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ARAŞTIRMA	Açık Erişim

Investigation of Deadly and Caring Habits in Romantic Relationships

Romantik İlişkilerde Ölümcül ve Besleyici Alışkanlıklar

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the aim was to determine which deadly and caring habits, as stated in reality therapy, individuals in the young adult period use in romantic relationships and how they display these habits. The study was completed with 10 couples continuing in a romantic relationship for at least one year. The study with qualitative research pattern used an interview form developed by the researchers as a data collection tool and interviews were performed by the researchers. Interviews were separately held with each member of the couple, for a total of 20 interviews. Interviews were decoded and the closed approach was used in the content analysis process for these codes. Accordingly, two main themes of deadly and caring habits with each containing seven habits in these two categories were identified. This study revealed couples' caring and deadly habits and how they experience these habits within their relationships.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada genç yetişkinlik döneminde olan bireylerin romantik ilişkilerinde gerçeklik terapisinde belirtilen ölümcül ve besleyici alışkanlıklarından hangilerini kullandıklarını ve bunlar nasıl sergilediklerini ortaya koymak amaçlanmaktadır. Çalışma en az bir yıl süreyle romantik ilişkisi devam etmiş olan 10 çift ile yürütülmüştür. Nitel araştırma deseninde olan çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen görüşme formu kullanılmış ve görüşmeler araştırmacılar tarafından yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler her bir çiftteki katılımcılar ile ayrı ayrı yapılmış ve toplamda 20 görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler transkript edildi ve bu transkriptlerin analizinde içerik analizi sürecinde kapalı yaklaşım kullanılmıştır. Buna göre, iki ölümcül ve besleyici alışkanlıklar olmak üzere iki ana temanın her birinde bulunan yedişer alışkanlık için ikişer kategori belirlenmiştir. Bu çalışma ile çiftlerin ilişkilerinde sergiledikleri ve maruz kaldıkları besleyici ve ölümcül alışkanlıkların, ilişki sürecinde nasıl yaşandığı ortaya konulmuştur.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of human life includes relationships with others. Many approaches advocate that people can direct their relationships, shape their relationships with their behavior and create and sustain healthy relationships. One of the best-known approaches advocating for this view is "reality therapy". Reality therapy, presented by William Glasser, is based on choice theory (Glasser & Wubbolding, 1997). The choice theory states that from birth to death everything a person does is behavior and is shaped according to their own choices, not due to external forces (Glasser, 2001). Behavior is displayed in order to meet needs basically; in other words, behavior is targeted and comes from within (Corey, 2015). All behavior, both positive and negative, is the choice of a healthy or unhealthy individual and the aim is to meet needs. In reality therapy, the five basic needs at the heart of individuals are "survival or self-protection, love and belonging, self-worth/power, freedom or independence, and fun" and all behavior, in the end, aims to fulfill one or more of these needs (Wubbolding at al., 2004). Peterson (2000) stated that love and belonging were the most important among these needs. These needs are met by relationships created with family, friends, and other people close to and intimate with the individual. In this context, the behavior of individuals about forming relationships with others and sustaining these relationships is basically about meeting the need for love and belonging, or occasionally an attempt is made to meet a different need through a close relationship. In situations where problems occur in these relationships, the individual becomes unhappy and may use different, destructive behavior forms to control people in their relationships, rather than work themselves to resolve the problem and their unhappiness (Glasser, 1999).

In reality therapy in addition to stating that the sources of many psychological problems exist in close relationships, it is also stated that healthy relationships are required for a satisfying life (Cameron, 2011). Glasser (1999) stated that the basic problem of unhappy people is that they cannot get along with the people they want to get on with better. Accordingly, when people experience problems with others who are important to them, they frequently use behavior patterns called external control to solve these problems. External control is defined as all behavior by an individual about controlling a person or people other than themselves. Glasser (2004) stated that though external control is an approach most frequently used by individuals to solve problems in their lives, this approach does not solve problems but inversely makes problems more complicated. According to Glasser (2000b), external control is destructive for relationships and is suppressive, controlling, and punitive (cited Murdock, 2014). Nearly all people from different societies, different political opinions, sexes, or socioeconomic levels frequently use external control. According to Glasser (2003), external control includes habits described as the seven deadly habits. These habits are criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing, and rewarding to control. All these habits appear to be obstacles to individuals developing healthy relationships and being happy. As these habits lead to very destructive outcomes in the individual's relationships, Glasser defined them as deadly habits. According to Glasser (1999, 2003), for an individual to form good relationships with other people and to protect these relationships, they must abandon external control and use internal control. People using internal control respect other people's desire to direct their lives when making decisions about their own lives and do not believe that they know best for others (Glasser, 2003). Internal control is the exact opposite of external control. For example, equivalent to the seven deadly habits of external control, the seven caring habits of supporting, encouraging, listening, trusting, respecting, negotiating differences, and accepting are frequently used by those with internal control. In this approach, instead of the individual trying to control others, they attempt to live in harmony with them.

Among relationships with others, romantic relationships become more important in a developmental context in the young adult period beginning at the end of the teens and beginning of the 20s until the 30s (Santrock, 2015). Erikson (1968) stated that individuals clarify their identities through love relationships, partner choice, marriage, and creating a family in this period characterized by the 'isolation versus intimacy' developmental crisis (Arnett, 2000; Dryfoos, 1990; Levinson, 2011; Santrock, 2015). For these reasons, it is possible to say the love and belonging need is more pronounced in this period among the basic needs.

Women and men display many different behaviors to begin and sustain a romantic relationship; additionally, over time a range of habits emerge within the dynamics of the relationship. Glasser (2001) emphasized these habits in work with couples especially and mentioned that constructive and destructive behaviors and habits exist in all close relationships. These may be defined as the seven caring and seven deadly habits in relationships. The seven deadly habits and then the seven caring habits are given below.

Seven deadly habits in intimate relationships may be defined as follows (Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004):

1. Criticizing: This habit, qualified by Glasser as the deadliest, is defined as judging a person or thing by finding fault and communicating this judgement.
2. Blaming: The second deadly habit increasing the destructive nature of relationships is blaming and is defined as communicating a person's flaws in completing or not completing a thing in a demeaning way.
3. Complaining: The third deadly habit of complaining is defined as communicating displeasure or disappointment with a person or thing by whining.
4. Grumbling (nagging): The fourth deadly habit of nagging is defined as all talk involving repetitive complaints, accusations, criticisms, and threats to cause permanent discomfort and harassment.
5. Threatening: The fifth in terms of deadliness, threatening is defined as expressing a desire to cause physical or emotional harm to a person and forcing them to do or not do something.
6. Punishing: In sixth place among deadly habits, punishing is defined as causing pain by deliberately harming or putting the person at a disadvantage to control the person.
7. Rewarding to control, bribing: This habit is mentioned by Glasser as "rewarding to control a person". Here, a person is offered something they desire if they do or don't do something. The rewarded person may like the reward; however, most of the time they are angry at the person giving the reward and there is an effort to control the person by creating a dependency-based relationship.

The seven caring habits are as follows (Rapport, 2007; Sohm; 2004):

1. Listening: This involves communicating without using any of the seven deadly habits.
2. Supporting: This involves doing and saying things that assist a person to achieve their goal, by showing belief in a person's ability to develop their strong aspects.
3. Encouraging: This involves emphasizing a person's strong points, and inspiring the person through hope for them to achieve success and meet their own needs.
4. Respecting: This is believing others are valuable and showing true interest in them.
5. Negotiating differences: This involves discussing and finding satisfactory solutions in a relationship with a win-win approach to differences and disagreements.
6. Trusting: This involves believing in a person and trusting his/her character, abilities, and power with the aim of assisting, not hurting the person, and communicating this situation.

7.   Accepting: This means approaching a person in a friendly way so they feel valued.

With the limited number of studies in the literature, it has been found that couples use both caring and deadly habits in romantic relationships and that caring habits increase satisfaction in the relationship. Additionally, researchers concluded that the caring habits of listening and trusting are most used by people and are the habits people most desire in their partners. Findings from the perspective of deadly habits show that criticizing, complaining, and nagging are frequently used by people, punishing is not used by anyone and the choice of these habits is caused by the conflict in the relationship due to the partners not changing (Dabo et al., 2015).

A qualitative study about the abusive behavior university students experience in romantic relationships found they were exposed to abusive behavior like 'punishing', 'threatening' and 'judgement' (a subdimension encompassing the 'criticizing' and 'blaming' habits within the scope of the study) (Seçim, 2019). In light of the findings of this research, inferences may be made about deadly habits in relationships causing conflict and having an abusive aspect. Qualitative research on topics that university students wanted training about in relationships before marriage questioned problems experienced by university students in romantic relationships. The five main themes obtained in this research were communication (126; 34.05%), conflict resolution (92; 24.86%), accepting differences (74; 20%), romance-sexuality (44; 11.90%), and social support (34; 9.19%) (Haskan Avcı, 2014). When these themes and the research findings are investigated, the communication theme emphasizes the deadly habits of criticizing and blaming and the caring habits of listening and trusting. The conflict resolution and accepting differences themes, comprising nearly 45% of the research, can be considered to be connected to the caring habits of listening, accepting, and negotiating differences, while the social support theme emphasizes the caring habits of supporting and encouraging. Again, couples dealing with accepting differences in their relationship before marriage will ensure couples can deal more healthily with resolving differences that emerge in the first years of marriage (Gladding, 2012).

The time when individuals step into the young adult period coincides with the university years. Intimacy, becoming an important developmental task in this period, plays a role in developing skills necessary to create healthy adult romantic relationships (Etchevery et al., 2008). Romantic relationships formed in the university years increase the individual's participation in social activities and positively affect social and personal development (Hamamcı & Esen-Çoban, 2010; Moss & Schwebel, 1993; Saraç et al., 2015). With experiences acquired in romantic relationships, individuals develop a perspective about the qualities of romantic relationships they will experience in the adult period and this period acts as a rehearsal for married life (Furman, 2002; Furman & Shaffer, 1999; Stabelli, 1988).

In this study, planned in light of this information, the aim was to determine which deadly and caring habits were used by individuals in the young adult period in romantic relationships lasting at least one year and how these habits are displayed. The question sought to be answered in this research: "How do individuals who have romantic relationships during young adulthood use deadly and caring habits in their relationships?" Additionally, in the study, individuals revealed which of these behaviors their partners displayed and how they experienced them. This study contributes to knowledge about the deadly and caring habits in close relationships as expressed in reality therapy and aims to guide future studies. Additionally, it is considered that the study will provide support in terms of practice for psychological counselors working with couples and clients experiencing problems with relationships in the young adult period.

METHOD

Pattern

The qualitative research pattern was used to ensure the ability to organize and investigate opinions emerging in line with the experiences and lives of people in the research or planned research (Ekiz, 2003). The study was completed within the framework of case studies (phenomenology), one of the qualitative research patterns described as "focus on cases we are aware of but which lack in-depth and detailed understanding' (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Everything in our surroundings, in short, the world, is our perception, and our existing knowledge through which we create meaning is broadly affected by our perceptions. The case study approach accepts that individual meaning emerges in a broader social context (Patton, 2002: 104).

Research Group

The targeted sampling method was used to determine the study group. In line with the aim of the research, participants were chosen according to certain criteria related to the problem (at least one-year relationship, being a young adult, the relationships of the participants include the expectation of marriage). For this reason, in the context of the study, one of the targeted sampling methods of criterion sampling was used to choose the sample to access rich situations in terms of knowledge and perform deep research. Criterion sampling means the sample is created of people, events, objects, or situations with qualities determined related to the problem (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2012).

The study group for the research comprised a total of 10 women and 10 men, comprising 10 couples, with a romantic relationship lasting at least one year, attending a university or newly graduated. For samples in qualitative research, the depth of qualitative data, knowledge load related to the situation, and the observation ability and analytical skills of the researcher come to the forefront rather than size (Baltacı, 2018; Sandelowski, 1986). For targeted sampling, information saturation should be reached rather than a particular sample size; in other words, the size is determined when no new information is obtained from a new sample unit, and information begins to repeat (Baltacı, 2018; Polat, 2014). When responses related to similar statements and themes began to be given to questions after interviews with 10 couples in the research sample, the researcher assumed data saturation was reached.

The mean duration of the relationship of couples was more than two years. One participant in the research was an associate degree student, the others were undergraduate students or new graduates. Participants were attending the psychotherapy and rehabilitation, guidance and psychological counseling, nutrition and dietetics, class teaching, science and technology teaching, business, engineering, psychology, and civil aviation and transport departments or had graduated from one of these departments. The mean age of participants was 22.1 years. Considering the future expectations of participants that they would continue their relationships and their development period, they planned to continue their relationship with marriage. One of the couples participating in the research was engaged.

Ethichal Statement

The authors declare that they continue to work in this study in accordance with scientific work ethics and Helenski declaration. In addition, the participants participated in the research voluntarily. Accordingly, the research was reviewed and approved by the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Kırşehir Ahi Evran University (04.03.2021-2021/1).

Data Collection Tools and Procedure

A structured interview form developed by the researchers was used as a data collection tool. After developing the research form, it was sent to five experts who were requested to examine it for suitability of language and meaning, and necessary feedback was obtained. One of these experts is a Ph.D. student in the guidance and psychological counseling program and he studied reality therapy in his doctoral thesis, another one has Ph. D. degree in measurement and evaluation program, and the others have Ph. D. degree in guidance and psychological counseling program. The expert investigation, in other words, peer checking, is one of the precautions taken to increase quality in this type of research (Yıldırım, 2010). In line with opinions, the structured form was revised and a pilot application was performed. The final form was created in line with the opinions of participants in the pilot application and experts. Interviews were completed using online video conference applications with different interviewers so that couples did not affect each other and the interviewer not be affected by the couples. Consent was obtained from participants and the interviews were recorded.

Analysis of Data

Data obtained from the structured interview form and recorded with the voice recording device were later transcribed. The data analysis process used the 'content analysis' method in qualitative research. Content analysis is a scientific approach allowing the objective and systematic investigation of verbal, written, and other material (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001). The basic aim of content analysis is to reach the concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006), first, the collected data is conceptualized, then the concepts are organized logically, and then it is necessary to identify the themes explaining the data.

There are generally two separate approaches to categorization in the content analysis process. The first approach is to group the recorded units according to an existing categoric system in a certain field. In the second approach, categories are not identified ahead of time. Categories become apparent as the message elements are considered and reviewed. These approaches are called the 'closed approach' for the first and the 'open approach' for the second (Henry & Moscovici, 1968; cited Bilgin, 2006).

In this research, content analysis was completed using the 'closed approach'. When data were analyzed by decoding and transcription, the content was first individually assessed by the three researchers and then assessed together based on criteria. Then the concepts included in participant statements were obtained in line with deadly habits and caring habits. These concepts were grouped within the framework of the existing categories related to Glasser's habits concept.

RESULTS

In this research about how university students use deadly and caring habits in romantic relationships, according to Glasser and dealt with in reality therapy, the findings obtained about deadly habits in the first stage are given in Table 1.

1. **Deadly Habits**: As seen in the table, it is clear the theme of deadly habits includes the subthemes of criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, rewarding to control, and punishing.

Table 1. Subthemes for deadly habits

Subthemes for deadly habits						
Criticizing	Blaming	Complaining	Nagging	Threatening	Rewarding to Control	Punishing
Personality Habits	Choices Disinterest	Character-behavior Habits	Disinterest Attitude	End the relationship Emotional withdrawal	Financial Emotional	Limited communication Opposite reaction

1.1. Criticizing: This subtheme includes two codes identified by the researchers as 'personal criticism' and 'criticism of habits.' **Personality Criticism**: Participants criticized each other's personalities in relationships and used the following statements about the criticizing deadly habit. Third couple female participant (3rdCFP): "*I criticize my boyfriend about being a realist. My boyfriend criticizes me due to being an emotional person.*" Fourth couple male participant (4thCMP): "*My girlfriend has an unbreakable stubbornness; I criticize her about that.*" 9thCFP: "*My boyfriend is very coldblooded, doesn't get excited about anything. Just stands like an idol. I express my criticism of this by saying 'Get a bit excited, don't be so cold'.*" 9thCMP: *"I get criticized by my girlfriend due to getting annoyed suddenly at small things."* **Criticism of Habits**: Participants criticized each other's habits in relationships and used the following statements about criticizing deadly habits. 8thCMP: "*My girlfriend is someone who loses the run of herself about spending money. I criticize that. At the same time, I have criticisms about her spending most of her time on the telephone.*" 10thCFP: "*I talk very fast, I rattle on when explaining what I experienced. The other day we talked about this topic, he said 'you talk very fast.' He criticized my fast talking. He speaks excessively slowly. I criticize him about that.*" 7thCMP: "*When some friends ask her for something she can't do, she can't say no. I criticize that situation.*"

1.2. Blaming: This subtheme was identified to have two codes of 'blaming choices' and 'blaming about disinterest' by the researchers. **Blame for choices**: The participants made statements about using the blaming deadly habit by blaming one another for their choices in relationships. 9thCFP: "*When I was preparing for the university exam, I wanted to teach. He was a year above me and got into the business. He wanted me to join him a lot. Because I believed we would walk together through life, I chose that department and joined him. But I saw that it would be difficult to get a job at the end of this degree and blamed him a lot saying 'you did this if I'd studied teaching, if you hadn't told me to come here, maybe I would have been employed more easily'. He blamed me saying 'you shouldn't have come then, you should have used your head.'*" 4thCFP: "*When universities went to distance education due to the pandemic, instead of returning to our hometown to prepare for the KPSS exam, we stayed in the city we were studying in. He didn't want this situation. We experienced economic problems. He saw me as being to blame for this.*" **Blame for disinterest**: Participants made statements about using the blaming deadly habit by blaming each other for disinterest in their relationship. 8thCFP: "*I think he allocates less time for me and as a result, I blame him by saying he doesn't care about me.*" 5thCMP: "*When I meet my friends, she perceives it as being like I don't show interest in her and blames me for disinterest. When she plays with her phone a lot, I blame her for not showing interest in me.*" 5thCFP: "*I blame him with statements like 'you didn't listen to me then, you didn't understand, you ask me the same thing again and I've already explained it before as he generally doesn't listen.*"

1.3. Complaining: In this subtheme, two codes were identified by the researchers as 'character-behavior complaints' and 'complaints about habits.' **Character-Behavior complaints**: Participants made statements about the complaining deadly habit by complaining about each other's character behavior in their relationships. 3rdCFP: "*I get complaints because I can't put a distance between me and other people, I can't say no to people.*" 6thCFP: "*I complain due to my boyfriend acting like a child. When I was in the hospital, he called 3-4*

times and my friends said 'look how much he calls!' I told him that jokingly, look what they are saying. He got offended by this and didn't call me at all one day, I complained about him being offended by this." 9thCMP: "*I complain about my girlfriend being excited.*" 10thCMP: "*The point I complain about my girlfriend is her jealousy. Sometimes I complain about her being too jealous.*" **Habit Complaints**: Participants used statements about using the complaining deadly habit about each other's habits in relationships. 4thCFP: "*He gives out about my time to get ready; he has to wait for me as it takes a long time. I complain about him getting ready quickly, he just makes a plan and expects me to adapt to it.*" 2ndCMP: "*She complains about me not being punctual and about being late.*" 4thCMP: "*The point she complains about me is my damaging habit of smoking, she complains about this a lot. She nearly doesn't want me to do it at all.*" 8thCFP: "*I don't want unhealthy food, I interfere with what he eats. I don't want him to eat pastries. I go out continuously and spend money. He complains about my unnecessary spending.*" 1stCMP: "*My girlfriend complains about me pestering her due to problems we experienced with communication. I complain about my girlfriend acting without telling me.*"

1.4. Nagging: In this subtheme, two codes were identified by the researchers as 'nagging about disinterest' and 'nagging about attitude'. **Nagging about disinterest**: Participants made statements about using the nagging deadly habit about a lack of interest in each other in their relationships. 2ndCFP: "*Sometimes when we sit, he focuses on the phone. There's a card game, he focuses on the game and doesn't hear what I say. I've said 'that's enough, leave it.' In other words, I nag about this game problem.*" 3rdCMP: "*I hear a lot of nagging when I play online games. It's like 'you're not paying attention to me.'*" 4thCMP: "*When I sit with my male friends or go to play a game, she won't leave me alone. She continuously asks questions like 'Where are you? What are you doing? When will you be home?*'" 8thCFP: "*We make a plan to meet up, but his friends call and he goes to the indoor football pitch. I nag about this situation. I think he spends more time with his male friends, so I continuously nag for this reason.*"
Nagging about Attitude: The participants made statements about using the nagging deadly habit about each other's attitudes in their relationship. 5thCFP: "*I'm very friendly, talkative, attempt to help people regardless of whether men or women and a person who tries to act happily and smile when I can. My boyfriend tells me I need to act more clearly and put more distance rather than smiling at the opposite sex. He continuously warns me.*" 5thCMP: "*As I find my girlfriend's behavior childish, I continuously tell her 'don't be a kid.'*" 6thCFP: "*My sudden anger is always on the agenda. I tell him not to be childish.*" 6thCMP: "*I stay quiet during arguments, I can't do anything, I can't act. She nags at those times.*"

1.5. Threatening: This subtheme was determined by the researchers to have two codes of 'ending the relationship' and 'emotional withdrawal'. **Ending the relationship**: Participants made statements about using the deadly habit of threatening by threatening to end the relationship and separate. 1stCFP: "*During a fight, to test him, I said 'enough, I'm so bored of these fights, I don't want to stay with you, I will go.'*" 10thCFP: "*I threatened him by saying 'you lied to me twice, lie a third time and see the outcome'. I told him 'if there is another woman while I'm in your life, if you cheat on me, even if I love you, even if I'd die for you, I'll leave.'*" 5thCFP: "*I said 'if you can't do this, I'll leave.' As he gets angry at everything so quickly, that doesn't scare me much, even if there's this irritability between lovers, in situations where we move forward, like marriage, this thing scares me. I said to him 'if this thing isn't solved, let's break up.'*" 4thCFP: "*Our family doesn't want us to marry without preparing well for the KPSS and beginning our careers. For this reason, we threaten each other that if we don't succeed in the exam and if there's a problem, we won't be able to marry.*" **Emotional Withdrawal**: Participants made statements about using the threatening deadly habit with threats about emotionally withdrawing from each other in the relationship. 9thCFP: "*I say things like 'if you don't do this, I won't talk to you, I'll ignore you, I won't walk beside you, I won't hold your hand, I won't say nice things.'*" 9thCMP: "*I say 'if you don't do this, I won't talk.'*"

1.6. Rewarding to Control: This subtheme was determined by the researchers to have two codes of 'financial reward' and 'emotional reward'. **Financial Reward**: Participants made statements about using the rewarding to control deadly habit by giving each other financial bribes in their relationships. 2ndCMP: "*When I don't want to go down to the garden, she promises to get me something from the corner shop if I go to the garden.*" 3rdCMP: "*If we're meeting in a café, I say 'I'll come on the condition you buy the cake I want.' She orders the cake so there's no coldness in front of her friends. I wanted to stay at home and play games at the weekend. Because there was a tournament and that tournament was very important to me. She likes pens and notebooks a lot. I've bought her a pen as a bribe.*" **Emotional Reward**: Participants made statements about using the rewarding to control habit by giving emotional bribes to each other in their relationships. 5thCMP: "*My girlfriend wants to get married later. She doesn't want to get married immediately when the university is finished. I want to get married immediately. As she doesn't want us to be separate when I enter the police force, she says 'Look, if you continue to study in this department together, we'll get married earlier.'*" 5thCFP: "*My boyfriend is someone who likes talking to other girls in the class. I said to him 'If you pay more attention when speaking with other girls, I'll do the things you want me to do better.' Like, if you don't do it, I won't do it.*" 10thCMP: "*When she wants to meet with her friends she says 'If I meet with my friends, you can go meet with your friends.'*"

1.7. Punishing: Two codes were determined within this subtheme as 'limiting communication' and 'opposite reactions.' **Limited Communication**: Participants made statements about using the punishing habit of limiting communication with each other in their relationships. 2ndCMP: "*When we have a momentary flare of anger, she blocks me on social media and I block her. I don't meet with her when we're arguing.*" 3rdCMP: "*The form of punishment is not talking to me.*" 6thCFP: "*He punishes me by choosing not to speak to me.*" 7thCFP: "*We message each other, but I punish by not speaking when I'm annoyed.*" **Opposite Reaction**: Participants made statements about using the punishing deadly habit of giving opposite reactions to make each other uncomfortable in their relationships. 5thCMP: "*I say don't hug me when she behaves in ways I don't like.*" 6thCFP: "*I say annoying things to him to punish him. I talk to make him angry.*" 2ndCMP: "*My way of punishing her is to do all the things that annoy and irritate her. This way she gets even more annoyed and really I get some satisfaction from her annoyance in that moment.*"

2. **Caring Habits**: As seen in Table 2, within the theme of caring habits, the subthemes of 'supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, negotiating, and respecting' were determined within the framework of reality therapy.

Table 2. Subthemes for caring habits

Subthemes for caring habits						
Supporting	Encouraging	Listening	Accepting	Trusting	Negotiating	Respecting
Emotional	Academic	Listening	withPersonality traits	Being	Open to	For personal traits
Academic	Personal	interest	Adoption	reachable	cooperation	For choices
	development	Empathy		Loyalty	Solution-focused behavior	

2.1. Supporting: In this subtheme, the researchers determined two codes of 'emotional support' and 'academic support'. **Emotional Support**: The participants made statements about using supporting caring habits in terms of emotionally supporting each other in their relationships. G5FP: "*His grandfather died. His grandfather looked after him and it affected him a lot. I tried to be with him and support him as much as I could.*" G7FP: "*We support each other about our decisions. We ask each other's ideas, we make our own decisions. For example, I thought about education abroad, I asked him and he said 'you should do whatever you want, I still don't want*

you to go as you'll be far away, but if you want to go, it's not a problem for me." G7MP: "*When my girlfriend experiences problems with her friend relationships, I am with her and support her.*" **Academic Support**: The participants made statements about using supporting caring habits in terms of academic supporting each other in their relationships. G4FP: "*He helps me in my lessons where I can't. He even tells the lessons.*" G2FP: "*He came to me from another city when I was both preparing for exams and was stressed, motivating me, spending time with me, trying to be good, etc. These were very important to me.*" G7MP: "*I am preparing for KPSS and my biggest focus is the exam right now. In this case, he is my biggest supporter. In this case, whenever I fall into pessimism, it wakes me up. He stands by me in my indecisiveness in every matter, he is my supporter.*"

2.2. Encouraging: In this subtheme, the researchers determined two codes of 'academic encouragement' and 'encouraging personal development'. **Academic Encouragement**: The participants made statements about using encouraging caring habits by motivating each other in academic terms in their relationships. G2FP: "*I may have problems with my family, with my friends, there are other problems, including exams, assignments. At times when I feel I can't overcome a task, I see his support. Like 'you can do it, you can succeed.' I see the concept of encouragement clearly.*" G7MP: "*She encourages me about working at my lessons. I encourage her by giving pep talks when she thinks she's going to fail.*" **Encouragement of Personal Development**: The participants made statements about using encouraging caring habits when motivating each other about personal development in their relationships. G1MP: "*When she is undecided and doesn't think she can do some things, I say that she can do it, she can succeed.*" G8MP: "*I think my girlfriend can obtain anything she wants and I do as much as I can for this. She sometimes retreats from things she wants to complete, wants to do, and I try to encourage her to do the things she wants.*" G4FP: "*When my boyfriend has fears about finding a job, I encourage him about this topic.*" G8FP: "*I'm afraid of traffic, I was afraid of getting my driver's license. He encouraged me about this.*"

2.3. Listening: In this subtheme, the researchers determined two codes of 'listening with interest' and 'empathy'. **Listening with interest**: Participants made statements about using the listening caring habit by listening to each other with interest in their relationships. G2MP: "*Sometimes I say very small things. Even I don't remember them. Then a week passes and she says 'you did this, you thought like that.'*" G10MP: "*For example, when I share a topic I've argued with my family about with her, I can feel that she gives me all her attention with her words*" G6MP: "*When I talk with her, I give one-hundred percent to her. If I'm dealing with something at that moment, I leave it and focus on her.*" G9MP: "*When I'm explaining a problem, I can feel I'm listened to when she's searching for a solution. If it was a person she didn't listen to, she wouldn't care, would appear to listen but not understand.*" **Empathy**: Participants made statements about using the listening caring habit by reacting to what they explain to one another and by trying to be empathic. G6FP: "*When he gives verbal reactions to what I explain, I feel I'm being listened to.*" G10FP: "*When he has a problem, I think about putting myself in his place. He puts himself in my place because I want him to. So 'when you lied to me when you hide something from me, how would I feel? How would you feel if I did it to you?' When I explain a problem, I feel I am listened to when he looks for a solution to my problem.*" G6MP: "*When she explains problems related to work, I try to answer by paying attention to her feelings. When I'm explaining a problem, I feel heard when she looks for a solution to my problem.*" G10MP: "*When I explain a problem to my girlfriend, I feel she is listening to me when she talks in a way that will solve my problem.*"

2.4. Accepting: The researchers determined two codes within this subtheme of 'personality traits' and 'adoption.' **Personality Traits**: Participants made statements about using the accepting caring habit by accepting each other's personality traits in relationships. G5FP: "*I'm a very smiley person and despite him continuously warning me that this will be misunderstood by others, he has accepted me in this way as I didn't change this; at least I think so. For me too, he can get angry at everything in a very impulsive way. Whether he wants or not, he gets*

annoyed at even the smallest event and I realized that no matter how much I warn him it didn't work and I've accepted him in this way." G9FP: "*At first he couldn't accept my excitedness, it was odd to him as he was cold-blooded. Similarly, his coldness was very odd to me. Later after experiencing some events within the relationship, I thought these aspects of ourselves led to these results. I couldn't accept this mood when we were first sweethearts but I began to accept this as we experienced these events.*" G6FP: "*He's not a very ambitious person. Generally, he thinks about things that will be a problem for him. He thinks that I accept these characteristics in him.*" **Adoption**: The participants made statements about valuing each other, including each other in their environments, and adopting each other as accepting caring habits. G10FP: "*He loves me for who I am. He was a friend to me. I love that aspect of him, I accepted that aspect.*" G8FP: "*I think accepted him because he was thoughtful and understanding toward me. I feel accepted as he loves and respects me.*" G3FP: "*I feel fully accepted when I talk and chat with my boyfriend. When my boyfriend sees that my attention is on him in crowded environments, he feels accepted.*" G7MP: "*When I mention my relationship to my family, my girlfriend feels she is accepted by me.*"

2.5. Trusting: Within this subtheme, the researchers determined two codes of 'being reachable' and 'loyalty.' **Being Reachable**: Participants showed they used the trusting caring habit with statements about being able to reach each other when needed in their relationships. G2FP: "*He's beside me for even the smallest problem, which gives me confidence. He never says 'that's your problem, what's it to me.' That gives me confidence, I know he'll always stand behind me.*" G3FP: "*As this is a small place, I get stressed when I see someone I know on the road. In this situation him being beside me calms me down and gives me confidence.*" **Loyalty**: The participants made statements about the trusting caring habit in their relationship by expressing their commitment to each other and their relationship. G3MP: "*When I leave her someplace to go out, I don't worry about her. I know very well that she won't betray me, won't talk to others. If she does talk to someone, it's just like a friend. I really don't know how I gained this trust. Her stance when she's beside me, the way she looks or communicates with others shows this in some way, even if I don't pay special attention.*" G4MP: "*The words 'whatever happens I'll be with you' have definitely been said by each couple to each other in relationships. But I understood that 'whatever happens I'll be with you' in my relationship from her actions. I trust her about this.*" G5MP: "*I feel confidence because I think she'll never leave me or break up with me.*" G6MP: "*Cheating comes to mind. I see, I know, I feel she won't cheat. She feels that I won't cheat. There's no chance of it, so I don't give it a chance either. Because I'm committed, and she's committed to the relationship. I think we're loyal.*"

2.6. Negotiating: Within this subtheme, the researchers determined two codes of 'being open to cooperation' and 'solution-focused.' **Open to Cooperation**: The participants made statements about using the negotiating caring habit by openly discussing cooperation during conflicts they experienced in their relationships. G1FP: "*Generally we end conflicts with resolution. We don't delay when we fight, we immediately talk about it. We talk about the causes, the process.*" G2FP: "*Generally we calmly sit and talk. He's not someone who shows his feelings much, I couldn't show at first, but we understand each other if something isn't going right. For example, a while ago he said something I didn't like in front of our friends. Later he noticed I didn't like it and said we couldn't talk about it. We sat after that and talked, we sorted it out.*" G9FP: "*In our fights, our opinions are different from each other. I say 'I want to do that', he says 'I want to do this.' Then we sit and talk. We think about the results of what I want, we imagine what will happen as a result of what he wants. We choose whichever appears more reasonable for both of us. Otherwise, if we resist and say 'no, what I want' we'll never solve our problems.*" **Being Solution-focused**: The participants made statements about solution-focused discussions about conflicts experienced in their relationships, by taking the path of least resistance before the conflict expands. G2MP: '*Both of us try to stay calm during conflicts, when we get annoyed with each other, the other just takes it. Even if I'm one hundred percent right, I won't extend the topic if it will upset my girlfriend.*" G5FP: "*Initially our conflicts are one-sided. But after we calm*

down, either he or I will find the common path. Generally, he finds the common path. In the end, there are discussions where we both leave happy."

2.7. Respecting: Within this subtheme, the researchers identified two codes of 'personality traits' and 'choices.' **Personality Traits**: Participants made statements about using this caring habit by respecting each other's personality traits in the relationship. G2FP: "*His calmness, they say thinks three times, speaks once, he's that kind of logical person. I respect his success, his developing himself, I appreciate it.*" G2FP: "*I think we are honest with each other, I am all the time like I don't question what he says. At the same time, I don't like telling lies and he knows that when I say something I won't lie, I won't deceive. I respect his honesty, his trustworthiness.*" G4MP: "*She is an individual who can achieve whatever she wants, and she can go the path she wants without paying attention to obstacles. I appreciate that a lot, I feel a lot of respect for her. She respects my hardworking traits.*" **Choices:** The participants made statements about using this caring habit by respecting each other's choices in the relationship. G7MP: "*If my girlfriend wanted to go outside the province with her friends, I would respect that.*" G7FP: "*Whenever I make any decision, he respects my ideas, my thoughts. He doesn't say you're wrong.*" G6FP: "*Whatever my decisions, I think he feels respect when he approves. He doesn't interfere with me much, so for that reason, I think he respects me.*" G3FP: "*Both of us know each other's red lines, we pay attention to them in situations where we will experience the smallest lack of respect.*"

DISCUSSION

Within the main theme of deadly habits in intimate relationships, the research results found criticizing personality and habits codes within the criticizing subtheme; choices and disinterest codes in the blaming subtheme; character-behavior and habits codes in the complaining subtheme; disinterest and attitude codes in the nagging subtheme; ending the relationship and emotional withdrawal codes in the threatening subtheme; financial and emotional codes in the rewarding to control subtheme; and limited communication and opposite reactions codes in the punishing subtheme. Under the caring habits the main theme, the seven subthemes included emotional and academic codes in the supporting subtheme; academic and personal development codes in the encouraging subtheme; listening with interest and empathy codes in the listening subtheme; personality traits and adoption codes in the accepting subtheme; being reachable and loyalty codes in the trusting subtheme; being open to communication and solution-focused behavior codes in the negotiating subtheme; and personal traits and choices codes in the respecting subtheme.

Couples participating in the research assessed habits they displayed and were exposed to in their relationships. In the context of deadly habits, when couples were asked about how they criticized and were criticized, two codes were obtained of personality criticism and habits criticism. According to choice theory, the only person an individual can control is themselves and everything they do is their own choice (Glasser, 1998). As individuals distance themselves from the choice theory and move toward external control psychology, they begin to use deadly habits. In this study, the criticisms of couples in the context of each other's personality traits and habits may be given as an example. In studies based on different theories, criticism is assessed as a negative communication behavior and frequent use is stated to be effective in ending the relationship, as with other deadly habits (Driver, Tabares, Shapiro & Gottman, 2003). In explanations related to marital satisfaction in the context of intimate relationships, Feeney (2002) stated that blaming, criticism and pressure were among the most pronounced behaviors lowering marriage satisfaction. In this context, criticism, especially qualified as most deadly by Glasser, is defined as judging a thing or person by finding errors in their intention and communicating this judgement

(Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). Negative effects on the relationship are unavoidable, especially when criticism between couples is directed toward traits representing the direct self like personality or habits. Additionally, considering Glasser (2005) stated that relationship problems are the basis of all psychological problems, and with the crisis of isolation versus intimacy of individuals in the young adult period (Erikson, 1968), these destructive habits in intimate romantic relationships may have negative effects.

One of the other habits used by couples in relationships is blaming, defined as attributing flaws in something that occurs or does not occur to a person and communicating them by demeaning that person (Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). Couples displayed this habit by blaming each other for decisions and disinterest. According to choice theory, individuals are responsible for everything they do (Glasser, 1998), and considering this responsibility, couples who blame each other for their individual decisions are again moving away from choice theory and orienting toward external control psychology. Love and belonging are the most important needs (Murdock, 2014) and individuals may use deadly habits due to the tendency to seek love and act according to external control psychology (Glasser, 1998). Couples can be said to blame each other for disinterest to meet this need. Again, while couples blame each other about disinterest, complaints about disinterest in the form of nagging cause permanent discomfort and may be included within the nagging habit defined as all speech involving repeated complaints, blame, criticism and threats with the aim of harassment (Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). According to Lehmann (1998), one of the behaviors classified within the range of control behaviors is blaming (cited Simmons and Lehmann, 2007). Again, in explanations about marriage satisfaction within the context of intimate relationships, Feeney (2002) found that blaming was among the most pronounced behaviors lowering marriage satisfaction. Individuals may blame their partner for lack of loyalty in an attempt to control the other within the relationship (Follingstad et al., 1990) and this control may be displayed by blaming for disinterest among the blaming habits. Nagging behavior has negative effects on communication and interaction between individuals due to its repetitive nature (Dunleavy et al., 2008) and people who are nagged are uncomfortable due to this situation (Tannen, 1991). In this context, the blaming and nagging subthemes may be said to have negative and destructive effects on both the need for intimacy (Erikson, 1968) and the basic need for love and belonging (Glasser, 1998) for individuals in the young adult period within intimate relationships.

Couples made statements about using the complaining habit in their relationships. They complained about each other in relation to character behavior and habits and received complaints about these topics. Complaining may be defined as communicating discontent or disappointment about someone or something by whining (Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). Additionally, if this discontent or disappointment about character behavior and habits becomes continuous, it will be displayed as nagging about attitudes within the relationship. Again, as the only person who can control someone is the individual themselves according to choice theory (Glasser, 1998) when they move away from this idea and focus on external control psychology, they may complain about character-behavior and habits and nag about each other's attitudes. Couples who display complaining and nagging behavior that will cause conflict and maladjustment instead of asking for support in their marriage (Çağ, 2011; Gardner & Cutrona, 2004) can be said to harm the nature of the relationship. According to Young and Gluhoski (1997), complaining about emotional needs not being met in marriage may lead to divorce (cited Kargın Güner, 2014). This complaining may be an indicator that the need for love and belonging is not being met within the relationship. Identification of codes about character behavior and habits within the

complaining subtheme along with the blaming about disinterest code in the blaming subtheme and nagging about disinterest code in the nagging subtheme show that these deadly habits may be associated with each other.

Within the threatening subtheme among deadly habits in relationships of couples participating in the research, the codes of threatening to end the relationship and emotional withdrawal were observed. Threatening is defined as expressing an intention to cause physical or emotional harm to a person to force them to do, or not do, something (Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). If an individual feels threatened, they begin to worry about freedom (Glasser, 1998). Within the punishing subtheme, couples used this deadly habit by limiting communication with each other or giving opposite reactions. Punishing may be defined as causing a person to feel pain by harming the person or placing the person in a disadvantaged position to intentionally control them (Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). When these two deadly habits are considered together, they may be assessed as a behavior pattern that has both a dimension of psychological violence and abuse and involves a range of controlling behavior (Follingstad et al., 1990; Lehmann, 1998; cited Simmons and Lehmann, 2007). In conclusion, threatening and punishing negatively affect relationships in this context and may be assessed as habits with relationship-harming qualities.

The final subtheme in the deadly habits main theme of rewarding to control may be defined as offering another person something they want if they do, or don't do, something. The basis of this habit involves the aim of controlling a person with rewards. In the research, the rewarding to control subtheme encompassed the codes of financial rewards and emotional rewards and couples used statements about attempting to control each other. Though this reward may have satisfying features for the rewarded person, it may also cause this person to feel angry. Additionally, rewarding to control may be based on dependence in the relationship (Nelson, 2002; Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). According to Peterson (2000), a person's need for freedom is met when they feel in control of their own lives. Between couples in a relationship, this habit may limit the other's need for freedom when used for controlling purposes and may prevent individuals from achieving the closeness they need in developmental terms.

Couples assessed their caring habits along with deadly habits in relationships. One of these caring habits was supporting, involving showing belief in a person's ability to develop their strong aspects, and doing and saying things to help them achieve their goal (Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). Couples participating in the research were found to use statements included in two codes of academic support and emotional support within the supporting subtheme. Another caring habit is encouraging, defined as emphasizing a person's strong aspects for them to be able to succeed and meet their own needs, and inspiring hope in that person (Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). Couples stated they displayed this habit within the codes of academic encouragement and encouragement about personal development in their relationships. Research stated that individuals choose to form relationships with people who are tolerant, have developed communication skills, are friendly and supportive (Ondaş, 2007; Yıldırım, 2007). Couples receiving the support of the type they choose and in amounts they need from each other increases satisfaction in relationships and positively affects relationships (Lorenzo et al., 2018). Cramer (2004) stated that support was a variable explaining relationship satisfaction. Additionally, encouragement was assessed as a type of support (Barrera and Ainley, 1983; Cohen and Wills, 1985). In this research, it may be said that the supporting and encouraging habits of couples had complementary qualities (the presence of the 'academic' code within both supporting and encouraging caring habits).

Another caring habit chosen by couples in relationships is listening. Listening is expressed as paying attention to communication without using any of the seven deadly habits (Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). The listening caring habit was explained by two codes of listening with interest and empathy. Effective listening causes trust to form in the interaction by contributing to the feeling of value being given to the person talking and making sharing satisfactory (Cüceloğlu, 2015). Additionally, couples acquiring effective listening skills supports the development of a healthier interaction pattern in relationships (Stanley et al., 2000).

Another caring habit was acceptance, involving a person approaching another in a friendly way that makes them feel valued (Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). Acceptance was explained by two codes of accepting personality traits and adoption. Again, respect was encountered as another caring habit and this habit is explained as believing others are valuable and approaching them with true interest (Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). An individual's acceptance of the other in relationships is an expression of respect and this expression corresponds to the individual respecting the essence of the other person and accepting them as they are (Keitner et al., 2010). According to Özkan (1989), individuals who do not accept their differences from each other or accept people as they are and partners not giving each other the required importance is an important cause of divorce. The lack of ability to accept and respect individual differences in relationships forces couples to try to make the other more like themselves and this situation may cause conflict and disappointment (Keitner et al., 2010).

A successful relationship is a relationship where the individuals mutually meet each other's needs and couples ensure this by mutual discussion and negotiation in relationships (Murdock, 2014). Negotiation is defined as finding solutions by discussion in a satisfactory way within the relationship using a win-win approach to differences and disagreements (Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). Based on this definition, the negotiating caring habit may be said to be similar to a constructive conflict resolution strategy. In constructive conflict, both partners achieve their goals, and conflicts are resolved with respect and trust (Johnson and Johnson, 1995; cited Varol, 2019). Couples displayed the negotiating caring habit in their relationships with statements collected in the codes of being open to cooperation and being solution-focused. Research by Grenager and Holmes (2013) concluded that cooperative negotiation styles were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction.

The final caring habit of trusting is represented by believing that the person exists to help, not to hurt, and conveying this situation, together with confidence in their character, abilities, and power (Rapport, 2007; Sohm, 2004). In the research, couples used expressions within the context of being accessible and loyalty codes and chose to trust caring habits in their relationship. Simpson (2007) stated that trust is an important component of a happy, good and functional relationship and is the strongest determinant of satisfaction along with relationship stability. In research by Terzi (2014), participants stated that one of the events disrupting committed relationships among romantic relationships was not being trusted by their partner.

Considering the deadly and caring habits within the framework of similar themes in couple relationships in parallel with the research findings, the codes determined may be used by professional members employed in the field of mental health when working with couples. Additionally, programs prepared for university students, the sample of this study, especially premarital preparation programs, may aim to develop caring habits and the findings of the research may be used in developing such a program. Again, more attention may be given to caring habits within available programs for groups. Additionally, similar

research may be repeated for samples with different marital statuses (married, divorced, widowed, etc.) and experimental programs may be completed to investigate the effect on relationships of available or newly-prepared psychoeducational programs about these habits.

Finally, the study has some limitations. The qualitative data in the study were only obtained from university students, which may be considered a limitation and it may be important to diversify the data with individuals in the young adult period not continuing their educational life or working. The research may be repeated with different groups in the same developmental period (not university students, employed in any job, graduated from university, etc.). Additionally, participants were only interviewed once during the data collection process and the sincerity of responses to the researchers by the participants, who were asked about their close relationships, was limited by this relationship being established in a short time.

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