

ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY MASTER’S DEGREE PROGRAM

ADOLESCENTS’ PERCEPTIONS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DATING
VIOLENCE: A FOCUS-GROUP STUDY

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ISTANBUL
2022

Adolescents' Perceptions of Psychological Dating Violence:

A Focus-Group Study

Ergenlerin Psikolojik Flört Şiddeti Algıları: Odak Grup Çalışması

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Date of Approval of Thesis: 06.07.2022

Total Page Number: 107

Keywords (Turkish)

- 1) Ergen Flörtü
- 2) Ergenlerde Flört Şiddeti
- 3) Flört Şiddeti ve Medya
- 4) Romantik Mitler
- 5) Cinsiyetçi Atıflar

Keywords (English)

- 1) Adolescent Dating
- 2) Adolescent Dating Violence
- 3) Dating Violence and Media
- 4) Romantic Myths
- 5) Sexist Attitudes

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I am coming to the end of one of the toughest years of my life, I do not know how to start to show my thankfulness to the people who made this year real. All in all, this year was difficult. It was full of rush, anxiety attacks, procrastinations, and fallings on the ground. However, I was the luckiest person as every time I found myself on the ground, I was offered help by countless hands to get me to stand on my feet again. I would not be able to complete this thesis as well as this whole year without their existence. Therefore, with all my heart, I would like to say “Thank you” to each person I encountered during this process for blessing me with their safe heaven.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Prof. Hale Bolak for providing her support, calmness, and guidance that puts me on track while writing this thesis. I also want to thank Assist. Prof. Anıl Özge Üstünel for both helping me construct the foundation of this thesis during first grade, introducing me to the concept of “dating violence” through her research projects, and her valuable feedback. I would like to thank Beril Türkoğlu Demirel for taking the time and effort to read my thesis and participate in the jury. I also should mention the people who gave me the chance to enroll in this valuable program and brought a clinical perspective to me both as a therapist and a researcher. In that sense, I am very grateful to be a student of Sibel Halfon and Elif Akdağ Göcek. This three-year period was a milestone in every way for my 27-year-old life that transformed me more than I even imagined. Thank you for giving me the chance to be a part of this community. This program would not be completed without Esra Akça and Sinem Kılıç. Thank you for providing every answer and help in a second. Your presence made lots of things easier in this program.

I would like to thank my family as well for the endless tolerance and acceptance they showed me during this year who was always so generous to realize my difficulties and provide the support I need (which even includes assistantship to my thesis). They are the ones who made this journey possible from the beginning. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to follow my dreams.

I also would like to thank my lovely cohort. I would never manage to run or finish this program without their presence. Apart from all the things I have learned in these three years, your presence was the one that made me feel the luckiest. Ebru, Hazal, Begüm, Dilara, Selin, Tuğçe, and Nurşen; thank you for providing the containment I need in any way even though you were struggling with the same issues.

I cannot finish this list without giving the biggest thanks to those who had always been there. The ones who carried the burden of my anxiety attacks, my cries, whinings, complaints, failures, excitements, etc. for me. Thank you for never getting tired to support and motivate me, and for getting me back on my feet. Papis, Firaz, Eylül, Seçom, Büşü and Betüş. Thank you for giving me a place in your hearts (as well as your homes from time to time). I could not be able to finish this year without your support. I also would like to thank the Güler. Thank you for being the biggest surprise of this year and for your “Go Rocky”s during this process.

I would like to finalize my thank list with participants and their families that take the time to attend the focus groups and trust me to share their valuable opinions. I should also thank Vefalı Oyuncular for their enthusiasm in involving in this study. It was an honor for me to have this group meeting with your involvement as a former student of Vefa Lisesi.

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis intends to investigate adolescents' perceptions of psychological dating violence on the basis of media representations of romantic relationships and to what extent they tend to normalize this violence with the effect of romantic myths and sexist attitudes. Twelve high school students participated in a one-session focus group in which they discussed dating, the ideal romantic relationship, the effect of media, and dating violence incidents through presented video clips. Following the focus groups, four major themes emerged from thematic analysis. The first theme "Perception of dating as a process with novel emotions, behaviors, and interpersonal dynamics" reflected how adolescents frame the concept of "dating". The second theme "Romantic relationships are complicated: Mutuality, jealousy and double standards" explained the adolescents' opinions about relationships. The third theme "Acknowledging the role of media on romantic relationships" revealed what participants think about the romantic relationships presented in the media. Finally, under the last theme, "Tentative recognition of power issues in dating," participants discussed the manifestations of dating violence within the presented video clips. In that sense, even though they depicted these incidents and regarded "problematic", they tend to romanticize and normalize the violence as a show of protection and a sign of love if the perpetrator appeared to be sad. The results indicated that even though the influence of romantic myths and sexist attitudes do exist, adolescents are aware of the manifestations of dating violence.

Keywords: adolescent dating, adolescent dating violence, dating violence and media, romantic myths, sexist attitudes

ÖZET

Bu tez çalışması, romantik ilişkilerin medyadaki temsillerini temel alarak ergenlerin psikolojik flört şiddeti algılarını ve bu şiddeti ne oranda romantik mitler ve cinsiyetçi atıfların etkisiyle normalleştirmeye meyilli olduklarını araştırmayı amaçlar. Çalışma kapsamında on iki lise öğrencisi, sunulan video klipler aracılığıyla flört, ideal romantik ilişki, medyanın etkisi ve flört şiddeti olaylarını tartıştıkları tek oturumluk bir odak gruba katıldı. Odak grupları sonrasında, tematik analiz sonucunda dört ana tema ortaya çıktı. “Yeni duygular, davranışlar ve kişilerarası dinamiklerle bir süreç olarak flört algısı” ilk teması, ergenlerin “flört” kavramını nasıl çerçevelediğini yansıttı. Bu örnekleme göre flört, tek eşli ilişkiye giden bir süreç olarak tanımlandı. İkinci tema olan “Romantik ilişkiler karmaşıktır: Karşılıklılık, kıskançlık ve çifte standartlar” ergenlerin romantik ilişkiye ilişkin görüşlerini açıkladı. Üçüncü tema olan “Medyanın romantik ilişkiler üzerindeki rolünün kabullenilmesi”, katılımcıların medyada sunulan romantik ilişkiler hakkında ne düşündüklerini ve bu imgelerden hangi dinamikler aracılığıyla etkilendiklerini ortaya çıkardı. Son olarak, son tema altında, “Flörtteki güç meselelerinin tanımlanma girişimi” katılımcılar, sunulan video kliplerde flört şiddetinin tezahürlerini tartışıldı. Bu anlamda her ne kadar bu olayları betimleseler ve “sorunlu” olarak değerlendirseler de failin daha hüzünlü bir üslubu varsa, şiddeti, koruma ve aşkın belirtisi olarak görerek romantikleştirme ve normalleştirme eğilimindedirler. Sonuçlar, romantik mitlerin ve cinsiyetçi tutumların etkisi olmasına rağmen, ergenlerin flört şiddeti tezahürlerinin farkında olduklarını göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ergen flörtü, ergen flört şiddeti, flört şiddeti ve medya, romantik mitler, cinsiyetçi tutumlar

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The current thesis' main goal is to have a deeper understanding of the adolescents' perceptions of psychological dating violence over its presentation on media targeting the adolescents. Their perceptions were investigated from the Social Learning Theory perspective as well as taking romantic myths and sexist attitudes into account in the degree of normalization of the violence. The primary investigator conducted semi-structured focus groups with high school students which included questions about participants' opinions on the nature of dating, the ideal romantic relationship, and the effect of media. The perceptions of dating violence were examined through four video clips that are taken from two movies and chosen by the primary investigator. Based on these video clips that show instances of two different couples, participants elaborated on what is problematic and what could be justified.

The study has the intention to contribute to the literature and provide a different perspective for researchers, clinicians, and other specialists who work on prevention and intervention programs about adolescent dating violence.

1.1 DATING VIOLENCE: DEFINITION AND CATEGORIZATION

Violence in the context of romantic relationships has always been one of the most researched and debated topics throughout the ages. When talking about violence in romantic relationships, this umbrella term contains dating context as well in addition to violence in families or marriage. At this point, it would be better to start examining "dating violence" by first defining the concept of dating. According to Oxford Dictionary, the word "dating" simply refers to being in a relationship with someone (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.). Cambridge Dictionary, on the other side, integrates "spending time" together consistently with

the partner in a romantic relationship (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Furthermore, it is a broad term that explains interpersonal relationships that are romantic, emotional, or sexual (The Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence, 2017). “Dating violence”, on the other hand, indicates imbalanced power between partners that result in one partner’s controlling, manipulating, and harming the other by enforcing that power in many ways (Close, 2005; Fredland et al., 2005; Wincktak et al., 2017). In other words, the concept indicates the use of violence and aggression of any kind within non-married couples, especially at younger ages (Üstünel, 2018; Rubio-Garay et al., 2017).

Diverse resources define these ways of coercing power in dating relationships under varied categorizations. According to the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence (2017), dating violence can be defined under six sub-categories: gender-based, emotional/verbal, virtual, stalking or persistent chasing, physical, and sexual. In this categorization, it is observed that “stalking” which refers to chasing someone persistently and violating personal boundaries either physically or virtually, is taken as a separate category. This type of categorization as distinguishing stalking is also encountered in different resources (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Apart from this organization, some resources used a broader framework and defined dating violence under three main types as “physical”, “sexual” and “psychological” (Center for Disease Control, 2018; Pittman et al, 2000, Rubio-Garay et al., 2017). In order to discuss within a more comprehensive framework, the definition based on three main types will be followed for this study.

1.1.1 Psychological Dating Violence

Psychological dating violence is any form of behavior that aims to threaten the partner’s self-respect and self-worth through different means (Debnam & Meuer, 2021; Lapierre et al., 2019). In other words, it is a very broad roof that consists of verbal harassment or humiliation to provoke shame, guilt, or fear, violating the personal boundaries of the partner or enforcing control over the other’s

behaviors like pushing into social isolation, attacking the properties that the partner values and manipulating emotionally or mentally to cause the others to question their opinions (Rubio-Garay et al., 2017). In that sense, when compared with physical and sexual dating violence, signs of psychological dating violence may not be salient as the other two types by both the victim and the people around. However, the outcomes of psychological dating violence are regarded as equal to or more distressing and detrimental than physical violence by the victims (Orpinas et al., 2012).

In addition to being harder to notice, these behaviors are prone to be romanticized and minimized or evaluated as manifestations of love or protection (Collins & Carmody, 2011; Üstünel, 2018) and prone to be tolerated and normalized which makes the violence harder to notice (Taylor et al., 2021). This situation highlights the importance of having knowledge about the patterns of psychological violence in order to detect and prevent possible harm.

1.2 PREVALENCE OF DATING VIOLENCE IN ADOLESCENCE

Even though the term “dating violence” mostly refers to relationships at younger ages, it is more likely to be regarded as an adult issue, especially in the more conservative cultures like Turkey in which adolescent sexuality is less visible (Öztürk, 2017). However, diverse sources and studies indicated that dating violence is a common shared experience in adolescence context as well. In a study of university students in Turkey, psychological violence was found to be the most prevalent in dating relationships (Bolak-Boratav & Cavdar, 2012). According to the National Institute of Justice report in 2011, among high school participants, the prevalence of psychological dating violence victimization was 47% while it was 30% for physical and 27% for digital dating violence. Another research provided a synthesis of 51 different studies (Stonard, et al., 2014) and presented the prevalence of adolescent dating violence in detail. According to this synthesis, psychological dating violence victimization was reported as the highest prevalence with 35-36% which was followed by physical (20-25%) and sexual (20%) dating violence

victimization among adolescents. Besides having diverse research on different types of adolescent dating violence in literature, the scope of research is narrower within the Turkey context. The most relevant project in Turkey about adolescent dating violence was completed through the “What’s Up What’s Not?!” youth program by The Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence in 2017. Through this project, several workshops, seminars, and brochures were conducted to increase the awareness of dating violence victimization and perpetration of high school students (The Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence, n.d.). The research report of the project suggested that among 94 high school students (The Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence, 2018) 56% of the participants experienced dating violence while 67% stated that they had witnessed such violent acts. Even though this project was one of the prominent studies on dating violence during adolescence in Turkey, it did not analyze dating violence with its sub-types. In that sense, it would be fair to claim that dating violence and adolescence in Turkey's context is still a topic that could be further researched.

The prevalence of dating violence victimization according to gender is varied in different studies (Coker et al., 2014; Leen et al., 2013; Reidy et al., 2016; Rubio-Garay et al., 2017; Stonard et al., 2014; Taquette & Monteiro, 2019). In the case of psychological dating violence, while girls were shown to be victimized more in some studies, research that reports higher victimization rates for boys also existed (Stonard et al., 2014). While the victimization rates varied according to types of dating violence, psychological dating violence victimization was found higher among girls (Coker et al., 2014; Rubio-Garay et al., 2016). However, there was also evidence for similar rates of victimization for both genders (Leen et al., 2013; Taquette & Monteiro, 2019). In addition to this, a study by Reidy and colleagues (2016) revealed higher victimization of psychological dating violence for boys, by also indicating girls experience negative emotions more as a result of these actions.

Not only victimization but also perpetration of dating violence among adolescents is also an important part of this issue. The same study by Stonard and colleagues (2014) suggested that the prevalence of psychological dating violence perpetration ranged between 20-25%. Another study, on the other hand, examined

the perpetration of dating violence depending on its degree of perpetration (Lapierre et al., 2019). In that sense, the study indicated that 61% of the adolescent participants perpetrated what the researchers named “low violence” to refer to one or two actions committed in a given period. In addition to this, more intense and frequent forms of psychological dating violence were reported by 8% within the sample. The gender differences regarding the perpetration diversified across studies as suggested in the earlier paragraph about victimization. Similar to victimization, perpetration of psychological dating violence was also found higher for girls (Coker et al., 2014; Rubio-Garay et al., 2017). Taquette and Monteiro (2019), on the other hand, provided a trajectory during adolescence in which in certain periods during adolescence girls tend to perpetrate psychological dating violence more than boys while at the same time highlighting that mutual violence from both partners is the most common form of violence.

Even though literature presented variational results in terms of gender differences, they all underlined the commonality of experiencing, enforcing, and witnessing the aspects of psychological dating violence to a great extent during adolescence. In that sense, it could be inferred that dating violence occupies a huge burden in adolescent romantic relationships even though it may remain in the background when compared with adult relationships in more conservative cultures.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF DATING AND DATING VIOLENCE DURING ADOLESCENCE

Adolescence is a critical period in terms of dating since adolescents learn how to form relationships, create opinions on roles within the relationships, and date patterns (Wincentak et al., 2017). In addition to getting acquainted with the concepts of “romance” and “dating”, this period is also important because romantic relationships have also vital developmental functions during the course of adolescence (Barber & Eccles, 2003). In that sense, romantic relationships hold the center of both social and personal development in adolescents’ lives (Sorensen, 2007). Many developmental issues like identity formation and self-esteem,

problem-solving skills, and social competencies improve within the romantic relationships and construct the foundation for the person's adult interpersonal relationships (Barber & Eccles, 2003; Reidy et al., 2016; Sorensen, 2007). Therefore, experiencing romantic relationships and efforts for dating progressively is very crucial during the adolescence period (Stonard et al., 2014).

Apart from the functions of dating, another reason for the importance of the adolescence period is the formation of gender roles. Similar to learning patterns of interpersonal relationships, it is a period in which gender expectations manifest themselves strongly in the behaviors of adolescents as well as within their romantic relationships (Taylor et al., 2021). In other words, this period could be seen as they are open to being influenced by the traditional gender norms which have the potential to affect their future relationships in adulthood. Furthermore, as Bergman (1992) suggested adolescents have a higher frequency of partner change which results in less selectivity in partner choice and increases the potential of facing risky situations within their relationships. Furthermore, jealousy and control enforced by the partner are more likely to be misjudged as signs of love during this period which makes the adolescent susceptible to abusive relationships (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). In line with this, adolescence, in general, is a period where people have a higher tendency to engage in risky behaviors both in their interpersonal relationships and sexual activity as well as being open to being abused by their partners (Sorensen, 2007). These risky behaviors include being the perpetrator as well in dating relationships which may be acquired by the adolescents as their relationship pattern (Lapierre et al., 2019). Therefore, adolescence carries the risk of learning not only being the abused but also being the abuser as a relationship pattern throughout their lives.

The consequences of adolescent dating violence are not only limited to influencing adulthood relationship patterns, victimization of dating violence of any kind is associated with many forms of behavioral and psychological problems including suicide attempts (Sarihan, 2019). A study by Callahan and colleagues (2003) also manifested different adverse experiences across genders. In that sense, girls tended to experience symptoms of posttraumatic stress more while boys

reported anxiety and depression. However, a strong relationship was found between victimization of dating violence and decreased psychological well-being for both genders (Callahan et al., 2003). Some studies, on the other hand, examined the consequences of dating violence by distinguishing different types. In that sense, psychological dating violence victimization had a significant relation to increased alcohol and substance abuse, internalizing symptoms, and problems that led suicide ideation (Foshee et al., 2013). It should be highlighted that apart from mental and behavioral adversities, adolescents also experienced actual injury due to psychological dating violence, and contrary to general expectations adolescent victims of psychological dating violence were found to be at greater risk for physical injury in comparison with other two types (Tharp et al., 2017).

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.4.1 Social Learning Theory

One of the major theories that explain the development of violence perpetration is the Social Learning Theory by Bandura (Foshee et al., 1999; Jennings et al., 2011; Set, 2020; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Social Learning Theory, in general, drew reciprocity between the person's cognition as well as behaviors and the environment (Bandura, 1977). The theory highlighted the importance of social experience in influencing people's behaviors, cognitions, and emotions which people acquire through observational learning (Bandura, 1977). In other words, through observation and modeling of behaviors that elicit positive consequences, the child acquires types of interactions that are formed by the people around them. In that sense, the theory suggested that violence is learned through this mechanism. As the child observes the positive outcomes of violent behaviors, those behavioral patterns are learned and committed in the future (Foshee et al., 1999; Set, 2020). The main observational source in learning violent behaviors is the parents since children attribute higher characteristics and value to their parents which in turn enhances learning (Bandura, 1977). Consequently, growing up in a

context where familial violence is experienced or witnessed increases one's potential to imitate these behaviors and commit violence in one's close relationships in adulthood to solve conflicts (Tontodonato & Crew, 1992; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). In other words, parents' use of violence presented positive functionality and overshadows the negative outcomes which in turn increase the likelihood of using violence by the children (Foshee et al., 1999).

In the context of dating violence, the theory drew a strong association between exposure to domestic violence and dating violence perpetration. A study by Wekerle and colleagues (2009) revealed that emotional abuse during childhood had an association with both perpetration and victimization of all kinds of dating violence. However, while some studies suggested a relationship between dating violence and witnessing familial violence (Glass et al., 2003), inconsistent outcomes in terms of the effect of witnessing the violence on one's dating violence perpetration or victimization also existed in the literature (O'Keefe, 2005). Whereas another perspective placed adolescent dating violence in a position in which they practice and learn roles, behaviors, and ways of solving conflicts that are brought from adverse childhood experiences and had the potential of moving forward toward adulthood (Wolfe et al., 2003)

Social learning of violence is not limited to family context. In that sense, these behavioral patterns can also be internalized through the media which presents cultural dynamics as well (Jennings et al., 2011). In other words, like the adults within the family, media is also a source of behavioral modeling and witnessing. Consequently, more appealing presentations of violence in relationships start to influence adolescents' perceptions since they have a deep and intense relationship with the materials they have been consuming especially during their rough times (Wekerle & Wolfe, 2009). When the fact of how frequently adolescents engage in various forms of mass media is considered (Rodenhizer & Edwards, 2017), the media's influence on adolescents becomes more apparent. This learning process can be examined in two different dynamics as witnessing violence and modeling behaviors similar to the internalization of domestic violence. Adolescents are at risk of witnessing dating violence in romantic relationships through a wide range of

mass media sources (Chapin, 2013). In that sense, exposure to instances of violence on TV shows was found to increase tolerance and acceptance of real-life dating violence perpetration and victimization as well as enforcing aggression within relationships (Coyne et al., 2011; Rodenhizer & Edwards, 2017). Therefore, not only behaviors but also cognitions of adolescents were influenced by media. In line with this, constant exposure to violent material through diversified means of media increased normalization and desensitization for such incidents (Collins & Carmody, 2011; Fredland et al., 2005). It should also be worth noting that their attitudes towards dating violence were differentiated in relation to their views about the media show to a certain extent (Rodenhizer et al., 2021).

The second way that adolescents are affected by the media is through modeling certain roles and behaviors and in a respect, function as a reference point that adolescents search for in order to learn about dating (Chapin, 2013; Manganello, 2008). In that sense, the storylines serve to justify and normalize the partner's aggressiveness and violence by romanticizing it as aspects of protection and true love in addition to inflicting traditional normative gender roles which highlight the dominance of the masculine and submissiveness of the feminine (Collins & Carmody, 2011; Masanet, Medina-Bravo & Ferres, 2018; Taylor et al., 2021). In a study on perceptions of dating violence, adolescents pointed out the learning processes of culturally appropriate gender roles acquired in socialization through media and other dimensions in which the male figure is associated with authority, control and protection while the female figure is associated with adaptation, tolerance, and being nice (Taylor et al., 2021). Therefore, in addition to increasing the potential of dating violence perpetration and victimization through exposure to violent material, modeling traditional sexist attitudes and romanticization of violence are also the ways adolescents' perceptions of dating violence are affected by presentations on mass media through social learning.

1.4.2 Sexist Attitudes and Romantic Myths

Some prominent and common features of heterosexual romantic relationships presented in the media are jealousy and male control over the female character (Papp et al., 2016). This situation is not only applicable in terms of adult romance but also covers adolescent relationships which revolve around violence, jealousy, and control (Collins & Carmody, 2011). To trace the aspects of violence in teenage-directed media sources, Collins and Carmody (2011) examined a popular and widely consumed book series *Twilight* which is a love story of a male vampire and a teenage girl. This love story was built around the boy's controlling and dominating of the girl and highlights justifications of love and protection. In that sense, the presented relationship served both sexist attitudes and romanticization of dating violence. When the fact that adolescents consult examples from media as role models for relationships and gender roles is taken into consideration, their perceptions of dating violence could be affected by how it is justified through sexist attitudes and romantic myths (Masanet et al., 2018; Munoz & Fedele, 2011).

Sexist attitudes refer to certain gender stereotypes that center on females suggested by Glick and Fiske (1996) in their ambivalent sexism theory. This theory manifested two branches of sexism, one of which "hostile sexism" reflected more overt attitudes that place women in an inferior and weak position whereas the other term "benevolent sexism" highlighted stereotyped and restricted views of women that are presented with positive intentions. In that sense, these are more fainted attitudes that do not give the impression of hostility, like the necessity of women to be protected by men. Authors also argued that even though benevolent sexism may be regarded as a positive attitude compared to hostile sexism, it should be noted that they are different justifications of the same fundamental belief: men's power and superiority over women.

Sexist attitudes are critical because they provide a foundation for youth regarding their relationship patterns (Marcos et al., 2020). This situation is also applicable to dating violence perceptions. A study by Black and Weisz (2005)

which examined the perceptions of Mexican adolescents on dating violence qualitatively indicated that the theme of men being strong and women being in the need of protection emerged frequently throughout the interviews. In other words, traces of both benevolent and hostile sexism might be encountered within the discussion of dating violence in adolescents. In parallel with this, adolescents' adopting sexist attitudes and normative gender roles had a relationship with committing, tolerating, and justifying the potential male violence in dating contexts (Carrascosa et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016; Marcos et al., 2020; Ramiro-Sanchez et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2012). This relationship was not limited to offline means of dating violence but also accounted for online dating violence as well, especially in terms of benevolent sexism (Cava et al., 2020).

Within the discussion of sexist attitudes, romantic myths also appeared in association with those attitudes in shaping adolescent perceptions of dating violence (Carrascosa et al., 2019). Sprecher and Metts (1989) defined five different romantic myths in general: Falling in love at first sight, the existence of one true love, the power of love to overcome difficulties, the excellence of true love, and the importance of following the feelings in partner choice. In addition to these five basic themes, studies on the romanticization of dating violence also focused on the need for a relationship in true happiness, regarding jealousy and control as the indication of love and love bringing pain as well (Carrascosa et al., 2019; Papp et al., 2017). In that sense, the interiorization of sexist attitudes and romantic beliefs had a substantial influence on normalizing partner violence, particularly for jealousy and control behaviors (Papp et al., 2017). The same study analyzed this effect for three different sub-types of dating violence and suggested a strong correlation between the romanticization of jealousy and psychological violence reporting. Though this study focused on adult perceptions and relationships, the dynamic between romantic myths and dating violence was also prevalent in adolescents. According to Nardi-Rodriguez and colleagues (2019), beliefs in love myths offered a positive relationship with acceptance of dating violence for adolescents. This relationship was suggested as even stronger for girls who are prone to evaluate the controlling behaviors of the partner as an indicator of love.

Another study that examined this issue through participants' views on a teenage TV show found out that adolescent participants tended to justify jealousy, aggression, and impulsive tendencies of the male partner through romantic myths that highlighted love's power to overcome difficulties and change the partner (Masanet et al., 2018).

Apart from the acceptance, increased beliefs in sexist attitudes and romantic myths demonstrated a linear relationship with victimization (Marcos et al., 2020). Similarly, this mechanism also manifested itself in the perpetration as well, through online dating violence, especially for girl participants, and predicted their use of online aggression (Cava et al., 2020). This finding is significant since the use of virtual aggression in a romantic relationship is linked with all forms of dating violence to a great extent and in addition to this, online aggression itself might actually be regarded as a form of psychological violence (Marganski & Melander, 2015; Stonard et al., 2014). Therefore, even though the studies may not focus specifically on psychological dating violence, they still indicated significant results to be able to generate a portrayal of how this association might be in terms of psychological dating violence. Consequently, when all information provided is gathered, it would be fair to claim that not only experiences but also conceptualizations of adolescents on psychological dating violence are influenced by their reliance on these sexist attitudes and romantic myths, therefore these concepts are worth giving attention to in terms of to what extent they present themselves within the adolescents' perceptions.

1.5 THE PRESENT STUDY

Violence within romantic relationships is not only a growing problem within marriage relationships. Partner violence in the dating context particularly in young couples is a prevalent issue that leads to many forms of physical and psychological problems that may have long-term effects (Callahan et al., 2003; Chiodo et al., 2012; Foshee et al., 2013; Sarihan, 2019; Tharp et al., 2017). Among the three main sub-types, psychological violence comes into prominence by being harder to detect

and easier to justify compared to physical and sexual violence even though its consequences are as detrimental as the other types (Collins & Carmody, 2011; Orpinas et al., 2012). One of the influential sources that promote this justification is romantic relationships presented in the media. In the process of striving to learn about the nature of romantic relationships and gender roles during adolescence, relationships presented in mass media come into prominence as sources (Manganello, 2008; Wincentak et al., 2017). In that sense, media might shape adolescents' perceptions on aspects of psychological dating violence either by exposure to dating violence (Chapin, 2013) or by promoting sexist attitudes and romantic myths which increase the likelihood of tolerating and normalizing dating violence (Collins & Carmody, 2011; Papp et al., 2016).

Even though there has been a wide range of studies regarding adolescents' perceptions on dating violence, studies within the Turkish sample are scarce which might be due to the low visibility of adolescent sexuality in conservative cultures (Öztürk, 2017). In that sense, studies about dating violence predominantly focused on emerging adults that are college students (Türk et al., 2020). However, dating violence is a critical issue that has been experienced very frequently by adolescent sample in Turkey as well (The Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence, 2018). Additionally, considering the fact that different forms of intimate partner violence are encountered in most-watched Turkish movies frequently (Çuhadaroğlu & Aydın, 2021), it is a gap in the literature that how adolescents in Turkey perceive these actions and whether they are aware of the violence presented. Awareness is vital since it is the first step in recognizing traces of dating violence and getting in touch with support systems (Nagamatsu et al., 2016). In that sense, the literature has few studies that examine how adolescents conceptualize the term and its representations in media. The present research aims to investigate adolescents' perceptions of psychological dating violence in heterosexual couples over its presence in visual media sources targeting adolescents and to what extent these perceptions are in parallel with sexist attitudes and romantic myths in a focus group. The study will point out and answer the following research questions:

1. How do adolescents understand and talk about romantic relationships?

2. What are the attitudes of adolescents about the patterns of psychological dating violence within the romantic relationship presented in visual media sources?
3. How and to what extent are their perceptions about psychological dating violence constructed around the representations in the media, sexist attitudes, and romantic myths?



CHAPTER II

METHOD

2.1. PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING METHOD

Following the approval of the Istanbul Bilgi University Ethics Board Committee, participants were recruited by convenience and snowball sampling methods. An introductory poster about the study was shared within the personal network of the primary investigator as well as the primary investigator's high school alumni network and student clubs. The study was presented as a group work about "Romantic relationships and the media" without further information. In order to facilitate recruitment and to reach a wider population, the only inclusion criterion was established as being a high school student since adolescence is the period in which they construct opinions about romantic relationships and patterns of dating (Wincentak et al, 2016). The exclusion criterion was being exposed to dating violence victimization in their current or former relationships. This criterion is set due to the fact that this study aims to investigate perceptions and is unable to offer support or intervention. Finally, even though dating violence within heterosexual couples was examined in the current study, sexual orientation was not established as an inclusion or exclusion criterion since it is suggested as continues developing until the emerging adulthood and can be more dynamic or fluid during middle adolescence (Kaestle, 2019; Stewart, 2019).

Prior to starting the data collection process, a pilot group with two participants had been completed to be able to review the outcomes in terms of revisions. The recruitment and the procedure remained the same for the pilot focus group. Focus groups enabled to observe how adolescents construct and discuss the psychological dating violence within a realistic interaction together.

Braun and Clarke's (2013) recommendations were taken as the basis for determining the number of participants. According to what they suggested, three groups were organized with five or six participants to give each adolescent enough space to express themselves. Thereby, seventeen participants were recruited for the

study aged between 14-17. All groups were arranged as mixed-gender and two groups consisted of six participants while one had five participants. Due to technical problems, the third focus group with five participants was unable to use and removed from the data. The personal information of these participants was deleted permanently.

2.2 INSTRUMENTS

A focus-group guide (Appendix D) with four main sections was developed to make room for the discussion about participants' perceptions of dating, ideal relationships, how relationships are represented on TV, and elements of dating violence. The main questions in the focus-group guide were asked and prob questions within the guide were used to enrich discussion when it is needed.

Participants were presented with four short video clips to elaborate on. Three video clips were taken from the Turkish movie "The Bad Boy" and one was taken from "Twilight: Breaking Dawn". "Twilight: Breaking Dawn" is the third movie of a four-movie "Twilight Saga" series which was released in 2009. This movie is important in the sense that it was taken from the very popular book series first published in 2005 which presents a love story between a teenage girl (Bella) and a vampire (Edward). Both books and movies gained huge popularity among young teenagers, especially girls. While the four books were placed on best-seller lists, the movies also broke box-office records with high ratings (Collins & Carmody, 2011; Child, 2012). Despite these high ratings, the series was criticized for romanticizing unhealthy relationship dynamics like stalking, jealousy, control, and other types of violence (Collins & Carmody, 2011). The other movie "The Bad Boy", on the other hand, is a Turkish-made production released in 2017. Similar to Twilight, this movie also was based on a teenager-targeted book that has the same name. The book was first published in a social platform "Wattpad" in which users write and read each other's original stories (Lau & Yuen, 2022). After taking a 141 million viewer rate on Wattpad, the story, which focused on the love between two teenagers, was first published as a book and was followed by a movie (Barış, 2017).

In addition to having a similar theme to Twilight, the movie was selected in order to present a more culturally familiar adolescent romantic relationship. Furthermore, both movies were selected because of involving several psychological violence aspects and had high popularity among adolescents during the time they had been released. In selecting video clips, four Twilight movies, and The Bad Boy had been watched by the primary investigator in order to identify scenes involving incidents of dating violence. Among those candidate themes, four video clips that had clear and understandable content were chosen together with the thesis advisor. The content and information of the video clips are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Descriptions of the video clips

	Movie Name	Duration	Characters	Description
1 st	The Bad Boy	1.14	Meriç (the boy) Kayla (The girl)	Meriç sneaks into the Kayla's home while she is crying and take her outside in the night.
2 nd	The Bad Boy	1.03	Meriç, Kayla, Another boy	As Kayla plays basketball with a male friend from school, Meriç sees from outside and send a threatening text message.
3 rd	The Bad Boy	1.24	Meriç and Kayla	Meriç sneaks into Kayl's home to warn her about her behaviors.
4 th	Twilight: Breaking Dawn	1.29	Edward (the boy) Bella (the girl)	As Bella tries to go to her friend Jacob, Edward breaks down her car.

2.3 PROCEDURE

Participation was based on volunteering and no incentive was offered. Volunteer adolescents or parents who want their children to participate in the study provided their contact information including e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Upon the first application, both the adolescents and one of their parents were

reached via phone and informed about the study by the primary investigator. Verbal consents of both parties were also received during these phone conversations. Adolescent participants who provide verbal consent together with one of their parents received a Google Forms link, containing the informed consent form (Appendix A) and the demographic form (Appendix B). The parents received a separate Google Forms link for the parent informed consent (Appendix C). The informed consent form included information regarding the aim of the study, visual media usage, the use of the data, focus group rules, and the right to withdraw from the study. The contact information which belonged to excluded participants was removed permanently.

Participants who completed the recruitment process were invited to a one-time focus group discussion online via Zoom. The importance of the confidentiality of discussions and comments shared within the group was reminded both written in the informed consent form and verbally at the beginning of the focus group. The focus groups were conducted by the primary investigator in a semi-structured format. Participants were informed about both audio and visual recordings will be taken due to Zoom's feature and visual recordings will be removed after the focus groups.

In the first section of the groups, participants were asked to elaborate thoughts on the definition of "dating", "ideal relationships", and "conflicts in romantic relationships" in general. In the second section, their favorite TV shows and movies were asked for, following their observations about romantic couples on those shows. In the third section, four video clips about two different couples were presented. The videos were taken from two different movies and showed instances of dating violence (Appendix E). Following the videos, their perceptions about the instances and the relationships were probed by the primary investigator's questions. In the last section, their suggestions and feedback were requested, and the primary investigator checked the general well-being of the participants before ending the group. Participants received an online brochure via e-mail that explains dating violence for youth which is prepared by the Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence after each group was completed. The duration of the semi-structured focus

groups took between 90-120 minutes including introducing rules, meeting with members, the discussion, and the closure.

2.4 DATA ANALYSIS

In order to explore how adolescents, understand and argue the patterns of psychological dating violence, Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was preferred. Thematic Analysis reveals the meanings and concepts beyond the collected data and provides a view of around which building blocks the participants construct their ideas about the related topic (Braun & Clarke, 2013). During the thematic analysis, the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) followed. As the first step, the audio recordings of the semi-structured focus groups were transcribed by the primary investigator. Prior to creating initial codes as the next step, transcriptions were read and re-read to have a sense of detailed understanding of the data. A wide range of initial codes was created by the primary investigator to be able to capture varied aspects of the data. These initial codes were reviewed thereafter in the fourth step. The data was organized around the potential themes to be able to detect whether the themes enable a meaningful thematic map around the research questions. The analysis proceeded with examining themes and codes in more detail to properly give each theme its final name. Data extracts and the primary investigator's field notes were read several times in the finalizing step to prevent any kind of loss within the data. Interpretations were discussed and revised with the thesis advisor during the whole analyzing process. In relation to research questions, final themes were analyzed, and results were generated. MAXQDA Software program was utilized in coding transcriptions, constituting themes and sub-themes.

2.5 REFLEXIVITY

As a personal confession, teenage media has always been an interest of mine, and I still share the same enjoyment as I read or watch a piece targeting

teenagers. During my adolescence period, this interest was very much alive, and I was very enthusiastic about following the movie series with my friends. This was specifically valid for the book and movie series Twilight Saga which I also used parts of for the current study. As Collin and Carmody (2011) examined in detail, the portrayal of the relationship between Edward the vampire and Bella the human was perceived as highly romantic by me and my friends. As I reached adulthood and came back to this movie years later, I experienced a huge shock to see that what I thought was romantic as a teenager was a toxic relationship from all angles, a relationship that promotes the boy's control and the girl's fragility under the cover of love and protection.

My perspective and interest in teenage media started to shift as I tried to learn and think about feminism and struggled to be a confident woman in a land where systematic violence against women has ongoingly been promoted. With each new piece of information and awareness, I traced back to my adolescence and realized that what I was presented as the "ideal" relationship felt like imprisonment which internally held me back from romantic relationships as an adult for many years. At some point, my interest in media sources turned into curiosity about how adolescents view these presentations and whether they follow these sources with excitement and admiration or with criticism. This curiosity brought me to my research questions on how adolescents perceive the media representations of dating violence and to what extent they are unaware of this violence because of romanticization.

Since the data was collected through focus groups, my presence within the group was also an influential factor in this relational data collection process. To be able to capture this influence, I tried to actively observe the dynamics during group discussions. First of all, I graduated from the same high school as the participants in the first group. I think this common background and becoming members of the same community created a different dynamic in the first group when compared with the second group. This commonality created a familiarity between me and the first group which facilitated a more fluent discussion. In that sense, they were more eager to share their views and built the discussion upon each other's comments as

well as my questions. Furthermore, this common background also increased my understanding of these participants' opinions and experiences as I also spent my adolescent period in the same environment. I tried to trace the similarities and differences between my opinions as an adolescent and participants in the first group.

My role as a young woman and a researcher had different influences on the second group, according to my observations. There were group members who did not know each other before and we did not have a common background like the first group. This situation, I think, affected both their interaction with me and my questions, and with each other as well. Especially in terms of male participants, even though there were more male participants, they tend to remain in the background or give shorter answers when compared with female participants. I believe being in a "young woman researcher" position in a group which female-to-male violence was discussed could promote defensive feelings which hold male participants more actively engage in the discussion. Overall, I should highlighted that my familiarity with both the content of the videos and context of some participants had effects on how I engaged with and analyzed the data.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in this chapter. The chapter includes demographical information about the participants and the themes that emerged during the focus groups.

3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE SAMPLE

Twelve high school students (seven girls and five boys) from different grades attended focus groups. Each group was organized with six people. The age range of the participants was 14-17. All participants were living in Istanbul with their families. Two of the participants stated a current dating relationship while another participant indicated that he broke up one day ago. The other nine participants, on the other hand, remarked no dating relationships. Every participant was assigned a number in order to preserve the confidentiality of the participants.

Six participants in the first group were students in the Vefa High School which the primary investigator had graduated as well. This piece of information is important in imagining their contextual background. This is a public school with mostly middle-class families prefer and provides a relatively intellectual environment that allows talking about social subjects when compared with most of the other public schools. The other six participants in the second group, on the other hand, came from different contexts and schools. Unlike the first group, the information regarding their schools and school cultures was not known by the primary investigator. Therefore, it should be noted that the two groups had different contextual dynamics which might be a factor that affects their discussion.

Table 3.1*Demographical Information of the Sample*

ID	Age	Grade	Living Conditions	Parents' Marital Status	Dating Status
P1	14	Prep-class	With family	Married/Together	No date
P2	14	Prep-class	Mother and father	Married/Together	No date
P3	16	10 th grade	With family	Married/Together	No date
P4	14	Prep-class	Mother, father, and sibling	Married/Together	Has a date
P5	17	11 th grade	With family	Married/Together	No date
P6	15	Prep-class	With family	Married/Together	No date
P7	14	Prep-class	With family	Married/Together	No date
P8	15	10 th grade	Mother, father, and little sibling	Married/Together	No date
P9	16	10 th grade	Mother, father, older brother, grandparents	Married/Together	Has a date
P10	17	11 th grade	With family	Separated/Divorced	Has a date until one day
P11	15	10 th grade	With family	Married/Together	No date
P12	15	10 th grade	Mother, father, and sibling	Married/Together	No date

3.2 THEMES

During the semi-structured focus groups, participants shared their perceptions and discussed dating, ideal romantic relationship, the effect of media

on the image of romantic relationships, and instances of dating violence through the presented videos. The data was organized under four major conceptual categories: 1) Framing the concept of “dating”, 2) Defining romantic relationships, 3) The effect of the image of romantic relationships in visual media, and 4) Perception of problems among dating partners. Further analysis revealed the following four themes: 1) Dating is a process with novel emotions, behaviors and relationship dynamics, 2) Romantic relationships are characterized by mutuality but also jealousy and gender inequity 3) Media images of love affect romantic relationships, 4) Perception of problematic issues among dating partners.

3.2.1 Perception of Dating as a Process with Novel Emotions, Behaviors, and Interpersonal Dynamics

This theme was developed based on how participants conceptualized “date” and “dating”. In other words, the boundaries of the dating relationships are negotiated and set. Participants explained experiences in the dating process based on their observations, and how should a “dating relationship” be. In that sense, their conceptions of dating evolved around three main dimensions: changes in emotions, behaviors, and dynamics between the parts of the couple. Therefore, according to the codes, three sub-themes emerged: 1) Experiencing new emotions, 2) Changes in behaviors and 3) Causal dynamics in the dyadic relationship.

3.2.1.1 Experiencing new emotions

As participants construct a framework of what is “dating”, one of the things expressed were emotional experiences within the dating relationships. However, it should be noted that participants did not define a wide range of emotions in this section. Their inferences about experiencing new emotions indicated what people inside the dating relationship are feeling towards each other and how they are observed from the outside. According to their statements, the theme of experiencing new emotions is explained in two categories: 1) Liking and 2) Embarrassment.

3.2.1.1.1 Liking

The primary emotion that the participants used to explain dating was “liking” in order to define positive feelings directed to a specific person. None of the participants used stronger words like “love”, “affection” or “romance”. In that sense, it gives the impression that less intense emotions emerge during the dating context. P8, a 15-year-old girl, took “liking” as the initial step of dating, which she regarded as a process that eventually proceeds into a committed romantic relationship.

Honestly, when I think of dating, a process comes to my mind. Isn't it the process of two people, before starting a relationship, who like each other or even if they don't, they have the potential to like each other and consider involving in a relationship?

In that sense, dating might be defined as a vague relationship dynamic that bases both parties' emotions towards each other according to the responses of the participants. In other words, it is viewed as a special kind of connection that does not have solid borders or words to name like being in a romantic relationship.

*I guess dating, as I learned, from someone you like, if he also likes you... Not like lovers, I mean, I don't know, as I know, you may or may not tell you like each other. It is not becoming lovers because of that. Thus, from what I know it is having personal feelings for each other without giving any names.
(P1, 14-year-old, girl)*

P2, who is a 14-year-old girl, brought this theme another perspective by providing a short and compact definition of dating that links liking with spending time. As the only participant who used the word “love”, she mentioned this emotion as directed to spending time with someone who is liked instead of towards the person himself/herself.

Dating is actually something like spending time with someone you like from the outside. Thus, you love spending time with him.

3.2.1.1.2 Embarrassment

While the main emotion between two people in a dating relationship is defined as “liking”, some participants also linked dating with being embarrassed by the person who is liked. P6 who is a 15-year-old girl, very briefly explained how liking someone and being embarrassed is interrelated and how they influence deepening the relationship between two people. In this short explanation, she names dating as an ambiguous process resulting from embarrassment.

Dating is... So you like someone but you are not dashing enough to become lovers, you are so embarrassed. So what are we know?

When explaining embarrassment in the dating context, participants tended to talk about behavioral components of embarrassment more. In order to approach emotional and behavioral changes separately, analyses of those responses are presented under the “changes in behavior” theme.

3.2.1.2 Changes in behavior

Apart from emotions, some participants mentioned behaviors of a person in a dating relationship that they have observed outside as a friend. Therefore, this sub-theme covers what behavioral changes occur when the person is around the dating partner. In that sense, observation of behavioral components of embarrassment is regarded as a part of dating contexts as well.

P1 who is a 14-year-old girl described how her friends behave differently when they see their dating partner. She claimed that liking is expressed through behaviors and is distinguishable not only by the dating partner but also by the social circle of that person. In addition to this, she also mentioned that the behaviors of boys and girls in this process might be different.

In dating... Well, I also observe from my friends, too. Her hands and feet get weird [knock knees together]. It happens like... Well, for example, we say “Yours has arrived”. I, for example, say this to my friend, so my friend stands more upright, and she tidies her hair like this. I don’t know, she

becomes like “yaa” and so forth. But I don’t know, when she is talking, when she is talking with the date, she is a little bit more... In a “cute” tone, different than the way she talks with us. I mean, frankly, I can understand she likes him. Even though she hasn’t told me. It is easier to understand when someone is flirting, I don’t find it that hard. I don’t have many ideas on how boys become when they are flirting. I guess they become a little bit embarrassed. They generally turn their eyes away.

Similarly, P4 who is a 14-year-old boy mentioned behavioral changes due to embarrassment near the person liked and evaluated them as “funny”. In addition to the change in a person’s own demeanors, he also included from an observatory point of view how one’s social circle reacts when such behavioral patterns occur.

For example, she tells something to him. You are with them, too, the third person as the friend. He strains, cricks like he can’t say anything, and gets embarrassed. As you know your friend is in his normal when he is warm when he is speaking with you, it’s funny his straining there.

Apart from what he had observed from outside as a friend, P4 also described a holistic layer for behavior changes that affect different dimensions like the way of talking or reacting. He pointed out a warmer manner in general when interacting with the dating partner.

For example, perhaps the words you use, perhaps your manner or anything of yours, I mean the reactions you give to her are changing. Of course, in a closer and warmer way.

In addition to acting shy, participants also mentioned a different kind of behavior change that revolves around an effort to “impress” the other person. P11, who is a 15-year-old boy, claimed such behavioral changes interfere with the natural flow of the dating relationship.

For example, when you like someone, you put yourself into certain shapes to impress her or to catch her attention. This I think, puts dating in a certain shape.

3.2.1.3 Casual dynamics in the dyadic relationship

Under this subtheme, participants' views on how the dynamics between two people in a dating relationship change are gathered. A great majority of the participants emphasized the casualness and flexibility between two people that do not rely on solid borders when framing the dating. Their responses are presented under three sub-themes: 1) Spending time together, and 3) The step before becoming a couple.

3.2.1.3.1 Spending time together

Some participants defined the concept of dating as two people knowing each other and spending time. Even though this construct was not brought frequently by most of the participants, it is taken as a separate theme because it was put in the center while describing dating by some participants. In that sense, it is interpreted as one of the core features of dating. P3, who is a 16-year-old girl, used her observation in school to indicate the difference between the dating relationships from others:

Well, from what I've seen in school, they hang out with each other more during the breaks. They engage in different activities outside of the school independently of their friends. Like going to a café or cinema.

P5, who is a 17-year-old girl, took spending time together as the holding factor in the ambiguousness of dating which both sides have hesitations about emotions and each other.

I think it is something in limbo. Yes, there are emotions a little bit. But I don't think anyone is confident enough about themselves or the other to take it to the next level. And you are having a good time. But there seems to be some indecisiveness about casting it into continuity.

3.2.1.3.2 The step before becoming a couple

In defining the framework of dating, all participants referred to dating as a different process than being involved in a romantic relationship. In that sense, participants underlined the ambiguous relationship dynamic between two people. This ambiguity is often explained in comparison with friendship or being lovers. P3 described dating as the step that goes into a committed romantic relationship due to sharing a different kind of bond than one's friends. In that sense, she mentioned the committed romantic relationships as "serious" while "dating" is the phase before that.

I think it's like the stage before being lovers. I mean you are closer than friendship, well you have a more special bond than your other friends. But not that serious. (P3, 16 year-old-girl)

Regarding dating as the path that results in a romantic relationship was the strongest perception among this theme. Since most of the participants defined dating as a process "in-between", the pattern of naming dating as "different than friendship" also emerged together with being the step before a relationship. P6 illustrated a continuum while framing dating as she located being lovers and being friends on two polars of the continuum and put dating in the middle of this spectrum.

We are not lovers. Thus, I think we are dates, something like that. It is something in between. Not as serious as being lovers. But not far away as friends. Something in the middle. (P6, 15-year-old girl)

Being the step before the relationship reflects the function of two people's getting to know each other during dating. In other words, it could be regarded as a way of forming a romantic relationship. P4 explained this function by indicating, similarly to P6, that dating is neither friendship nor a romantic relationship, rather it is a step toward a relationship.

Well, I think it is a step towards a relationship. So, it's like meeting but not meeting any people. It is warmer and with different thoughts. Thus, it is not

like getting to know a friend, or kith and kin. It is getting to know someone you are thinking of. (P4, 14-year-old boy)

Apart from getting to know each other, defining dating as a process to build intimacy was another pattern that emerged in this theme. In other words, dating is seen as two people's initial steps toward each other before they eventually get very close and meet in a relationship. At this point, dating is also regarded as a flexible process depending on the dynamic between two people. P8 explains this as two different functions of dating depending on whether two people had a former acquaintance or not.

I think it is a process that varies from relationship to relationship. For some... For example,. while for two people who started out as friends, this is not a process of intimacy, but rather the process of preparing the intimacy between them for the next step in their lives, for people who started out as strangers, it may be a process of intimacy. What we call dating is a process. (P8, 15-year-old girl)

3.2.2 Romantic Relationships are Complicated: Mutuality, Jealousy, and Double Standards

This theme covered participants' perceptions of romantic relationships including what is regarded as "ideal" in a romantic relationship and what they observe within romantic couples around them. Their responses are presented under three sub-themes: 1) The ideal relationship requires mutuality, 2) The ideal relationship has a proper amount of jealousy, and 3) Double standards affect couple relationships.

3.2.2.1 The ideal relationship is mutual

In describing the ideals in romantic relationships, "mutuality" was one of the most referred constructs by the participants. In that sense, this theme demonstrates the importance of the involvement of both parties in the relationship

rather than relying more on one partner. Furthermore, the ideal romantic relationship is defined as a dynamic in which partners exchange responsibility in different aspects. In other words, according to the participants' responses, people expect to get what they have provided to their partners in return. Mutuality was discussed under three different dimensions by the participants: 1) Mutual love and care, 2) Mutual sharing, and 3) Mutual effort

3.2.2.1.1 Mutual love and caring

While “liking” is heavily used in defining dating, participants preferred “love” in talking about romantic relationships. As drawing lines for the ideal romantic relationship, not only loving the partner but also feeling loved emerged as a necessary construct.

Because when you don't make the other feel; since the other won't understand it when you only feel it yourself, I think feel... I mean feeling love is as important as making the other feel it. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

In describing this mutuality, P1 linked it with loyalty as taking feeling loved and ignoring others together. In addition to loyalty, receiving the attention and caring of the partner was regarded as a part of feeling loved in the relationship.

Feeling yourself like “I am his lover”, and make him feel this, too. Well, we are not... The others are not that important to us. And caring, I think. I expect attention from the other, well according to me. Because I mean I am not an attention maniac, but I think attention is one of the essentials in a relationship. (...) I, for example, expect someone to give surprises for me, to do something. Well, yes, you love me, okay, you care about me, but make me feel it. So, I'll make you feel it, too. Right? (P1, 14-year-old girl)

The importance of a partner's providing strong emotions is also highlighted with different emotional words like “excitement” or “fun”. These are considered under this theme because they reflect the mutuality of the emotions in a relationship. P4 mentioned excitement as the core emotion in a relationship that holds the couple together. However, even though naming the “excitement”, he also stated an

unsureness about specifying what the partner makes the person feel. In that sense, it would be fair to infer that how to feel in a relationship might not always be clear for the participants.

I think excitement is what keeps the relationship alive. That fun, the excitement the person gives you. Because when you lose it, you don't have any expectations from the other.

Then the idea of why I shouldn't live alone is formed. That part shouldn't disappear. Trust or so can be solved somehow, but what we call fun, the feeling we feel from the other side, I don't know if that emotion can be explained exactly. It is a thing that shouldn't end in an ideal relationship. (P4, 14-year-old boy)

3.2.2.1.2 Mutual sharing

Mutual sharing indicates a deepened communication in which both parties share each other their secrets, listen to and value their ideas as well as ask for advice when they face a problem in their personal lives. In other words, apart from feeling the emotions, participants also request to involve each other's lives in an ideal romantic relationship. P1 considered sharing and asking for advice from the partner as a sign of respect and valuing each other.

When I say disrespect, I mean not seeing the other as, how can I say, not seeing as someone to consult, seeing just love. When the other presents you something, saying "well, she is my date what can she do? It should be the opposite. I mean you love her. She shares something with you as she values you, you should give an ear and listen, right? (P1, 14-year-old girl)

Another way of mentioning the importance of mutual sharing is its connection with love and trust. Below in the two different quotations, by also linking it with the former sub-theme "mutual love and caring", P2 drew a correlation between sharing, love, and trust. In that sense, she suggested that honesty and sharing is the indicator of trust which is the foundation of the relationship.

The relationship is built on trust. That is, two people need to trust each other. Of course, there is love, but I don't know, trust... Trust is important to me. And honesty, for example, they should first let to know each other. I mean, if they hear this from other people, it might hurt them so that's why I think trust is important.

I mean sharing your secrets with her, to make her that way, thus make her feel that you love her. I think that gives trust. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

3.2.2.1.3 Mutual effort

One of the essentials in an ideal relationship according to responses is the effort to run the relationship that is put by both sides of the couple. At this point, a feeling of equity in taking responsibility for that relationship was brought into discussion by the participants.

I definitely think that it [an ideal romantic relationship] should be mutual. One person shouldn't make an effort more than the other in a relationship. Thus, if one puts five <units> of effort, the other should put five, too. Because if there are imbalances in the relationship like one is five and one is six, it naturally doesn't work anyway. It should definitely be equal. Both sides must want it somehow. (P10, 17-year-old boy)

Another participant in the same focus group with P10, regarded imbalanced efforts as “tiring” which will eventually harm the relationship. In that sense, this imbalance in the exchange dynamic has a vital role in the course of the relationship.

No matter how much one side loves, won't it start to get tired this time? Constantly providing from your own being... After a while, I think self-sacrifice is up to a point. (P8, 15-year-old girl)

One participant brought a different angle to this theme by referring to the importance of breaking down the stereotypes. She mentioned that both sides should make an effort to take the first step regardless of gender expectations in the ideal relationship. In other words, this might be explained as people's taking

responsibility for their own expectations instead of waiting from the other side even though it is seen as the male's or female's duty by the society.

There is the concept of, you know, man should send the first message, I don't know, man should take the first step, etc. I don't believe in this, too. If I mean, there is love, if you love me and I love you, it doesn't matter who sends the first message or it doesn't matter who sends the first "good morning" message at all. It doesn't matter who says "I love you" first. Because it is "love" important there, and for example, you are in a relationship, I don't think these things matter. I think these kinds of things should be broken for an ideal relationship. Because then it becomes like, I don't know, "She/he should take the first step". Okay, then you do it. (P5, 17-year-old girl)

This idea of mutuality in taking the first step is also supported by a male participant. What he proposed was the difficulty in changing these types of gender expectations which were transferred through many generations.

There is a perception in people's minds that even the marriage proposal is directly made by the man. This is how it's formed; I mean it is not something that we, our generation do. The foundational stones. It's a pre-existing situation, this is how it's formed, so I mean, about the first step, it should be taken but I think it's not easy. Something at least must change. (P4, 14-year-old boy)

3.2.2.2 The romantic relationship has a proper amount of jealousy

While defining the romantic relationship, one of the things participants gave importance was jealousy. They evaluated jealousy within two different dimensions as positive and negative sides and described a proper dose of jealousy for an ideal relationship. In that sense, while jealousy is regarded necessary as the sign of love and caring, exceeding limits and being jealous of one's close circle are found problematic. According to P2, jealousy is something that one might want to

experience in a relationship unless the partner is jealous of everyone, which turns it into a kind of restriction.

Well, there should be jealousy, but everything has a dose. You know, you shouldn't be jealous of a flying bird either. But I think jealousy must exist. I mean, in a relationship, I want to be envied. Because as long as there is a dose of jealousy, it is a kind of care. So, he cares about you, he attaches importance to you. He is jealous of others because he loves you, but it must have a dose. This should not go up to the restriction. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

In other words, depending on its dosage, jealousy could be either a positive or a negative experience in a romantic relationship. P3 states this duality by explaining how jealousy could be related to mistrust and disrespect as well as feeling valued.

Because when there is too much jealousy, I think it means that there is a problem at the root of this relationship. For example, about trust. Or about respect. I mean, as Ş said, you should be a little jealous. Because it makes you feel valued in this relationship, but it would be bad to be jealous of your friends and close circle. I feel like my partner doesn't respect me. I feel that you don't trust me. (P3, 16-year-old girl)

Similar to P2, P1 also drew appropriate lines of jealousy. She distinguished between questioning the partner and interfering with the partner's behavior from each other as she placed behavioral intervention on the "bad jealousy" part. In other words, this perspective considers to what extent jealousy is put into action as an obvious restriction of partner while just asking questions to the partner is not regarded as a restrictive action.

I think what the jealous person will do, he can be jealous within himself. But as they say, there should be no restrictions. Or when going somewhere or something, girls send messages to boys, for example, "how many girls are there?". I don't know or boys are texting girls. "You are in this setting, what did you wear?" etc. But it doesn't seem like a complete restriction to me either. It's like I'm feeling a little bit like "he is jealous of me". I like it too. I can't lie about it. But taking it to the next level, sentences like "No, you

will not wear this”, “You will do this”, “Leave that place immediately”, I mean, to make such dedications to the other party is in bad jealousy. (P1, 14-year-old girl)

The acceptability of jealousy as an emotion is underlined by also other participants. In that sense, jealousy could be accepted until it is put into action. Being jealous of someone only as a thought in one’s mind or feeling is evaluated as acceptable while implementing this jealousy through behaviors could interfere with the relationship and restrict the personal freedom of the person.

I think that jealousy is a human emotion, therefore acceptable, but only to the point where this starts to be put into one’s own behavior. Well, because if we get jealous, let's say I have a girlfriend for example. If my girlfriend is jealous that I'm talking to someone else if she's jealous that I'm talking to another girl, if she tries to villainize her in my eyes because of the things she didn't do. After a certain point, this will be spoiled and make the relationship even worse. So that's why it shouldn't be put into behavior, but it is acceptable up to a point. (P9, 16-year-old boy)

I think each other's personal boundaries should always be taken into account. Because individuals in a relationship should not have the right to restrict each other's freedoms. And for example, of course, these kinds of feelings can be felt, but I don't think they should turn into any action. (P12, 15-year-old girl)

3.2.2.3 Double standards affect couple relationships

Participants also discussed how gender inequities result in conflicts between couples when defining the ideal romantic relationship. In that sense, through their observations of other relationships, they explained what is expected from the girl and the boy.

P3, who is a 16-year-old girl, mentioned how socially attributed gender roles in a way act as a burden in a relationship. In explaining this, she suggested that this burden becomes more evident as the relationship proceeds into a more committed

phase like marriage. In other words, for P3 it is possible to state that as the couple starts to unite their lives, the pressure of the gender inequalities increases.

That is inequality resulting from stereotypes and expectations directed to social and cultural gender. Especially if your relationship has come to a point, marriage for instance. I mean, a woman does X kind of work, etc. As a result of this, a healthy relationship cannot be lived. Because you get tired.

Another participant, P5, who is a 17-year-old girl, approached the inequalities through the issues of power and limiting the other. According to her, boys are authorized to question and control the personal space of the girls while girls are responsible to follow what boys are told. In this inequality dynamic, boys are allowed to use excuses why girls are not offered that option.

There is inequality. For example, there is such thing in the case of being lovers, I, for example, cannot meet with the person I want, but the other person can meet with whomever he wants. Well, "I don't want you to see that friend of yours". Why? Well, "I don't want". But you need to give me a reason. There is such a thing, too. There is a restriction. It is mentioned generally but when I say, "you meet with that", "but blah blah". Well, I must do what you say, but you may not do what I say.

Apart from the burden of responsibilities and restriction, one of the other constructs within this theme was the issue of innocence. Two participants emphasize that the girls are expected to be inexperienced in a relationship. This situation is explained as a criterion that is only set for girls while boys are allowed to have multiple dating experiences. P1 associates this expectation of innocence from girls with boys' tendency to approach relationships as ownership and prefer their girlfriends to be compatible in line with this.

Boys usually expect this... Should I say like an "untouched hand"? That this, the untouched, unscented flower. They expect something like this. Here you are, I am your owner, you are my thing or something. You know, that's how it usually happens, that's what I see. Even if it is not like this, it is like this to a certain level. And generally boys... I don't like it for example. For some reason, boys tend to prefer dignified girls (P1, 14-year-old girl)

The issue of the untouched and unscented flower is like that, men may have had girlfriends in the past. Girls don't make it a thing too much, but guys look at the past of girls, for example. That's not such a good thing. If he has a girlfriend, I can have one, too. There should be equality, too. Sometimes they can also look at this, too. I mean, like this girl had too many lovers and such, whereas girls don't look at men's past. (P2, 14-year-old)

The history of having romantic relationships is also regarded as a source of a bad reputation for girls. In that sense, P2 explains how people discriminate against genders when it is the case of having former relationship experiences. According to her response, gender inequality manifests itself as girls being stigmatized while boys getting praised due to having multiple dating relationships experience.

When girls meet with many people, I mean when she has many lovers, they are stigmatized. I mean, which is the swear, they usually get stigmatized. "You are like that". I mean it's not being looked at. "You are a thing with everyone". But for example, when a guy had too many lovers, things like "good job champ, well done" happen too much. There is an inequality here, too.

3.2.3 Acknowledging the Role of Media on Romantic Relationships

This theme gathers participants' responses about how romantic relationships are presented in the visual media sources and what kind of influence they make on them. The sub-theme is presented under three sub-headings: 1) The portrayal of love is unrealistic, 2) Media's role in one's romantic relationships

3.2.3.1 Media portrayals of love are unrealistic

The majority of the participants evaluated romantic relationships they see in movies or TV series as "unrealistic". In that sense, these romantic relationships are defined as excessively dramatized and inconsistent. In addition to this, how intense love is portrayed and emphasized makes these relationships unrelatable to reality.

I think some things are too dramatized in relationships in media. I mean, of course, for the sake of watching and art it is normal to dramatize, but it is not normal to evaluate the relationships in daily life based on those you see in the media. I mean, because no matter where we look, most of the time we see relationships that we can't associate ourselves with in any way. Like too dramatized breakups or too exaggerated emotions etc. (P5, 15-year-old girl)

Apart from dramatization, one participant mentioned the romanticization of negative experiences like psychological dating violence. According to her response, some negative indicants in visual media relationships are also relatable to real-life experiences. Unhealthy relationship dynamics that are presented in visual media could also be encountered in real-life. Nevertheless, TV shows or movies present this by focusing on the romantic aspects as though there were no negative outcomes of that experience. From this perspective, even though the experience might be relatable to real-life relationships, the result of being exposed to psychological dating violence is romanticized like the victim has not had bad experiences.

I think there are such relationships in real life, but not in the way fictions romanticize. Well, if we consider these types of relationships, especially the one in the first video we have watched in which psychological pressure exists, do not go very well. I don't think it's like this the way it was romanticized. (P12, 15-year-old girl)

P10, who is a 17-year-old boy, provided an example from his favorite movie series Star Wars about the presentation of “real love”. In this example, the real love is presented as impossible and so intense that makes both parties lose their conciseness.

There is a Jedi named Anakin. She is a very strong Jedi. And there is a senator named Padme. They both love each other so much but it is forbidden for Anakin to love Padme because they thought that Jedis should not have a love life in council etc. Therefore, Anakin goes mad out of love, and she goes into the dark side. Well, actually, a good relationship is told but it is unattainable. Both sides can't reach each other and so both go mad.

Another participant also agreed that real love is highlighted too much in romantic relationships in the media. However, apart from intense and real love, the exaggeration of happiness and other emotions were also factors that participants brought as reasons for unrealistic romantic relationship images in visual media. While one of the participants stated his boredom with the fairytalelike storylines, the other pointed out the artificiality of characters' drifting into strong contrast emotions so easily. In that sense, it could be claimed that they view these romantic relationships as cliché scenarios that are far from reality. Consequently, it would be fair to claim that their expectations from visual media are more balanced relationships where they see both sides of the events with less emphasis on emotions.

Love, love for example is too exaggerated, a divine thing. And then like springs, sweetness, a happy air, songs... Well, that kind of thing. Okay, it's fine up to a point, but then this move is happening in people [he makes the sign for "enough" with his hand] (P4, 14-year-old boy)

I can tell one of the clichés that disturbs me in the TV series industry. In this summer series for example they start with hate. For some reason, there is always such hatred for each other, like the others told. A strange hatred. Then it turns into love. I, for example, don't believe in this. I mean you can't fall with someone you hate this much. (P1, 14-year-old girl)

Similar to the others, another participant also complained about the cliché scenarios that base only on certain emotions like jealousy. She explained that the storyline and the incidents the couple face always revolve around jealousy and the other problems a couple may encounter in real life are disregarded. Furthermore, one of the other things disregarded in romantic relationships on media is mutual love. According to the same participant, unlike what the visual media is presenting, both sides' falling for each other is not always possible in real-life relationships. Therefore, the image of romantic relationships in visual media could be regarded as shallow in that the experiences of the couple are not diverse and very predictable.

It's like all problems are built on jealousy. For example, in the summer TV series, first, they run after each other. Then somehow, they both fall in love

with each other at the same time. Then the man makes surprises. Then things start to get complicated. He gets jealous, some people step in between them. Then they get back together. This is how it is told. But there are other problems too, in real life. It is not just based on jealousy. I mean, it looks like the girl is always tripping like this, but it's not like that in real life. It's been shown like this. They both fall in love at the same time and such. Well, things like this don't happen. It can be platonic most of the time. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

According to one participant, the romantic relationship in a TV series is taken as a separate construct from the show's main topic. He emphasized the inconsistent nature of the presentation of those relationships where there is no stability between the partners.

...I mean they keep it separate from the topic. So they are doing something by keeping the people in the show and the topic different. They sustain that the show, the subject is not convoluted and is maintainable. (...) <The relationship> mostly changes. It becomes healthy and unhealthy as well. (...) If they get like they are going to break up in one or two episodes, they can make up right away after an episode. It's changing, I mean. (P9, 16-year-old boy)

3.2.3.2 Media's role in one's romantic relationships

This theme gathered participants' perceptions on to what extent and how they are getting affected by the romantic relationship images presented in visual media. Most of the participants agreed that these presentations have an influence on them in different ways. Furthermore, it is also stated by two participants that as the person likes the show, the degree of being influenced by the romantic relationship within the show increases. Participants described three different ways of the media's role in shaping their perceptions or experiences of romantic relationships: 1) Searching for what you see in the media, 2) Feeling disappointed, and 3) Behaving like the characters in the media.

3.2.3.2.1 Searching for what you see in the media

One of the experiences participants have suggested is searching for and expecting a similar experience that they watched on visual media. In that sense, a relationship on one's favorite TV show might function as a reference point that causes the adolescents to adjust their expectations according to it. In a way, it creates an image of an "ideal" that provides diverse positive emotions to partners. P5 explained how their expectations of real-life relationships are influenced by those representations by also linking it with the next sub-theme. In other words, she mentioned that the media makes the person believe in a fake ideal which provokes the person to live that fake ideal.

It pushes us a little bit to search for things. We can say that the ideal relationship that appears there, is very connected to each other. That high dose of love, since it pushes them to search for that, it causes unhappiness in people who have an interest right now. Well because you want that, but you don't have it right now. Because there is no such ideal environment as well, there is no life that goes so smoothly. I think it pushes us to search for it. (P5, 17-year-old girl)

Another participant brought the inevitableness of dreaming about living the experience they saw on visual media. Therefore, it could be claimed that even though the person is aware of the fakeness of the image, it still has the power on creating a wish for living a similar romantic relationship experience.

Because really, no matter how much I make fun of something, I mean, no matter how someone made fun of something, it seems as if everybody wants the pure love that is reflected us there. Who wouldn't want that much? I mean supposedly pure love. (...) So, I watch them in real life, so I'm laughing. I really laugh but sometimes I really want something like this, I mean, for no reason, I think of myself while imagining something like this, in such pure love. So, it's inevitable. (P1, 14-year-old girl)

One participant stated a relatively more limited effect of the images of relationships presented in visual media. While acknowledging the influence, he

regarded this as a more dynamic construct that depends on personal features and to what extent a person is open to being influenced.

Yes, it can change the thing, the relationship you're looking for. It can change what you are looking for. But I don't think it will affect much, it would take such a big role. Unless we're someone who influenced too much.
(P9, 16-year-old, boy)

3.2.3.2.2 Feeling disappointed

This theme is in a way associated with the former theme and functions as the emotional result of searching for what you see in the media. Since the image of romantic relationships is too ideal and unrealistic, searching for that kind of relationship inevitably results in feelings of disappointment. Two participants link this disappointment with a dramatization of emotions and experiences in media. According to their responses, only intense emotions and events in a relationship appear in media which reminds “fairytales”. However, both participants highlight the importance of not comparing those relationships with real-life experiences to protect themselves from disappointment.

I mean, because if we take the relationships in the media as a role model for the relationships in fictional things, on top of inexperience in real life, I think we can be very disappointed. Because there are no such relationships in real life. Because for example, I think they show the peak romantic moments or the saddest moments of relationships in TV series or movies. They show their best points, but there are times when they are more ordinary. That's why I think it's ridiculous to take them as a role model.
(P12, 15-year-old girl)

(...) It is not correct to evaluate the relationships you see in daily life according to the relationships you see in the media. That is, because no matter where we look, we often see things that we cannot relate to ourselves. Such very dramatic separations are very exaggerated feelings and so on. You know, most of the time, we don't encounter them ourselves in daily life.

So of course, it feels nicer there. It sounds nicer. Because it sounds like a fairy tale, but when we can't experience these in our own life, we are disappointed later. So I don't think it's fair to compare. (P8, 15-year-old girl)

3.2.3.2.3 Behaving like the characters in the media

Another side of being influenced by the image of romantic relationships in media is it creates the tendency to act like the characters they had watched. In that sense, participants mentioned that when they watch a romantic relationship in TV shows or movies that they like, their behaviors in their own dating life start to change for a while. One participant evaluated this as a generational issue and claimed that his generation is more prone to shape their behaviors according to the things they watched.

In my own generation, this was not very effective in previous situations, but this is the case in our generation, especially now, I can give an example of a series of people like "Love 101", either students or generally people in this age put themselves in their place and it feels good to be like that. I believe we act according to it, according to that given situation. According to what is instilled in us. Influential, I think. (P4, 14-year-old boy).

A participant evaluated this situation as an inevitable result. According to this perspective, media, in a way, creates a formula between behaviors and experiences with the scenarios presented. This formula might be perceived as certain behaviors bring love and interest from the partner by the adolescents and consequently might affect the behaviors of people in real life.

In fact, it can inevitably be affected. You know, you're trying to be like the girls there. Guys will like you more when you're like the girls there. He seems like he will be more interested in you or you're trying to show some of the behaviors there or something. And in the same way, the surprises that the men in those TV series make and such, you expect them in real life. (P1, 14-year-old girl).

This influence on people is also defined as intense and temporary by one participant. According to her response, the influence is highest immediately after watching the show or movie, however, it tends to decrease gradually as the influence of the show disappears.

To be honest, when I finish the series or the movie, first it affects me a lot and my attitudes change pretty much, but then when I get out of the influence of the movie or the series, I can say that only traces of this influence remain. Well, I don't experience a big impact for a long time, but at that moment, I experience a big impact. (P12, 15-year-old, girl)

3.2.4 Tentative Recognition of Power Issues in Dating

This theme gathered participants' perceptions and perspectives on aspects of dating violence as a response to short video clips of two different relationships provided by the primary investigator. In that sense, the theme reflects how the adolescent participants discuss the elements of dating violence around the provided material. The theme has two main sub-themes: 1) The toxic and unhealthy relationship, and 2) The justification of the perpetrator's actions.

3.2.4.1 Identifying “toxic” and “unhealthy” behaviors in the relationship

While discussing the incidents of dating violence within the presented videos, a great majority of the participants used the words “toxic” and “unhealthy” to define the relationships. In this theme, it is worth noting that a “toxic” or “unhealthy” relationship is used when more concrete violence is perpetrated like breaking into the house, threatening, and stalking that evoke strong feelings of fear or anger in the victim. In this theme, participants discussed their perceptions of the toxic and unhealthy relationship in six sub-themes: 1) Possessiveness, 2) Objectification, 3) Manipulation, 4) Violation of personal boundaries, 5) Crossing the line, and 6) Victim is not assertive enough.

3.2.4.1.1 Possessiveness

One of the main reasons why participants called the relationships “toxic” and “unhealthy” was the actions of the boy resulting from the possessiveness. In that sense, participants both named the word “possessiveness” and explained behaviors related to it like overcontrolling or putting pressure on the partner. P10 established a direct association between the attitude of enforcing ownership over the other and the unhealthy relationship dynamic within his interpretation. Another participant, P9, supported this comment by stating the boy’s effort to enchaining the girl.

In the second video, the boy's attitude, I mean, he thinks like, as if the girl has no other life more and more, her only life is to be with me. In the last video, we see the things, the side effects of it. So, in short, I think it's an unhealthy relationship. (P10, 17-year-old boy)

The girl has a normal love, but the boy is now a binder. He first possesses the girl too much. That is why the relationship is not going well. (P9, 16-year-old boy)

Another participant provided a different dimension of possessiveness like limiting the partner, jealousy, and mistrust. In that sense, she defined possessiveness as the whole of these concepts.

He is overly possessive. Well, the girl was saying her name in the third video, like “I am not your girl, I am this”. He restricts her will, her freedom. He is overly possessive. In the second video, for example, there is no loyalty, no trust. They are just playing basketball. He gets jealous of this, overreacts, and follows her such and such. (P3, 16-year-old girl).

Although most of the participants mentioned possessiveness as a negative construct, only one participant named it “psychological violence” concerning the boy’s sending threatening text messages after seeing her with a different boy in the schoolyard.

Simply put, I think it's the message. So, he's texting that “you're mine”. So, girl, there is no one in such a thing. “You are mine” thus he is doing

something like “you are mine or the black soil”, I think he is using psychological violence against the girl there. (P6, 15-year-old girl)

Besides the unattractiveness of possessiveness, one participant highlighted the importance of an “optimal” level of it. In that sense, what she evaluated as problematic was the degree of possessiveness.

Actually, there should be a dose of possessiveness as well as jealousy. Well, like “my darling, my love”. These possessive suffixes actually feel good, too. I mean, I think an ideal relationship would be healthy if these are used in moderation, but it's too much here, “you're my girl, you're with me, be careful whom you talk to”. This is going too far. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

3.2.4.1.2 Objectification

Apart from possessiveness, objectification of the victim by the partner was another term brought by the participants that are evaluated as very problematic within the relationship presented in video clips. While some participants associated possessiveness and objectification as well, enforcing control over the partner's behaviors, and acting like the person has ownership over the partner is mostly debated under the term objectification. Even though it may overlap with the term “possessiveness” to a certain extent, this theme is taken as a separate category because participants used the word “object” very clearly within the discussion. Consequently, this sub-theme explains what participants named “objectification” when they discuss the elements of dating violence.

Through the word “object”, three participants referred to the overly possessive behaviors that the girl in the video was exposed to. In explaining their thoughts, all three participants gave reference to the boy's saying “You are my girl” to the girl. Even though they did not mention this sentence as an aspect of “violence”, the common notion was that it was very disturbing.

I think it's a very toxic and disturbing relationship. Because in all three videos, the guy's behavior bothered me a lot. You know, at the very beginning, he always says “you are mine”, but he cannot say such a thing.

Because he treats the girl like his object and takes ownership of her. Well, the girl is bothered by this, too in the last video. She says I'm not yours or anything. (P12, 15-year-old girl)

So, there's an over-possessiveness thing going on here. "You are my girl; you are with me" and so on. However, he showed the girl as such an object and this is not nice and saying things like "I will protect you", "Am I a normal person enough to enter the door or something" and such. He is a very selfish person and well he is "so cool" and such, he limits the girl. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

The third participant also highlighted the boy's jealous reaction against the girl playing basketball with another boy. In explaining her thoughts, she underlined the manners and reactions of the boy as problematic and provided a more acceptable reaction that could be given. In that sense, it could be claimed that not jealousy itself, but the overt actions the boy showed are evaluated as the sources of objectification.

In the end, he knows who the person he is in a relationship with is. He might know that and talk to her or even say "I don't want you to meet this person". He may say this because of these conversations, but to threaten her and send threatening messages, or to objectify that person to himself by striking attitudes like "you are mine" afterward... These, I think, are very wrong. (P8, 15-year-old girl)

Jealousy is also associated with objectification by another participant. However, she distinguished jealousy and objectification by regarding the actions of the boy as "not jealousy" but a very childish wish not to share his object that does not value the partner as a "person".

I think it is not a kind of jealousy. It is like, well you have a toy in your hand and then the guest's child comes and takes it away from you. I think it is all about that logic. I don't think it is a type of jealousy. I think it's a logic that looks completely like an object. (P5, 17-year-old girl)

3.2.4.1.3 Manipulation

One other dimension that the participants mentioned when discussing the incidents of dating violence through the provided videos was manipulation. Either describing the content or directly naming it as “manipulation”, participants emphasized their disturbance on one side’s enforcing control over the other’s mind.

This sub-theme included two main perspectives of the participants. One perspective was directed to the first video which included threatening, overly controlling attitudes of the boy to instill fear or guilt in the partner. In that sense, one participant claimed the way the boy talked with the girl is an effort to convince her that she cannot get out of this relationship.

After seeing the girl only playing basketball with another boy, he sends a threatening message, you know, “never forget that you're mine”, “be careful whom you hang out with”.

Well, when they are fighting over this, “you chose to be with me once, now you are always mine”. Like “Watch your demeanor”. The lines like “you can't go back”, I think it's very disturbing and the behavior of the boy seemed extremely manipulative. (P12, 15-year-old girl)

Similar to P12, P6 also pointed out how the boy is enforcing pressure on the girl for entering this relationship and puts her responsible for the consequences. In this example, even though the participant did not explicitly name this as “manipulation”, she regarded it as “psychological violence”.

Well, the man is committing psychological violence. There is such a thing as “You were the one who came to me”, so “You will suffer the consequences”. He puts the blame on the girl. (P6, 15-year-old-girl)

In addition to this, two participants in a short dialogue, very briefly built manipulation referring to the boy's possessive and controlling behaviors. In that sense, while one participant highlighted the behaviors of the boy, the other enhanced this comment by stating his real intention.

P10: Well, his attitudinizing or saying “I told you not to do this, not to hang out with that boy” etc. are also psychological pressures, as well. Well, these. (17-year-old, boy)

Primary Investigator: What do you think the boy is trying to do? We talked a bit in the previous question but...

P11: Maybe he is trying to manipulate. He is trying to say it’s only him. I think that’s it. (15-year-old-boy)

The second perspective focused on less overt signs of manipulation which pointed out the second relationship presented in the video clips. While in the former relationship the boy evidently commits coercive actions, this time the boyfriend figure had a sad manner and used explanation instead of overt threats for his restrictive behaviors. Although it did not have a high frequency, participants named this attitude as manipulative because of his effort to emphasize being protective to evoke her conscience.

So, it's harder to understand in “Twilight” [the second relationship] than in “The Bad Boy” [the first relationship]. The thing in there is making her conscientious deep down inside. “Put yourself in my place. I am worried about you”. Like “I'm doing it for you, so if you were in my place, you would too”. (...) I sensed some of that from Edward. I mean, Bella’s putting her in his place, “I'm doing this for Bella's sake, just for her sake, I'm doing it for your thing”. It was kind of weird. (P1, 14-year-old girl)

While acknowledging his manipulation, a participant also provided justifications for his behaviors and emphasized his protective intentions as well as his love towards the girl. In that sense, it could be stated that when the perpetrator heightens his protective intentions rather than inducing fear or anger, it might be perceived as more acceptable by some participants.

But Edward is definitely not like the person in “The Bad Boy”. And besides being a much softer character, he does something like this to protect the person he really loves, but you know, he showed a little manipulative behavior there. So, he could have solved it in a more constructive way. (P3, 16-year-old girl)

3.2.4.1.4 Violation of personal boundaries

When talking about the perceptions of dating violence through the presented videos, one of the sub-themes that emerged from participants' responses was the perpetrator violating personal boundaries. The sub-theme included such behaviors like enforcing control over her behaviors, inhibiting her actions, and taking decisions on her behalf.

About the second relationship presented, in which the boy breaks the girl's car to prevent her from going to her friend, the boy's action was regarded as both enforcing his decision over the girl and an inhibitory attitude. One participant interpreted this as harming the girl while trying to protect her.

By doing this, he is saying "if you don't do what I say, I know how to get you to do it". Because, well, you may have blocked it directly without giving her a choice which in doing so he is putting both the girl and himself in danger. I mean, if she wants to prevent the girl from going because the person he is talking about will be dangerous for her, he is doing the same thing by damaging her car. I mean what he did was all wrong, I think. (P8, 15-year-old girl)

While acknowledging his intention to protect the girl from danger, another participant evaluated the boy's making a decision for the girl as very disturbing. In that sense, she created the ideal scenario in which the boy should talk about his feelings rather than interfere with what she is doing.

I mean Edward made the decision here. So he said you can't go. The girl really couldn't go. I mean, it's normal to go there and sit and feel something like this because, it's normal because, they're going to do something to my girlfriend, I'm so scared. But you can't go and decide on behalf of your lover. You sit down, you talk to her. So that's how you decide, in my opinion. The rest is up to the other person. Not for you. You're not something there, you're not a decision machine, I'm just asking you for advice. (P1, 14-year-old girl)

3.2.4.1.5 Crossing the line

One of the perspectives that participants had taken about the perpetrator's behavior was separating his intentions from his actions. In other words, in an alternative scenario in which the perpetrator talks with the girl about his intentions in a harmless way rather than taking an action like breaking down her car or breaking into her home, it might not have been a misappropriate situation. According to this, it could be claimed that putting his doubts and control into action crosses a line, which is in turn, evaluated as disturbing.

P8 shared her thoughts on how Edward breaks down Bella's car for protective purposes. In that sense, she acknowledges what might Edward be thinking while at the same time objecting to his preventive actions toward the girl.

I think what he does is that if that person is a person who is hurting her life, of course, it is something he can come up with and talk about: "This is hurting you, it's not about me, it's about you, you're the one who will get hurt, so I think you should remove that person from your life". But his attempt to directly prevent it in this way, well he trips her up when she is going. (P8, 15-year-old girl)

Similar to P8, P12 also highlights the need for talking about the issue instead of causing physical damage. Furthermore, she evaluated this action as ending up being wrong when he is actually right.

I mean, yes, he thinks about her well-being, but he didn't need to damage her truck as the others said. I mean, instead of inflicting physical material damage, he could catch the girl in a more normal environment, talk and explain the situation, and after he has put the dangers in the right way, the girl will not go and spend time with the boy, if it is dangerous enough and I think the girl is at a level to understand this. It was unnecessary for him to immediately resort to material damage. So he's making himself wrong. That is, when he is right, he becomes wrong (P12, 15-year-old girl)

Even though not specifically naming it as "violence", P9 also evaluated detaining her from taking her own decisions as "too much" which crosses the line.

That is, movements that cross the borders. Thus, even though he has a certain relationship, I mean, he must stop at a certain point. When the girl had her own free will, his doing things in a certain way to prevent her from doing, restraining her, not going, I mean doing things so that she does not go to him, they were too much. (P9, 16-year-old boy)

3.2.4.1.6 Seeing the victim as not being assertive enough

While discussing how they perceive dating violence through the presented videos, participants did not only focus behaviors of the perpetrator. A great majority of the participants also took the victim's attitude into consideration when naming the relationship as "toxic" or "unhealthy". In that sense, both victims in two relationships were criticized due to not reacting to the perpetrator powerful enough. One participant pointed out the victim's inability to step up and stated her disturbance by the situation.

In general, she doesn't like them [the behaviors of the boyfriend], but well she both has love, and I don't know, stays in the relationship, and can't say no. She can't say I don't like it. (P3, 16-year-old girl)

Apart from mentioning her attitudes as a description, this manner also drew a negative reaction from the participants. The victim's need to be more reactive and assertive is highlighted by most of the participants.

It hurts the girl more. The guy is always more dominant here, in a way always self-opinionated, and yes, the girl needs to react a little more, you know, she needs to give a reaction like "Wait a minute, I am an individual, you can't interfere with what I say or do, or you can't interfere with the people I talk to". (P5, 17-year-old-girl)

In line with the other participant, P2 also pointed out the importance of giving a reaction and states that the victim is responsible for protecting herself as well as saying no. In that sense, not only for the presented relationships but also for the real life, girls should be able to say "no" in their relationships.

A girl should definitely be able to say no in a relationship. <She says> Yes for everything. that is, she should be able to protect herself and be a little more dominant. This girl has been very passive. I mean, she was just doing whatever he said. So, girls need to be a little bit more dominant. So she should be able to say no. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

One of the sources of not being assertive enough against violence was provided as the victim's not being disturbed by the actions of the perpetrator. In other words, the violent actions of the perpetrator might have a different function in the victim's life, or they might look like "contrarian" characteristics that increase the liking of the victim towards him. P1 explained why the victim might not be disturbed by those actions.

I think the reason why she did this is because... You asked why the girl reacted so normally. I think she likes the boy's contrariety in the first video. In other words, they enter a place where helicopters land on the hill one by one. Even though she shows an attitude like "I don't need your protection" at first, it is very obvious that she likes the fact that the guy is different, I mean, so to say different. From his contrariety, well, he is not like the others, he is different, he embraces me. I think that's why she reacts so normally to him. (P1, 14-year-old girl)

Another point of view indicated how the victim is being a part of the violence by not being assertive and protecting herself. In that sense, her actions are defined as the stones that lead to the violent road. P8 stated the necessity of holding on to her boundaries at the beginning of the relationship while P4 interpreted this attitude as giving authority to the perpetrator to enforce such behaviors.

They're both completely extreme. The girl is too passive, she does not protect herself in any way. If she doesn't want to stay in that situation, she should have set her limits from the beginning. Thus she shouldn't have let herself be controlled in the first place saying "You can't tell me to do this" or "I don't want you to do that or else I don't want to be in this relationship". (P8, 15-year-old girl)

The girl actually prepared the ground. I mean, the guy has also an impact, too so I'm not saying the guy is innocent, but she gives him the authority to do so in that relationship. (P4, 14-year-old boy)

3.2.4.2 Seeing the perpetrator justified in his actions

While discussing elements of dating violence, in addition to describing the aspects that are found “toxic” or “unhealthy”, participants also went beyond the action and took the perpetrator’s perspective into consideration. When the perpetrator has protective purposes, participants were more likely to explain his behaviors by presenting love as a justification. Therefore, in the second relationship presented in the videos, the perpetrator’s breaking down the girl’s truck in order to protect her was perceived as “not violence” by the majority of the participants.

P7 distinguished protective purposes from jealousy and based on this distinction, he evaluated two alternative scenarios. In that sense, if the reasons behind the perpetrator’s actions were jealousy, the action is called wrong while the protective purposes change the perception into the opposite and justify the perpetrator.

If the boy he called Jacob is really dangerous, but the girl doesn't understand, it's okay, except for damaging the truck. But if there is only jealousy, that is, if it is a situation that will not pose a danger to the girl, then what the boy did is wrong. So, I think we need to know a little more about the subject here. (P7, 14-year-old boy)

For P4, the conditions of the perpetrator also mattered, and his perspective might actually have a point. Therefore, it could be inferred that if the situation is indeed dangerous, this might give the partner to restrain the other and enforce power over her behaviors to be able to keep her safe.

Now, we don't actually know about Edward's reality. Now, those who are watching or who may know... If we only look at the part we have watched, so, actually, we may not say he is so wrong. Because she wasn't supposed to do something and Edward probably knew one thing, based on what we

have watched there. (...) Actually, if he really did it to protect her, I don't think it is something so wrong. (P4, 14-year-old-boy)

Another participant also mentioned the intention of protecting the partner and highlighted that the girl should empathize with the boy to understand why he implemented this action. According to this perspective, fear of the perpetrator about the safety of the victim overshadows the action itself. In other words, when the participant could relate to the intention of the perpetrator, it might be perceived as protecting the loved one rather than enforcing control. By analyzing the reasons behind the action of the perpetrator in detail, P2 explains why this is not an example of over-possessiveness.

You know, Edward is actually trying to protect her. Because Jacob is actually a werewolf. but Bella actually needed to think a little more from Edward's point of view, to empathize. Because after all, it is a werewolf, it's unpredictable, Edward thinks, but Bella, Jacob's friend, wants to see him, but it's dangerous. But since Jacob is her friend, she thinks he won't do anything to her. But werewolves' control isn't so much a thing. I don't think that Edward is doing an overdose of possessiveness here. He's just trying to talk here. (P2, 14-year-old girl)

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated adolescents' perceptions of the nature of dating and dating violence through its presentation of teenage movies. The participants consisted of twelve high school students aged between 14-17 who do or do not have former dating histories. Within the scope of this study, participants shared their reflections on romantic relationships and evaluated the instances of psychological dating violence in the video clips presented by the primary investigator in mix-gender focus groups. These discussions revealed their attitudes toward different manifestations of violence in the media were explored as well as whether they normalize or romanticize these manifestations through sexist attitudes or romantic myths. Since the data was collected through focus groups, their dynamics between each other were also an observational source. Two groups showed different manners in building a discussion together. While the first group whose members had formerly known each other, were more inclined to agree with each other's opinions and expand the discussion to a certain extent, the second group which had members with or without prior acquaintance was less likely to engage in a mutual conversation. However, it should be noted that in both groups, talking directly to the investigator rather than the participants were a more common pattern. This might be due to the online group setting which interferes with the group's cohesion.

The qualitative analysis of the responses organized the data around four main themes: Perception of dating as a process with novel emotions, behaviors, and interpersonal dynamics; romantic relationships are complicated: Mutuality, jealousy, and double standards; acknowledging the role of media on romantic relationships; tentative recognition of power issues in dating.

The first theme "Perception of dating as a process with novel emotions, behaviors, and interpersonal dynamics" captured participants' opinions on the nature of dating. In that sense, participants explained how they frame dating and

what changes they experience themselves or observe in dating relationships under three sub-themes: Experiencing new emotions, changes in behaviors, and change in the dyadic relationship. The first sub-theme that emerged in defining dating, revealed which emotions dating is built upon. In this respect, participants centered on liking and embarrassment when explaining the emotional constructs of dating relationships. While the second sub-theme focused on behavioral changes during the dating processes, the third sub-theme “casual dynamics in the dyadic relationship” referred to relational changes that occurred between the couple as the dyad moved toward dating.

The second theme “Romantic relationships are complicated: Mutuality, jealousy, and double standards” consisted of three main sub-themes. These three sub-themes reflected issues that participants brought in discussing the ideal relationship. Their responses revealed three categories of their observations on romantic relationships: The ideal relationship is mutual, the romantic relationship has a proper amount of jealousy, and double standards affect couple relationships. The first sub-theme highlighted the importance of both parties’ active involvement in different dimensions of the relationship. These different dimensions are defined as “mutual love and care”, “mutual sharing” and “mutual effort”. The second sub-theme, on the other hand, defined jealousy as a necessary construct with an acceptable dose. In addition to reflections on how the ideal relationship should be, participants also brought up the issues that might result in conflicts within a romantic relationship due to gender inequalities in the third sub-theme.

The third theme, “Acknowledging the role of media on romantic relationships” drew the portrayal of how adolescents view romantic relationships presented in the media and to what extent they are influenced by those representations. The theme covered the issue under two categories: Media portrayals of love are unrealistic and media’s role in one’s romantic relationships. While the first category expressed the reasons participants regarded those relationships as unrealistic, the second category proposed three ways that adolescents are influenced by media in case of romantic relationships: searching for

what you see in the media, feeling disappointed, and behaving like the characters on the media.

The final theme, “Tentative recognition of power issues in dating ” involved the participants’ perceptions of video clips that present the instances of dating violence in two teenage relationships. How they discussed these incidents revealed two sub-categories: Identifying toxic and unhealthy behaviors in the relationship and seeing the perpetrator justified in his actions. The first sub-theme covered the aspects that participants interpreted as “toxic” or “unhealthy” under six headings: Possessiveness, objectification, manipulation, violation of personal boundaries, crossing the line and seeing the victim as not being assertive enough. The second sub-theme, on the other hand, contained justifications for the actions of the perpetrator.

Within the scope of this section, the results will be discussed under four main themes with respect to what had been suggested in the literature. Furthermore, the section will be followed by the clinical implications of the study in terms of identifying psychological dating violence perceptions of adolescents prior to presenting limitations and suggestions for further research.

4.1 DISCUSSION OF THE THEMES

4.1.1 Perception of Dating as a Process with Novel Emotions, Behaviors, and Interpersonal Dynamics

Prior to examining participants’ perceptions of dating violence, how they conceptualize “dating” and describe “the dating couple” was investigated. In that sense, participants’ opinions described a process of change in emotions, behaviors, and the dynamic between the dyad. The first sub-theme emphasized the two novel emotions that partners experience in a dating relationship: Liking and Embarrassment. The romantic emotions between the partners were explained through “liking” by the majority of the participants which could be regarded as a soft and less intense form of affection and love. Therefore, it could be inferred that

even though acknowledging the experience of novel emotions, dating is a dynamic that starts with smooth feelings. As these findings are related to the literature, it also contradicts what has been suggested. According to studies on adolescent relationships' developmental trajectory, in the early periods of adolescence affiliation does not come into prominence while it appears to be an important factor during middle and late adolescence (Furman et al, 2002; Furman & Wehner, 1997). On the other hand, while the same studies highlight attractiveness in adolescent relationships, the participants of the current study did not bring any theme regarding the attractiveness of the potential dating partner.

Even though not being frequent as "liking" within the data, embarrassment also occurred as a novel emotion experienced during dating in which the person feels embarrassed to talk and deepen the relationship with the dating partner into the next step. Participants did not merely mention embarrassment as an emotion, but also explained its behavioral expressions through their observations of what the person is experiencing next to the dating partner. These observations are in line with the previous study that mentioned the difficulty in approaching and communicating with the dating partner as well; however, the highlighted emotion was "being scared" rather than embarrassment (Sullivan et al, 2010). Another study, on the other hand, named this situation "awkward", preserving its ambiguous nature (Giardano et al, 2006). In that sense, it could be claimed that even though the emotions may differentiate, they are all expressions of the same challenge which is making a contact with the person liked. Why "embarrassment" is the emotion that accompanies this challenge in the Turkish context could be further investigated in relation to individuals' characteristics.

Apart from behavioral and emotional changes, participants also pointed out the changes in the dynamic between two people. In this section, one of the most emphasized features of dating was the 'flexible' aspect of the relationship between two people. Through flexibility, the concept of dating is defined as a process between friendship and romance. While the previous research also emphasized the unstable nature of dating, this dynamic mostly relied on constant breaks up and coming backs (Manning et al., 2014). However, the dynamics described in the

current study did not refer to a structured romantic relationship in which the couple can break up or come back together; rather it is regarded as the step before becoming a “serious” couple. In that sense, it could be inferred that the conceptualization of “dating” is different for the current adolescent sample when compared with the general definition. Even though it may represent different dynamics, dating in general terms is used to refer to romantic relationships which include intimacy (Love is Respect, n.d.). However, the Turkish translation of the word “dating” is the same as “flirt” which indicates emotional attraction between two people (Turkish Language Association, n.d.) and in general used to refer to two people’s first interaction expressing their interest in each other and getting to know each other without naming themselves as romantically involved couples. This type of “dating” definition overlapped with how the adolescents described the early stages of a relationship which included spending time together and knowing each other (Thongpriwan & McElmurry, 2009). Therefore, even though most of the studies have taken adolescent dating and romantic relationships together interchangeably, dating is placed just before being involved in romantic relationships on a continuum of becoming a committed couple for the Turkish sample. In other words, participants defined “dating” as an ambiguous process rather than a “relationship”.

Apart from differences, commonalities also exist between the current study and the literature in terms of dynamics in the dyad which included spending time with the dating partner. As suggested by various studies, participants indicated the dyad’s starting to organize frequent social activities alone, in and outside the school life (Adams et al, 2001; Choukas-Bradley et al., 2015; Fredland et al., 2005; Gevers et al., 2012; Noonan & Charles, 2009; Thongpriwan & McElmurry, 2009),

4.1.2 Romantic Relationships are Complicated: Mutuality, Jealousy, and Double Standards

This theme reflected the participants’ elaborations on the ideal relationship. Their ideas on ideal relationships mainly evolved around the exchange relationship

of both providing and receiving emotions, support, and active effort which constituted the sub-theme “mutuality”. The first branch of this theme “mutual love and caring” emphasized that being affectioned by the partners is as significant as loving them. What is noticeable in this theme is that while talking about dating, participants used “liking”; however, they automatically started to use “love” in discussing ideals of a romantic relationship. Even though the majority of the participants mentioned love and feeling loved in an abstract dimension, one female participant proposed a way to feel cared for in a relationship, which was receiving surprises. Although she did not specifically explain “making surprises”, this could be, to a certain extent, in line with expecting boys to purchase gifts in adolescent relationships (Fredland et al., 2005; Noonan & Charles, 2009). Apart from love and caring provided by the partner, excitement and fun were also suggested by one male participant as a necessary construct in a relationship. Though it was not a common pattern within the present data, having fun and companionship were found as vital in defining healthy relationships for the adolescent period (Furman et al., 2002; Hays et al., 2011).

In addition to the mutuality of emotions, the intensity of personal communication and sharing was also regarded as a vital part of ideal relationships. This pattern included partners’ being open to receiving support and being open in sharing their private problems. When compared with the existing literature, adolescents’ definitions of the ideal relationship presented diverse results in terms of the importance of personal connectedness and support. On the one hand, a number of studies state adolescents value support, openness, and interchange of communication in a romantic relationship (Adams et al., 2001; Hays et al., 2011; Thongpriwan & McElmurry, 2009). Though being in parallel with these findings, Noonan and Charles (2009) proposed a gender difference in which the theme “support” was encountered in female participants’ opinions. Furthermore, the absence of this emotional connection and sharing was presented as a source of conflict in another study (Sullivan et al, 2010).

On the other hand, studies on the nature of adolescents’ romantic relationships pointed out the fact that relationships during the early period of

adolescence, attraction and impression in peer groups come into prominence while support and caregiving emerge in late adolescent relationships (Furman & Wehner, 1997, Furman et al., 2002; Goldman et al., 2016). However, although all participants within the current study were within the middle adolescence range, they still identified caretaking and support as important constructs. Therefore, it could be inferred that the need for emotional intimacy in romantic relationships may manifest itself during the mid-phases of adolescence. Another explanation for this differentiation could be grounded in cultural divergence; adolescents in the Turkish context may look for an emotional connection and support more than attractiveness and impressions in the peer group. When fact that mutual sharing is a pattern brought heavily by female participants, the situation can be linked with gender roles in relationships that assign girls to provide caretaking for the boyfriend (Noonan & Charles, 2009). Since these gender roles are rooted more strongly in conservative cultures like Turkey, this might be an influential factor in increasing the importance of mutual sharing during middle adolescence romantic relationships.

Even though the internalization of gender expectations could explain the former pattern, participants also discussed the need to put equal effort into a relationship regardless of gender. In that sense, the general gender assumptions on issues like boys should send the first message or take the first step were challenged by both male and female participants. However, the research found no indication of mutual involvement of both parties in taking responsibility for the relationship in terms of ideal relationship expectations of adolescents. When the results are compared with the nature of adolescent romantic relationships, a dynamic opposed to the mutual effort was encountered. While participants in the current study context put emphasis on equal effort, adolescent romantic relationships are characterized by “asymmetrical” reciprocity (Giordano et al, 2006). In other words, mutuality was in line with friendship dynamics whereas in romantic relationships involvement of one party overweighs the other frequently (Giordano et al, 2006).

Apart from mutuality, another construct that an ideal relationship has jealousy. In line with what Wekerle and Wolfe (1999) suggested jealousy is prone to be evaluated as an indication of love during adolescence. In the current study,

while acknowledging this indication, participants drew a framework on to what extent jealousy is acceptable and necessary in a relationship and distinguished “good” and “bad” jealousy. Jealousy also occurred in the literature in adolescents’ conceptualizations of dating, but it reflected feeling jealous of the partner while this study highlighted the partner’s being jealous of the person (Goldman et al, 2016).

During the discussion of the ideal relationship perceptions, participants also brought up that relationships are affected by double standards due to gender. In that sense, they mentioned these double standards as factors that interfere with the ideal relationship. These are seen as sources of conflict which imply the boy’s dominance over the girlfriend and the girl’s showing conformity to her boyfriend in line with what is suggested in the literature (Noonan & Charles, 2009; Taylor et al, 2021). The expectation of being inexperienced in dating was also a pattern that emerged in terms of gender expectations. Participants presented having former dating experiences as a possible risk of being exposed to rumors and defamation for girls. This risk of being the target of a bad reputation for girls was also encountered in the literature. However, this situation was not related to being inexperienced and innocent unlike what is stated in the current study. Rather, female adolescents experience this humiliation and rumors following their breakups with their boyfriends as a retaliation (Lavoile et al., 2000; Noonan & Charles, 2009)

One of the biggest differences with the literature in defining romantic relationships was the existence of sexuality. All studies examined for this project focused on the nature of romantic relationships as well as dating, and themes around sexual experiences or intentions were mentioned as an important part of relationships during adolescence (Choukas-Bradley et al., 2015; Gevers et al, 2012; Giardono et al, 2006; Hays et al, 2011; Fredland et al, 2005; Furman & Wehner, 1997; Furman, 2002; Manning et al., 2014; Thongpriwan & McElmurry, 2009). More specifically, Furman (2002) stated sexuality is the most apparent theme in adolescent relationships. Both male and female participants in the current study, on the other hand, referred to sexuality or sexual intentions in explaining dating or romantic relationships. This situation might rely on the fact that studies on adolescent romantic relationships mostly emerged in Western cultures which in

comparison with the Turkish culture, have a much earlier age onset in experiencing sexuality.

4.1.3 Acknowledging the Role of Media on Romantic Relationships

The third theme is organized according to participants' elaborations on the romantic relationships presented in their favorite TV shows or movies and the extent they are being influenced by those relationships. By remembering their favorite TV shows, they evaluated how media represents romantic relationships. Their opinions on the media image of romantic relationships are gathered under one heading: The portrayal of love is unrealistic. In that sense, participants viewed the relationships they watch in TV series or movies as exaggerated and dramatized in general. This dramatization included the excessive importance attributed to "real love" as well as the fairytale-like happiness of having a partner. In that sense, this perception shows parallelism with the romantic myths that highlight the excellence of true love (Sprecher & Metts, 1989) and the strong relationship between happiness and real love (Papp et al., 2016). Moreover, participants' naming of "unrealistic" is also linked with the literature that supports the idea of media presenting unrealistic relationship portrayals (Galician, 2004).

According to the principles of the Social Learning Theory, media is one of the sources that affects the perceptions of adolescents by presenting a model of behaviors that are reinforced (Jennings et al, 2011). In the case of this effect on adolescents, one study found that media is the least influential source when compared with friends and family (Wood et al, 2002). However, Galician (2004) suggested that between the ages of 13-15, adolescents' unrealistic beliefs increase in parallel with their perceived influence from mass media. Shapiro and Kroeger (1991), on the other hand, found a positive relationship between unrealistic beliefs about romantic relationships and exposure to different kinds of popular media sources for adults.

In the current study, on the other hand, while participants did not describe the effect of images in the media on them as "very strong", they acknowledged this

influence to a certain extent which is reflected in their dating behaviors and opinions on daily life. Furthermore, few participants stated that the effect of media increase in line with one's interest in the show. Participants in the current study defined multiple ways of being affected by the media images of romantic relationships. According to their opinions, three main dynamics emerged on how their dating practices or perspectives are being influenced by those images. Adolescents, in that sense, are prone to search for the supposed "ideal" presented on TV shows or movies and consequently feel disappointed about the real relationships, and they may temporarily behave like the characters they have watched in their relationships. In that sense, participants partially confirmed the findings of Galician (2004) and Shapiro and Kroeger (1991) on the influence of media on unrealistic beliefs about romantic relationships, but they explained this effect through their bond with the show. In addition to this, the current study is also in line with adolescents having the awareness of the media's effect on their behaviors and attitudes (Lavoie et al, 2000).

4.1.4 Tentative Recognition of Power Issues in Dating

This section reflected how participants discussed the incidents of violence in the presented video clips. Participants were presented with four videos about two different teenage relationships. Both videos show the male's violence over the girl including psychological violence like threatening, controlling, inducing fear, jealousy, and manipulation. Even though the study focused on psychological dating violence, the incidents within the video clips also included physical dating violence in which the boy sneaks into the girl's room from the window, holds the girl, and covers her mouth with his hand in the first relationship and the boy damages the girl's car in the second relationship.

During the first phase of the discussion, the primary investigator did not use the word "violence" while the participants were elaborating on what is happening and disturbing in the video clips. In the second phase, the question of whether these clips included violence was asked explicitly. In that sense, even though many

aspects of psychological dating violence emerged within their discussion, only sending threatening messages to the victim and manipulation were named as “psychological violence” by one participant without the primary investigator’s probing questions. Rather than explicitly naming it as violence, participants tend to use the words “toxic” or “unhealthy” to direct the dynamics they found disturbing. Even though research on how and to what extent adolescents notice incidents of violence is scarce, a study by Rodenhizer and colleagues (2021) on college women’s attitudes on popular TV shows reveals that young women can detect verbal and physical forms of dating violence. However, it is also suggested that when sexual violence is perpetrated through psychological means like assaults, they are prone to remain under the radar.

Even though participants did not explicitly call the perpetrators’ actions “violence” as suggested before, under the terms “toxic” and “unhealthy” they were able to define multiple manifestations of psychological violence. In that sense, the first sub-theme was comprised of six main headings: Possessiveness, objectification, manipulation, violation of personal boundaries, crossing the line and seeing the victim as not being assertive enough. These perceptions of dating violence are partially compatible with the research on adolescents’ perceptions of dating violence.

The majority of studies in the literature examined adolescents’ perceptions through their personal experiences without a specific focus on one type of dating violence. Based on their experiences, adolescents underlined manipulation, enforcing control, forcing to maintain the relationship or other kinds of behaviors, jealousy, humiliation and calling names, ignorance by the partner, threatening, and disrespectful acts as aspects of psychological dating violence (Black & Weisz, 2005; Fredland et al., 2005; Goldman et al., 2016; Hays et al., 2011; Sanhueza & Lessard, 2018; Taylor et al., 2021; Thongpriwan & McElmurry, 2009). What is additional in this study was possessiveness, objectification, and crossing the line which refers to putting the controlling intention into action. In that sense, while the studies in the literature had taken the behaviors related to possessiveness and objectification under jealousy and control, participants in this study discussed them

separately. In possessiveness, they highlighted the actions of the perpetrator like he owns the girl, and they regarded these actions as “not even jealousy” but seeing the other like an object similar to children who do not want to share their toys. The former studies also indicated that adolescents tend to mention action-based expressions of aggression and other forms of psychological violence more (Taylor et al, 2021; Sanhueza & Lessard, 2018). The current study also supported these findings which participants were more likely to detect and react to violent incidents when they were put into action or when the perpetrator showed his aggression overtly. This pattern was encountered in the Turkish college population as well. A qualitative study by Ustunel (2022) revealed that young men and women tend to refer to intense forms of jealousy and control as “violence” and claimed it might occasionally be needed or justified.

One of the prominent findings of this study was the reaction participants gave to the victim. Both male and female participants regarded the victim’s conformity and submissiveness to the perpetrator as a part of the toxicity. One participant even suggested the girl is providing a basis for the boy’s dominance by not reacting assertively. In that sense, it could be inferred that the adolescents are aware of the sexist attitudes internally which highlight the dominance of men and submissiveness of women; but attribute the responsibility of breaking down these sexist attitudes to the girl side. This type of victim-blaming perspective centering on submissiveness of the woman was also encountered in Turkish college population (Ustunel, 2022) which indicated this is not a rare pattern in general and might have a cultural foundation as well. Furthermore, this situation might also be related to the romantic myth that assigns the eventual responsibility of the relationship to women (Masanet et al, 2018). In that sense, even though victim-blaming was also encountered in the previous study on adolescent dating violence, it is mostly focused on the girl’s necessity of empathizing with the boy and understanding his love (Masanet et al., 2018). It should also be noted that recognition of victim-blaming revealed a contradiction with their attitudes towards sexist expectations in relationships which were presented under former themes. An ambivalent attitude occurred between challenging gender norms in romantic

relationships and regarding victims as responsible for the violence in the current study. This contradiction could yield that adolescents' attitudes on normative gender roles and dating violence may differentiate when asked directly or talking through an experience.

The second aspect of this theme included participants' justifications for the perpetrator's behaviors. Prior to further discussing this theme, it should be noted that between the two romantic relationships presented in the video clips, the perpetrator in the first relationship (Meriç) had an aggressive manner in which he evidently controls and threatens the girl and inflicts fear. On the other hand, the perpetrator in the second relationship (Edward) showed no indication of aggressiveness and expressed shame and sorrow for what he had to do because of protecting his girlfriend. This differentiation highly affected participants' justification tendencies. When the perpetrator showed no signs of aggression like in the second case, the situation was more likely to be romanticized and named as "not violence" by the participants despite the physical action.

The justifications provided by the adolescents were in accordance with what was elicited in previous research on romantic myths and dating violence perceptions. When the male character highlighted his intentions to protect the girl from another male character, the importance of love overshadowed his actions and jealousy. These findings demonstrated parallelism with research on the effects of romantic myths on adolescents in which the protecting intention overshadowed the perpetrator's actions due to his intense love in line with the "love conquers all" myth (Carrascosa et al., 2019; Papp et al., 2016). In a similar vein, this normalization of the perpetrator's actions also supported the linear relationship between the acceptance of violence and beliefs in romantic myths (Nardi-Rodriguez et al., 2019). In that sense, both the effect of romantic myths and sexist attitudes came into prominence in justifying dating violence.

4.2 STRENGTHS AND CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the current study contribute to the literature in different ways. First of all, it provides the portrayal of how adolescents in the Turkish context define dating. The literature on adolescent dating violence focused on adolescents' definitions of dating violence to a great extent. However, how they conceptualize dating in the first place is a topic that merges in the background. In that sense, the study manifests a portrayal of the “dating” definition for adolescents in the Turkish context. The findings suggested that the concepts of dating and romantic relationships differentiate among the current sample due to terms' translation into Turkish. Since the term's Turkish translation is the same as “flirting”, participants regarded dating as the process in which the couple flirt, get to know each other, and express their interest in each other before they enter into a committed romantic relationship. In other words, due to linguistic distinctions "dating" was framed as an ambiguous process while being a romantic couple was named a “serious relationship”. The findings are important in designing prevention and intervention programs on dating violence among adolescence. In that sense, clinicians and other specialists who have the intention to create such programs can be aware of this distinction in adolescents' perceptions since the word “dating violence” might not refer to violence in a romantic relationship in their minds.

The study also provides significant information regarding the relationship between images of romantic relationships in the media and adolescents' perceptions. Even though literature shows the degree of using media as a source in learning romantic relationships and roles, the studies most frequently investigated the effect of sexual material in shaping adolescent sexual behavior. The current study, on the other hand, contributes to this topic by pointing to the mechanism through which they experience the influence of media in daily dating practices.

Finally, the research also reveals how adolescents discuss dating violence incidents presented in the media and whether their perceptions share commonalities with romantic myths and sexist attitudes in terms of justification and normalization of the violence. In that sense, the romanization of jealousy and protection were two

major patterns that emerged in justifying the perpetrator's behavior. These findings highlight the importance of creating awareness not only about dating violence but also about romantic myths and sexist attitudes in prevention groups on adolescent dating violence.

4.3 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

The current study contained several limitations as well. One of the main limitations is the sample size of the study. Even though the study included an adequate number of participants in terms of small qualitative projects (Braun & Clarke, 2013), a higher number of participants could increase the generalizability of the findings. In addition to having a small number of participants, the homogeneous characteristics of the participants which included having a middle or middle-to-high class socioeconomic status is also another factor that decreased generalizability. Furthermore, the translation of the term "dating" may have resulted in perceptions being affected by language-specific factors which makes the current study less relatable to other populations outside the Turkish context. However, according to Braun & Clarke (2013) qualitative research highlights contextual meanings rather than reaching generalizable conclusions. In that sense, it is worth emphasizing that the current study was not intended to point out generalizable conclusions.

Research supported that in shaping adolescents' perceptions and attitudes toward dating violence, peers and family are the major sources (Wood et al., 2002). Furthermore, according to Social Learning Theory principles witnessing familial violence has a powerful relationship with one's violent behaviors (Foshee et al., 1999; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). In that sense, whether they had been exposed to familial violence in their homes or observed such relationships in their social circle could have a profound effect on their evaluations or acceptance of violent behaviors. In a similar vein, participants' parents' attitudes towards sexism and romantic myths could also be an influential model for their perceptions. However, the current study did not have information regarding participants' witnessing

violence within their family or social circle as well as parents' sexist attitudes. In investigating adolescents' perception of dating and dating violence, future research could take the familial history of violence into account and elicit deeper information on romantic relationships that adolescents witness in their peer groups. Moreover, future research could also widen the scope of research by examining the associations between parental sexist attitudes and adolescents' evaluation of violent scenes presented in the media. Similarly, participants' demographic characteristics were not associated with their responses during the analysis. In that sense, future research can examine the issue under clusters based on demographical differences.

One other limitation of the study derived from the conditions of the focus group. First of all, according to the nature of the study, the data was collected in one focus group session. However, this situation might have caused a limited setting in deepening participants' elaborations. A qualitative design with multiple sessions could enable a more deepened understanding of the issue for future research. Secondly, some participants in the same group had a prior acquaintance as being friends or cousins. Even though this might make them feel more comfortable, it could also generate suspicions about the confidentiality of their sharing. There might also be limitations due to mix-gendered groups. In addition to this, having a female group leader could also influence participants' attendance in discussions and may lead to self-censors. In that sense, it should be noted that male participants were less active, and the discussion was mostly led by female participants. Besides the gender of the group leader, one other reason for this situation could be the way they were invited to the study. The participants had not encountered the word "dating violence" when they had first volunteered for the study and were told they were going to talk about "romantic relationships and media". However, discussing male-to-female dating violence without further notice could promote defensiveness and contribute to remaining in the background during the meeting for male participants. This is why conducting the discussion under single-gendered groups could provide an atmosphere that might elicit different perspectives for future studies. In addition to the structural design of the groups, the video clips preferred for this study also drive some limitations. Both four videos from two teenage

movies showed heterosexual couples and male-to-female violence. However, scenes with different kinds of dynamics could generate distinct reactions from the participants as well as affect the male adolescents' participation.

Some limitations emerged due to the setting of the focus groups as well. Since the groups were conducted online via Zoom, every participant attended from their own personal space. Although participants were reminded about the need for privacy both before and during the group, being in the same environment with the family members could have limited their degree of openness in their communication.

Thematic analysis was utilized in order to understand the perceptions of adolescents' dating violence; the initial codes were constructed by the primary investigator and the themes were developed with the consultation by the thesis advisor. In that sense, having one data-coder made inter-rater reliability unable to be provided. Additionally, the effect of the primary investigator's subjectivity in interpreting the data should also be taken into consideration. In that sense, the primary investigator's curiosity on this topic is driven by her own adolescence period and familiarity with the movies used for this study. Therefore, her subjectivity has the potential to impact the analysis as well as the data itself through the primary investigator's manner and prob questions. Consequently, while interpreting the current paper, the primary investigator's demographics and perspective should be held in mind. However, the subjectivity of the researcher was not regarded as a limitation according to Braun and Clarke (2013). In contrast, the recognition of the researcher's perspective and reflexivity was proposed as a strength of the qualitative analysis.

CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to investigate how adolescents perceive the scenes in the media that includes psychological dating violence and to what extent these perceptions are affected by sexist attitudes and romantic myths. The sample focused on this study was high school students and with a mixed-gender, one-session focus group their opinions and elaborations about the frameworks of dating and the ideal relationship, the effect of the presentation of romantic relationships in media on themselves, and dating violence perceptions were examined. The participants' definitions of dating differed from the general definition of being in a romantic relationship. Rather, they distinguished dating from the committed relationship and regarded it as the phase in which the couple prepares to be involved in a relationship with subtler emotions like "liking". However, this was also in line with the literature as taking spending time and doing activities as well as getting to know each other as the core features of dating. (Thongpriwan & McElmurry, 2009).

In drawing an ideal relationship portrayal, participants not only mentioned the necessities in an ideal relationship but also the negativities that relationships are affected. In that sense, their ideal relationship portrayal was partially in line with the literature. Even though participants were in the middle adolescence period, they highlighted the support and caregiving features of the relationships that are expected in relationships of late adolescents or emerging adults (Furman & Wehner, 1997, Furman et al., 2002). Contrary to the literature, sexual expectations were never mentioned by the participants both for dating and the ideal relationship. This situation could rely on the cultural discrepancy for the sexuality age-onset or participants' hesitation to talk about sexuality since adolescent sexuality is not still completely acknowledged within the Turkish context (Öztürk, 2017).

The signs of romantic myths and sexist attitudes emerged in both descriptions of the ideal relationship and dating violence perceptions. In that sense, one of the prominent issues was jealousy. Participants were more likely to consider jealousy as a necessity in a relationship to a certain extent and as a sign of love and caring. In the case of dating violence, participants' reactions are differentiated

according to the manner of the perpetrator. When the perpetrator has an obvious aggressive style and induces fear in the victim, they tend to name the relationship “toxic” whereas if the perpetrator is sad for what he had to do, romanticizations around love and protection were more likely to occur. In the second case, despite naming the situation as disturbing, the girl’s necessity of empathizing with the boy in protecting her was highlighted.

Gender roles related to sexist attitudes which assign dominance to boys were also depicted. According to their perspective, the victim’s not giving powerful reactions enough was also a part of the toxicity. Therefore, it would be fair to say that although they were aware of gender roles, they put the responsibility to break this cycle on the victim. This perspective, to a certain extent, is in parallel with the romantic belief which dedicates women to be responsible for the relationship.

The study also presents novel findings in terms of adolescents’ insight into how their own dating practices are influenced by the images of romantic relationships in the media. According to what they have suggested, exposure to fairytale-like relationships in the mass media is linked with searching for those kinds of relationships in reality and experiencing disappointment in accordance with this. This impact is defined mostly as temporary and increased in parallel with one’s interest in the show.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Informed Consent Form (Adolescent)

Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu

Araştırmanın Yürütüldüğü Kurum:	İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi
Araştırmanın Adı:	Ergenlerin Psikolojik Flört Şiddeti Algıları: Bir Odak Grubu Çalışması
Araştırmacının Adı:	Fatma Selin Ateş
Araştırmacının E-mail Adresi ve Telefonu:	pskselinales@gmail.com 0531 697 43 79
Araştırmanın Danışmanı:	Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak
Danışmanın E-mail Adresi ve Telefonu:	hale.boratav@bilgi.edu.tr

Bu araştırma, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Fatma Selin Ateş tarafından Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, ergenlerin psikolojik flört şiddetine karşı tutumları ve medyada temsil edilen çiftler üzerinden bu kavramı nasıl tartıştıklarını incelemektir. Araştırmanın bu konudaki literatüre katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

Bu araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde, yaklaşık 60-90 dakika sürecektir. Bu görüşmede, romantik ilişkiler üzerine düşünce ve gözlemlerinizi öğrenmek için iki adet kısa video klip gösterilecek ve sizden bazı sorulara yanıt vermeniz istenecektir. Yanıtlarınız, sonraki analizlerde kullanılmak üzere ses kaydına alınacaktır.

Bu araştırma bilimsel bir amaçla yapılmakta ve katılımcı bilgilerinin gizliliği esas alınmaktadır. Verdiğiniz tüm bilgiler gizli tutulacaktır. Ses kayıtları araştırma süresince yalnızca araştırmacının ve danışmanın erişimi olan bir harici bellekte muhafaza edilecek, araştırma sona erdiğinde silinecektir. Araştırma bulgularının sunumu ve raporlamasında kişi isimleri kullanılmayacak, elde edilen bilgiler toplu olarak değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılacaktır. Tüm katılımcılarımızın gizlilik hakkını korumak adına, grup içerisinde yapılacak tüm paylaşımların, katılımcı isimleri de dahil olmak üzere grup dışına çıkarılmaması veya üçüncü kişilerle paylaşılması, araştırmacının kendisi dışında görüntü veya

ses kaydı alınmaması gerekmektedir. Araştırmaya katılmaya onay verdiğinizde tüm katılımcı ve araştırmacı tarafından yapılan paylaşımların gizliliğini korumanız beklenmektedir.

Bu araştırmaya katılmak tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Görüşmeye katılmanın üzerinizde herhangi bir olumsuz etki yaratması beklenmemektedir. Ancak görüşme sırasında yanıt vermek istemediğiniz, size kendinizi rahatsız hissettiren sorular olursa bu soruları yanıtlamadan geçebilirsiniz. Görüşme sırasında dilediğiniz zaman kaydı durdurulmasını isteyebilirsiniz. Görüşme başlamadan önce, görüşme sırasında veya sonrasında dilediğiniz zaman soru sorabilirsiniz. Katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir sebep göstermeden araştırmadan çekilme hakkına sahipsiniz. Araştırmadan çekildiğiniz durumda verdiğiniz bilgiler değerlendirmeye alınmayacaktır.

Görüşmenizin sonuçları, araştırma sonlandırılmadan önce gözden geçirmeniz için sizinle e-posta yoluyla paylaşılacak ve geri bildiriminiz doğrultusunda gerekli değişiklikler yapılacaktır. Burada amaç, sizin görüşlerinizin ve deneyimlerinizin en doğru şekilde anlaşılmasını sağlamaktır.

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz durumda, Google Drive üzerinden “Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum. Bana anlatıları ve yukarıdaki açıklamaları anladım. Çalışmaya katılmayı ve verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını, tüm katılımcı ve araştırmacılar tarafından yapılan paylaşımların gizliliğini koruyacağımı kabul ediyorum.” seçeneğini işaretleyiniz.

Araştırmayla ilgili bilgi almak, soru sormak veya yorumlarınızı paylaşmak isterseniz, araştırmacı Fatma Selin Ateş ile pskselinales@gmail.com adresinden iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

APPENDIX B – Demographic Form

Sosyo-Demografik Form

1) Yaşınız:

2) Sınıfınız:

3) Yaşadığınız şehir:

4) Kiminle yaşıyorsunuz?

5) Ebeveynlerinizin medeni durumu:

☐ Evli /beraber ☐ Ayrı/boşandı ☐ Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz):

6) Cinsel Yöneliminiz:

7) İlişki durumunuz:

☐ Romantik ilişki içerisinde ☐ Flörtüm var

☐ Flörtüm yok

☐ Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz):

8) Şu anda romantik ilişkiniz varsa, ilişkiniz ne kadar süredir devam ediyor? (hafta, ay ya da yıl olarak belirtebilirsiniz):

APPENDIX C – Informed Consent Form (Parent)

Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu (Ebeveyn)

Araştırmanın Yürütüldüğü Kurum:	İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi
Araştırmanın Adı:	Ergenlerin Psikolojik Flört Şiddeti Algıları: Bir Odak Grubu Çalışması
Araştırmacının Adı:	Fatma Selin Ateş
Araştırmacının E-mail Adresi ve Telefonu:	pskselinates@gmail.com 0531 697 43 79
Araştırmanın Danışmanı:	Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak
Danışmanın E-mail Adresi ve Telefonu:	hale.boratav@bilgi.edu.tr

Bu araştırma, İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Fatma Selin Ateş tarafından Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak danışmanlığında yürütülmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, ergenlerin psikolojik flört şiddetine karşı tutumları ve medyada temsil edilen çiftler üzerinden bu kavramı nasıl tartıştıklarını incelemektir. Araştırmanın bu konudaki literatüre katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

Bu araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde, çocuğunuzun yaklaşık 60-90 dakika sürecek beş kişilik çevrimiçi bir odak grup çalışmasına katılmasına onay vermiş olacaksınız. Bu görüşmede, çocuğunuzun romantik ilişkiler ve medya üzerine düşünce ve gözlemlerini öğrenmek için iki adet kısa video klip izleyerek bazı sorulara yanıt vermesi istenecektir. Yanıtları, sonraki analizlerde kullanılmak üzere ses kaydına alınacaktır.

Bu araştırma bilimsel bir amaçla yapılmakta ve katılımcı bilgilerinin gizliliği esas alınmaktadır. Çocuğunuzun verdiği tüm bilgiler gizli tutulacaktır. Ses kayıtları araştırma süresince yalnızca araştırmacının ve danışmanın erişimi olan bir harici bellekte muhafaza edilecek, araştırma sona erdiğinde silinecektir. Araştırma bulgularının sunumu ve raporlamasında kişi isimleri kullanılmayacak, elde edilen bilgiler toplu olarak değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılacaktır.

Bu araştırmaya katılmak tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Görüşmeye katılmanın çocuğunuzun üzerinde herhangi bir olumsuz etki yaratması beklenmemektedir. Ancak görüşme sırasında çocuğunuzun yanıt vermek istemediği, kendisini rahatsız hissettiren sorular olursa bu soruları yanıtlamadan geçebilir. Görüşme sırasında dilediği zaman kaydın durdurulmasını isteyebilir. Görüşme başlamadan önce, görüşme sırasında veya sonrasında dilediği zaman soru sorabilir. Araştırmaya onay verdiğiniz takdirde çocuğunuz çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir

sebeup göstermeden arařtırmadan çekilme hakkına sahiptir. Arařtırmadan çekilmesi durumda verdiđi bilgiler deđerlendirmeye alınmayacaktır.

Arařtırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiđiniz durumda, Google Drive üzerinden “Çocuđumun bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılmasını onaylıyorum. Bana anlatıları ve yukarıdaki açıklamaları anladım. Çocuđumun çalışmaya katılmasını ve verdiđi bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.” seçeneđini işaretleyiniz.

Arařtırmaayla ilgili bilgi almak, soru sormak veya yorumlarınızı paylaşmak isterseniz, arařtırmacı Fatma Selin Ateř ile pskselinales@gmail.com adresinden iletişime geçebilirsiniz.



APPENDIX D – Semi-Structured Focus Group Guide

A. Flört ve İdeal Partner Tanımları

- Flört nasıl tanımlanabilir?
 - Flörtün genel çerçevesi nedir? Çevrenizdeki flört ilişkileri nasıl? İdeal bir ilişki nasıl olur? Sizi en güvende hissettirecek partner özellikleri ne olabilir? İlişki içerisinde ideal “erkek” ve ideal “kadın” kavramlarından bahsedilebilir mi? Nasıl?
 - İlişkilerde çoğunlukla karşılaşılan çatışmalar ne olabilir? (Kıskançlık?). Partner davranışları ne aşamaya kadar kabul edilebilir / kabul edilebilir mi? (Israrlı takip “*stalk*”, sosyal çevreyi kısıtlama, aşağılama/küçümseme, fiziksel ve duygusal şiddet?)

B. Medyadaki İlişki Görünümleri

- Medyadaki romantik ilişkiler ve ilişki içerisindeki roller nasıl yansıtılıyor? Takip ettiğiniz dizilerdeki ilişkiler ve roller nasıl?
 - Bu gibi şeyler izlediğinizde ilişkiler hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Bu izledikleriniz ilişkilere bakışınızı nasıl etkiliyor?
 - İlişkiler hakkındaki görüşünüzü etkileyen bir dizi ya da film sahnesi hatırlıyor musunuz?

C. Video Gösterimleri Üzerine İzlenimler

- Klipteki ilişkiyi nasıl değerlendirebiliriz?
 - Sizce bu sahne gerçek bir ilişkiyi yansıtıyor mu?
 - Bu sahnedeki kişiler için ne düşünüyorsunuz? Sizce karakterleri nasıl?
 - Bu sahnede olumsuz ya da rahatsız edici bulduğunuz bir kısım oldu mu? Neden?
 - Böyle bir ilişkide bulunmak ister miydiniz?

- Bu sahne sonrasında erkeğin kızın sosyal media hesaplarını araştırıp arkadaşlarıyla iletişim kurduğunu düşünelim, bunu nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?
- Bu sahne öncesinde erkeğin kızın telefonunda tanımadığı birinden bir mesaj gördüğünü düşünelim, bu durum bu sahneye yönelik düşüncelerinizi etkiler miydi? Nasıl?
- Bu olayı bir arkadaşınız yaşamış ve size anlatıyor olasa, nasıl bir tepki verirdiniz?
- Sizce ideal bir ilişkide kadın ve erkek roller buna benzer mi ya da farklıysa ne derece farklı?
- Bu videolarda “şiddet” olarak isimlendirebileceğimiz öğeler var mı?
- Televizyon ve dizilerde gördüğümüz ilişki tarzlarının değişmesi bizim romantik ilişkilere dair algı ve tutumlarımızı da değiştirir mi? Nasıl?

D. Sonlandırma

- Son olarak eklemek istediğiniz bir düşünce ya da sorunuz var mı?
- Grupla ilgili genel düşünceleriniz nedir? Sizce nasıl farklı olabilirdi?
- Bu görüşme size nasıl geldi? Burada geçirdiğiniz zamanı nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?
- Sizce başka hangi dizi/filmlerden parçalar eklenebilir?

APPENDIX E – Description of the Video Clips

Bu çalışma kapsamında “Twilight” (“*Alacakaranlık*”) ve “Kötü Çocuk” filmlerinden kesitler kullanılmıştır. Video detayları, izletilme sırası gözetilerek aşağıda belirtilmiştir.

Kötü Çocuk:

Video 1: *Meriç’in Kayla’nın odasına girmesi (1.14)*

Kayla odasında ağlamaktadır, birden arkasında Meriç’in sesini duyunca çığlık atar. Meriç, Kayla’nın ağzını kapatarak onu tutar. Konuştuktan sonra kendisini aşağıda beklediğini söyler, Kayla Meriç’in arkasından gider.

Video 2: *Meriç, Kayla’yı uzaktan izleyerek tehdit eder (1.03)*

Kayla okul bahçesinde erkek bir arkadaşıyla basketbol oynarken Meriç onları dışarıdan gizlice izler. Kayla okuldan çıktığında Meriç’in onu uyaran mesajını görür, takip edildiğini anlar ve korkuyla etrafına bakar.

Video 3: *Meriç, Kayla’nın odasına gizlice girerek tehdit eder (1.24)*

Kayla, odasına girdiğinde pencereden odasına girmiş olan Meriç’i görür ve buna alışacağını söyler. Konuştukları konu esnasında Meriç “benim kızımsan benimle kalırsın” diyerek bundan sonra artık onunla olacağını söyler ve odadan çıkar.

Twilight:

Video 4: *Edward’ın Bella’nın arabasını bozması (1.29)*

Bella arkadaşı Jacob’un yanına gitmek için evden çıkıp arabasına biner fakat arabası çalışmaz. Bu sırada bir gürültüyle irkilir ve yanında Edward’ı görür. Edward oraya gitmenin Bella için güvenli olmadığını söyler ve gitmesine izin vermez. Bella sinirlenerek arabasından iner ve evine döner.

ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL

Ethics Board Approval is available in the printed version of this dissertation.

