

**ATTACHMENT AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT:
THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INTERPERSONAL
EMOTION REGULATION**

FERAY TARIMTAY

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ATTACHMENT AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF
INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION



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Name/ Last Name of the Student: Feray Tarımtay

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Assist. Prof. Burak KÜNTAY
Graduate School Director

I certify that this thesis meets all requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.



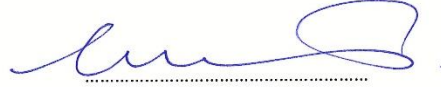
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Program Coordinator

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and we find it fully adequate in scope, quality and content, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts

Examining Committee Members

Signature

Thesis Supervisor
Assist. Prof. Dr. Ayşe Meltem Budak



Member
Assist. Prof. Dr. Başak Türküler Aka



Member
Assist. Prof. Dr. Burak Doğruyol



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ABSTRACT

ATTACHMENT AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION

Tarımtay, Feray

M.A., Clinical Psychology

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Ayşe Meltem Üstündağ Budak

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The present study aimed to investigate the mediating role of interpersonal emotion regulation in the relationship between attachment styles (i.e., attachment anxiety and avoidance) and marital adjustment. The sample of the current study consisted of 123 married couples (123 women, 123 men) aged between 23 and 72 ($M = 39.25$, $SD = 11.84$). The participants completed three scales namely, Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R), Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (IERQ) and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). In the study, a mediation analysis was conducted by using bootstrapped multivariate extension of the INDIRECT test of mediation that measures total, direct and indirect effects of independent variable (i.e., attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) on dependent variable (i.e., marital adjustment) through a proposed mediator (i.e., interpersonal emotion regulation). According to the results, soothing and

perspective taking partially mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment. Moreover, soothing also partially mediated the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment. The findings, contributions and limitations of the present study were discussed in the light of the literature and suggestions for future research were provided.

Key words: marital adjustment, attachment styles, interpersonal emotion regulation

ÖZ

BAĞLANMA VE EVLİLİK UYUMU: KİŞİLERARASI DUYGU DÜZENLEMENİN

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Tarımtay, Feray

Yüksek Lisans, Klinik Psikoloji

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, kişilerarası duygu düzenlemenin, bağlanma stilleri (kaygılı ve kaçınmalı bağlanma) ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkideki aracı rolünü incelemektir. Çalışmanın örneklemini yaşları 23 ve 73 arasında olan 123 evli çift (123 kadın, 123 erkek) oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcılar sırasıyla Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri II, Kişilerarası Duygu Düzenleme Ölçeği ve Çiftler Uyum Ölçeği'ni tamamlamıştır. Bu çalışmada kullanılan aracılık analizinde bootstrapping yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bağımsız değişkenin (kaygılı bağlanma ve kaçınmalı bağlanma), bağımlı değişken (evlilik uyumu) üzerindeki rolüne, aracı değişken (kişilerarası duygu düzenleme) ile bakılmıştır. Bulgulara göre, yatıştırma ve bakış açısı almanın, kaygılı bağlanma ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki

ilişkide kısmi aracı rolü oynadığı bulunmuştur. Buna ek olarak, yatıştırmanın, kaçınmalı bağlanma ve evlilik uyumu arasında da kısmi aracı rolü oynadığı ortaya konmuştur. Çalışmanın bulguları, katkıları ve sınırlılıkları literatür kapsamında değerlendirilmiş, gelecek çalışmalara yönelik öneriler tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: evlilik uyumu, bağlanma stilleri, kişilerarası duygu düzenleme

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested that forming and sustaining stable and close relationships is one the basic needs of human beings (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Marriage has been considered as the most significant and primary human relationship since it is a foundation that provides a family relationship that contributes to the next generation (Larson & Holman, 1994). Ersanlı (1990) suggested that family is the foundation of the society that is universal and it is a social institution in which man and woman marry each other in conformity with social values, traditions and the law. Marriage has important contributions for individuals' material and moral satisfaction, to do their duties, and live as individuals who are adapted to their environment and to become individuals who are beneficial to the society (Çelik, 2006).

It has been reported that marriage provides better physical and mental health (Waite & Gallagher, 2000), connectedness and intimacy (Laurenceau, Barrett, & Rovine, 2005) for individuals. However, even though benefits of marriage for the couples are well established, marriage is not always characterized by enjoyment. Even though marriage provides people joy and gratification at the beginning, after a while,

most people decide to end it with accompanying feelings of hopelessness and disappointment (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). A study conducted by Hawkins and Booth (2005) suggested that maintaining an unhappy marriage is related to lower levels of happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem and higher levels of psychological distress. Apart from making couples unhappy and dissatisfied with their lives, marital problems also pave the way for children behavior problems (Grych & Fincham, 1990). For these reasons, even though marital adjustment is a subject that has been extensively focused on since 1990s (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000), it is crucial to identify different factors that might be related with the concept. Therefore, it is important to investigate the factors related with marital adjustment.

Previous studies demonstrated the importance of adult attachment styles in romantic relationships and marriage (Butzer & Campbell, 2008; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Simpson, 1990). Similarly, emotion regulation strategies among couples have been previously investigated in romantic relationships (Richards, Butler & Gross, 2003; Righetti, Balliet, Visserman & Hofmann, 2015) and marriage (Bloch & Haase, 2013). However, the relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation in relation to attachment and marital adjustment has never been studied before. Interpersonal emotion regulation is closely related with social support. Social support has been found to be related with attachment styles and marital adjustment previously. Therefore, it was expected to find a relationship between attachment styles and interpersonal emotion regulation and marital adjustment. Thus, the subject of this study is to investigate the relationship between attachment styles, interpersonal emotion regulation with marital adjustment. Examining the role of interpersonal

emotion regulation in marital relationships will contribute to the literature and clinical practice.

Research questions include;

1. Is there a relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation and attachment styles of married couples?
2. Is there a relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation and marital adjustment?
3. Does interpersonal emotion regulation have a mediating role in the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment?

1.1. Marital Adjustment

Marital adjustment is a construct that has a significant position in the investigation of marriage and family functioning (Spanier, 1976). Even though considerable number of studies examined variables related with marital quality and marital adjustment in the literature, conceptualization of the concept has been unclear due to the discrepancy between definitions. The incongruity in the terminology results from several numbers of elements which are associated with the term such as social, individual and demographic variables (Glenn, 1990). Terms that can be used to refer marital quality are “marital satisfaction”, “marital happiness”, “marital adjustment” (Heyman, Sayers & Bellack, 1994).

Lively (1969) called attention to ambiguity of definition of terms in the area of marital interaction and she is the first researcher who defined marital happiness, marital success and marital adjustment separately. Lively (1969) defined marital adjustment as a term that indicates a relationship which continuously develops between husband and wife and depends on the ongoing relationship between them. In addition, Hoult (1969) described marital adjustment as a complex term that includes factors such as spouses' amount of conflict and shared activities that are related to marriage's happiness and success (as cited in Fıfılođlu & Demir, 2000). Furthermore, Spanier (1976) emphasized the nature of marital adjustment as a changing process rather than a stable condition. He proposed that adjustment between partners depends on their compatibility on important subjects related to their relationship along with the extent of dissimilarities that would lead problems. Spanier and Cole (1976) criticized other definitions as being limited because of focusing on specific time rather than a process. In addition, they proposed that marital adjustment is a common term that includes marital satisfaction and happiness (Spanier & Cole, 1976). Similarly, marital adjustment can be said to involve extensive features of the relationship in which high levels of marital adjustment contain marital happiness, marital satisfaction and satisfactory communication between the partners (Spanier & Lewis, 1980).

It can be proposed that satisfaction and adjustment can be considered as interchangeable terms (Özen, 2012). In a study conducted by Heyman, Sayers and Bellack (1994), scales that measure marital adjustment and marital satisfaction were compared and results revealed very strong correlation between them. Accordingly, marital satisfaction and marital adjustment are essentially similar constructs that refer to the quality of marriage. Therefore, considering different concepts that refer to

marital quality, in the present study, the terms marital adjustment and satisfaction were used in the same way to refer the level of the happiness derived from the marriage.

Robinson and Blanton (1993) stated that understanding, friendship, sharing activities and commitment that involve persistence, open-mindedness and toleration between couples constitute a gratifying relationship. They further suggested that the power of long lasting marriages lays in those ingredients of gratifying relationship. They reported that intimacy was the main element for the couples. Further, communication between them is a crucial factor that helps to preserve and improve couples' connectedness. In addition, Ersanlı (1990) described successful marriage as a synthesis of maturity, sharing, harmony and also acceptance of responsibilities in the face of negative conditions.

Marital adjustment draws an outstanding attention for specifying the components that are associated with family dysfunction. The reason for that attention is because marital adjustment has been increasingly recognized as an important factor that plays a mediating role in adaptive or deficit functioning in other topics (Fıfılođlu & Demir, 2000). Therefore, it is crucial to identify different factors that are related with couples' happiness related to their marriage.

As previously mentioned, investigating the factors that contribute to the quality of marriage has been crucial. In the literature, individual and relationship variables associated with marital quality has been numerously investigated. In terms of the relationship between some demographic factors and marital adjustment, length of marriage has been repeatedly taken into consideration and studies provided conflicting

results. On the one hand, Anderson, Russel & Schumm (1983) found that a curvilinear course of marital quality that which suggests that couples tend to be more satisfied with their relationship in the early years of marriage, and then their satisfaction levels tend to decrease after couples have children. Afterwards, satisfaction levels tend to improve by the time couples get older. In other words, several studies reported that older couples have higher levels of marital adjustment compared to middle-aged couples. Several other studies supported this view (Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman, 1993; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007). On the other hand, there are some studies that do not support this view and reported that duration of marriage is not associated with marital adjustment (Feeney, 1994). In addition, Glenn (1998) found that marital satisfaction starts to decrease during the first ten years of marriage. In addition, the author reported that it tends to continue to decrease. Consequently, results regarding the relationship between length of the marriage and marital adjustment are conflictual.

Apart from age of couples, gender has been identified as an important variable that is related with marital adjustment. It has been previously suggested that women experience significantly less marital satisfaction compared to men (Fowers, 1991; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007; Rogers & Amato, 2000) and men have much more advantages than women in marriage (Bernard, 1972; as cited in Jackson, Miller, Oka & Henry, 2014) and many studies supported this view (Rhyne, 1981; Feeney, 1994; Özmen & Atik, 2010). On the other hand, some studies demonstrated that there are no differences in wives and husbands' marital satisfaction (Kurdek, 1995; Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman, 1993). In the same way, a meta-analysis conducted by Jackson, Miller, Oka and Henry (2014) found no gender differences in marital

satisfaction and researchers suggested that man and women experience different obstacles in marriage and those obstacles influence marital happiness in a similar way.

In addition to some demographic variables, marital adjustment has been found to be significantly associated with dysfunctional relationship beliefs and sex role (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988), maladaptive attributions (Bradbury, Beach, Fincham, & Nelson, 1996), communication skills (Litzinger & Gordon, 2005), depressive symptoms (Kurdek, 1998), marital locus of control (Myers & Booth, 1999), life stressors and transitions (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000) and personality traits (Gattis, Berns, Simpson & Christensen 2004). In addition, marital problems were found to influence parenting behavior and children's development (Belsky, 1981). In addition, results of a longitudinal study conducted by Dush, Taylor & Kroeger (2008) revealed that couples who have higher marital happiness reported much less decrease in life happiness compared to couples who have lower marital happiness. Numerous studies proved the importance of sustaining a happy marriage for the couples. Another crucial variable that is related with individuals' characteristics that is significantly associated with marital quality is attachment styles (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000). Therefore, in the next section, attachment theory and its association with marital adjustment will be mentioned.

1.2. Attachment Theory

Bowlby's attachment theory was different from traditional psychoanalytic and social learning theories in a way that does not accept the idea that the tie between mother and the infant develops only because the mother fulfills the infant's hunger

needs (Cassidy, 2008). His theory began to develop from the time when he worked with his colleague James Robertson and examined children who experienced extreme distress by the time they were detached from their mother despite of other people taking care of them (Cassidy, 2008). Bowlby (1988) acknowledges the significance of communication between the baby and the caregiver and gives priority the emotional bond between them.

Bowlby (1988) defined attachment system as containing any kind of behavior that results from keeping some other individual close who is considered as stronger and more capable of dealing with the world. According to him, sustaining proximity to attachment figures is a natural tendency that is evolved with respect to being vulnerable and dependent on caregivers since infants are not able to protect themselves from threats of the outside world. In other words, maintaining proximity is performed in order to maintain the perception of feeling safe (Sroufe & Waters, 1977). According to Bowlby (1988), human has a tendency to explore their surroundings and desire to be with other people which are incompatible with attachment behavior. However, he indicated that at times of experiencing distress, tiredness or facing anything that is frightful, the absence and unavailability of mother can trigger attachment system. By the time it has been triggered, infant does not want to explore (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). Apart from those times, attachment behavior is apparent to a lesser extent.

There are individual differences in attachment behavioral system as a consequence of different interactions with attachment figures. Bowlby (1973) suggested that the interaction with available and sensitive caregivers at stressful times lead attachment system to operate in a functional way which promotes to developing

an enduring sense of security for the child. On the other hand, if the caregiver is not available in times of need and does not pay attention to the child's proximity seeking signals, the child is enabled to achieve a sense of security. Consequently, the child develops strategies that are called secondary attachment strategies aimed to decrease the distress other than performing proximity seeking behavior. Those secondary strategies are categorized as anxiety and avoidance (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005).

Bowlby (1958) specified five behaviors that he called "instinctual responses" which represent attachment behavior as recognizable behavioral forms. Those behaviors include sucking, clinging, following, crying and smiling and according to him, those behaviors connect the child to the mother. It has been suggested that all of those different behaviors are aimed at maintaining the proximity between the caregiver (Sroufe & Waters, 1977) and those behaviors were called as primary strategy that are aimed to increase feelings of security (Bretherton, 1992). If proximity seeking behaviors does not alleviate distress and establish sense of comfort and security, another approach that are aimed to decrease the distress level are labelled as secondary strategies: hyper-activation and deactivation (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). Hyper-activation strategies resemble "fight" response as a consequence of inconsistent behaviors performed by the attachment figure. By using this strategy, the infant sustains proximity maintaining attempts at an extreme level that aims to solicit the caregiver's attention (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). On the other hand, deactivation strategies resemble "flight" response to unavailable and unresponsive attachment figure. By using this strategy, the infant does not continue to maintain the proximity and deals with the stress alone (Cassidy, 2008; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). In this

way, the child prevents possible future frustration and distress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005).

Attachment styles demonstrate an internal working model which is primarily accessed by the individual either in a particular relationship or also in other relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Those internal working models closely affect personality formation and behaviors in social contexts (Simpson, Rholes & Philips, 1996). Accordingly, on the basis of Bowlby's theory, Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Walls (1978) initially categorized attachment patterns. They classified those patterns as a consequence of their observations based on children's responses to being separated from their mother and after the reunion (as cited in Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Following the study, they defined three attachment patterns as secure, avoidant and anxious/ambivalent. It has been found that infants were inclined to be securely attached whose mothers were responsive to their needs. On the other hand, infants tend to display insecure attachment patterns whose mothers were not good at meeting their needs (Bretherton, 1992). Those differences result from internal working models of attachment. In the following section, the correspondence between attachment to parent and attachment to romantic partners will be mentioned.

1.2.1. Adult Attachment Styles

People construct beliefs about themselves and the nature of relationships as a consequence of their personal and interpersonal experiences. Furthermore, those experiences form internal working models which organize their behaviors, judgments

and feelings in their relationships (Collins, 1996). As Bowlby (1988) suggested, even though early childhood is the time when attachment behavior is the most apparent, it can be detected from the beginning to the end of life, particularly during stressful times. In other words, despite of being mature and independent adults, people look for attachment figures particularly at times of threat, suffering, feeling lonesome and depressed (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2014).

Hazan & Shaver (1987) are the first researchers who applied attachment theory to romantic relationships. Results of their study showed that individuals who display secure attachment described their romantic life as affectionate, joyful. Further, those people were unsuspecting about their partners. On the other hand, individuals who display insecure attachment patterns identified their romantic relationships with feelings of jealousy, emotional imbalance and wish for retaliation. Overall, it has been demonstrated that individuals who have different attachment patterns perceive and experience romantic love differently and have different opinions about their feelings of being worthy of love. Similarly, they have different opinions about whether their partners will be there for them or not, when they are needed.

Based on experiences with attachment figures, individuals develop particular view toward themselves and also toward others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Individuals with secure attachment have positive model of self and believe that they are worthy of love (Cassidy, 2000). They also have a positive model of others in which they view other people as available and caring in times of need styles (Cassidy, 2000). On the other hand, anxious individuals have negative model of self in which they believe that they are not worthy of love (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). In addition,

they view others as unresponsive to the needs. Furthermore, avoidant individuals have negative model of others do not perceive others as caring and responsive.

Furthermore, different than Hazan and Shaver's model (1987), Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991) proposed that it was more suitable to categorize attachment styles with a two-dimensional model which are based on the internal model of self and internal working model of others. According to their model, representation of self was characterized by anxiety whereas representation of others was characterized avoidance. Low scores on anxiety and avoidance dimensions represent secure attachment. Sense of security is promoted by interacting with available and responsive attachment figures as a consequence of forming positive model of self and others (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2014). On the other hand, unavailable and insensitive attachment figures promote negative view of self and others that leads to insecure attachment patterns. High scores on both dimensions represent fearful attachment while high score in one dimension represents either preoccupied or dismissive attachment patterns.

According to Mikulincer and Shaver (2014), anxiously attached individuals are concerned about their partners' availability at times they need them. In addition to that, avoidant individuals have doubts about their partners' good intentions and make an effort to be self-sufficient, independent from their partners and detach themselves emotionally.

Differences in attachment styles in relation to gender have been investigated to a great extent. Several studies displayed no differences related with gender (Hazan &

Shaver, 1987; Shi, 2003). On the other hand, several studies revealed gender differences and suggested that men tend to have avoidant attachment compared to women (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998). In line with these studies, a meta-analysis conducted by Del Giudice (2011) aimed to investigate gender differences in relation to attachment patterns demonstrated that men tend to display higher levels of avoidant attachment patterns while displaying lower levels of anxiety compared to women.

In terms of gender differences of attachment patterns and relationship quality, it has been offered that anxious attachment which has been characterized with behaviors such as desire of being excessively close and making excessive amount of requests are stereotypes of women's behaviors (Feeney, 1994). Thus, anxious attachment style has been offered as not harmful when women display those behaviors. On the other hand, since it is not compatible with traditional behavior of men, anxious attachment has been considered as harmful for the quality of marriage (Feeney, 1994). Furthermore, it has been reported that there is a strong negative relationship between men's anxiety and their satisfaction with the relationship which has been explained with the significance of being comfortable with intimacy with men's relationship quality (Feeney, 1994).

In addition, to gender, duration of marriage has been found to be related with attachment styles. Feeney (1994) found that couples were less anxious if they were married for more than twenty years compared to couples married up to ten years.

Apart from gender and length of marriage, it has been demonstrated that attachment patterns are associated with self-esteem (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney &

Noller, 1990), negative affectivity (Davila, Bradbury, & Fincham, 1998), conflict resolution styles (Marchand, 2004), psychological distress and social support (Meyers & Landsberger, 2002) and sexual satisfaction (Butzer & Campbell, 2008).

Even though the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment has been well established, the connection between them has not been clearly explained. This lack of comprehension has been explained with individual variables resulted from the nature of the relationship between attachment figure (Martins, Canavarro & Moreira, 2015).

1.2.2. Attachment Styles and Marital Adjustment

As stated earlier, experimental studies demonstrated that differences in the internal working models incline individuals to make different explanations about people and events (Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2006; Collins, 1996). Correspondingly, internal working models of attachment play a significant role in marital relationships.

In the literature, the studies about adult attachment patterns and romantic relationships consistently showed that securely attached individuals have higher relationship satisfaction/marital satisfaction compared to anxious and avoidant individuals (Brennan & Shaver, 1995, Feeney, 1994; 1999; Feeney, Noller, and Callan, 1994; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Simpson, 1990). On the other hand, insecure attachment is associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction (Collins & Feeney, 2004). As a result of overly focusing negative aspects of the

partners' behaviors, anxious individuals cannot interpret their partners' behaviors in a positive way, so their relationship satisfaction is decreased (Collins, Ford, Guichard & Allard, 2006).

Furthermore, it has been proposed that individuals match based on their attachment styles. Feeney (1994) found that individuals with secure attachment were likely to match securely attached individuals. In addition, it has been suggested that the interaction between couples' attachment styles might predict relationship satisfaction (Feeney, 1994). Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) found that anxious women matched with secure or avoidant men are likely to have a long lasting relationship.

Even though Bowlby did not directly focus on the emotion, essence of the attachment theory is based on how humans undergo, manifest and modulate their emotions such as anger, anxiety and distress (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2007). In the next section, emotion regulation which is another variable that is closely related with attachment theory and has a significant role in marital relationships will be discussed.

1.3. Interpersonal Emotion Regulation

Attachment theory has significant implications regarding intrapersonal regulation of emotions and interpersonal regulation of emotions. Intrapersonal emotion regulation is mainly based on the processes in which individuals determine the emotions they have, control the timing of them and the way they experience and manifest those emotions (Gross, 1998b). Those processes may occur spontaneously or

people may manipulate them. Individuals need to monitor and manage their emotions, especially negative ones during social interactions in order to sustain happy and healthy relationships. Otherwise, not being able to manage their negative emotions would result in experiencing interpersonal problems (Simpson, Hughes & Synder, 2006). Therefore, common aims of emotion regulation capture individuals' attempt to reduce negative emotions and improve positive ones (Gross, 1998b).

According to Gross' intrapersonal emotion regulation model (1998a, 1999, 2001), there are two main strategies: antecedent-focused and response-focused emotion regulation strategies. Antecedent-focused strategies capture the things individuals do before experiencing an emotion fully and before reacting to it, modifying behavior and physiological response. Cognitive reappraisal is an antecedent-focused strategy that aims to reassess the situation in order to reduce the impact of the emotion. On the other hand, response-focused strategies capture the things individuals do after an emotion is about to manifest itself and an individual starts to behave accordingly (Gross, 2001). Suppression is a response-focused strategy that aims to inhibit the behavior that is emotionally charged. Research suggests that reappraisal is more adaptive emotion regulation strategy compared with suppression and related with better social functioning and well-being (John & Gross, 2004). Research about antecedent and response-focused strategies suggested that antecedent-focused strategies seem to be more adaptive than response-focused strategies (Gross, 1998b).

Even though emotion regulation is a subject of research that has become the focus of numerous studies in current psychology literature, interpersonal regulation of emotions has been a neglected area. Studies generally focused on intrapersonal

emotion regulation rather than interpersonal emotion regulation. The proposed model of emotion regulation by Gross (2001) captures intrapersonal emotion regulation processes. Nevertheless, Bowlby (1982) proposed in his attachment theory that providing support and being available in times of need is a main aspect of interpersonal emotion regulation (as cited in Monin, 2016). Despite of the general tendency to study emotion regulation as an individual variable, researchers started to recognize the significance of interpersonal relationships in regulating emotions by providing comfort, support and empathy (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003). Due to the fact that people generally prefer to seek help from others in order to interpret and deal with their emotions, interpersonal emotion regulation is an important construct that should be considered (Zaki & Williams, 2013).

In spite of the significant influence of Gross' process model of emotion regulation, there is a conflictive perspective regarding the model. For instance, Hoffman (2014) criticizes the model's aspect of excessively drawing attention into intrapersonal processes and conveying an idea that reappraisal is healthy and adaptive whereas suppression is detrimental for individuals and social relationships. However, the researcher signifies that in some contexts, suppression might be necessary and healthy form of regulation when it comes to interpersonal relationships. He emphasized the significance of interpersonal processes in regulation of emotions by considering developmental literature and highlights the significance of the way caregivers regulate both child's and her emotions, the way she communicates with the child (Eisenberg, Spinrad & Eggum, 2010) to the development of emotion regulation.

Interpersonal emotion regulation has been proposed as a construct that displays a mechanism in social support (Marroquin, 2011). Zaki and Williams (2013) offered an interpersonal emotion regulation model and considered social support, providing empathy, helping others to repair from negative states as parts of interpersonal emotion regulation and suggested that such a model that captures all of them. They conceptualized interpersonal emotion regulation as a concept that contain social relations providing support (Bolger & Eckenrode, 1991), individuals' wish for sharing their emotions with other people in order to get support and comfort (Rime, 2009) and being compassionate towards others and affecting their emotional states (Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010). They categorized interpersonal emotion regulation as either intrinsic or extrinsic. In intrinsic interpersonal emotion regulation, a person aims to get in touch with others in to manage his or her negative experience. In addition, in extrinsic interpersonal emotion regulation, a person aims to modulate another people's experience. In the present study, the scale developed by Hofmann, Carpenter and Curtiss (2016) that measure intrinsic aspect of interpersonal emotion regulation was used.

Interpersonal emotion regulation can be divided into four factors as enhancing positive affect, perspective taking, soothing and social modeling. Enhancing positive affect involves individuals' disposition to use others in order to have more positive feelings such as happiness and pleasure. Perspective taking describes individuals' tendency to search for others who would remind them sometimes things can be worse also for other people and they should not be concerned. Soothing can be characterized as looking for other people to alleviate negative emotions and facilitate understanding.

Finally, social modeling includes observing other people dealing with similar condition.

What makes interpersonal emotion regulation an effective mechanism to regulate individuals' emotions is related to getting a message from others that they are safe and they can reappraise the situation causing strong affect (Zaki & Williams, 2013). Additionally, only sharing own emotions and experiences with others helps to connect people and provides a belief that they are able to get support in the future. This regulating mechanism does not require altering the meaning of the situation. Zaki and Williams (2013) proposed that this part of interpersonal emotion regulation corresponds to Rime's (2009) social sharing of emotions. Marrequin (2011) proposed a framework that emphasizes the role of interpersonal emotion regulation with the relationship between depression and social support. The researcher called attention to contributions of other people in reappraisal process for depressed people. Furthermore, Hoffman (2014) developed an interpersonal emotion regulation model with mood and anxiety disorders and suggested interpersonal regulation strategies might be adaptive or detrimental depending on the role in the perpetuation of the problem.

Zaki and Williams (2013) draw attention to study interpersonal emotion regulation in different areas because of its connection to different disciplines. In the following sections, possible associations of interpersonal emotion regulation, attachment styles and marital adjustment will be mentioned.

1.3.1. Interpersonal Emotion Regulation and Attachment

Even though attachment theory originates from other people's reactions to one's signals and needs, it provides a significant framework to understand one's reactions to others as well (Monin, 2016). Attachment theory explains individual differences in interpersonal relationships and support seeking. In this sense, in accordance to their internal working models, secure and insecurely attached people bear no resemblance to each other in processing information related to apprehending and using supportive behaviors of others (Collins & Feeney, 2004). Concordantly, individuals who are securely attached are inclined to ask for and obtain more social support compared to insecurely attached people (Meyers & Landsberger, 2002) and they tend to employ social support as a mechanism that helps them to cope with negative experiences. On the other hand, avoidant individuals are less likely to seek support during stressful experiences (Collins & Feeney, 2000) as a result negative perception of others (Collins & Feeney, 2004). Since they strive to maintain distance from others and act self-sufficient, seeking support at stressful times is inconvenient for them (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007)

As a consequence of anxious individuals' excessive desire to be the focus of attachment figures, different than secure and avoidant people, they exaggerate the emotions they have in order to get attention from them (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). For that reason, anxious individuals are more likely seek help from others in accordance to negative view of self and positive view of others along with an excessive desire of proximity (Collins & Read, 1990; Vogel & Wei, 2005). However, they cannot use support mechanism in an adaptive way resulting from the internal conflict they

have about whether they would receive enough support and attention or not (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992). For instance, a study conducted by Rholes, Simpson, Campbell and Grich (2001) investigated the relationship between women's perception of support from their husbands during the transition to the parenthood period. They found that in relation to their negative internal working models, anxiously attached women perceived support from their husbands to a lesser extent, even though the actual amount of support was much more and they long for support and attention. Similarly, Hofmann (2016) suggested that anxiously attached individuals might seek others more often to manage their emotions since they experience more negative emotions. All in all, there are conflictual results in the literature with regard to anxiety and support seeking. Vogel and Wei (2005) provided an explanation regarding anxious individuals' conflictual patterns regarding support seeking behavior. On the one hand, it might be the case that anxiety that is related with increased psychological distress might result in increased look for support with recognition of advantages of getting help. On the other hand, anxious individuals' unfulfilled desire to get attention from others might lead them to believe that others' will not be supportive enough.

As mentioned above, in spite of investigating attachment intrapersonal emotion regulation strategies and social support which is a related construct with interpersonal emotion regulation, no study investigated the relationship between attachment and interpersonal emotion regulation among married couples. Since attachment styles are based on different internal working models that guide individuals' relationships with others, it was expected to find a relationship with interpersonal emotion regulation and attachment styles. In that sense, it was expected that interpersonal emotion regulation would associate with attachment patterns in a different way. In particular, anxious

individuals would be more likely to employ interpersonal emotion regulation mechanism in relation to their negative view of self that would direct them to seek help and support from others. On the contrary, avoidant individuals would not turn to others to regulate their emotions.

1.3.2. Interpersonal Emotion Regulation and Marital Adjustment

Even though past studies extensively investigated the relationship between interpersonal regulation of emotion and romantic relationship and marital functioning (Butler, 2011), there is no study investigated the relationship between Zaki and Willams' (2013) model of interpersonal emotion regulation in relation to attachment styles and marital adjustment. Interpersonal emotion regulation has been proposed as a mechanism underlying social support (Hoffman, Carpenter & Curtiss, 2016; Marroquin, 2011). Studies in the literature suggested that social support plays a significant role in the couples' marriage (Julien & Markman, 1991; Özbey, 2012). For instance, Meyers and Landsberger (2002) demonstrated social support as a mediator between avoidant attachment style and marital satisfaction among married women. In other words, the researchers advocated that avoidant women's decreased levels of support from family and lack of friend network which would be gratifying and helpful may contribute to decreased marital quality. However, their research did not reveal any mediating relationship between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction. They argued that the lack of significant association between anxiety and marital satisfaction would be related with not including husbands in their sample.

It has been reported that interpersonal emotion regulation may be adaptive or maladaptive depending on the context (Hoffman, 2014). Hoffman (2014) suggested that interpersonal strategies may protect individuals from stress resulting from intense emotions. On the other hand, it can be detrimental if it leads the problem to continue. He explained this in terms of anxiety disorders in which it can be harmful for someone to consistently use others to regulate own emotions by decreasing sense of control over the events. Even though social support is a part of interpersonal emotion regulation (Zaki & Williams, 2013) and social support is related with marital adjustment (Meyers and Landsberger, 2002) interpersonal emotion regulation is a different concept. Since a new model of interpersonal emotion regulation has not been studied in marital context before, in the present thesis, no hypotheses or predictions were made regarding the relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation and marital adjustment.

1.4. Aim of the Study

Even though an extensive area of research in psychology has been focused on the factors underlying marital quality (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000), there is still a room to integrate different individual variables that partners bring them into the relationship. Despite of the fact that the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment has been extensively demonstrated, as discussed above, this relationship might be affected by other variables (Meyers & Landsberger, 2002). The primary aim of the current study is to investigate a concept of interpersonal emotion regulation which was proposed as a mechanism underlying social support, in the context of marital relationships. By doing so, it was aimed to contribute to marriage literature by integrating interpersonal relationship with an attachment perspective.

In the light of the literature, depending upon the theoretical associations, the hypotheses of the present study are:

H1: There will be a significant relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment. Particularly, individuals with higher anxiety and avoidance scores would have lower marital adjustment.

H2: Attachment styles would be significantly associated with interpersonal emotion regulation. Particularly, individuals with anxious attachment style would be more likely to use interpersonal emotion regulation compared to individuals with avoidant attachment style.

H3: Interpersonal emotion regulation would mediate the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Existing literature suggested that attachment insecurities have a detrimental influence on marital quality. Besides, considering the fact that each behavior, situation and event are connected to an array of emotions, regulation of them in the marital context becomes crucial. Even though previous studies focused on emotion regulation mechanisms in the marriage, there is no study that investigated the relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation model developed by Zaki and Williams (2013) and marital adjustment neither in Turkey nor abroad. Previously, the role of interpersonal emotion regulation has been investigated in relation to anxiety and mood disorders (Hoffman, 2014). Due to the considerable resemblance of interpersonal

emotion regulation with social support, interpersonal emotion regulation has been considered as an important variable that requires attention in the marriage subject since previous studies in the literature revealed significant association between social support and quality of marriage (Julien & Markman, 1991).

Moreover, Meyers and Landsberger (2002) discovered that getting support from other people mediates the relationship between attachment and marital adjustment among married women. Therefore, in the present study, it was hypothesized that interpersonal emotion regulation would be related to marital adjustment, as well. Besides, since theoretical framework of attachment theory provided strong association between internal working models of attachment and emotions (Collins, 1996; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005), it is important to integrate interpersonal emotion regulation perspective with attachment styles in the marital context. By investigating the relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation, attachment styles and marital adjustment, the present study aims to contribute to the literature by revealing how using other people to modulate emotions influences dyadic relationships. Therefore, the major contribution of the study will be integrating a different perspective into marriage literature by revealing how interpersonal emotion regulation relates to adjustment of couples.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1. Participants

At the beginning of the study, a total of 312 married individuals completed the questionnaires. However, 40 participants were removed from the data since their spouses did not participate in the study. As a result, the sample of the study included 136 married couples (136 women, 136 men). 61 couples (122 people) completed paper-pencil battery and the remaining 75 couples (150 people) participated via online survey link. In addition, following the data screening process, 11 participants were removed as a result of univariate outlier analysis. Furthermore, 2 participants were excluded as a result of multivariate outlier analysis. Their partners were also excluded from the data. Therefore, statistical analyses were conducted on 123 married couples (123 women, 123 men).

Participants were aged between 23 and 72 with a mean of 39.25 ($SD = 11.84$). Women were aged between 23 and 66 with a mean of 37.42 ($SD = 11.38$) and men were aged between 24 and 72 with a mean of 39.98 ($SD = 12.2$). 85.4% of participants

were living in Istanbul and remaining 14.6 % of the participants were living in other cities of Turkey such as Ankara, Bursa, Eskişehir. 95.1% of participants were first time married (n=231). In addition, the mean length of marriage was 140 months ($SD = 146.5$) and ranged between 1.5 month and 523 months (1.5 months and 43.5 years). 215 participants reported marriage type as self-initiated decision (87.4%). Furthermore, 38.3% of participants do not have children, 31.7% of them have one child, 29.7% of them have two or more children.

In addition, 66.3% of the participants were currently working (n = 163) while 17.5% of them were not working (n = 43) and the remaining 16.3% were retired (n = 40). Furthermore, 15.9% of participants include engineers (n = 39), 8.9% of them work at health sector (n = 22), 8.9% of them work at education sector (n = 22), 8.1 % of them work at bank sector (n = 20), 2% of them work at law sector (n = 5) and 42.7% of them work at other sectors (n = 105). Details of demographic information about participants were represented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Wives (N=123)	Husbands (N=123)	Total (N=236)
Age			
Mean	34.42	39.98	39.25
SD	11.38	12.2	11.84
Range	23-66	24-72	23-72
Length of Marriage (in Months)			
Mean	139.75	140.37	140.06
SD	146.49	147.12	146.5
Range	1.5-523	1.5-523	1.5-523
Type of Marriage			
Self-initiated	107 (87%)	108 (87.8%)	215 (87.4%)
Arranged Marriage	2 (1.6%)	3 (2.4%)	5 (2%)
Arranged Meeting	14 (11.4%)	12 (9.8%)	26 (10.6%)
Number of Marriage			
First Marriage	117 (95.9%)	114 (94.2%)	231 (95.1%)
Second Marriage	5 (4.1%)	7 (5.8%)	12 (4.9%)
Number of Children			
None	46 (38.8%)	46 (37.7%)	93 (37.8%)
1 Child	37 (30.6%)	40 (32.8%)	77 (31.3%)
2 or more Children	37 (30.6%)	34 (29.5%)	73 (29.7%)
Education Level			
Primary School	5 (4.1%)	5 (4.1%)	10 (4.1%)
Secondary School	6 (4.9%)	1 (0.8%)	7 (2.8%)
High School	18 (14.6%)	18 (14.6%)	36 (14.6%)
Vocational School	17 (13.8%)	9 (7.3%)	26 (10.6%)
University	61 (49.6%)	67 (54.5%)	128 (52%)
Master's / Phd	16 (13%)	23 (18.7%)	39 (15.9%)
Montly Family Income			
<1000 TL	2 (1.7 %)	1 (0.8%)	3 (1.3%)
1001-2000 TL	9 (7.6%)	9 (7.3%)	18 (7.5%)
2001-4000 TL	27 (22.9%)	27 (22.1%)	54 (22.5%)
4001-7000 TL	43 (36.4%)	41 (33.6%)	84 (35%)
7001-12000 TL	26 (22%)	22 (22.1%)	53 (22.1%)
>12000 TL	11 (9.3%)	17 (13.9%)	28 (11.7%)

2.2. Instruments

Participants completed a demographic form and three scales, namely Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R), Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (IERQ) and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS).

2.2.1. Socio-Demographic Form

The socio-demographic form was developed by researcher. The form included questions aimed to obtain personal information such as age, gender, education and income level; and also relational information such as duration of marriage, and number of children

2.2.2. Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised

In the current study, in order to measure attachment styles of married couples, Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) were used. The original scale was developed by Fraley, Waller and Brennan (2000). The scale includes 36 items consisting of 2 dimensions as Anxiety including 18 questions (eg., I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me) and Avoidance with 18 questions (eg., I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner). The scale utilizes 7-point Likert-type questions ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha level for Anxiety subscale was reported as .91 and .94 as Avoidance subscales. ECR-R has been extensively used measure to capture attachment styles in previous studies due to the fact that it has better reliability and validity than other self-report attachment measures (Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000).

The adaptation study of ECR-R into Turkish was conducted by Selçuk, Günaydın, Sümer and Uysal (2005). As a result of their study, Cronbach's alpha for Anxiety subscale was reported as .86 and Avoidance subscale as .90 which demonstrate high internal reliability. In addition, test-retest reliability of Anxiety subscale was .82 and .81 for Avoidance. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was found as .76 for Anxiety .85 for Avoidance factors. Finally, since the aim of this study was to measure attachment styles in marital relationship, the term "romantic partner" was changed as "spouse".

2.2.3. Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire was recently developed by Hoffman, Carpenter and Curtiss (2016) consisting of 20 items and 4 factors as Enhancing Positive Affect, Perspective Taking, Soothing and Social Modeling. The scale utilizes 5-point Likert type questions ranging from 1 (not true for me at all) to 5 (extremely true for me). A sample item includes "If I'm upset, I like knowing what other people do if they were in my situation". Internal consistency coefficients for factors range between .89 and .94 (Hoffman, Carpenter & Curtiss, 2016).

Adaptation study of IERQ into Turkish was conducted by Koç (2017). According to the results, Cronbach's alpha for IERQ was reported as .90. In addition, Cronbach's alphas for the subscales were reported as .81, .86, .77 and .87 for Enhancing Positive Affect, Soothing, Perspective Taking and Social Modeling, respectively. Furthermore, test-retest reliability coefficients were ranging between .58

and .76. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was also found as .90. Moreover, Cronbach's alphas for subscales were found as follows: .71 for Enhancing Positive Affect, .80 for Soothing, .76 for Perspective Taking and .82 for Social Modeling.

2.2.4. Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was developed by Spanier (1976) and it is the most commonly used scale with aim to measure marital quality. In this study, it was administered to married couples in order to measure marital adjustment. The scale consists of 32 items with four subscales that measure different components of the relationship named as Dyadic Cohesion, Dyadic Consensus, Affectional Expression, and Dyadic Satisfaction. Items in the scale are mostly in 5-point, 6-point or 7-point Likert-type response formats range from always agree to always disagree. In addition, the scale also consists of two questions that can be answered as either yes or no. The sample item includes "Do you trust your partner?". Even though subscales can be used separately to measure different areas of relationship, the scale was generally used by the total score in order to assess the relationship quality. Scores range between 0-151 and higher scores reflect a higher sense of relationship quality. The original scale has a strong internal validity since Cronbach's alphas range between .73 and .94 for the subscales. In addition, Cronbach alpha for the entire scale was reported as .96 (Spanier, 1976).

The scale was adapted into Turkish by Fıfşiloğlu and Demir (2000). Internal reliability scores for subscales were found as .83 for Dyadic Satisfaction, .75 for

Dyadic Cohesion, .75 for Dyadic Consensus and .80 for Affectional Expression. In addition, Cronbach alpha for entire scale was reported as .92 which demonstrates a high internal reliability. In addition to that, the split-half reliability coefficient was reported as .86. Fıfılođlu and Demir's (2000) adaptation study indicated that Dyadic Adjustment Scale is reliable and valid measure that can be used to assess marital adjustment of Turkish individuals.

2.3. Procedure

After receiving approval from Bahçeşehir University Committee for Research and Publishing Ethics, the data was collected using convenience sampling. The data was collected either via online web-site or through paper-pencil form. In order to collect online data, widely preferred online survey platform Qualtrics has been used. For online collected data, the first participant from the family was asked to fill a code that has been specified by the researcher that involves the first letter of his or her name, the third letter of his or her name, the first letter of the family name and year of birth. The first participants of the families were asked to tell their spouse to enter the same code in order to match the couples. Additionally, for the paper-pencil form, two separate questionnaire batteries with two separate envelopes were given to the couples and they were requested to seal envelop after they complete the scales. Participants were told that they should complete the scales alone without their partners and they should not look at their partners' answers.

The first page of the scales involved an informed consent form that aimed to give brief information to the participants about the study, assure that their responses will be confidential. Participants were told that they have an opportunity to not complete the scales if they do not feel comfortable. Following the informed consent, participants were completed socio-demographic form and Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised, Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire and Dyadic Adjustment Scale, respectively.



CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1. Data Analysis Plan

Before the main analyses, the data was screened for missing values. In addition, the data was checked for univariate and multivariate outliers. Moreover, characteristics of measurement (means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum ranges were computed for each scale and sub-scales.

Furthermore, in order to examine the relationship between demographic variables and the main study variables, separate one-way ANOVAs, independent sample t-tests and Pearson correlations were performed. Afterwards, in order to test the hypotheses, the mediation analysis was conducted by using bootstrapped multivariate extension of the *MEDIATE* test of mediation for this step (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) that assesses the total, direct and indirect effects of independent variable (i.e., Attachment Styles) on dependent variable (Marital Adjustment) via proposed mediator (i.e., Interpersonal Emotion Regulation).

3.2. Preliminary Analyses

3.2.1. Data Screening

To begin with, the data was screened for missing values. Afterwards, in order to deal with univariate outliers, z scores were checked and 11 participants (and with their partners) whose z scores were not between the interval of -3 and 3 were excluded from the data. As the next step, multivariate outliers were checked by investigating *Mahalanobis* distance. Degrees of freedom were taken as 13 and alpha as .001. The cut off score was detected as 34.52. As a result, 2 participants above the cut off score were identified as multivariate outliers and they were excluded from the data along with their partners. After the extraction of both univariate and multivariate outliers from the data, the normality assumption was maintained. Consequently, the data from 123 couples (123 women, 123 men) were used for the analyses.

3.2.2. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, ranges) were shown in Table 3.1. for Experiences in Close Relationships Revised with subscales of Anxiety and Avoidance; Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire with subscales of Enhancing Positive Affect, Soothing, Perspective Taking and Social Modeling and Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

Table 3.1. Descriptives for the Main Variables of the Study

Measures	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Attachment Anxiety	246	46.12	13.8	18	93
Attachment Avoidance	246	34.25	14.5	18	83
Enhancing Positive Affect	246	21.89	3.06	13	26
Soothing	246	16.40	5.02	5	28
Perspective Taking	246	16.41	4.62	5	30
Social Modeling	246	17.08	4.71	5	30
Marital Adjustment	246	118.48	16.89	60	148

Depending on the results of the paired sample t-test, the difference among anxious and avoidant attachment styles of participants was found to be significant ($t(245) = 13.04, p < .001$). Participants were more likely to display anxious attachment style ($M = 46.12, SD = 13.8$) compared to avoidant attachment style ($M = 34.25, SD = 14.5$). Moreover, the mean marital adjustment score of the participants were 118.48 ($SD = 16.89$) which indicates that generally couples in the present study had satisfactory marriages.

3.2.3. Analyses relying on Demographic Variables

To begin with, in order to investigate gender differences in attachment styles, interpersonal emotion regulation and marital adjustment levels, series of independent sample t-tests were conducted. Following the results of the Levene's test ($p > .05$) and assuming that variances were equal between the groups, it was found that men and women did not significantly differ in terms of attachment anxiety, $t(244) = -.63, p > .05$ and avoidance $t(244) = -1.68, p > .05$. In addition, results revealed that there was not any significant difference between men and women in terms of marital adjustment levels, $t(244) = .58, p > .05$. In terms of interpersonal emotion regulation, men and

women did not significantly differ in enhancing positive affect, soothing, perspective taking and social modeling ($p > .05$).

In addition, in order to investigate the relationship between age and marital adjustment, Pearson correlations were conducted. Results revealed that there was marginally significant negative correlation between age and marital adjustment of couples ($r = -.11, p = .06$). As couples get older, their marital adjustment levels decreases. Moreover, there was no significant relationship between age of participants and subscales of interpersonal emotion regulation ($p > .05$).

In order to investigate the relationship between length of marriage and marital adjustment level, Pearson correlation was conducted. According to the results, there was a significant and negative correlation between length of marriage and marital adjustment of participants ($r = -.18, p < .01$). As duration of marriage increases, marital adjustment levels of participants decrease.

Another investigation was on differences between couples who have children and who do not have children and marital adjustment levels, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Results revealed that there was a significant difference in marital adjustment scores of couples who have children and who do not have children $F(4,237) = 2.73, p < .05$. In order to investigate group differences, Tukey post-hoc test was conducted and results demonstrated that couples who do not have any children had higher marital adjustment levels ($M = 122.81, SD = 15.65$) compared to couples who have two or more children ($M = 114.90, SD = 14.67$).

Finally, sample sizes were not balanced regarding education level, income level, and marriage type among the participants. For that reason, analyses to investigate the differences between education level, income level and type of marriage among the participants on the main variables were not conducted.

3.3. Testing the Hypotheses

3.3.1. Correlational Analyses

Before testing the hypotheses, Pearson correlations were examined with the aim of investigating the relationship between attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, enhancing positive affect, soothing, perspective taking, social modeling and marital adjustment. Correlations among variables were represented in Table 3.2.

There was a significant and positive correlation between attachment anxiety and avoidance ($r = .49, p < .001$). In addition, attachment anxiety was significantly and negatively correlated with marital adjustment ($r = -.42, p < .001$). Likewise, attachment avoidance was negatively correlated with marital adjustment ($r = -.64, p < .001$). Therefore, results revealed that as attachment anxiety and avoidance increase, marital adjustment levels decrease. Individuals who have higher attachment anxiety and avoidance had lower marital adjustment levels. In addition, the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment ($r = -.64$) was stronger compared to attachment anxiety ($r = -.42$).

Furthermore, attachment anxiety was positively correlated with soothing ($r = .19, p < .01$), perspective taking ($r = .26, p < .01$) and social modeling ($r = .20, p < .01$) whereas attachment anxiety was not correlated with enhancing positive affect ($p > .05$). In addition, attachment avoidance was negatively correlated with enhancing positive affect ($r = -.13, p < .05$) whereas there was no significant correlation between attachment avoidance and soothing, perspective taking and social modeling ($p > .05$). According to the results, individuals who reported higher attachment anxiety were more likely to use soothing, perspective taking and social modeling as interpersonal emotion regulation strategies. On the other hand, individuals who reported higher attachment avoidance were likely to employ enhancing positive affect as an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy. Finally, there was no significant correlation between subscales of interpersonal emotion regulation and marital adjustment ($p > .05$).

Table 3.3.1. Correlations among the Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.Anxiety	1						
2.Avoidance	.49**	1					
3.Enhancing Positive Affect	.04	-.13*	1				
4.Soothing	.19**	-.05	.45**	1			
5.Perspective Taking	.26**	.06	.33**	.64**	1		
6.Social Modeling	.20**	.005	.42**	.63**	.72**	1	
7.Marital Adjustment	-.42**	-.64**	.05	-.07	-.03	-.03	1

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

3.3.2. Testing the Relationship between Attachment Styles and Marital Adjustment with the Mediating Role of Interpersonal Emotion Regulation

The present study examined the mediational role of interpersonal emotion regulation (enhancing positive affect, soothing, perspective taking, social modeling) in the relationship between attachment dimensions (anxiety and avoidance) and marital adjustment by using mediation model proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). In the analysis, attachment anxiety and avoidance was taken as independent (predictor) variables, interpersonal emotion regulation (enhancing positive affect, soothing, perspective taking and social modeling) was considered as mediator variables and marital adjustment was taken as dependent (predicted) variable.

First of all, the total effect of Attachment Styles (Anxiety and Avoidance) on Marital Adjustment was found significant $F(2, 243) = 90.49, p < .001$. Moreover, it was found that attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance explained the variances at 42%.

The bootstrap analysis demonstrated that the direct effect of attachment anxiety on marital adjustment was significant ($\beta = -.17, SE = .07, t(245) = -2.50, p < .05$). In addition, the direct effect of attachment avoidance on marital adjustment was significant ($\beta = -.67, SE = .06, t(245) = -10.43, p < .001$). Moreover, the effect of attachment anxiety on soothing was found significant ($\beta = .10, SE = .03, t(245) = 4.03,$

$p < .001$), on perspective taking was found significant ($\beta = .10$, $SE = .03$, $t(245) = 4.27$, $p < .001$), on social modeling was found significant ($\beta = .09$, $SE = .02$, $t(245) = 3.66$, $p < .001$) and finally, on enhancing positive affect was found marginally significant ($\beta = .03$, $SE = .01$, $t(245) = 1.89$, $p = .06$). Furthermore, the effect of attachment avoidance was also analyzed and the results revealed that attachment avoidance had significant effect on enhancing positive affect ($\beta = -.04$, $SE = .01$, $t(245) = -2.76$, $p < .01$) and on soothing ($\beta = -.06$, $SE = .02$, $t(245) = -2.69$, $p < .01$). On the contrary, the effect of attachment avoidance on perspective taking and social modeling was not significant ($\beta = -.03$, $SE = .02$, $t(245) = -1.24$, $p > .05$; $\beta = -.04$, $SE = .02$, $t(245) = -1.73$, $p > .05$, respectively). Moreover, it was demonstrated that there was a direct effect of soothing on marital adjustment ($\beta = -.55$, $SE = .23$, $t(245) = -2.38$, $p < .05$) and marginally significant effect of perspective taking on marital adjustment ($\beta = .54$, $SE = .28$, $t(245) = 1.94$, $p = .053$). On the other hand, the direct effect of enhancing positive affect and social modeling on marital adjustment was not significant ($\beta = -.03$, $SE = .31$, $t(245) = .12$, $p > .05$; $\beta = -.01$, $SE = .27$, $t(245) = -.05$, $p > .05$, respectively). Finally, the mediating role of soothing and perspective taking on the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment was found to be significant due to the fact that zero did not fall within the range of the CIs ($\beta = -.06$, $SE = .03$, 90% CI [-.11, -.01]); $\beta = .05$, $SE = .03$, 90% CI [.01, .11], respectively). On the other hand, enhancing positive affect and social modeling did not mediate the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment ($\beta = .00$, $SE = .01$, 90% CI [-.02, .02]); $\beta = -.00$, $SE = .03$, 90% CI [-.04, .04], respectively). As the final investigation, the mediating role of soothing was found to be significant in the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment analysis revealed the mediating role of soothing ($\beta = .04$, $SE = .02$, 90% CI [.00, .07]). On the contrary,

it was found that enhancing positive affect, perspective taking and social modeling did not mediate the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment ($\beta = -.00, SE = .01, 90\% CI [-.02, .02]$); $\beta = -.01, SE = .02, 90\% CI [-.04, .00]$, ($\beta = .00, SE = .01, 90\% CI [-.02, .02]$, respectively).

In conclusion, it was found that there were a significant and partial mediation between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment through soothing (see Figure 3.3.2) and perspective taking (see Figure 3.3.2.1.), and a significant partial mediation between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment (see Figure 3.3.2.2).

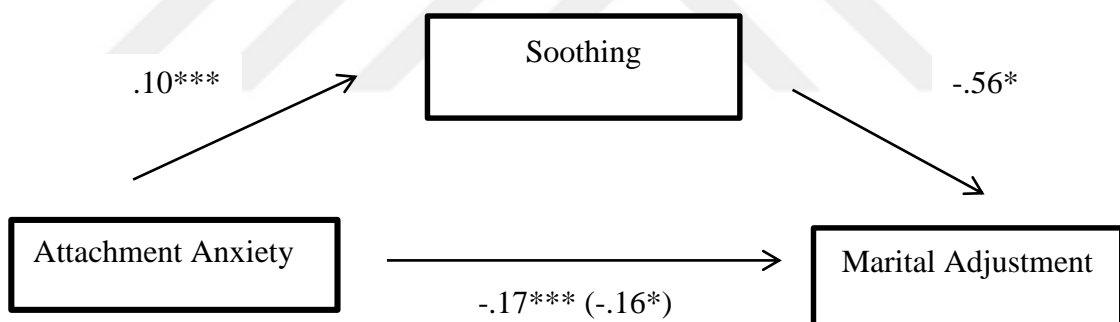


Figure 3.3.2. Mediation Model of Indirect Effect of Attachment Anxiety on Marital Adjustment, through Soothing

Note: $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

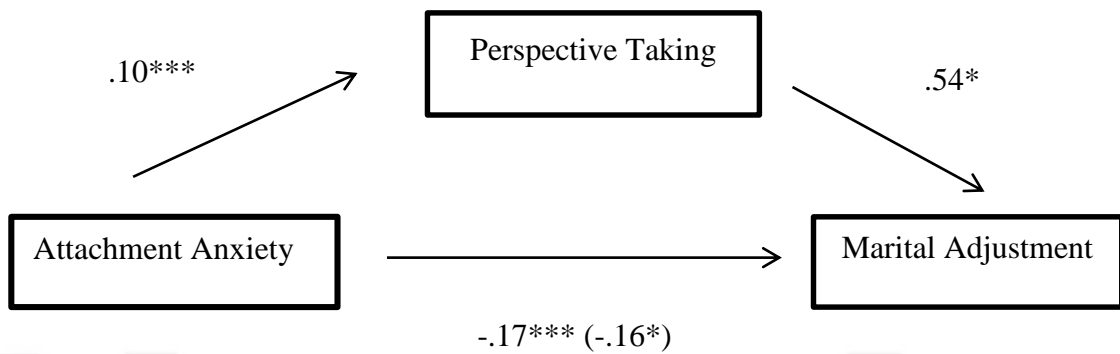


Figure 3.3.2.1. Mediation Model of Indirect Effect of Attachment Anxiety on Marital Adjustment, through Perspective Taking

Note: $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

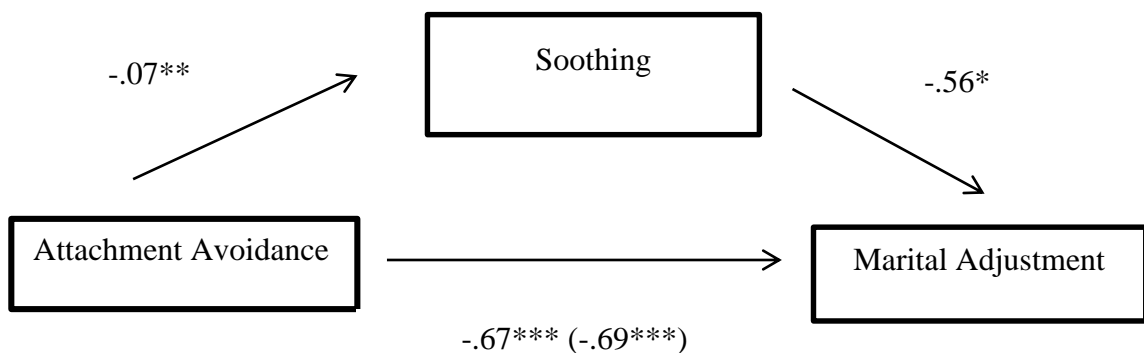


Figure 3.3.2.2. Mediation Model of Indirect Effect of Attachment Avoidance on Marital Adjustment, through Soothing

Note: $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{**}$

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the current study was to test the proposed model in which interpersonal emotion regulation mediates the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment among married couples. In the following sections, firstly, descriptive analyses will be evaluated. Furthermore, the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment and the possible mediating role of interpersonal emotion regulation will be discussed. In addition, limitations of the study and suggestions for the future research will be mentioned. Finally, contributions and clinical implications of the present study will be addressed.

4.1. Evaluation of Descriptive Analyses

Analyses investigating gender differences on the main study variables demonstrated no significant difference between men and women in terms of attachment styles, interpersonal emotion regulation and marital adjustment. In the present study, there was not any significant difference between men and women in terms of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. In the literature, there are

contradictory results regarding the relationship between gender and attachment styles. Some studies revealed differences between men and women in relation to attachment styles and reported that men are more likely to display avoidant attachment style compared to women (Del Giudice, 2011). On the other hand, several studies demonstrated that there are no gender differences in attachment styles (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shi, 2003). Shi (2003) proposed that men and women both have the same probability to develop secure or insecure attachment styles during their childhood depending on the nature of the relationship between their caregivers.

Furthermore, in the present study, there was not any significant difference between men and women in terms of marital adjustment levels. In the literature, there is no consensus regarding the relationship between gender and marital adjustment. Some studies reported that men significantly have higher marital adjustment compared to women (Fowers, 1991; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007; Rogers & Amato, 2000). On the other hand, several studies found no significant difference between men and women in terms of marital adjustment levels (Demir & Fıfılođlu, 1999; Jackson, Miller, Oka & Henry, 2014; Kurdek, 1995; Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman, 1993).

Moreover, it has been found that there was a negative relationship between length of marriage and marital adjustment. As couples get older, their satisfaction level is likely to decrease. Several studies suggested that middle-aged individuals have significantly lower marital adjustment level compared to younger individuals (Anderson, Russel & Schumm, 1983; Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2007). Similarly, Glenn (1998) found that marital adjustment tend to decrease as couples age and

proposed that changes associated with getting older such as health problems may influence marital quality negatively.

In addition, it has been found that individuals who do not have any child have higher marital adjustment levels compared to individuals who have two or more children. Results of the present study support previous research (Lawrence, Rothman, Cobb, Rothman, & Bradbury, 2008; Twenge, Campbell & Foster, 2003). It has been suggested that decline in the marital quality may be related with increased limitation of individuals' independence and role conflict after becoming a parent (Twenge, Campbell & Foster, 2003).

4.2. Attachment Styles and Marital Adjustment

The extensive body of research showed that attachment insecurity is negatively associated with relationship satisfaction in dating couples and marital adjustment in married couples (Brennan & Shaver, 1995, Feeney, 1994; 1999; Feeney, Noller, and Callan, 1994; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Simpson, 1990). In line with previous research, in the present study, it was found that there was a significant and negative association between insecure attachment and marital adjustment. There are different reasons for decreased level of marital adjustment for anxious and avoidant people. While individuals with anxious attachment use hyperactivation strategies, individuals with avoidant attachment use deactivation strategies (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). Anxiously attached individuals strive to become closer to the attachment figure and seek their support and affection in a clingy way. Since they demand closeness and intimacy excessively, it is never enough for them. They are inordinately sensitive to signals of potential threat such as rejection (Li &

Chan, 2012). Consequently, they display their thoughts, emotions and actions to their partners in an escalated way. However, avoidant individuals strive to maintain detachment from their partners and act independent, does not express emotions and thoughts (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

In addition, in line with the previous studies, results of the present study showed that attachment avoidance, rather than attachment anxiety, was the strongest predictor of marital adjustment (Friedman et al., 2012; Harma & Sümer, 2015, Kane et al., 2007). Results of a meta-analysis conducted by Li and Chan (2012) revealed that attachment avoidance has a greater effect on decreased relationship quality compared to attachment anxiety. To put it another way, even though individuals with anxious attachment style experience romantic relationships negatively, they have more positive involvement with their partners compared to avoidant people. The reason for stronger predictive power of attachment avoidance in decreased levels of marital adjustment might be explained in that way.

Furthermore, cultural differences should be taken into consideration while interpreting the results regarding attachment differences in marital adjustment. When collectivistic cultural contexts are considered, it is evident that interpersonal relationships are emphasized and interdependence becomes a crucial factor for close relationships (Sümer & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). Similarly, Friedman et al. (2012) found that attachment avoidance is more strongly related with decreased relationship quality in collectivist cultures compared to individualistic cultures. in which interdependence is emphasized. On the other hand, attachment anxiety is acceptable especially for women in Turkey (Sümer & Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010). Hence, as Harma and Sümer (2015)

discussed, it can be said that attachment anxiety is not as detrimental as attachment avoidance and attachment avoidance is stronger predictor of decreased levels of marital adjustment in Turkish culture. Results of the present study are in line with this view.

4.3. Interpersonal Emotion Regulation and Marital Adjustment

Since interpersonal emotion regulation has not been studied in the marital context before, no specific hypotheses were made regarding the direction of the relationship between them. Even though results of the correlation analyses revealed no significant relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation and marital adjustment, results of the bootstrapping method revealed that there was a negative association between soothing and marital adjustment whereas there was a positive association between perspective taking and marital adjustment. Social modeling and enhancing positive affect were not significantly related to marital adjustment.

Hoffman (2014) stated that interpersonal emotion regulation may become detrimental depending on the context. He proposed a model for anxiety disorders and reasoned that continually seeking out others might make a way for maladaptive emotion regulation strategies. Apart from that, the relationship between using other people to regulate emotions and marital adjustment was unknown. In the present study, soothing negatively predicted marital adjustment levels of married couples. In other words, the more individuals use soothing as an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy, the less they are satisfied with their marriages. A possible explanation for the negative association between soothing and marital adjustment might be that soothing

might resemble avoiding or suppressing negative emotions. Previously, it has been demonstrated that suppression was detrimental for interpersonal relationships due to the fact that it prevents healthy communication (Butler et al, 2003; Richards, Butler & Gross, 2003). As Feeney (1999) suggested, displaying negative emotions is related with relationship satisfaction due to the fact that manifesting negative emotions permits individuals to deliberate over problems in the relationship and find solutions. However, suppression or avoidance of the emotions does not allow couples to discuss relationship problems. Similarly, by using interpersonal emotion regulation of soothing, cognitions remain unchanged while negative emotions were minimized only by the presence of other people. For instance, following a disagreement with a partner, when one uses soothing as an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy, soothing would only decrease the intensity of the negative emotions at that moment. However, this might cover the real problem and would have detrimental influence for the marriage in the long run. In other words, even though alleviating negative emotions seems desirable goal at a time, this strategy seems to provide no solution and this may contribute to decreased marital adjustment level.

Another explanation for the association between soothing and marital adjustment might be that if a person consistently seeks comfort from his or her partner and cannot deal with overwhelming emotions, this demand may become tiring for the partner and might decrease their marital adjustment.

Apart from soothing, it has been found that perspective taking is positively predicted marital adjustment. In other words, using perspective taking as a regulatory strategy leads to increased marital adjustment. Perspective taking causes individuals

to remember that they should not be worried, the situation would be worse but it is not. They were also reminded that other people gone through worse experiences (Hoffman, Carpenter and Curtiss, 2016). In this way, perspective taking might resemble antecedent-focused strategies such as cognitive reappraisal in which an individual reevaluates the situation in order to decrease the influence of negative emotion (Gross, 2001). Perspective taking might lead to a change in the cognition since an individual is reminded that the situation is not as bad as they feel and it could have been worse. In that way, an individual might engage in problem solving. Unlike soothing, perspective taking might lead an individual to reconsider the stressful or upsetting situation in a way that would make them feel calm by changing the way an individual think about that situation. When evaluated in this way, changing one's perspective might lead to have higher marital adjustment.

4.4. Attachment Styles and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation

According to the results of the present study, there was a significant positive association between attachment anxiety and interpersonal emotion regulation strategies, namely; soothing, perspective taking, social modeling and marginally significant relationship with enhancing positive affect. As expected, individuals with anxious attachment style tend to rely on others to regulate their negative emotions. Different from individuals with secure and avoidant attachment, individuals with anxious attachment style perceive negative emotions as compatible with their attachment goals. For that matter, they strive to maintain and intensify those emotions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Accordingly, it was expected to find a positive association between anxious attachment and interpersonal emotion regulation and results supported this prediction.

Individuals with anxious attachment style tend to seek support from others resulting from holding negative view of self and positive view of others accompanying excessive desire of proximity (Collins & Read, 1990; Vogel & Wei, 2005). Therefore, as attachment anxiety increases, a person's tendency to use other people in order to regulate his or her emotions increases. Individuals who use other people to manage emotions do not make any effort to regulate their emotions by themselves. For that reason, since individuals with higher attachment anxiety do not rely on their resources to cope with distress, they tend to rely on other people to manage their negative emotions.

On the other hand, there was a significant negative relationship between attachment avoidance and enhancing positive affect. Individuals with higher attachment avoidance were less likely to use other people to increase their positive emotions. Similarly, there was a significant negative relationship between attachment avoidance and soothing. Furthermore, there was not any significant relationship between attachment avoidance and perspective taking and also social modeling. According to the results, individuals with higher attachment avoidance do not seek other people and rely on them to decrease their negative emotions. Individuals displaying avoidant attachment style do not permit their emotions such as fear, anxiety, unhappiness, embarrassment or remorse to be displayed. That is related with their internal working models and regulation strategies which convey a message that experiencing and displaying those emotions represent vulnerability (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Since it is hard to rely on others fully, it is bothersome and uncomfortable to be close to others for individuals with avoidant attachment. They become anxious if someone tries to establish a close relationship with them (Hazan &

Shaver, 1987). Individuals with avoidant attachment use deactivating strategies by acting overly self-reliant and keep emotional distance from others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). When they experience negative emotions, they try to down-regulate them in order to reduce intimacy and involvement with others. Furthermore, based on internal working models of individuals with avoidant attachment style, avoidant individuals reject attachment needs and excessively rely on one self. As Mikulincer and Nachshon (1991) found in their study, avoidant individuals' excessive reliance on one self leads to decreased level of self-disclosure. Those individuals do not seek other people to share their feelings, thoughts and experiences.

As a consequence of avoidant individuals' beliefs that others will not be available and helpful in times of need, they do not employ support mechanisms and problem solving attitude (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). They suppress their emotional experiences (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Accordingly, the present study revealed that they do not use interpersonal emotion regulation strategies to regulate their negative emotions. They might act as they do not need others' support.

4.5. The Mediating Role of Interpersonal Emotion Regulation

It was hypothesized that the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment would be mediated via interpersonal emotion regulation. According to the results of the mediation analysis, some strategies of interpersonal emotion regulation mediated that relationship.

The results showed that both perspective taking and soothing partially mediated the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment of married couples. Particularly, individuals with higher attachment anxiety were more likely to use perspective taking as an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy, which then led to higher levels of marital adjustment. Additionally, individuals with higher attachment anxiety were more likely to use soothing as an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy, which in turn, led to decreased marital adjustment level. In addition, soothing mediated the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment. Individuals displaying avoidant attachment style were less likely to use soothing, which in turn, led to decreased marital adjustment level. According to the results, perspective taking and soothing influence marital adjustment level of the couples in a different way.

As stated before, perspective taking can be defined as relying on other people that helps individuals to realize that they should not be worried, other people gone through worse experiences (Hoffman, Carpenter and Curtiss, 2016). In addition, soothing involves needing another person's presence and empathy in order to feel their comfort and sympathy during difficult times. Different mechanisms of perspective taking and soothing in relation to marriage can be discussed in several ways. Anxiously attached individuals are more likely to need other people's opinions about matters. Therefore, they are more likely use perspective taking when they face a challenging situation and experience negative emotions. When they pay attention to different point of views, they might reconsider the event which might lead them to reappraise the situation. Since they do not use cognitive reappraisal as an emotion regulation strategy (Winterheld, 2015) other people might motivate them to reappraise the difficult

situation causing negative emotions. In turn, reappraising the situation might lead them to change their negative emotions by changing their thoughts. In the marital context, it would provide them to find solutions to the conflicts in the relationship and consider different aspects of relationship difficulties which might contribute to the marital quality. This might be a plausible explanation for the mediating role of perspective taking in the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment.

Different than perspective taking, in soothing, the person does not reconsider different aspects of the situation, just looks others to decrease intense emotions that cause distress. In particular, individuals with higher attachment anxiety are more likely to rely on others when they experience negative emotions just to find solace in others since this is relevant with their attachment goals (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). However, by using soothing, an anxious individual does not change his or her thoughts regarding the situation that upset him or her. When the cognition stays the same, in the future, by the time an individual goes through the same situation, continues to behave and feel the same way. When the marital context is considered, conflicts between the partners generally stem from financial problems, unfairness in the division of labor, personality characteristics or stressful life experiences (Fincham, 2003). Since conflict is an inevitable aspect of marriage, the way couples manage conflicts is closely related with the way they regulate their emotions (Levenson, Haase, Bloch, Holley & Seider (2013). When they use soothing to alleviate intense emotions, conflict might not resolve in a positive way. In fact, it would contribute to the avoidance of the problems. As a result, using that strategy might contribute to decreased marital adjustment level.

Besides, Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) suggested that since avoidant individuals believe that other people act in a demanding and clingy way and be nonsensitive to personal boundaries, they tend to match with anxious individuals. They also suggested that anxious individuals perceive other people behaving in an emotionally distant and cold way since closeness is never enough for them. Those are the main characteristics of avoidant individuals. Thus, individuals displaying higher attachment anxiety are inclined to be partners with individuals displaying higher attachment avoidance since avoidant individuals' behaviors are parallel to their relationship issues (Collins & Read, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). From this point of view, if anxious individuals were matched with avoidant individuals, avoidant partners would not soothe them when their attachment needs are triggered. They might stay distant. However, anxious individuals would act in a demanding way and their demand would not be satisfied by avoidant partners. One possible interpretation of the mediating role of soothing in the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital adjustment might be that.

Another explanation of detrimental effects of soothing in marital quality might be related with responsibility taking. Özen (2012) investigated experience and expression of emotions in relation to marital satisfaction considering attachment styles of the couples. It has been found that anxious individuals were not likely to apologize for their mistakes and accept that they are wrong. Since anxious individuals use hyperactivating strategies when their attachment needs are triggered, they expect to be soothed desperately. In order to maintain this situation, even though they make mistakes, they are more likely to deny the fact that they are mistaken (Özen, 2012). In other words, when individuals with anxious attachment seek other people's assurance

at difficult times, they would not take responsibility for the problems as adults and do not attempt to resolve the conflict in a positive way, which in turn, might lead to lower marital adjustment levels.

As in third wave cognitive behavioral therapies such as DBT (dialectical behavior therapy) change is significantly stressed (Heard & Linehan, 1994). A part of DBT includes self-soothing as a distress tolerance skill in order to deal with overwhelming emotions. It can be said that it is encouraged to employ in order to prepare an individual to change. However, as Linehan (1993) suggested, inhibiting emotions would fail to notice the problem since emotions guide behaviors by signaling that something is wrong with the situation. Furthermore, suppressing the emotion would maintain emotional avoidance. As a result, an individual would not allow negative emotions to come and go and would not learn that he or she can endure those overwhelming emotions. Besides, when a person inhibits primary emotions such as guilt or shame, a person would not notice that he or she is mistaken by behaving like that and blocks finding a solution to relationship problems (Linehan, 1993). Acceptance of the situation without any attempt to change does not provide any solution to existing problems. Accordingly, by using soothing as an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy, anxiously attached individual sought acceptance to his or her overwhelming emotions by connecting with others. However, this does not provide a solution or change to on-going problems between the partners. Even though this might be a healthy strategy that secure individuals would employ, anxious individuals would overly do that since they do not have confidence in their resources to deal with negative emotions. Therefore, anxious individuals' excessive reliance on others to deal

with negative experiences would cause an emotional avoidance which would result in decreased marital adjustment.

Apart from DBT, in their emotion-focused therapy for couples, Goldman and Greenberg (2013) suggested that conflict between couples emerges from problems in emotion regulation. During conflictual interactions between the partners, in order to provide a healthy conflict resolution, it is important to recognize adaptive and maladaptive emotions. By doing so, it helps to determine which emotions require soothing and which ones require expression. Furthermore, they emphasized self-soothing as a significant tool that is helpful to employ in order to work for permanent change, at the beginning of the therapy. They suggested that self-soothing provides a working distance that enables to move forward and acquire emotion regulation abilities. On the other hand, when partner soothes and reassures the other partner, in spite of providing comfort and security, it does not provide a solution and change unless a person modifies emotions within the self (Goldman & Greenberg, 2013). In the present study, anxious individuals' increased tendency to seek comfort from other people leading to decreased marital adjustment level might be associated with that.

When the mediating effect of soothing in the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital adjustment considered, soothing has a different influence for people with high attachment avoidance compared to individuals with high attachment anxiety. On the one hand, when attachment anxiety increases, tendency to use soothing as an interpersonal emotion regulation also increases, which in turn, predicts decreased marital adjustment. On the other hand, as attachment avoidance increases, tendency to use soothing as a regulatory strategy decreases, which in turn, predicts decreased

marital adjustment. It might be the case that even though soothing might be helpful strategy that secure individuals employ during difficult experiences (Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan & Cowan, 2002), anxious individuals may use it too much whereas avoidant individuals may not use it at all. In other words, soothing would be detrimental for anxious individuals since they overly use it whereas it would be detrimental for avoidant individuals because of the fact that they do not use it at all. It would be a helpful strategy to regulate emotions when used in a balanced way.

All in all, results indicated that attachment anxiety and avoidance have an effect on interpersonal emotion regulation of married individuals, in turn, it predicts marital adjustment. According to the results, interpersonal emotion regulation partially mediated the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment. Accordingly, attachment anxiety and avoidance still predicted marital adjustment even though interpersonal emotion regulation was taken into account. In other words, partial mediation suggested that attachment styles may have a strong relationship with marital adjustment and other variables do not eliminate attachment styles' effect on marital adjustment. Especially, when the cultural context is taken into account, attachment avoidance has stronger negative influence on marital adjustment.

4.6. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite of the significant findings regarding the proposed mediational model, the present study includes several limitations, thus the results should be evaluated by taking them into consideration. First, the findings of the current study are based upon self-report measures. Using self-report measures might lead to self-presentation bias.

In the future research, a qualitative approach would help to better understand the dynamics between couples in the marital relationship.

Second, the interpersonal emotion regulation scale was used to measure how married individuals use other people to regulate their emotions. Participants were not asked to think about their spouse when they answer the questions. In the future research, it would be valuable to develop the scale that measures interpersonal emotion regulation in romantic relationships. In this way, different results would be revealed.

Third, the findings of the current study were based on cross-sectional data. As Karney and Bradbury (1995) proposed, longitudinal data provides the best mean to understand the development of marriage. In the future research, it would be better to observe how attachment and interpersonal emotion regulation interact to change marital adjustment level of couples with a longitudinal design.

Finally, in the future research, the role of self-soothing in relation to attachment styles and marital adjustment should be investigated. Self-soothing is a distress tolerance skill encouraged in third-wave cognitive behavioral therapies in order to handle overwhelming emotions. It is a strategy that secure individuals are expected to perform (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004). However, since it leads to emotional avoidance, avoidant individuals might use it too much in order to avoid distressing emotions. For that reason, it would be beneficial to investigate its role in the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment.

4.7. Clinical Implications and Contributions of the Present Study

The current study provided significant contributions to the literature and clinical practice of couple and family therapy. The present study adds existing literature by investigating how married individuals' using others to regulate their emotions is related with marital quality. While the results of the present study supported the significant influence of attachment styles on marital quality, findings of the current study contributed literature by displaying mediating role of interpersonal emotion regulation in the relationship between attachment styles and marital adjustment. By doing so, the present study contributed to Turkish literature about how using other people to regulate ones' emotions influence marital adjustment of married individuals.

In the clinical practice, attachment theory provided a significant framework regarding the dynamics of the couples that have been integrated into couple and family therapies. The present study aimed to contribute clinical practice by investigating the the role interpersonal emotion regulation perspective in dyadic relationships. Revealing that attachment anxiety leads to increased levels of perspective taking which in turn leads to higher levels of marital adjustment is crucial. In that sense, it can be suggested that using perspective taking as an emotion regulation strategy would decrease the detrimental effects of attachment anxiety on marital adjustment. This result displays that perspective taking might be a strategy that is believed to contribute to the reappraisal in couples' relationships would be integrated into couple therapy. Therefore, in the clinical practice, it should be encouraged.

Furthermore, anxious individuals' increased tendency to using soothing whereas avoidant individuals' decreased tendency to use soothing leading to decrease in the marital adjustment provides that interpersonal emotion regulation would be detrimental for marital relationships. This finding revealed that even though soothing is a strategy that secure individuals would also use, it would be harmful in the marital context if overly or barely used depending on the attachment style of the individuals. In the clinical practice, clinicians should be attentive about whether an individual has an excessive tendency to seek soothing from others or does not seek others to soothe negative emotions at all. A balanced use of this strategy should be supported. Furthermore, as third wave cognitive behavioral therapies suggested, self-soothing would be helpful for the acceptance process. However, without followed by change, it would be detrimental. Therefore, acceptance combined with change would be helpful for couple therapies.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Sayın katılımcı,

Bu araştırma Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Feray Tarımtay tarafından Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ayşe Meltem Budak danışmanlığında yürütülen bir tez çalışmasıdır. Çalışmanın amacı, evli çiftlerin bağlanma stilleri, kişilerarası duygu düzenleme ve evlilik uyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır ve size kimliğinizi belirtecek herhangi bir soru yöneltilmemektedir. Araştırmaya katılmanız halinde yanıtlarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacı tarafından toplu olarak değerlendirilecektir. Araştırmada elde edilecek veriler sadece tez kapsamındaki bilimsel çalışmada kullanılacaktır. Araştırmada geçerli sonuçlar elde edebilmesi amacı doğrultusunda sorulara size en uygun yanıtları vermeniz ve soruları boş bırakmamanız çok önemlidir. Uygulama 25-30 dakikanızı alacaktır.

Anket, genel olarak size rahatsızlık verebilecek sorulardan oluşmamaktadır. Ancak, anketleri doldurma sırasında herhangi bir nedenden dolayı kendinizi rahatsız hissettiğiniz takdirde anketi doldurmayı yarıda bırakabilirsiniz. Anket sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Çalışma hakkında herhangi bir sorunuz olursa Psk. Feray Tarımtay (E-posta: feraytarimtay@gmail.com) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden çok teşekkür ederiz.

Araştırmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve araştırmacının herhangi bir aşamasında kendimi rahatsız hissettiğimde çalışmayı yarıda bırakabileceğim konusunda bilgilendirildim. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

() Evet

() Hayır

APPENDIX B

SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

1. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın () Erkek ()
2. Yaşınız: _____
3. Yaşadığınız İl: _____
4. Eğitim düzeyiniz: İlkokul ()
Ortaokul ()
Lise ()
2 yıllık yüksekokul ()
Üniversite ()
Yüksek Lisans veya Doktora ()
5. Çalışma durumunuz: Çalışıyorum () Çalışmıyorum () Emekliyim ()
6. Evinize giren aylık toplam gelir:
a. Ayda 1000 TL'nin altında () b. 1001-2000 TL ()
c. 2001-4000 TL () d. 4001-7000 TL ()
e. 7001-12000 TL () f. Ayda 12000 TL'nin üzerinde ()
7. Eşinizle ne kadar süredir evlisiniz? ____Ay ____ Yıl
8. Bu sizin kaçınıcı evliliğiniz? İlk Evliliğim ()
İkinci Evliliğim () Diğer (lütfen açıklayınız) _____
9. Eşinizle evlenmeden ne kadar süre önce tanıştınız? _____
10. Eşinizle nasıl evlendiniz? Anlaşarak, kendi kararınız ile ()
Görücü usulü ile ()
Görücü usulü ile tanışarak, kendi kararınız ile ()
11. Çocuğunuz var mı? Evet () Hayır ()
Çocuğunuz varsa lütfen yaşlarını belirtiniz.

APPENDIX C

EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS-REVISED (ECR-R)

Aşağıdaki maddeler eşinizle ilişkinizde hissettiğiniz duygularla ilgilidir. Bu araştırmada sizin yalnızca şu anda değil, genel olarak **eşinizle** neler yaşadığınızla ilgilenmekteyiz. Her bir maddenin evliliğinizdeki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi ne oranda yansıttığını karşılarındaki 7 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde ilgili rakamı yuvarlak içine alarak belirtiniz.

	1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7							
Hiç katılmıyorum		Kararsızım/ fikrim yok						Tamamen katılıyorum
1. Eşimin sevgisini kaybetmekten korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. Gerçekte ne hissettiğimi eşime göstermemeyi tercih ederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. Sıklıkla, eşimin artık benimle olmak istemeyeceği korkusuna kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. Özel duygu ve düşüncelerimi eşimle paylaşmak konusunda kendimi rahat hissedirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. Sıklıkla, eşimin beni gerçekten sevmediği kaygısına kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. Eşime güvenip inanmak konusunda kendimi rahat bırakmakta zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7. Eşimin beni, benim onu önemsedığım kadar önemsemediğinden endişe duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. Eşime yakın olma konusunda çok rahatımdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. Sıklıkla, eşimin bana duyduğu hislerin benim ona duyduğum hisler kadar güçlü olmasını isterim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. Eşime açılma konusunda kendimi rahat hissetmem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. İlişkilerimi kafama çok takarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

12. Eşime fazla yakın olmamayı tercih ederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Benden uzakta olduğunda, eşimin başka birine ilgi duyabileceği korkusuna kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Eşim benimle çok yakın olmak istediğinde rahatsızlık duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Eşime duygularımı gösterdiğimde, onun benim için aynı şeyleri hissetmeyeceğinden korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Eşimle kolayca yakınlaşabilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Eşimin beni terk edeceğinden pek endişe duymam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Eşimle yakınlaşmak bana zor gelmez.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Eşim kendimden şüphe etmeme neden olur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Genellikle, eşimle sorunlarımı ve kaygılarımı tartışırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Terk edilmekten pek korkmam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Zor zamanlarımda, eşimden yardım istemek bana iyi gelir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Eşimin, bana benim istediğim kadar yakınlaşmak istemediğini düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Eşime hemen hemen her şeyi anlatırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Eşimin bazen bana olan duygularını sebepsiz yere değiştirdiğini hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Başımdan geçenleri eşimle konuşurum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Çok yakın olma arzumu bazen insanları korkutup uzaklaştırır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Eşim benimle çok yakınlaştığında gergin hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Eşim beni yakından tanırsa, “gerçek ben”i sevmeyeceğinden korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Eşime güvenip inanma konusunda rahatımdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Eşimden ihtiyaç duyduğum şefkat ve desteği görememek beni öfkelenendir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Eşime güvenip dayanmak benim için kolaydır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

33. Başka insanlara denk olamamaktan endişe duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Eşime şefkat göstermek benim için kolaydır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. Eşim beni sadece kızgın olduğumda önemser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Eşim beni ve ihtiyaçlarımı gerçekten anlar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



APPENDIX D

INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Aşağıda bireylerin başka bireyler aracılığıyla duygularını nasıl düzenlediklerini gösteren ifadeler bulunmaktadır. Bu ölçekte doğru veya yanlış cevap yoktur. Önemli olan verdiğiniz yanıtın sizi ne kadar doğru yansıttığıdır. Lütfen her bir maddeyi dikkatlice okuyun ve her biri için o ifadenin sizin için ne kadar doğru olduğunu **1'den= "Kesinlikle doğru değil" den 5'e= "Tamamen doğru"** kadar uzanan beşli ölçek üzerinde **yalnızca birini** işaretleyerek belirtin.

1-----	2-----	3-----	4-----	5-----
Kesinlikle doğru değil	Çok az doğru	Biraz doğru	Oldukça doğru	Tamamen doğru

1. Başka kişilerin duygularıyla nasıl baş ettiğini öğrenmek kendimi daha iyi hissetmemi sağlar.	1---2---3---4---5
2. Başka kişilerin bana işlerin görüldüğü kadar kötü olmadığını belirtmeleri üzgün/mutsuz ruh halimle baş etmeme yardımcı olur.	1---2---3---4---5
3. Mutluluğumu paylaşmak istediğimde başka insanların yanında olmak hoşuma gider.	1---2---3---4---5
4. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde, etrafımda bana şefkat gösteren insanlar olmasını isterim.	1---2---3---4---5
5. Endişeli olduğum zamanlarda başka bir kişinin bu işlerle nasıl baş edileceğine dair fikirlerini duymak bana iyi gelir.	1---2---3---4---5
6. Sevinçli olduğumda hayatımdaki önemli kişilerle birlikte olmak hoşuma gider.	1---2---3---4---5
7. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde benden daha kötü durumda kişilerin olduğunun hatırlatılması bana iyi gelir.	1---2---3---4---5
8. Keyifli olduğumda, başkalarıyla birlikte olmak beni daha da keyiflendirir.	1---2---3---4---5
9. Kendimi kötü hissetmek genellikle, bana anlayış gösterecek kişilerle iletişime geçmeme neden olur.	1---2---3---4---5
10. Kendimi kötü hissettiğimde başka kişilerin bana işlerin şimdikinden çok daha kötü sonuçlanmış olabileceğini fark ettirmesi daha iyi hissetmemi sağlar.	1---2---3---4---5
11. Hayal kırıklığına uğradığımda başka insanların aynı durumla nasıl başa çıkacaklarını bilmek bana yardımcı olur.	1---2---3---4---5
12. Keyifsiz olduğumda rahatlamak için başka insanlara yönelirim.	1---2---3---4---5
13. Mutluluk bulaşıcı olduğundan mutlu olduğumda çevremde başka insanlar da olsun isterim.	1---2---3---4---5

14. Kızgın olduğumda başkaları bana endişelenmememi söyleyerek beni yatıştırabilir.	1---2---3---4---5
15. Üzgün olduğumda başka insanların benzer duygularla nasıl baş etmiş olduklarını duymak bana iyi gelir.	1---2---3---4---5
16. Üzgün/mutsuz olduğumda sadece sevdiğimi bilmek için çevremde başka insanlar olsun isterim.	1---2---3---4---5
17. Kaygılı olduğumda insanların telaşlanmamamı söylemesi beni sakinleştirir.	1---2---3---4---5
18. Sevinçli olduğumda, onları da mutlu etmek için çevremdeki insanlara yönelirim.	1---2---3---4---5
19. Üzülüşümde teselli görmek amacıyla çevremdeki başka insanlara yönelirim.	1---2---3---4---5
20. Eğer kötü hissediyorsam, başka insanların benim durumumda ne yapacaklarını bilmeyi isterim.	1---2---3---4---5

APPENDIX E

DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE

Sample items:

- Evlendiğiniz için hiç pişmanlık duyar mısınız?

Her zaman	Hemen hemen her zaman	Zaman zaman	Ara sıra	Nadiren	Hiçbir zaman
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Eşinizi öper misiniz?

Her gün	Hemen hemen her gün	Ara sıra	Nadiren	Hiçbir zaman
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>