

EFFECTS OF SHAME AND SELF-FORGIVENESS ON MENTAL HEALTH OF
GAY MEN IN TURKEY: A MINORITY STRESS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF SHAME AND SELF-FORGIVENESS ON MENTAL HEALTH OF GAY MEN IN TURKEY: A MINORITY STRESS PERSPECTIVE

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The present master's thesis aimed to investigate the relations between minority stress processes (i.e., distal stressors and proximal stressors) and mental health outcomes (i.e., depression, anxiety, and non-suicidal self-injury [NSSI]) as well as the mediating roles of shame and forgiveness of self in these associations among gay men in Turkey. Data were collected from 200 gay men aged between 18 and 48. The results of the study indicated that while both distal and proximal minority stress processes predicted depression and anxiety among gay men in Turkey, only distal stressors were found as a significant predictor of NSSI. The findings of the mediation analyses revealed that shame and forgiveness of self sequentially mediated the associations of proximal stressors with depression and anxiety. The mediator roles of shame and forgiveness of self in the relation between proximal stressors and NSSI were insignificant. Similarly, findings regarding the mediation analyses did not support the mediator roles of shame and forgiveness of self in the relations between distal stress processes and mental health outcomes. The results of

the current study were discussed in the light of the existing literature. Strengths, limitations, and clinical implications of the current study were presented.

Keywords: Minority Stress, Shame, Forgiveness of Self, Gay Men, Mental Health



ÖZ

UTANCIN VE KENDİNİ AFFETMENİN TÜRKİYE'DEKİ EŞCİNSEL ERKEKLERİN RUH SAĞLIĞINA ETKİLERİ: AZINLIK STRESİ PERSPEKTİFİ

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Bu yüksek lisans tez çalışmasının amacı Türkiye'deki eşcinsel erkeklerin deneyimlediği azınlık stresi süreçleri ve zihinsel sağlık sorunları arasındaki ilişkileri incelemek ve utanç ile kendini affetmenin bu ilişkilerdeki aracı değişken rollerine bakmaktır. Çalışmanın örneklemini kendini eşcinsel olarak tanımlayan ve yaşları 18 ile 48 arasında değişen 200 erkekten oluşmuştur. Bulgular hem uzak hem de yakın azınlık stresi süreçlerinin depresyon ve kaygıyı yordadığını ancak sadece uzak stresörlerin kasıtlı kendine zarar verme davranışlarını yordadığını göstermiştir. Aracı değişken analizleri yakın stresörlerle depresyon ve kaygı arasındaki ilişkilerde utanç ve kendini affetmenin sırasıyla aracı değişken rolü üstlendiğini ancak yakın stresörlerle kasıtlı kendine zarar verme davranışları arasındaki ilişkide bu rolün anlamsız olduğunu göstermiştir. Benzer şekilde aracı değişken analizlerinin sonuçlarında utanç ve kendini affetmenin uzak stresörlerle ruh sağlığı sorunları arasındaki ilişkilerde aracılık etmediği bulunmuştur. Çalışmanın bulguları ilgili alan yazın ışığında tartışılmış; ek olarak çalışmanın güçlü

yönleri, sınırlılıkları ve klinik uygulama alanları tartışılmış ve gelecek çalışmalar için çeşitli öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Azınlık Stresi, Utanç, Kendini Affetme, Eşcinsel Erkekler, Ruh Sağlığı





To all gay men...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Every gay and lesbian person who has been lucky enough to survive the turmoil of growing up is a survivor. Survivors always have an obligation to those who will face the same challenges.”

Bob Paris

There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of sexual identity for mental health. It is now well established from a variety of studies (e.g., Gilman et al., 2001), that lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals experience more symptoms of both internalizing and externalizing mental health problems relative to heterosexual people. Among the wide spectrum of internalizing disorders, a great deal of previous research has predominantly focused on anxiety, depression, and suicidality (e.g., Plöderl & Tremblay, 2015). Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is another significant yet overlooked internalizing problem for which sexual minorities are at higher risk, as well (e.g., Batejan, Jarvi, & Swenson, 2015). Several researchers (e.g., Meyer, 2003; Hatzenbuehler, 2009) have attempted to theoretically explain the mechanisms by which sexual minorities are resulted in poorer mental health outcomes. In this section, firstly, a brief literature review about the link between sexual orientation and internalizing mental health problems (e.g., depression, NSSI) will be provided, followed by existing theoretical explanations, mediators of the link, and finally by presentation of the model tested in this thesis.

1.1. Sexual Orientation and Mental Health

As previously stated, there is a large number of published studies which found that LGB individuals have an elevated prevalence of such internalizing problems as depression, anxiety, and suicidality as compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Gilman et al., 2001; Cochran & Mays, 2000; Jorm, Korten, Rodgers, Jacomb, & Christensen, 2002; King et al., 2008; Plöderl & Tremblay, 2015; Semylen, King, Varney, & Hagger-Johnson, 2016; Hottes, Bogaert, Rhodes, Brennan, & Gesink, 2016; Batejan, Jarvi, & Swenson, 2015). For example, a population-based study reported that in comparison with heterosexual people, sexual minorities have higher one-year prevalence of suicidal thoughts and plans, anxiety, and of mood disorders (Gilman et al., 2001). Similarly, in another population-based study, it was found that men engaging in same-sex sexual relationships are more likely to have symptoms of major depression and panic attack than men in opposite-sex sexual relationships (Cochran & Mays, 2000). Besides population-based studies, results of a community-based survey have revealed that same-sex partnered men are higher on the measures of depression, anxiety, and suicidality in comparison with their opposite-sex partnered counterparts (Jorm et al., 2002).

Findings from these single studies have been confirmed by a number of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. To determine the risk for having an internalizing mental disorder, a group of researchers have conducted a systematic review and found that risk for depression and anxiety is 1.5 times higher for gay men as compared to their heterosexual counterparts (King et al., 2008). In the same vein, in a much more recent systematic review, it was suggested that relative to heterosexual individuals, LGB people have an elevated risk for depression, anxiety and suicide attempts (Plöderl & Tremblay, 2015). Results of these reviews have further been confirmed by two recent meta-analytic studies in which it was reported that compared to heterosexual adults, sexual minority adults are twice more likely to have symptoms of depression and anxiety (Semylen et al., 2016), and have higher lifetime prevalence of suicide attempts (Hottes et al., 2016).

In addition to depression, suicidality, and anxiety, NSSI, defined as the self-inflicted, intentional destruction of body tissue without suicidal intent (International Society for the Study of Self-injury, 2018) is another significant yet overlooked

internalizing mental health problem for which a number of studies have begun to examine the prevalence rates among sexual minority population. Up to date, several lines of evidence have suggested that in comparison with heterosexual people, sexual minorities are at increased risk for engaging in self-injurious behaviors. An example of this is the study conducted by King et al. (2008) in which LGB individuals were reported to be at greater risk for NSSI than heterosexual adults. In a similar yet more recent meta-analytic review, the overall effect size for the relationship between sexual orientation and NSSI was found to be 3, indicating a medium-to-large effect (Batejan et al., 2015).

The studies mentioned thus far provide evidence that LGB adults have poorer mental health outcomes and are at elevated risk for developing mental health problems in comparison with heterosexual individuals. Having established this risk, researchers attempted to understand and explain the mechanisms through which sexual minorities are resulted in developing mental disorders more than heterosexual people.

1.1.1. Minority Stress Model

To identify the factors creating higher risk for sexual minorities in terms of mental health, in an extensive meta-analysis, Meyer (2003) proposed a model explaining the relations between different kinds of stress processes and mental health outcomes (see Figure 1). According to the model, circumstances in the environment such as income or education level (see Figure 1, box a) lead to a number of advantages or disadvantages in a person's life. The disadvantages inevitably create stress, which constitutes general stressors (see Figure 1, box c).

In addition to general stressors, minority status of people, that is being classified as a gender, ethnic and/or sexual minority (see Figure 1, box b), constitutes an important aspect of the environment and leads to extra and unique stressors such as discrimination or victimization (see Figure 1, box d) resulting from minority status. For instance, a Kurdish low-income woman who has same-sex sexual relationships may be exposed to general stressors due to poverty, as well as to such minority stressors as racism, sexism, or heterosexism because of her minority statuses.

Meyer named this type of additional stress exclusive to gender, ethnic, and sexual minorities as distal stressors (see Figure 1, box d), which include 1) discrimination, 2) victimization, and 3) microaggression, among which the latter was acknowledged in the model later (Meyer & Frost, 2013). In case of aforementioned Kurdish woman, for example, one of her job applications could be rejected because of her gender, sexuality, or ethnicity *only if* others perceive or classify her as a woman, lesbian, or Kurdish. Here, the discrimination objectively takes place independent of the woman’s identification with any of these identities and of appraisal of the event. Thus, as Meyer asserted, distal stressors are objective, real-life prejudiced and discriminatory events which do not require identification but require one’s classification as a minority by others, which makes them distant to the self.

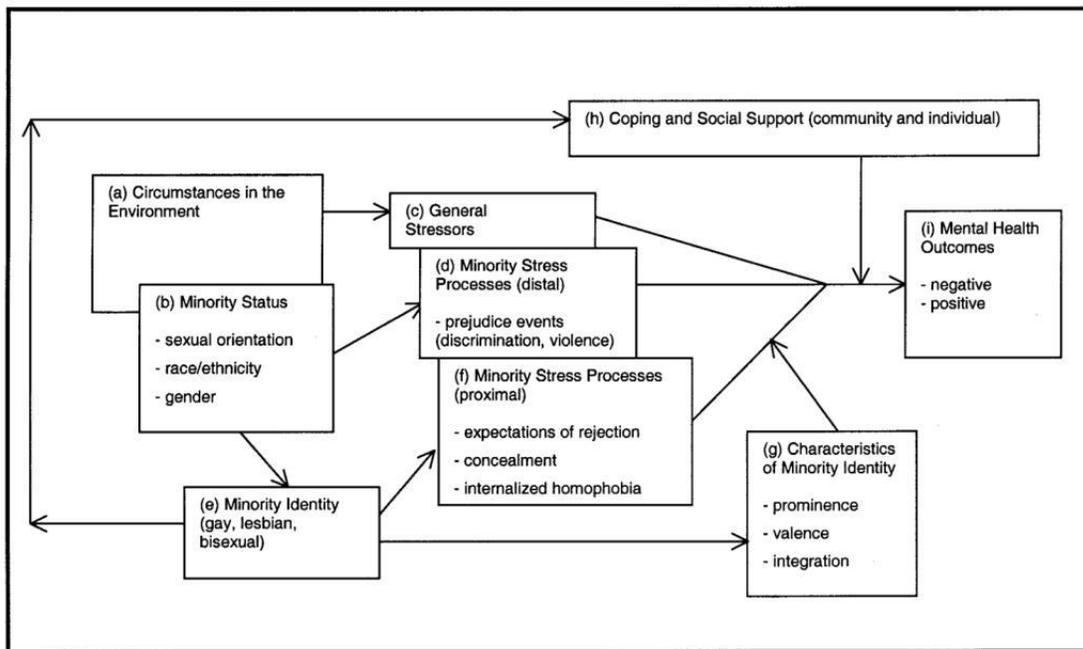


Figure 1. Minority stress model. Reprinted from “Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence.” by I. H. Meyer, 2003, *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674–697.

On the other hand, when a person identifies with a sexual identity (see Figure 1, box e), a different kind of stress process might operate. According to Meyer, when people

identify with a sexual identity, as a result of this identification, the appraisal or perception of one's self is likely to be altered in a way that the self is evaluated as a degraded and stigmatized minority in line with the society's view of sexual minorities. The negative evaluation of the self might cause extra stress processes such as internalized homophobia that is specific to people self-identified as a sexual minority. Returning to the example of Kurdish woman, for instance, if that woman identifies herself as lesbian, following the experience of discriminatory job application, the woman is likely to expect such negative treatment to occur again, to hide her sexual identity in order not to be discriminated again, and to internalize those negative attitudes. Unlike distal one, in this type of stress, discriminatory events are not real, rather they happen within the subject's mind.

Based on this, Meyer defined second type of minority stress process as proximal stressors (see Figure 1, box f), which comprise 1) expectations of rejection, 2) concealment of sexual identity, and 3) internalized homophobia, respectively. Since proximal stressors require identification and identification with a sexual identity brings about alterations in self-perceptions, Meyer considered proximal stressors as subjective and more proximate to self.

While presenting minority stress model, Meyer also mentioned the characteristics of minority identities, and coping and social support mechanisms as important determinants of stress processes. In terms of characteristics of identities (see Figure 1, box g), the meaning associated with a sexual identity or the centrality of an identity for one's self-concept can exacerbate or alleviate the impacts of proximal stressors. For instance, gay men whose sexual identities are central to them are likely to have higher scores on measures of proximal stressors as compared to gay men whose identities are less prominent (Thoits, 1999). Additionally, as the literature about stress suggests, coping and social support mechanisms (see Figure 1, box h) can buffer against the impacts of minority stress processes, as well.

In summary, Meyer attempted to explain the mental health disparities that sexual minorities experience from a social perspective by introducing the concept of minority stress and emphasizing the role of socially created stressors. However, Meyer has particularly focused on group-specific processes (e.g., discrimination, internalized

homophobia) and not provided information on how *exactly* distal and proximal stressors cause mental health problems among LGB population.

1.1.2. General Psychological Processes in Mental Health of LGB Individuals

On the other side, a second literature has endeavored to reveal the importance of general psychological processes (e.g., emotion regulation, interpersonal functioning) rather than group-specific ones. While doing so, researchers have accentuated common risk factors for adverse mental health outcomes that are shared by both heterosexual people and sexual minorities. A number of within- (e.g., Walls, Freedenthal, & Wisneski, 2008) and between-group studies (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2008) have demonstrated that certain general psychological factors (e.g., social support, family functioning) play significant roles in development and maintenance of mental disorders among sexual minorities and that relative to heterosexual people, certain psychological risk factors (e.g., hopelessness, low self-esteem) are higher among LGB individuals. Despite providing a rich understanding of the link between sexual identity and mental health problems, these two literatures pursued separately by researchers, for which an integrated approach was essential to get a better insight.

1.1.3. Psychological Mediation Framework

To address this gap in the literature, based on these two distinct literatures, Hatzenbuehler (2009) proposed a psychological mediation framework in which group-specific processes as well as general psychological processes were included. According to Hatzenbuehler, distal stress processes proposed by Meyer (2003) seem to alter social, emotional, and/or cognitive processes of sexual minorities, which in turn mediate the relation between minority stress and mental health burdens. While proposing his theoretical framework, he has substantially focused on the mediators having the strongest empirical support in the literature such as emotion regulation, rumination, social support, and negative self-schemas.

Hatzenbuehler provided a comprehensive insight by acknowledging the importance of aforementioned mediating factors; however, his primary framework fails to give sufficient consideration to proximal stressors despite strong empirical support from the relevant literature (e.g., Newcomb & Mustanski, 2010). Although he proposed an alternative integrative framework inclusive of proximal stress processes, as well, a serious weakness with this framework is that distal stressors are considered as the main predictors; while proximal stressors are regarded as mediators. While introducing minority stress model, however, Meyer (2003) presented distal and proximal stressors mutually to illustrate their interdependency.

Taken altogether, since minority stress model has not sufficiently captured the mediators of stress-psychopathology linkage; and psychological mediation framework has concentrated on a limited number of mediators and not properly encompassed the proximal stress processes, more complex models simultaneously involving both proximal stress processes and potential mediators are needed to better understand the link between minority stress and psychopathology.

1.2. Shame as a Mediator

1.2.1. Definition of Shame

One of the possible mediators of the minority stress and mental health link appears to be shame. In the current literature, several definitions of shame have been proposed by a number of researchers (e.g., Lewis, 1971; Tangney & Dearing, 2002; Barrett, Lewis, & Haviland-Jones, 2016). Although differences of opinion still exist, there seems to be some agreement that shame is a self-conscious evaluative emotion arising from either failures to meet standards, rules, and goals (SRGs) for which one accepts responsibility (Lewis, 2016) or from the perceived discrepancy between one's actual and ideal self (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2018).

According to structural model of self-conscious evaluative emotions (Lewis & Sullivan, 2005), SRGs are learned through socialization processes and are prescribed by culture, which cause children to internalize them as they grow up. Parents, grandparents,

families, peers, and such superordinate constructs as religion and education play essential roles in the process of acquisition and internalization of SRGs. When people engage in behaviors for which they see themselves as responsible and fail to meet either their own or others' SRGs, a focus on their global selves during which the self is evaluated negatively (e.g., inadequate, unlovable, deficient, defective) invariably takes place; and consequently the feelings of shame are evoked, causing individuals to desire for hiding, disappearing, or even dying (Lewis, 2016; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2018). Based on this, real or imagined disapproval from significant others, worrying about others' negative judgments, being criticized, and violating societal norms are reported as typical shame-eliciting situations (Tangney, 1992).

1.2.2. Association between Sexual Orientation and Shame

Considering LGB population, it is plausible to state that such shame-eliciting events are likely to be more pertinent for sexual minorities than for heterosexual individuals, due to negative social attitudes toward LGB individuals and internalization of those attitudes by sexual minorities. Support for this argument can be exemplified in the work undertaken by Allen and Oleson (1999) in which shame was found to be heightened among gay men who consider themselves breaking social norms regarding masculinity, not complying with the stereotypical male sex role, and disobeying normative sexual behaviors.

When Turkey is taken into consideration where Islam is the dominant religion and collectivistic values are adopted, it is conceivable to assert that Turkey has a collectivistic and conservative culture in which non-heterosexual sexual orientations are regarded as abnormal (Engin, 2015). As indicated earlier, since SRGs are prescribed by culture, SRGs governing Turkish society are likely to have more negative attitudes towards sexual minorities than do Western societies, due to abovementioned Islamic and collectivistic culture. A number of studies has proved this argument by showing higher rates of discrimination, prejudice, and victimization that LGB people are exposed in Turkey (Pew Research Center, 2013; Ozturk, 2011; KAOS GL, 2019). This heterosexist treatment can result in LGB individuals in Turkey to internalize those homophobic values and conceal

their sexual identities not to break social norms; while becoming hypersensitive to others' judgements during social encounters in order not to come to light, all of which are common shame-eliciting situations and proximal stressors, as previously mentioned.

Strikingly, however, among LGB individuals both in Western countries and in Turkey, prior to the work of Kaufman and Raphael (1996), the role of shame was largely unknown. In their pioneering work, shame was considered as a significant concept to be figured out for sexual minorities due to internalization of society's heterosexist beliefs by these individuals which imply the idea that they are unnatural, immoral, sinner, or sick. Kaufman and Raphael described shame as the intense feeling of "being exposed as something lesser and despicable" (p.4), and asserted that shame experienced by sexual minority adults is caused by the marginalization of sexual minorities, which disrupts the healthy development and functioning of the self, leading to disturbances in natural development of identity, self-esteem, and intimacy of sexual minorities.

Following the work of Kaufman and Raphael (1996), much more information has become available on the link between sexual orientation and shame, supporting the argument that heterosexist SRGs and internalization of them may lead to shame among LGB individuals. A considerable amount of studies have revealed a positive correlation between shame, and distal and proximal stress processes, including: heterosexism (Mereish & Poteat, 2015), internalized homophobia (Allen & Oleson, 1999; Greene & Britton, 2012), concealment of sexual identity (Chow & Cheng, 2010; Bybee, Sullivan, Zielonka, & Moes, 2009), and expectations of rejection (Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2009).

1.2.3. Relations among Sexual Orientation, Shame and Mental Health

Having confirmed the importance of minority stressors on sexual minority adults' experiences of shame, researchers attempted to examine the link between minority stress, shame, and mental health. Although a great number of studies has shown positive correlations between shame and mental health problems in general population (e.g., Kim, Thibodeau, & Jorgensen, 2011; Căndea & Szentagotai-Tăta, 2018; Hack & Martin, 2018; Mahtani, Hasking, & Melvin, 2018), only a few studies has considered and investigated the role of shame in mental health of LGB individuals. Those papers reported that shame

and mental health problems such as depression (Bybee et al., 2009; Hallman, Yarhouse, & Suárez, 2018), anxiety (Mereish & Poteat, 2015), and NSSI (McDermott & Scourfield, 2008) are related among sexual minorities.

However, the research on the subject has tended to focus on either stress-shame linkage or shame-mental health association (Mereish & Poteat, 2015) rather than examining three variables together to understand the possible mediating effect of shame. Up to date, only one cross-sectional study was found in the Western literature which have examined the mediator role of shame in the association between minority stressors and mental health; and it was reported that shame mediates the relation between distal and proximal stressors and depression and anxiety (Mereish & Poteat, 2015). Similarly, in the current Turkish literature, only one study was found investigating the mediator role of shame; and it was reported that shame mediates the relation between internalized homophobia and depression (Baydoğan, 2019). Yet, the paper does not take into account other minority stressors such as expectations of rejection or victimization. A more comprehensive study would include all distal and proximal stressors to investigate whether shame mediates the relation between other stressors and depression.

Overall, whilst some research has been carried out to show the significance of shame, no single study exists which includes both distal and proximal stressors, and examines the mediator role of shame in the association between minority stress processes and mental health of sexual minorities in Turkey, in spite of its adverse impacts on mental health.

1.3. Self-Forgiveness as an Antidote to Shame

1.3.1. Definition of Self-Forgiveness

Because shame is a strong aversive emotion with debilitating effects on mental health, during the past thirty years, researchers have shown an increasing interest in approaches which might eliminate the detrimental effects of shame. Self-forgiveness has recently been found to be one of the possible antidotes against shame and its negative impacts on mental health (Fisher & Exline, 2010). Widely varying definitions of self-

forgiveness stemming from diverse theories have emerged in the literature (e.g., Enright & The Human Development Study Group, 1996; Hall & Fincham, 2005; Davis et al., 2015). One of the definitions of self-forgiveness was contended by Thompson and colleagues (2005) who considered self-forgiveness as a dispositional response to a faulty behavior. According to them, self-forgiveness, under the umbrella term forgiveness, is defined as:

The framing of a perceived transgression such that one's responses to the transgressor, transgression, and sequelae of the transgression are transformed from negative to neutral, or positive. The source of a transgression, and therefore the object of forgiveness, may be *oneself* [emphasis added], another person or persons, or a situation that one views as being beyond anyone's control (e.g., an illness, "fate", or a natural disaster) (p. 318).

This definition of self-forgiveness implies the notion that acknowledgement of the perceived faulty behavior, and negative reactions subsequent to this behavior are prerequisites for self-forgiveness to take place. Therefore, the aim of self-forgiveness is detaching the reverse association between negative responses and positive self-regard (Wenzel, Woodyatt, & Hedrick, 2012) rather than simply avoiding taking responsibility by pardoning or excusing the transgression, which is referred as pseudo self-forgiveness (Hall & Fincham, 2005). Having engaged in a transgression and admitted responsibility, a person is likely to experience a number of negative emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions such as self-hatred, guilt, and self-injury, which are later exchanged with neutral or positive ones with the help of self-forgiveness (Woodyatt, Worthington, Wenzel, & Griffin, 2017).

1.3.2. Association of Self-Forgiveness with Shame and Mental Health

As was mentioned previously, since shame is an emotion elicited by failures to meet SRGs, it is also found to be one of the potential emotional responses following a transgression, which made several researchers to examine the relation between shame and self-forgiveness. Not surprisingly, a great deal of previously published studies (Carpenter, Tignor, Tsang, & Willett, 2016; Fisher & Exline, 2006; Macaskill, 2012; McGaffin, Lyons, & Deane, 2013; Strelan, 2007; Ranganadhan & Todorov, 2010) have reported that a moderate negative correlation exists between shame and dispositional self-forgiveness in general population.

In addition to that, data from several sources have revealed that self-forgiveness is negatively correlated with depression (Cheavens, Cukrowicz, Hansen, & Mitchell, 2016; Maltby, Macaskill, & Day, 2001; Seybold, Hill, Neuman, Chi, 2001; Thompson et al., 2005) and anxiety (Macaskill, 2012; Thompson et al., 2005; Walker & Gorsuch, 2002); shame had an adverse impact, as previously referred. Confirming the positive effects of self-forgiveness and negative effects of shame on mental health, researchers attempted to conceptually explain the potential neutralizer role of self-forgiveness on the shame-mental health association.

1.3.3. Mediator Role of Self-Forgiveness in Shame and Mental Health Link

Based on the transactional theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), a group of researchers (Toussaint, Webb, & Hirsch, 2017) proposed stress-and-coping model of self-forgiveness and health. According to the model, self-forgiveness is regarded as an emotion-focused coping mechanism to overcome stressful experience of shame; and it can function as either a mediator or a moderator depending on the nature of the self-forgiveness. As illustrated by Grant and colleagues (2003), mediators are triggered *by* stressors; while moderators are regarded as characteristics of a person prior to a stressor. Because dispositional self-forgiveness is a dispositional response elicited *by* a shameful transgression that allows people to release their feelings of shame, self-forgiveness can be conceived as a mediator rather than a moderator in the relation between shame and mental health. Moreover, considering self-forgiveness both as a mediator and as an emotion-focused coping variable is in accordance with Hatzenbuehler's (2009) assertion that general psychological processes such as coping mechanisms can mediate the impacts of minority stressors on mental health. A number of studies have begun to examine the mediator role of self-forgiveness in general population. For instance, in one study, self-forgiveness was reported to mediate the relation between self-esteem and subjective well-being (Yao, Chen, Yu, & Sang, 2016). Similarly, self-forgiveness mediated the relation between spirituality and suicidal behavior (Hall, Webb, & Hirsch 2018); and the link between anger and depression in general population (Ascenzo & Collard 2018).

1.3.4. Impact of Self-Forgiveness on Mental Health of LGB Individuals

Despite their promising results, studies investigating the role of self-forgiveness among LGB population are very few in number. In one study, higher levels of self-forgiveness was found to predict lower levels of loneliness in gay men (Currin & Hubach, 2018). In the same vein, another study reported that self-forgiveness mediates the relation between shame proneness and self-esteem (Greene & Britton, 2013), showing the positive effects of self-forgiveness on sexual minorities' self-esteem. Yet, no single study has examined the mediator role of self-forgiveness in the association of minority stress and shame with mental health of LGB individuals. In other words, it is still not known whether shame and self-forgiveness mediate the relation between all minority stressors and mental health of sexual minorities living in Turkey.

1.4. Proposed Model by the Current Thesis

Considering all the literature mentioned thus far, the purpose of this thesis was to investigate the relations between minority stress processes and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and NSSI among gay men living in Turkey and to examine the effects of shame and self-forgiveness in these relations. Only men who identified themselves as gay were considered appropriate to participate in the study in order not to confound the results due to potential additional stress experienced either by lesbian women resulting from their double minority statuses, which are gender and sexual orientation, or by bisexual men resulting from their sexual orientation (Meyer, 2003). Since minority stress model (Meyer, 2003) postulates that characteristics of a minority identity (e.g., centrality, valence) might increase or decrease the impacts of minority stressors, identity centrality and identity affirmation were considered as covariate variables in the current study (see Figure 2). Accordingly, the hypotheses of the present study were as follows:

- 1) In terms of the relation between distal stressors, proximal stressors, and mental health outcomes in gay men in Turkey it was hypothesized that:
 - a. Distal stressors will predict symptoms of depression.
 - b. Distal stressors will predict symptoms of anxiety.

- c. Distal stressors will predict symptoms of NSSI.
- d. Proximal stressors will predict symptoms of depression.
- e. Proximal stressors will predict symptoms of anxiety.
- f. Proximal stressors will predict symptoms of NSSI.

2) In terms of the relation between distal stressors, proximal stressors, shame, and mental health outcomes it was hypothesized that:

- a. Shame will mediate the relation between distal stressors and depression.
- b. Shame will mediate the relation between distal stressors and anxiety.
- c. Shame will mediate the relation between distal stressors and NSSI.
- d. Shame will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and depression.
- e. Shame will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and anxiety.
- f. Shame will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and NSSI.

3) In terms of the relation between distal stressors, proximal stressors, self-forgiveness, and mental health it was hypothesized that:

- a. Self-forgiveness will mediate the relation between distal stressors and depression.
- b. Self-forgiveness will mediate the relation between distal stressors and anxiety.
- c. Self-forgiveness will mediate the relation between distal stressors and NSSI.
- d. Self-forgiveness will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and depression.
- e. Self-forgiveness will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and anxiety.
- f. Self-forgiveness will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and NSSI.

4) In terms of the relation between distal stressors, proximal stressors, shame, self-forgiveness, and mental health outcomes it was hypothesized that:

- a. Shame will mediate the relation between distal stressors and self-forgiveness and self-forgiveness will mediate the link between shame and

depression (Distal Stressors → Shame → Self-Forgiveness → Depression).

b. Shame will mediate the relation between distal stressors and self-forgiveness and self-forgiveness will mediate the link between shame and anxiety (Distal Stressors → Shame → Self-Forgiveness → Anxiety).

c. Shame will mediate the relation between distal stressors and self-forgiveness and self-forgiveness will mediate the link between shame and NSSI (Distal Stressors → Shame → Self-Forgiveness → NSSI).

d. Shame will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and self-forgiveness and self-forgiveness will mediate the link between shame and depression (Proximal Stressors → Shame → Self-Forgiveness → Depression).

e. Shame will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and self-forgiveness and self-forgiveness will mediate the link between shame and anxiety (Proximal Stressors → Shame → Self-Forgiveness → Anxiety).

f. Shame will mediate the relation between proximal stressors and self-forgiveness and self-forgiveness will mediate the link between shame and NSSI (Proximal Stressors → Shame → Self-Forgiveness → NSSI).

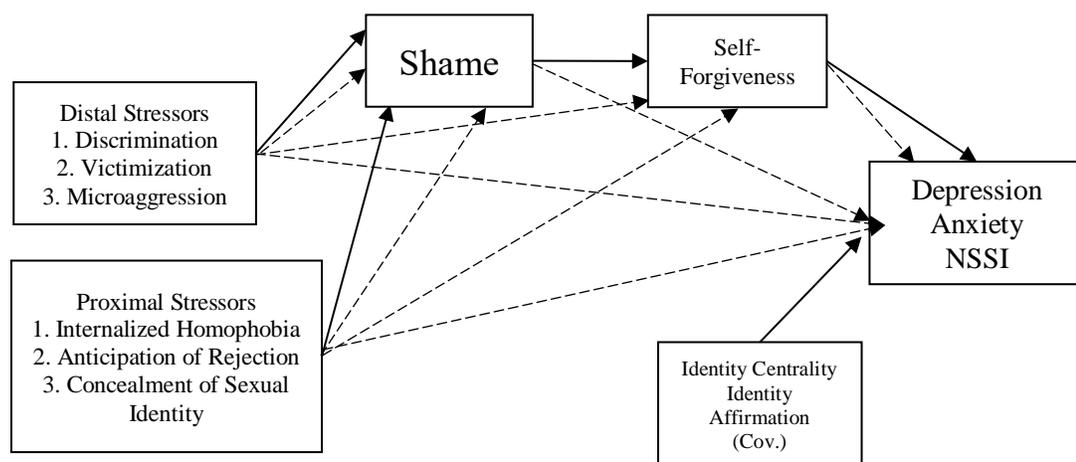


Figure 2. The proposed model: Shame and self-forgiveness mediate the association of distal and proximal stressors with mental health outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1. Participants

The data were collected from 304 men by an online questionnaire battery delivered via “Qualtrics”. However, for the purpose of the current study, 38 participants who indicated their sexual orientation as bisexual or other were excluded before the analyses. Three other participants who reported their age as either 16 or 17 were excluded, as well. Also, 63 other participants marking choices other than the true ones for two bogus questions measuring inattentive responding were excluded. Thus, the sample of the current study consisted of 200 men who identified themselves as gay and whose ages ranged between 18 and 48 ($M = 24.45$, $SD = 4.66$).

Of 200 participants, 67 of them were high school (33.5%), 5 of them were college (2.5%), 100 of them were university (50%), 21 of them were master (10.5%), and 7 of them were doctorate (3.5%) graduates. Majority of the participants were single ($n = 188$, 94%), 11 of them reported that they are married or cohabiting with their partner (5.5%), and one participant were separated/divorced (0.5%). Sixty-two point five percent of the participants ($n = 125$) reported their perceived income level as middle, 29.5% as low ($n = 59$), and 8% as high ($n = 16$). One hundred and thirty-four participants (67%) indicated that they live in a metropolis, 37 of them in a city (18.5%), 25 of them in a town (12.5%), and 4 of them in a village (2%). None of the participants had children. Sixty-one participants indicated that they are religious (30.5%), whereas 139 of them indicated that they are not religious (69.5%). While 56 participants (28%) reported that they have a mental problem for which they seek treatment, 17 of them (8.5%) indicated that they have

a physical illness that requires medical help. In terms of sexual identity-related variables, 90% of the participants ($n = 180$) reported that they have disclosed their identity to at least one person. Among the ones who disclosed their identity, 42.5% of them ($n = 85$) reported the time of their first disclosure as five years ago, 19% of them ($n = 38$) as two years ago, 12% of them ($n = 24$) as 10 years ago, 9.5% of them ($n = 19$) as last year, and 7% of them ($n = 14$) as more than 10 years ago. Participants who disclosed their identity were allowed to select more than one choice to indicate to whom they disclosed their identity. Among the ones who disclosed their identities, 170 respondents (85%) disclosed their identity to their close friend(s), 120 of them (60%) to their friend(s), 115 of them (57.5%) to their classmate(s), 64 of them (32%) to their sibling(s), 54 of them (27%) to their mothers, 43 of them (21.5%) to their coworker(s), 30 of them (15%) to their fathers and/or relative(s), and 15 of them (7.5%) to other people. Table 1 presents descriptive characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	min-max
Age			24.45	4.66	18-48
25 <	124	62			
25-30	60	30			
30 >	16	8			
Income Level					
Low	59	29.5			
Middle	125	62.5			
High	16	8			
Education					
High School	67	33.5			
College	5	2.5			
University	100	50			
Masters	21	10.5			
Doctorate	7	3.5			
Place of Living					
Metropolis	134	67			
City	37	18.5			
Town	25	12.5			
Village	4	2			
Marital Status					
Single	188	94			
Married/Cohabited	11	5.5			
Separated/Divorced	1	0.5			
Mental Health Problem					
Yes	56	28			
No	144	72			
Physical Health Problem					
Yes	17	8.5			
No	183	91.5			
Disclosure					
Yes	180	90			
No	20	10			

Table 1 (continued)

	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	min-max
Disclosure Time					
Last year	19	9.5			
2 years ago	38	19			
5 years ago	85	42.5			
10 years ago	24	12			
10+ years ago	14	7			
Disclosed to					
Mother	54	27			
Father	30	15			
Sibling(s)	64	32			
Relative(s)	30	15			
Close Friend(s)	170	85			
Friend(s)	120	60			
Classmate(s)	115	57.5			
Coworker(s)	43	21.5			
Other	15	7.5			
Religious					
Yes	61	30.5			
No	139	69.5			

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form consisting of two different parts was developed by the current author. The questions in the first part of the form aimed at obtaining participants' basic demographic information (e.g., age, place of living, income). The second part was intended to get information related to participants' sexual identity such as if, when, or to whom they have come out as gay. The demographic information form is provided in Appendix H.

2.2.2. Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Development Scale (LGBIS)

LGBIS, developed by Mohr and Kendra (2011), is a 27-item 6-point Likert type self-report scale with options ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (see Appendix B). The scale is composed of eight subscales measuring different phases of sexual identity development. Cronbach’s alpha values and test-retest reliability coefficients for subscales ranged between .72–.94 and .70–.92, respectively. For the purpose of the current study, *internalized homonegativity* (e.g., if it were possible, I would choose to be straight), *acceptance concerns* (e.g., I often wonder whether others judge me for my sexual orientation), and *concealment motivation* (e.g., I keep careful control over who knows about my same-sex romantic relationships) subscales were used to assess participants’ level of proximal stress, while *identity centrality* (e.g., my sexual orientation is an insignificant part of who I am) and *identity affirmation* (e.g., I am glad to be an LGB person) subscales were used to measure covariates. The minimum score is 27 and the maximum score is 162. Higher scores on each subscale indicate increases in what each dimension is supposed to measure.

Turkish adaptation of the scale was conducted by Kemer, Demirtaş, Pope, and Ummak (2017); the analyses revealed the same factor structure with eight subscales. Cronbach’s alpha values for subscales ranged between .58 and .86 for Turkish version. To assess convergent and divergent validities, Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) were used. Validity analyses revealed that *acceptance concerns* ($r = .29, p < .01$), *concealment motivation* ($r = .21, p < .01$), and *internalized homonegativity* ($r = .26, p < .01$) subscales had significant positive correlations with *negative affect* subscale of PANAS, indicating the convergent validity of LGBIS. In terms of divergent validity, the correlation of *positive affect* subscale of PANAS with *acceptance concerns* ($r = -.17, p < .01$) and *internalized homonegativity* ($r = -.19, p < .01$) subscales were significant. Also, correlations of SWLS with *acceptance concerns* ($r = -.21, p < .01$), *concealment motivation* ($r = -.14, p < .05$), and *internalized homonegativity* ($r = -.14, p < .05$) subscales were significant, demonstrating divergent validity of LGBIS. For the current sample, Cronbach’s alpha reliability values for

concealment motivation, internalized homophobia, acceptance concerns, identity centrality, and identity affirmation subscales were .79, .82, .82, .79, and .88, respectively.

2.2.3 Discrimination, Victimization, and Microaggression Index (DVMI)

Because no instrument in the current Turkish literature was found, an index was developed by the current author to assess gay men's experiences of discrimination, victimization, and microaggression. In order to develop the items of the index, first, previously developed instruments were reviewed to create a list of potential items. Next, a university professor was requested to review and improve the items. Based on her suggestions, the index was constructed compatible with the characteristics of Turkish gay population.

The final version of the index consisted of 19 items asking participants, because of their sexual identity, how often they are exposed to events of discrimination (e.g., because I am gay, I have been treated unfairly by my professors or teachers), victimization (e.g., because I am gay, I have been verbally insulted), and microaggression (e.g., because I am gay, people assumed I am attracted to them or willing to have sex with them) on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from "never" to "always" (see Appendix C). A total score of distal stress was acquired by summing up the scores obtained from 19 items. The minimum score is 19 and the maximum score is 95. Higher scores indicate higher exposure to distal stressors. For the current sample, Cronbach's alpha reliability value of the index was .93.

2.2.4. Guilt-Shame Scale-Turkish (GSS-TR)

GSS-TR, developed by Şahin and Şahin (1992), is a 24-item 5-point Likert type self-report measure with response options ranging from "never" to "extremely" (see Appendix D). The scale consists of two 12-item subscales, which are *guilt* and *shame*, asking participants to indicate how much they would be bothered in several situations. For the purpose of the current study, only *shame* subscale (e.g., having unexpected guests when your home is in a mess) was used to measure the level of shame experienced by the

participants. The minimum score is 12 and the maximum score is 60 for each subscale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of shame. For the purpose of the current study, one item with heterosexist wording was changed with a non-heterosexist version. Cronbach's alpha value for the shame subscale was .80. For the current sample, the Cronbach's alpha reliability value for shame subscale was .85.

2.2.5. Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS)

HFS, developed by Thompson et al. (2005), is an 18-item 7-point Likert type self-report scale with response options ranging from “almost always false of me” to “almost always true of me” (see Appendix E). The scale consists of three 6-item subscales (i.e., forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations) asking participants to indicate how they usually respond to transgressions. For the purpose of the current study, only *forgiveness of self* subscale (e.g., I hold grudges against myself for negative things I've done) was used to measure self-forgiveness levels of participants. The minimum score is 6 and the maximum score is 42. Higher scores indicate higher forgiveness of self. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was done by Bugay and Demir (2010); and the analyses showed the same factor structure with three subscales. Cronbach's alpha value for *forgiveness of self* subscale was found to be .64. To assess convergent and divergent validities, SWLS and Ruminative Response Scale (RRS) were used, respectively. *Forgiveness of self* subscale had a significant positive correlation with SWLS ($r = .21, p < .001$) and a significant negative correlation with RRS ($r = -.35, p < .01$). For the current sample, Cronbach's alpha value for forgiveness of self subscale was .66.

2.2.6. Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)

BSI, developed by Derogatis (1993), is a 53-item 5-point Likert type self-report scale with response options ranging from “not at all” to “extremely” (see Appendix F). The original scale consists of nine subscales asking participants to indicate how frequently they experienced different psychopathological symptoms during the course of last week.

Cronbach's alpha values for the subscales ranged between .71 and .85. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was conducted by Şahin and Durak (1994). Unlike the original one, Turkish adaptation of the scale revealed a five-factor structure which are anxiety, depression, somatization, hostility, and negative self. For the purpose of the current study, only 12-item *depression* (e.g., thoughts of ending your life) and 13-item *anxiety* (e.g., nervousness or shakiness inside) subscales were used. A score of depression and anxiety for each participant was calculated by dividing the scores obtained from each subscale by the number of the items in each subscale. Thus, the minimum score is 0 and the maximum score is 4. Higher scores indicate higher levels of depressive or anxious symptoms. Cronbach's alpha values for *depression* and *anxiety* subscales were .88 and .87, respectively. To assess convergent and divergent validities, UCLA-Loneliness Scale and Interpersonal Relationships Scale (IRS) were used. The correlation coefficients between subscales of BSI and UCLA-Loneliness Scale ranged between .13 and .36 ($p < .001$), indicating convergent validity of BSI. In terms of divergent validity, the correlation coefficients between subscales of BSI and IRS ranged between -.13 and -.36 ($p < .001$) indicating the divergent validity of BSI. For the current sample, Cronbach's alpha values for *depression* and *anxiety* subscales were .90 and .88, respectively.

2.2.7. Self-Mutilation Index (SMI)

SMI, developed by Tuna (2012), is a 15-item self-report index assessing whether and how frequent respondents engage in various types of self-injurious behaviors such as cutting, burning, hitting (see Appendix G). A final score is arrived by summing up the frequencies of self-injurious behaviors. Cronbach's alpha reliability value for SMI was found to be .67. For the current sample, Cronbach's alpha value was .70.

2.3. Procedure

After ethical approval was obtained from the Review Board of Middle East Technical University (see Appendix A), an announcement inviting people to participate to the study was posted on various LGB community Facebook groups. The announcement

is provided in Appendix I. Data collection started in 1st of April, 2019 and ended in 31st of December, 2019. All participants were provided with a voluntary participation form (see Appendix J) and a debriefing form (see Appendix K). One bogus question was added to LGBIS and another one was included in the BSI in order to detect and screen out inattentive responding. The order of the questionnaires was counterbalanced in order to avoid ordering effect.

2.4. Data Analysis

For statistical analysis, IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software was used. First, Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to investigate the linear relations among the study variables. Following this, series of mediation analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. Process macro of Hayes and Matthes (2009) was used for mediation analyses.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Analyses for the Measures

To examine descriptive characteristics of the measures of the current study, means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum scores for Discrimination Victimization and Microaggression Index (DVMI), Lesbian Gay and Bisexual Identity Development Scale (LGBIS) *concealment motivation*, *acceptance concerns*, *internalized homophobia*, *identity centrality*, and *identity affirmation* subscales, Guilt and Shame Scale (GSS) *shame* subscale, Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) *forgiveness of self* subscale, Self-Mutilation Index (SMI), and Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) *depression* and *anxiety* subscales were examined. Table 2 presents descriptive characteristics of the measures.

3.2. Correlational Analyses

Bivariate correlations among the variables of the current study were investigated by calculating Pearson's correlation coefficients. The analyses revealed that distal stress was positively correlated with depression ($r = .20, p < .01$), anxiety ($r = .28, p < .01$), non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) ($r = .30, p < .01$), and identity affirmation ($r = .23, p < .01$). On the other hand, the correlations of distal stress with proximal stress ($r = -.08, p > .05$), identity centrality ($r = .13, p > .05$), shame ($r = .09, p > .05$), and forgiveness of self ($r = -.09, p > .05$) were found to be insignificant.

Table 2. *Descriptive Characteristics of the Measures*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min.-Max.</i>
<i>Discrimination Victimization and Microaggression Index</i>	200	39.89	14.79	19-86
<i>Lesbian Gay and Bisexual Identity Development Scale</i>				
Concealment Motivation	200	12.37	3.87	3-18
Acceptance Concerns	200	10.36	4.34	3-18
Internalized Homophobia	200	7.59	4.23	3-18
Total Proximal Stress Score	200	30.32	9.26	9-54
Identity Centrality	200	17.17	5.80	5-30
Identity Affirmation	200	12.28	4.06	3-18
<i>Guilt and Shame Scale</i>				
Shame	200	37.06	9.03	14-55
<i>Heartland Forgiveness Scale</i>				
Forgiveness of Self	200	27.54	5.92	13-42
<i>Brief Symptom Inventory</i>				
Anxiety	200	1.00	0.71	0-3
Depression	200	1.49	0.89	0-3
<i>Self-Mutilation Index</i>	200	1.08	1.66	0-7

The other independent variable of the study, proximal stress, was found to be positively correlated with shame ($r = .34, p < .01$), anxiety ($r = .29, p < .01$), and depression ($r = .32, p < .01$); and negatively correlated with forgiveness of self ($r = -.21, p < .01$) and identity affirmation ($r = -.57, p < .01$). However, the correlations of proximal stress with identity centrality ($r = -.07, p > .05$) and NSSI ($r = .11, p > .05$) were not statistically significant. Shame, first mediator variable of the current study, was positively correlated with anxiety

($r = .30, p < .01$), depression ($r = .22, p < .01$), and NSSI ($r = .16, p < .05$); and negatively correlated with forgiveness of self ($r = -.30, p < .01$) and identity affirmation ($r = -.20, p < .01$). The correlation between shame and identity centrality was insignificant ($r = .09, p > .05$). The second mediator variable of the present study, forgiveness of self, was negatively correlated with anxiety ($r = -.34, p < .01$), depression ($r = -.36, p < .01$), and NSSI ($r = -.18, p < .05$); and positively correlated with identity affirmation ($r = .20, p < .01$). However, the correlation between forgiveness of self and identity centrality was statistically insignificant ($r = -.03, p > .05$). Identity affirmation, one of the covariate variables of the present study, was positively correlated with identity centrality ($r = .28, p < .01$) and negatively correlated with anxiety ($r = -.16, p < .05$) and depression ($r = -.25, p < .01$). Yet, its correlation with NSSI was statistically insignificant ($r = -.03, p > .05$). The other covariate variable of the current study, identity centrality, was not significantly correlated with anxiety ($r = .00, p > .05$), depression ($r = -.08, p > .05$), and NSSI ($r = .05, p > .05$). Anxiety, as one of the dependent variables of the current study, was positively correlated with depression ($r = .82, p < .01$) and NSSI ($r = .38, p < .01$). Finally, depression positively correlated with NSSI ($r = .31, p < .01$). Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients among the study variables.

Table 3. *Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Distal Stress	(.93)								
2. Proximal Stress	-.08	(.81)							
3. Shame	.09	.34**	(.85)						
4. Forgiveness of Self	-.09	-.21**	-.30**	(.66)					
5. Identity Affirmation	.23**	-.57**	-.20**	.20**	(.88)				
6. Identity Centrality	.13	-.07	.09	-.03	.28**	(.79)			
7. Anxiety	.28**	.29**	.30**	-.34**	-.16*	.00	(.88)		
8. Depression	.20**	.32**	.22**	-.36**	-.25**	-.08	.82**	(.90)	
9. NSSI	.30**	.11	.16*	-.18*	-.03	.05	.38**	.31**	(.70)

Note 1. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note 2. NSSI: Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

Note 3. Scores shown within the parentheses on the diagonal indicate the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the measures

Note 4. Proximal stress includes items of internalized homonegativity, acceptance concerns, and concealment motivation subscales of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identity Development Scale.

3.3. Regression Analyses

In order to test the first group of hypotheses, a series of regression analyses were performed by using SPSS. In each analysis, identity affirmation and identity centrality were entered into the regression equations in the first step to control their hypothesized effects.

3.3.1. Investigating the Predictors of Depression

In order to investigate the predictors of depression, two separate regression analyses were conducted. In both of the analyses, in the first step, identity centrality and identity affirmation were entered into the models to control their effects. Following that, in the first analysis, distal stress variable was included in the model; and in the second analysis, proximal stress variable was included in the model. The results revealed that in the first step, combination of identity centrality and identity affirmation contributed to the models significantly [$F(2, 197) = 6.79, p < .01$] and these variables explained 6% of the variance in depression. When their unique contributions were analyzed, it was seen that while identity affirmation significantly predicted depression [$\beta = -.25, t(197) = -3.52, p < .01$], identity centrality was not a significant predictor of depression [$\beta = .00, t(197) = -.09, p = .93$]. In other words, as identity affirmation levels of participants increased, their levels of depression decreased. In the second step of the first regression analysis (see Table 4), when distal stress was entered into the model, it significantly contributed to the model [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 15.79, p < .001$], and explained additional 7% variance in depression. More specifically, distal stress predicted depression [$\beta = .27, t(196) = 3.97, p < .001$] in a way that as level of distal stress increased, depression levels of participants increased, as well. Furthermore, in the second step of second analysis (see Table 4), when proximal stress was entered into the model, it significantly contributed to the model [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 10.04, p < .001$] and explained additional 5% variance in depression. More precisely, proximal stress predicted depression [$\beta = .26, t(196) = 3.19, p < .01$] in a way that participants with higher levels of proximal stress had higher level of depressive symptoms, as well. Therefore, based on these results, H_{1a} and H_{1d} were supported.

Table 4. Results of the Regression Analyses Predicting Depression

	Models 1 & 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	Step 1		Step 2		Step 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>
Identity						
Affirmation	-.25	-3.52*	-.03	-4.37**	-.1	-1.16
Identity Centrality	.00	-.09	-.31	-.39	-.03	-.42
Distal Stress			.27	3.97**		
Proximal Stress					.26	3.19*
<i>df</i>	2, 197		1, 196		1, 196	
ΔF	6.79		15.79		10.04	
Sig. ΔF	.01		.001		.01	
ΔR^2	.06		.07		.05	

Note. * $p < .01$ ** $p < .001$

3.3.2. Investigating the Predictors of Anxiety

In order to investigate the predictors of anxiety, two separate regression analyses were conducted. In both of the analyses, in the first step, identity centrality and identity affirmation were entered into the models to control for their effects. Following that, in the first analysis, distal stress variable was included in the model; and in the second analysis, proximal stress variable was included in the model. The results demonstrated that in the first step, combination of identity centrality and identity affirmation did not contribute to the models significantly, $F(2, 197) = 2.66, p = .07$. In the second step of the first regression analysis, when distal stress was entered into the model, it significantly contributed to the model [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 22.74, p < .001$], and explained

10% of variance in anxiety. More specifically, distal stress predicted anxiety [$\beta = .33$, $t(196) = 4.77$, $p < .001$] in a way that as level of distal stress increased, anxiety levels of participants increased, as well. In the second step of the second regression analysis, when proximal stress variable was entered into the model, it significantly contributed to the model [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 11.81$, $p < .01$] and explained 8% of variance in anxiety. More precisely, proximal stress predicted anxiety [$\beta = .29$, $t(196) = 3.44$, $p < .01$] in a way that participants with higher levels of proximal stress had higher level of anxiety symptoms. Thus, based on these results, H_{1b} and H_{1e} were supported. Table 5 presents the details of regression analyses ran to find out the predictors of anxiety.

Table 5. Results of the Regression Analyses Predicting Anxiety

	Models 1 & 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	Step 1		Step 2		Step 2	
	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>	β	<i>t</i>
Identity Affirmation	-.17	-2.31	-.24	-3.34*	.00	.00
Identity Centrality	.05	0.68	.03	.36	.02	.34
Distal Stress			.33	4.77**		
Proximal Stress					.29	3.44*
<i>df</i>	2, 197		1, 196		1, 196	
ΔF	2.66		22.74		11.81	
Sig. ΔF	.072		.001		.01	
ΔR^2	.03		.10		.08	

Note. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

3.3.3. Investigating the Predictors of NSSI

In order to investigate the predictors of NSSI, two separate regression analyses were conducted. In both of the analyses, in the first step, identity centrality and identity affirmation were entered into the models to control for their effects. Following that, in the first analysis, distal stress variable was included in the model; and in the second analysis, proximal stress variable was included in the model. The results demonstrated that in the first step, combination of identity centrality and identity affirmation did not contribute to the models significantly, $F(2, 197) = 0.44, p = .65$. In the second step of the first analysis, when distal stress was entered into the model, it significantly contributed to the model [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 21.17, p < .001$], and explained 10% of variance in NSSI. More specifically, distal stress predicted NSSI [$\beta = .32, t(196) = 4.60, p < .001$] in a way that participants with higher levels of distal stress were more likely to engage in NSSI. In the second step of second analysis, when proximal stress was entered into the model, it did not significantly contribute to the model [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 2.44, p = .12$]. Thus, based on these results, while H_{Ic} was supported, H_{If} was rejected. Table 6 presents the details of regression analyses ran to find out the predictors of NSSI.

Table 6. *Results of the Regression Analyses Predicting NSSI*

	Models 1 & 2		Model 1		Model 2	
	Step 1		Step 2		Step 2	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
Identity Affirmation	-.05	-.62	-.11	-1.57*	.03	.37
Identity Centrality	.06	.84	.04	.53	.05	.67
Distal Stress			.32	4.60**		
Proximal Stress					.14	1.56
<i>Df</i>	2, 197		1, 196		1, 196	
ΔF	.44		21.17		2.44	
Sig. ΔF	.648		.001		.12	
ΔR^2	.00		.10		.01	

Note. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$

3.4. Mediation Analyses

In order to test the hypothesized indirect effects of shame and forgiveness of self on the associations between distal and proximal stress and depression, anxiety, and NSSI, 12 single and six sequential mediation analyses were performed by using SPSS macro. In all analyses, identity centrality and identity affirmation were included as covariate variables, and 95% confidence interval based on 5000 bootstrap samples was considered. In the first group of analyses, the mediator role of shame in the links between distal and proximal stress (IVs) and depression, anxiety, and NSSI (DVs) was investigated by using Model 4 of PROCESS Macro. In the second group of analyses, the mediator role of forgiveness of self in the links between distal and proximal stress (IVs) and depression, anxiety, and NSSI (DVs) was examined by using Model 4 of PROCESS Macro. Finally, in the third group of analyses, the mediator roles of shame and forgiveness of self in the links between distal and proximal stress (IVs) and depression, anxiety, and NSSI (DVs)

were examined within the same model by using Model 6 of PROCESS Macro. In these models, shame was considered as the first and forgiveness of self was considered as the second mediator variable.

All the models in which distal stress was included as the independent variable were statistically insignificant. Therefore, H_{2a} , H_{2b} , H_{2c} , H_{3a} , H_{3b} , H_{3c} , H_{4a} , H_{4b} , and H_{4c} were rejected. Similarly, six models including proximal stress as the independent variable were statistically insignificant. Based on this, H_{2d} , H_{2f} , H_{3d} , H_{3e} , H_{3f} , and H_{4f} were rejected, as well. On the other hand, three models including proximal stress as the independent variable were statistically significant. Hence, only statistically significant three models were reported under this section. Table 7 presents the summary of the mediation analyses.

Table 7. Summary of the Results for the Mediator Roles of Shame and Forgiveness of Self in the Relation between Minority Stress Processes and Mental Health Outcomes

Independent Variable	1 st Mediator	2 nd Mediator	Dependent Variable	Mediation	Confidence Interval
Distal Stress	Shame	No	Depression	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Shame	No	Anxiety	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Shame	No	NSSI	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Forgiveness of Self	No	Depression	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Forgiveness of Self	No	Anxiety	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Forgiveness of Self	No	NSSI	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Shame	Forgiveness of Self	Depression	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Shame	Forgiveness of Self	Anxiety	No	Not significant
Distal Stress	Shame	Forgiveness of Self	NSSI	No	Not significant
Proximal Stress	Shame	No	Depression	No	Not significant
Proximal Stress	Shame	No	Anxiety	Yes	Significant
Proximal Stress	Shame	No	NSSI	No	Not significant
Proximal Stress	Forgiveness of Self	No	Depression	No	Not significant
Proximal Stress	Forgiveness of Self	No	Anxiety	No	Not significant
Proximal Stress	Forgiveness of Self	No	NSSI	No	Not significant
Proximal Stress	Shame	Forgiveness of Self	Depression	Yes	Significant
Proximal Stress	Shame	Forgiveness of Self	Anxiety	Yes	Significant
Proximal Stress	Shame	Forgiveness of Self	NSSI	No	Not Significant

Note. NSSI: Non-Suicidal Self-Injury

3.4.1. Mediator Role of Shame in the Relation between Proximal Stress and Anxiety

After controlling for covariates, the findings from mediation analysis revealed that shame mediated the relation between proximal stress and anxiety ($\beta = .006$, $SE = .002$, 95% CI [0.002, 0.01]). As Figure 3 depicts, proximal stress was significantly and positively associated with shame ($\alpha = .31$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.154, 0.466]), which in turn, was significantly and positively associated with anxiety ($b = .02$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.029]). That is, participants having higher levels of proximal stress were more likely to experience shame; and individuals with higher levels of shame were more likely to have symptoms of anxiety. In addition, both direct effect ($c' = .016$, $SE = .007$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.004, 0.029]) and total effect ($c = .022$, $SE = .006$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.009, 0.034]) of proximal stress on anxiety were significant. Overall, the proposed model was significant [$F(4, 195) = 7.03$, $p < .001$], and it explained 13% variance in anxiety through shame. Thus, H_{2e} was supported.

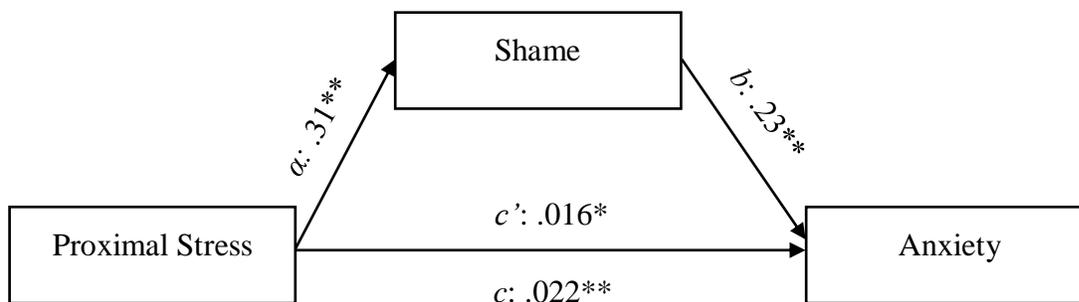


Figure 3. The mediating effect of shame in proximal stress-anxiety relation

Note 1. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Note 2. Unstandardized coefficients are reported

3.4.2. Mediator Roles of Shame and Forgiveness of Self in the Relation between Proximal Stress and Depression

After controlling for the effects of covariates (i.e., identity centrality and identity affirmation), the results of mediation analysis demonstrated that shame and forgiveness of self sequentially mediated the relation between proximal stress and depression ($\beta = .02$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.046]). As Figure 4 depicts, proximal stress led to an increase in shame ($\alpha = .31$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.154, 0.466]), which decreased the level of forgiveness of self ($b_1 = -.16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.256, -0.069]), which in turn, increased the level of depression ($b_2 = .04$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.063, -0.023]). That is, gay men with higher levels of proximal stress were more likely to experience shame which led to a significant decrease in their levels of forgiveness of self, which in turn, made them more likely to have depressive symptoms. In addition, both direct effect ($c' = .020$, $SE = .008$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.004, 0.035]) and total effect ($c = .025$, $SE = .008$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [0.009, 0.040]) of proximal stress on depression were significant. All in all, the proposed model was significant [$F(5, 194) = 9.56$, $p < .001$], and it explained 20% of variance in depression through shame and forgiveness of self. Therefore, H_{4d} was supported.

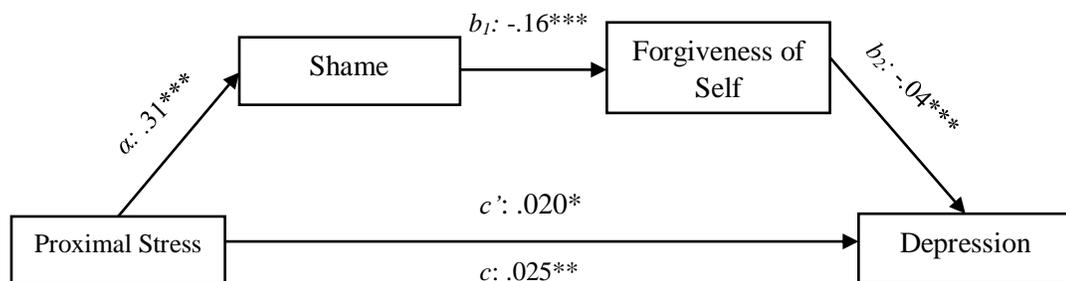


Figure 4. The mediating effects of shame and forgiveness of self on the proximal stress-depression association

Note 1. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note 2. Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

3.4.3. Mediator Roles of Shame and Forgiveness of Self in the Relation between Proximal Stress and Anxiety

After controlling for the effects of covariates (i.e., identity centrality and identity affirmation), the results of mediation analysis demonstrated that shame and forgiveness of self sequentially mediated the relation between proximal stress and anxiety ($\beta = .002$, $SE = .001$, 95% CI [0.001, 0.004]). As Figure 5 depicts proximal stress was significantly and positively associated with shame ($\alpha = .31$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.154, 0.466]), which was negatively associated with forgiveness of self ($b_1 = -.16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.256, -0.069]), which in turn, increased the level of anxiety ($b_2 = -.03$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.048, -0.015]). That is, gay men with higher levels of proximal stress were more likely to experience shame which led to a significant decrease in their levels of forgiveness of self, which in turn, made them more likely to have anxious symptoms. In addition, both direct effect ($c' = .015$, $SE = .006$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.003, 0.028]) and total effect ($c = .022$, $SE = .006$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.009, 0.034]) of proximal stress on anxiety were significant. Overall, the proposed model was significant [$F(5, 194) = 8.96$, $p < .001$], and it explained 19% variance in anxiety through shame and forgiveness of self. Thus, H_{4e} was supported.

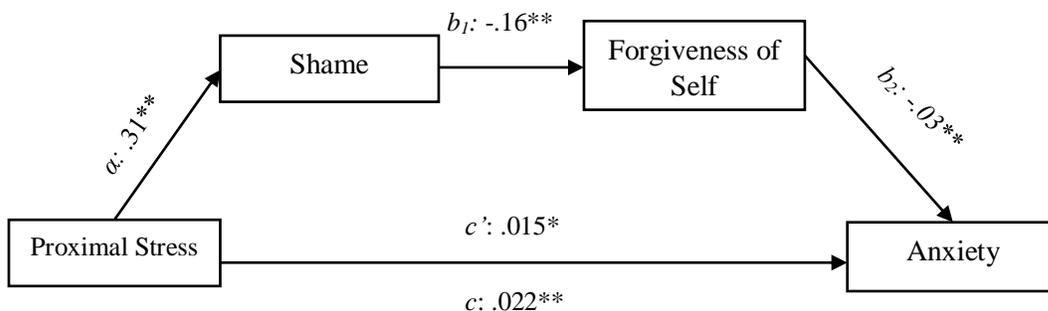


Figure 5. The mediating effects of shame and forgiveness of self on the proximal stress-depression association

Note 1. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

Note 2. Unstandardized coefficients are reported.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted for two main purposes. The first purpose of this study was to examine the relations between minority stress processes and mental health outcomes. For this purpose, based on minority stress model (Meyer, 2003), after controlling for the effects of covariates (i.e., identity centrality and identity affirmation), predictive roles of minority stressors (i.e., distal stressors and proximal stressors) on mental health outcomes (i.e., depression, anxiety, and non-suicidal self-injury [NSSI]) were examined via six different regression analyses. The second purpose of this study was to investigate the mediator roles of shame and forgiveness of self on the relation between minority stressors (i.e., distal stressors and proximal stressors) and mental health outcomes (i.e., depression, anxiety, and NSSI). For this purpose, first, correlational analyses were conducted to investigate the linear relations among the study variables. Secondly, after controlling for the effects of covariates (i.e., identity centrality and identity affirmation), 12 single and six sequential mediation analyses were conducted by using either Model 4 or Model 6 of PROCESS Macro.

In this section, research outcomes of the current study were summarized and discussed. Firstly, correlational analyses were overviewed. Following that, the findings of the regression analyses and mediation analyses were discussed in the light of the literature. Finally, clinical implications, strengths, and limitations of the current study and directions for future studies were presented.

4. 1. Correlational Analyses

Of the all correlational analyses, only one of them was unexpected; all other correlations were in line with the existing literature. Thus, in this section, only the unexpected finding will be discussed. The current study revealed that the correlation of distal stressors (i.e., discrimination, victimization, and microaggression) with proximal stressors (i.e., internalized homophobia, anticipation of rejection, and concealment of sexual identity) was insignificant, meaning that prejudice-based events were not associated with internalization of discriminatory treatment among gay men in Turkey. This finding supports neither previously published studies which have suggested a positive correlation between distal stressors and proximal stressors (Timmins, Rimes, & Rahman, 2019; Ramirez & Galupo, 2018; Hatzenbuehler, 2009) nor minority stress model (Meyer, 2003), which asserted that distal stressors and proximal stressors were interdependent.

A possible explanation for this might be that in Turkish culture where collectivistic and conservative values and Islamic norms are adopted, majority of gay men may not experience discrimination directly, rather they are likely to be exposed to *vicarious* discrimination during which they realize that other men who are perceived as gay are discriminated. As a result, they might spend efforts to conceal their sexual orientation in order not to be perceived as a gay man and discriminated. Indeed, feedbacks from the participants of the current study seem to support this argument. After filling out the online questionnaire battery, a considerable number of participants e-mailed the researcher and indicated that the questions measuring distal stressors were not suitable for them as they were not discriminated against by virtue of concealing their sexual orientation. Another possible explanation for this finding is that the index measuring distal stressors was developed for the purpose of the current study and its psychometric properties were not examined in detail. Although it had a high reliability value, this does not mean that it is a valid tool to measure distal stressors. Thus, the way distal stressors were measured might have affected the results.

4.2. Regression Analyses

4.2.1. The Predictors of Depression

Two separate regression analyses were conducted to investigate the predictors of depression. In both of the analyses, the impacts of identity centrality and identity affirmation were controlled by entering those variables into the models in the first step. Identity affirmation was found as a significant predictor of depression. More precisely, as participant's identity affirmation levels increased, their depression levels decreased, which supported previous findings indicating a negative relation between identity affirmation and depressive symptoms (Ghavami, Fingerhut, Peplau, Grant, & Wittig, 2011; Busby, et al., 2020). This result was also in line with one of the main tenets of minority stress model (Meyer, 2003) asserting that characteristics of minority identities might have significant impacts on mental health.

In terms of identity centrality and depression, in the current study, it was found that the predictive role of identity centrality on depression was insignificant. Previously published studies have predominantly focused on the role of identity centrality on sexual minorities' disclosure decisions and not included depression as an outcome variable (Griffith & Hebl, 2002; Ragins, 2008). Although a considerable amount of studies was conducted to investigate the impact of identity centrality on mental health, these studies have focused only on visible identities such as ethnicity or race (Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009) and provided contradictory evidence; while some of them reported a significant positive relation (Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone, & Zimmerman, 2003), others suggested negative or insignificant correlations (Eccleston & Major, 2006; McCoy & Major, 2003). Therefore, future research should further investigate the relation between identity centrality and depression among sexual minority population.

After controlling for abovementioned variables, the predictive impacts of distal stressors and proximal stressors on depression were examined by two separate regression analyses. The results revealed that both distal stressors and proximal stressors were significant predictors of depression among gay men in Turkey. More specifically, as gay men experienced higher levels of distal stressors or proximal stressors, their levels of

depression increased, as well. These results further confirm the idea of minority stress, which postulates that distal and proximal minority stress processes have detrimental impacts on mental health of lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals including depression (Meyer, 2003). This finding also broadly supports the work of other studies in this area linking minority stress processes with depression (Timmins, Rimes, & Rahman, 2019; Ramirez & Galupo, 2018).

4.2.2. The Predictors of Anxiety

In order to investigate the predictors of anxiety, two separate regression analyses were run. The impacts of identity centrality and identity affirmation were controlled in both of the analyses by entering those variables into the models in the first step. It was found that, unlike depression, neither identity centrality nor identity affirmation explained a significant amount of variance in anxiety. This outcome is contrary to that of Ghavami et al. (2011) who found a significant negative relation between identity affirmation and anxiety. This discrepancy could be attributed to the way anxiety and depression were operationalized and measured. In this study, anxiety and depression levels of participants were assessed by Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI). While BSI measures only behavioral and physiological aspects when it comes to anxiety, it captures not only behavioral and physiological but also affective aspects when depression is taken into account (Şahin & Durak, 1994). Because identity affirmation is an affective process during which one develops positive feelings towards one's identity and strong attachment to a social group (Phinney, 1992), it is likely that affective changes resulting from identity affirmation had an impact on affective symptoms of depression but had no significant impact on anxiety. In terms of the relation between identity centrality and anxiety, as previously mentioned, previous studies have not focused on mental health of sexual minorities while examining identity centrality.

After controlling for abovementioned variables, by two separate regression analyses, the predictive impacts of distal stressors and proximal stressors on anxiety were investigated. The findings demonstrated that both distal stressors and proximal stressors were significant predictors of anxiety in gay men in Turkey. More precisely, as gay men

experienced higher levels of distal stressors or proximal stressors, their levels of anxiety increased, as well. These results also support the concept of minority stress, which asserts that distal and proximal minority stress processes have deleterious impacts on sexual minorities' mental health including anxiety (Meyer, 2003). Additionally, in accord with the present results, previous studies have also revealed that minority stress processes predicted anxiety in sexual minority population (Timmins, Rimes, & Rahman, 2019; Ramirez & Galupo, 2018).

4.2.3. The Predictors of NSSI

Two separate regression analyses were conducted to investigate the predictors of NSSI. In both of the analyses, the impacts of identity centrality and identity affirmation were controlled by entering those variables into the models in the first step. The results showed that, similar to anxiety, neither identity centrality nor identity affirmation explained a significant amount of variance in NSSI. This finding is consistent with the findings of Busby and her colleagues (2020) who reported a nonsignificant correlation between identity affirmation and NSSI. In terms of the relation between identity centrality and NSSI, as was mentioned previously, earlier studies have not focused on mental health of sexual minorities while examining identity centrality.

After controlling for abovementioned variables, the predictive impacts of distal stressors and proximal stressors on NSSI were examined by two separate regression analyses. The results revealed that NSSI was significantly predicted by distal but not by proximal stressors. To state more precisely, as gay men experienced higher levels of distal stressors, their levels of NSSI increased, as well. This finding partially supports the concept of minority stress, which asserts that *both* distal and proximal minority stress processes have detrimental impacts on mental health of sexual minorities including NSSI (Meyer, 2003). Moreover, while the positive relation between distal stressors and NSSI was reported by a number of researchers (Muehlenkamp, Hilt, Ehlinger, & McMillan, 2015; House, Van Horn, Coppeans, & Stepleman, 2011), up to now, the relation between proximal stressors and NSSI was predominantly examined by researchers with qualitative methods (Alexander & Clare, 2004; McDermott, Roen, & Scourfield, 2008); there is a

scarcity of research using quantitative approaches (Fehling, 2016). The single, cross-sectional study in the existing literature examined the impact of internalized homophobia (i.e., one constituent of proximal stress processes) on NSSI, and it reported that internalized homophobia predicts NSSI (Rehman, Lopes, & Jaspal, 2020). Thus, to develop a full picture of the association of proximal stressors with NSSI, additional studies employing quantitative methods are needed.

A possible explanation for the discrepancy between predictive roles of distal and proximal stressors on NSSI might be provided by Emotional Cascades Model (Selby, Anestis, & Joiner, 2008). According to the model, following an emotionally loaded stimulus, the positive loop between rumination and negative affect leads individuals to engage in highly distractive behaviors such as NSSI. The model's explanation for NSSI appears to be compatible with Hatzenbuehler's (2009) assertion that rumination might mediate the relation between distal stress processes and mental health outcomes, during which distal stressors operate as emotionally loaded stimuli that cause negative affect and rumination, which in turn bring about NSSI. Further studies are needed to investigate the mediator role of rumination in the link between distal stressors and NSSI.

4.3. Mediation Analyses

4.3.1. Mediator Roles of Shame and Forgiveness of Self in the Relation between Distal Stressors and Mental Health Outcomes

All the models in which distal stressors were included as an independent variable were found to be insignificant. This finding is contrary to Hatzenbuehler's (2009) psychological mediation framework which has asserted that general psychological factors mediate the relation between distal stressors and mental health outcomes including depression, anxiety, and NSSI as well as to other studies which reported shame as a significant mediator of distal stressors-mental health linkage (Mereish & Poteat, 2015). There might be several explanations for this contradictory finding. First of all, as explained earlier, psychometric properties of the index measuring distal stressors were not examined in detail, which might have resulted in a measurement error. Secondly, as

indicated by the participants, distal stressors were not experienced as much as proximal stressors due to concealment of sexual identity, which might have led to an insignificant indirect effect of distal stressors on mental health outcomes. Finally, as it was mentioned in the introduction section, although distal stressors include objective, real life, and prejudice-based events, they are not exempt from the appraisal or evaluation of the subject (Meyer, 2003). Since the way participants appraise distal stressors were not measured and controlled in the current study, the appraisal of distal stressors might have affected their impacts on mediators and mental health outcomes. In other words, as previously stated, because shame is an emotion arising from failures to meet standards, rules, and goals (SRGs) for which one accepts responsibility, it is likely that gay men experiencing discrimination might have appraised discriminatory treatment as other's failures rather than their owns, which might have resulted in lower levels of shame. Similarly, because self-forgiveness was conceptualized as an emotion-focused coping mechanism following a shameful transgression, lower levels of shame might have caused insignificant mediating effects of shame and self-forgiveness on mental health outcomes.

4.3.2. Mediator Role of Shame in the Relation between Proximal Stressors and Anxiety

As anticipated, the results of the mediation analysis revealed that after controlling the effects of covariates (i.e., identity centrality and identity affirmation), shame mediated the relation between proximal stressors and anxiety. To state more precisely, as gay men experienced higher levels of proximal stressors, their levels of shame increased, which in turn led to higher levels of anxiety symptoms. This finding is parallel to those of Mereish and Poteat (2015) who also found that the association of proximal stressors with anxiety was mediated by shame. This finding is also in line with minority stress model (Meyer, 2003) and structural model of self-conscious evaluative emotions (Lewis & Sullivan, 2005). In minority stress model, proximal stressors were defined as the results of the process by which LGB individuals internalize society's negative attitudes. In a similar vein, according to structural model of self-conscious evaluative emotions, shame also includes a process during which one internalizes SRGs of parents, peers or more general

concepts such as culture and religion. Thus, proximal stressors are likely to increase the shame experienced by participants, which in turn increases the level of anxiety.

4.3.3. Mediator Role of Shame in the Relation between Proximal Stressors and Depression

Surprisingly, the results of the mediation analysis did not reveal a significant mediator role of shame in the association of proximal stressors with depression. This finding is contrary to that of Baydoğan (2019) and Mereish and Poteat (2015) who found that shame mediated the link between proximal stressors and depression. This discrepancy might be emerged due to the way the shame was operationalized in these studies. In the current study, shame was measured by Guilt-Shame Scale-Turkish (GSS-TR). While GSS-TR measures situational shame (Şahin & Şahin, 1992), abovementioned studies used questionnaires assessing trait shame, which might explain the discrepancy between results of the current study and earlier findings. Furthermore, considering the fact that in the current study shame did mediate the relation between proximal stressors and anxiety, it is likely that situational shame is related to anxiety but not to depression. Thus, further studies with a focus on the links between different types of shame (i.e., situational vs. trait) and depression and anxiety are suggested.

4.3.4. Mediator Role of Shame in the Relation between Proximal Stressors and NSSI

According to the results of the mediation analysis, shame did not mediate the association of proximal stressors with NSSI, which is not surprising considering the fact that in the current study, the correlation of proximal stressors with NSSI was insignificant; and that proximal stressors were found to be an insignificant predictor of NSSI. Although one study was found that shame has a significant role on the link between internalized homophobia (i.e., one constituent of proximal stressors) and NSSI among sexual minority population (McDermott, Roen, & Scourfield, 2008), the authors used a qualitative approach. Similarly, as previously mentioned, the relation between proximal stressors and

NSSI was also mostly examined qualitatively. Therefore, future studies should employ quantitative techniques to grasp a holistic understanding of the relations between proximal stressors, shame, and NSSI.

A possible explanation for this insignificant finding is that, in the current study, NSSI was measured by Self-Mutilation Index which assesses engagement in any kind of self-injurious behaviors in the course of the last year. Since NSSI peaks in mid-adolescence period (Gandhi et al., 2016), a scale which measures lifetime prevalence of NSSI would have yielded significant results.

4.3.5. Mediator Role of Forgiveness of Self in the Relation between Proximal Stressors and Mental Health Outcomes

All the models in which proximal stressors were included as the independent variable and forgiveness of self was regarded as the mediator variable were statistically insignificant. Although this was the first study investigating the mediator role of self-forgiveness in the association of proximal stressors with mental health outcomes, these results seem to contradict with that of earlier studies. For instance, a group of researchers (Yao, Chen, Yu, & Sang, 2016) reported that forgiveness of self significantly mediated the association of self-esteem with subjective well-being. In a similar vein, another study demonstrated the mediator role of forgiveness of self in the relation between anger and depression (Ascenzo & Collard 2018). However, since these studies conducted in general population, these findings cannot be extrapolated to sexual minorities and must be interpreted with caution.

Nevertheless, there might be several possible explanations for this discrepancy. Firstly, in the current study, based on stress-and-coping model of self-forgiveness (Toussaint, Webb, & Hirsch, 2017), forgiveness of self was conceptualized as an emotion-focused coping strategy to overcome stressful experience of shame. Without including shame in the models, insignificant mediator role of forgiveness of self is not surprising. In addition to that, Toussaint, Webb, and Hirsch (2017) asserted that there could be other mediating or moderating paths in the association of self-forgiveness with mental health

outcomes, which were not included in the current study and would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, in future investigations, it might be possible to include other potential mediating or moderating paths to develop a full picture of the relations between proximal stressors, forgiveness of self, and mental health outcomes.

4.3.6. Mediator Roles of Shame and Forgiveness of Self in the Relation of Proximal Stressors with Depression and Anxiety

Because previously published studies simultaneously included depression and anxiety as mental health outcomes (Meyer, 2003), depression and anxiety were discussed under the same section. According to the results of the mediation analyses, after controlling the effects of covariates (i.e., identity centrality and identity affirmation), shame and forgiveness of self sequentially mediated the relation of proximal stressors with both depression and anxiety. To state more precisely, it was demonstrated that proximal stressors led to an increase in levels of shame which decreased levels of self-forgiveness, which in turn caused higher levels of depression and anxiety among gay men. To the best of our knowledge, although this is the first study in the existing literature which investigated the mediator roles of shame and forgiveness of self within the same model, these results somewhat match those observed or asserted in earlier studies in several ways.

First of all, these findings are in accord with both minority stress model (Meyer, 2003) and structural model of self-conscious evaluative emotions (Lewis & Sullivan, 2005). As explained earlier, both proximal stressors and shame include a process during which one internalizes either society's negative attitudes or SRGs of others. Thus, proximal stressors are likely to increase shame experienced by participants, which was also reported by Mereish and Poterat (2015). Secondly, as it was pointed out in the introduction section, in stress-and-coping model of self-forgiveness (Toussaint, Webb, & Hirsch, 2017), forgiveness of self was conceptualized as an emotion-focused coping strategy used following a shameful transgression. The results of the current study, which demonstrated the mediator role of self-forgiveness in the link of shame with depression

and anxiety, are in line with this model. In other words, among the participants who had higher levels of shame, the ones who used self-forgiveness as an emotion-focused coping strategy experienced lower levels of depressive and/or anxiety symptoms. Thirdly and finally, one previously published study also revealed the mediator role of self-forgiveness in the relation between shame proneness and self-esteem of sexual minorities (Greene & Britton, 2013).

4.3.7. Mediator Roles of Shame and Forgiveness of Self in the Relation between Proximal Stressors and NSSI

According to the results of the mediation analysis, it was found that shame and forgiveness of self did not mediate the association of proximal stressors with NSSI. As indicated previously, in the current study, the correlation of proximal stressors with NSSI was insignificant; and proximal stressors were found to be an insignificant predictor of NSSI. Thus, it is plausible to state that this result is not surprising. Although earlier work has shown the associations of proximal stressors with shame and NSSI in LGB population (McDermott, Roen, & Scourfield, 2008) and the relation between self-forgiveness and NSSI in general population (Hirsch, Webb, & Toussaint, 2017), this is the first study which included both shame and self-forgiveness as mediator variables in the link between proximal stressors and NSSI.

This inconsistency between current findings and the results from the earlier studies may be related to the functions of NSSI among sexual minority population. As explained earlier, based on emotional cascades model (Selby, Anestis, & Joiner, 2008) and psychological mediation framework (Hatzenbuehler, 2009), it can be hypothesized that for gay men in Turkey, NSSI is a result of the ruminative process following exposure to distal stressors but not to proximal ones. While proximal stressors are defined as the subjective experience of discrimination, distal stress processes are objective events happening outside of the individual. Therefore, it is possible to hypothesize that NSSI provides emotion regulatory function for gay men in Turkey who are exposed to objective prejudice-based events. Additionally, as suggested by stress-and-coping model of self-forgiveness (Toussaint, Webb, & Hirsch, 2017), there might be some other moderator or

mediator variables in the relations between shame, forgiveness of self, and mental health outcomes, which were not included in the current study and might have affected the results.

4.4. Clinical Implications

The present study yielded various implications for clinical psychology practices and social policy making. First of all, distal minority stress processes were found to predict depression, anxiety, and NSSI in gay men in Turkey, supporting minority stress model (Meyer, 2003) which asserted that discriminatory treatment results in adverse mental health outcomes. Thus, when a gay man with symptoms of depression, anxiety, and/or NSSI applies to psychotherapy, psychotherapists are suggested to consider environmental conditions in which the client is or was exposed to distal stressors including discrimination, victimization, and microaggression. If the client has symptoms of NSSI, distal stress processes play an even more significant role because it was found that NSSI is predicted only by distal stressors. As previously explained, distal stressors comprise objective, real life, prejudice-based events which happen *outside* of the subject (Meyer, 2003). Hence, it could conceivably be hypothesized that for gay men experiencing distal stressors, the locus of etiology is *external* rather than internal. According to the three-dimensional model of minority counseling (Atkinson, Thompson, & Grant, 1993), if the locus of etiology is external, then, psychotherapists should be able to bend the frame of the therapy and to have different roles in order to ease client's suffering. In other words, rather than working on an individual-level to decrease symptoms, psychotherapists should also be able to act as an adviser, advocate, consultant or change agent. Having these counseling roles could eliminate the locus of etiology, prejudice-based events, by creating superordinate societal changes which will provide an egalitarian environment in which non-heterosexual sexual orientations are not discriminated against. Thus, clinicians having a gay client with self-injurious behaviors, as well as depressive and/or anxious symptoms, are recommended to be cautious before applying any kind of individual-level intervention and to improve their practitioner repertoire so as to include diverse counseling roles. In order to do so, psychotherapists are advised to reflect on themselves

regarding their own attitudes and biases against sexual minorities, be a part of LGB's non-governmental organizations, and to continue their education to become a culturally sensitive psychotherapist (Arredondo et al., 1996).

However, abovementioned suggestions do not imply the notion that individual-level interventions are not needed at all. As the results demonstrated, proximal stress processes were also found to predict depression and anxiety in gay men in Turkey, which reveals the importance of internal locus of etiology, as well. Therefore, while conducting psychotherapy with gay men suffering from depression and/or anxiety, it seems significant to consider and assess the proximal stress levels of clients, including internalized homophobia, anticipation of rejection, and concealment of sexual identity in order to better conceptualize the case and to provide treatment.

Moreover, as the findings of the current study revealed, shame and forgiveness of self sequentially mediated the association of proximal stressors with depression and anxiety. These findings may help clinical psychologists to understand the mechanisms by which gay men in Turkey experience higher levels of depression and anxiety. Based on the results, it can be suggested that while shame has a negative impact on mental health of gay men in Turkey, forgiveness of self has a positive impact on symptoms of depression and anxiety. Thus, at first, clinicians providing psychotherapy to gay men in Turkey should assess the shame levels of their clients, which might have negative impacts on their depressive and/or anxiety symptoms. While doing so, it seems important to also consider the relation between proximal stress processes and shame; for gay men in Turkey, feeling ashamed might be a result of the proximal stress processes. Therefore, rather than directly working on the feelings of shame, clinical psychologists are suggested to primarily work on the proximal stressors, which might eventually have a positive impact on feelings of shame. Gay affirmative therapy, defined as the psychotherapy practice that uses traditional psychotherapeutic techniques but originates from a non-traditional point of view (Maylon, 1982), might provide a guideline to practitioners while working on proximal stress processes (Davies, 1996).

When it is not possible to work on proximal stress processes due to client's current situation or when the client's level of shame does not decrease although proximal stressors are worked through, then, forgiveness of self could become a part of the psychotherapy

practice. As the results demonstrated, forgiveness of self mediated the associations of shame with depression and anxiety. Hence, techniques of self-forgiveness should be included in the intervention programs specifically developed for gay men suffering from depression and/or anxiety in order to eliminate the detrimental impacts of shame on clients' symptoms. The therapeutic model of self-forgiveness proposed by Cornish and Wade (2015) could provide a theoretical and practical framework to practitioners planning to implement self-forgiveness techniques. According to the model, self-forgiveness can be divided into four different components, which are responsibility, remorse, restoration, and renewal, respectively.

When working with gay clients with higher levels of shame, remorse component of the model seems to play a crucial role. Having accepted responsibility after a faulty behavior, as the findings revealed, gay men are likely to experience shame resulting from higher levels of proximal stressors. Since shame is an emotion during which the global self is evaluated negatively such as defective, it is impossible to reach self-forgiveness (Cornish & Wade, 2015). Therefore, in psychotherapy practice, it is important that feelings of shame are transformed into feelings of remorse (Cornish & Wade, 2015) in a way that one starts to evaluate his/her behavior as faulty rather than appraising one's whole self as defective. That is to say, one of the main aims of the psychotherapy practice with gay men suffering from higher levels of shame could be disconnecting the link between negative evaluation of the global self and symptoms of depression and anxiety with the help of remorse component of self-forgiveness.

Last but not the least, the findings of the present study inform not only clinical psychologists but also social policy makers about the problems of gay men in Turkey. The results revealed that gay men in Turkey experience distal minority stressors which mostly occur in public sphere such as schools, universities, workplaces, and hospitals. Thus, aforementioned individual-level interventions should be accompanied by societal level changes in order to create LGB-affirming public environments in which sexual minorities are not exposed to any kind of prejudice-based events. Policy makers should consider the findings of the current study while developing policies regarding sexual minorities.

4.5. Strengths of the Present Study

The current study has various strengths. To begin with, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study in the literature that examined the mediator roles of shame and forgiveness of self on the associations of minority stress processes with several mental health outcomes. Also, this is the first study in the Turkish literature which included both distal and proximal minority stress processes as predictor variables. In other words, this study was the first one which attempted to understand the mental health of gay men in Turkey from a minority stress perspective. Also, to our knowledge, in the Turkish literature, no study investigated the predictors of NSSI in sexual minority population. Lastly, gay men constitute a scarcely studied sample of the population, particularly in Turkey, which is another strength of the current study.

4.6. Limitations of the Present Study and Directions for Future Research

Despite its strengths and unique contributions, the current study is not without its limitations. First of all, the present study used a cross-sectional design; and the data were collected by self-report measures, which made it impossible to infer causality. Future studies are suggested to implement longitudinal and/or experimental designs and other data collection methods in order to better understand the cause-effect relations between study variables. Another limitation of the current study is about the sample characteristics. Because the sample of the current study predominantly consisted of younger gay men who were raised in a metropolis, the homogeneity of the sample might have decreased its representativeness of the population and the generalizability of the findings. Thus, future studies should be conducted with more heterogeneous samples including diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and other sociodemographic characteristics. Additionally, most of the results illustrated by the current study were first in the literature, which resulted in a lack of previous evidence. Hence, it was not possible to compare a considerable number of the findings of the current study with previous findings. Furthermore, the psychometric properties of the index measuring distal stressors were not

examined in detail. Thus, future studies should develop psychological measurement tools that can assess distal stress levels of LGB individuals in Turkey. Finally, although the results demonstrated worthwhile relations between study variables, a significant amount of variance in the outcome variables still could not be explained. Therefore, future studies should investigate other potential variables (e.g., rumination, community involvement, and resiliency) which might predict mental health outcomes of gay men in Turkey.

4.7. Conclusion

The general aim of this study was to examine the relations between minority stress processes, shame, forgiveness of self, and mental health outcomes. The current study demonstrated that, in accord with the main tenets of minority stress model (Meyer, 2003), minority stress processes predicted mental health outcomes of gay men in Turkey and that shame and forgiveness of self sequentially mediated the associations of proximal minority stressors with depression and anxiety. Hence, clinical psychologists working with gay men suffering from higher levels of shame and symptoms of depression or anxiety could benefit from these findings by integrating techniques of self-forgiveness into their psychotherapy practices. In terms of the mediator roles of shame and forgiveness of self in the relations between distal stressors and mental health outcomes, the current study yielded insignificant results. Thus, future studies should take other potential mediator or moderator variables into account while examining the impacts of distal stressors on mental health outcomes of gay men in Turkey.

To conclude, in spite of its limitations, the present study made unique contributions to the existing literature by being the first study that captured both distal and proximal minority stressors, shame, forgiveness of self, and NSSI as one of the mental health outcomes. Also, the current study partially supported minority stress model's (Meyer, 2003) assumptions and revealed the significance of shame and forgiveness of self on mental health of gay men in Turkey.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A. ETHICAL APPROVAL FROM MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

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ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

06 MART 2019

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Prof.Dr. Özlem BOZO

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Berk Can ÜNSAL'ın "The Effects of Shame and Self-Forgiveness on Mental Health of Gay Men in Turkey: A Minority Stress Perspective" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 100-ODTÜ-2019 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.


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APPENDIX B. LESBIAN, GAY, AND BISEXUAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT SCALE / LEZBİYEN, GEY VE BİSEKSÜEL KİMLİK GELİŞİMİ ÖLÇEĞİ

Aşağıda Lezbiyen, Gey ve Biseksüellerin (LGB) cinsel yönelimlerine ilişkin kişisel deneyimlerine dair sorular yer almaktadır. Siz cinsel yöneliminizi “lezbiyen, gey ve biseksüel” terimlerinden daha farklı kelimelerle tanımlıyor olabilirsiniz (örneğin; queer, panseksüel). Bu çalışmada, kullanım yaygınlığı nedeniyle biz LGB terimini kullanacağız. Eğer bu terim sizin cinsiyet kimliğinizi yansıtmıyorsa şimdiden anlayışınız için teşekkür ederiz. Lütfen bir LGB olarak şu anki yaşantılarınızı en iyi şekilde yansıtan seçenekleri işaretleyiniz. Soruları cevaplarken olabildiğince dürüst ve samimi olmanız araştırmanın bulgularının sağlıklı olması açısından önemlidir; lütfen **nasıl hissetmeniz** gerektiğini değil, **şuan nasıl hissettiğinizi** belirtiniz. Üzerinde gereğinden fazla düşünmeden, her bir soruyu verdiğiniz ilk tepkiye göre cevaplayıp diğer soruya geçiniz.

(1) Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	(2) Katılmıyorum	(3) Biraz katılmıyorum	(4) Biraz katılıyorum	(5) Katılıyorum	(6) Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1. Eşcinsel duygusal ilişkilerimi gizli tutmayı tercih ediyorum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
2. Seçme şansım olsaydı heteroseksüel olmayı seçerdim.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
3. Cinsel yönelimimden tam olarak emin değilim.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
4. Eşcinsel duygusal ilişkilerimi kimlerin bildiğini dikkatle kontrol altında tutuyorum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
5. Başkalarının cinsel yönelimim nedeniyle beni yargılayıp yargılamadığını sıklıkla merak ediyorum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
6. LGB olduğum için mutluyum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
7. Heteroseksüellere tepeden bakıyorum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
8. Cinsel yönelimime ilişkin fikrimi sürekli değiştiriyorum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
9. Başkalarının beni cinsel yönelimim nedeniyle yargıladığını bildiğimde rahat edemiyorum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
10. LGBlerin heteroseksüellerden üstün olduğunu düşünüyorum.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
11. Cinsel yönelimim kim olduğumun önemsiz bir parçasıdır.				1 2 3 4 5 6	
12. LGB olduğumu kabullenme sürecim çok sancılı geçiyor.				1 2 3 4 5 6	

13. LGB topluluğunun bir parçası olmaktan gurur duyuyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Biseksüel mi yoksa eşcinsel mi olduğumdan emin olamıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Cinsel yönelimim kimliğimin temel parçasıdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Cinsel yönelimim hakkında insanların ne düşündüğünü, bunun onları nasıl ve ne derece etkilediğini çok fazla düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. LGB olduğumu kabullenme sürecim çok yavaş ilerliyor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Heteroseksüellerin yaşamları, LGBlerin yaşamlarına kıyasla daha sıkıcı.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Cinsel yönelimim oldukça kişisel ve özel bir konudur.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Keşke heteroseksüel olsaydım.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. Bir birey olarak kim olduğumun anlaşılması için LGB olduğumun bilinmesi gerekir.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. Cinsel yönelimimi anlamaya çalışırken kafam çok fazla karışıyor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Cinsel kimliğim konusunda başından beri kendimi rahat hissettim.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. LGB olmak hayatımın çok önemli bir parçasıdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. LGB olmanın benim önemli bir parçam olduğuna inanıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. LGB olmaktan gurur duyuyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. Kendi cinsiyetimden insanları çekici bulmamın adil olmadığına inanıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6

**APPENDIX C. DISCRIMINATION, VICTIMIZATION, AND
MICROAGGRESSION INDEX / AYRIMCILIK, ŐİDDET VE
MİKROSALDIRGANLIK GÖSTERGESİ**

AŐađıda eŐcinsel bireylerin karŐılaŐtıđı bazı durumlar sıralanmıŐtır. LŐtfen tŐm hayatınızı gŐz ŐnŐnde bulundurunuz ve her bir maddeyi dikkatle okuyarak sizin iŐin gerŐekleŐme sıklıđını belirtiniz.

EŐcinsel olduđum iŐin...		HiŐ	Nadiren	Bazen	Sık sık	Her zaman
1	<u>Őretmenlerim</u> /hocalarım bana haksız muamelede bulundu.	1	2	3	4	5
2	<u>patronum</u> /iŐverenim/amirim bana haksız muamelede bulundu.	1	2	3	4	5
3	<u>meslektaiŐım</u> /iŐ arkadaŐım/okul arkadaŐım bana haksız muamelede bulundu.	1	2	3	4	5
4	<u>hizmet</u> sektŐrŐnde ŐalıŐanlar (mađaza gŐrevlisi, garson, barmen, banka memuru, tamirci vb.) bana haksız muamelede bulundu.	1	2	3	4	5
5	<u>yabancılar</u> (tanımadiđım kiŐiler) bana haksız muamelede bulundu.	1	2	3	4	5
6	bir sađlık veya eđitim sektŐrŐ ŐalıŐanı tarafından (hemŐire, doktor, psikiyatrist, psikolog, <u>terapist</u> , sosyal hizmet uzmanı, okul mŐdŐrŐ, rehber Őretmen vb.) ihtiyaŐım olmayan hizmetleri almaya zorlandım ya da bana hizmet verilmedi.	1	2	3	4	5
7	hak ettiđim halde zam/ <u>promosyon</u> /kidem artıŐı ya da iŐle alakalı baŐka Őeyleri alamadım.	1	2	3	4	5
8	<u>ailem</u> bana adaletsiz davrandı.	1	2	3	4	5
9	<u>heteroseksist</u> isimlerle (top, dŐnme vb.) Őađırıldım.	1	2	3	4	5
10	<u>benimle</u> dalga geŐildi, itilip kakıldım, baŐkaları bana sataŐtı, vurdu ya da zarar vermekle tehdit etti.	1	2	3	4	5
11	<u>sŐzel</u> olarak aŐađılandım.	1	2	3	4	5
12	<u>bir</u> organizasyona (dini topluluk, spor takımı vb.) dahil edilmedim.	1	2	3	4	5
13	<u>bir</u> organizasyon ya da etkinlik cinsiyete gŐre ayrıldıđında, kendimi oraya ait hissetmedim.	1	2	3	4	5
14	<u>insanlar</u> onlardan hoŐlandıđımı ya da onlarla seks yapmak istediđimi zannettiler.	1	2	3	4	5
15	<u>insanlar</u> bana kiŐisel sınıřımı/mahremiyetimi ihlal eden sorular sordular.	1	2	3	4	5
16	<u>insanlar</u> beni ilginŐ/enteresan/tuhaf buldular.	1	2	3	4	5
17	<u>insanlar</u> cinsel yŐnelim konusunu tartıŐırken beni fazla savunmacı ya da hassas olmakla itham ettiler.	1	2	3	4	5
18	<u>insanlar</u> benim bir erkek eŐcinsel stereotipine (moda konusunda bilgili olmak vb.) uyduđumu dile getirdiler.	1	2	3	4	5
19	<u>bir</u> baŐka eŐcinsel erkekle sıř o da eŐcinsel diye tanıŐtırıldım ya da ondan hoŐlanmam beklendi.	1	2	3	4	5

**APPENDIX D. GUILT-SHAME SCALE-TURKISH (SHAME SUBSCALE) /
SUÇLULUK-UTANÇ ÖLÇEĞİ (UTANÇ ALTÖLÇEĞİ)**

Bu ölçeğin amacı bazı duyguların hangi durumlarda ne derece yoğun olarak yaşandığını belirlemektir. Aşağıda bazı olaylar verilmiştir. Bu olaylar sizin başınızdan geçmiş olsaydı, ne kadar rahatsızlık duyardınız. Lütfen her durumu dikkatle okuyup öyle bir durumda ne kadar rahatsızlık duyacağınızı aşağıdaki ölçekten yararlanarak belirleyiniz.

Ne kadar rahatsızlık duyardınız?	Hiç	Biraz	Orduka	Epey	Çok
1. Bir tartışma sırasında büyük bir hararetle savunduğunuz bir fikrin yanlış olduğunu öğrenmek	1	2	3	4	5
2. Evinizin çok dağınık olduğu bir sırada beklenmeyen bazı misafirlerin gelmesi	1	2	3	4	5
3. Kendi cinsinizden birinin kalabalık bir yerde herkesin dikkatini çekecek bir şekilde size açıkça ilgi göstermesi	1	2	3	4	5
4. Giysinizin, vücudunuzda kapalı tuttuğunuz bir yeri açığa çıkaracak şekilde buruşması ya da kıvrılması	1	2	3	4	5
5. Uzman olmanız gereken bir konuda, bir konuşma yaptıktan sonra dinleyicilerin sizin söylediğinizin yanlış olduğunu göstermesi	1	2	3	4	5
6. Çok işlek bir iş merkezinin bulunduğu bir köşede herkesin size bakmasına sebep olacak bir olay yaşamak	1	2	3	4	5
7. Lüks bir restoranda başkaları size bakarken çatal bıçak kullanmanız gereken yerde elle yemek yediğinizi fark etmek	1	2	3	4	5
8. Sözlü bir sınav sırasında kekeleydiğiniz ve heyecandan şaşırduğunuzda, hocanın sizin bu halinizi kötü bir sınav örneği olarak bütün sınıfa göstermesi	1	2	3	4	5
9. Bir partide yeni tanıştığınız insanlara açık saçık bir fıkra anlattığınızda birçoğunun bundan rahatsız olması	1	2	3	4	5
10. Bir davete ya da toplantıya rahat, gündelik giysilerle gidip herkesin resmi giyindiğini görmek	1	2	3	4	5
11. Bir yemek davetinde bir tabak dolusu yiyeceği yere düşürmek	1	2	3	4	5
12. Herkesten sakladığınız ve hoş olmayan bir davranışın açığa çıkarılması	1	2	3	4	5

**APPENDIX E. HEARTHLAND FORGIVENESS SCALE
(FORGIVENESS OF SELF SUBSCALE) / HEARTHLAND AFFETME
ÖLÇEĞİ (KENDİNİ AFFETME ALTÖLÇEĞİ)**

Hayatımız boyunca, kendi davranışlarımız nedeniyle olumsuz olaylar yaşayabiliriz. Bu olumsuz yaşantıların ardından belli bir zaman geçtikten sonra, kendimiz hakkında olumsuz duygu veya düşüncelerimiz olabilir. Bu tür olumsuz olaylara genel olarak nasıl tepki verdiğinizi düşüncünüzü ve aşağıda verilen her ifadenin yanına, tarif edilen olumsuz duruma genellikle nasıl tepki verdiğinizi ifade eden sayıyı (aşağıdaki 7'li değerlendirme ölçeğine göre) yazınız. Vereceğiniz yanıtlarda doğru veya yanlış cevap yoktur. Lütfen yanıtlarınızda olabildiğince dürüst ve samimi olunuz.

⊕	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Beni hiç yansıtmıyor		Beni pek yansıtmıyor		Beni biraz yansıtıyor		Beni tamamen yansıtıyor ⊖

___ İşleri berbat ettiğimde önce kötü hissetmeme rağmen zamanla kendimi rahatlatabilirim.

___ Yaptığım olumsuz şeyler için kendime kin tutarım.

___ Yaptığım kötü şeylerden öğrendiklerim onlarla baş etmemde bana yardımcı olur.

___ İşleri berbat ettiğimde, kendimi kabul etmek benim için gerçekten çok zordur.

___ Yaptığım hatalara, zamanla daha anlayışlı olurum.

___ Hissettiğim, düşündüğüm, söylediğim ya da yaptığım olumsuz şeyler için kendimi eleştirmeyi durduramam.

APPENDIX F. BRIEF SYMPTOM INVENTORY / KISA SEMPTOM

ENVANTERİ

AÇIKLAMA: Aşağıda, insanların bazen yaşadıkları belirtilerin ve yakınmaların bir listesi verilmiştir. Listedeki her maddeyi lütfen dikkatle okuyun. Daha sonra o belirtinin sizde BÜGÜN DAHİL, SON BİR HAFTADIR NE KADAR VAROLDUĞUNU aşağıdaki derecelendirmeye göre uygun olan yeri işaretleyiniz. Hiçbir maddeyi atlamamaya ve de tek bir yeri işaretlemeye özen gösterin. Teşekkürler.

<u>0 Hiç yok</u>	<u>1 Biraz var</u>	<u>2 Orta derecede var</u>	<u>3 Epey var</u>	<u>4 Çok fazla var</u>		
1	İçinizdeki sinirlilik ve titreme hali	0	1	2	3	4
2	Baygınlık, baş dönmesi	0	1	2	3	4
3	Bir başka kişinin sizin düşüncelerinizi kontrol edeceği fikri	0	1	2	3	4
4	Başınıza gelen sıkıntılardan dolayı başkalarının suçlu olduğu duygusu	0	1	2	3	4
5	Olayları hatırlamada güçlük	0	1	2	3	4
6	Çok kolayca kızıp öfkelenme	0	1	2	3	4
7	Göğüs (kalp) bölgesinde ağrılar	0	1	2	3	4
8	Meydanlık (açık) yerlerden korkma duygusu	0	1	2	3	4
9	Yaşamınıza son verme düşünceleri	0	1	2	3	4
10	İnsanların çoğuna güvenilemeyeceği hissi	0	1	2	3	4
11	İştahta bozukluklar	0	1	2	3	4
12	Hiçbir nedeni olmayan ani korkular	0	1	2	3	4
13	Kontrol edemediğiniz duygu patlamaları	0	1	2	3	4
14	Başka insanlarla beraberken bile yalnızlık hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
15	İşleri bitirme konusunda kendini engellenmiş hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
16	Yalnızlık hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
17	Hüzünlü, kederli hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
18	Hiçbir şeye ilgi duymamak	0	1	2	3	4
19	Ağlamaklı hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
20	Kolayca incinebilmek, kırılmak	0	1	2	3	4
21	İnsanların sizi sevmediğine, kötü davrandığına inanmak	0	1	2	3	4
22	Kendini diğerlerinden daha aşağı görmek	0	1	2	3	4
23	Mide bozukluğu, bulantı	0	1	2	3	4
24	Diğerlerinin sizi gözlediği ya da hakkınızda konuştuğu hissi	0	1	2	3	4
25	Uykuya dalmada güçlük	0	1	2	3	4
26	Yaptığınız şeyleri tekrar tekrar doğru mu diye kontrol etmek	0	1	2	3	4

27	Karar vermede güçlükler	0	1	2	3	4
28	Otobüs, tren, metro gibi umumi vasıtalarla seyahatlerden korkmak	0	1	2	3	4
29	Nefes darlığı, nefessiz kalmak	0	1	2	3	4
30	Sıcak soğuk basmaları	0	1	2	3	4
31	Sizi korkuttuğu için bazı eşya, yer ya da etkinliklerden uzak kalmaya çalışmak	0	1	2	3	4
32	Kafanızın “bomboş” kalması	0	1	2	3	4
33	Bedeninizin bazı bölgelerinde uyuşmalar, karıncalanmalar	0	1	2	3	4
34	Günahlarınız için cezalandırılmanız gerektiği	0	1	2	3	4
35	Gelecekle ilgili umutsuzluk duyguları	0	1	2	3	4
36	Konsantrasyon(dikkati bir şey üzerinde toplama) güçlük/zorlanmak	0	1	2	3	4
37	Bedenin bazı bölgelerinde zayıflık, güçsüzlük hissi	0	1	2	3	4
38	Kendini gergin ve tedirgin hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
39	Ölme ve ölüm üzerine düşünceler	0	1	2	3	4
40	Birini dövme, ona zarar verme, yaralama isteği	0	1	2	3	4
41	Bir şeyleri kırma, dökme isteği	0	1	2	3	4
42	Diğerlerinin yanındayken yanlış bir şeyler yapmamaya çalışmak	0	1	2	3	4
43	Kalabalıklarda rahatsızlık duymak	0	1	2	3	4
44	Bir başka insana hiç yakınlık duymamak	0	1	2	3	4
45	Dehşet ve panik nöbetleri	0	1	2	3	4
46	Sık sık tartışmaya girmek	0	1	2	3	4
47	Yalnız bırakıldığında/kalındığında sinirlilik hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
48	Başarılarınız için diğerlerinden yeterince takdir görmemek	0	1	2	3	4
49	Yerinde duramayacak kadar tedirgin hissetmek	0	1	2	3	4
50	Kendini değersiz görmek/değersizlik duyguları	0	1	2	3	4
51	Eğer izin verirsiniz insanların sizi sömüreceği duygusu	0	1	2	3	4
52	Suçluluk duyguları	0	1	2	3	4
53	Aklında bir bozukluk olduğu fikri	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX G. SELF-MUTILATION INDEX

Son 1 yıl içinde, intihar etme amacı taşımadan, KENDİNİZE ZARAR VERMEK AMACIYLA aşağıda davranışları yaptınız mı?

	Evet	Hayır	<u>Evet ise kaç defa?</u>
1. Kendini kesmek (kol, bilek vb.)			
2. Kendini yakmak (sigara, kibrit ya da sıcak başka bir obje ile)			
3. Deriye keskin bir obje (iğne, zımba, şiş vb.) batırmak			
4. Cilde resim, şekil ya da harfler <u>çizmek</u>			
5. Kendine bilerek vurmak			
6. Saç yolmak			
7. Bir yarayı yolmak (iyileşmesine izin <u>vermeyecek</u> kadar)			
8. Kendini bilerek ısırarak (dudak, dil vb.)			
9. Kafanızı bilerek bir yere vurmak (duvar, cam vb.)			
10. Kendini çimdiklemek (kan <u>toplanacak</u> kadar)			
11. Cildi kazımak			
12. Sürekli olarak aynı yeri kaşımak (kanatacak ya da yara izi bırakacak <u>kadar</u>)			
13. Cilde bilerek kimyasal bir madde <u>dökmek</u> (asit, çamaşır suyu vb.)			
14. Bilerek kemiğini kırmak			
15. Diğer _____ _____			

APPENDIX H. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM / DEMOGRAFİK

BİLGİ FORMU

Cinsiyet Kimliğiniz (Cinsiyetiniz): Erkek Kadın Diğer: _____

Yaşınız: _____

Eğitim Durumunuz (son aldığınız diplomaya göre): _____

Okur-yazar değil Okur-yazar İlkokul Ortaokul Lise

Yüksekokul Üniversite Yüksek Lisans Doktora

Mesleğiniz: _____

Medeni Durumuz:

(1) Bekar (2) Evli/Birlikte Yaşıyor (3) Ayrılmış/ Boşanmış (4) Dul

Cinsel yöneliminiz:

Eşcinsel Biseksüel Heteroseksüel Diğer: _____

Size göre gelir düzeyiniz hangisidir?

(1) Düşük (2) Orta (3) Yüksek

Yaşamınızın büyük bir bölümünü nerede geçirdiniz?

(1) Büyükşehir (2) İl (3) İlçe
(4) Köy/Kasaba

Etnik kimliğiniz nedir? _____

1- Şu anda sizi profesyonel bir yardım almaya yönlendiren ruh sağlığınızla ilgili bir probleminiz var mı?

EVET HAYIR

Eğer cevabınız “evet” ise lütfen ruh sağlığınızla ilgili şu anki problemi/ problemleri yazınız:

2- Şu anda sizi profesyonel bir yardım almaya yönlendiren fiziksel bir rahatsızlığınız var mı?

EVET

HAYIR

Eğer cevabınız “evet” ise lütfen fiziksel sağlığınızla ilgili şu anki problemi/ problemleri yazınız:

3- Cinsel yöneliminizi başkalarıyla paylaştınız mı?

EVET

HAYIR

Eğer cevabınız “evet” ise 4. ve 5. soruları cevaplayınız, “hayır” ise 6. soruya geçiniz.

4- Cinsel yöneliminizi kimlerle paylaştınız? (Birden çok seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz)

(1) Yakın Arkadaş(lar)ımla (2) Annemle (3) Babamla (4)Kardeş(ler)imle

(5)Akraba(ları)mla (6)Arkadaş(lar)ımla (7) Okul Arkadaş(lar)ımla (8) İş arkadaş(lar)ımla

(9) Diğer: _____

5- Cinsel yöneliminizi ilk kez ne zaman başkalarıyla paylaştınız?

(1) Geçen sene içinde (2) İki yıl önce (3) Beş yıl önce (4) 10 yıl önce (5) 10 yıl+

6- Çocuğunuz var mı?

EVET

HAYIR

7- Herhangi bir dine inanıyor musunuz?

EVET

HAYIR

Cevabınız “evet” ise hangi dine inandığınızı belirtiniz: _____

APPENDIX I. ANNOUNCEMENT

Araştırmaya Katılım Çağrısı

Merhaba! Ben, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji programında yüksek lisans öğrencisiyim. Prof. Dr. Özlem Bozo Özen danışmanlığında yürüttüğüm ve azınlık stresinin çeşitli duygulara ve psikolojik durumlara olan etkisini incelediğim yüksek lisans tezimin veri toplama aşamasındayım. Bu sebeple cinsiyet kimliğini/cinsiyetini “erkek”, cinsel yönelimini “eşcinsel” olarak tanımlayan katılımcılara ihtiyaç duymaktayım.

Çalışmaya katılmak için yapmanız gereken aşağıda paylaştığım linke tıklamak ve sorulan soruları yanıtlamaktır. Çalışmada sizden hiçbir kişisel bilgi talep edilmemektedir. Ayrıca, elde edilecek veriler tamamen bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılacak ve gizli tutulacaktır. Daha fazla sorunuz olursa benimle berk.unsal@metu.edu.tr e-posta adresi üzerinden iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

Vakit ayırıp doldurursanız hem bilime bir katkınız olmuş olur hem de beni çok sevindirirsiniz. Ayrıca, katılımcı olabileceğini düşündüğünüz olası kişilerle de anket linkini paylaşırsanız daha çok kişiye ulaşmış olabiliriz.

Vakit ayırdığınız için şimdiden çok teşekkürler. Hepinize gökkuşağı gibi renkli günler dilerim!

APPENDIX J. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencilerinden Berk Can Ünsal tarafından Prof. Dr. Özlem Bozo Özen danışmanlığında yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, katılımcıların cinsel yönelimleriyle ilgili yaşantılarının çeşitli duygularla ve psikolojik stresle ilişkisini incelemektir.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden beklenen, anketlerde yer alan bir dizi soruyu derecelendirme ölçeği üzerinde yanıtmanızdır. Bu çalışmaya katılım ortalama olarak 30 dakika sürmektedir.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Ankette, sizden kimlik veya kurum belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak, sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır. Sağladığınız veriler gönüllü katılım formlarında toplanan kimlik bilgileri ile eşleştirilmeyecektir.

Katılımınızla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Anket, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Anket sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız cevaplanacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencilerinden Berk Can Ünsal ile (E-posta: berk.unsal@metu.edu.tr) iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

APPENDIX K. DEBRIEFING FORM

Bu araştırma, daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Berk Can Ünsal tarafından Prof. Dr. Özlem Bozo Özen danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, Türkiye’de yaşayan eşcinsel erkeklerde azınlık stresinin bazı duygularla ve psikopatolojiyle arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamaktır.

Literatüre göre daha çok azınlık stresi yaşayan bireylerin utanç, suçluluk gibi duyguları daha çok deneyimlediği ve sonucunda daha çok psikopatoloji geliştirdiği bulunmuştur. Ancak utanç ve suçluluk duyguları yaşayan bireylerin kendilerini affedebildiğinde bunun psikopatolojiye olumlu etkileri olduğu da bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada da daha çok azınlık stresi deneyimlemiş eşcinsel erkeklerin günlük yaşam olayları karşısında daha fazla utanç deneyimlemeleri, daha az kendilerini affedebilmeleri ve daha olumsuz psikolojik zorluk deneyimlemeleri beklenmektedir.

Bu çalışmadan alınacak ilk verilerin Nisan 2019 sonunda elde edilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Elde edilen bilgiler sadece bilimsel araştırma ve yazılarda kullanılacaktır. Çalışmanın sağlıklı ilerleyebilmesi ve bulguların güvenilir olması için çalışmaya katılacağını bildiğiniz diğer kişilerle çalışma ile ilgili detaylı bilgi paylaşımında bulunmamanızı dileriz. Bu araştırmaya katıldığınız için tekrar çok teşekkür ederiz.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarını öğrenmek ya da daha fazla bilgi almak için aşağıdaki isime başvurabilirsiniz.

Berk Can Ünsal (berk.unsal@metu.edu.tr)

Çalışmaya katkıda bulunan bir gönüllü olarak katılımcı haklarınızla ilgili veya etik ilkelerle ilgili soru veya görüşlerinizi ODTÜ Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi’ne iletebilirsiniz.

e-posta: ueam@metu.edu.tr

L. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

Utancın ve Kendini Affetmenin Türkiye'deki Eşcinsel Erkeklerin Ruh Sağlığına Etkileri: Azınlık Stresi Perspektifi

1. GİRİŞ

Alan yazında sayıları giderek artmakta olan pek çok araştırma cinsel kimliğin ruh sağlığı üzerindeki önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Çeşitli çalışmaların bulgularının gösterdiği üzere lezbiyen, gey ve biseksüel (LGB) bireylerde hem içselleştirme hem de dışsallaştırma bozuklukları heteroseksüel bireylere kıyasla daha sık olarak görülmektedir. Önceden yayınlanmış önemli sayıdaki araştırma, geniş spektrumdaki içselleştirme bozuklukları içerisinde çoğunlukla depresyon, kaygı ve intihar eğilimine odaklanmıştır. İntihar amacı olmayan kendine zarar verme davranışları (KZV) bir diğer önemli ancak göz ardı edilmiş ruh sağlığı sorunudur ve LGB bireyler KZV açısından da yüksek risk taşımaktadır. Farklı araştırmacılar, LGB bireylerin heteroseksüel akranlarıyla karşılaştırıldığında bahsedilen ruhsal sağlık problemlerini daha çok deneyimlemelerine sebep olan mekanizmaları kuramsal olarak açıklamaya çalışmışlardır. Bu bölümde, öncelikle, cinsel yönelim ve içselleştirme bozuklukları arasındaki ilişkiye dair kısa bir literatür taraması sunulmuş, devamında var olan kuramsal açıklamalara ve bu ilişkideki aracı değişkenlere değinilmiş ve son olarak bu çalışmada test edilen model sunulmuştur.

1.1. Cinsel Yönelim ve Ruh Sağlığı

Depresyon, kaygı ve intihar eğilimi gibi içselleştirme bozuklukları cinsel azınlık bireylerde heteroseksüel bireylere kıyasla daha sık görülmektedir. Örneğin, toplum

temelli bir çalışmada heteroseksüel bireylere göre duygudurum bozukluklarının, kaygının ve intihar düşünceleri ile planlarının bir yıllık yaygınlığının cinsel azınlıklarda daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur (Gilman ve ark., 2001). Benzer bir şekilde, bir başka toplum temelli çalışmada kendi cinsiyetinden kişilerle cinsel ilişki yaşayan erkeklerde majör depresyon ve panik atak belirtilerinin karşı cinsiyetten kişilerle cinsel ilişki yaşayan erkeklere göre daha çok görüldüğü rapor edilmiştir. (Cochran & Mays, 2000). Bu çalışmaların yanı sıra, bir başka çalışmanın bulguları partneri kendi cinsiyetinden olan erkeklerin, partneri karşı cinsiyetten olan erkeklere kıyasla, depresyon, kaygı ve intihar eğilimi ölçümlerinden daha yüksek skorlar aldığını ortaya koymuştur (Jorm, Korten, Rodgers, Jacomb, & Christensen, 2002).

Bu çalışmaların bulguları, çeşitli meta-analiz ve sistematik derleme çalışmalarının bulguları tarafından desteklenmiştir. Herhangi bir içselleştirme bozukluğuna sahip olmanın riskini belirlemek için bir grup araştırmacı sistematik bir derleme çalışması yürütmüş ve LGB bireyler için depresyon ve kaygı riskinin heteroseksüel kişilere göre 1,5 kat daha yüksek olduğunu bulmuştur (King ve ark., 2008). Aynı şekilde, daha yakın tarihli bir başka derleme çalışmasında heteroseksüel bireylere kıyasla, cinsel azınlık kişiler için depresyon, kaygı ve intihar girişiminde bulunma riskinin daha yüksek olduğu bildirilmiştir (Plöderl & Tremblay, 2015). Buna paralel olarak, yeni tarihli iki meta-analitik çalışma yukarıdaki çalışmaların bulgularını doğrular niteliktedir. Bu iki meta-analitik çalışmada, heteroseksüel akranlarına kıyasla, cinsel azınlık bireylerin depresyon ve kaygı belirtilerini gösterme olasılığının iki katı daha fazla olduğu (Semylen, King, Varney, & Hagger-Johnson, 2016) ve intihar girişiminde bulunmanın yaşam boyu yaygınlığının da LGB bireylerde daha yüksek olduğu raporlanmıştır (Hottes, Bogaert, Rhodes, Brennan, & Gesink, 2016).

Buraya kadar değinilen çalışmalar LGB bireylerin, heteroseksüellere kıyasla, ruhsal bozukluğa sahip olma ya da ruhsal bozukluk geliştirme olasılıklarının daha yüksek olduğuna dair kanıtları öne sürmektedir. Bu riski ortaya koyduktan sonra, araştırmacılar cinsel azınlıkların daha olumsuz ruh sağlığı çıktıklarına sahip olmasına sebep olan mekanizmaları anlamaya ve açıklamaya çalışmışlardır.

1.1.2. Azınlık Stresi Modeli

Ruh sađlıđı aısından LGB bireyler iin yksek risk yaratan faktrleri belirlemek iin, kapsamlı bir meta-analiz alıřmasında, Meyer (2003) farklı tr stres sreleriyle ruh sađlıđı ıktıları arasındaki iliřkiyi aıklayan azınlık stresi kuramını geliřtirmiş ve sunmuřtur. Meyer'e gre evredeki sosyoekonomik stat, eđitim seviyesi ya da bir yakının kaybı gibi kořullar bir kiřinin yařamında eřitli avantaj ya da dezavantajlara neden olmaktadır. Dezavantajlar kaınılmaz olarak kiřilerin yařamlarında stresle sonulanmakta ve Meyer bu stres trne genel stresrler adını vermektedir.

evredeki dezavantajlar tarafından oluřturulan ve herkes tarafından deneyimlenme olasılıđı olan genel stresrlerin yanı sıra, bir bireyin azınlık stats, yani bir kiřinin diđerleri tarafından azınlık olarak sınıflandırılması, kiřilerin evrelerindeki bir diđer kořulu oluřturmakta ve onların ayrımcılık gibi ekstra ve farklı bir stres deneyimlemesine neden olmaktadır. Meyer, bu tr ekstra ve sadece etnik/cinsiyet/cinsel azınlıklara ynelik stres trne "uzak stresrler" (distal stressors) adını vermiş ve 1) ayrımcılık (discrimination), 2)řiddet (victimization) ve 3) mikro saldırganlık (microaggression) olmak zere  farklı tipte uzak stresr tanımlamıştır. Meyer, uzak stres srelerini objektif, gerek hayatta gerekleřen, zdeřim gerektirmeyen ve bu yzden de benliđe uzak stresrler olarak tanımlamaktadır.

Diđer bir taraftan, bir kiři cinsel bir kimlikle zdeřim kurduđunda ve kendini bu kimlikle tanımladıđında, farklı tr bir stres sreci iřler. Meyer'e gre, bireyler bir cinsel kimlikle zdeřleřtiđinde, bu zdeřimin bir sonucu olarak, kiřilerin kendilik algısı ya da deđerlendirmesi toplumun cinsel azınlıklara dair grřyle uyumlu olarak deđerersiz ve damgalanmış bir kendilik olarak deđerışmektedir. Kendiliđin olumsuz deđerlendirilmesi zamanla iselleřtirilmiş homofobi ya da ayrımcılık beklentisi gibi sadece kendisini bir cinsel kimlikle tanımlayan bireylere zg olan eřitli stresrler ortaya ıkarmaktadır. Uzak stresrlerden farklı olarak bu tarz stres srelerinde ayrımcılık yařantısı gerek deđerildir, aksine znenin zihninde gerekleřmektedir.

Buradan yola ıkarak Meyer ikinci tr azınlık stresi srelerini "yakın stresrler" (proximal stressors) olarak tanımlamıştır. Yakın stresrler sırasıyla 1) reddedilme beklentisi (anticipation of rejection), 2) cinsel kimliđi saklama (concealment of sexual

identity) ve 3) içselleştirilmiş homofobiden (internalized homophobia) oluşmaktadır. Yakın stresörler özdeşim gerektirdiği için ve özdeşim kişinin kendiliğini algılayışında değişimler yarattığı için Meyer yakın stresörleri öznel ve benliğe daha yakın olarak tanımlamıştır.

Meyer azınlık stresi kuramını sunarken stres süreçlerinin önemli belirleyicileri olarak azınlık kimliklerinin özelliklerine ve sosyal destek mekanizmalarına da değinmiştir. Azınlık kimliklerinin özellikleri açısından bakıldığında bir cinsel kimliğe atfedilen anlam ya da bir cinsel kimliğin kişinin benlik kurulumunda ne derece merkezde olduğu yakın stres süreçlerinin etkilerini artırabilmekte ya da azaltabilmektedir. Ek olarak stresle alakalı alan yazının önerdiği üzere başa çıkma ve sosyal destek mekanizmaları azınlık stresi süreçlerinin etkilerine tampon görevi görebilmektedir.

Özetle, Meyer cinsel azınlıkların deneyimlediği olumsuz ruh sağlığı çıktılarını sosyal bir bakış açısıyla açıklamaya çalışmış ve sosyal olarak yaratılmış stresörlerin önemini vurgulayarak azınlık stresi kavramını ortaya atmıştır. Ancak Meyer ağırlıklı olarak gruba özgü stres süreçlerine (örn., içselleştirilmiş homofobi, ayrımcılık) odaklanmış ve uzak ve yakın stresörlerin tam olarak nasıl ruh sağlığı sorunlarına yol açtığına dair bilgi sunmamıştır.

1.1.3. LGB Bireylerin Ruh Sağlığında Genel Psikolojik Süreçler

Diğer bir taraftan, başka araştırmacılar gruba özgü süreçlerden ziyade duygu düzenleme ya da kişilerarası işlevsellik gibi genel psikolojik süreçlerin önemini ortaya koymaya çalışmıştır. Bunu yaparken araştırmacılar hem heteroseksüel hem de cinsel azınlıklar tarafından paylaşılan ve olumsuz ruh sağlığı çıktılarına sebep olan ortak risk faktörlerini belirlemeye çalışmışlardır. Önemli sayıdaki gruplar arası (örn., Walls, Freedenthal, & Wisneski, 2008) ve grup içi çalışma (örn., Hatzenbuehler, McLaughlin, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2008) çeşitli genel psikolojik faktörlerin (örn., sosyal destek, aile işlevselliği) LGB bireylerde ruhsal bozuklukların gelişiminde önemli rollerinin olduğunu ve heteroseksüellere kıyasla çeşitli psikolojik risk faktörlerinin (örn., umutsuzluk, düşük benlik saygısı) cinsel azınlık bireylerde daha yüksek olduğunu göstermiştir. Cinsel kimlik ve ruh sağlığı arasındaki ilişki açısından zengin bir kavrayış sunmalarına rağmen bu iki

farklı alan yazın araştırmacılar tarafından ayrı olarak takip edilmiştir. Bu sebeple bütünleşmiş bir yaklaşıma ihtiyaç duyulmuştur.

1.1.4. Psikolojik Aracılık Çerçevesi

Alan yazındaki bu boşluğu doldurmak için, iki farklı yöndeki çalışmalardan yola çıkarak Hatzenbuehler (2009) hem gruba özgü hem de genel psikolojik süreçlerin dahil edildiği psikolojik aracılık çerçevesini sunmuştur. Hatzenbuehler'e göre Meyer tarafından ortaya atılan uzak stres süreçleri cinsel azınlıkların sosyal, duygusal ve/ya bilişsel süreçlerini değiştirmekte ve bu değişimler de uzak stresörlerle ruh sağlığı problemleri arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken olmaktadır. Kuramsal çerçevesini sunarken Hatzenbuehler ağırlıklı olarak duygu düzenleme, ruminasyon, sosyal destek ve olumsuz benlik şemaları gibi alan yazında etkileri görgül araştırmalar tarafından güçlü şekilde desteklenen aracı değişkenlere odaklanmıştır.

Hatzenbuehler yukarıda değinilen aracı değişkenlerin önemini vurgulayarak kapsamlı bir kavrayış sunmuştur ancak ortaya attığı kuramsal çerçeve alan yazındaki önemli bulgulara rağmen (örn., Newcomb & Mustanski, 2010) yakın stres süreçlerini yeteri kadar ele alamamıştır. Alternatif ve daha kapsamlı bir kuramsal çerçeve sunmasına rağmen bu kuramsal çerçevenin önemli bir eksikliği yakın stres süreçlerini uzak stres süreçleriyle ruh sağlığı problemleri arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken olarak görmesidir. Yani, Hatzenbuehler'e göre cinsel azınlık kişiler öncelikle ayrımcılığı deneyimlemekte sonrasında bu ayrımcılık kişilerin bu tutumları içselleştirmesine neden olmakta ve bu içselleştirme süreci de olumsuz ruh sağlığı çıktılarına neden olmaktadır. Ancak Meyer azınlık stresi modelinde (2003) uzak ve yakın stres süreçlerini birbirlerine bağlı olarak sunmuş ve iki stres sürecinin karşılıklı ilerlediğini savunmuştur.

Hep birlikte değerlendirildiğinde, azınlık stresi modeli aracı değişkenleri içermediği için, psikolojik aracılık çerçevesi ise yakın stres süreçlerine yeteri kadar yer vermediği için, hem yakın stresörleri hem de olası aracı değişkenleri içeren daha kapsamlı modellere ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

1.2. Aracı Değişken Olarak Utanç

1.2.1. Utancın Tanımı

Azınlık stresi ve psikopatoloji ilişkisinin olası aracı değişkenlerinden biri utançtır. Utanç, sosyal ve kendilik bilincine dayalı bir duygudur ve kişinin sorumluluğu üstlendiği ve standartları, kuralları ya da hedefleri karşılayamadığı hataları sonucu ortaya çıkar (Lewis, 2016). Utanç ortaya çıkaran durumlar, diğerlerinden gelen hayali ya da gerçek reddetme, diğerlerinin yargıları hakkında endişelenme ve toplumsal normları ihlal etme olarak bildirilmiştir (Tangney, 1992).

1.2.2. Cinsel Yönelim ve Utanç Arasındaki İlişki

Cinsel yönelim ve utanç arasındaki ilişki değerlendirilecek olursa sıralanan utanç ortaya çıkaran durumların LGB bireyler için daha geçerli olduğu söylenebilir. Toplulukçu ve muhafazakâr normların ve İslami değerlerin benimsendiği Türkiye değerlendirildiğindeyse, Türkiye kültürünün heteroseksüel olmayan cinsel yönelimlere karşı olumsuz bir tutumu olduğu söylenebilir (Engin, 2015). Bu olumsuz tutumlar LGB bireylerin heteroseksist standartları, kuralları ve hedefleri içselleştirmesine, sosyal etkileşimler sırasında diğerlerinin tepkilerine aşırı duyarlı olmasına ve toplumsal normları ihlal etmemek için cinsel yönelimlerini gizlemelerine neden olabilir ki bu üç durum da hem yakın stres süreçlerini hem de utanç ortaya çıkaran durumları oluşturmaktadır. Utanç ve azınlık stresörleri arasında anlamlı ve pozitif bir korelasyon bulunmuştur (Mereish & Poteat, 2015; Allen & Oleson, 1999; Greene & Britton, 2012; Chow & Cheng, 2010; Bybee, Sullivan, Zielonka, & Moes, 2009; Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 2009).

1.2.3. Cinsel Yönelim, Utanç ve Ruh Sağlığı Arasındaki İlişkiler

Aynı zamanda utancın ruh sağlığı üzerinde olumsuz etkileri olduğu rapor edilmiştir (Bybee et al., 2009; Hallman, Yarhouse, & Suárez, 2018; Mereish & Poteat, 2015; McDermott & Scourfield, 2008). Ancak utancın LGB bireylerin ruh sağlığına olan

etkilerini inceleyen alıřmalar ya azınlık stresi-utan ya da utan-ruh saėlıėı baėlantısına odaklanmıřtır (Mereish & Poteat, 2015) ve u deėiřkeni bir arada inceleyen alıřma sayısı olduka azdır.

1.3. Panzehir Olarak Kendini Affetme

1.3.1. Kendini Affetmenin Tanımı

Utan ruh saėlıėı üzerinde olumsuz etkilere sahip bir duygu olduėu iin son 30 yılda arařtırmacılar utancın olumsuz etkilerini ortadan kaldırabilecek yaklařımlara artan bir ilgi gstermiřlerdir. Kendini affetme son zamanlar utancın olumsuz etkilerine panzehir olabilecek bir deėiřken olarak sunulmuřtur. Thompson ve arkadaşlarına gre (2015) affetme, algılanan bir ihlalin, ihlali gerekleřtiren kiřiye, ihlalin kendisine ve sonularına verilen olumsuz tepkilerin ntr ya da olumlu tepkilere dnüştürölmesini kapsar. Bu baėlamda affetmenin nesnesi kiřinin *kendisi*, bařkaları ya da kontrolünün dıřında grdüėü durumlar olabilir.

1.3.2. Kendini Affetmenin Utanla ve Ruh Saėlıėıyla Olan İliřkisi

Utan kiřinin hataları sonucu ortaya ıkan bir duygu olduėu iin olası bir ihlalden sonra verilen duygusal tepkilerden biridir. Arařtırmacılar utanla kendini affetmenin arasındaki iliřkiyi incelemiř ve negatif ynde anlamlı korelasyonlar rapor etmiřlerdir (Carpenter, Tignor, Tsang, & Willett, 2016; Fisher & Exline, 2006; Macaskill, 2012; McGaffin, Lyons, & Deane, 2013; Strelan, 2007; Ranganadhan & Todorov, 2010). Buna ek olarak farklı kaynakların gsterdiėi üzere utancın ruh saėlıėı üzerinde olumsuz bir etkisi varken kendini affetmenin olumlu bir etkisi vardır ki bu da arařtırmacıları kendini affetmenin utancın olumsuz etkilerini etkisiz hale getirici özelliėini kuramsal olarak aıklamaya ynelmiřtir.

1.3.3. Kendini Affetmenin Utanç-Ruh Sağlığı İlişkisindeki Aracı Rolü

Bir grup arařtırmacı (Toussaint, Webb, & Hirsch, 2017) kendini affetmenin ve sađlıđın stres ve bařa ıkma modelini sunmuřlardır. Bu modelde kendini affetme utan verici bir hatadan sonra kullanılan duygu-odaklı bir bařa ıkma stratejisi olarak tanımlanmıřtır. Arařtırmacılar kendini affetmenin utan ve ruh sađlıđı arasındaki iliřkide aracı deđiřken rolü üstlenebileceđini savunmuřlardır.

1.3.4. Kendini Affetmenin LGB Bireylerin Ruh Sağlığına Olan Etkisi

Umut verici sonuçlara rađmen kendini affetmenin LGB bireylerin ruh sađlıđına olan etkilerini inceleyen alıřmaların sayısı oldukça azdır. Örneđin bir alıřmada yüksek seviyelerdeki kendini affetmenin eřcinsel erkeklerde düşük seviyede yalnızlıđı yordadıđı bulunmuřtur (Currin & Hubach, 2018). Benzer řekilde bir bařka alıřmada kendini affetmenin utanca yatkınlıkla benlik saygısı arasındaki iliřkide aracı deđiřken rolü üstlendiđi bulunmuřtur (Greene & Britton, 2013). Yine de hibir alıřmada kendini affetmenin azınlık stresi ve utancın ruh sađlıđıyla olan etkisindeki aracı rolü incelenmemiřtir.

1.4. alıřmanın Amacı

Buradan yola ıkılarak bu alıřmanın amaları azınlık stresörleriyle ruh sađlıđı ıktıları arasındaki iliřkiyi incelemek ve utancın ve kendini affetmenin bu iliřkilerdeki aracı deđiřken rolüne bakmak olarak belirlenmiřtir. Bu amalara paralel olarak uzak ve yakın stres süreçlerinin ruh sađlıđı ıktılarını yordayacađı varsayılmıřtır. Ayrıca, utancın ve kendini affetmenin bu iliřkilerde hem bireysel olarak hem de sırasıyla aracı deđiřken rolü üstleneceđi varsayılmıřtır.

Lezbiyen kadınlar tarafından deneyimlenen ifte azınlık stresinin (cinsiyet ve cinsel yönelim) ya da biseksüel erkekler tarafından deneyimlenen farklı tür azınlık stresinin bulguları karıřtırmaması için sadece 18 yařın üzerindeki eřcinsel erkeklerin

çalışmaya katılması uygun bulunmuştur. Benzer şekilde, kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezियeti mevcut çalışmada kontrol değişkenleri olarak yer almıştır.

2. YÖNTEM

2.1. Örneklem

Çalışmanın örneklemini yaşları 18 ile 48 arasında değişen ($M = 24.45$, $SD = 4.66$) kendisini eşcinsel olarak tanımlayan 200 erkek oluşturmuştur. Katılımcıların %50'si üniversite mezunu, %94'ü bekar, %30.5'i inançlı, %62.5'i orta gelir seviyesindedir ve hiçbirinin çocuğu yoktur. Ankete cevap verenlerin %67'si büyük şehirde yaşamakta, %28'i ruh sağlığıyla alakalı tedavi almakta ve %8.5'i fiziksel sağlıklarıyla ilgili tedavi almaktadırlar.

Katılımcıların %90'ı cinsel kimliklerini en azından bir kişiyle paylaşmışlardır. Katılımcıların %42.5'i ilk kez beş sene önce birine açılmışlardır. Katılımcıların %85'i yakın arkadaşlarına, %60'ı arkadaşlarına %57.5'i sınıf arkadaşlarına, %32'si kardeşlerine, %27'si annelerine, %15'i babalarına ve/ya akrabalarına, %7.5'i diğer kişilere açılmışlardır.

2.2. Veri Toplama Araçları

Bu çalışmada şu veri toplama araçları kullanılmıştır: Demografik Bilgi Formu, Ayrımcılık, Şiddet ve Mikrosaldırğanlık İndeksi, Lezbiyen, Gey ve Biseksüel Kimlik Gelişimi Ölçeği (Mohr & Kendra, 2011), Suçluluk ve Utanç Ölçeği (Şahin & Şahin, 1992), Heartland Affetme Ölçeği (Thompson ve ark., 2005), Kısa Semptom Envanteri (Derogatis, 1993) ve Kendine Zarar Verme İndeksi (Tuna, 2012).

2.3. İşlem

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan etik izin alındıktan sonra veri toplama araçlarını içeren çevrimiçi bir anket çeşitli LGB Facebook

gruplarında paylaşıldı ve potansiyel katılımcılara erişildi. Tüm katılımcılara gönüllü katılım formu ve katılım sonrası bilgilendirme formu verildi. Dikkatsiz cevaplamaların önüne geçebilmek için anketlere iki sahte soru eklendi. Anketlerin sırası karşılıklı olarak dengelendi.

2.4. Veri Analizi

İstatistiksel analizler için IBM SPSS Statistics 20 yazılımı kullanıldı. Öncelikle, değişkenler arasındaki doğrusal ilişkileri incelemek için Pearson korelasyon analizi yapıldı. Devamında, hipotezleri test etmek için bir dizi aracı değişken analizi yapıldı. Aracı değişken analizleri için Hayes ve Matthes (2009) Proses makrosu kullanıldı.

3. BULGULAR

3.1. Ölçek Puanlarının Betimleyici Analizi

Katılımcıların Ayrımcılık, Şiddet ve Mikrosaldırıcılık İndeksi puan ortalaması 39.89, Lezbiyen, Gey ve Biseksüel Kimlik Gelişimi Ölçeği (içselleştirilmiş homofobi) puan ortalaması 7.59, Lezbiyen, Gey ve Biseksüel Kimlik Gelişimi Ölçeği (gizlenme motivasyonu) puan ortalaması 12.37, Lezbiyen, Gey ve Biseksüel Kimlik Gelişimi Ölçeği (kabullenilme kaygısı) puan ortalaması 10.36, Suçluluk ve Utanç Ölçeği (utanç) puan ortalaması 37.06, Heartland Affetme Ölçeği (kendini affetme) puan ortalaması 27.54, Kısa Semptom Envanteri (depresyon) puan ortalaması 1.49, Kısa Semptom Envanteri (kaygı) puan ortalaması 1, ve Kendine Zarar Verme İndeksi puan ortalaması 1.08'dir.

3.2. Korelasyon Analizi

Katılımcıların uzak stres seviyeleri ile depresyon ($r = .20, p < .01$), kaygı ($r = .28, p < .01$), KZV ($r = .30, p < .01$), ve kimliği olumlama ($r = .23, p < .01$) ölçümleri arasında anlamlı ilişkiler bulunmaktadır. Yakın stresörler ile utanç ($r = .34, p < .01$), kaygı ($r = .29, p < .01$), ve depresyon ($r = .32, p < .01$) arasında pozitif ve kendini affetme ($r = -.21 p <$

.01) ve kimliği olumlama ($r = -.57, p < .01$) arasında negatif ilişkiler olduğu bulunmuştur. Utanç ölçümleri, kaygı ($r = .30, p < .01$), depresyon ($r = .22, p < .01$), ve KZV ($r = .16, p < .05$) ile pozitif yönde ve kendini affetme ($r = -.30, p < .01$) ve kimliği olumlama ($r = -.20, p < .01$) ile negatif yönde ilişkilidir. Kendini affetme ile kaygı ($r = -.34, p < .01$), depresyon ($r = -.36, p < .01$), KZV ($r = -.18, p < .05$) ve kimliği olumlama ($r = .20, p < .01$) arasındaki ilişkiler anlamlıdır. Kimliği olumlama ile kimlik merkezियeti ($r = .28, p < .01$), kaygı ($r = -.16, p < .05$) ve depresyon ($r = -.25, p < .01$) arasındaki ilişkiler de anlamlıdır. Kaygı ölçümleri depresyon ($r = .82, p < .01$) ve KZV ($r = .38, p < .01$) ile ilişkilidir. Son olarak, depresyon KZV ($r = .31, p < .01$) ile ilişkili bulunmuştur.

3.3. Regresyon Analizleri

İlk grup hipotezleri test etmek için bir dizi regresyon analizi uygulanmıştır. Bütün analizlerle kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezियeti ilk adımda onların etkilerini kontrol edebilmek için modellere eklenmiştir.

3.3.1. Depresyonun Yordayıcıları

Depresyonun yordayıcılarını test etmek için yürütülen regresyon analizlerinin sonuçlarına göre ilk adımda kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezियeti [$F(2, 197) = 6.79, p < .01$] modele anlamlı şekilde katkıda bulunmuş ve depresyonun varyansının %6'sını açıklamıştır. Sonuçlar, sadece kimliği olumlamanın [$\beta = -.25, t(197) = -3.52, p < .01$] depresyonun anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğunu göstermiştir. İlk modelin ikinci aşamasında, uzak stresörler değişkeni modele sokulduğunda, modele anlamlı derecede katkıda bulunduğu, %7 ek varyans açıkladığı, [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 15.79, p < .001$] ve depresyonun anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu bulunmuştur [$\beta = .27, t(196) = 3.97, p < .001$]. Benzer şekilde, ikinci modelin ikinci adımında, yakın stresörler değişkeni modele sokulduğunda, modele anlamlı derecede katkıda bulunduğu, %5 ek varyans açıkladığı [$\Delta F(1, 196) = 10.04, p < .001$] ve depresyonun anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu bulunmuştur [$\beta = .26, t(196) = 3.19, p < .01$].

3.3.2. Kaygının Yordayıcıları

Kaygının yordayıcılarını test etmek için yürütülen regresyon analizlerinin sonuçlarına göre ilk adımda kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezieti modele anlamlı şekilde katkıda bulunmamış ve anlamlı bir varyans açıklamamıştır, $F(2, 197) = 2.66, p = .07$. İlk modelin ikinci aşamasında, uzak stresörler değişkeni modele sokulduğunda, modele anlamlı derecede katkıda bulunduğu, %10 ek varyans açıkladığı, $[\Delta F(1, 196) = 22.74, p < .001]$ ve kaygının anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu bulunmuştur $[\beta = .33, t(196) = 4.77, p < .001]$. Benzer şekilde, ikinci modelin ikinci adımında, yakın stresörler değişkeni modele sokulduğunda, modele anlamlı derecede katkıda bulunduğu, %8 ek varyans açıkladığı $[\Delta F(1, 196) = 11.81, p < .01]$ ve kaygının anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu bulunmuştur $[\beta = .29, t(196) = 3.44, p < .01]$.

3.3.3. KZV'nin Yordayıcıları

KZV'nin yordayıcılarını test etmek için yürütülen regresyon analizlerinin sonuçlarına göre ilk adımda kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezieti modele anlamlı şekilde katkıda bulunmamış ve anlamlı bir varyans açıklamamıştır, $F(2, 197) = 0.44, p = .65$. İlk modelin ikinci aşamasında, uzak stresörler değişkeni modele sokulduğunda, modele anlamlı derecede katkıda bulunduğu, %10 ek varyans açıkladığı, $[\Delta F(1, 196) = 21.17, p < .001]$ ve KZV'nin anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu bulunmuştur $[\beta = .32, t(196) = 4.60, p < .001]$. Ancak, ikinci modelin ikinci adımında, yakın stresörler değişkeni modele sokulduğunda, modele anlamlı derecede katkıda bulunmadığı, anlamlı bir varyans açıklamadığı $[\Delta F(1, 196) = 2.44, p = .12]$ ve KZV'nin anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olmadığı bulunmuştur.

3.4. Aracı Değişken Analizleri

Aracı değişken analizlerinin sonuçlarına göre sadece üç model anlamlı çıkmıştır. Bu nedenle yalnızca anlamlı modeller rapor edilmiştir.

3.4.1. Yakın Stresörler ile Kaygı Arasındaki İlişkide Utancın Aracı Rolü

Kontrol değişkenleri kontrol edildikten sonra, bulgular utancın yakın stresörler ve kaygı arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken rolü üstlendiğini göstermiştir ($\beta = .006$, $SE = .002$, 95% CI [0.002, 0.01]). Yakın stresörler utançla olumlu ve anlamlı derecede ilişkili bulunmuş ($\alpha = .31$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.154, 0.466]) ve utanç da kaygı ölçümleriyle anlamlı ve olumlu yönde ilişkili bulunmuştur ($b = .02$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.029]). Diğer bir deyişle, yüksek yakın stres seviyesine sahip katılımcılar daha yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimlemiş, daha yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimleyenler ise daha çok kaygı belirtisi rapor etmiştir. Bulgulara göre genel model anlamlı bulunmuş [$F(4, 195) = 7,03$, $p < .001$] ve kaygıdaki varyansın %13'ünü açıklamıştır.

3.4.2. Yakın Stresörler ile Depresyon Arasındaki İlişkide Utancın ve Kendini Affetmenin Aracı Roller

Kontrol değişkenleri kontrol edildikten sonra, bulgular utancın ve kendini affetmenin sırasıyla yakın stresörler ve depresyon arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken rolü üstlendiğini göstermiştir ($\beta = .02$, 95% CI [0.007, 0.046]). Yakın stresörler utançla olumlu ve anlamlı derecede ilişkili bulunmuş ($\alpha = .31$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.154, 0.466]), utanç kendini affetme ile anlamlı ve negatif yönde ilişki göstermiş ($b_1 = -.16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.256, -0.069]) bu da depresyon seviyelerinde artışla sonuçlanmıştır ($b_2 = -.04$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.063, -0.023]). Diğer bir deyişle, yüksek yakın stres seviyesine sahip katılımcılar daha yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimlemiş, daha yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimleyenler ise daha kendini affetme ölçümlerinden düşük skorlar almış, bu da daha yüksek seviyede depresyonla sonuçlanmıştır. Bulgulara göre genel model anlamlı bulunmuş [$F(5, 194) = 9,56$, $p < .001$] ve depresyondaki varyansın %20'sini açıklamıştır.

3.4.3. Yakın Stresörler ile Kaygı Arasındaki İlişkide Utancın ve Kendini Affetmenin Aracı Rollerini

Kontrol değişkenleri kontrol edildikten sonra, bulgular utancın ve kendini affetmenin sırasıyla yakın stresörler ve kaygı arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken rolü üstlendiğini göstermiştir ($\beta = .002$, $SE = .001$, 95% CI [0.001, 0.004]). Yakın stresörler utançla olumlu ve anlamlı derecede ilişkili bulunmuş ($\alpha = .31$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.154, 0.466]), utanç kendini affetme ile anlamlı ve negatif yönde ilişki göstermiş ($b_1 = -.16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.256, -0.069]) bu da depresyon seviyelerinde artışla sonuçlanmıştır ($b_2 = -.03$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.048, -0.015]). Diğer bir deyişle, yüksek yakın stres seviyesine sahip katılımcılar daha yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimlemiş, daha yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimleyenler ise daha kendini affetme ölçümlerinden düşük skorlar almış, bu da daha yüksek seviyede kaygıyla sonuçlanmıştır. Bulgulara göre genel model anlamlı bulunmuş [$F(5, 194) = 8,96$, $p < .001$] ve depresyondaki varyansın %19'unu açıklamıştır.

4. TARTIŞMA

Bu bölümde korelasyon analizleri gözden geçirilmiş devamında ise regresyon ve aracı değişken analizlerine yer verilmiştir. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulguların klinik uygulamaları, çalışmanın güçlü yönleri ve sınırlılıkları tartışılmış ve gelecek çalışmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

4.1. Korelasyon Analizleri

Tüm korelasyonlar içerisinde sadece bir tanesi beklenmediktir. Dolayısıyla bu bölümde sadece bu beklenmedik korelasyon tartışılmıştır. Mevcut çalışmanın bulguları uzak stresörlerle yakın stresörler arasındaki korelasyonun anlamsız olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu bulgu, azınlık stresi kuramının (Meyer, 2003) ana ilkelerinden biriyle örtüşmemektedir. Azınlık stresi modelinde uzak ve yakın stres süreçlerinin birbirleriyle alakalı olduğu ortaya atılmıştır. Bu beklenmedik bulgunun farklı açıklamaları olabilir.

Bunlardan biri toplulukçu normların ve İslami değerlerin benimsendiği Türkiye’de yaşayan eşcinsel erkeklerin ayrımcılığa direkt olarak değil dolaylı olarak maruz kalmasıdır. Türkiye’de yaşayan eşcinsel erkekler, eşcinsel olarak algılanan diğer erkeklerin ayrımcılığa maruz kaldığını dolaylı olarak deneyimledikleri için kendileri de ayrımcılığa uğramamak adına cinsel yönelimlerini gizliyor olabilir. Katılımcıların e-posta aracılığıyla araştırmacıya verdiği geribildirimler bu argümanı destekler niteliktedir. Anketleri doldurduktan sonra önemli sayıdaki katılımcı araştırmacıya e-posta göndermiş ve uzak stresörleri ölçen soruların kendileri için çok uygun olmadığını çünkü kimliklerini gizledikleri için ayrımcılığa maruz kalmadıklarını söylemişlerdir.

4.2. Regresyon Analizleri

4.2.1. Depresyonun Yordayıcıları

Depresyonun yordayıcılarını test etmek için yürütülmüş regresyon analizlerinin sonuçları kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezietü deęişkenleri kontrol edildikten sonra hem uzak hem de yakın stres süreçlerinin depresyonu anlamlı şekilde yordadığını göstermiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, daha yüksek seviyede uzak ve yakın stresör deneyimleyen eşcinsel erkeklerin depresyon seviyelerinin de daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu bulgu, uzak ve yakın stresörlerin ruh sağlığı problemlerine yol açtığının iddia edildiği azınlık stresi modelini (Meyer, 2003) destekler niteliktedir. Aynı zamanda, mevcut çalışmanın sonuçları, önceden yapılmış önemli sayıdaki araştırmadan elde edilen ve uzak ve yakın stres süreçlerinin cinsel azınlıkların depresyon seviyelerini yordadığını gösteren bulgularla paraleldir (Timmins, Rimes, & Rahman, 2019; Ramirez & Galupo, 2018).

4.2.2. Kaygının Yordayıcıları

Kaygının yordayıcılarını test etmek için yürütülmüş regresyon analizlerinin sonuçları kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezietü deęişkenleri kontrol edildikten sonra hem uzak hem de yakın stres süreçlerinin kaygıyı anlamlı şekilde yordadığını göstermiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, daha yüksek seviyede uzak ve yakın stresör deneyimleyen

eşcinsel erkeklerin kaygı seviyelerinin de daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu bulgu, uzak ve yakın stresörlerin ruh sağlığı problemlerine yol açtığı iddia edildiği azınlık stresi modelini (Meyer, 2003) destekler niteliktedir. Aynı zamanda, mevcut çalışmanın sonuçları, önceden yapılmış önemli sayıdaki araştırmadan elde edilen ve uzak ve yakın stres süreçlerinin cinsel azınlıkların kaygı seviyelerini yordadığını gösteren bulgularla paraleldir (Timmins, Rimes, & Rahman, 2019; Ramirez & Galupo, 2018).

4.2.3. KZV'nin Yordayıcıları

KZV'nin yordayıcılarını test etmek için yürütülmüş regresyon analizlerinin sonuçları kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezietiyi deęişkenleri kontrol edildikten sonra uzak stres süreçlerinin KZV'yi anlamlı şekilde yordadığını göstermiştir. Ancak yakın stres süreçlerinin KZV'yi yordayıcı rolünün anlamsız olduğu bulunmuştur. Diğer bir deyişle, daha yüksek seviyede uzak stresör deneyimleyen eşcinsel erkeklerin KZV seviyelerinin de daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu bulgu, hem uzak hem de yakın stresörlerin ruh sağlığı problemlerine yol açtığı iddia edildiği azınlık stresi modelini (Meyer, 2003) kısmen destekler niteliktedir. Uzak stresörlerle KZV arasındaki ilişki literatürde önceden yapılmış çalışmaların bulgularını desteklerken (Muehlenkamp, Hilt, Ehlinger, & McMillan, 2015; House, Van Horn, Coppeans, & Stepleman, 2011) yakın stresörlerle KZV arasındaki ilişki ağırlıklı olarak nitel yöntemlerle incelenmiştir. Dolayısıyla, bu iki deęişken arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen nicel çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

4.3. Aracı Deęişken Analizleri

4.3.1. Utancın ve Kendini Affetmenin Uzak Stresörler ve Ruh Sağlığı Çıktıları Arasındaki İlişkilerdeki Aracı Roller

Uzak stresörlerin bağımsız deęişken olarak ele alındığı tüm modeller istatistiksel olarak anlamsız bulunmuştur. Bunun çeşitli açıklamaları olabilir. Öncelikle, uzak stresörleri ölçen indeksin geçerlilik analizleri yürütülmemiş ve psikometrik özellikleri

detaylı olarak incelenmemiştir. Bu durum bir ölçüm hatasıyla sonuçlanmış olabilir. İkinci olarak, katılımcıların belirttiği üzere uzak stresörler yakın stresörlere kıyasla katılımcılar tarafından çok daha düşük seviyede deneyimlenmektedir ki bu da anlamsız bir indirekt etkiye yol açmış olabilir. Son olarak katılımcıların ayrımcılık, şiddet ve mikrosaldırganlık gibi uzak stresörleri nasıl değerlendirdiği sonuçları etkilemiş olabilir. Utanç kişinin sorumluluk kabul ettiği hataları sonucu deneyimlenen bir duyguysen uzak stresörler söz konusu olduğunda katılımcılar bu durumları kendilerinin değil diğerlerinin sorumluluğu olarak değerlendirmiş olabilir. Bu durum utancın düşük seviyede deneyimlenmesine yol açmış olabilir. Benzer şekilde, kendini affetme utanç uyandıran bir deneyimden sonra kullanılan bir duygu-odaklı başa çıkma stratejisi olduğu için düşük seviyede utanç kendini affetmenin anlamsız bir aracı değişken olmasına yol açmış olabilir.

4.3.2. Utancın Yakın Stresörler ve Kaygı Arasındaki İlişkideki Aracı Rolü

Beklenen şekilde, kimliği olumlama ve kimlik merkezliyeti değişkenleri kontrol edildikten sonra, utancın yakın stresörler ve kaygı arasındaki ilişkide aracı değişken rolü üstlendiği bulunmuştur. Diğer bir deyişle, yakın stresör seviyeleri yüksek olan eşcinsel erkekler yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimlemiş, bu da kaygı seviyelerinin artmasına yol açmıştır. Bu bulgu, utancın yakın stresörlerle kaygı arasındaki ilişkide aracılık rolü üstlendiğini gösteren diğer çalışmaların bulgularıyla benzerlik göstermektedir (Mereish & Poteat 2015). Ayrıca, bu bulgu hem azınlık stresi modelini (Meyer, 2003) hem de kendilik bilinçli duyguların yapısal modelini (Lewis & Sullivan, 2005) destekler niteliktedir. Azınlık stresi kuramına göre yakın stresörler kişinin toplumsal tutumları içselleştirdiği süreçleri kapsar. Benzer şekilde, utanç da kişinin diğerlerinin standartlarını, kurallarını ve hedeflerini içselleştirdiği bir süreci içerir. İçselleştirme süreçlerindeki bu benzerlik utancın aracı değişken rolünü açıklamaktadır.

4.3.3. Utancın Yakın Stresörler ve Depresyon Arasındaki İlişkideki Aracı Rolü

Şaşırtıcı şekilde, utanç, yakın stresörlerle depresyon arasındaki ilişkide aracılık rolü üstlenmemiştir. Bu bulgu, önceden yapılmış çalışmaların bulgularıyla örtüşmemektedir (Baydoğan, 2019; Mereish & Poteat, 2015). Bu sonucun olası açıklamalarından biri utancın önceki çalışmalarda ve mevcut çalışmadaki işe vurumsal tanımının farklılığıdır. Mevcut çalışmada utanç seviyeleri durumsal utancı ölçen bir anketle belirlenmiştir. Ancak önceki çalışmalar kişilik özelliği olarak utancı ölçen anketler uygulamışlardır. Dolayısıyla, farklı utanç türlerinin depresyon üzerindeki etkisini araştırarak çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

4.3.4. Utancın Yakın Stresörler ve KZV Arasındaki İlişkideki Aracı Rolü

Utanç, yakın stresörlerle KZV arasındaki ilişkide aracılık rolü üstlenmemiştir. Yakın stresörlerle KZV arasındaki korelasyonun anlamsız olduğu ve yakın stresörlerin KZV'yi yordamadığı düşünüldüğünde bu bulgu şaşırtıcı değildir. LGB popülasyonunda utançla KZV arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen bir çalışma bulunmuş ancak bu çalışma nitel yöntemleri kullanmıştır (McDermott, Roen, & Scourfield, 2008). Dolayısıyla, bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiyi daha iyi anlayabilmek için nicel çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu anlamsız bulgunun olası bir açıklaması KZV'nin nasıl ölçüldüğüyle alakalı olabilir. Mevcut çalışmada kullanılan indeks son bir yıl içindeki KZV'yi ölçmektedir. Ancak literatürdeki çalışmalar KZV'nin ergenlik döneminde en yüksek seviyeye ulaştığını göstermektedir (Gandhi ve ark., 2016). Dolayısıyla, KZV'nin yaşam boyu yaygınlığını ölçen bir ölçüm aracı anlamlı sonuçlar çıkarabilirdi.

4.3.5. Kendini Affetmenin Yakın Stresörler ve Ruh Sağlığı Çıktıları Arasındaki İlişkilerdeki Aracı Rolü

Yakın stresörlerin bağımsız değişken kendini affetmenin ise aracı değişken olarak dahil edildiği tüm modeller istatistiksel olarak anlamsızdır. Mevcut çalışma kendini

affetmenin bahsedilen ilişkilerdeki aracılık rolünü inceleyen ilk çalışma olmasına rağmen önceki bulgularla örtüşmemektedir (Yao, Chen, Yu, & Sang, 2016; Ascenzo & Collard 2018). Bu anlamsız ilişkilerin olası açıklamaları olabilir. Bunlardan ilki kendini affetmenin modeldeki yeriyle alakalıdır. Mevcut çalışmada kendini affetme utanç verici bir deneyimden *sonra* kullanılan duygu-odaklı bir başa çıkma stratejisi olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır. Test edilen modellere utanç dahil edilmediği için bu bulgu pek de şaşırtıcı değildir. Benzer şekilde, araştırmacılar (Toussaint, Webb, & Hirsch, 2017) kendini affetme ve ruh sağlığı problemleri arasındaki ilişkide başka aracı ya da düzenleyici değişkenlerin olabileceğini savunmuşlardır. Bu değişkenler bu çalışmaya dahil edilmemiştir ve mevcut çalışmanın kapsamının dışındadır. Ancak ileriki araştırmalarda kendini affetme ile ruh sağlığı çıktıları arasındaki ilişkide rol alabilecek olası aracı ya da düzenleyici değişkenler dahil edilmelidir.

4.3.6. Utancın ve Kendini Affetmenin Yakın Stresörler ve Depresyon ile Kaygı Arasındaki İlişkilerindeki Aracı Roller

Mevcut çalışmanın bulguları, utancın ve kendini affetmenin yakın stresörler ile depresyon ve kaygı arasındaki ilişkilerde sırasıyla aracılık ettiğini göstermiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, yakın stresörler utanç seviyelerinde artışa yol açmış, yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimlenen kendini affetmeyi azaltmış ve bu da sonucunda daha fazla depresyon ve kaygı belirtisi deneyimlenmesine yol açmıştır. Bu bulgular azınlık stresi modeli (Meyer, 2003), kendilik bilinçli duyguların yapısal modelini (Lewis & Sullivan, 2005) ve kendini affetmenin stres ve başa çıkma modelini (Toussaint, Webb, & Hirsch, 2017) desteklemektedir. Önceden bahsedildiği gibi, hem yakın stresörler hem de utanç bir içselleştirme süreci içermektedir. Devamında ise yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimleyen katılımcılar arasından kendini affetmeyi duygu-odaklı bir başa çıkma olarak kullananlar daha düşük seviyede depresyon ve kaygı deneyimlemiştir.

4.3.7. Utancın ve Kendini Affetmenin Yakın Stresörler ve KZV Arasındaki İlişkide Aracı Roller

Mevcut çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular utancın ve kendini affetmenin yakın stresörler ile KZV arasındaki ilişkide sırasıyla aracı değişken rolleri üstlenmediğini göstermiştir. Önceden değinildiği gibi yakın stresörlerin KZV ile olan korelasyonunun anlamsız olduğu ve yakın stresörlerin anlamlı bir şekilde KZV'yi yordamadığı düşünüldüğünde bu bulgu şaşırtıcı değildir. Bu çalışma utancı ve kendini affetmeyi bahsedilen ilişkide sırasıyla aracı değişken olarak dahil eden ilk çalışmadır. Dolayısıyla bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen daha çok çalışmaya ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Yine de sonuçlar KZV'nin LGB popülasyonu için işlevini ortaya koymaktadır. Uzak stresörler KZV'yi yordadığı için, KZV'nin cinsel azınlıklar için ayrımcılığa maruz kaldıktan sonra duygu düzenleme işlevi gördüğü savunulabilir. Ancak bu iddiayı test edecek gelecek çalışmalara ihtiyaç vardır.

4.4. Klinik Uygulamalar

Çalışmanın bulguları uzak stresörlerin ruh sağlığı çıktılarını yordadığını göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla, eşcinsel erkeklerle çalışan klinisyenlerin, danışanlarının uzak stresörlere maruz kaldığı çevresel koşulları değerlendirmeleri önemlidir. Ayrıca, depresyon ve kaygı söz konusu olduğunda, yakın stresörler de bu ruh sağlığı problemlerini yordadığı için, psikoterapistlerin danışanlarının yakın stresör seviyelerini de göz önünde bulundurmaları önemlidir. Sonuçların gösterdiği üzere, utanç ve kendini affetme yakın stresörler ile depresyon ve kaygı arasındaki ilişkide aracılık rolleri üstlenmiştir. Bu sebeple, yüksek seviyede utanç deneyimleyen eşcinsel erkeklerle çalışan klinik psikologlar kendini affetme tekniklerini psikoterapi uygulamalarında kullanabilirler. Bunu yaparken, utanç duygularının psikoterapi sırasında pişmanlık duygularına dönüştürülmesi ve kişinin benliğini değil davranışını hatalı olarak algılaması önemlidir. Son olarak sosyal politika geliştiricileri mevcut çalışmanın bulgularından faydalanabilirler. Sonuçların gösterdiği üzere eşcinsel erkekler genellikle kamusal alanlarda ayrımcılığa maruz kalmaktadır. Bireysel seviyedeki tüm müdahale programları

toplumsal seviyede sosyal politikalar tarafından desteklenmeli ve cinsel azınlıklara, ayrımcılığa maruz kalmayacakları kamusal alanlar yaratılmalıdır.

4.5. Çalışmanın Güçlü Yönleri

Bu çalışma, utancı ve kendini affetmeyi sırasıyla aracı değişken olarak dahil eden ilk çalışmadır. Ayrıca, Türkçe literatüre bakıldığında bu çalışmanın eşcinsel erkeklerin ruh sağlığını azınlık stresi perspektifinden anlamaya çalışan ilk çalışma olduğu görülmektedir. Benzer şekilde, KZV'nin bir cinsel azınlık popülasyonunda çalışıldığı ilk çalışmadır. Son olarak, eşcinsel erkekler nadir çalışılan bir örneklem olduğu için bu da çalışmanın güçlü yönlerinden biridir.

4.6. Çalışmanın Sınırlılıkları ve Gelecek Çalışmalar için Öneriler

Mevcut çalışmanın bazı sınırlılıkları vardır. Öncelikle, çalışmada kesitsel desen kullanılmış ve veriler öz değerlendirme aracılığıyla elde edilmiştir. Bu sebeple değişkenler arasında neden sonuç ilişkisi çıkarmak mümkün değildir. İleriki çalışmalar deneysel ve/ya boylamsal desenler kullanarak farklı veri toplama çeşitlerine yer vermelidir. İkinci olarak çalışmanın örnekleme ağırlıklı olarak genç ve büyükşehirde yaşayan eşcinsel erkeklerden oluşmuştur. Örneklem özellikleri dolayısıyla çalışmanın bulgularını genellemek zorlaşmıştır. İleriki çalışmalar daha çeşitli sosyodemografik karakterlere sahip örneklemelerle yürütülmelidir. Ayrıca, mevcut çalışmadan elde edilen bulguların pek çoğu literatürde ilk kez bulunmuştur. Dolayısıyla, mevcut çalışmadan elde edilen bulguları önceden elde edilen bulgularla karşılaştırmak pek mümkün olamamıştır. Bu sebeple bu alanda yürütülecek daha çok çalışmaya ihtiyaç vardır. Son olarak değişkenler arasında önemli ilişkiler göstermesine rağmen, ruh sağlığı çıktılarındaki varyansın önemli bir kısmı açıklanamamıştır. Bu sebeple ileriki çalışmaların farklı değişkenleri dahil etmesi önerilmektedir.

4.7. Sonu

Sonu olarak sınırlılıklarına raėmen mevcut alıřma, azınlık streslerini, utancı, kendini affetmeyi ve bir ruh saėlıėı ıktısı olarak KZV'yi dahil eden ilk alıřma olmuř ve literatre nemli katkılar sunmuřtur. Aynı zamanda, mevcut alıřmanın bulguları azınlık stresi modelini (Meyer, 2003) kısmen doėrulamıř ve utancın ve kendini affetmenin eėcinsel erkeklerin hayatlarındaki nemini ortaya koymuřtur.



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