

EXAMINING FREQUENTLY AND RARELY SHARED
SELF-DEFINING MEMORIES

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EXAMINING FREQUENTLY AND RARELY SHARED
SELF-DEFINING MEMORIES

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ABSTRACT

Examining Frequently and Rarely Shared Self-Defining Memories

Sharing autobiographical experiences with others is a common practice that serves as a crucial tool for understanding the significance of past events and deriving meaning from them. The act of telling experiences not only helps individuals reassess their emotional responses but also facilitates the integration of these events into their self. The present study specifically focuses on self-defining memories (SDMs), which are characterized by their self-relevance and importance. This study aims to comparatively examine frequently and rarely shared SDMs on meaning they involve, the functions (self, social, and directive) they fulfill, their centrality to one's identity, phenomenological characteristics (e.g., valence, importance) and content (e.g., relationship, achievement) attributed to them. Results revealed that rarely shared SDMs contained more meaning making compared to frequently shared ones and were emotionally more negative. Despite this, they served as reference points in individuals' life. Regarding memory content, frequently shared memories predominantly revolved around achievements and recreational events, whereas rarely shared memories exhibited greater content variability. Additionally, frequently shared SDMs predominantly served social functions and were shared within group settings.

ÖZET

Sıkça ve Nadiren Paylaşılan Benlik Tanımlayıcı Anıların İncelenmesi

Otobiyografik deneyimleri başkalarıyla paylaşmak, geçmiş olayların önemini anlamak ve onlardan anlam çıkarmak için önemli bir araç görevi gören yaygın bir uygulamadır. Deneyimleri yeniden anlatma eylemi, bireylerin duygusal tepkilerini yeniden değerlendirmelerine yardımcı olmakla birlikte bu olayların benlikleriyle bütünleşmesini de kolaylaştırır. Bu çalışma özellikle benlikle yakından ilgili ve kişisel önemi oldukça yüksek olarak karakterize edilen benlik tanımlayıcı anılara odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, başkalarıyla sıklıkla ve nadiren paylaşılan benlik tanımlayıcı anıları; içerdikleri anlam, yerine getirdikleri işlevler (benlik, sosyal ve yönlendirici), kişinin benliği için merkeziliği, bunlara atfedilen fenomenolojik özellikler (örn., duygusal yük, önem) ve anı içeriği (örn., ilişki, başarı) açısından karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Sonuçlar, nadiren paylaşılan benlik tanımlayıcı anıların, sık paylaşılanlara göre daha fazla anlam içerdiğini ve duygusal açıdan daha olumsuz olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Buna rağmen, nadiren paylaşılan anıların bireylerin hayatında referans noktası görevi gördüğü gözlemlenmiştir. Bunun yanında, başkalarıyla sıklıkla paylaşılan anılar nadiren paylaşılanlara kıyasla başarı ve günlük hayatta keyif alınan deneyimler gibi anı içerikleri daha çok barındırmaktadır. Ek olarak, sıklıkla paylaşılan anıların ağırlıklı olarak sosyal işlevlere hizmet ettiği bulunmuştur.

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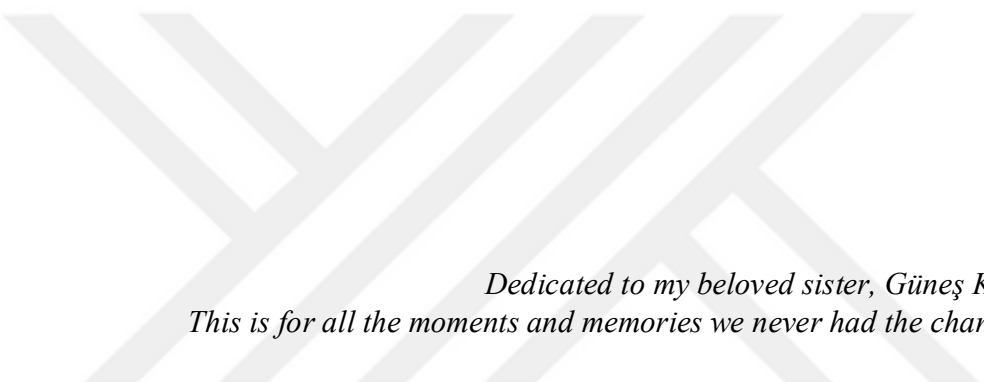
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*Dedicated to my beloved sister, Güneş Kübra Yöyen
This is for all the moments and memories we never had the chance to share.*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sharing life experiences with others is a widespread practice observed across diverse demographics and cultures. It plays an important role in helping individuals understand and find meaning in past events by reassessing their emotional responses and integrating these experiences into their self-identity.

Considering previous research on memory sharing and its impact on memories and the self, the primary aim of this study is to comparatively examine the self-defining memories (SDMs) that are frequently and rarely shared, focusing on the meaning derived from them, the various functions they fulfill, their centrality to identity, and their characteristics including phenomenology and content. Investigating this relationship might offer a means to understand how memory sharing is associated with integrating past events into one's self.

1.1 Autobiographical memories and the self

The mutual relationship between self and autobiographical memories has been studied extensively. Current self-concepts, including beliefs, values, goals, and emotions affect the encoding, storage, and retrieval of autobiographical memories. Conversely, autobiographical memories play a crucial role in shaping and maintaining the self by contributing to the construction of a coherent narrative identity (Conway, 2005). Thus, emotions experienced during the recollection of past events can be regarded as an additional source of self-relevant information (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000).

There are several approaches explaining the link between self and autobiographical memories. Conway's Self-Memory System Model (SMS) is one of the most comprehensive conceptual frameworks in the study of autobiographical memories that suggests a bidirectional relationship between self and memories. According to the model, while autobiographical memory formation and retrieval is heavily influenced by the self, memories also influence self-concepts. The model proposes that autobiographical memories are structured hierarchically, comprising two key components: the "autobiographical knowledge base" and the "working self".

The working self has a coordinating role between the self and the autobiographical memories that strives to establish a comprehensive and coherent sequence of goals, fostering the development of lasting self-knowledge. As part of this process, the working self evaluates memories for their relevance to the individual's current self-concepts and goals. According to the model, memory retrieval is influenced by the activation of these coherent self-concepts and goals. This means that memories aligning with one's self-image and goals are more likely to be recalled, while those that do not align are less likely to be remembered (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). For example, a person who views themselves as benevolent is more likely to remember instances where they helped others, rather than occasions when they chose not to help despite having the opportunity.

The autobiographical knowledge base is another crucial component of the model that has three hierarchical levels: lifetime periods, general events, and event-specific knowledge. Lifetime periods represent distinct chapters in one's life, characterized by identifiable beginnings and ends. General events comprise shorter periods or thematic memories, and event-specific knowledge focuses on events that occur in a particular

time and place. These levels serve as a framework for storing and retrieving autobiographical memories, allowing individuals to categorize and access their memories based on their specificity and significance.

Bluck and Habermas (2000) also address the relationship between autobiographical memories and self. According to the life story approach, autobiographical memories consist of important and emotional experiences that come together in a certain order to create life stories that help explain how a person became who she/he is. The approach asserts the idea that whether and how a person changes or stays similar across time is reflected in the life stories. The process of establishing and maintaining a coherent life story necessitates the capacity to interrelate one's self with life experiences. Similar to the life story approach, the narrative identity framework proposed by McAdams (2001) focuses on the role of personal narratives in shaping self-identity. However, the latter places a greater emphasis on the narrative structure and content of the narratives. It asserts the idea that sense of self is reflected in autobiographical memory narratives (McLean et al., 2007). Narrative identity relates to the individual's attempt to understand oneself as a unique person and involves making sense of narratives to "develop a sense of personal unity across their lifespan" (McAdams, 2001; Singer, 2004).

1.2 Sharing autobiographical memories

Sharing an emotional experience with others is a common practice. Majority of emotional experiences are shared with others within the first few days that they occur (for reviews, see Rimé et al., 1991; 1998). Even for a few life experiences that have not been shared, individuals are willing to disclose them when prompted (Rimé et al., 1992).

Various studies with different methodologies have been conducted in this realm, including follow-up, diary, and survey studies.

In immediate “follow-up” studies, victims of traffic/domestic incidents, or workplace injuries are contacted while undergoing initial treatment at the hospitals and a week later to inquire about event-related social sharing. Results suggested that accident-related sharing occurred in 93% of cases, with 60% doing so within the first day, and 83% sharing repeatedly, often daily (Boca et al., as cited in Rimé et al., 1998). However, these studies primarily focus on life-threatening events, potentially overlooking the more prevalent occurrences of everyday experiences. In addressing this gap, keeping daily diaries emerged as a valuable method. Unlike follow-up studies, keeping daily diaries allows limited time for social sharing to occur. Yet, considerable frequencies of memory sharing were still reported, suggesting that 59% of daily hassles (e.g., concerns about weight and health of a family member) and 69% of uplifts (e.g., relating well with one’s spouse or lover and feeling healthy) were shared with others (Rimé et al., 1998). Other studies retrospectively assessing memory sharing using surveys (e.g., “social sharing questionnaire”) reveal consistent results (see, Rimé et al, 1991; Rimé, 2007).

1.2.1 Factors influencing memory sharing

Understanding the factors that might influence disclosure decisions is crucial for comprehending the attributes of frequently and rarely shared memories. Research emphasizes different factors including emotional valence, and intensity of the memory in this realm.

For instance, Pasupathi et al., (2009) showed a change in viewpoint in two experiments. The first study, which required participants to fill out a daily diary, focused

on actual disclosure behavior by initially asking about life experiences and then assessing the extent of sharing. The results revealed that more intense negative emotions were likely to be disclosed. Similar results were observed by Rimé et al. (1998) and Rauw and Rimé (1990). In contrast, the second study prompted participants to recall an event they had disclosed and an event they had never disclosed before. This approach aimed to emphasize the distinction between the disclosed and undisclosed events, showing that previously undisclosed events were emotionally less positive compared to disclosed ones. However, there was no significant difference in emotional negativity between the two types of events. These findings suggest a potential relationship between emotional valence and disclosure but does not provide evidence for a predictive relationship between the valence of events and their likelihood of being disclosed.

Emotional intensity may serve as a variable influencing individuals' likelihood of disclosure. For instance, researchers asked participants to watch three-minute videos that varied in the intensity of negative emotions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups (high, moderate, or low emotion films). Results showed that highly emotionally intense video clips encouraged more sharing compared to videos involving moderate and low emotional intensity (Luminet et al., 1998).

There are also personality characteristics that shown to be associated with memory telling. For example, research indicates that extraverted individuals are more inclined to share memories online to maintain social connections (Stone et al., 2022). Additionally, personality traits may influence the quality of memory sharing. Specifically, individuals high in neuroticism are more likely to use negative words in their recollections and particularly include less self-growth in their memories of an unpleasant event (Baddeley & Singer (2008).

Overall, while there appears to be a relationship between emotional valence of memories and disclosure, there is not sufficient data to conclude that the overall emotionality and intensity of events predict their likelihood of being disclosed (Pasupathi et al., 2009), which highlights the complex nature of memory sharing and suggest that multiple factors might contribute to this phenomenon. The present study required participants to recall frequently and rarely shared self-defining memories. By examining these memories, the study aims to focus on undisclosed aspects of personally significant and intense experiences. Through this exploration, the study seeks to investigate whether the emotional valence, intensity, and self-relevance of memories are related to their extent of disclosure.

1.2.2 Sharing negative memories and their integration to the self

As mentioned earlier, undisclosed memories are typically less positive. However, studies have shown that people are still willing to share even their unpleasant experiences. Despite the reactivation of negative emotions, participants have reported their willingness to share similar experiences again if asked in the future. They also report that they learn lessons and gain insight, predominantly from negative experiences (Thome et al., 2004). This suggests that people might find benefits in sharing both positive and negative experiences.

Sharing memories, even unpleasant ones, may be driven by the desire to develop more insightful narratives through gaining better understanding of one's thoughts and emotions. This is particularly evident when individuals focus on the emotional aspects of the events in their sharings rather than focusing on the factual details. For example, when participants were divided into groups and interviewed about their most distressing

life event, focusing either on factual or emotional details, those in the emotional details condition found the interview process to be more meaningful, and impactful. They perceive it as offering greater emotional relief compared to those who focused on factual details (Zech & Rimé, 2005).

Moreover, the benefits of sharing negative experiences seem to occur gradually. People's reports of retellings are more positive and less negative than their emotions initially elicited by the event. This is especially true when the event is negative (Pasupathi, 2003). There are also studies showing that the number of retellings and negative word use are negatively correlated: as the number of retellings increases, the use of negative emotional words decreases (Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999). Consistently, the effects for changes in insight and causal words also show a progressive pattern. Specifically, studies employing the emotional writing paradigm, where participants are instructed to write about an emotionally distressing event over several consecutive days, have shown that individuals whose health improved demonstrated a gradual increase in their use of causal and insight words from the first to the last day of writing (for further information on the "emotional disclosure paradigm" see Frattaroli, 2006; Pennebaker, 1997; 2003).

Contrary to the benefits of disclosure, failure to recognize one's emotions can have detrimental effects on well-being. Pennebaker and Chung (2007) re-analyzed participants' narratives from six previously conducted studies using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) text analysis program. They found that increased references to positive emotion words were correlated with improved health, evidenced by decreases in doctor visits. Interestingly, participants who used a moderate number of negative words in their narratives showed greater improvement compared to those who

used either a high or low number of negative words. The results suggest that inability to acknowledge one's emotions and labelling them accordingly might lead to adverse effects on overall well-being as well.

1.2.3 Meaning making in memories

Not only acknowledging but also making sense of life experiences is essential.

Integrating narratives of life experiences enable us to understand the link between the self and memories. Within these narratives, individuals reason about, interpret, and evaluate their memories. By reflecting on and deriving meaning from the past, they enrich their understanding of who they are as an individual. Achieving unity in one's narrative requires engaging in what Habermas and Bluck (2000) refer to as “autobiographical reasoning”. Autobiographical reasoning refers to the ability to connect the self and experiences and involves combining personal experiences, interrelating them with one another and with the self through looking at the causal, motivational, and thematic integration in one’s life story. Researchers explore various forms of autobiographical reasoning that includes different levels of abstraction from life narratives to specific incidents like self-defining memories (Pasupathi & Mansour, 2007).

Among various approaches investigating autobiographical reasoning, Singer and Blagov's (2000) framework introduces a more general concept of “integrative memories” for self-defining memories. Their understanding of self-defining memories requires individuals to further evaluate the meaning of their experiences by relating them to lessons about the self, others, or life in general. Constructing integrative self-defining memories enhances the cognitive, affective, and motivational significance of the

memory and reinforces its relevance to the self and goals (Blagov & Singer, 2004; Singer, 2004). The effort for constructing integrative memories is present in memories that involve interpersonal conflict and discomfort as well (McLean & Thorne, 2003; Thorne et al., 2004).

Researchers typically study meaning making processes in self-defining memories by focusing on the spontaneous references of meaning statements within the narratives, such as references to a lesson learned or insight gained. In one notable study, participants were asked to recall self-defining memories and then rate the memories' impact on them, as well as the meaning they derived from these memories (Wood & Conway, 2006). Researchers also coded the written descriptions to identify spontaneous references to meaning making. Findings reveal a weak positive correlation between narrative coding and subjective ratings of meaning making for only positive memories, and no correlation for negative events. However, the study holds significance for its objective to assess meaning making through analyzing both the narratives and the subjective ratings provided by participants.

The present study focused on frequently and rarely shared self-defining memories. Given the nature of rarely shared memories, some participants may face difficulty putting their life experiences into words for various reasons, potentially resulting in brief descriptions with limited content. This might pose challenges in identifying meaning making in the written descriptions. To avoid this, meaning making was analyzed using both narrative coding and participants' subjective ratings. Employing these methods enhanced our ability to identify the meaning derived from these memories and provide an additional way of assessing meaning making that narrative coding might overlook.

1.2.4 Approaches to memory sharing

Previous studies have typically focused on two aspects of memory sharing: a dichotomous viewpoint which emphasize the frequency of individuals' thinking and talking about their memories, and the influence of the listener in shared memory, which emphasizes the socio-constructive aspect of sharing.

The dichotomous viewpoint on memory sharing proposes that memories fall into one of two categories: either remembered but not shared or remembered and shared with others. This classification includes three types of autobiographical memories: “silent”, “socially silent”, and “disclosed”, based on their frequencies of sharing and thinking. The type of memories that people rarely think and talk about is silent memories. Socially silent memories, on the other hand, frequently come to mind but they are rarely shared. These are the types of memories that are studied the most in literature on silent memories. Another type of memory is disclosed memories which come to mind frequently and are shared with others most of the time. In a typical autobiographical memory study, participants are generally asked about disclosed memories (e.g., self-defining memories, flashbulb memories) (p.143).

On the other hand, a two-dimensional view by Fivush (2010) on “silenced” memories adopts a social-constructive perspective, emphasizing that people's interactions with others, especially with authority, affect the decision to share life experiences. The four types of memories are based on two dimensions: voiced and silenced, and self and other. “Voiced” and “silenced” memories refers to the decision to share an experience, where narratives aligning with culturally accepted norms are deemed “voiced”, while those diverging from these norms are considered “silenced”. In contrast, “self” and “other” dimension refers to the dynamic between the teller and

listener. Thus, self-voiced memories give the teller control over their narrative, whereas other-voiced memories give power to the listener. Other-silenced memories arise when the listener dismisses the teller's viewpoint, while self-silence memories involve avoiding discussion of painful events by the teller.

The classifications aforementioned are intriguing as they distinguish between the extent of thinking and talking about events as well as evaluating the two as a continuous variable. When considering that autobiographical memory literature often overlooks the distinction between thinking and talking about memories, treating them as what is retrieved is thought and talked about to the same extent. The two-memory unit comprises memories that frequently come to mind but differ in their level of sharing with others, categorized as frequently shared and rarely shared self-defining memories. Therefore, while the present study does not directly adopt the exact concepts from previous studies, their common emphasis on the thinking and talking aspects of memories remains crucial.

1.2.5 Characteristics of memory sharing

Alea (2010) investigated the characteristics of silent, socially silent and disclosed autobiographical memories. Young, middle-aged, and older adults remembered positive and negative memories about their romantic relationship involving their partner. Then, they were asked about the extent to which they think and talk about the memory as well as other questions on the quality of the memory they recalled. Results indicated that positive memories were disclosed more frequently (73%) rather than being kept silent (12%) or being socially silent (15%).

In contrast, negative memories were kept silent (42%) more than being disclosed (34%) or socially silent (24%). Disclosed and socially silent negative memories were more significant, vivid, and emotionally intense than silent memories. Regarding positive memories, silent memories were less positive and less intense than disclosed ones, with no differences found between socially silent and silent ones.

Consistently, aiming to examine how disclosure relates to memory types, Pasupathi et al., (2009) found that previously undisclosed events were emotionally less positive and more negative compared to previously disclosed ones. Additionally, undisclosed memories were more likely to involve transgressions compared to disclosed events. In line with this, disclosed events were more likely to involve achievement and less likely to involve transgressions compared to undisclosed events. Additionally, Pasupathi (2007) demonstrated that both types of memories were equally likely to involve interpersonal themes.

To summarize, finding shows that positive memories are more likely to be disclosed. However, memories that are recalled but not shared as similar memory quality in terms of vividness, significance, and emotionality as disclosed memories (Alea, 2010; Pasupathi, 2007; Pasupathi et al., 2009). Furthermore, there appear to be no gender differences in the frequency and quality of disclosed and undisclosed memories (Pasupathi, 2007; 2009). Although some findings suggest that men are less likely to disclose their emotions (Dindia & Allen, 1992), other studies indicate that this difference is moderated by the content and degree of self-relatedness, with women sharing more intense and personal memories (see Leaper & Ayres, 2007).

1.2.6 Functions and motives of memory sharing

Research indicates that individuals across various demographics commonly reflect upon and discuss past experiences (Fivush & Waters, 2014). Nevertheless, there seems to be variability in the extent to which people utilize different functions in their autobiographical memories (Bluck & Alea, 2002; Cohen, 2014). The prevailing theory on the functional approach of psychosocial functions of autobiographical remembering proposes that remembering is a purposeful act. The fact that people do not retain each event that they experience and instead recall the ones that hold a significance supports this claim (Alea & Bluck, 2007).

The three main functions of memories are social, directive and self. According to social function individuals remember for developing and maintaining intimacy through sharing and listening to others' experiences. Remembering and sharing memories serve the purpose of fostering interpersonal relationships, facilitating conversations, and promoting mutual understanding among individuals (Bluck & Alea, 2002). The conceptual model suggests that sharing memories serve additional social functions including “developing and maintaining intimacy”, “teaching and informing others” and, “eliciting and expressing empathy” (p. 15).

The directive functions involve guiding current behaviors, decisions, and future actions based on a lesson learned from past experiences. Insight gained from past events serve as a framework for navigating current problems and planning for the future (Bluck & Alea, 2011). Directive function is associated with negative memories. For instance, directive function emerged in the marital conflict conversations where the conversation involves a problem to be solved and a goal to be pursued (Pasupathi et al., 2002). The predominance of directive function in negative memories is explained by the need of

learning from an unpleasant experience and guiding the future based on the insight gained from (Pasupathi et al., 2002; Rasmussen & Berntsen, 2009).

Lastly, self-function indicates that people remember because memories involve valuable information about who we are across time and help maintain self-continuity (Alea & Bluck, 2009; Conway, 2005). Memories that indicate the consistency of a person's values, goals, and personality over time contribute to this function.

The functional approach to undisclosed memories in autobiographical memory research is currently limited, as no study have thoroughly examined the functions these memories might serve. However, there are studies that explore similar concepts by investigating the motives behind non-sharing. For instance, Pasupathi et al., (2009) conducted a study where participants were asked about their reasons for not disclosing their memories and categorized the responses into three main groups: “social consequences”, “lack of social opportunity”, and “avoidance”. The “social consequences” category was the sum of themes for embarrassment, fear of getting in trouble/upsetting others and not being supported by others. “Lack of social opportunity” comprised themes such as not having had the chance (e.g. “I was not asked”) to discuss the event. “Avoidance” referred to themes associated with fear of upsetting the self and desire to forget the event. The results revealed “social consequences” was the prevalent motive behind not sharing. Moreover, motives were associated with different characteristics and levels of emotionality in the events, with “social consequences” and “avoidance” strongly linked to negative emotions and avoidance motive linking to higher negativity and less positivity levels in the events.

To the best of our knowledge, there has been no research conducted on the relation between memory sharing and functions memories serve. The present study aims

to fill this gap by being the first investigation to assess the functions attributed to both frequently and rarely shared memories. This was achieved by using the “Thinking About Life Experiences” questionnaire, a widely accepted scale in the study of autobiographical memory functions (Bluck & Alea, 2011).

1.3 The present study

The existing literature on memory sharing primarily focuses on written disclosures of negative or traumatic events. The present study aims to extend literature by examining disclosure through sharing self-relevant and important autobiographical memories with others. Specifically, we will focus on self-defining memories (SDMs) which are characterized by their high personal meaning, emotional intensity, and significance.

The present study aims to explore how frequently and rarely shared SDMs are associated with the meaning derived from them, the various functions they fulfill, their centrality to one's identity, and the phenomenological characteristics (e.g., valence, importance) attributed to them. Additionally, we examined the event content (e.g., relationship, shame/guilt), the motives for sharing these memories, and the extent to which personality traits, such as extraversion and neuroticism, relate to shared experiences and the meaning derived from them. To our knowledge, this research is the first to comparatively examine the relationship between these two types of memories and their impact on the aforementioned variables.

Hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

1. Given that undisclosed memories are emotionally less positive and more negative (Pasupathi et al., 2009), rarely shared SDMs were expected to be emotionally more negative than frequently shared SDMs.

2. Previous studies have demonstrated that meaning making is common when recalling predominantly negative experiences (McLean & Thorne, 2003; Thorne et al., 2004). Since rarely shared SDMs were anticipated to be emotionally negative, we hypothesized that rarely shared SDMs will involve a greater meaning making compared to frequently shared ones.
3. Social functions of autobiographical memories suggest that individuals remember to foster intimacy through sharing and listening to others' experiences (Alea & Bluck, 2003). Thus, frequently shared SDMs were expected to serve the social function more than rarely shared ones. In contrast, given that rarely shared SDMs were expected to be emotionally negative, and research links negative themes and emotions with the directive function (Pasupathi et al., 2002; Rasmussen & Berntsen, 2009), rarely shared SDMs were expected to involve more directive function than frequently shared SDMs.
4. The two types of SDMs were expected to differ in terms of their centrality to identity. Consistent with the second hypothesis, rarely shared SDMs are expected to be more central to one's identity than frequently shared ones.
5. The content of the memories was expected to differ. More specifically, consistent with the literature on self-defining memories (Blagov & Singer, 2004; Lardi et al., 2010), we hypothesized that frequently shared self-defining memories (SDMs) would more often share the characteristics of self-defining memories and focus on achievements and relationships compared to rarely shared SDMs. On the other hand, rarely shared SDMs were expected to include more guilt/shame memories than frequently shared ones.

6. Consistent with studies showing positive effect of disclosure on health-related outcomes (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007) and the association between meaning making and well-being (Blagov & Singer, 2004; McLean & Thorne, 2003), we hypothesized that those whose memories involve more meaning will score higher on well-being.



CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1 Participants

Considering previous studies relevant to the research questions of the current study, methodology, and target population, small-to-medium effect sizes were anticipated. Using the G*Power 3.1 program (Faul et al., 2009), with an effect size of $f = .15$ and a statistical power of .80, we calculated a sample size of 59 for ANOVA and 88 for chi-square analyses ($w = .30$). To accommodate potential issues such as participant dropout and data loss due to technical reasons, a total of 109 undergraduate students from Boğaziçi University enrolled in two psychology courses participated in the study through the University's Research Participation System (RPS).

Two participants were excluded from the analyses due to data loss in one task: three participants were excluded for the sake of homogeneity of the data in terms of age and gender: 17 participants were excluded since they were identified as outliers in terms of the amount of time they spend completing the tasks. The final sample consisted of 87 participants (51 females [59%] and 36 males [41%] with the age range of 18 to 24 ($M = 20.34$, $SD = 1.26$). 35.6% of the participants reported they have received therapy before and among these, 9.2% of them are still on their therapy processes (mean duration of therapy for these participants was approximately 3 months).

2.2 Procedure

The ethics approval for the current study was taken from the Boğaziçi University Institutional Review Board in Social Sciences and Humanities (SBINAREK) (see

Appendix J). All tasks were provided to participants through Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT).

Participants signed an informed consent form before the study. Then, they were given self-defining memory instructions both for their frequently and rarely shared memories. The instructions asked participants to think about one SDM that they frequently shared and one that they rarely shared, then write each down in detail. The order in which participants were asked for frequently and rarely shared SDMs was counterbalanced, with half of the participants writing frequently shared SDM first and the other half of the participants writing rarely told SDM first. In this way, the possible effects of the initial recollective experience on the second one was distributed.

After writing the SDMs, participants completed the following questionnaires: Impact Ratings, Autobiographical Memory Questionnaire (AMQ), Centrality of Event Scale (CES), Thinking About Life Experiences Scale (TALE), Flourishing Scale, Big Five Inventory (BFI), and Demographics. All scales and instructions used in the present study are presented in the Appendices.

2.3 Memory coding

All memories were coded by two independent coders. Cohen's Kappas for interrater agreement for content and integration coding showed strong reliability: for frequently shared memories, integration: .75; content: .79, and for rarely shared memories, integration: .80; content: .72. Disagreements were resolved through discussions between the initial raters and the two other raters who were unaware of the memory types and hypotheses.

2.3.1 Integration

The meaning derived from frequently and rarely shared SDMs were coded according to Singer and Blagov's (2000) "Classification System and Scoring Manual for Self-Defining Autobiographical Memories". This coding system divides memories into two categories: integrative (1), non-integrative (0). Integrative memories are memories that involve meaning. They include statements that refer to what the memory means to the individual and whether the individual gained insight, learned a life-focused or self-focused lesson from the memory. Non-integrative memories are memories that lack meaning of memories were coded based on the adapted version of the Classification System and Scoring Manual for Coding Events in SDMs (Thorne & McLean, 2001). The manual originally involves the following categories: life-threatening event (LTE), recreation/exploration, relationship, achievement/mastery, guilt/shame, drug, alcohol or tobacco use, and event not classifiable.

If the memory involved serious illness, injury, or any form of assault of someone else or the narrator, it was coded as having "life-threatening event (LTE)" In the current study, memories of being bullied were also added to this category regardless of the existence of direct phrases about physical assault. Narratives that include leisure activities, travelling, and hobbies was coded as having a "recreation/exploration" theme. Narratives that contain interpersonal relationships with partners, family, and friends were coded as having a "relationship" theme. Memories that emphasize effortful attempts towards accomplishment (e.g., passing exams, winning competitions) were coded as "achievement/mastery". Another category, "failure" was introduced for instances where the focus lay on the adverse results of these efforts such as failing exams, facing setbacks in life, or falling short of personal goals. This category was

added aimed to separate memories of failure from those of achievement, as they diverge not only in emotional valence but also in conceptual nature. Narratives that contain feelings of guilt and/or shame as a result of one's thoughts and actions were coded as "shame/guilt". Finally, events lacking a clear theme or involving multiple themes were categorized as "events not classifiable". No narrative fell under the category of "drug, alcohol, or tobacco use" in our coding process. Consequently, we disregarded this content, resulting in a total of seven remaining categories.

2.4 Measures

2.4.1 Self-defining memory task

In the present study, participants were asked to recall both a memory that they frequently shared and a memory that they rarely shared. To do this, we adapted the instructions used in the original self-defining memory study (Singer & Blagov, 2000). For frequently shared SDMs the instructions were changed as "A memory that you have frequently told to others, that you believe has a personal meaning for you and defines you". For rarely shared SDMs the instruction was changed as "A memory that you have experienced but rarely told to others, that you believe has a personal meaning for you and defines you" (Appendix A).

2.4.2 The impact ratings

The impact ratings created by Wood and Conway (2006) assesses "subjective impact" of self-defining events, evaluating both the event's influence on individuals and the meaning individuals derive from these memories. The ratings involve 7-point Likert type (1 = not at all, 7 = very much) items. In the original study, the total number of items

were reduced from seven to six because one item's loadings in the PCA fell below the acceptable threshold of .70, indicating a weaker relationship with the underlying factor. Furthermore, the item was deemed different from the other items as it pertained to learning about other people, warranting its exclusion ("Having had this experience, I have learned more about what other people are like"). Therefore, the scale used in the present study used six items such as "I have often spent time thinking about what this event means to me". The translation and back-translation of the items were made by the researcher and 2 other individuals (Appendix B).

2.4.3 Autobiographical memory questionnaire

Rubin et al. (2003) developed the Autobiographical memory questionnaire (AMQ) to measure the phenomenological characteristics of autobiographical memories and extent of recollective experiences. The questionnaire involves 7-point Likert type (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) questions that are used in a variety of studies with different combinations. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Rubin, Schrauf, Gülgöz and Naka (2007). In the current study, questions regarding the reliving, visual imagery, emotional intensity, remember/know judgements, importance, vividness, retrieval ease, age of event, and valence was be measured by AMQ. The original question regarding the rehearsal of memories is changed in order to gather information for thinking and talking about the memories separately (Appendix C).

2.4.4 Other questions for SDMs

A brief survey was developed to ask additional questions about frequently and rarely shared self-defining memories (SDMs). Some of these questions address whom the

SDMs are shared with, the reasons for not sharing the memories, and whether the memories occurred intrusively (Appendix D).

2.4.5 Centrality of event scale

The centrality of the event scale (CES) was developed by Berntsen and Rubin (2006) for measuring the extent to which people integrate their life experiences with their identities. The scale has three subscales: personal identity, reference point, and turning point. CES consists of 7 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) and includes items such as “I feel that this event has become part of my identity” (Appendix E). The reliability and validity study of the Turkish version of the scale was made by Boyacıoğlu et al., (2018) and yielded Cronbach’s α of .89. In our study, Cronbach’s alpha was .90 and .88 for frequently and rarely shared memories respectively.

2.4.6 Thinking about life experiences scale

Thinking About Life Scale (TALE) was developed by Bluck, Alea, Habermas and Rubin (2005) to measure the extent of motives people use in their autobiographical memories for. The scale measures three functions: self, directive and social. The latest version of TALE was created by Bluck and Alea (2011). Participants had to respond on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = very frequently). The reliability coefficient of the latest version of the scale is .86. The present study adapted the translation used by Göz (2016) with some changes in the vocabulary and the 5-point Likert type (Appendix F).

2.4.7 Flourishing scale

The Flourishing Scale was developed by Diener et al. (2009) to measure individuals' social and psychological well-being. The scale consists of 8 items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) and the scale includes items such as "I am leading a purposeful and meaningful life". The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Telef (2013). The reliability study revealed internal consistency coefficient of .80 and a test-retest measurement of .86. In our study Cronbach's α was .85 (Appendix G).

2.4.8 The big five inventory

The Big Five Inventory was developed by Benet-Martinez and John (1998) and measures individuals on five factors of personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness). The scale involves 44 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scores obtained from the five subscales reflect the degree to which individuals demonstrate the personality traits assessed by each respective subscale. The adaptation to Turkish was conducted by Sümer et al. (2005), and the scale's internal consistency coefficients range between .64 and .77 (Appendix H).

2.4.9 Demographics

Demographic information questions involve seven questions related to age, gender, socio-economic status and educational background of the participants. Demographics was given at the end of the study (Appendix I).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1 Descriptives for the scales

Descriptive statistics of the scales are presented below to summarize the characteristics of the dataset. The means, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, minimum and maximum values of Impact ratings, CES, TALE, and Flourishing scale can be found in Table 1. For all scales, Skewness and Kurtosis scores were between -1.5 and +1.5, indicating that the data was suitable for parametric tests (Tabachnick et. al., 2013).

An examination was conducted on the gender effect, and it was found that gender did not have any effect on any of the variables. Therefore, the data were collapsed across gender.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Scales

| Scale | Memory Type | | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Sk. | Kr. | Min. | Max. |
|--------------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------|-------|------|------|
| Impact Scale | Frequent | | 4.96 | 1.44 | -0.78 | 0.43 | 1.00 | 7.00 |
| | Rare | | 5.43 | 1.20 | -0.59 | -0.72 | 2.67 | 7.00 |
| CES | Frequent | | 3.07 | 1.04 | -0.21 | -0.60 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| | Rare | | 3.30 | 0.97 | -0.19 | -0.41 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| TALE | Frequent | Self | 2.92 | 0.98 | -0.07 | -0.53 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| | | Social | 2.74 | 1.01 | 0.25 | -0.54 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| | | Directive | 2.70 | 0.96 | 0.20 | -0.75 | 1.00 | 4.80 |
| | Rare | Self | 2.95 | 0.87 | -0.33 | -0.50 | 1.00 | 4.80 |
| | | Social | 2.1 | 0.86 | 0.49 | -0.67 | 1.00 | 4.40 |
| | | Directive | 2.86 | 0.92 | 0.17 | -0.36 | 1.00 | 5.00 |
| Flourishing | Total | | 5.26 | 0.87 | -0.42 | -0.35 | 2.88 | 7.00 |

Note. Sk and Kr stand for skewness and kurtosis, respectively.

3.2 Memory characteristics

3.2.1 Phenomenological characteristics

Paired-samples t-tests with Bonferroni adjustment were used, resulting in a p-value of .006 for each comparison. Descriptive statistics for the phenomenological properties measured by the AMQ are provided in Table 2. Results indicated no significant differences between the frequency of thinking about frequently shared and rarely shared SDMs. This outcome is noteworthy as it suggests that participants' understanding of SDMs aligns with the genuine nature of the categorization used in the present study. Additionally, there was a significant difference in the frequency of sharing frequently and rarely shared SDMs, further underscoring the importance of participants' comprehension of the SDM instructions.

Three participants who reported sharing their rarely shared memory with therapists were excluded from the analysis to determine whether the two types of memories differed in their frequency of sharing. The rationale behind this exclusion was that these memories might have been repeatedly shared in a therapeutic context, which could affect the results. However, since our instructions did not specify excluding such memories, we re-conducted the t-test after excluding them. The results still showed a significant difference in the frequency of talking about the memory between the frequently shared ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.29$) and rarely shared memories ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.06$), $t(83) = 14.31$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.60$. Therefore, we retained them in our analyses.

Consistent with our hypothesis, rarely shared SDMs were emotionally more negative compared to frequently shared SDMs. Additionally, there was a positive correlation between the valence scores of rarely shared SDMs and well-being, $r(84) = .32$, $p = .003$. No correlation was found for the frequently shared memories, $p > .05$.

Table 2. Phenomenological Properties of SDMs

| Variables | Frequently Shared | | Rarely Shared | | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>d</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | | | |
| Reliving | 4.84 | 1.58 | 5.10 | 1.56 | -1.11 | .27 | -0.12 |
| Visual imagery | 5.26 | 1.40 | 5.48 | 1.25 | -1.08 | .28 | -0.12 |
| Emotional intensity | 4.44 | 1.81 | 4.93 | 1.54 | -1.99 | .05* | -0.21 |
| Remember/know | 5.31 | 1.41 | 5.33 | 1.44 | -0.11 | .91 | -0.01 |
| Valence | 0.43 | 2.31 | -1.11 | 2.06 | 4.51 | .00** | 0.48 |
| Importance | 4.74 | 1.80 | 5.22 | 1.72 | -2.05 | .04* | -0.22 |
| Thinking | 4.78 | 1.59 | 4.84 | 1.59 | -0.25 | .80 | -0.03 |
| Talking | 5.08 | 1.29 | 2.53 | 1.09 | 14.26 | .00** | 1.53 |
| Retrieval ease | 2.10 | 1.38 | 1.98 | 1.24 | 0.75 | .46 | 0.08 |
| Age of event (year) | 6.36 | 5.05 | 7.39 | 5.34 | -1.67 | .10 | -0.18 |

Note. * and ** indicate $p < .05$ and Bonferroni adjusted alpha $p < .006$, respectively.

3.2.2 Content

Both frequently shared and rarely shared SDMs were coded according to main content categories (life-threatening events/bully, recreation/exploration, relationship, achievement, guilt/shame, not classifiable, and failure). Frequently shared memories predominantly involved achievement, followed by recreation and relationship themes. Conversely, rarely shared memories were predominantly about relationship-related content followed by achievement and life-threatening events. The percentages of content categories for each type of memory are presented in Table 3.

McNemar's chi-square tests were conducted to compare the percentages of categories used in the two memory types. Recreation/exploration was more prevalent in frequently shared SDMs (23%) compared rarely shared SDMs (5.7%), $p = .004$.

We first examined the percentages of achievement content as a blend of success and failure memories, consistent with the approach outlined in the original manual (Thome & McLean, 2001). Results showed that achievement was more prevalent for frequently shared SDMs (33.3%) compared to rarely shared SDMs (20.7%), $p = .02$. Upon isolating “failure” content and specifically focusing on instances emphasizing success-related themes, a higher prevalence of success was still observed in frequently shared SDMs (28.7%) compared to rarely shared SDMs (14.9%), $p = .02$.

There were no significant differences in the percentages of “life-threatening events/bully”, “relationship”, “guilt/shame”, and “not classifiable” categories between the two memory types (all $ps > .05$ and highest χ^2 was 2.38).

Table 3. Content of SDMs

| Content Category | Frequently Shared | | Rarely Shared | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------|---------------|------|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| LTE/bully | 15 | 17.2 | 18 | 20.7 |
| Recreation/exploration* | 19 | 21.8 | 5 | 5.7 |
| Relationship | 19 | 21.8 | 29 | 33.3 |
| Achievement* | 29 | 33.3 | 18 | 20.7 |
| Success* | 25 | 28.7 | 13 | 14.9 |
| Failure | 4 | 4.6 | 5 | 5.7 |
| Guilt/shame | 1 | 1.1 | 6 | 6.9 |
| Not Classifiable | 4 | 4.6 | 11 | 12.6 |

Note. * indicate $p < .05$.

3.2.3 Listeners of shared memories

Table 4 illustrates the distribution of individuals with whom memories were shared, for both types of memories. While more than half of the participants reported sharing their frequently shared memories with close friends, they reported sharing their rarely shared memories predominantly with family members. McNemar's chi-square test revealed that these differences in percentages were significant. Specifically, higher proportions of rarely shared SDMs were shared with family members (43.7%) compared to frequently shared SDMs (23%), $p < .05$. Conversely, a higher proportion of frequently shared SDMs were shared with close friends (66.7%) compared to rarely shared ones (31%), $p < .001$.

Table 4. Listeners of Shared Memories

| | Frequently Shared | | Rarely Shared | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------|---------------|------|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| Family* | 20 | 23.0 | 38 | 43.7 |
| Significant other | 8 | 9.2 | 15 | 17.2 |
| Close friend** | 58 | 66.7 | 27 | 31.0 |
| Therapist | 1 | 1.1 | 3 | 3.4 |
| Other (not stated) | - | - | 4 | 4.6 |

Note. * and ** indicate $p < .05$. and $p < .001$, respectively.

3.2.4 Context of shared memories

We also investigated the location of sharing memories. McNemar's chi-square test showed that majority of frequently shared SDMs were shared in a group setting (72.4%) compared to rarely shared ones (9.2%), $p < .001$. Exactly oppositely, rarely shared memories were primarily shared in person-one-on-one interactions (81.6%), compared to frequently shared ones (26.4%), $p < .001$. Percentages of location categories for each type of memory are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Context of Shared Memories

| | Frequently Shared | | Rarely Shared | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------|---------------|------|
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| In person- one-on-one interactions* | 23 | 26.4 | 71 | 81.6 |
| In person-within a group setting* | 63 | 72.4 | 8 | 9.2 |
| Phone call and text | 1 | 1.1 | 2 | 2.3 |
| Online meeting | - | - | 2 | 2.3 |
| Other (not stated) | - | - | 4 | 4.6 |

Note. * indicate $p < .001$.

3.2.5 Reasons for not sharing

To investigate participant's reasons for not sharing their rarely shared SDMs, we first investigated whether frequently and rarely shared SDMs differ in their intrusiveness and event rumination. Both questions were asked with a 7-point Likert type question with higher scores indicating higher ruminative and intrusive thoughts regarding the memory. We asked the extent to which the memory occupies the person's mind to measure event rumination. We asked how frequently the memory suddenly comes to the person's mind to measure event's intrusiveness. Results showed that frequently and rarely shared SDMs did not differ in rumination and intrusiveness (all $ps > .05$ and highest t was .96).

We included one open-ended question regarding participants' reasons for not sharing the rarely shared SDM they provided for the study. To categorize the responses, we utilized three broad categorizations from Pasupathi (2009): "social consequences", "lack of social opportunity", and "avoidance". Additionally, we introduced three supplementary categories as certain responses did not fit into the existing classifications: "having no desire to share", "privacy reasons", and "not being understood by others". Responses indicating a lack of inclination to share the memory, either because it was considered as unworthy of sharing or participants simply stated that they did not want to, were coded as "having no desire to share". Responses emphasizing the presence of private information concerning self and others were categorized as "privacy reasons". Lastly, responses emphasizing that others will not understand the situation that narrator perceives, were coded under the "not being understood by others" category.

Ten responses were excluded because some participants misinterpreted the question. The results indicated that, in total, over half of the participants' reasons for not sharing were mainly about social consequences (39%) and avoidance (27.3%).

Table 6. Reasons for not Sharing

| | Rarely Shared | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------|
| | Frequency | % |
| Social consequences | 30 | 39.0 |
| Avoidance | 21 | 27.3 |
| Lack of social opportunity | 1 | 1.3 |
| Having no desire to share | 12 | 15.6 |
| Privacy reasons | 10 | 13.0 |
| Not being understood by others | 3 | 3.9 |

3.3 Meaning making

A McNemar test was conducted to compare the level of meaning making involved in frequently and rarely shared SDMs when they were considered dependent. Consistent with our expectations, the analysis revealed a difference in the proportion of meaning making statements across the two memory types. A higher proportion of rarely shared SDMs involved meaning making statements (27.6%) compared to frequently shared ones (14.9%), $p = .04$.

Alongside evaluating meaning making through narrative coding, participants were also explicitly asked to rate the extent to which they have involved in meaning making for their SDMs by giving the impact ratings. Impact ratings include 7-point Likert type six items, with higher scores indicating more meaning involved in the memory. One participant was excluded from the analysis due to having extreme scores for both memories, leaving eighty-six participants for the analyses related to impact ratings. In line with our expectations and parallel to the results from the narrative coding mentioned above, paired-sample t-test showed that the mean difference between impact scores of rarely shared SDMs ($M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.20$) and frequently shared SDMs ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.44$) was significant, $t(85) = -2.46$, $p = .02$, $d = -0.27$.

People with higher well-being scores were expected to contain more meaning in their memories. Thus, the relationship between well-being and the meaning making derived from both the impact scale and narrative coding was investigated. Prior to conducting the analysis, data were screened for outliers and extreme scores. One participant was detected to have an extreme score on the well-being scale ($z = -3.22$) and was excluded from all analyses involving well-being. This exclusion was made in accordance with common practices for handling extreme scores (Tabachnick & Fidell,

2019). Results showed no correlation between the well-being scores and meaning making derived from narrative coding either in frequently ($r(84) = .03, p = .82$) or rarely shared memories ($r(84) = 0.03, p = .78$). In contrast, there was a positive correlation between the impact scores and well-being in rarely shared memories ($r(83) = 0.27, p = .01$). The correlation was not significant for frequently shared memories ($r(83) = 0.14, p = .19$).

3.4 Centrality of SDMs

To explore the differences between frequently and rarely shared SDMs and the three subscales of the CES, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. The results revealed no significant main effect of memory type, $F(1, 86) = 3.34, p = .07, \eta_p^2 = 0.04$. However, there was a significant main effect of centrality scores, $F(2, 85) = 10.91, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.20$. Specifically, the scores for turning point subscale ($M = 3.03, SE = 0.10$) were lower than both the personal identity ($M = 3.20, SE = 0.09$) ($p = .04$) and reference point ($M = 3.34, SE = 0.09$) subscales ($p < .001$).

There was an interaction effect between the centrality subscales and memory types $F(1,86) = 4.38, p = .04, \eta_p^2 = 0.05$. Follow-up pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction revealed that rarely shared SDMs ($M = 3.49, SE = 0.11$) serve as a reference point in one's lives more than frequently shared ones ($M = 3.20, SE = 0.12$) ($p = .04$). No other pairwise comparisons were significant ($ps > .05$).

3.5 Functions of SDMs

The current study aims to explore whether there are differences in the functions attributed to frequently and rarely shared memories. To investigate this, a repeated

measures ANOVA with a 2 (memory type: frequently shared and rarely shared) ³ (function subscales: self, directive, social) design was conducted. The main effect for memory type was not significant ($F(1, 86) = 3.77, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = 0.04$). However, results revealed a main effect of functions on the memory type, $F(1.77, 149.55) = 19.50, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.18$ ¹. Pairwise comparison with a Bonferroni correction revealed that regardless of the type of memory, self-function ($M = 2.93, SE = 0.08$) was used more than those of directive function ($M = 2.77, SE = 0.09$) ($p = .04$), and social function ($M = 2.42, SE = 0.08$) ($p < .001$). Moreover, the directive function was used more than the social function with ($p = .001$).

Additionally, there was a significant interaction effect between memory type and functions they serve, $F(1.79, 150.89) = 20.67, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.19$. Frequently shared SDMs have higher scores on social function ($M = 2.74, SE = 0.11$) than rarely shared ones ($M = 2.10, SE = 0.09$) ($p < .001$). No difference between frequently and rarely shared memories on the directive function and self-function scores was found ($p > .05$).

¹ Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated for the functions and the interaction between functions and memory type ($p < .001$). Considering that the Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon value (ϵ) is greater than .75, Huynh-Feldt adjustment applied for the tests of within-subject's effects (Field, 2013; Girden, 1992).

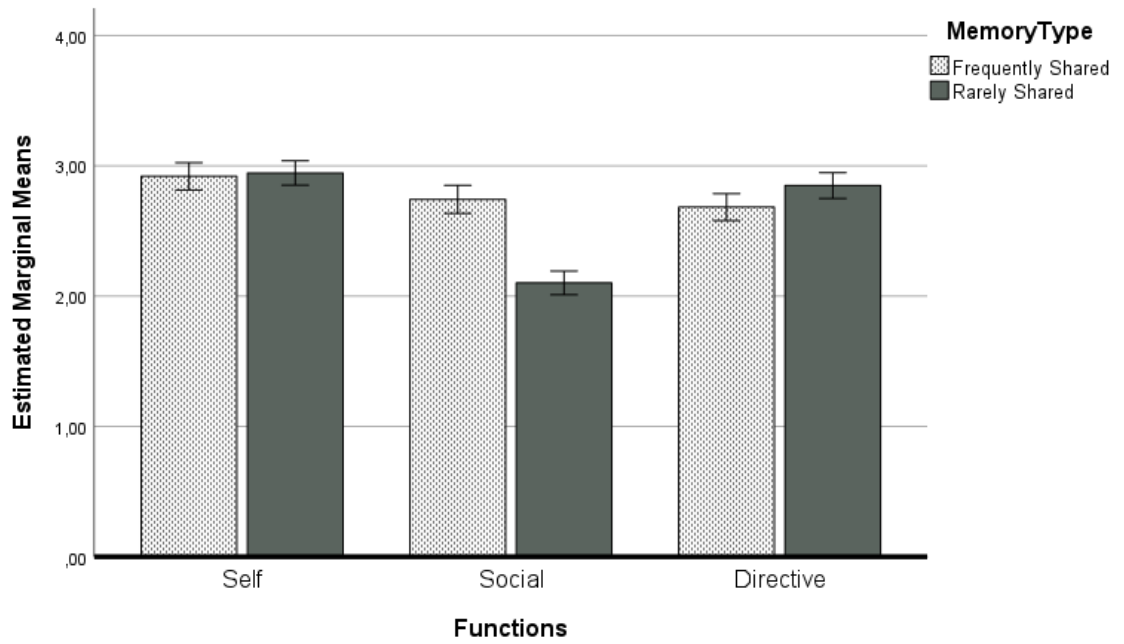


Figure 1. Autobiographical memory functions for frequently and rarely shared self-defining memories

3.6 Personality variables

Correlational analyses were conducted to explore the relationship between personality traits and various aspects of memories, including their meaning, centrality, and function. A positive correlation was found between extraversion and the frequency of talking about rarely shared memories, $r(85) = .30$, $p = .01$. Similarly, extraversion was positively correlated with the impact scores of rarely shared SDMs, $r(84) = .26$, $p = .02$, individuals with higher extraversion scores tend to talk more frequently about their rarely shared memories and ascribe greater meaning to them.

Additionally, there was a positive correlation between neuroticism and the directive function ($r(85) = .24$, $p = .02$), self-function ($r(85) = .22$, $p = .04$), and social function in rarely shared SDMs, $r(85) = .25$, $p = .02$ of rarely shared SDMs, suggesting that individuals with higher neuroticism scores tend to utilize self, social, and directive functions when recalling these memories.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The current study aims to comparatively examine frequently and rarely shared self-defining memories (SDMs) across several aspects. We compared the degree of integration involved, the functions these memories serve, their centrality to one's identity, and memory characteristics including content and phenomenology. Our findings indicate that rarely shared SDMs involved more meaning making and were more emotionally negative compared to frequently shared ones. Despite their negative emotional valence, these rarely shared memories served as crucial reference points for individuals' identities. Frequently shared memories were often about achievements and recreational events, while rarely shared memories showed more variability in their content. Additionally, frequently shared SDMs predominantly served social functions and were shared within group settings. A detailed discussion of the findings is provided below.

4.1 Memory characteristics

4.1.1 Phenomenological characteristics

Our results indicated that participants' rarely shared memories were more negative compared to frequently shared ones. This contrasts with previous research suggesting that emotionally negative events are more likely to be disclosed (e.g., Rimé, 2007). However, it aligns with a methodologically similar study by Pasupathi (2009), which found that less positivity and more negativity was associated with undisclosed memories. In the former study, participants were asked to retrieve an event-specific

memory and then answer questions about sharing it. In contrast, the latter study directly asked about told and untold memories, possibly making it easier for participants to identify and recall untold events. When not directly asked about untold events, participants might find it difficult to retrieve them. On the other hand, explicitly asking about untold memories could prompt participants to identify those memories and reveal their negativity. One other possibility is that when asking about undisclosed memories, people might think of particularly negative experiences, such as shameful or transgressive events, possibly responding to a cultural expectation of the untold self.

The two memories did not differ in their retrieval ease, suggesting that although rarely shared SDMs were more negative, their accessibility did not differ from the frequently shared SDMs. Previous research has suggested that negative memories might be more readily accessible due to the additional cognitive effort involved in encoding them, which enhances their overall memory quality (Talmi, 2013; Williams et al., 2022). In fact, in the present study, we found that rarely shared SDMs had greater emotional intensity and importance ratings ($p = .05$ and $p = .04$ respectively). However, p values do not remain significant when Bonferroni adjusted alpha ($p < .006$) was conducted. Thus, this result should be evaluated carefully.

Other studies also found that, memories that are inconsistent with one's self and those that are consistent are found to be equally accessible (Mutlutürk & Tekcan, 2016). This finding is considered reasonable because Conway (2005) includes memories that do not serve self-goals in the Self-Memory System (SMS) model as well. By justifying inconsistencies and reconciling memories that conflict with one's identity and objectives, individuals can effectively integrate these memories (Landoll, 2000, as cited in

Mutlutürk & Tekcan, 2016). In the current study, the processes of meaning making may play a similar role to these justification and reconciliation processes.

Negative memories are considered more intense and impactful immediately after they occur but tend to diminish over time, whereas positive memories tend to remain strong -a phenomenon known as fading affect bias (see Ritchie et al., 2006; Walker et al., 1997). In the current study, although there were no differences in the age of the frequently and rarely shared events, we did not assess the immediate affect of the event on individuals, as the Autobiographical Memory Questionnaire (AMQ) typically refers to current memory characteristics (Berntsen & Rubin, 2006; Rubin et al., 2003). Therefore, future studies might gather more comprehensive information by assessing both immediate and recent characteristics of the events.

4.1.2 Narrative content

Majority of frequently shared memories had achievement and recreation related themes. Thus, memories that emphasize an effortful attempt, regardless of the outcome was coded as achievement memory (Thorne & McLean, 2001). Additionally, we also examined memories that emphasized “failure”. This was done because it is thought that they are conceptually and characteristically different.

The results revealed that the proportion of failure memories among success memories was relatively small. However, it should also be noted that achievement memories were generally about academic-related success and mostly covers university entrance exam period. Given that the sample of this study consists of university students, this finding aligns with the idea that autobiographical memories are highly related to one’s current and future-directed goals and motivations (Conway et al., 2004; Conway

& Jobson, 2012). The majority of academic identity-related memory narratives in our study involved statements of a fear of being perceived as an "unsuccessful" individual and of disappointing family members, consistent with findings from studies involving undergraduate samples (e.g., Wang & Singer, 2021).

Frequently shared memories also tended to include more content related to "recreation/exploration". It is important to note that in our sample, these memories predominantly about leisure activities that involve exploration while enjoying oneself (i.e., spending a day-off with friends, going abroad for the first time). Keeping a recreational memory to oneself, in that sense, does not make sense as these memories are inherently more suitable for sharing in various social settings.

Rarely shared memories showed more variability in their prevailing content, with relationship, achievement, life-threatening, and non-classifiable events being shared in similar percentages. We propose that this result indicates that frequently shared SDMs better represent the characteristics of SDMs, as previous studies have shown that SDMs often involve themes of achievement, relationships, and recreation (Blagov & Singer, 2004). However, in the present study, regardless of the sharing status, SDMs involve high percentages of relationship content. The prevalence of relationship content, which aligning with their current life goals, can be attributed to the participant group being young adults in university (Wang & Ross, 2007). This period, characterized by the centrality of interpersonal connections in their lives, likely contributed to this outcome.

Additionally, the results revealed a lower-than-expected percentage of shame and guilt memories. This may be due to a self-enhancement bias, where participants prefer to present a positive image of themselves and thus prefer to mention experiences involving guilt and shame. In fact, research indicates that people tend to recall memories of

success (Engo & Meijer, 2004) and fairness (Gelfand et al., 2002) more readily than memories of failure and unfairness.

Lastly, the percentage of life-threatening themes for both memory types was ranging from 17% to 21%. After reviewing the narratives, it was noticed that memories with life-threatening themes often involved psychological and physical violence from friends/peers. Although peer-bullying is commonly observed among university students (Lund & Ross, 2007), our findings are still surprising, given that the average well-being score of the sample was comparable to that of university students across different cultures (Diener et al., 2009; Howell & Buro, 2015; Telef, 2013). It appears that despite participants not reporting low well-being, the content of their self-defining memories independently involved negativity. In fact, the reported valence of the events was not related to the general well-being of the sample. More specifically, the correlation was weak for rarely shared memories and no correlation was found for the frequently shared ones.

4.2 Meaning making

Approximately 28% of rarely shared, and 15% of frequently shared self-defining memory narratives contained meaning making. Other studies with young adult samples report similar percentages for the meaning making in the SDMs (e.g., Blagov & Singer, 2004; Lardi et al., 2010; Thorne et al., 2004). However, studies where the narrative coding covers implicit references to meaning making reports slightly higher meaning making (e.g., Conway & Wood, 2006). In our case, we solely coded explicit references to meaning in narratives in accordance with the manual.

We also examined the two memories for integration involvement using the impact scale, which measures the extent of events' impact on individuals and the meaning they derived from these memories. To our knowledge, apart from the study in which the impact scale was created (Wood & Conway, 2006), the present study is one of the first study to measure meaning making through narrative coding and the impact scale. The results showed that rarely shared SDMs were more impactful and contained more meaning making compared to frequently shared ones.

This finding was consistent with our examination of meaning making involvement with the narrative coding. We demonstrated that in addition to narrative coding when examining meaning making in SDMs, using a scale can be particularly useful for studying memories that are self-relevant and not frequently shared. However, it should be noted that, besides involving items measuring retrospective aspect of meaning making (e.g., "Having had this experience, I have more insight into who I am and what is important to me"), the scale also involves items about current thoughts on the event's impact and how much of a "self-growth" experienced after the event. Thus, it measures the current impact and meaning derived to the memories and is not purely retrospective.

We expected individuals with higher well-being scores to contain greater meaning making in their memories, as measured by both narrative coding and the impact scale. The results showed that those with higher well-being scores also reported greater impact scores for their rarely shared memories. However, there was no correlation between meaning making derived from narrative coding and well-being for any memory type. Thus, our hypothesis regarding the relationship between well-being and meaning making is supported only when considering impact scores for rarely shared memories.

As mentioned, the impact score does not solely measure the retrospective aspect of impact and meaning making in memories. In fact, it resembles the well-being scale as it also assesses current the level of current emotion and meaning attached to the event (Wood & Conway, 2006).

Taking these results together, participants' rarely shared memories involved more meaning making even though they were more negative. This result matches the studies suggesting that efforts to meaning making is greater when the situation involves some kind of interpersonal conflict (McLean & Thorne, 2003). Consistently, Thorne et al. (2004) found that presence of tension (e.g., discomfort, disagreement) in self-defining memories was positively correlated with people's meaning making involved in their narratives. It seems that challenging aspects of negative events contributes to the construction of more meaningful narratives of the self. This might be because of the fact that deriving meaning and insight from negative events require much more reflective and exploratory autobiographical reasoning processes than positive events. Nonetheless, to draw more accurate conclusions, future research that explicitly distinguishes between the effects of negative and positive events on meaning making processes is needed.

4.3 Functions and centrality

In line with our expectations, participants used social function more prevalently when recalling frequently shared SDMs compared to rarely shared ones. This finding supports the idea that when people frequently think and talk about their memories, they do this for "social bonding" purposes (Bluck & Alea, 2011; Nelson & Fivush, 2004).

We evaluate this finding along with the findings related to the locations of sharing, the people with whom the memories were shared, and personality

characteristics. We found that more than half of the frequently shared memories were shared with close friends. Additionally, they were shared in person within a group setting. In contrast, almost half of the rarely shared memories were shared with family members, and they were typically shared in one-one-one interactions. The differences in the percentages suggest distinct patterns of social sharing behavior across different memory types, emphasizing the importance of considering both the context and the addressee of memories.

These findings also suggest that frequently and rarely shared SDMs might differ in terms of their interpersonal versus intrapersonal nature. Given that frequently shared memories serve social functions and mainly shared within groups, we conclude that frequently shared SDMs are more interpersonal. Rarely shared memories on the other hand, shared with close circles and within one-one occasions. Furthermore, when participants were asked about their reasons for not sharing, majority of them mentioned fear of not being supported, embarrassment, and not wanting to upset themselves. This further indicates that rarely shared memories are intrapersonal.

Since rarely shared SDMs were emotionally more negative, we expected participants to use the directive function more when recalling these memories. Contrary to our expectations, we did not find any differences in the use of the directive function between the two types of memories. This result might be related to rarely shared memories involving more meaning making. Specifically, the directive function subscale measures how the memory is used for learning lessons from past experiences and applying that knowledge to goals and behaviors, which requires making sense of the experiences. We found that such processes were present in the rarely shared memories, at least more so than in frequently shared ones. Therefore, the presence of meaning

making processes in rarely shared memories might explain why the expected difference in the directive function did not emerge.

We also find that participants with higher extraversion scores tend to talk more frequently about their rarely shared memories and ascribe greater meaning to them. This indicates that extroverts may be more inclined to share and discuss memories that are less commonly shared, possibly reflecting their outgoing and sociable nature.

Regarding the centrality to identity for the two memory types, we found that rarely shared memories serve more as a reference point. Taking an event as a reference point refers to using that event as an “anchor” in one's life story (Berntsen & Rubin, 2006). Such experiences guide individuals in reevaluating and making sense of their past experiences and learning lessons from them. Additionally, individuals develop beliefs and expectations based on these events and perceive future events with the understanding gained previously. It is noteworthy that rarely shared memories, despite being more negative, serve as reference points in people's lives. Although, there are studies showing that people with PTSD and depression symptoms positioned their negative memories as more central to their lives compared to positive ones (Berntsen et al., 2011; Berntsen & Rubin, 2007; Gehrt et al., 2018), our findings are inconsistent with the previous studies with non-clinical samples. Such studies demonstrated that positive memories are more central to identity than negative ones (Berntsen et al., 2011; Rubin et al., 2019; Zaragoza Scherman et al., 2020).

More recently, Pociunaite's research (2022) suggests that age influences the centrality of positive and negative events, with older adults, who typically have a well-established self-concept, placing less centrality on negative events. It is proposed that an established self-concept might reduce the centrality of negative events because “a person

with a clear self-concept would aim to maintain the impact of positive events while diminishing the impact of negative experiences” (Ritchie et al., 2014). Given that our sample consisted of university students, one explanation for the findings could be their possible “less established” self-concept. Additionally, the existence of psychopathology (e.g., depression, PTSD) remains untested and should be explored in future research.

The emotional valence of events might relate to identity through different mechanisms. For instance, Berntsen et al. (2011) suggest that while positive events are considered central to one's self as a cultural norm learned during developmental processes, negative events acquire importance for identity by deviating from such norms and creating intense emotional reactions (p. 33). This aligns with our findings regarding the characteristics of frequently and rarely shared memories, with frequently shared memories being more of a “social” side of the SDMs and rarely shared ones being more personal.

The two types of memories did not differ in the personal identity and turning point subscales. This lack of difference in the turning point subscale might be attributed to the age of the sample and the general content of the memories, which were predominantly recreational, and relationship related.

4.4 Limitations and future directions

The present study has some limitations. Firstly, we cannot be certain that the memories participants shared are truly their most representative rarely shared memories. This uncertainty is a common issue in autobiographical memory research, where participants are asked to recall most significant or happiest memories. However, due to the highly

personal nature of the memories examined in this study, participants may have been especially hesitant to share them.

Moreover, we asked participants to indicate the frequency of sharing the reported memory on a Likert scale. Particularly for memories that are shared frequently, participants might have difficulty accurately recalling the exact number of times they have shared them. Consequently, the precise number of times these memories were shared remains uncertain. Additionally, the frequently and rarely shared memories reported by participants showed variability in their sharing frequencies. To make more robust inferences, future research should examine memories with less variability in sharing frequencies and focus on absolute numbers of sharing.

The fact that the sample consisted mostly of undergraduates with a narrow age range can also be listed as a limitation. Including groups of people from various ages, such as middle-aged and older adults, would have provided further information regarding memory sharing.

Lastly, although our finding regarding to meaning making derived from the narrative coding and the scale is important to its kind, it should be noted that the scale involves questions about the current thoughts on the impact of the event and how much of a “self-growth” people experienced after the event. Therefore, the scale does not solely measure the retrospective evaluations of the meaning involved in the memories. Future studies should explore the concept of meaning making from memories using measurement methods in addition to or as alternatives to narrative coding. This is particularly important when investigating highly personal memories that may lead participants to provide quantitatively weak narratives.

4.5 Conclusion

The existing literature predominantly explores written disclosures of negative or traumatic events. Therefore, present study is the first to comparatively examine frequently and rarely shared self-defining memories (SDMs) across various dimensions, including meaning making, functions served, centrality to identity, event content, and phenomenological characteristics. In summary, despite rarely shared memories being more negative in emotional content, they are characterized by a higher degree of meaning making, suggesting that individuals engage in deeper reflective processes when recalling such memories. This evaluation of meaning making measured both by narrative coding and subjective ratings provided by participants. This approach could offer valuable guidance for studies seeking to elicit and analyze private memories from participants, as demonstrated in this research.

Moreover, rarely shared memories serve as reference points in participants' life stories. Nevertheless, both memory types were equally central to personal identity and turning points in life. Contrary to expectations, rarely shared memories did not exhibit a greater directive function, potentially due to their involvement in meaning making processes. Majority of the frequently shared memories were about achievements and recreations while rarely shared memories varied in their content. Moreover, frequently shared memories predominantly served social functions and were shared within group settings, whereas rarely shared memories were more often shared in one-on-one interactions, indicating distinct patterns of interpersonal and intrapersonal sharing behaviors.

The most compelling and interesting aspect of the current study is its departure from the traditional definition of self-defining memories, expanding and enhancing this

definition in a valuable way. This approach allowed us to illustrate both the distinguishing and common features of frequently and rarely shared memories. The representativeness of memories and variability within the memory types raises as limitations of the present study. Future research could address these limitations by examining memories with less variability in sharing frequencies and eliciting multiple memories per type.



APPENDIX A

SELF-DEFINING MEMORY TASK

In this study, we will ask you to recall memories that hold personal significance for you and help define who you are. Memories that define you have the following characteristics:

- They give clues about who you are,
- They are remembered clearly,
- They are important to you,
- Include an experience that evokes intense emotions, whether positive, negative, or both.

On the following pages, we will ask you to recall some of these self-defining memories and write about them in as much detail as possible.

(Bu arařtırmada, sizin için kiřisel bir anlam tařıyan ve kim olduėunuzu tanımlamanıza yardımcı olan anılarınızı hatırlamanızı isteyeceėiz. Sizi tanımlayan anılar ařaėıdaki özelliklere sahiptir:

- Sizi siz yapan, kim olduėunuz hakkında ipuçları veren,
- Net bir biçimde hatırladıėınız,
- Sizin için önemli olan,
- Olumlu, olumsuz ya da her iki türden de yoğun duygular uyandıran bir deneyiminizi içeren anılar.

Sonraki sayfalarda, sizi tanımlayan bazı anılarınızı hatırlayıp olabildiėince detaylı şekilde isteyeceėiz.

Frequently Shared SDM Task

In this part of the study, we want you to recall a memory that defines you and that you frequently share with others. Please write a memory that fits this description in as much detail as possible. Please remember that there is no time limit to complete this section. You can think carefully before and/or while writing your memory.

(Arařtırmamızın bu kısmında hatırlamanızı istediėimiz anı, sizi tanımlayan bir anı olup başkalarıyla sıkça paylařtıėınız bir anı olmalıdır. Lütfen bu tanıma uyan bir anınızı mümkün olduėunca ayrıntılı bir biçimde yazınız. Bu bölümü tamamlamak için bir zaman sınırı bulunmadıėını unutmayın. Anınızı yazmadan önce veya yazarken detaylıca düşünebilirsiniz.)

Rarely Shared SDM Task

Now, we want you to recall a memory that defines you and that you rarely share with others. Please write a memory that fits this description in as much detail as possible. Please remember that there is no time limit to complete this section. You can think carefully before and/or while writing your memory.

(řimdi hatırlamanızı istediėimiz anı, sizi tanımlayan bir anı olup başkalarıyla nadiren paylařtıėınız bir anı olmalıdır. Lütfen bu tanıma uyan bir anınızı mümkün olduėunca ayrıntılı bir biçimde yazınız. Bu bölümü tamamlamak için bir zaman sınırı bulunmadıėını unutmayın. Anınızı yazmadan önce veya yazarken detaylıca düşünebilirsiniz.)

APPENDIX B

IMPACT SCALE

Please think about the memory you just wrote about and respond to the following questions by marking the appropriate number (1 = Strongly disagree, 7 = Strongly agree).

(Lütfen biraz önce yazdığınız anıyı düşünerek, aşağıdaki soruları uygun bulduğunuz rakamı işaretleyerek cevaplayın (1 = Hiç katılmıyorum, 7 = Tamamen katılıyorum)).

1. This past event has had a big impact on me
(Yaşadığım bu olay üzerimde büyük bir etki bıraktı)
2. I feel that I have grown as a person since experiencing this past event
(Yaşadığım bu olaydan beri bir insan olarak büyüdüğümü hissediyorum)
3. Having had this experience, I have more insight into who I am and what is important to me
(Bu deneyimi yaşadktan sonra kim olduğuma ve benim için neyin önemli olduğuna dair daha fazla fikir sahibi oldum)
4. Having had this experience, I have learned more about what life is all about
(Bu deneyimi yaşadktan sonra hayatın aslında ne olduğu hakkında daha çok şey öğrendim)
5. Even when I think of the event now, I think about how it has affected me
(Şu anda bu olayı düşündüğümde dahi, beni nasıl etkilemiş olduğunu düşünüyorum)
6. I have often spent time thinking about what this event means to me
(Bu olayın benim için ne ifade ettiğini düşünmeye sıkça zaman ayırdım)

APPENDIX C

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please think about the memory you just wrote about and respond to the following questions by marking the appropriate number.

(Lütfen biraz önce yazdığınız anıyı düşünerek, aşağıdaki soruları uygun bulduğunuz rakamı işaretleyerek cevaplayın.)

1. While remembering the event, I feel as though I am reliving it.
(Olayı hatırladığımda, olayı yeniden yaşıyormuş gibi hissediyorum.)
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 As if it were happening now
(Hiç) (Olay şu anda oluyormuş gibi)
2. As I remember the event, I can see it in my mind.
(Olayı hatırladığımda onu zihnimde görebiliyorum.)
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 As if it were happening now
(Hiç) (Olay şu anda oluyormuş gibi)
3. While remembering the event now, my feelings are quite intense.
(Olayı hatırlarken çok yoğun duygular hissediyorum.)
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 As if it were happening now
(Hiç) (Olay şu anda oluyormuş gibi)
4. To what extent does this event contain positive or negative emotions for you?
(Bu olay sizin için ne ölçüde olumlu veya olumsuz duygular içeriyor?)
Completely negative -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 Completely positive
(Tamamen olumsuz) (Tamamen olumlu)
5. As I think about the event, I actually remember it rather than just knowing that it happened.
(Bu anıyı hatırlarken olayın başımdan geçtiğini bilmekten öte onu gerçekten hatırlayabiliyorum.)
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely
(Hiç) (Tamamen)
6. This memory is significant for my life because it imparts an important message for me or represents an anchor, critical juncture, or a turning point.
(Bu olay, bana bir mesaj verdiği için ya da yaşamımda kritik bir zamanı veya dönüm noktasını simgelediği için benim için önemli bir anıdır.)
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely
(Hiç) (Tamamen)
7. When we remember some memories, we see the event directly from our own eyes, while with other memories, we can see ourselves from the outside as an observer. From which perspective do you see your memory of this event?
(Bazı anılarımızı hatırladığımızda olayı doğrudan kendi gözümüzden görürken, bazı anılarımızı kendimizi de dışarıdan görebilecek şekilde gözlemci perspektifinden görürüz. Bu olaya dair anınızı hangi perspektiften görüyorsunuz?)

- a) From my own eyes (*Kendi gözümden*)
b) Observer's perspective (*Gözlemci gibi*)
c) Both (*Her ikisi de*)
8. Since it happened, I have thought about this event.
(*Bu olay gerçekleştiğinden beri olay hakkında düşündüm.*)
Almost never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very frequently
(*Neredeyse hiç*) (*Çok sık*)
9. Since it happened, I have talked about this event.
(*Bu olay gerçekleştiğinden beri, olay hakkında konuştum.*)
Almost never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very frequently
(*Neredeyse hiç*) (*Çok sık*)
10. How difficult was it for you to remember this memory?
(*Bu anıyı hatırlayabilmeniz sizin için ne kadar zor oldu?*)
Very difficult 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very easy
(*Çok zor oldu*) (*Hiç zor olmadı*)
11. Please date the memory (month/day/year) as accurately as you can. Please fill in a month, day, and year even if you must estimate. If the memory extended over a period of time, report the approximate middle of the period.
(*Lütfen olayın tarihini (gün/ay/yıl) mümkün olduğu kadar doğru bir biçimde hatırlamaya çalışınız. Tahmin etmeniz gerekse bile lütfen bir ay, gün ve yıl bildiriniz. Eğer anı belli bir süreye yayılmışsa, bu sürenin ortasındaki yaklaşık bir tarihi veriniz.*)

APPENDIX D

OTHER QUESTIONS FOR SDMS

1. How much does this memory occupy your mind?
(*Bu anı zihninizi ne kadar meşgul eder?*)
Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely
(*Hiç*) (*Çok sık*)
2. How often does this memory come to mind suddenly, without you making an effort to think about it?
(*Bu anı ne sıklıkla aklınıza, üzerinde düşünmeye çaba sarfetmeden "birdenbire" gelir?*)
Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Frequently
(*Hiç*) (*Çok sık*)
3. With whom have you generally shared this memory?
(*Bu anıyı genelde kimlerle paylaştınız?*)
 - a. Family members (*Aile üyeleri*)
 - b. Romantic partner (*Sevgili*)
 - c. Spouse (*Eş*)
 - d. Close friend (*Yakın arkadaş*)
 - e. Other (please specify) (*Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz)*)
4. In what ways have you usually told this memory?
(*Bu anıyı genellikle hangi yolla anlattınız?*)
 - a. Face-to-face, one-on-one conversation (*Yüz yüze, birebir görüşme ortamında*)
 - b. Face-to-face, with a small group of friends/acquaintances (*Yüz yüze, birkaç kişilik arkadaş/tanıdık grubunda*)
 - c. Phone conversation (*Telefon görüşmesi yaparak*)
 - d. Text messaging (*Telefonda mesajlaşarak*)
 - e. Online video call (*Çevrimiçi görüntülü görüşme yaparak*)
 - f. Other (please specify) (*Diğer (belirtiniz)*)
5. How long after experiencing this memory did you share it with others? Please specify. (For example: a few hours later, one week later, etc.)
(*Bu anıyı yaşandıktan ne kadar zaman sonra başkalarıyla paylaştınız? Lütfen belirtiniz. Örneğin: birkaç saat sonra, bir hafta sonra vb.*)
6. What are your reasons for frequently/rarely sharing this memory with others?
(*Sıklıkla/Nadiren başkalarıyla paylaştığınız bu anınızı paylaşma nedeniniz veya nedenleriniz nelerdir? Lütfen belirtiniz.*)
7. To what extent did you refrain from sharing this memory with others in the past?
(*Bu anıyı geçmişte başkalarıyla paylaşmak için kendinizi ne derece durdurmuşsunuz?*)
Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Completely
(*Hiç*) (*Tamamen*)

APPENDIX E

CENTRALITY OF EVENT SCALE

Answer the following questions by circling a number from 1 to 5.

(Lütfen biraz önce yazdığınız anıyı düşünerek, aşağıdaki soruları uygun bulduğunuz rakamı işaretleyerek cevaplayın.)

Total disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree
(Hiç katılmıyorum) (Tamamen Katılıyorum)

1. I feel that this event has become part of my identity.
(Bu olayın kimliğimin bir parçası haline geldiğini hissediyorum.)
2. This event has become a reference point for the way I understand myself and the world.
(Bu olay, kendimi ve dünyayı anlamamda bir referans noktası haline geldi.)
3. I feel that this event has become a central part of my life story.
(Bu olayın hayat hikayemin merkezi bir parçası haline geldiğini hissediyorum.)
4. This event has colored the way I think and feel about other experiences.
(Bu olay, diğer deneyimlerimle ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerimi etkiledi.)
5. This event permanently changed my life.
(Bu olay, hayatımı kalıcı bir biçimde değiştirdi.)
6. I often think about the effects this event will have on my future.
(Sık sık bu olayın geleceğim üzerindeki etkileri hakkında düşünürüm.)
7. This event was a turning point in my life.
(Bu olay, hayatımda bir dönüm noktası oldu.)

APPENDIX F

THINKING ABOUT LIFE EXPERIENCES SCALE

Please circle one response on each scale to indicate how often, when you think back about or talk about your frequently/rarely shared memory, you do it for the reasons given. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not hesitate to use any of the points on the scale. If you never think back over your life for this reason, circle "Almost never." Please answer every question.

(Şimdi size çeşitli durumlar sunacağız. Lütfen başkalarıyla sıkça/nadiren paylaştığınız sizi tanımlayan anı hakkında düşündüğünüzde ya da konuştuğunuzda bunu ne sıklıkla verilen nedenlerden dolayı yaptığınızı belirtmek için her ölçekteki bir cevabı işaretleyiniz. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış cevabı yoktur. Ölçekteki cevaplardan herhangi birini işaretlemekte tereddüt etmeyiniz. Eğer belirtilen nedenden dolayı yazdığınız anı hakkında hiç düşünmüyorsanız, "Neredeyse hiç." cevabını işaretleyiniz. Lütfen her soruyu cevaplayınız.)

Almost never Seldom Occasionally Often Very Frequently
(Neredeyse hiç Nadiren Zaman zaman Sık sık Çok sık)

I think back over or talk about this frequently/rarely shared memory...
(Bşkalarıyla sıkça/ nadiren paylaştığım bu anıyı...)

1. When I want to feel that I am the same person that I was before.
(Geçmişteki ile aynı insan olduğumu hissetmek istediğimde anımsarım.)
2. When I want to remember something that someone else said or did that might help me now.
(Bir başkasının söylemiş ya da yapmış olduğu ve bana şimdi yardımcı olacak bir şeyi hatırlamak istediğimde anımsarım.)
3. When I hope to also find out what another person is like.
(Başka bir kişinin nasıl birisi olduğunu anlamak istediğim zaman anımsarım.)
4. When I am concerned about whether I am still the same type of person that I was earlier.
(Önceden olduğum gibi bir insan olup olmadığım konusunda meraklandığım zaman anımsarım.)
5. When I believe that thinking about the past can help guide my future.
(Geçmişimle ilgili düşünmenin geleceğime yön vermeye yardımcı olabileceğine inandığımda anımsarım.)
6. When I am concerned about whether my values have changed over time.
(Değer yargılarımın zamanla değişip değişmediğini düşündüğüm zaman anımsarım.)
7. When I want to try to learn from my past mistakes.
(Geçmişteki hatalarımdan ders çıkarmak istediğim zaman anımsarım.)
8. When I want to develop more intimacy in a relationship.
(Bir ilişkimdeki samimiyeti artırmak istediğim zaman anımsarım.)

9. When I need to make a life choice and I am uncertain which path to take.
(Yaşamımla ilgili bir seçim yapmam gerekirken hangi yolu seçeceğimden emin olmadığımında anımsarım.)
10. When I want to remember a lesson I learned in the past.
(Geçmişte çıkardığım bir dersi hatırlamak için anımsarım.)
11. When I want to develop a closer relationship with someone.
(Biriyle daha samimi bir ilişki geliştirmek istediğim zaman anımsarım.)
12. When I want to maintain a friendship by sharing memories with friends.
(Bir arkadaşlığı anılar paylaşarak sürdürmek istediğim zaman anımsarım.)
13. When I am concerned about whether my beliefs have changed over time.
(Değer yargılarımın zamanla değişip değişmediğini düşündüğüm zaman anımsarım.)
14. When I hope to also learn more about another person's life.
(Başka bir kişinin hayatı hakkında daha fazla şey öğrenmek istediğim zaman anımsarım.)
15. When I want to understand how I have changed from who I was before.
(Geçmişteki ile aynı insan olduğumu hissetmek istediğimde anımsarım.)

APPENDIX G

FLOURISHING SCALE

Below are 8 statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1–7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by indicating that response for each statement.

(Aşağıda katılıp ya da katılmayacağınız 8 ifade vardır. 1–7 arasındaki derecelendirmeyi kullanarak, her bir madde için uygun olan cevabınızı belirtiniz.)

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Slightly disagree 4. Mixed or neither agree nor disagree 5. Slightly agree 6. Agree 7. Strongly agree

(1. Kesinlikle katılmıyorum 2. Katılmıyorum 3. Biraz katılmıyorum 4. Kararsızım 5. Biraz katılıyorum 6. Katılıyorum 7. Kesinlikle katılıyorum)

1. I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.
(Amaçlı ve anlamlı bir yaşam sürdürüyorum.)
2. My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.
(Sosyal ilişkilerim destekleyici ve tatmin edicidir.)
3. I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.
(Günlük aktivitelere bağlı ve ilgilim.)
4. I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.
(Başkalarının mutlu ve iyi olmasına aktif olarak katkıda bulunurum.)
5. I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me.
(Benim için önemli olan etkinliklerde yetenekli ve yeterliyim.)
6. I am a good person and live a good life.
(Ben iyi bir insanım ve iyi bir hayat yaşıyorum.)
7. I am optimistic about my future.
(Geleceğim hakkında iyimserim.)
8. People respect me
(İnsanlar bana saygı duyar.)

APPENDIX H

THE BIG FIVE INVENTORY

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

(Aşağıda sizi kısmen tanımlayan (ya da pek tanımlayamayan) bir takım özellikler sunulmaktadır. Örneğin, başkaları ile zaman geçirmekten hoşlanan birisi olduğunuzu düşünüyor musunuz? Lütfen aşağıda verilen özelliklerin sizi ne oranda yansıttığını ya da yansıtmadığını belirtmek için sizi en iyi tanımlayan rakamı her bir özelliğin yanına yazınız.)

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly agree
(Tamamen katılmıyorum) (Tamamen katılıyorum)

I see myself as someone who... (Kendimi biri olarak görüyorum)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Is talkative (<i>Konuşkan</i>) | 14. Can be tense (<i>Gergin olabilen</i>) |
| 2. Tends to find fault with others (<i>Başkalarında hata arayan</i>) | 15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker (<i>Maharetli, derin düşünen</i>) |
| 3. Does a thorough job (<i>İşini tam yapan</i>) | 16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm (<i>Heyecan yaratabilen</i>) |
| 4. Is depressed, blue (<i>Bunalımlı, melankolik</i>) | 17. Has a forgiving nature (<i>Affedici bir yapıya sahip</i>) |
| 5. Is original, comes up with new ideas (<i>Orijinal, yeni görüşler ortaya koyan</i>) | 18. Tends to be disorganized (<i>Dağınık olma eğiliminde</i>) |
| 6. Is reserved (<i>Ketum/vakur</i>) | 19. Worries a lot (<i>Çok endişelenen</i>) |
| 7. Is helpful and unselfish with others (<i>Yardımsever ve çıkarıcı olmayan</i>) | 20. Has an active imagination (<i>Hayal gücü yüksek</i>) |
| 8. Can be somewhat careless (<i>Biraz umursamaz</i>) | 21. Tends to be quiet (<i>Sessiz bir yapıda</i>) |
| 9. Is relaxed, handles stress well (<i>Rahat, stresle kolay baş eden</i>) | 22. Is generally trusting (<i>Genellikle başkalarına güvenen</i>) |
| 10. Is curious about many different things (<i>Çok değişik konuları merak eden</i>) | 23. Tends to be lazy (<i>Tembel olma eğiliminde olan</i>) |
| 11. Is full of energy (<i>Enerji dolu</i>) | 24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset (<i>Duygusal olarak dengeli</i>) |
| 12. Starts quarrels with others (<i>Başkalarıyla sürekli didişen</i>) | 25. Is inventive (<i>Keşfeden, icat eden</i>) |
| 13. Is a reliable worker (<i>Güvenilir bir çalışan</i>) | 26. Has an assertive personality (<i>Atılgan bir kişiliğe sahip</i>) |
| | 27. Can be cold and aloof (<i>Soğuk ve mesafeli olabilen</i>) |

28. Perseveres until the task is finished (*Görevi tamamlanıncaya kadar sabreden*)
29. Can be moody (*Dakikası dakikasına uymayan*)
30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences (*Sanata ve estetik değerlere önem veren*)
31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited (*Bazen utangaç, çekingen olan*)
32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone (*Hemen hemen herkese karşı saygılı ve nazik olan*)
33. Does things efficiently (*İşleri verimli yapan*)
34. Remains calm in tense situations (*Gergin ortamlarda sakin kalabilen*)
35. Prefers work that is routine (*Rutin işleri yapmayı tercih eden*)
36. Is outgoing, sociable (*Sosyal, girişken*)
37. Is sometimes rude to others (*Bazen başkalarına kaba davranabilen*)
38. Makes plans and follows through with them (*Planlar yapan ve bunları takip eden*)
39. Gets nervous easily (*Kolayca sinirlenen*)
40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas (*Düşünmeyi seven, fikirler geliştirebilen*)
41. Has few artistic interests (*Sanata ilgisi çok az olan*)
42. Likes to cooperate with others (*Başkalarıyla iş birliği yapmayı seven*)
43. Is easily distracted (*Kolaylıkla dikkati dağılan*)
44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature (*Sanat, müzik ve edebiyatta çok bilgili*)

APPENDIX I
DEMOGRAPHICS

Aşağıda sizinle alakalı bazı sorular yer almaktadır. Lütfen bu soruları eksiksiz cevaplayınız.

1. Age (*Yaşınız*):
2. Gender (*Cinsiyetiniz*):
3. How do you perceive your economic status in Turkey overall?
(*Türkiye genelinde değerlendirdiğinizde kendi ekonomik durumunuzu nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?*)
 - a) Low-income level (*Düşük gelir düzeyi*)
 - b) Low-middle income level (*Düşük-orta gelir düzeyi*)
 - c) Middle income level (*Orta gelir düzeyi*)
 - d) Middle-upper income level (*Orta-üst gelir düzeyi*)
 - e) Upper income level (*Üst gelir düzeyi*)
4. Have you ever received therapy before? (*Daha önce hiç terapi aldınız mı?*)
 - a) Yes (*Evet*) b) No (*Hayır*)
5. Are you currently receiving therapy regularly?
 - a) Yes (Please specify how many years you have been receiving) (*Evet (lütfen kaç yıldır aldığınızı belirtin)*)
 - b) No (*Hayır*)

APPENDIX J

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL FORM



T.C. BOĞAZIÇI ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (SBİNAREK)

18.04.2024

Sayın Prof. Dr. Ali İzzet TEKCAN

Tez danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz öğrenciniz Esra Kardelen Yöyen'in "Sıkça ve Nadiren Paylaşılan Benlik Tanımlayıcı Anıların İncelenmesi" başlıklı projesi ile Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (SBİNAREK)'e yaptığınız 2024-16T kayıt numaralı başvurunuz 18.04.2024 tarih ve 2024/03 sayılı kurul toplantısında incelenmiş ve projenize etik onay verilmesi uygun bulunmuştur.

Bu karar tüm üyelerin toplantıya on-line olarak katılımıyla ve oybirliği ile alınmıştır. Onay mektubu tüm üyeler adına Komisyon Başkanı tarafından imzalanmıştır. Bilgilerinizi rica ederiz.

Saygılarımızla,

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Işıl ERDUYAN
Başkan

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