Investigation of The Relationship Between Resilience, Self-Compassion, and Attachment Styles in Interpersonal Relationships in Married Individuals [*]

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Abstract

   This study is aimed to examine the relationship between resilience, self-compassion, and attachment styles. The study group consists of a total of 1026 married individuals, 574 females (55.9%) and 452 males (44.1%) aged 18 and above. As data collecting tools, "Brief Resilience Scale", "The Self Compassion Scale" and "Attachment Styles Scale in Interpersonal Relationships" were used. In the study, the relationships between resilience and self-compassion, and attachment styles were examined by correlation and regression analysis. As a result of the correlation analysis, a significant relationship has been found between resilience and self-compassion, secure attachment, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment. From the result of the analysis, it has been determined that the resilience levels of the married individuals were significantly predicted by self-compassion, secure attachment, and anxious attachment variables, while it has not been predicted by avoidant attachment variables. The findings obtained from the study have been discussed in the context of the literature.

   Keywords: *Attachment styles, marriage, resilience, self-compassion*

Evli Bireylerde Psikolojik Sağlamlık ile Öz Anlayış ve Bağlanma Stilleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi

Öz

   Bu araştırmada psikolojik sağlamlık ile öz anlayış ve bağlanma stilleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, yaşı 18 ve üzeri olan 574 kadın (% 55.9) ve 452 erkek (% 44.1) olmak üzere toplam 1026 evli bireyden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri; "Kısa Psikolojik Sağlamlık Ölçeği", "Öz Anlayış Ölçeği" ve "Kişilerarası İlişkilerde Bağlanma Stilleri Ölçeği" ile toplanmıştır. Araştırmada psikolojik sağlamlık ile öz anlayış ve bağlanma stilleri (güvenli, kaygılı, kaçınmacı) arasındaki ilişkiler korelasyon ve regresyon analizi ile incelenmiştir. Korelasyon analizi sonucunda, psikolojik sağlamlık ile öz anlayış,

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güvenli bağlanma, kaygılı bağlanma ve kaçınmacı bağlanma arasında anlamlı ilişki olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Regresyon analizi sonucunda ise, evli bireylerin psikolojik sağlamlık düzeylerini öz anlayış, güvenli bağlanma ve kaygılı bağlanma değişkenlerinin istatistiksel açıdan anlamda düzeyde yordadığı; kaçınmacı bağlanma değişkeninin yordamadığı belirlenmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, ilgili alanyazın bağlamında tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Bağlanma stilleri, evlilik, öz anlayış, psikolojik sağlamlık*

Introduction

Throughout life, an individual is faced with many stressful situations in order to meet his needs and continue his life (Gizir, 2007). In this process from birth to death, a lot of difficulties are faced; it is stated that the development and changes experienced during critical periods such as infancy and early childhood also affect adulthood (Atalan Ergin & Kapçı, 2013). Being able to continue his life despite the difficulties, complete his developmental tasks, reorganize the disturbed balance and solve problems is important for the mental and physical health of the individual (Esen Aktay, 2010).

Marriage, which is described as a critical developmental task in the life of an adult (Seiffge-Krenke & Gelhaar, 2008), can become a source of serious stress for the individual. It is seen that the problems in marital relations continue to increase with each passing year, and according to statistical data, the divorce rates increase every year compared to the previous year (TÜİK, 2021). Especially the changing living conditions, technological developments, economic difficulties, and cultural changes cause marital relations to deteriorate (Sevim, 1999). Despite all these difficulties, it can be said that there are individuals who can continue their marriages in a healthy way and struggle with difficult conditions. The concept of resilience is defined as trying to solve one's problems, recovering, and adapting to the situation despite negative experiences. Resilience is defined as the human ability to stay harmonious and strong in the face of difficulties and stressors encountered in life (Masten, 1994; Newman, 2005). Individuals with high levels of resilience make more efforts to resolve conflicts in the marriage process (Werner & Smith, 2001). In a study, positive and significant relationships were found between life satisfaction and resilience levels of married individuals (Fırat, 2021). In line with this finding, it can be said that the level of resilience is an important variable for married individuals.

One of the important variables that can affect the marriage process and the level of resilience of married couples can be self-compassion. Self-compassion is defined as the individuals' being kind and compassionate towards himself, being forgiving in the face of his mistakes, not judging his failures and inadequacies, seeing the distressing situations as a part of humanity, and accepting the present moment as it is without judging (Özyeşil, 2011). Thus, self-compassion can act as a protector against all these negative situations that the person experiences, and when these negative situations occur, it enables the individual to develop positive feelings towards himself

(Leary et al., 2007). In addition, realizing the fact that these situations such as distress, negative experience, inadequacy, and stress are common sharing for all people will reduce the impact of these negative situations on human psychology (Asıcı, 2013; Neff, 2003a).

It is seen that self-compassion affects interpersonal relations positively, and individuals with high self-compassion, especially among married couples or lovers, have more emotional reactions to their spouses, they can understand their partners better and resort to less physical violence (Neff & Beretvas, 2013). The deterioration of marital relations can affect the future of the society to which it belongs, as well as affecting the family to which it belongs. In a study comparing the resilience levels of children whose parents are divorced and those whose parents are together, being together with the family was expressed as a protective factor for children (Özcan, 2005). In this direction, it can be said that studies on the resilience of married individuals will be appropriate for the solution of problems in marriages and the continuation of marriages in a healthy way.

Another variable that may be related to the level of resilience of married individuals may be attachment styles. It can be said that from the birth of a person, the first relationship he establishes with the person who cares for him will affect his whole life. Turner et al. (2001) state that the quality of the relationship established between the parent and the child is the determinant of the psychological health of the individual in the future. The first relationship that develops between the individual and the person who cares for him from his birth, and after he becomes an adult, affects every relationship process he establishes throughout his life (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Attachment; it is defined as the strong emotional closeness people feel towards the caregiver (mostly the mother) in infancy and early childhood (Bowlby, 1979). From birth, a baby has some physiological needs such as food and warmth, and a satisfaction-based bond that develops with the caregiver who meets these needs (Bowlby, 2014). This bond, which is aimed at meeting the basic needs between the baby and the caregiver at first, makes it a healthy individual affecting the social-emotional development of the baby later on. (Kayahan, 2002). The way of attachment to the mother continues to affect the individual's romantic relationships and even the marriage process positively or negatively (Davila et al., 1999). It is thought that there may be a relationship between the couples' ability or inability on overcoming diffiulties and stressful situations that they encounter during marriage process and their attachment styles. Therefore, attachment style can be considered a factor affecting the resilience levels of married individuals.

In the literature, no research has been found in which resilience, self-compassion, and attachment styles were studied together in married individuals. In a study, the relationship between the variables of self-efficacy, perceived social support, optimism, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction and the resilience levels of married individuals was examined and it was found that there was a positive relationship

between all variables and resilience (Bektaş, 2018). In a study examining the resilience and happiness levels of married individuals with children and unmarried individuals, it was determined that there was a significant relationship between resilience levels and happiness scores in married individuals with children. In the same study, it is seen that as the resilience of married individuals with children increases, their happiness levels also increase (Şaşmaz, 2016). The limited number of studies on resilience in married individuals in the literature and the fact that the relationship between resilience and self-compassion and attachment styles in married individuals has not yet been examined reveals the importance of this study. In this direction, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between resilience, self-compassion, and attachment styles in married individuals.

Method

This research was conducted using the survey method, which is one of the quantitative research types. By using the survey method, the degree of relations between the variables is determined. In addition, in this method, the situation in the other variable or variables is estimated in line with the information of one variable (Christensen et al., 2015).

Participants

The study group of the research consists of 1026 married individuals, 574 females (55.9%) and 452 males (44.1%), aged 18 and over, residing in different regions and cities of Turkey and participating in the research voluntarily.

Data Collection Tools

Brief Resilience Scale

The scale developed by Smith et al. (2008) was adapted to Turkish culture by Doğan (2015). Consisting of a total of 6 items and a single dimension, the scale is a 5-point Likert-type measurement tool. As a result of the explanatory factor analysis (EFA), it was observed that the factor loads of the items varied between .63 and .79. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results were found to have good agreement (NFI= 0.99, NNFI= 0.99, CFI= 0.99, IFI= 0.99, RFI= 0.97, GFI= 0.99, AGFI= 0.96, RMSEA= 0.05, and SRMR= 0.03). As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the scale showed a single factor structure, similar to the original. When the internal consistency level of the scale was examined, it was determined that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .83. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha value was determined as .80. Within the scope of criterion-related validity, significant relationships were found between the Brief Resilience Scale and the Oxford Happiness Scale Short Form (r= .40), Ego Resilience Scale (r= .61), and Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (r= .66).

Self-Compassion Scale

The scale developed by Neff (2003b) was adapted to Turkish culture by Deniz et al. (2008). The scale, which consists of 26 items and 6 sub-dimensions in total, is a 5-point Likert-type measurement tool. As a result of EFA, 2 items with a factor load below .30 were removed from the scale. It was observed that the CFA results showed good agreement (RMSEA= 0.123, RMS= 0.128, RMS= 0.255, GFI= 0.692, and AGFI= 0.638). As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the scale, unlike the original, showed a single factor structure. In addition, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .89 and the test-retest correlation as .83. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha value was determined as .91. Within the scope of criterion-related validity, significant relationships were found between the Self-Compassion Scale and self-esteem (r= .62), life satisfaction (r= .45), positive emotion (r= .41), and negative emotion (r= -.48). In its final form, it was stated that the scale consisted of 24 items and one dimension.

Attachment Styles Scale in Interpersonal Relationships

The scale was developed by Kandemir and İlhan (2017) considering attachment theory. The scale, which consists of 21 items and 3 sub-dimensions in total, is a 7-point Likert-type measurement tool. As a result of factor analysis, it was determined that the scale had a 3-factor structure. When the obtained dimensions are examined, the first factor is 17.66% of the variance; It was found that the second factor explained 15.37% of the variance, the third factor explained 11.09% of the variance, and 44.12% of the variance in total. The factors determined after this application was named considering the literature and factor structures. The factors are respectively; secure attachment, anxious/preoccupied attachment, and avoidant attachment. When the internal consistency level of the scale was examined, it was determined that the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .80, .74, and .72, respectively. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha value were determined as .70, .72, and .66.

Data analysis

In the study, the relationships between resilience and self-compassion and attachment styles (secure, anxious, avoidant) were examined by correlation analysis. Whether the resilience variable was predicted by self-compassion and attachment styles was determined by multiple linear regression analysis. Statistical analyzes were made with SPSS 22.00 package program.

Findings and Interpretation

Relationships between resilience, self-compassion, and attachment styles in married individuals were examined by correlation analysis and the findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Relationships Between Resilience, Self-Compassion, and Attachment Styles

Variable	$\bar{x}$	sd	1	2	3	4	5
1. Resilience	20.44	4.49	–				
2. Self-compassion	83. 68	14.57	.66**	–			
3. Secure attachment	37.81	5.89	.35**	.36**	–		
4. Anxious attachment	25.96	7.81	-.43**	-.47**	.02	–	
5. Avoidant attachment	23.58	6.32	-.08*	-.15**	-.29**	-.00	–

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

When Table 1 is examined, positive and significant relationships were determined between resilience and self-compassion (r= .66, p< .01) and secure attachment (r= .35, p< .01). It was determined that there were negative and significant relationships between resilience and anxious attachment (r= -.43, p< .01) and avoidant attachment (r= -.08, p< .05).

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine whether self-compassion and attachment styles were significant predictors of resilience in married individuals. Before the regression analysis, the data were examined in terms of regression analysis assumptions, and after the outlier analysis 19 extreme data that damaged the normal distribution were determined and excluded from the data set. Then, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values were examined together. It has been determined that the skewness values are between -.10 and -.30, and the kurtosis values are between .01 and -.38 and are at an acceptable level (Büyüköztürk, 2019). Ayrıca, In addition, Tolerance values were determined as .62 for self-compassion, .76 for secure attachment, .72 for anxious attachment, and .90 for avoidant attachment, respectively. VIF values were determined as 1.59, 1.31, 1.37, and 1.10, respectively. The fact that the VIF values are less than 10 and the tolerance values are greater than .10 indicates that the data set does not have a multicollinearity problem. Finally, it was determined that the Durbin-Watson value was 1.11 and it was between 1-3, which is the criterion figure, and therefore, it was determined that the data set was suitable for regression analysis in this sense (Seçer, 2013). Information on the regression analysis assumptions is shown in Table 3.

Table 2
Results of Regression Analysis Assumptions

Variable	Mean	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis	Tolerance	VIF	Durbin-Watson
Resilience	20.44	4.49	-.10	-.15	–	–	
Self-compassion	83.68	14.57	-.22	-.33	.62	1.59	
Secure attachment	37.81	5.89	-.30	-.38	.76	1.31	1.11
Anxious attachment	25.96	7.81	.25	-.21	.72	1.37	
Avoidant attachment	23.58	6.32	.29	.01	.90	1.10	

When Table 2 is examined, it can be concluded that the data set of the research meets the regression assumptions. In this direction, the predictive level of the resilience levels of married individuals by the variables of self-compassion and attachment styles was examined by regression analysis, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Self-Compassion and Attachment Styles and Resilience

Variable	*B*	Standard Error	*β*	*t*	*p*
Constant	4.31	1.14		3.76	.00
Self-compassion	.15	.00	.50	17.79	.00**
Secure attachment	.14	.02	.18	7.34	.00**
Anxious attachment	-.11	.01	-.20	-7.75	.00**
Avoidant attachment	.03	.01	.04	1.87	.06

*R= .69, R²= .48, F= 242.46, ** p< .01*

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that self-compassion and attachment styles explain 48% of the variance in resilience ($R= .69$, $R^2= .48$, $F= 242.46$, $p< .01$). When the predictive variables are considered one by one and $β$ and t values are examined, it is seen that self-compassion ($β= .50$, $t= 17.791$, $p< .01$), secure attachment ($β= .18$, $t= 7.342$, $p< .01$) and anxious attachment ($β= -.20$, $t= -7.759$, $p< .01$) was found to be a significant predictor of resilience. It is seen that avoidant attachment ($β= .04$, $t= 1.872$, $p= .06$) is not a significant predictor of resilience

Discussion, Conclusion, and Suggestions

In this study, it was determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between resilience and secure attachment, which is a sub-dimension of attachment styles and self-compassion in married individuals. It has been determined that there is a negative and significant relationship between resilience and anxious and avoidant attachment dimensions in married individuals. When the literature was examined, no study was found in which all three variables of resilience, self-compassion, and attachment styles were investigated together. However, it is seen that these variables were studied in different samples. In the study of Kır Demirhan (2020) with emerging adults, the relationship between well-being (resilience and life satisfaction), self-compassion, and attachment characteristics was examined. A statistically significant negative correlation was found in the anxious and avoidant attachment sub-dimensions. In studies conducted with university students (Dilmaç Pınar, 2020; Uysal, 2019) and teachers (Şahin, 2014), it was determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between self-compassion and resilience. These findings in the literature; are consistent with current research findings.

According to the results of the research, self-compassion and secure attachment positively predict resilience; anxious attachment predicts resilience negatively in

married individuals. In line with these results, it can be said that with the increase of self-compassion in married individuals, resilience will also increase. In addition, a high level of secure attachment increases resilience; it can be stated that a high level of anxious attachment may have a reducing effect on resilience. On the other hand, it was found that avoidant attachment style was not a significant predictor of resilience in married individuals. Although there is a significant relationship between avoidant attachment and resilience, there is no predictive relationship; shows that other variables (self-compassion, secure attachment, and anxious attachment) included in the regression equation may have a mediating effect on the relationship between self-compassion and attachment styles and resilience. Therefore, the avoidant attachment sub-dimension may not predict resilience.

There are studies in the literature that examine the relationship between self-compassion and resilience and support the findings of this study (Bolat, 2013; Neff & McGehee, 2010; Şahin, 2014; Uysal, 2019). Resilience is defined as the individual's struggle against difficult situations in his life and adapting to the new situation (Kahvecioğlu, 2016). A person's ability to adapt can be an indicator of resilience. The personal protective factors of the individual enable him to react constructively in the face of negative life situations (Gizir, 2007). Self-compassion; is defined as an individual's understanding of himself despite his negative experiences and deficiencies and consciously accepting painful situations without rejecting them (Germer, 2009). It has been stated that individuals with a high level of self-compassion are more empathetic towards others (Özpolat, 2015), and get along better with their friends in the social environment (Crocker & Canevello, 2008), and are more willing to resolve conflicts (Çarman, 2015). In this respect, self-understanding can be considered a protective quality for resilience. In a study; it has been determined that depression, anxiety, and stress are lower in students with high self-compassion (Deniz & Sümer, 2010). In addition, it is stated that self-compassion is a coping strategy (Neff, 2003a). In this respect, it can be said that self-compassion can be an important determinant in the development of resilience.

The finding in this study that secure attachment positively predicts resilience is consistent with studies in the literature (Karaırmak, 2009; Karaırmak & Güloğlu 2014; Neria et al., 2001). Individuals with a secure attachment style think positively about themselves and others, have high self-esteem, perceive themselves as lovable, and describe others as accessible and reliable (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Adaptation and coping with the negative experiences or difficulties faced by the individual are defined as an indicator of their resilience (Block & Kremen, 1996). It is also stated that individuals with secure attachment are active in coping with stress and difficulties (Terzi & Çankaya, 2009). Accordingly, it can be said that secure attachment will be a protective factor for resilience.

The finding in this study that anxious attachment predicts resilience negatively and significantly is consistent with the findings of the literature (Çakmak, 2018; Jenkins,

2016; Kara, 2019). It is stated that individuals with anxious attachment have low self-confidence and have difficulty expressing the need for social support (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). According to Egeci and Gencoz (2011), it is stated that individuals with avoidant and anxious attachments tend to conflict as a result of experiencing communication problems and use ineffective methods in problem-solving. In addition, it is stated that anxious attachment transforms individuals into jealous, suspicious, and constantly thinking that they are rejected in their relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Anxiety-attached individuals want to have a relationship they can trust in order to overcome the feeling of insecurity, and they may make great efforts to keep these people close to themselves. However, he may not be able to cope with difficulties due to the thought of being rejected, abandoned, and resorting to ineffective solutions to problems. This may lead to a decrease in the resilience of the individual.

Research findings show that self-compassion and attachment styles are important determinants of the level of resilience of married individuals. In this direction, it can be suggested that professionals working in the field of marriage should create new therapeutic processes and treatment plans by taking this information into account. Self-compassion psychoeducation and group counseling programs can be applied to married individuals, which can increase their level of resilience. In addition, psycho-educational support programs can be applied to couples before marriage in order to develop a secure attachment style and decrease the effect of anxious attachment style. Finally, family education programs organized in institutions such as schools, public education centers, and municipalities can be prepared by considering current research findings.

The limitations of this study can be stated as the selection of the study group only from married individuals, the research being conducted with the survey method, the measurements is based on self-report, and the assumption that the participants made accurate and unbiased self-reports. In order to make comparisons, ensuring the participation of unmarried individuals in research, conducting qualitative, experimental, and longitudinal studies in order to better explore the development of resilience in married individuals and the factors affecting this process can increase the generalizability of these research findings.

Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of the paper.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Evli bireylerde psikolojik sağlamlığa yönelik çalışmaların, evliliklerde yaşanan sorunların çözümü ve evliliklerin sağlıklı bir şekilde devam ettirilmesi konusunda önemli katkılar sunacağı düşünülebilir. Alanyazında evli bireylerde psikolojik sağlamlıkla ilgili çalışmaların sınırlı sayıda olması ve evli bireylerde psikolojik sağlamlık ile öz-anlayış ve bağlanma stilleri arasındaki ilişkinin henüz incelenmemiş

olması, bu çalışmanın gerekliliğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışmanın amacı, evli bireylerde psikolojik sağlamlık, öz-anlayış ve bağlanma stilleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesidir.

Bu araştırma, nicel araştırma türlerinden ilişkisel tarama yöntemi kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Anket yöntemi kullanılarak değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilerin derecesi belirlenir. Ayrıca bu yöntemde bir değişkenin bilgileri doğrultusunda diğer değişken veya değişkenlerdeki durum tahmin edilmektedir. Araştırmada psikolojik sağlamlık ile öz-anlayış ve bağlanma stilleri arasındaki ilişkiler korelasyon analizi ile incelenmiştir. Psikolojik sağlamlık değişkeninin öz-anlayış ve bağlanma stilleri tarafından yordanıp yordanmadığı ise çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi ile belirlenmiştir.

Korelasyon analizi sonucunda psikolojik sağlamlık ile öz-anlayış, güvenli bağlanma, kaygılı bağlanma ve kaçınmacı bağlanma arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Analiz sonucunda evli bireylerin psikolojik sağlamlık düzeylerinin öz-anlayış, güvenli bağlanma ve kaygılı bağlanma değişkenleri tarafından anlamlı olarak yordandığı, kaçınmacı bağlanma değişkeni tarafından ise yordanmadığı tespit edilmiştir.

Araştırma bulguları, öz-anlayış ve bağlanma stillerinin evli bireylerin psikolojik sağlamlık düzeylerinin önemli belirleyicileri olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu doğrultuda evlilik alanında çalışan profesyonellerin bu bilgileri dikkate alarak yeni tedavi süreçleri ve tedavi planları oluşturmaları önerilebilir. Evli bireylere psikolojik sağlamlık düzeylerini artırabilecek öz-anlayış odaklı psikoeğitim ve grupla psikolojik danışma programları uygulanabilir. Ayrıca güvenli bağlanma stilini geliştirmek ve kaygılı bağlanma stilinin etkisini azaltmak için evlilik öncesi, çiftlere psiko-eğitim destek programları uygulanabilir. Bunlara ek olarak okul, halk eğitim merkezi ve belediye gibi kurumlarda düzenlenecek aile eğitim programları da güncel araştırma bulguları dikkate alınarak hazırlanabilir.

Çalışma grubunun sadece evli bireylerden seçilmesi, araştırmanın ilişkisel tarama modeliyle yürütülmesi, ölçümlerin öz-bildirime dayalı olması ve katılımcıların kendilerine yönelik doğru ve yansız bildirimlerde bulunduğunun varsayılması bu araştırmadaki sınırlılıklar olarak ifade edilebilir. Karşılaştırma yapılabilmesi adına evli olmayan bireylerin de araştırmalara katılımının sağlanması, evli bireylerde psikolojik sağlamlık gelişimini ve bu süreçte etkili olan faktörleri daha iyi keşfedebilmek için nitel, deneysel ve boylamsal çalışmalar yapılması, bu araştırma bulgularının genellenebilirliğini artırabilir.