

The Relationships between Love Styles and Satisfaction in Romantic Relationships: The Mediating Role of Intimacy

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Abstract

Romantic relationships are among the important elements that enrich human life. These relationships begin to be shaped during adolescence and serve an important developmental role in the young adulthood years. Love is a pervasive topic within the field of research on romantic relationships. Theories of love offer various explanations and classifications, one of which includes Lee's Colors of Love Theory. This study aims to examine the mediating role of intimacy in the relationship between love styles and relationship satisfaction in university students. The study group comprised 349 students, 267 (76.5%) women and 82 (23.5%) men. The participants' average age was 23.39 years (SD=4.57). Data were collected through the Love Attitudes Scale: Short Form, the Intimacy Scale in Romantic Relationships, the Relationship Assessment Scale, and the Personal Information Form. The hypothetical models designed in the study were tested using structural equation modeling. The findings suggest that eros and storge have a positive direct effect on relationship satisfaction, while mania has a negative effect. Intimacy plays a crucial role in romantic relationships. It serves as a mediator in the relationship between relationship satisfaction and ludus, agape, and storge. In conclusion, love styles other than pragma are important predictors of relationship satisfaction directly and/or through intimacy.

Keywords: Romantic relationships, relationship satisfaction, love styles, intimacy.

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Romantik İlişkilerde Doyum ve Aşk Stilleri Arasındaki İlişki: Yakınlığın Aracı Rolü

Makale Türü	Başvuru Tarihi	Kabul Tarihi
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Öz

Romantik ilişkiler, insan yaşamını zenginleştiren önemli unsurlar arasında yer alır. Bu ilişkiler ergenlik döneminde ortaya çıkmaya başlar ve genç yetişkinlik yıllarında önemli bir gelişimsel görevi yerine getirir. Romantik ilişkiler konusunda yapılan araştırmalarda daha çok aşk konusu ele alınır. Aşk konusundaki kuramlarda da farklı açıklamalar ileri sürülür ve farklı sınıflamalar yapılır. Sınıflamalardan biri, Lee'nin Aşkın Renkleri Kuramında geçer. Bu çalışmada, üniversite öğrencilerinin aşk stillerinin ilişki doyumunu yordamasında yakınlığın aracı rolü incelenmiştir. Çalışma grubunu 349 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıların 267'si (%76.5) kadın, 82'si (%23.5) erkektir ve yaş ortalamaları 23.39'dur (SS=4.57). Verilerin toplanmasında Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Aşka İlişkin Tutumlar Ölçeği: Kısa Form, Romantik İlişkilerde Yakınlık ile İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçekleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın hipotetik modelleri yapısal eşitlik modellemeleri ile test edilmiştir. Bulgulara göre tutkulu aşk ile arkadaşça aşk ilişki doyumu üzerinde pozitif etkiye sahipken sahiplenici aşk negatif etkiye sahiptir. Oyun gibi aşkta ve özgeci aşkta ilişki doyumunun tam aracı olan yakınlık, arkadaşça aşkta kısmi aracıdır. Sonuç olarak mantıklı aşk dışındaki aşk stillerinin doğrudan ya da yakınlık aracılığı ile ilişki doyumunun önemli birer yordayıcısı olduğu söylenebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Romantik ilişkiler, ilişki doyumu, aşk stilleri, yakınlık.

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Introduction

Intimate relationships with others are among the basic human needs. Individuals' relationships with their parents, siblings, relatives, friends, partners, and spouses could greatly affect how loved, respected, and valued they feel. While relationships with parents, siblings, close relatives, and friends initially hold an important place in individuals' lives during the development process, adolescence years include relationships with romantic partners as well.

Relationships with a romantic partner may include dating, engagement, marriage, cohabitation, and other arrangements (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). While these relationships could provide support, love, health, and well-being, they could also lead to serious problems (Antonucci et al., 2001). Therefore, understanding relationship satisfaction and related variables is important for supporting individuals' development. Romantic relationship satisfaction refers to the quality of a romantic relationship. Although there is no precise definition, it generally represents an individual's perception and evaluation of their current relationship status (Collins & Read, 1990). Studies indicate that satisfaction in romantic relationships is associated with variables such as emotional intelligence (Jardine, Vannier, & Voyer, 2022), age (Bühler, Krauss, & Orth, 2021), perspective-taking (Cahill, Malouff, Little, & Schutte, 2020), the big five personality traits (Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Schutte, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2010), attachment (Candel & Turliuc, 2019), and empathic accuracy (Sened, Lavidor, Lazarus, Bar-Kalifa, Rafaeli, & Ickes, 2017). Love is another variable that is considered to be related to satisfaction in romantic relationships.

It is challenging to make a precise definition of the concept of love. Although love has biological foundations (Buss, 2023; Fisher, 2004, 2016), individuals' experiences, impressions, expectations, and behaviors are often influenced by contextual conditions (Myers & Shuts, 2002), which is also relevant for the theoretical explanations of love. In the field of evolutionary psychology, the concept of love is intertwined with the mechanisms of mate selection, emphasizing the behavioral expressions of affection (Buss, 1989; 1995). Neuropsychological explanations propose that all birds and mammals are equipped with three distinct emotional/motivational systems: lust, attraction, and attachment (Fisher, 2004; 2006). Attachment theory posits that love relationships are associated with the emotional bonds formed between infants and their caregivers (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; 1994). Some theories of love include classifications. The first explanation for differences and similarities in individuals' understanding of love comes from Zick Rubin (1970). Rubin (1970) distinguishes between liking for a friend and love for a lover. Liking involves positive evaluation, perceived similarity, respect, and trust, while loving involves attachment, caring, and intimacy. Elaine Hatfield categorizes love into passionate and companionate love, both of which have cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. John A. Lee, whose perspective on love is the basis of this research, provided another categorization.

Lee (1974; 1988) defined three primary love styles in his theory, the Color Theory of Love, using a color analogy: passionate (eros), playful (ludus), and friendly (storge). He argued that their binary combination in different proportions gives rise to three secondary love styles: pragmatical (pragma), possessive (mania), and altruistic (agape). Lee believes that several other love styles combine various elements of the primary love styles in varying proportions. However, primary and secondary forms of love are the most encountered ones. According to Lee (1974; 1988), eros is characterized by strong emotions and usually begins with physical attraction. Individuals may list the physical characteristics they find attractive and sexual intimacy is important to them. They take risks in their relationships but avoid extremes. In ludus, individuals may view the relationship as a game, where the focus is on having fun and experiencing excitement. Just as individuals require specific strategies and skills when playing a game, the same applies to love relationships. If cheating can be done to win a game, cheating is also acceptable in love relationships. Ludic individuals may not be as passionate or committed in their relationships and may not demand commitment from their partner. The reason behind cheating is not related to sexuality. Instead, it is the individual's enjoyment of being able to engage in such behavior without getting caught. In storge, the bond grows gradually as partners share activities and interests. There is no set standard for an ideal partner. Sexuality is viewed as a form of self-disclosure and is typically expressed later in the relationship. Pragma emphasizes a pragmatic perspective. Individuals expect a positive and sustainable relationship based on certain criteria, such as social class, ethnicity, education level, income level, and religious beliefs. Passion and physical attraction are not considered.

Mania is characterized by intense positive and negative emotions. Individuals feel euphoric and happy when their beloved is with them but hopeless and unhappy when they are apart. When individuals' expectations for attention are not met, they may experience feelings of jealousy and insecurity. Although they may have significant issues, they cannot afford to separate. Agape is defined by strong emotions, patience, and perseverance. The lover prioritizes the well-being and happiness of their beloved above all else, accepting and loving them despite their flaws. They are generous and selfless in their relationships. Lee (1974) suggests that people's perception of love is influenced by their childhood experiences, socialization processes, lifestyle, and personality traits. Furthermore, as individuals' values and ideals evolve, so do their love styles. In addition to Lee, Robert J. Sternberg is another notable figure in the field of love studies.

In his Triangular Love Theory, Sternberg (1986, 1988, 1998) emphasizes the importance of intimacy, passion, and commitment as the basic components that define different love styles. According to Sternberg, the passion component relates to romance, physical attraction, and sexuality. The commitment component refers to the decision to love and remain dedicated to the partner to sustain the relationship. The intimacy component involves sharing, self-disclosure, and emotional support. Sternberg states that the ratio of these three components in a relationship determines eight different love styles: liking, passion, empty love, romantic love, companionate love, foolish love, consummate love, and no love. The perfect love is the love style in which intimacy, commitment, and passion are balanced. Everyone seeks consummate love, but it is difficult to achieve and maintain. For this reason, individuals strive for love that is closest to consummate. As Sternberg states, intimacy is a crucial element of love and can be considered one of the main determinants of satisfaction in romantic relationships.

As highlighted by the various definitions and measurement tools used to study intimacy, the concept of intimacy lacks clear boundaries in the field of psychology (Moss & Schwebel, 1993; Prager, 1994). Intimacy is discussed from such a broad perspective, which may be related to the diversity of individuals' experiences, differences in the perceptions and expressions of experiences, and cultural elements (Ercan, 2019). However, in all situations, intimacy is an important aspect of romantic relationships. For this reason, the execution of studies on intimacy is essential for the comprehension of individuals' romantic relationships and the characterization of these relationships.

The individuals' satisfaction with their relationships may be influenced by their love styles. Besides, as suggested by Sternberg (1986), the elements and ratios in a romantic relationship can affect the satisfaction obtained from it. Partners' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in the early stages of romantic relationships may predict their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors in the later stages of their relationships and perhaps in their marriages (Axinn & Thornton, 1993). Individuals' subjective well-being increases when they find satisfaction in their relationships (Das & Bapu, 2024; Demistas & Tezer, 2012; Tepeli Temiz & Elsharnouby, 2022); their satisfaction with life improves (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007; Yam, 2023; Yancey & Berglass, 1991); and health indicators are positively affected (Bookwala, 2005; Robles, Slatcher, Trombello, & McGinn, 2014). The opposite occurs when they are dissatisfied with the relationship. Therefore, research on this subject may provide clues for predicting potential problems in relationships and for identifying factors that could increase the risk of terminating the relationship (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). The primary objective of this study is to examine the hypothetical model positing that the love styles of university students predict relationship satisfaction both directly and through the level of intimacy in romantic relationships.

There are two basic hypotheses in the study:

- 1) Love styles significantly predict relationship satisfaction.
- 2) Intimacy has a mediating role between love styles and relationship satisfaction.

Figure 1 displays the hypothetical model developed to test these hypotheses.

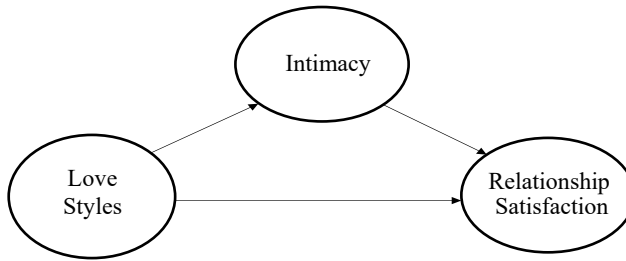


Figure 1. Hypothetical model

Method

Research Design

This study was designed using a correlational model to examine the mediating role of intimacy in the relationship between love styles and romantic relationship satisfaction among university students (Büyüköztürk et al., 2019). The research focused on relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable, love styles as the independent variable, and intimacy as the mediating variable in the relationship between love styles and romantic relationship satisfaction.

Study Group

The study group was selected using a convenience sampling technique, which involved including volunteers who were believed to possess specific characteristics under investigation (Johnson & Cristensen, 2019). Research data were collected from voluntary participants via an online form, which included 349 university students in the study. While 267 (76.5%) of the participants were women, 82 (23.5%) were men, and their ages ranged from 18 to 40 (Mean=23.39, SD=4.57). Their relationship status showed that 63% of the participants (N= 220) had a date, partner, or fiancée. Of all the participants, 33% (N=115) reported being separated from their partners and 4% (N=14) reported being married. The participants were asked about the number of romantic relationships they have had to date, which was found to range from 1 to 13 (Mean= 2.54, SD=2.23).

Research Instruments

The Love Attitudes Scale: Short form

The scale, originally developed by Hendrick et al. (1998), was designed to measure the six love styles suggested by Lee (1973). The scale was later adapted into Turkish by Büyüksahin and Hovardaoğlu (2004). The 24-item scale is responded on a 5-point Likert scale. Four to 20 points can be received for each love style in the scale. Higher scores in the sub-scales indicate that the characteristics of the love style relevant to the specific sub-scale are more prominent. Internal consistency was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha for the sub-scales in this study. The results were as follows: .80 for agape, .83 for storge, .72 for eros, .70 for pragma, .78 for ludus, and .75 for mania.

Intimacy Scale in Romantic Relationships

Ercan (2019) developed the scale to measure the level of intimacy in romantic relationships. The scale includes four sub-scales: self-disclosure, physical attraction, support, and trust. Each sub-scale consists of four items, making a total of 16 items on the scale. The 16-item scale is responded on a 4-point Likert scale. The total score to be obtained from the scale ranges from 16 to 64, with higher scores indicating more intimacy and lower scores indicating less intimacy. The internal consistency coefficient for the total score was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and was found to be .92 in this study.

Relationship Assessment Scale.

Hendrick (1988) developed the scale to measure romantic relationship satisfaction between individuals. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Curun (2001). Scores to be obtained from the scale range from 7 to 49, with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction within the relationship. In this

study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to evaluate the internal consistency of the scale, which was found to be .90.

Personal Information Form

The participants were asked to fill out the Personal Information Form by providing information regarding their gender, age, relationship status, and number of relationships.

Data Analysis

During the analysis phase, the distribution of the data was analyzed using the kurtosis and skewness values. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2012), these values should be within ± 1.5 . The kurtosis and skewness values calculated for the scores were found to meet this criterion (see Table 1), indicating that the scores demonstrate normal distribution. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the scores. Besides, structural equation modeling was used to test the hypothetical research model. In structural equation modeling, the mediating roles of intimacy were examined in the relationships between love styles and relationship satisfaction. When the model fit of the constructed structural equation model $\chi^2/df < .5$; CFI, GFI $> .90$ was analyzed; RMSEA $< .10$ was considered as a criterion (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012). The bootstrapping method (10,000 resampling) was preferred to examine the significance of the mediating role of intimacy in romantic relationships. For the mediation in the model to be considered significant, it was determined that the confidence intervals should not include zero (Hayes, 2013). The analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 28 and IBM AMOS 24.

Ethical Procedures

Before the study was conducted, all the participants were given an informed consent form and told that participation was on voluntary basis. The study followed the Declaration of Helsinki guidelines set out in 1975. Prior to the study, ethics committee approval was obtained from the institution where the corresponding author was affiliated (Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University).

Results

Table 1 displays the Pearson correlation coefficient values and descriptive statistics for the variables that were analyzed in the study.

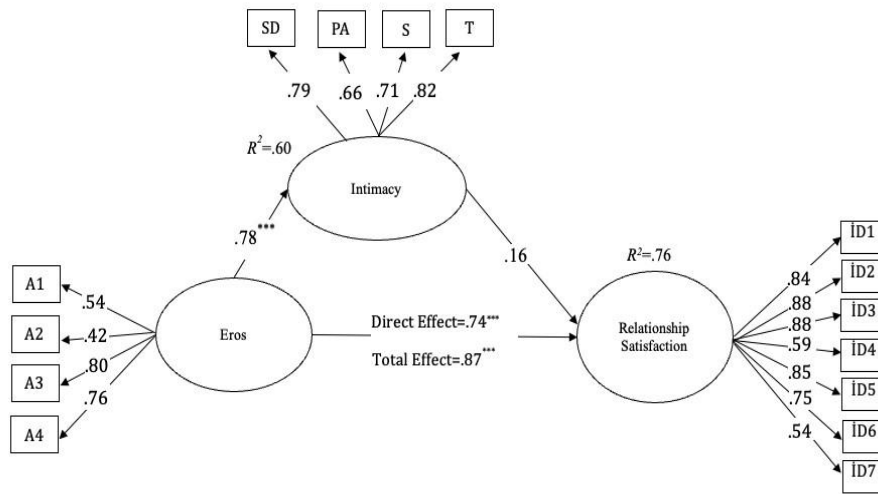
Table 1. *Pearson correlation coefficients and descriptive statistics for variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Eros	1.00							
2. Ludus	-.18***							
3. Storge	.35***	-.05						
4. Mania	.06	.18***	.01					
5. Agape	.38***	.02	.23***	.41***				
6. Pragma	.05	.11*	.11*	.11*	.08			
7. Intimacy	.62***	-.21***	.28***	-.04	.32***	-.02		
8. Relationship Satisfaction	.73***	-.15***	.30***	-.12*	.29***	-.04	.63***	
Mean	14.61	9.78	12.01	12.95	11.85	12.48	51.99	34.85
Standard Deviation	2.96	2.69	4.14	2.88	3.64	3.34	8.65	9.64
Kurtosis	-.34	-.28	-.58	-.54	-.58	-.49	.03	-.17
Skewness	-.24	.13	.12	.25	.12	-.15	-.67	-.71
Reliabilities	.72	.78	.83	.75	.80	.70	.92	.90

Note: $N = 349$.

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 1 demonstrates that significant relationships exist between eros, ludus, storge, and agape styles and intimacy and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships. However, the pragma love style does not show a significant relationship with either intimacy or relationship satisfaction. Additionally, the mania love style does not show a significant relationship with intimacy in romantic relationships. It is important to highlight the positive and significant correlation between intimacy and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships ($r = .63, p < .001$). The structural equation modeling findings, which include significant relationships among the variables in the hypothetical research model, are presented below. First, the model with eros, one of the primary love styles, was tested (Figure 2).



*** $p < .001$, SD: Self-disclosure, PA: Physical attraction, S: Support, T: Trust.

Figure 2. Findings Regarding the Model (Eros)

The model presented in Figure 2 exhibits goodness of fit indices within acceptable limits [$\chi^2 = 303.252, df = 87, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 3.61; GFI = .901; CFI = .928; RMSEA = .087$]. According to the model, eros style directly and positively predicts intimacy in romantic relationships ($\beta = .78, p < .001$) and relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .74, p < .001$). However, eros style does not seem to predict relationship satisfaction through intimacy in romantic relationships. In other words, the eros style does not have a significant indirect effect on relationship satisfaction. Therefore, intimacy in romantic relationships does not mediate the relationship between eros style and relationship satisfaction. Table 2 presents the confidence interval values.

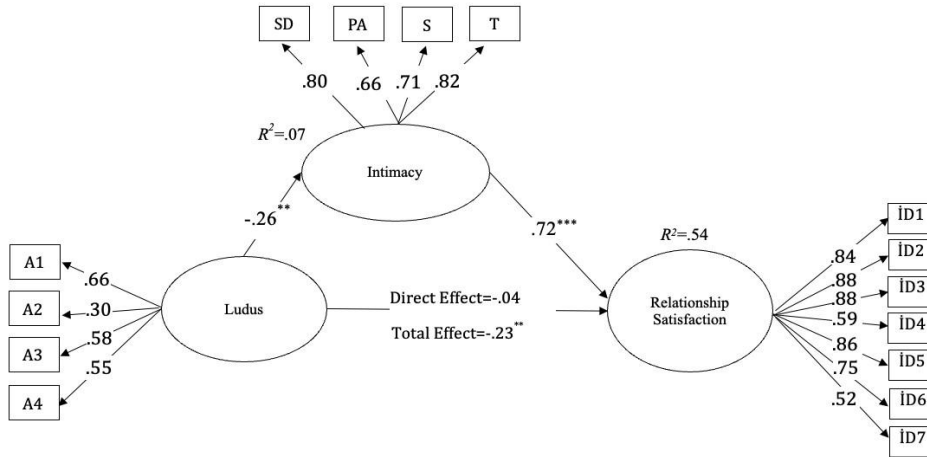
Table 2. Findings Regarding Mediation Analysis (Eros)

Pathway	B	S.E.	C.R.	Coefficient	CI Lower-bound	CI Upper-bound
Total Effect						
Eros → RS				.87***	.81	.91
Direct Effects						
Eros → RS	1.14	.15	.86	.74***	.58	.93
Eros → Int	1.35	.13	.54	.78***	.71	.84
Int → RS	.15	.07	.98	.16	-.04	.34
Indirect Effect						
Eros → Int → RS				.13	-.03	.26

*** $p < .001; N = 349$.

Note: CI: 95% Confidence Intervals; RS: Relationship Satisfaction; Int: Intimacy.

Figure 3 displays the results of the ludus style model, which is one form of love.



** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, SD: Self-disclosure, PA: Physical attraction, S: Support, T: Trust.

Figure 3. Findings Regarding the Model (Ludus)

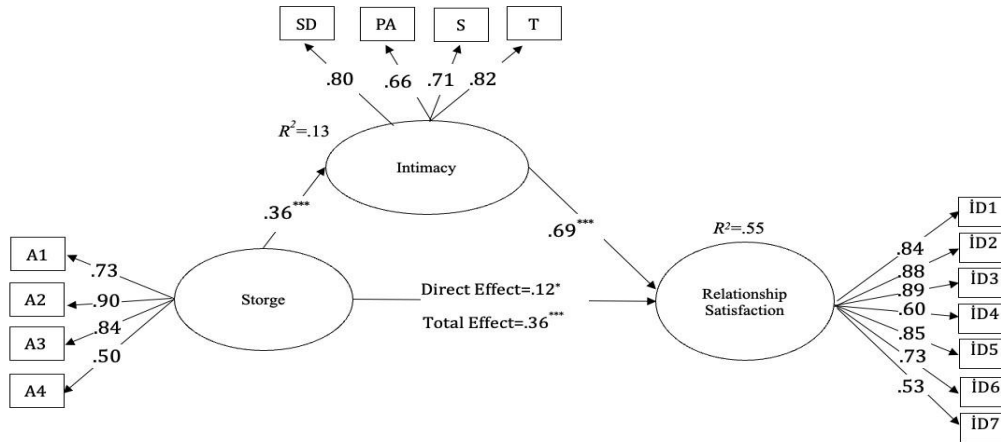
The model presented in Figure 3 has goodness of fit values that fall within acceptable limits [$\chi^2=273.514$, $df=85$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df=3.22$; GFI=.906; CFI=.927; RMSEA=.080]. Specifically, the ludus style seems to have a negative effect on intimacy in romantic relationships ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .01$). However, the ludus style does not seem to directly predict relationship satisfaction to a significant degree. Instead, the ludus style seems to affect relationship satisfaction indirectly through its effect on intimacy in romantic relationships. In other words, the ludus style has a significant indirect effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .01$). Thus, in romantic relationships, intimacy has a mediating role in the association between ludus style and relationship satisfaction. Table 3 presents the confidence interval values.

Table 3. Findings Regarding Mediation Analysis (Ludus)

Pathways	B	S.E.	C.R.	Coefficient	CL Lower-bound	CL Upper-bound
Total Effect						
Ludus → RS				-.23**	-.35	-.11
Direct Effects						
Ludus → RS	-.07	.11	.70	.04	-.14	.07
Ludus → Int	-.55	.17	3.28	-.26**	-.41	-.11
Int → RS	.64	.06	.83	.72***	.64	.80
Indirect Effect						
Ludus → Int → RS				-.19**	-.31	-.08

** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; $N = 349$.
 Note: CI: 95% Confidence Intervals; RS: Relationship Satisfaction; Int: Intimacy.

Figure 4 presents the results of the model created using storge, one of the forms of love.



* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$, SD: Self-disclosure, PA: Physical attraction, S: Support, T: Trust.

Figure 4. Findings Regarding the Model (Storge)

The model in Figure 4 has goodness of fit values that fall within acceptable limits [$\chi^2=262.848$, $df=87$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df=3.02$; $GFI=.906$; $CFI=.942$; $RMSEA=.076$]. According to the model, storge style has a direct and positive effect on intimacy in romantic relationships ($\beta=.36$, $p < .001$) and relationship satisfaction ($\beta=.12$, $p < .05$). It was also found that storge style affected relationship satisfaction through intimacy in romantic relationships, which means that the indirect effect of storge style on relationship satisfaction is significant ($\beta=.25$, $p < .001$). Hence, in romantic relationships, intimacy plays a mediating role in the association between the storge style and relationship satisfaction. Table 4 displays the confidence interval values.

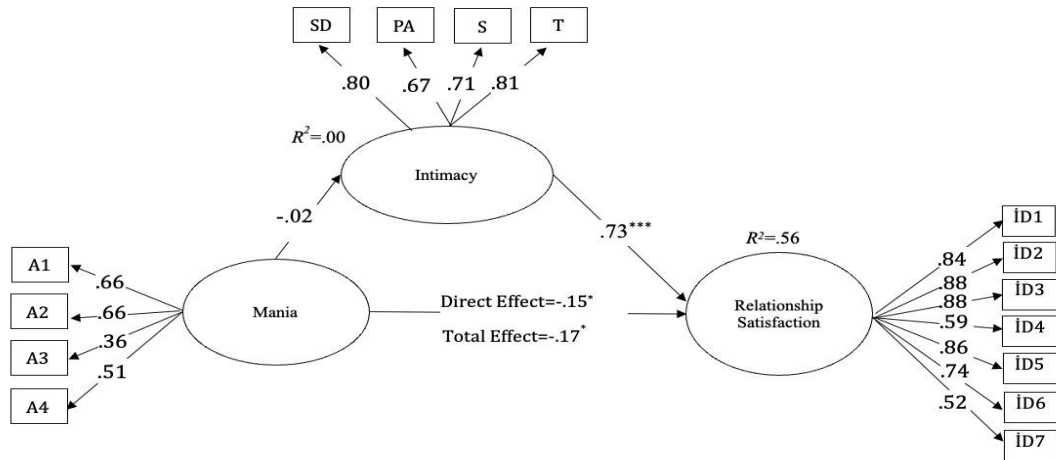
Table 4. Findings Regarding Mediation Analysis (Storge)

Pathways	B	S.E.	C.R.	Coefficient	CL Lower-bound	CL Upper-bound
Total Effect						
Storge → RS				.36***	.27	.45
Direct Effects						
Storge → RS	.27	.11	.35	.12*	.04	.20
Storge → Int	.92	.18	.05	.36***	.26	.45
Int → RS	.61	.06	0.47	.69***	.60	.77
Indirect Effect						
Storge → Int → RS				.25***	.18	.32

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$; $N = 349$.

Note: CI: 95% Confidence Intervals; RS: Relationship Satisfaction; Int: Intimacy.

Figure 5 presents the results of the model, which was created using mania as one of the love styles.



* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$, SD: Self-disclosure, PA: Physical attraction, S: Support, T: Trust.

Figure 5. Findings Regarding the Model (Mania)

The model in Figure 5 has goodness of fit values that fall within acceptable limits [$\chi^2=242.565$, $df=85$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df=2.85$; $GFI=.915$; $CFI=.937$; $RMSEA=.073$]. This model indicates that mania style does not predict intimacy in romantic relationships. However, the mania style exerts a direct, negative, and significant effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .05$). On the other hand, intimacy affects relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships directly, positively, and significantly ($\beta = .73$, $p < .001$). The findings suggest that intimacy in romantic relationships does not mediate the relationship between mania style and relationship satisfaction. Table 5 presents the confidence interval values.

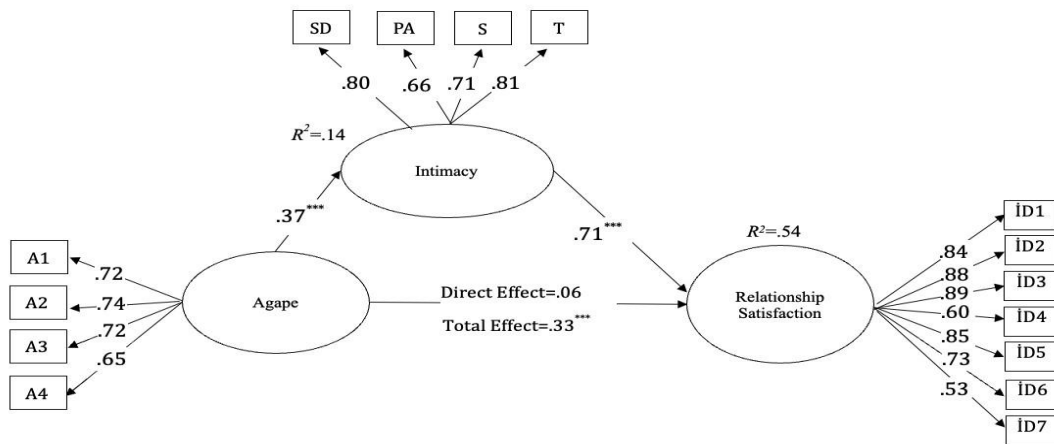
Table 5. Findings Regarding Mediation Analysis (Mania)

Pathways	B	S.E.	C. R.	Coefficient	CI Lower-bound	CI Upper-bound
Total Effect						
Mania → RS				-.17*	-.29	-.04
Direct Effects						
Mania → RS	-.34	.13	-2.69	-.15*	-.26	-.05
Mania → Int	-.05	.19	-.26	-.02	-.16	.12
Int → RS	.64	.06	11.22	.73***	.65	.79
Indirect Effect						
Mania → Int → RS				-.01	-.12	.09

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$; $N = 349$.

Note: CI: 95% Confidence Intervals; RS: Relationship Satisfaction; Int: Intimacy.

Figure 6 presents the findings of the model created using agape, one of the love styles.



*** $p < .001$, SD: Self-disclosure, PA: Physical attraction, S: Support, T: Trust.

Figure 6. Findings Regarding the Model (Agape)

The fit indices for the model depicted in Figure 6 fall within acceptable ranges [$\chi^2 = 269.950$, $df = 87$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 3.10$; $GFI = .905$; $CFI = .935$; $RMSEA = .078$]. The model indicates that agape style positively predicts intimacy in romantic relationships ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$). However, the agape style does not predict relationship satisfaction directly and significantly. Instead, the agape style seems to predict relationship satisfaction indirectly through intimacy in romantic relationships. In other words, the indirect effect of agape style on relationship satisfaction is significant ($\beta = .27$, $p < .001$). Thus, in romantic relationships, intimacy plays a mediating role in the association between the agape style and relationship satisfaction. Table 6 presents the confidence interval values.

Table 6. Findings Regarding Mediation Analysis (Agape)

Pathways	B	S.E.	C.R	Coefficient	CL Lower-bound	CL Upper-bound
Total Effect						
Agape → RS				.33***	.23	.42
Direct Effects						
Agape → RS	.11	.09	.19	.06	-.02	.15
Agape → Int	.73	.14	.33	.37***	.27	.47
Int → RS	.63	.06	.44	.71***	.62	.79
Indirect Effect						
Agape → Int → RS				.27***	.19	.35

*** $p < .001$; $N = 349$.

Note: CI: 95% Confidence Intervals; RS: Relationship Satisfaction; Int: Intimacy.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored whether university students' love styles could predict relationship satisfaction depending on the degree of intimacy in romantic relationships. The results indicate that while eros style and storge style have a positive direct effect on relationship satisfaction, mania style has a negative effect. In addition, intimacy serves as a mediator in the relationship between relationship satisfaction and the ludus, agape, and storge styles. It was found that love styles other than pragma could predict relationship satisfaction both directly and through the degree of intimacy in romantic relationships. The findings regarding the prediction of relationship satisfaction through intimacy in direct and romantic relationships by eros, ludus, storge, mania, and agape are discussed below.

The initial model showed that the eros style had a direct and positive effect on relationship satisfaction. However, it was found that intimacy did not mediate the prediction of relationship satisfaction. Previous studies also reported that eros style positively predicted relationship satisfaction (Beştav, 2007; Budak, 2011; Fricker & Moore, 2002; Gana, Saada, & Untas, 2013; Goodboy & Booth-Butterfield, 2009; Morrow, Clark, & Brock 1995; Rohmann, Führer, & Bierhoff, 2016; Türk & Yıldız, 2017; Uysal, 2016; Vedes, Hilpert, Nussbeck, Randall, Bodenmann, & Lind, 2016). The lack of a mediating effect of intimacy suggests that relationship satisfaction in eros style may be associated with strong emotions and physical attraction (Lee, 1974; 1988).

This study indicated that the ludus style did not directly predict relationship satisfaction in the second model tested. However, the data showed that intimacy had a full mediating effect in the prediction of relationship satisfaction. The participants' relationship satisfaction increased as their levels of ludus decreased, through their levels of intimacy. Previous studies found that ludus had a negative effect on relationship satisfaction (Beştav, 2007; Budak, 2011; Fricker & Moore, 2002; Türk & Yıldız, 2017; Uysal, 2016; Vedes et al., 2016). The finding that intimacy within the ludus style functions as a crucial mediator of relationship satisfaction is of utmost importance, representing a groundbreaking revelation in this area of study. In the ludus style, individuals perceive their relationship as a game or source of entertainment. This approach often entails having multiple partners at the same time and a lack of commitment to any specific relationship (Lee, 1974; 1988). These characteristics could have a detrimental effect on partners' ability to trust each other, communicate openly, and seek support, when necessary, thereby impeding the development of intimacy. It is worth noting that this love style is generally regarded as undesirable. According to Lee (1974; 1988), the ludus style involves viewing relationships as a game or entertainment tool, accepting the possibility of having multiple partners simultaneously and having a low commitment to the relationship. These characteristics are generally considered negative. This leads to low commitment to the relationship, which can negatively affect partners' ability to trust each other, open up to each other, and ask for support when needed. However, increasing intimacy in individuals with ludus may also improve low relationship satisfaction caused by ludus. In romantic relationships, intimacy can transform the negative effect of ludic love on relationship satisfaction. This transformation leads to the evolution of ludus style into other forms of love.

This study tested a third model and found that storge style had a positive effect on both relationship satisfaction and intimacy. Intimacy was also found to partially mediate the relationship between storge style and relationship satisfaction. Therefore, an increase in storge levels led to an increase in both relationship satisfaction and intimacy. Although Uysal (2016) found that storge did not predict relationship satisfaction, the findings of other studies (Beştav, 2007; Rohmann et al., 2016; Türk & Yıldız, 2017) support this result. Storge style is characterized by the slow development of relationships, shared interests and activities, and stability (Lee, 1974; 1988). While passion may not be a prominent feature of this love style, relationship satisfaction could still be influenced by factors such as similarity and closeness. These factors can aid in individuals' understanding of each other and in resolving conflicts.

The fourth model test concluded that mania style has a direct and negative effect on relationship satisfaction. The analysis indicated that intimacy did not act as a mediator in the relationship between the two variables. This discovery aligns with prior research indicating that a mania style is inversely correlated with relationship satisfaction. (Budak, 2011; Rohmann et al., 2016). However, some studies suggest that mania does not predict relationship satisfaction (Beştav, 2007), or it predicts it positively (Uysal, 2016). Mania involves showing intense attention to the lover and demanding the same level of attention in return. When this expectation is not met, feelings of jealousy and insecurity may arise. Individuals may experience fear of losing their partner and may be reluctant to end the relationship even if it fails to meet their expectations. The presence of these adverse attributes suggests that a manic interpersonal style is anticipated to yield a detrimental effect on the level of satisfaction within relationships. Consequently, it can be inferred that the results of this study are consistent with the foundational theoretical frameworks. Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that the research results may exhibit nuances contingent upon the specific attributes of the demographic cohorts from which the data were sourced. It is noteworthy that individuals exhibiting manic traits typically experience heightened relationship contentment when paired with partners exemplifying altruistic tendencies.

The last model tested in this study concluded that the agape style did not directly predict relationship satisfaction. However, intimacy had a full mediating effect on predicting relationship satisfaction. As participants' agape levels increase, their relationship satisfaction increases through their levels of intimacy. The literature presents conflicting findings regarding the relationship between agape style and relationship satisfaction. While some studies suggested a positive correlation (Budak, 2011; Rohman et al., 2016; Uysal, 2016; Vedes et al., 2016), others found no such correlation (Beştav, 2007). Agapic lovers prioritize the well-being and happiness of their partners, exhibiting selflessness and generosity without expecting anything in return (Lee, 1974; 1988). These characteristics serve an important function in establishing intimacy with partners and may lead to increased satisfaction in romantic relationships.

This study found that only the pragma style did not directly predict relationship satisfaction or mediate intimacy. This discovery aligns with prior studies (Beştav, 2007; Budak, 2011; Rohman et al., 2016; Taghavi Dinani et al., 2014; Uysal 2016). Pragma is dominated by a pragmatic perspective, where individuals expect partners to meet certain criteria (Lee, 1974; 1988). It may be argued that this feature, which is mostly encountered in regulated relationships, does not meet the characteristics that individuals seek to obtain satisfaction from their relationships in today's conditions. However, if an arranged relationship persists, intimacy can be established, and relationship satisfaction may increase. However, the nature of this type of love does not support the establishment of intimacy in the early stages of a relationship. Therefore, considering the developmental characteristics of the research group, the possibility of not being part of a long-standing arranged relationship with no built intimacy may have played a role in the emergence of this result. In addition, pragma style did not predict relationship satisfaction, which may be an indication that collectivist values and arranged relationships are not idealized among undergraduate students.

Finally, some recommendations could be given to researchers and practitioners for future studies. Firstly, the study could be conducted with a distinction between actors and partners. Secondly, data could be collected from a wider age range, and comparisons could be made considering both relationship duration and relationship status. Thirdly, cross-cultural comparison studies could be conducted to reveal similarities and differences between cultures. Lastly, the existing information unit could be used in counseling and couple therapies before marriage.

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