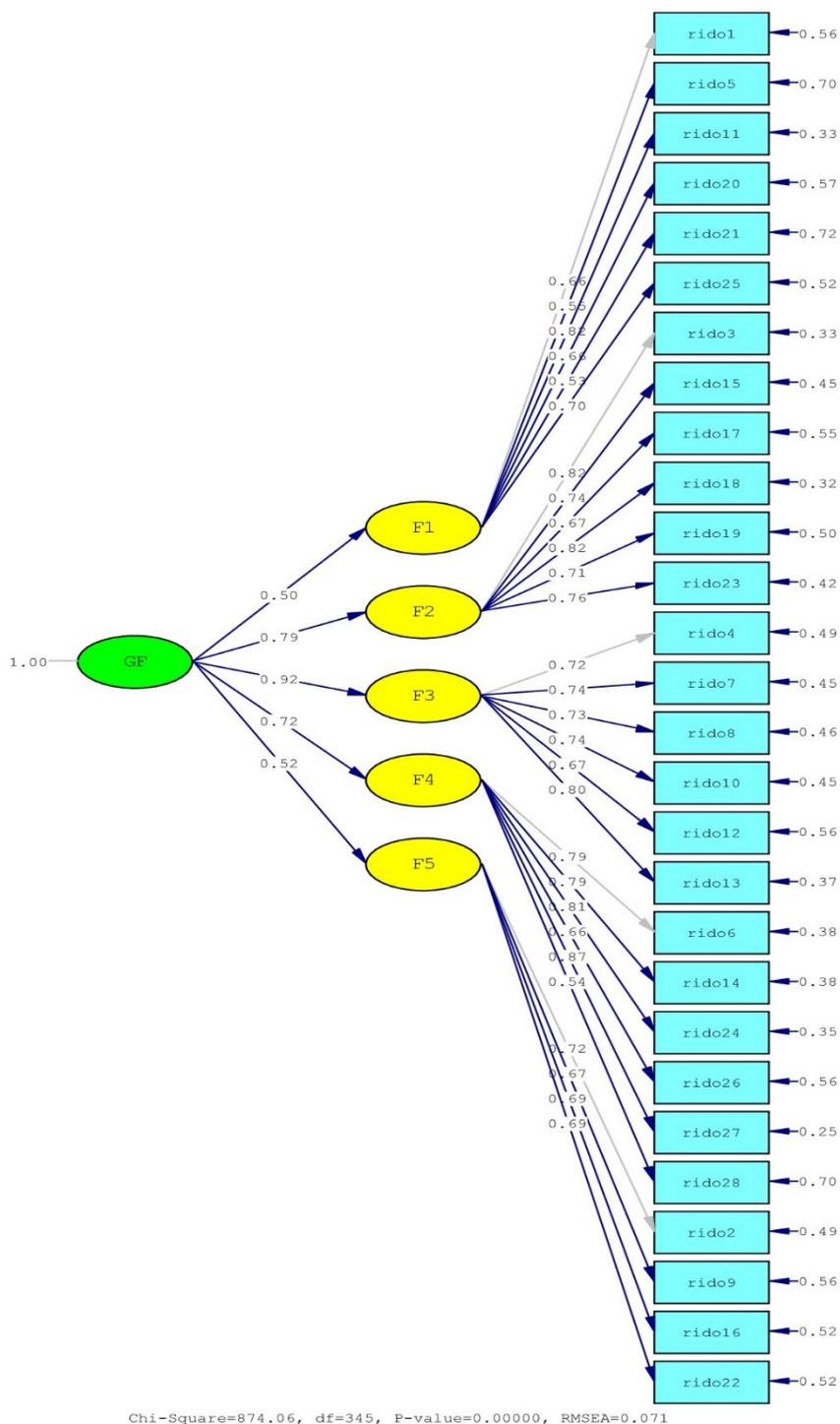


Figure 3. Path Diagram for Second-Level Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

**Table 7.** Fit Indices for Second Level Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale - Revised Form

The goodness of fit indices.	$\chi^2 / df$	RMSEA	SRMR	NFI	NNFI/TLI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
Value	2.534	.071, CI[.065-.077]	.067	.93	.95	.96	.87	.85

When the goodness of fit indices regarding the model with 28 items obtained at the end of the second-level confirmatory factor analysis given in table 7 are examined, it is clear that RMSEA, SRMR, CFI, NFI, GFI, AGFI values are within the acceptable intervals, while  $\chi^2/df$  and TLI/NNFI have values of perfect fit (Kline, 2011, Marcoulides & Schumacher, 2001; Schermelleh-Engel, et al., 2003).

When these results are considered, it is possible to say that Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale-Revised Form, which has 28 items in total, is a valid measurement tool according to the first and second-level confirmatory factor analyses.

### Criterion Validity

The researchers asked the participants to respond to the items in the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale-Revised Form (RRAS-RF) as well as the Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Curun, 2001) as it is thought to measure an opposite construct during the second application done for CFA in order to test the criterion validity. In this phase of criterion validity conducted with the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale-Revised Form and Relationship Satisfaction Scale, the relations between the two scales were examined. Table 8 presents the correlation coefficients among scores obtained from RRAS-RF, sub-factors of RRAS-RF, and RSS.

**Table 8.** Criterion Validity Analysis of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale-Revised Form

	RSS	RRAS-RF	Physical Harm	Social Restriction	Cognitive Suppression	Emotional Neglect	Sexual Abuse
RSS	-	-.61**	-.22**	-.46**	-.46**	-.63**	-.38**
RRAS-RF		-	.51**	.81**	.88**	.83**	.56**
Physical Harm			-	.33**	.38**	.35**	.30**
Social Restriction				-	.67**	.50**	.30**
Cognitive Suppression					-	.61**	.38**
Emotional Neglect						-	.44**
Sexual Abuse							-

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

As is clear in Table 8, RSS is negatively related to RRAS-RF at a statistically significant level ( $r = -.61$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while RSS is negatively related to RRAS-RF's sub-factor of physical harm ( $r = -.22$ ,  $p < .01$ ), social restriction ( $r = -.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ), cognitive suppression ( $r = -.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotional neglect ( $r = -.63$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and sexual abuse ( $r = -.38$ ,  $p < .01$ ) at a statistically significant level. Starting from this point, it is possible to state that RRAS-RF is valid in the context of similar criteria.

After completing the analyses conducted to gather evidence for the validity of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale-Revised Form, the researchers conducted some analyses for reliability, which is another feature that a scale needs to have.

## Reliability of Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale – Revised Form

The reliability of the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale-Revised Form was analyzed with two different study groups. In this context, in the first phase, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the whole revised form consisting of 28 items and five factors obtained at the end of the explanatory factor analysis was found to be .91, while this value was found to be .85 for the sub-factor of physical harm, it was .87 for the sub-factor of social restriction, it was .87 for the sub-factor of cognitive suppression .87, it was .83 for emotional neglect and it was .74 for sexual abuse.

In the second phase, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the whole revised form consisting of 28 items and five factors confirmed at the end of the confirmatory factor analysis was found to be .92, while this value was found to be .80 for the sub-factor of physical harm, it was .87 for the sub-factor of social restriction, it was .87 for the sub-factor of cognitive suppression, it was .88 for emotional neglect and it was .78 for sexual abuse.

Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) state that a reliability coefficient equal to or higher than .70 is enough to consider the scale reliable. The results show that this scale is a reliable tool.

## RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS

The current study aims at revising the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale (RRAS) and creating a revised form of it. First of all, the researchers conducted an explanatory factor analysis with the Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale consisting of one factor and 70 items in order to identify the construct validity. They came up with a construct with 28 items and 5 factors at the end of the explanatory factor analysis. The analysis showed that this construct with five factors accounted for 61.02% of the total variance. Afterward, the researchers conducted first and second-level confirmatory factor analyses with a different sample group in order to obtain evidence for the validity of five-factor construct obtained at the end of EFA. When the results of first and second-level confirmatory factor analysis were examined together, it was clear that RRAS-RF had the necessary goodness of fit indices (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993; Kline, 2011).

For the purpose of testing the criterion validity of the scale, the researchers asked the participants to respond to items in RRAS-RF as well as Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Curun, 2001) as it was thought to have an opposite construct, and calculated the correlations between the scores obtained from these two scales. The results showed that there was a negative relationship between participants' score of RRAS-RF and relationship satisfaction at a statistically significant level. The higher the score of sexual abuse was, the lower the score of relationship satisfaction was. This finding can be said to support the validity of the scale.

The researchers calculated the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient to test the reliability of the scale. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was calculated to be .92 for the whole scale, .74 for the sub-factor of physical harm, .86 for the sub-factor of social restriction, .86 for the sub-factor of cognitive suppression, .87 for the sub-factor of emotional neglect and .73 for the sub-factor of sexual abuse. These values obtained at the end of the analysis for reliability are considered sufficient for the reliability of a scale (Kline, 2011).

Depending on the aforementioned findings of the current study, it is possible to state that Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale – Revised Form (RRAS-RF) consists of 28 items and five factors (physical harm, social restriction, cognitive suppression, emotional neglect, sexual abuse) obtained after revising Romantic Relationship Assessment Scale is a valid and reliable tool to measure the level and type of the abuse which adults suffer from in their romantic relationships. There are no reverse items in RRAS-RF. The participants can respond to the items in the scale as “never (1)”, “rarely (2)”, “sometimes (3)”, “often (4)” and “very often (5)”. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 28, whereas the highest score can be 140. A higher score refers to a high level of abuse in a romantic relationship.

Literature review shows that abuse in romantic relationships affects individuals’ physical and psychological health badly (Banyard & Cross, 2008; Breiding et al., 2014; Silverman et al., 2001). Various studies, some of which are applied, emphasize that it is of vital importance to address this concept in Turkey, where abuse in romantic relationships has turned out to be a matter of public health (Aba, 2008; Kayı, Yavuz & Arıcan, 2000; Kılınçer & Tuzgöl Dost, 2014; Tagay, Ünüvar & Çalışandemir, 2018). Therefore, RRAS-RF, which was revised in the current study and has good psychometric features, can be used in further studies that will address abuse in romantic relationships. Moreover, as RRAS-RF is composed of 28 items, it can be easier to use with other measurement tools in further theoretical and applied studies.

RRAS-RF is a scale that can measure how much adults suffer from which type of abuse in their romantic relationships, and it would be helpful to test its validity and reliability with different sample groups that can face abuse in their romantic relationships such as adolescents or LGBT individuals. In this way, it can be possible to conduct various studies with different variables (e.g. depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, sleep disorders, some personality disorders, chronic pain syndromes, psychosomatic disorders, life satisfaction, happiness, hope, psychological well-being, etc.) and with different sample groups (e.g. adolescents, emerging adults, adults, immigrant women, LGBTQ communities, pregnant women, low-income people, etc.) in order to identify the variables that predict abuse in romantic relationships. In addition, RRAS-RF can contribute to identifying the level and type of abuse people suffer in their romantic relationships, which can be helpful to prepare psycho-educational programs to prevent abuse in romantic relationships and to identify the individuals to participate in such programs.

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### Author Contribution

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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### Ethical Statement

The study was approved by the ethical committee of Gazi University on July 14, 2020 (No: 2020-389). In addition, consent forms were obtained from all participants included in the study.

**Ethics Committee Name:** Gazi University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee

**Approval Date:** 2020/07/14

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### Author(s) Note

This research article was produced from a doctoral thesis.