

**THE MEDIATING ROLES OF TRIANGULAR LOVE
COMPONENTS IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP
BELIEFS AND MARRIAGE ATTITUDES**

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the mediating roles of triangular love components (intimacy, passion, and commitment) in the relationship between university students' romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes. The research sample consisted of 376 undergraduate students, 289 of whom were female and 87 were male, studying at a public university. In addition to the Personal Information Form, four measurement tools, namely the İnönü Marriage Attitude Scale, the Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (STLS and STLS-M forms), and the Romantic Relationship Beliefs Scale, were employed in this study. According to the study results, romantic relationship beliefs significantly and positively predicted triangular love components, triangular love components predicted marriage attitude, and romantic relationship beliefs predicted marriage attitudes. Another finding of the study, the triangular love components, intimacy had a partial mediating role, while passion and commitment had full mediating roles in the relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes. All the adjustments regarding the collected data were conducted in the R programming environment. The findings were discussed based on the existing literature, followed by suggestions for various practices in the field and future studies.

Keywords: Attitudes toward marriage; triangular love; romantic relationship beliefs

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ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ İNANÇLARI VE EVLİLİK TUTUMLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİDE ÜÇGEN AŞK BİLEŞENLERİNİN ARACI ROLÜ

ÖZET

Bu araştırmada, üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişki inançları ve evlilik tutumu arasındaki ilişkide üçgen aşk bileşenlerinin (yakınlık, tutku ve bağlılık) aracı rolü incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, bir kamu üniversitesinde öğrenim gören 289'u kadın, 87'si erkek olmak üzere toplam 376 lisans öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Bu araştırmada Kişisel Bilgi Formunun yanı sıra, İnönü Evlilik Tutum Ölçeği, Sternberg Üçgen Aşk Ölçeği (ÜAÖ-A ve ÜAÖ-B formları) ve Romantik İnançlar Ölçeği olmak üzere toplam dört ölçme aracı kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, romantik ilişki inançları üçgen aşk bileşenlerini, üçgen aşk bileşenleri evlilik tutumunu ve romantik ilişki inançları evlilik tutumlarını anlamlı ve pozitif yönde yordamaktadır. Araştırmanın bir diğer bulgusu, üçgen aşk bileşenleri, romantik ilişki inançları ile evlilik tutumları arasındaki ilişkide yakınlığın kısmi aracı role sahip olduğu, tutku ve bağlılığın ise tam aracı role sahip olduğudur. Elde edilmiş olan verilere ilişkin bütün düzenlemeler, R programlama ortamında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, alanyazın temelinde tartışılmış ve ardından alandaki çeşitli uygulamalara ve gelecek çalışmalara yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evliliğe yönelik tutum; üçgen aşk; romantik ilişki inançları

1. INTRODUCTION

People go through many processes throughout their lives and develop and continue their lives with the impact of these processes. Sometimes, they make decisions in this ongoing flow of life and add new meaning to their lives. Marriage is considered a life mission that individuals should fulfill in most societies (Cüceloğlu, 2019). Indeed, it is believed that individuals need to get married in order to complete romantic relationships according to social norms. In this context, individuals often feel the need to share their lives with another person after completing certain developmental tasks, and as a result, they consider finding a suitable spouse and getting married (Ondaş, 2007). The importance of the decision to get married increases, as it constitutes a crucial turning point in individuals' lives, and the time spent in marriage covers a significant part of their lives. Indeed, individuals' thoughts and beliefs about marriage and their established positive and negative attitudes are important determinants in deciding whether to get married (Park & Rosen, 2013). Attitudes towards marriage are expressed as individuals' expectations about marriage, the meanings they attribute to marriage, and all family relationships they expect to have in the future (Willoughby, 2010). The meanings and values that individuals attribute to marriage affect their attitude towards marriage in a positive or negative direction (Karabacak & Çiftçi, 2016). Therefore, a positive attitude increases individuals' likelihood of getting married, while a negative attitude may cause them to distance themselves from marriage. In addition, attitudes towards marriage are also reflected in individuals' experiences in their romantic relationships. It is stated that individuals who have a positive attitude toward marriage exhibit more positive behaviors in their relationships and have more positive experiences (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Larson, Benson, Wilson, & Medora, 1998).

One of the variables examined in this study is romantic relationship beliefs. Romantic relationship beliefs encompass individuals' perceptions and expectations about their romantic relationships. Indeed, many individuals start a relationship with the various beliefs that they should love the person they are emotionally together with and that the relationship should be a mutually satisfying process. Therefore, almost everyone has some basic pre-existing beliefs about how their ongoing relationship should be (Sprecher & Metts, 1999). Sprecher and Metts discuss these beliefs in four dimensions: "love at first sight", "one and only", "idealization", and "love finds a way". These beliefs are learned through other socialization channels where observed marriages, media, cultural values, and norms are shared. As such, it is argued that these beliefs, formed through media reflections and popular definitions, affect attitudes toward marriage (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Romantic relationship beliefs are necessary to some extent in terms of empowering the relationship (Sprecher & Metts, 1999). Sprecher and Metts argue that beliefs about romantic relationships reflect romantic ideology and indicate the level of romanticism, which is the increasing relationship expectations in an individual's romantic relationship. From a parallel perspective, according to Anderson (2005), the ideology of romantic love includes basic beliefs such as love at first sight is possible, love is the most important foundation for marriage, true love lasts forever, and love can overcome all obstacles (Weaver & Ganong, 2004). In the meantime, the ideology of love is an expression of the extraordinary power of love that suggests we can overcome all obstacles if we are with our soul mate. Thus, individuals tend to expect to be attached to their partners with passionate and romantic love (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Similarly, it is observed that the relationship satisfaction of spouses increases when they idealize each other more or express that their emotional level is higher (Sprecher & Metts, 1999).

In this study, the mediating effect of the variable that will be examined in the relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes is individuals' levels of triangular love. When the literature is examined, the most important motivation for romantic relationships is expressed as love. In many cultures, marriage and romantic love are seen as sources of self-expression and self-realization (Acevedo & Aron, 2009). In this respect, perceptions, attitudes, and expectations towards love appear to be significant determinants of individuals' positive feelings in their lives and future marriage processes. One of the important theories explaining love is Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love. In this theory, love is represented by three components: "intimacy", "passion", and "commitment," which are assumed to represent the emotional, motivational, and cognitive aspects of love. Sternberg points out that each component reveals a different aspect of love, and the perceived intensity of love increases or decreases depending on these components. Of these components, *intimacy* reflects the need for mutual understanding with the romantic partner, such as honesty and intimacy. It also involves mutual self-disclosure, sharing secrets, and feeling close emotions toward each other. *Passion* reflects physical attraction, sexual arousal, and the need for physical intimacy with a romantic partner. Therefore, the passion component constitutes the motivational aspect of the relationship that

leads to romance, physical attraction, and sexual intercourse. *Commitment* reflects the need for the relationship to have meaning for the future and the need to decide on that relationship. In other words, the commitment component signifies one's decision to love someone at a certain point in time and to continue their commitment to maintaining this love in the ongoing process (Sternberg, 1997).

The study group addressed in this study consists of university students. The university years, when romantic relationships begin to develop, are crucial because they are a period in which students enter into more meaningful and serious romantic relationships. As stated in Erikson's (1968) psychosocial development theory, students are in the "intimacy versus isolation" period in this period and feel the need to establish intimacy with the opposite sex. Similarly, Havighurst (1980) emphasizes that individuals entering the young adulthood period should accomplish developmental tasks related to career choice and mate selection. In addition, romantic relationships established during university years determine the quality of intimate relationships to be established in adulthood and the individual's mate selection in the marriage process (Furman, 2002). At the same time, it is thought that determining the romantic relationship beliefs of individuals will affect their perspectives on marriage and the mate selection process. From this perspective, it is estimated that the studies carried out to transform expectations and beliefs about love into more realistic beliefs will lead to healthier marriage processes. In conclusion, it would be meaningful to examine the mediating roles of intimacy, passion, and commitment, the three components of triangular love, in the relationship between university students' romantic relationship beliefs and their attitudes towards marriage.

2. METHOD

2.1. Study Group

The study group includes 376 university students enrolled in various faculties of a public university, determined through a random sampling method. The study group consisted of 289 (77%) female and 87 (23%) male students.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

2.2.1. Personal Information Form

To describe the sample group, a questionnaire prepared by the researchers under the name of "Personal Information Form" was administered to determine the participants' department, class, gender, age, and whether they had romantic relationships.

2.2.2. Inonu Marriage Attitude Scale (IMAS)

The IMAS, developed by Bayoğlu and Atli (2014), is used for measuring individuals' attitudes toward marriage. The IMAS is a unidimensional scale that is assessed based on the total score. It is a 5-point Likert scale, where the level of agreement for each statement is rated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The lowest obtainable score from the total of the scale is 21, and the highest score is 105. High scores indicate positive attitudes toward marriage, while low scores indicate negative attitudes toward marriage (Bayoğlu & Atli, 2014). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was reported as 0.90 in the original study where the scale was developed. Within the scope of this study, the item-total test correlations of this scale ranged from 0.375 to 0.763. In addition, the calculated Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was 0.931. All these calculations show that the reliability of the scale is at a sufficient level.

2.2.3. Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS)

The RBS was developed by Sprecher and Metts in 1989. This scale, which measures the beliefs identified as constituents of romantic ideology, was adapted to Turkish by Küçükarslan and Gizir (2013). The lowest score that can be obtained from the RBS, which uses a 5-point Likert-type rating, is 13 and the highest score is 65. Furthermore, each item in the scale is rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale consists of 13 items under four factors called *love finds a way*, *one and only*, *idealization*, and *love at first sight*. At the same time, the scale is also assessed based on the total score, where the lowest obtainable score is 13, and the highest score is 65. The total score obtained from the scale determines an individual's level of romanticism. According to the results of the reliability studies of the RBS, Cronbach's alpha value obtained to determine the internal consistency of the scale was 0.84, and the test-retest reliability was 0.83. Within the scope of this study, the item-total test correlations of this scale ranged from 0.449 to 0.665. In addition, the calculated Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was 0.874. All these calculations show that the reliability of the scale is at a sufficient level.

2.2.4. Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (STLS)

The STLS (Sternberg, 1997) aims to measure the levels of intimacy, commitment, and passion of individuals in romantic relationships within the framework of the triangular theory of love. Accordingly, an individual's amount of love or level of perceived intensity toward love depends on the absolute strength of these three components. Soyer and Gizir (2021) adapted the scale to Turkish and reported that it had a 24-item, three-factor (intimacy, commitment, and passion) structure. Participants respond to the scale items using a 9-point Likert-type rating, where each item is responded to on a scale

of 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the STLS has been reported as 0.96 and its test-retest reliability as 0.95.

2.2.5. Sternberg Triangular Love Scale – Modified (STLS-M)

The STLS-M (Soloski, Pavkov, Sweeney, & Wetchler, 2013) is a revised version of the STLS, used for determining the thoughts and expectations of individuals having no romantic relationships regarding the components of *intimacy*, *passion*, and *commitment* mentioned in the triangular theory of love. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Soyer and Gizir (2021), and similar to the STLS, the STLS-M had a 24-item and three-factor structure (intimacy, commitment, and passion). Participants respond to the scale items based on a 9-point Likert-type rating scale, with response categories of 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). The internal consistency of the Turkish STLS-M is 0.95, and its test-retest reliability coefficient is 0.81. In this study, the original version of the Triangular Love Scale (Sternberg, 1997) was used for university students having romantic relationships, and the adapted version of the Triangular Love Scale was used for individuals having no romantic relationships (Soloski, Pavkov, Sweeney, & Wetchler, 2013), named STLS and STLS-M, respectively. Soyer (2019) examined the validity, reliability, and measurement equivalence of the STLS and STLS-M scales. As a result of examining their measurement equivalence, it was determined that the STLS and STLS-M had a 24-item three-factor structure (intimacy, commitment, and passion) and satisfied the measurement equivalence criteria. Within the scope of this study, the item-total test correlations of this scale ranged from 0.341 to 0.774. In addition, the calculated Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was 0.943. All these calculations show that the reliability of the scale is at a sufficient level.

2.3. Procedure

Initially, necessary permissions were obtained from Mersin University Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee during the study. After the research model and sample were determined, a personal information form was prepared. During the applications process, the participation of participants in the study was voluntary. In classroom applications, the purpose of the study and the instructions for the application of measurement tools were explained to the participants. The scales were administered by the researchers, and the approximate time determined was 20 minutes.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 22 program. All the adjustments regarding the collected data were conducted in the R programming environment. Mediation analysis was conducted according to the Hayes Approach based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) steps. Mediation analyses and visualizations were carried out using the Psych package.

3. FINDINGS

The analysis results for the mediating effects of triangular love components (intimacy, passion, and commitment) in the relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes are displayed in Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively, following the mediation analysis steps.

Table 1. Hayes Mediation Analysis Results for the Mediation Role of Intimacy (A1) in the Relationship between Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Marriage Attitudes

	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
D → C (c)	0.46	0.11	4.05	374	0.001		
D → C (c')	0.26	0.13	2.04	373	0.042		
D → A1 (a)	0.58	0.06	10.24	374	0.001		
A1 → C (b)	0.35	0.1	3.39	373	0.001		
Indirect effect (ab)	0.2					0.09	0.34

Note: A1: Intimacy; A2: Passion; A3: Commitment; D: Romantic Relationship Beliefs; C: Marriage Attitudes

As seen in Table 1, the Baron and Kenny mediation steps were fulfilled. However, when the mediating variable of intimacy was included in the model, the effect of romantic relationship beliefs on marriage attitudes decreased from 0.46 to 0.26. Upon examining the bootstrap results of the indirect effect obtained, the coefficient of 0.20 fell in the range of 0.09–0.34, indicating that it was significant. Accordingly, one could state that the indirect effect is statistically significant. Since the direct effect was still significant, the intimacy dimension was a partial mediator. Figure 1 illustrates the results related to the model.

Figure 1. Mediating Role of Intimacy between Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Marriage Attitudes

Mediation Model for the A1 Dimension of Love

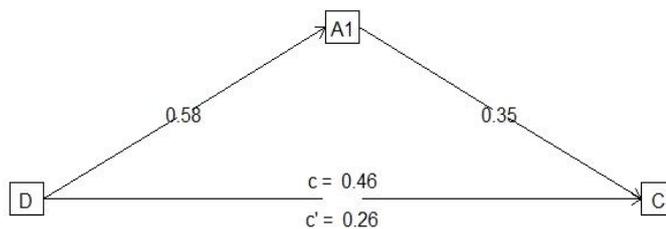


Table 2. Hayes Mediation Analysis Results for the Mediation Role of Passion (A2) in the Relationship between Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Marriage Attitudes

	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
D → C (c)	0.46	0.11	4.05	374	0.001		
D → C (c')	0.22	0.14	1.58	373	0.120		
D → A2 (a)	0.72	0.05	14.02	374	0.001		
A2 → C (b)	0.34	0.11	2.96	373	0.003		
Indirect effect (ab)	0.24					0.09	0.42

Note: A1: Intimacy; A2: Passion; A3: Commitment; D: Romantic Relationship Beliefs; C: Marriage Attitudes

As seen in Table 2, the Baron and Kenny mediation steps were fulfilled. However, when the mediating variable of passion was included in the model, the effect of romantic relationship beliefs on marriage attitudes decreased from 0.46 to 0.22. Considering the bootstrap results for the indirect effect, the coefficient of 0.24 fell in the range of 0.09–0.42, indicating that it was significant. Accordingly, one could argue that the indirect effect is statistically significant. The resultant direct effect value was 0.22 ($p > 0.05$) and non-significant. Herein, one could state that passion holds a full mediator role. Figure 2 displays the results related to the model.

Mediation Model for the A2 Dimension of Love

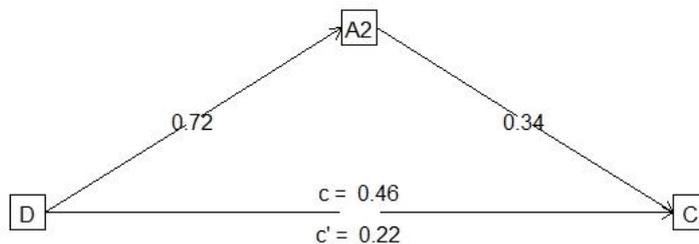


Figure 2. Mediating Role of Passion between Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Marriage Attitudes

Table 3. Hayes Mediation Analysis Results for the Mediation Role of Commitment (A3) in the Relationship between Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Marriage Attitudes

	Coefficient	Standard Error	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
D → C (c)	0.46	0.11	4.05	374	0.001		
D → C (c')	0.17	0.13	1.36	373	0.170		
D → A3 (a)	0.69	0.06	11.24	374	0.001		
A3 → C (b)	0.42	0.09	4.44	373	0.001		
Indirect effect (ab)	0.29					0.17	0.43

Note: A1: Intimacy; A2: Passion; A3: Commitment; D: Romantic Relationship Beliefs; C: Marriage Attitudes

As seen in Table 3, the Baron and Kenny mediation steps were fulfilled. However, when the mediating variable of commitment was included in the model, the effect of romantic relationship beliefs on marriage attitudes decreased from 0.46 to 0.17. Considering the bootstrap results for the indirect

effect, the coefficient of 0.29 fell in the range of 0.17–0.43, indicating that it was significant. Accordingly, one could argue that the indirect effect is statistically significant. The resultant direct effect value was 0.17 ($p > 0.05$) and non-significant. Thus, one could state that commitment holds a full mediator role. Figure 3 displays the results related to the model.

Mediation Model for the A3 Dimension of Love

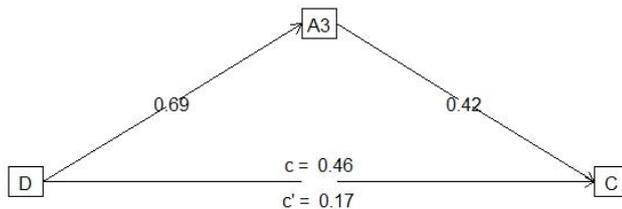


Figure 3. Mediating Role of Commitment between Romantic Relationship Beliefs and Marriage Attitudes

4. DISCUSSION

This study examined the mediating role of triangular love components (intimacy, passion and commitment) in the relationship between university students' romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes. According to the study results, romantic relationship beliefs significantly and positively predicted triangular love components, triangular love components predicted marriage attitude, and romantic relationship beliefs predicted marriage attitude. Another findings of the study the triangular love components, intimacy had a partial mediating role, while passion and commitment had full mediating roles in the relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes.

The primary finding of the study was that romantic relationship beliefs significantly and positively predicted the components of triangular love, namely intimacy, passion, and commitment. Considering the literature, many studies have examined the association between romantic relationship beliefs and love (Beştav, 2007; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989; Karabacak & Çiftçi, 2016). However, these studies draw attention to the relationships between irrational beliefs and love styles. However, as discussed in this study, romantic relationship beliefs express perceptions and expectations towards romantic relationships and reveal an individual's level of romanticism. In this respect, it is expected that the individual's level of romanticism significantly affects the level of love in romantic relationships, or, in other words, the perceived intensity of love.

Romantic relationship beliefs form perceptions and expectations that represent romantic ideology and play a significant role in the development of individuals' seemingly ideal relationships (Healy, Scheidegger, Meyers, & Friedlen, 2009; Holmberg & Mackenzi, 2002). Therefore, the closer the perceptions of individuals toward the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of their romantic partners

in romantic relationships are to their ideal standards, the more likely they are to evaluate their relationships positively (Fletcher & Simpson, 2000). Hence, it seems that increasing romanticism may affect the intensity of love.

Another finding of the study was that triangular love components (intimacy, passion, and commitment) significantly predicted marriage attitudes in a positive direction. Very few studies in the literature draw attention to the relationship between love and marriage attitudes. However, many studies in the literature have focused on the relationships between love, marital satisfaction, and marital adjustment. In parallel with the findings of this research, Yıldırım and Parlar (2010) showed in their study that love styles significantly and positively predicted marriage attitudes. From a similar perspective, Larson (1992) emphasize that premarital couples believe that their love, which is strong enough to overcome all difficulties, will naturally lead to marriage.

Commitment, which is one of the triangular love components, is also emphasized as being quite important in making marriage decisions due to its role in maintaining consistency in the relationship. In long-term relationships, commitment provides continuity and validation to the relationship, protecting the individual from doubt, uncertainty, and loneliness within the framework of personal beliefs. Therefore, in many romantic relationships, couples dedicate themselves strongly to continuing their relationship. To maintain their relationships, they often tend to overlook their spouse's negative traits and focus more on their praiseworthy attitudes (Overall & Sibley, 2008). As per the intimacy component, when it is considered that the continuation of a romantic relationship may be related to the level of satisfaction in the relationship, one could argue that the importance placed on intimacy increases over time depending on the fulfillment of individuals' needs for loving and being loved. Compared to other components of triangular love, passion forms the motivational aspect of love and can have a greater impact on one's evaluation of love in a romantic relationship. From this perspective, positive attitudes towards marriage significantly increase with an increase in the perceived intensity of love.

Another finding was that romantic relationship beliefs significantly and positively predicted marriage attitudes. Similarly, Shimkowski, Punyanunt-Carter, Colwell, and Norman's (2017) study revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and marriage. In another study, Karabacak and Çiftçi (2016) reported significant and positive relationships between romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes. These findings indicate that beliefs add dynamism to relationships to some extent and therefore positively affect attitudes towards marriage. Crosby (1985) notes that the concept of romantic love is the sole reason for marriage and emphasizes that the belief in a "one and only" soulmate encourages the search for one true spouse. On the other hand, Cosby emphasizes that individuals who look for alternative spouses have high standards, which in turn reduces their chances of getting married. Therefore, the increase in romantic ideology may affect positive evaluations of marriage.

Lastly, in the relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitude, it was determined that intimacy, which is the triangular love component, has a partial mediator role, while passion and commitment have a full mediator role. This finding could be interpreted that an increase in the level of romanticism, together with the perceived intensity of love, has a greater significant effect on marriage attitudes. In other words, when romanticism combines with love, positive attitudes toward marriage increase. According to Park and Rosen (2013), positive and negative attitudes towards marriage, beliefs about relationships, and behaviors within relationships affect marriage-related behaviors. At this point, if an individual plans to marry their romantic partner and if this partner meets the standards of a romantic relationship, the dating process starts being guided by the individual's assumptions about who the ideal partner is (Reis, Sprecher, & Sprecher, 2009).

On the other hand, Sprecher and Metts (1999) focused on the association between romantic relationship beliefs and relationship quality in their study. Contrary to popular and professional opinions, growing evidence suggests that spouses who idealize each other more or exhibit higher levels of romanticism also tend to have higher levels of relationship satisfaction and liking for their spouses (Murray & Holmes, 1997; Sprecher & Metts, 1999). In the meantime, Sprecher and Metts (1999) emphasize that romantic relationship beliefs cause an increase in commitment over time. This finding raises doubts concerning the assumption that romantic idealism in a relationship is harmful or leads to disappointment.

To conclude, each component of triangular love seems to have significant effects on romantic relationship beliefs and marriage attitudes. Indeed, considering that passion is a significant determinant of romanticism, intimacy is a significant determinant of emotional and social support in romantic relationships, and commitment is a determinant that takes the romantic relationship to more serious relationships in the future (such as engagement and marriage), it is highly meaningful that all these components are significant determinants in the relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and attitudes towards marriage.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In conclusion, this study determined that intimacy plays a partial mediator role in the relationship between romantic relationship beliefs and attitudes towards marriage, while the passion and commitment components of triangular love play a full mediator role. Considering the resultant findings of the study, it appears highly meaningful for university counseling and guidance centers to establish various preventive and developmental programs that enable students to make more realistic assessments of love and romantic relationships.

In addition, through services including group counseling, workshops, group guidance activities, brochures, posters, and various seminars carried out in universities, university students could be

informed about what romantic love and beliefs are, how they are formed, why they are important, and how to overcome the challenges experienced in romantic relationships. This way, students could be enabled to develop a healthier perspective on marriage. On the other hand, premarital relationship development programs could be developed to raise awareness of university students' attitudes towards marriage and increase couple adjustment.

Meanwhile, children's and young adults' tendencies to resemble the characters in movies, TV series, and magazine programs they watch are reflected in their lives as part of the modeling process. Thus, especially in regards to romantic relationship beliefs and themes related to love, TV series, movies, or commercials could be structured more realistically, avoiding exaggeration and rigidity toward love.

Lastly, this study is limited to Mersin University students. Therefore, restructuring similar studies in different universities and with different sample groups would be useful. In addition, new studies could be conducted within the framework of different analyses with variables (such as well-being, relationship satisfaction, attachment styles, and relationship quality) other than those addressed in the present study.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ TÜRKÇE ÖZET

ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ İNANÇLARI VE EVLİLİK TUTUMLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİDE ÜÇGEN AŞK BİLEŞENLERİNİN ARACI ROLÜ

Bu araştırmada, üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişki inançları ve evlilik tutumu arasındaki ilişkide üçgen aşk bileşenlerinin (yakınlık, tutku ve bağlılık) aracı rolü incelenmiştir. Evlilik yönelik tutumlar, bireyin evliliğe ilişkin beklentisi, evliliğe yüklediği anlamlar ve gelecekte olmasını beklediği aile ilişkilerinin tamamı olarak ifade edilmektedir (Willoughby, 2010). Romantik ilişki inançları, bireylerin romantik ilişkilerine yönelik algı ve beklentilerini içermektedir (Sprecher & Metts, 1999). Bu çalışmada romantik ilişki inançları ve evlilik tutumları arasındaki ilişkide aracılık etkisi incelenecek olan değişken, bireylerin üçgen aşk düzeyleri olacaktır. Sternberg 'in (1986) üçgen aşk kuramı aşkın duygusal, güdüsel ve bilişsel yönlerini temsil ettiği öngörülen “yakınlık”, “tutku” ve “bağlılık” bileşenlerinden söz etmektedir. Her bileşenin aşkın farklı bir yönünü ortaya koyduğunu belirten Sternberg, algılanan aşk yoğunluğunun bu bileşenlere bağlı olarak arttığına veya azaldığına dikkat çekmektedir. Bu çalışmada ele alınan çalışma grubu üniversite öğrencilerini oluşturmaktadır. Üniversite yıllarında kurulan romantik ilişkiler yetişkinlik döneminde kurulacak yakın ilişkilerin niteliğini ve bireyin evlilik sürecinde eş seçimini belirlemektedir (Furman, 2002). Bu bakış açısıyla, üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişki inançları ve evlilik tutumları arasındaki ilişkide üçgen aşkın bileşenleri olan yakınlık, tutku ve bağlılık düzeylerinin aracı rolünün incelenmesinin anlamlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Araştırmanın örneklemini, bir kamu üniversitesinde öğrenim gören 289'u kadın, 87'si erkek olmak üzere toplam 376 lisans öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Bu çalışmada Kişisel Bilgi Formunun yanı sıra, İnönü Evlilik Tutum Ölçeği, Sternberg Üçgen Aşk Ölçeği (ÜAÖ-A ve ÜAÖ-B formları) ve Romantik İnançlar Ölçeği olmak üzere toplam dört ölçme aracı kullanılmıştır. Bayoğlu ve Atli (2014) tarafından geliştirilen İETÖ aracılığıyla, bireylerin evliliğe ilişkin tutumlarını değerlendirmek amaçlanmaktadır. Romantik İnançlar Ölçeği, 1989 yılında Sprecher ve Metts tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Romantik ideolojiyi oluşturduğu tespit edilen inançları ölçmek amacıyla kullanılan ölçek (Küçükarslan & Gizir, 2013) tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlanmıştır. Sternberg Üçgen Aşk Ölçeği (ÜAÖ-A ve ÜAÖ-B formları) Soyer ve Gizir (2021) tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlanmıştır.

Araştırma sürecinde öncelikle Mersin Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan gerekli izinler alınmış, araştırmanın modeli ve örneklemi belirlendikten sonra kişisel bilgi formu düzenlenmiştir. Verilerin analizi, SPSS 22 paket programı kullanılarak yapılmıştır. Uygulamalar esnasında katılımcıların araştırmaya gönüllü katılımları esas alınmıştır. Sınıf içerisinde gerçekleştirilen uygulamalarda araştırmanın amaçları ve ölçme araçlarının uygulanmasına yönelik yönergeler

katılımcılara açıklanmıştır. Ölçek uygulamaları araştırmacılar tarafından yapılmış ve yaklaşık süre 20 dakika olarak belirlenmiştir. Elde edilmiş olan verilere ilişkin bütün düzenlemeler, R programlama ortamında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Aracılık Analizi Baronv e Kenny (1986) adımları esas alınarak Hayes Yaklaşımı'na göre gerçekleştirilmiştir. Aracılık analizleri ve grafiklemeler psych paketi kullanarak yapılmıştır.

Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre, romantik ilişki inançları ve evlilik tutumu arasındaki ilişkide, üçgen aşkın bileşenleri olan yakınlığın kısmi, tutku ve bağlılığın ise tam aracılık rolüne sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen bu bulgu romantiklik düzeyinin artmasının, aşka yönelik algılanan yoğunlukla beraber evlilik tutumunu daha anlamlı etkileyeceğini şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Yani romantizm aşk ile birleştiğinde evliliğe yönelik olumlu tutum artmaktadır. Rosen ve Park'a (2013) göre pozitif ve negatif evlilik tutumları, ilişkiler ile ilgili inançlar ve ilişki içerisindeki davranış şekilleri evlilik ile ilgili davranışlarını etkilemektedir. Bu noktada, birey romantik eşi ile evlenmeyi planlıyorsa ve bu eş romantik ilişkide sahip olunan standartlara uygunsu, flört etme süreci ideal eşin kim olduğuna ilişkin bireyin sahip olduğu varsayımlar tarafından yönlendirilmeye başlamaktadır (Reis, Sprecher ve Sprecher, 2009). Diğer taraftan [Sprecher ve Metts \(1999\)](#) yaptıkları çalışmada, romantik ilişki inançları ve ilişki kalitesi arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanmıştır. Popüler ve profesyonel düşüncenin aksine, birbirlerini daha fazla idealleştiren veya daha yüksek düzeyde romantizm sergileyen eşlerin aynı zamanda daha yüksek düzeyde ilişki doyumu ve eşlerinden hoşlanma eğiliminde olduklarını öne süren kanıtlar artmaktadır (Murray & Holmes, [1997](#); [Sprecher ve Metts, 1999](#)). Aynı zamanda Sprecher ve Metts (1999), romantik ilişki inançlarının zaman içinde bağlılıkta artışa neden olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu bulgu, bir ilişkideki romantik idealizmin zararlı olduğu veya hüsrana yol açtığı varsayımına şüphe uyandırmaktadır. Üçgen aşkın her bir bileşeninin romantik ilişki inançları ve evlilik tutumu arasındaki önemli etkileri olduğu görülmektedir. Nitekim ilişkide tutku bileşeninin, romantizmin önemli bir belirleyicisi olduğu, yakınlık bileşeninin de romantik ilişkilerde duygusal ve sosyal desteğin önemli belirleyicisi olduğu ve bağlılık bileşeninin de romantik ilişkiyi gelecekte daha ciddi ilişkilere (nişanlanmak ve evlenmek gibi) taşıyan bir belirleyici olduğu düşünüldüğünde; tüm bu bileşenlerin romantik ilişkideki inançlar ve evliliğe yönelik tutumları arasındaki ilişkide önemli bir belirleyici olması oldukça anlamlı olmaktadır.

Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgulardan hareketle, üniversitelerde hizmet veren Üniversite Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Merkezleri'nin, öğrencilerin aşk ve romantik ilişkilere yönelik daha gerçekçi değerlendirmeler yapmalarını sağlayacak çeşitli önleyici ve gelişimsel programlar oluşturmaları oldukça anlamlı görünmektedir. Bununla birlikte, üniversite bünyelerinde gerçekleştirilecek grupla psikolojik danışma, çalışma grupları, grup rehberliği etkinlikleri, broşürler, afişler ve çeşitli seminerleri kapsayan hizmetler temelinde üniversite öğrencileri için, romantik aşkın ve inançların ne olduğu, nasıl oluştuğu, neden önemli olduğu ve aşk ilişkilerinde yaşanan zorluklarla nasıl baş edileceği konusunda bilgilendirme çalışmaları yapılabilir. Aynı zamanda, çocukların ve genç

yetişkinlerin izlenen filmlerdeki, dizilerdeki ve magazin programlarındaki karakterlere benzeme eğilimleri, modelleme süreçlerinin bir parçası olarak yaşamlarına yansımaktadır. Bu nedenle özellikle romantik ilişki inançlarına ve aşka yönelik temaları dizi, film ya da reklamların daha gerçekçi bir şekilde yapılandırılması ve aşka yönelik abartı ve katılıktan uzak olması sağlanabilir. Son olarak, bu çalışma Mersin üniversitesi öğrencileri ile sınırlıdır. Farklı üniversite ve farklı örneklem gruplarında benzer çalışmaların yeniden yapılandırılmasında yarar vardır. Bununla beraber, çalışmada ele alınan değişkenler dışında değişkenlerle (iyi oluş, ilişki doyumu, bağlanma stilleri, ilişki niteliği gibi) farklı analizler çerçevesinde yeni çalışmalar yapılabilir.