

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN PERSPECTIVE OF SELF-
CONSTRUAL, CLOSENESS AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION**

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Istanbul - 2024

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CLOSENESS AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS IN PERSPECTIVE OF SELF-CONSTRUAL, CLOSENESS AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

Close relationships are an important part of people's lives because, for their nature, humans need to belong. Existing literature has found that satisfactory relationships are related to increased physical and mental health, well-being, and happiness. On the other hand, breakup, divorce, and loss of a loved one are linked to decreased health outcomes and life satisfaction, and increased stress and depressive symptoms. The current study investigated the relationships between self, self-other interaction, and relationship satisfaction in close relationships of various types (family, friends, partners, etc.). Self-other interaction related factors were perceived closeness, including others in the self (IOS) and personality similarity. Self-concept clarity and self-construal (independent, relational-independent, and interdependent) were self-related factors. Two hundred eighteen individuals (78% women) participated in the study. Results showed that self-other interaction related factors were prominent in predicting relationship satisfaction. Additionally, self-related factors were related to relationship satisfaction. In conclusion, close relationships and self are interwoven, and satisfactory relationships are linked to self-variables and self-related variables.

Keywords: Close relationships, Closeness, Relationship satisfaction, Self-concept clarity, Self-construal

ÖZET

BENLİK KURGUSU, YAKINLIK VE İLİŞKİ DOYUMU PERSPEKTİFİNDEN YAKIN İLİŞKİLER

Yakın ilişkiler, insanın doğası gereği hissettiği aidiyet ihtiyacından ötürü insan yaşamının önemli bir parçasıdır. Mevcut literatür, tatmin edici ilişkilerin kişilerin fiziksel ve mental sağlığına, iyi oluş haline ve mutluluklarına olumlu yönde etki ettiğini desteklemektedir. Bunun yanında, boşanma, ayrılık, sevilen birinin kaybı kişilerde azalan yaşam doyumu ve sağlık göstergeleri ile artan stres ve depresif semptomlarla ilişkilendirilmektedir. Bu çalışmada, farklı türlerdeki yakın ilişkilerde benlik, ben-öteki ilişkisi ve ilişki doyumu arasındaki ilişkiler araştırılmaktadır. Ben-öteki ilişkisi ile ilgili faktörler arasında algılanan yakınlık, ben tasavvuruna ötekini katma, ve karakter benzerliği yer almaktadır. Benlik kavramıyla ilişkili faktörler ise benlik kurgusu ve benlik belirginliğidir. Çalışmaya %78'i kadın üzere toplam 218 kişi katılmıştır. Çalışma sonuçlarına göre, ben-öteki ilişkisine dair faktörlerin ilişki doyumunu yordamada öne çıktığını göstermektedir. Bunun yanında, benliğe ilişkin faktörlerin de ilişki doyumuyla ilişkili olduğunu desteklemektedir. Sonuç olarak; yakın ilişkiler ve benlik kavramı içe içe geçen kavramlardır ve ilişki doyumu hem benliğe hem ben-öteki ilişkisine dair faktörlerle ilişkilidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Benlik belirginliği, Benlik kurgusu, İlişki doyumu, Yakınlık, Yakın ilişkiler

DEDICATION



To my mom and dad..

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1. INTRODUCTION

"No [one] is an island."

John Dunno (1975)

What makes life meaningful? One of the possible answers to this question is the presence of and the satisfaction with close relationships. The quote above emphasizes the inevitable social contact with other people. For its nature, humans need to belong, develop relationships, and preserve them (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Intimacy is one of the dimensions of close relationships. Reis and Shaver (1988) defined intimacy as an internal personal process involving two people interacting. Interaction can contain, but not limited to, expressing and experiencing emotions, verbal and non-verbal communication, fulfilling social needs, increasing or decreasing social fearfulness, talking and finding out about interacting parties and their traits. Frequent physical interactions, such as touch and possibly sexual behavior, can lead to a feeling of psychological closeness. The feeling intimacy is unique to relationship and the extent to which one feels intimate to other would depend on duration, the frequency and the quality of interactions (Reis & Shaver, 1988).

Although there might be objective indicators of intimacy and how one perceives their relational partner, it is people's perceptions about the relationships that predominantly predict relationship satisfaction. In fact, relationship satisfaction is defined as "the subjective evaluation of one's relationship" (Keizer, 2014, p. 5437). In the psychological literature, relationship satisfaction often refers to romantic relationships, including heterosexual and others (Graham et al., 2011). Instead of satisfaction, related constructs such as quality, adjustment, and happiness are used in the literature of marital research (Heyman et al., 1994). In the current thesis, relationship satisfaction used as an umbrella term that refers to not only romantic relationships but also other types of relationships including family, friends, and relatives as suggested in the literature (e.g., Finkenauer et al., 2004; Morry & Harasymchuk, 2005).

1.1. The Nature of Close Relationships

The type of relationship that is particularly prominent and influential in human life

may vary depending on age, gender, and cultural settings (Antonicci et al., 2004). Kahn and Antonicci (1980) used the metaphor of convoys to describe personal networks with family, friends, and others, and in their convoy model they explained how these convoys (i.e., intimate relationships and others) behave at different life stages and generations in three circles: inner, middle, and outer circles. To give an example, Kahn and Antonicci (1980) found that, for a woman at the age of 35, her mother, father, husband, and sister constituted the inner circle. In contrast, for the same woman, the inner circle at 75 was centered on her relationship with her sister, daughter, and neighbor. Significant changes such as the loss of a husband and parents or the newborn daughter throughout the life inevitably shapes the inner circle. As clearly demonstrated in this example, factors such as age inevitably determines the formation of close relationships (Kahn & Antonicci, 1980). Therefore, defining intimate relationships, or inner circles as Kahn and Antonicci would call them, by focusing on specific relationship types would be misleading. Instead, close relationships refer to any type of relationship according to people's perceptions.

Research of close relationships has important implications for clinical psychology because of its relation to physical and mental health, well-being, and happiness. Close relationships are one of the protective factors concerning health (Stadler et al., 2012; Lunstad et al., 2010). Stadler et al. (2012) found that daily physical intimacy is protective against somatic symptoms like back and muscle aches. A meta-analytic review of a 148 study about close relationships and mortality revealed that stronger relationships decrease the likelihood of mortality risks by 50% by increasing the likelihood of the survival (Lunstad et al., 2010).

Having close relationships is strongly related to well-being (Antonucci et al., 2001; Kach & Antonucci, 1980; Mertika et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2017; Yucel & Dincer, 2024). According to Kach and Antonucci (1980), being supported in close relationships is an essential factor of well-being as it eliminates stress and other negative outcomes related to stress. Randall and Bodenmann (2017) also indicated that being satisfied in relationships is related to decreased levels of stress. Happiness is another important concept related to intimate relationships (Demir, 2009; Demir & Ozdemir, 2009; Demir & Weitekamp, 2007). Research revealed that the quality and quantity of our friendships are related to our happiness. Companionship and self-validation are two predominant factors related to friendship quality, which predicts happiness (Demir & Ozdemir, 2009; Demir & Weitekamp, 2007).

Intimate relationships can be beneficial for people in many aspects, but there are also some dark sides linked to the relationships when breakup, divorce, and loss of a loved one occur. Studies on the breakup of unmarried and married couples found that separation or divorce is associated with decreased health outcomes (Rhoades et al., 2011; Sbarra, 2015). People who have inadequate resilience functioning after the end of the relationship are at risk of health risks and even higher mortality rates (Sbarra, 2015). According to Rhoades et al. (2011), separation from a romantic partner was related to higher psychological stress and decreased life satisfaction. Instability in relationship satisfaction is related to increased depressive symptoms (Whitton & Whisman, 2010).

Therefore, understanding the true nature of relationship satisfaction seems to be crucial for a good and meaningful life and there is enough evidence in the literature to expect a strong positive correlation between having close relationships and relationship satisfaction.

1.2. Close Others and Self

Relationship satisfaction is not only related to the perception of the connection with others that one is interacting with. The perception and the organization of one's own self also contribute to relationship satisfaction (John et al., 2020). Baumeister (2010) emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships in the self. One of the foundations of the self was intimate relationships. The self is shaped by social interactions and relationships rather than being raised inside the person (Baumeister, 2010). If self is involved in, and even shaped by close relationships, then the nature of self and self-other interactions should also be the correlates of relationship satisfaction. Therefore, a thorough understanding of different layers of relationship satisfaction necessitates an assessment of self-other interaction.

1.2.1. Self-Other Overlap: Including Other in the Self

Self-expansion theory was suggested by Aron and Aron (1986) to connect the basic human motivation of self-expansion to close relationships. Self-expansion theory was built around the idea that expanding the self is human motivation, and intimate relationships help people reach that expansion by including the other people in the self. By including other's resources, identities, and perspectives in the self, people have an opportunity for self-

expansion by expanding their resources (Aron & Aron; 1986, 1996). The resource aspect of inclusion contains material goods, knowledge, and social advantages. By accessing and including the resources of the other, the accomplishment of the goals can be facilitated (Aron et al., 2004). In their research, Aron et al. (1991) tested how people share the given resources with other people with conditions of two: a) the interaction partner in three conditions: close friend, friend, or stranger, and b) the interaction partner's knowledge about division rules: informed vs. not informed. Results revealed that the resource difference shared between self and other decreases as closeness increases.

Similar to resources, perspectives of others can be considered as part of the self. The inclusion of the perspectives of others is related to seeing the world from the other's eyes; in other words, it is taking the other's perspectives somehow as himself/herself (Aron et al., 2004). In the same paper discussed above, Aron et al. (1991) showed that an adjective describing people were memorized better when this adjective reflected both the self and the closest other (vs. distant other). The results supported the idea that people were intertwined with the close other's perspective; in other words, people's perspectives were combined with other's perspectives in close relationships. The identity part of the theory corresponds to the idiosyncratic characteristics of the people that make people different from others. Inclusion of the identity of the other in the self means that differentiation between characteristics is less rigid; in other words, confusion about the traits of herself/himself and others is possible (Aron et al., 2004). When participants evaluated 90 trait adjectives for themselves, for their partner, and for a celebrity on a scale of extremely likely to unlikely, the response time was shorter when the given adjective overlaps with both the people themselves and their partner. On contrary, the response time was longer when the given adjective describes one person but not the other. Thus, these results supported the confusion between self and other (Aron et al., 1991).

From the perspective of the theory of inclusion of others in the self (Aron; 1986, 1996), interpersonal closeness and relationship satisfaction were also investigated in the literature. Tsapelas et al. (2009) found that boredom in long-term marriages is associated with decreased closeness, leading to less relationship satisfaction. Józefacka et al. (2023) investigated the predominant predictors of the relationship satisfaction of young adults in romantic relationships. In cohabiting couples, not for men but only for women, interpersonal closeness was found to be the most significant predictor of relationship satisfaction. In a

meta-analysis of the existing studies, Le et al. (2010) found that, in non-marital romantic relationships, a higher perceived closeness measured with the Inclusion of the Other Scale (IOS) was related to less likeness of relationship dissolution. Frost and LeBlanc (2022) investigated the discrepancy between actual and desired IOS in romantic relationships. Results revealed that more significant discrepancies between actual and desired closeness were associated with decreased relationship quality.

As a closeness measure, the desire to include others in the self can show interpersonal variance (Aron et al., 2004). Some people may desire less closeness, and therefore the discrepancy between the actual inclusion of others in the self (IOS; Aron, 1986) and the desired IOS can show interpersonal variance. Therefore, in addition to present level of self-other overlap measures by IOS, the discrepancy between the actual and ideal self-other overlap (thus closeness) in the perspective of including others in the self may predict the perceived relationship satisfaction.

1.2.2. Similarity Between Self and Other

Similarity refers to the elements of other sharing descriptive features with those of the self (Aron et al., 2004, p.34). People perceive anything as a part of themselves as possible, and it is similar to other sides of themselves. Thus, similarity was intertwined with closeness (Aron et al., 2004). People may have positive or negative attitudes toward others according to how much they are rewarded or punished (Newcomb, 1957). According to Byrne (1961), attitude similarity is rewarding and affects relationships positively. In contrast, attitude dissimilarity causes punishing interactions and impacts relationships negatively. Byrne (1961) found that people have more positive feelings towards a stranger when they perceive similar attitudes between themselves and a stranger. Izard (1960) showed that people in mutual friendships have more actual similar personalities than random people. Studies also used online behaviors on Facebook of the pairs of romantic couples and friends to assess similarity between pairs through an examination of digital records of language use and likes, as well as self-reports (Youyou, 2017). Results showed that likes-based and language-based similarities between couples and friends were stronger than the self-report similarity. A mixture of these three methods revealed that romantic partners and friends had stronger personality similarity (Youyou et al., 2017).

Treger and Masciale (2018) researched the domains of similarity in attraction to examine which domains can be more important in relation to the three relationship types: friendship, short and long-term romantic relationships. Results revealed that increased similarity was desired in long-term relationships compared to other relationship types. In that study, the most important five similarity domains across 18 domains in similarity were opinions on politics, career objectives, food preferences, travel interests, and taste in music.

Many studies were conducted to understand the effect of similarity dimension of closeness on relationship satisfaction. Carli (1991) designed a study to investigate the relationship between similarity in attractiveness, personality, and relationship satisfaction. University students in the dormitories participated in the study. Sixty-seven roommate pairs were analyzed, and the result revealed that increased similarity in personality and attractiveness levels among the participants was related to more satisfied friendships. In a similar vein, Russell and Wells (1991) conducted research with 94 married couples to examine the relationship between personality similarity and the quality of marriages. Results indicated that discrepancies between spouse's extraversion, psychoticism, and lie scores were associated with decreased quality of marriage. The results partly supported the importance of genetic similarity on marriage quality (Russell & Wells, 1991). Gongaza et al. (2007) worked with dating and married couples' similarity of personality and emotions. Results showed that both personality and emotional similarity between couples strengthened relationship satisfaction. Additionally, the mediation model of these three variables supported the idea that emotional similarity mediates the relationship between personality similarity and relationship satisfaction. Therefore, in addition to perceived closeness and self-other overlap, actual and perceived similarity can predict relationship satisfaction.

1.3. Self as the Relational Object

One and perhaps the most crucial component of a relationship is the self. It serves to initiate and develop relationships. Connection with others and being in satisfactory relationships are related aspects of self (Baumeister, 2010). Therefore, the structure of the self-concept would inevitably be part of any social relationship.

1.3.1. Self-Concept Clarity

One self-related -structural- construct that can play a significant role is self-concept clarity. Self-concept clarity is defined as "the extent to which the contents of an individual's self-concept (e.g., perceived personal attributes) are clearly and confidently defined, internally consistent and temporally stable" (SCC; Campbell et al., 1996, p. 141). Studies revealed that higher self-concept clarity is related to higher self-esteem, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion (Campbell et al., 1996). Lower self-concept clarity is associated with higher neuroticism (Campbell et al., 1996). In social conflicts, people with higher SCC tend to be more active in problem-solving and less focused on themselves. On the contrary, lower SCC was associated with more passiveness during social conflicts (Bechtoldt et al., 2010).

Cultural differences in self-concept clarity were also investigated since this concept reflected Western culture. Research showed that Japanese people scored low on SCC and self-esteem compared to the Canadian scores (Campbell et al., 1996). That result was consistent with Markus and Kitayama's (1991) work, which suggested that, in Asian cultures, the construal of the self was predominantly shaped by the social environment, and the view of the self was changeable. In Western cultures like Canada, people have a more autonomous view of themselves that is not very flexible according to the social circle.

Self-concept clarity was investigated from the perspective of romantic relationships. Lewandowski et al. (2010) designed a study to investigate the relationship between self-concept clarity, self-esteem, inclusion of the self (IOS), commitment, and relationship satisfaction with 199 participants who were in a romantic relationship. Results revealed that higher self-concept clarity scores were related to higher satisfaction and commitment in relationships. Additionally, mediator roles of self-esteem and inclusion of the self in self-concept clarity and relationship satisfaction were supported by the conducted analysis (Lewandowski et al., 2010). Parallel with the study of Lewandowski et al. (2010), Parise et al. (2018) indicated that people with increased levels of self-concept clarity have more satisfactory relationships and more satisfied partners in romantic relationships. According to Tajmirriyahi and Ickes (2020), in romantic relationships, self-concept clarity plays a vital role in self-disclosure.

The role of self-concept clarity goes beyond relationship satisfaction between romantic pairs. Self-concept clarity regarding parent-child relationships was also examined. Jia et al. (2022) implemented a study to determine the role of the parents' self-concept clarity on children's SCC and marital and parent-child relationship satisfaction. Results showed that the mother's and father's SCC was related to the quality of the mother-child and father-child relationships. Additionally, higher self-concept clarity of one of the partners was associated with higher relationship quality for both partners. These results supported the idea that SCC relates to family dynamics from the perspective of children and marriage (Jia et al., 2022).

1.3.2. Self- Construal

Markus and Kitayama (1991) investigated the effect of culture on the construals of the self. By examining the differences between American and Asian cultures, they established a theory around two different self-construals, independent and interdependent. Emotion, cognition, and motivation of the self were structured around the construals of the self. In independent self-construal, autonomous and authentic self was centered. Although the social environment was also important in the independent view, the motivation under it was linked to the verification of the inner beliefs. The interdependent view of the self circled being connected with the social environment and being a part of it. Beliefs about the self highly depend on the context, situation, or people. Interdependent selves are much more sensitive to cues from their social environments because of their attentiveness and sensitivity to others and the self from the perspective of others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Cross et al. (2000) suggested relational-interdependent self-construal since the interdependence view of self was much related to groups rather than close relationships. They criticized this view of interdependence since it does not include the American culture that emphasizes not group harmony but intimate relationships. Relational-interdependent construal is "thinking of oneself in terms of close others or identifying with close others" (Cross et al., 2000, p. 793). They created a scale to measure relational-interdependent construal named Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale (RISC). Results revealed that RISC was moderately related to collectivism and interdependence measures but not to independent ones. People who scored high on relational-interdependent self-construal were likely to be more responsive and open in close relationships (Cross et al., 2000).

Markus and Kitayama (1991) used the interdependent construal of self parallel with “collectivism” and “independent” for “individualism”. Collectivism is defined as a “social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives (family, co-workers, tribe, nation)” (Triandis, 1995, p. 3). Collectivists’ main motives are following the norms and responsibilities inflicted by collectives. They emphasize these responsibilities over their personal objectives. Being part of the collective was essential to them, meaning connections with people were crucial. The definition of individualism is “a social pattern that consists of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent of collectives” (Triandis, 1995, p. 3). Their objectives and demands were the main motives of these individuals over the goals of the collective. In social relationships, they analyzed the benefits and losses. Asian cultures were predominantly regarded as collectivist, whereas European and American cultures counted as individualistic. Degrees of collectivism and individualism differ by country, and the same country can include elements from both (Triandis, 1995). Triandis and Gelfand (1998) worked on the horizontal-vertical model of the I-C (individualism-collectivism) and empirically supported the theory. They suggested that not all collectivist and individualistic groups are the same and added other components, such as equality (horizontal) and hierarchy (vertical).

The relationship between self-construals and intimate relationships was investigated in the literature. Kagıtcıbaşı (2007) emphasized families in the “Theory of Family Change” because of their critical role in the transmission of the culture to the children. The economic and psychological benefits of having children were discussed from the perspective of independent and interdependent cultures. In interdependent cultures, having children economically benefits families since having more children means more support. Another aspect of these cultures was that having a son was preferred over daughters. However, in independent cultures, families emphasize the psychological benefits of having children. These cultures generally have higher socioeconomic status, smaller families, and no preference for sons (see Myers-Walls, 2010, for a review).

Pınarbasi (2023) designed a study to compare young adults in Türkiye, a relatively interdependent culture, and Germany, a relatively independent culture, concerning autonomy and independent self-construal. Results revealed no significant differences between Turkish and German adult independence scores, and Turkish participants scored higher on the scale. Ercan (2013) investigated self-construal in young adults with a sample

of Turkish participants. According to the research findings, relational and independent self-construals were two prominent construals compared to interdependent self-construals. Karakitapoğlu-Aygün (2004) found that among descriptives participants used to describe self and identity, themes of independent and relational-interdependent were more predominant than collective-interdependent self-construal. On the contrary, Uskul et al. (2004)'s research revealed that Turkish people scored high on self-construal interdependence compared to Canadian scores and independent self-construal scores. The stance of Turkey in the spectrum of individualism-collectivism was mixed, but it did not mean to conclude that Turkish culture did not show collectivistic features (Goregenli, 1997; Fischer et al., 2017).

Research showed the link of satisfaction and self-construal in the same and cross-sex friendships (Morry & Kito, 2009; Morry et al., 2014). Morry et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study to examine the relationship between relational-independent self-construal and satisfaction in same-sex friendships. Results supported that people with higher RISC are associated with higher relationship quality that measures satisfaction, love, and like in friendships. Also, this effect was found in the time range of four months at four different times, which demonstrated the long-term effect. Morry et al. (2013) found that the similarity between the RISC levels of the friends was associated with higher satisfaction when the RISC of the friend that was perceived was also high.

1.4. Self-Construal, Self-Concept Clarity and Closeness

Holland et al. (2004) conducted three studies examining the relationship between self-construal and closeness as physical, interpersonal space. They used a priming technique that activated independent self-construal by priming the participants' names and interdependent self-construal by asking them to evaluate the similarities between them and close others. To test the personal distance, they used a seating arrangement with chairs, and one chair had a jacket on it to show the presence of others in the room. Results revealed that the activation of interdependent self-construal resulted in less proximity to the other person's chair. On the contrary, priming of the independent one demonstrated the increased distance. They concluded that each person had these two self-construals, and activation of the self-construal affected interpersonal behavior as personal proximity (Holland et al., 2004). Uskul et al.

(2004) worked on cross-cultural studies to investigate the relationship between self-construals and closeness in close relationships. They compared the sample of Turkey and Canada to examine the effect of culture on actual and desired closeness with their partner, family, friends, and relatives. Research studies revealed that Turkish people scored high on interdependence compared to Canadian participants, but independence scores were not significant among these two cultures. Independent from the type of relationships, Turkish people scored higher than Canadians on the closeness scale. In ideal closeness, Turkish people desired to be closer in relationships compared to participants from Canada (Uskul et al., 2004).

Cross et al. (2003) investigated the relationships between relational-interdependent self-construal, consistency in self-concept, and well-being. They found that the relationship between RISC and consistency in the self-concept was weak. Another finding was that self-concept consistency among significant relationships was not associated with well-being. This finding did not differentiate among participants who scored higher and lower on RISC (Cross et al., 2003).

Lewandowski et al. (2010), in study 1, found that participants who scored high on the SCC scale scored high on IOS. In other words, people who had more clarity in their self-concept feel more inclusion of the self in their romantic partners. Study 2 used manipulation checks with personality traits to measure self-concept clarity. After completing the trait list, participants were assigned to two conditions: self-concept confusion and self-concept clarity. In the confusion group, participants received a list of three adjectives they reported were not defined. The clarity group got a list of three adjectives to describe them that they chose. In the end, participants of both conditions gave examples about the three adjectives that explain why that adjective describes them or not. Analysis of study 2 supported the findings of study 1 that demonstrated higher self-concept clarity is related to higher inclusion in the self.

1.5. Current Study

The current study investigated the factors related to and predicting relationships satisfaction in three related domains: closeness, self-other overlap, and self. Closeness has been analyzed as the crucial relational factor. The current study examined closeness with

perceived closeness, actual and ideal IOS, and similarity measures. Driven from the theories and findings described in the previous section, two (preregistered) hypotheses were tested in the current research:

H1: There is a positive correlation between perceived interpersonal closeness and relationship satisfaction.

H2: There is a negative correlation between the discrepancy of perceived self-other overlap and ideal self-other overlap, and relationship satisfaction.

Instead of focusing solely on closeness, in current study, it is aimed to explore the evaluations of the self in order to shed light on different layers of relationship satisfaction. Therefore, the current thesis incorporates individual-specific factors as well as relational factors to understand relationship satisfaction. Individual-specific factors that were considered as the correlated of relationship satisfaction as explained in the literature discussed in the previous section are self-concept clarity and self-construal. Aside from the confirmatory part, it is aimed to explore how relationship satisfaction is linked to self-concept clarity, self-construal, self-close other similarity, self-other overlap, and ideal self-other overlap.

The study was conducted via Qualtrics (www.qualtrics.com), which is a research design and data collection platform. Convenience sampling was used to collect data for the current study. Before the data collection process, all hypotheses, measures, sample size was preregistered via Aspredicted (see <https://aspredicted.org/mn92m.pdf>). With permission from Yeditepe University's Ethical Committee, the current study was conducted (see Appendix A).

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

The Qualtrics link to the study was distributed through social media. The criteria of participation were being over 18 years old and voluntary confirmation based on the informed consent form. We aimed to collect data from 200 participants. Two hundred eighteen participants completed the survey. Seventy-eight percent of the participants was women. The age range was between 19 and 61 ($M = 40.03$, $SD = 11.55$). Fifty eight percent of the participants were university graduates, and most of the sample consisted of bachelor's degrees and higher educational levels. Demographic information about participants' characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Sample Characteristics	n	%	M	SD
Gender				
Men	37	18.7%		
Women	155	78.3%		
Other	0	0%		
Education Level				
Primary Education	1	0.5%		
High School	18	9.1%		
Two-year degree	21	10.6%		
Bachelor's degree	115	58.1%		
Master's degree	28	14.1%		
Doctoral degree	9	4.5%		
Age			40.02	11.54

2.2. Procedure

Before participants started the study, they read the informed consent form, which included information about the study, contacts, and possible risks of participation. Participation was voluntary and involved no gain. Before the start of the survey, participants wrote the initials of the people who are closest. It is asked to participants to complete the survey according to the selected person. Participants first asked to evaluate a list of adjectives once for themselves and once for the close other (Me Not Me Task), the Self-Concept Clarity Scale, the Inclusion of Other Scale, and the Self-Construal Scale. They answered the question of how close they feel to the person they are closest to and how satisfied they are with their relationship. Participants marked the option that best describes the relationship type. Finally, participants filled out the demographic form (age, gender, education level). After completing the survey, a debriefing form was presented. The debriefing form provided information about the purpose of the study and contacts for further data for interested parties.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. Self-Concept Clarity Scale

The Self-Concept Clarity Scale (Campbell et al., 1996) was used to assess self-concept clarity. The scale consists of 12 items; ten of them were reverse-coded (e.g., "I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am"). Participants scored each item from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). In the original study, the reliability of the scale was 0.86 (Campbell et al., 1996). The Turkish adaptation of the scale (Sumer & Gungor, 1999) was used in the current study. In that study, reliability was found 0.89 (Sumer & Gungor, 1999), whereas in the current study, Cronbach's alpha is 0.88.

2.3.2. Self-Construal

Self-construal has three dimensions: independent, interdependent and relational-interdependent. To measure relational self-construal, the three items from the Relational

Self-Construal Scale (Cross et al., 2000) was used. To assess independent and collective independent self-construals six items from Gudykunst and Lee (2003) were used. Items were selected from original studies according to the highest factor loadings from associated construals (cf. Ugurlar & Wulff, 2022). Three different scores were obtained: independent (e.g., "I prefer to be self-reliant rather than depend on others"), collective-interdependent (e.g., "I respect decisions made by my group), and relational-interdependent (e.g., "When I feel very close to someone, it often feels to me like that person is an important part of who I am"). Participants scored a total of nine items, and each category had three questions on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). A Turkish translation of the items was made for that study by two experts, Dr. Pınar Ugurlar and me. For proofreading, translations were checked by two reviewers whose native language was Turkish and professional language was English. Cronbach's alpha for independent self-construal scale was 0.72, collectivist self-construal scale was 0.78 and 0.84 for the interdependent relational self-construal. In current study, the Cronbach's alpha results were 0.68, 0.65, 0.63, respectively.

2.3.3. Me- Not Me Task

We used me-not me (they- not they) task (Aron et al., 1996) to measure self-close other overlap. To identify the closest one, the initials of this person was asked to participants before me-me not task and asked participants to evaluate that selected person for the study. To evaluate the similarity between oneself and close others, adjectives that are adapted from the Big Five (John et al., 1991) were used (Uğurlar & Wulff, 2022). Participants assessed 25 opposite adjective pairs (e.g., tidy-untidy) for both themselves (option of me or not me) and the closest other (option of he/she or not he/she) (see Figure 1). The Turkish version of the opposite adjective pairs was created in the current study. The translation was made by two experts and two other raters proofread the translations. To calculate the similarity score, the answers given by participants for themselves and the closest ones were compared, and the number of matching answers was counted. Matching adjectives between self and the other was calculated and each pairing adjectives counted as a similarity score. Similarity score would increase if a person relates the same adjective the self and to the other person. For example, if the participant selected the «me» option for the adjective «tidy» and selected the «he/she» option for the closest other, this participant would gain 1 point for a similarity

score. The maximum similarity that could be obtained was 50 and the minimum was 0. Higher similarity scores indicate higher personality similarity between the participant and the closest other.

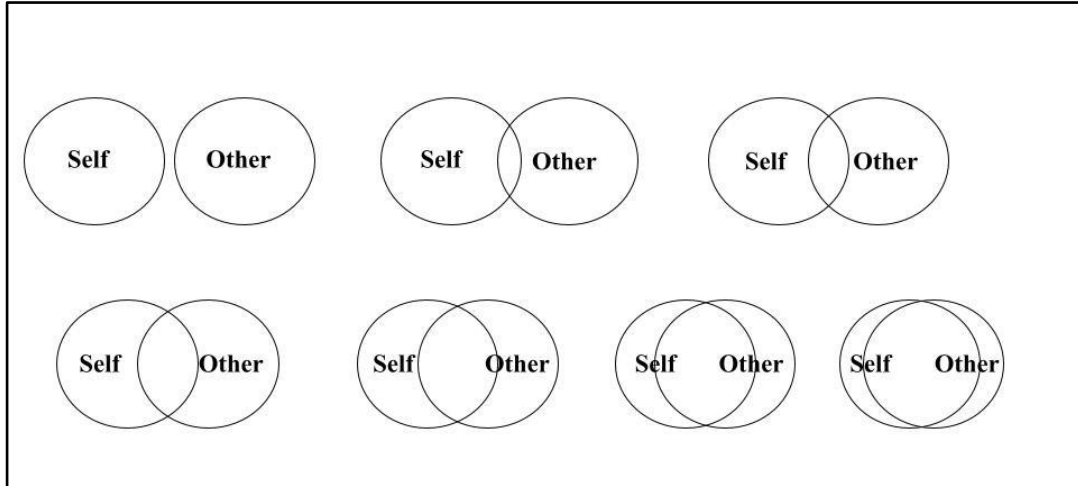
Figure 1

Exemplar of a screen from the me-not me task

Plansız A.A (initials of the closest person) A.A (initials of the closest person) Değil	Disiplinli Benim Ben Değilim
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2.3.4. Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale

To measure perceived self-close other overlap, the Inclusion of Other Scale (IOS; Aron et al., 1992) was used. IOS consists of seven choices that intersect two circles, varying in crossing areas. One of the circles represented the participant, whereas the other circle represented the closest one. The first pair of circles was not intersecting, and the last pair of circles was almost one within the other (see Figure 2). That seven-circle symbolized the relationship between the participant and the closest other. First, participants selected the best option from the seven choices that best represents their relationship with (initials of the person). Secondly, from the same pairs of circles participants selected the best option that describes their desired intimacy with(initials of the person). The discrepancy between actual and ideal IOS was calculated by subtracting the ideal IOS score from the actual IOS score. Absolute value of the subtraction scores was in the current study.

Figure 2*Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (IOS)**Note.* Adapted from Aron et al. (1992)**2.3.5. Relationship Satisfaction**

To assess relationship satisfaction, we asked one item “How satisfied are you with your relationship with (initials of the selected person) ? ” on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 not satisfied to 7 extremely satisfied (e.g, Ezer, 2017).

2.3.6. Closeness

Perceived closeness was measured by the single item with the question, "To what extent are you close with (the initials of the person)?" a 10-point scale was used, from 1 (not close) to 10 (very close) (e.g., Uğurlar & Wulff, 2022).

2.3.7. Relationship Type

To found out who was selected by the participants as the closest one, we asked which option best describes the relationship with six options: mother/father, partner, brother/sisters, friend, relatives (other than mother, father, sister, and brother), and others. The other option was an open-ended question.

2.3.8. Demographic Information Form

Age, education level, and gender information were included in the survey.



3. RESULTS

Before conducting analysis, missing value analysis and normality tests were conducted. A Missing Values Analysis showed that Little's (1988) test of Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) was not significant, $\chi^2 101.034$, $DF = 85$, $p = .110$. Since the results of the analysis were not significant, the missing values were randomly distributed. To check whether the data was normally distributed or not, Mardia's (1970) multivariate skewness and kurtosis coefficients, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests (Massey, 1951), Q-Q plots, and histograms were used. Means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis coefficients were shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis coefficients of study variables

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Relationship Satisfaction	5.80	1.36	-1.33	1.66
2. Closeness	8.83	1.96	-2.15	4.77
3. IOS	4.89	1.76	-.664	-.389
4. Ideal IOS	5.34	1.62	-.884	.119
5. Ideal-Actual Discrepancy IOS	0.95	1.3	1.84	3.87
6. Similarity	34.78	7.26	-.439	.236
7. Independent Self Construal	5.48	1.28	-1.09	1.32
8. Interdependent Self Construal	5.49	1.15	-.748	.169
9. Relational Self Construal	4.93	1.32	-.542	-.109
10. SCC	3.56	0.72	-.354	-.231

3.1. Frequencies of Relational Types

Fifty three percent of the participants identified their partners as the closest person and 43 percent of the participants identified others such as their mother, father, brother, sister, friends, and relatives. Frequency of the relational types were shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency of relationship types

Relational Type	Frequency	Percent
Mother/Father	12	6.1%
Partner	106	53.5%
Brother/Sister	9	4.5%
Friend	46	22.7%
Relatives	6	3.0%
Other	15	8.1%

3.2. Actual and Ideal Self-Other Overlap

To investigate whether there are significant differences between actual and ideal(desired) overlap with closest other, paired samples t-test was used. The results indicated that there was significant difference between actual overlap ($M = 4.89$, $SD = 1.76$) and ideal overlap ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.62$), $t(194) = -4.07$, $p < .001$.

3.3. Demographic Characteristics and Study Variables

To compare the all variables included in the study in terms of gender, an independent samples *t*-test were used. Women scored higher on self-concept clarity scale ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 0.70$) than men ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.80$), $t(186) = -0.62$, $p = .036$. Results indicated that IOS differences was statistically not significant, between the women ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.73$) and the men group ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.80$), $t(190) = 0.62$, $p = .539$. Perceived closeness differences was statistically not significant, between the women ($M = 8.92$, $SD = 1.87$) and

the men group ($M = 8.57$, $SD = 2.17$), $t(189) = -0.98$, $p = .326$. Relationship satisfaction were not significant between women ($M = 5.79$, $SD = 1.37$) and men ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.36$), $t(190) = 0.31$, $p = .757$. On independent self-construal scale, women ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 1.13$) scored higher than and men ($M = 5.35$, $SD = 1.72$), but the differences were statistically non-significant, $t(186) = -0.88$, $p = .380$. Scores on relational self-construal was statistically not significant between the women ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 1.29$) and the men group ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.46$), $t(185) = -0.16$, $p = .876$. On interdependent self-construal scale, women ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 1.10$) scored higher than and men ($M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.24$), but the differences were statistically non-significant, $t(186) = -0.64$, $p = .526$. Similarity differences was statistically not significant, between the women ($M = 35.05$, $SD = 7.01$) and the men group ($M = 34.22$, $SD = 8.19$), $t(182) = -0.62$, $p = .538$. Men scored higher on ideal- actual IOS discrepancy ($M = 1.03$, $SD = 1.30$) than women ($M = 0.90$, $SD = 1.25$), but the differences were statistically non-significant, $t(190) = 0.51$, $p = .611$.

To examine the relationship between age and study variables, Pearson's correlation was used. Results indicated that there are positive correlation between age and self-concept clarity, $r(188) = .36$, $p < .001$. Correlation coefficients between age and other study variables were not statistically significant.

A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate the differences between education levels on the study variables. Educational levels significantly differed on SCC, $F(5, 182) = 3.02$, $p = .012$. Post hoc analyses with Tukey's HSD revealed that high school graduates ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.73$) had significantly lower self-concept clarity scores than participants who had bachelor's degree ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.69$). The other post-hoc analyses between education levels was not statistically significant.

3.4. Hypotheses Testing

Pearson's correlation was used to examine the relationship between relationship satisfaction, perceived closeness and ideal-actual overlap discrepancy for hypotheses testing. Analysis showed that there are positive correlation between perceived closeness and relationship satisfaction with moderate effect size, $r(190) = .39$, $p < .010$. The variables ideal-actual IOS discrepancy and relationship satisfaction were found to be negatively correlated with moderate effect size, $r(191) = -.43$, $p < .01$. Additionally,

correlations among variables in the study were examined for exploratory purposes. Correlations among all variables were shown in Table 4.



Table 4*Correlations*

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Relationship Satisfaction	1									
2. Closeness	.39**	1								
3. IOS	.44**	.34**	1							
4. Ideal IOS	.21**	.12	.58**	1						
5. Ideal-Actual Discrepancy IOS	-.43**	-.22**	-.40**	-.02	1					
6. Similarity	.40**	.20**	.25**	.11	-.25**	1				
7. Independent Self Construal	.01	.07	.15*	-.03	-.16*	.08	1			
8. Interdependent Self Construal	.20**	.07	.16*	.16*	-.10	.25**	.15*	1		
9. Relational Self Construal	.16*	.09	.12	.08	-.07	.06	.21**	.38**	1	
10. SCC	.18*	.07	.12	-.01	-.09	.28**	.04	.09	-.01	1

Note. * $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$; IOS: Inclusion of the Self ; SCC: Self-Concept Clarity.

3.5. Exploratory Analyses

For exploratory analyses, multiple regression was used to examine the variables that predict relationship satisfaction. Firstly, all variables in the study were used to investigate the strongest variable. Secondly, closeness variables (perceived closeness, ideal-overlap discrepancy, and similarity) and self-related variables (self-concept clarity and self-construal) were analyzed separately.

3.5.1. Predicting Relationship Satisfaction from Self and Self-Other Related Variables

Firstly, a multiple regression analysis was used to predict relationship satisfaction from self-concept clarity, self-construal, self-close other similarity, interpersonal closeness, self-other overlap, and ideal self-other overlap. Relationship satisfaction was added to the regression equation as the outcome variable, whereas self-concept clarity, self-construal, self-close other similarity, interpersonal closeness, self-other overlap, and ideal self-other overlap were predictors. The results showed that the self-concept clarity, independent, interdependent, and relational self-construal, similarity, closeness, overlap, and ideal-actual overlap discrepancy explained 43% of the variance in relationship satisfaction, $F(8, 188) = 15.28$, $p < .001$. The individual predictors were investigated further and revealed that perceived closeness ($\beta = .232$, $t(190) = 3.70$, $p < .001$), overlap ($\beta = .212$, $t(190) = 3.07$, $p = .002$), and ideal-actual overlap discrepancy ($\beta = -.224$, $t(190) = -3.26$, $p = .001$), similarity with close others ($\beta = .239$, $t(190) = 3.61$, $p < .001$) were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction. Self-concept clarity ($\beta = .055$, $t(190) = .90$, $p = .371$), independent self-construal ($\beta = -.086$, $t(190) = -1.39$, $p = .167$), and interdependent self-construal ($\beta = .030$, $t(190) = .45$, $p = .655$), and relational self-construal ($\beta = .113$, $t(190) = 1.72$, $p = .088$) were not significant predictors of relationship satisfaction. Multiple regressions of all variables included in the study were shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Standardised (β) regression coefficients, SE, t and p values for each predictor in a regression model predicting relationship satisfaction

Variable	β	SE	t	p
Constant		.758	2.366	.019
Closeness	.232	.042	3.696	<.001
IOS	.212	.052	3.073	.002
Ideal-Actual Discrepancy IOS	-.224	.070	-3.256	.001
Similarity	.239	.012	3.616	<.001
SCC	.055	.113	.896	.371
Independent Self Construal	-.086	.064	-1.390	.167
Interdependent Self Construal	.030	.076	.448	.655
Relational Self Construal	.113	.066	1.719	.088

Note. Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction ; IOS: Inclusion of the Other Scale ; SCC: Self-Concept Clarity.

In a second model, closeness variables that are perceived closeness, ideal-overlap discrepancy, and similarity were analyzed with multiple regression. The results showed that perceived closeness, ideal-overlap discrepancy, and similarity explained %33 of the variance in relationship satisfaction, $R^2 = .33$, $F(3, 182) = 29.03$, $p < .001$. Unstandardised (B) Regression Coefficients, SE, t and p values, 95% CI shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Unstandardised (B) regression coefficients, SE, t and p values, 95% CI for closeness variables predicting relationship satisfaction

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95%CI
Closeness	.18	.04	3.97	<.001	[.09 , .26]
Ideal-Actual Discrepancy	-.29	.06	-4.28	<.001	[-.43 , -.16]
IOS					
Similarity	.05	.01	4.34	<.001	[.02 , .07]

Note. Dependent Variable: Relationship Satisfaction ; IOS: Inclusion Other in the Self Scale.

In a third model, self-related variables that were self-concept clarity and self-construals (independent , interdependent , relational) were analyzed with multiple regression. The results showed that self-concept clarity and self-construals (independent, interdependent, relational) explained %08 of the variance in relationship satisfaction, $R^2 = .080$, $F(4, 181) = 3.87$, $p < .001$. Unstandardised (B) Regression Coefficients, SE, t and p values, 95% CI shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Unstandardised (B)Regression Coefficients,SE, t and p values, 95% CI for self-related variables predicting relationship satisfaction

Variable	B	SE	t	p	95%CI
SCC	.34	.13	2.55	.012	[.07 , .60]
Independent Self- Construal	.00	.07	0.01	.99	[-.15 , .15]
Interdependent Self- Construal	.15	.09	1.59	.11	[-.04 , .33]
Relational Self-Construal	.12	.08	1.48	.13	[-.04 , .28]

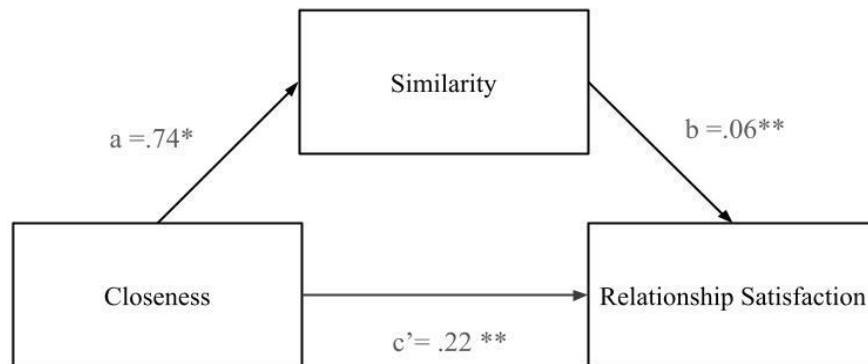
3.5.2. Similarity as the Mediator on the Link between Closeness and Relationship Satisfaction

For exploratory purposes, a model of mediation, similarity being the mediator on the relationship between perceived closeness and relationship satisfaction was tested. In this mediation model, perceived closeness was the predictor variable, relationship satisfaction was dependent variable, and similarity was mediator (see Figure 3). The mediation model was significant, $R^2 = .26$, $F(2, 180) = 31.38$, $p < .001$. The direct effect (c') of closeness on relationship satisfaction was supported by the model, $c' = 0.22$, $LLCI/ULCI \neq 0$, $t = 4.80$, $p < .001$. The indirect effect (ab) of closeness via similarity on relationship satisfaction was supported by the model, $ab = 0.04$, $LLCI/ULCI \neq 0$. The partially standardized indirect effect was 0.04, $LLCI/ULCI \neq 0$.

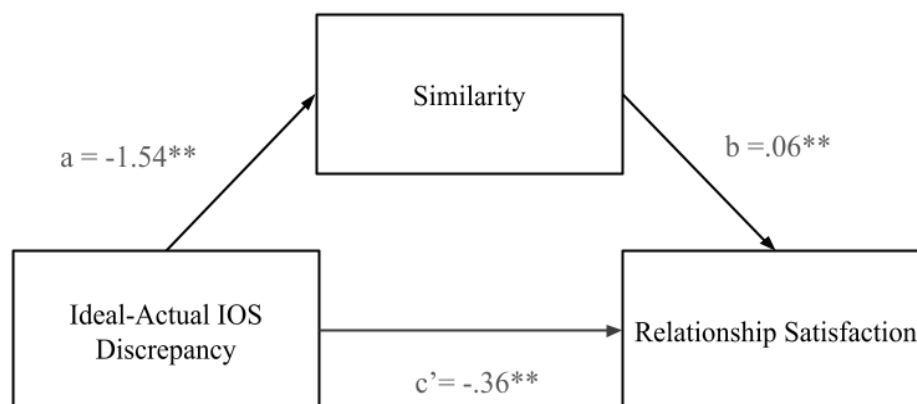
In the second model, mediation of similarity on the relationship between ideal-actual IOS discrepancy and relationship satisfaction were investigated (see Figure 4). Ideal-actual IOS discrepancy was the predictor variable, relationship satisfaction was dependent variable, and similarity was mediator variable. The mediation model was significant, $R^2 = .26$, $F(2, 181) = 32.79$, $p < .001$. The direct effect (c') of ideal-actual IOS discrepancy on relationship satisfaction was supported by the model, $c' = -0.35$, $LLCI/ULCI \neq 0$, $t = -5.09$, $p < .001$. The indirect effect (ab) of ideal-actual IOS discrepancy via similarity on relationship satisfaction was supported by the model, $ab = -0.09$, $LLCI/ULCI \neq 0$. The partially standardized indirect effect was -0.07, $LLCI/ULCI \neq 0$.

Figure 3

Mediating role of similarity on closeness and relationship satisfaction

**Figure 4**

Mediating role of similarity on ideal-actual IOS discrepancy and relationship satisfaction



4. DISCUSSION

In the current study, expanding the relationship types and focusing on both self-related variables (self-concept clarity and self-construal) and self-other related variables (interpersonal closeness, including others in the self, similarity) of relationship satisfaction, broadening the perspective of close relationships. Results support that both self and self-other variables were related to relationship satisfaction in close relationships.

4.1. Closeness and Relationship Satisfaction

Among all study variables, perceived closeness, IOS, ideal-actual IOS discrepancy, and similarity are prominent variables predicting relationship satisfaction. In the current study, those measures are categorized under the term "closeness," which is one of the terms related to relationship-specific features. From that point of view, current studies' results are consistent with John et al. (2020), who found the importance of people's perceptions about their relationships in predicting relationship satisfaction.

For confirmatory purposes, there were two main hypotheses in the present study. The study's first hypothesis was that there is a positive correlation between perceived interpersonal closeness and relationship satisfaction. The results of the study support the first hypothesis. People's perception of closeness was related to people's perceived satisfaction in close relationships. Increased perceived closeness to the closest other indicates better relationship satisfaction. The result was consistent with the literature on romantic relationships (Tsapelas et al., 2009; Le et al., 2010). Also, the current study supports the generalizability of the results to romantic relationships and non-romantic relationships. Contrary to Józefacka et al. (2023), there were no gender differences in the current study. One of the possible reasons for this result may be due to the higher number of women in the sample than the number of men in the current study.

The study's second hypothesis was a negative correlation between the discrepancy of perceived self-other overlap and ideal self-other overlap and relationship satisfaction. The conducted analyses support the hypotheses. People who have a larger discrepancy between actual and ideal IOS are less satisfied in their relationships. The match between people's

internalized closeness level and the actual closeness affects the perception of people's satisfaction in that relationship. These results support Aron et al. (2004), who states that not all people want to be closer, but some people desire less closeness in intimate relationships. People who desire less closeness can feel threatened by losing their personal control and identity when the actual closeness they experience is higher than desired. From the perspective of self-expansion theory, when there is no personal space for expanding the self, people can feel losing control, which, in turn, causes "under-expansion". Additionally, exhaustion from the partner's desires for activities can create "over-expansion". When there is too much inclusion of others in the self, it can create fear of losing identity. Not only desirable features but also undesired features of the other can be integrated into the self. In turn, it can cause a desire for less closeness in intimate relationships (Aron et al., 2004). Another possibility in the discrepancy spectrum is being less close to the other than the desired level of closeness. In the current study, people desire higher closeness than their actual level of closeness. As well as desiring less closeness, being less closer than expected was related to decreased relationship satisfaction. People can feel an unfulfilled desire to be related to that relationship (Frost & Froster, 2013). The two ends of the discrepancy spectrum, which are feeling too close and not close enough, are both related to decreased satisfaction in intimate relationships. These results are consistent with Frost and LeBlanc's (2022) study on romantic relationships. The current study expands the literature by including not only romantic relationships but also other types of close relationships with similar dynamics in perspective of the match between desired and current closeness levels.

Another measure of closeness measure included in the study is IOS. Results show that people who include close others more in their selves are satisfied more in their relationships. This study's results were consistent with other studies in literature, including romantic couples (Tsapeles et al., 2009; Le et al., 2010). Józefacka et al. (2023) found that increased closeness is related to higher relationship satisfaction, not for men but only for women. In the current study, there are no gender differences. One possible reason for that result may be insufficient male participants in the current study. There are not enough samples of men for a conclusion concerning gender differences. Additionally, there are not only romantic partners but also other relationship types in the present study that can affect the different results for gender differences.

The similarity of the personality characteristics is discussed as a part of closeness in

intimate relationships. Results support the idea that people with similar personality characteristics are more satisfied in their relationships with close others. Those results are consistent with the literature that found that the increased similarity is related to higher relationship satisfaction in friendships (Carli, 1991) and dating and married couples (Russell & Wells, 1991; Gongaza et al., 2007). One of the possible explanations for that similarity can also be interpreted by one of the elements of including others in the self. Aron et al. (2004) stated that similarity makes it possible to include a part of anything in the self. There should be some similarities in perceiving something as a part of themselves. Mediation analyses support that similarity mediates the relationship between ideal-actual closeness discrepancy and relationship satisfaction. Higher discrepancy in the ideal-actual closeness is related to less similarity, which, in turn, is linked to less satisfaction in the relationship. Those results support the role of similarity in including others in the self. Having more similar characteristics with close others is related to a lower discrepancy in ideal-actual closeness. Additionally, increased similarity in close relationships is related to increased attraction (Carli, 1957). People with more similar characteristics can be attracted to each other, which in turn can increase the possibility of similar personal characteristics getting closer.

Closeness-related variables are investigated to understand the concept of closeness and its relation to relationship satisfaction. Although there are correlations between closeness variables, these correlations are weak to moderate. Although both scales measure closeness, scales capture different aspects of closeness. The current study enables us to discuss closeness from various aspects and its relation to relationship satisfaction from a broader perspective in various relationship types.

4.2. Self-related Variables and Relationship Satisfaction

In relation to the self, self-concept clarity and self-construal (independent self-construal, interdependent self-construal, and relational-interdependent self-construal) are discussed in the current study.

The only significant factor predicting relationship satisfaction among self-related variables is self-concept clarity. People with more clarity in their self-concepts are more satisfied in their relationships. Results are consistent with current literature studies that found

higher self-concept clarity is associated with higher relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships (Lewandowski et al., 2010; Parise et al., 2018) and parent-child relationships (Jia et al., 2022). One of the possible explanations for that result is that higher clarity in self is related to higher agreeableness and conscientiousness (Campbell et al., 1996), which in turn is linked to higher relationship satisfaction (Schaffhuser et al., 2014). Additionally, higher self-concept clarity is associated with higher inclusion of the other in the self (Lewandowski et al., 2010). According to Aron and Aron (1986), close relationships are a source of expanding the self. By including others close to them in the self, people expand their resources, perspectives, and characteristics; in turn, people may have more clarity in the self. Additionally, people who have more clarity in the self can be better sources for expanding the self, which can lead to more inclusion in the self in others.

The relationship between self-construals and relationship satisfaction is investigated in the current study. Higher interdependent and relational-interdependent self-construals are related to higher relationship satisfaction. However, independent self-construal is not linked to relationship satisfaction. The study's results are consistent with the literature found that increased relational-self construal is related to higher friendship satisfaction (Morry & Kito, 2009; Morry et al., 2014). People with interdependent views of self, tightly connected to their social environment and their self, are centered around groups and close relationships. People are more sensitive, attentive, responsive, and empathic to close others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Cross et al., 2000), which, in turn, may be related to more satisfaction in their close relationships. That may stem from their importance to their relationships, but their perception of satisfaction with others close to them can also be idealized. Murray et al. (1996) proposed that people's perceptions of satisfaction are idealistic rather than realistic. Like a mirror, people reflect themselves into their partner, creating illusions related to increased perception of satisfaction. People who have a more interdependent view of self may be more likely to perceive their close relationships as more satisfying. In the current study, there are no measures to investigate possible relationships, but future studies can expand that idea to investigate the effect of culture on the perception of satisfaction in close relationships.

The current study sample shows that people scored almost the same on the independent and interdependent cultures, whereas relational-interdependency scores are relatively low compared to other self-construals. Features of autonomy and relatedness aspects of self are

predominant in Turkish people. Although group dynamics and close relationships are essential parts of the self, autonomy, and authenticity also shine out. Türkiye shows both the characteristics of individualistic and collectivistic cultures. That supports the stance that Türkiye is mixed but still shows collectivistic features (Goregenli, 1997; Fischer et al., 2017). Ercan (2013) and Karakitapoğlu-Aygün (2004) found that relational-interdependent and independent self-construals are outstanding aspects of the self in the Turkish sample. In the current study, although independent self-construal is one of the predominant ones, the other one is not relational-interdependent but rather interdependent. One possible explanation may be the different sample characteristics. In the current study, there are not only young adults but also people in the age range of 19 to 61. Past studies have used only young adults as a sample. Generation differences may cause differentiation in the self-construal scores. Snyder (2023) found that concerning interdependent self-construal, older people scored high on harmony to collective compared to younger people. The current study, with a mean age of 40, mainly consists of middle-aged adults rather than young adults.

4.3. Closeness, Self-Concept Clarity and Self-Construals

The present study shows that people's perceptions of closeness are linked to construals of the self. Culture, which influences the development of self-construals, also affects people's desire for closeness. People who score higher on interdependent self-construal are included in the close other in their self more, more similar to their close other, and desire to be closer in their relationships. In an interdependent view, the self is centered around social relationships, and people define themselves with their close relationships. Those people are more prone to social cues (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Including the other in the self and desiring to be closer is crucial since the self is centered around that. The feeling of closeness and desire closer may stem from their motivation to connect and relate to people. So, being closer to someone may mean that people feel more connected to people around them. Additionally, since these people are more attentive to social cues, similarities between close others may be more visible or remarkable to them. That may explain why similarity and interdependent views of self are connected.

Not only the interdependent but also independent self-construal are also linked to the inclusion of others in the self. People with a more independent view of self include close

others in the self more and have less discrepancy between the ideal and actual inclusion. Although the independent self is centered around autonomy, that does not mean that close relationships are unimportant. Through close relationships, people with more independent self-views verify their inner beliefs about themselves (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Increased closeness with other people may mean a better chance for verification of their inner thoughts. Another possible explanation for that result is a self-expansion theory that includes others in the self and enables self-expansion through reaching other's resources, identity, and perspective (Aron & Aron, 1986). Through close relationships, people may expand their self while nourishing their autonomous and authentic selves.

In the current study, self-concept clarity is not linked to any of the self-construals. These results contradict the results of Campbell et al. (1996), who found that self-concept scores were lower in collective cultures. One possible explanation for that result may stem from people having more mixed self-construal of independent and interdependent rather than being purely collectivist or individualistic. Additionally, the current study's results do not replicate the study of Cross et al. (2004), which found a weak relationship between self-concept clarity and relational-interdependent self-construal. Since it is a weak correlation, it needs to be examined more in future research to enlighten the relationship between self-construal and self-concept clarity.

Self-concept clarity is the only variable associated with the demographic variables in the study. People have a more stable and clear sense of self as they age. The result of the current study supported the work of Lodi-Smith and Robert (2010), who found a positive correlation between age and self-concept clarity between the ages of 18 and 60. According to Erikson's (1968) psychosocial theory, identity formation starts in adolescence and continues through adulthood. In line with the theory, as people age, the journey in identity development becomes clear and stable, as is supported in the current relationships. Aron's (1991) theory of expanding the self through close relationships is also related to self-concept clarity. That demonstrates the effect of close relationships on having more clarity in the self. As people get old, the relationships they accumulate may contribute to expanding the self and having more stability and clarity of self. Additionally, gender differences in self-concept clarity reveal that women have more clarity in self-concept than men. The results should be evaluated cautiously since the current study sample consists predominantly of women. These results contradict the study of Campbell et al. (1996), who found that men scored higher than

women in SCC. A possible explanation for these findings may be women's higher self-consciousness than men's (Csank & Conway, 2004). Being self-conscious may contribute to women thinking about themselves and their traits more, which in turn can lead to more clarity in their self-concept.

4.4. Implications

Current studies have some implications for the field of clinical psychology. In psychotherapy, close relationships are one of the themes that emerge in the sessions. Results revealed that satisfaction in close relationships is linked to both self-related and self-other-related factors. Understanding the self is possible with the integration of the client's self-characteristics and the self that is integrated with their close others. It is important to understand the close relationships of the patients somehow to understand the patients themselves.

Interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) is a treatment that focuses on strengthening interpersonal relationships. In the initial phases of the IPT, the therapist gets information from the patient about close relationships, the problems that the patient encounters in relationships, and expectations from close relationships (Stuart & Robertson, 1994). The current study reveals that not only being close but also the match between the expected and actual closeness is linked to relationship satisfaction. To understand the problems and expectations, the client's desired and actual level of closeness may be used to improve relationship satisfaction. For example, the client may want to be closer or feel too close in a relationship with a close other. In therapy, matching the internalized and actual levels of closeness may help the client improve interpersonal relationships. This technique can be used in couple and family therapies to reveal both partners' expectations and feelings related to the closeness experienced in their relationship. The couple's shared characteristics may also be used in therapy to emphasize their similarity. Similarity is related to the couple's relationship dynamics, which in turn nourish their closeness and satisfaction in their relationships. Hatcher (1978) highlighted the importance of integrating intrapersonal and interpersonal processing in family therapy. The current study supported that idea by demonstrating both self-related factors and relationship-specific factors are linked to relationship satisfaction. To understand the clients' interpersonal relationships, the therapist

may pay attention to both factors. For example, within couple and family therapy, the therapist may investigate the self-concept clarity and self-construals of the individual to understand each partner's self-related factors that play a role in their relationships. Additionally, closeness factors related to their relationship will also be investigated.

4.5. Limitations and Future Research

There are some limitations of the study. The first limitation of the study is the distribution of the sample in terms of gender. The current sample predominantly consists of women participants. This limitation can affect the generalization of the results and differentiation in terms of gender. Future studies should consider that limitation for equal sample distribution according to gender. Another limitation of the study is that a single question measured relationship satisfaction due to the difficulty of finding a measure that could be valid for each type of relationship. We could not use the common scales like Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1998) since we were interested in studying closeness across different relationship types, not only the romantic relationships but also close friends, families, relatives etc. This study highlighted the importance of developing a broader relationship satisfaction scale for all types of relationships. To understand relationship satisfaction, the scale with broader dimensions can contribute to close relationship research, mainly in non-romantic relationships. The current study only included one person but did not include the closest other. Future studies should include dyadic couples (self and close others) to examine the actor-partner effect. Lastly, since the current study depends on self-reports, it is essential to use an experimental research design for a comprehensive conclusion for close relationships research.

4.6. Conclusion

The current study investigated the links between self, self-related variables, and relationship satisfaction in close relationships of various types. Close relationships and self are interwoven, and satisfactory relationships are linked to self-variables and self-related variables.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



T.C.
YEDİTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ

31.10.2022

Sayı : E.50532705-302.14.01-1378
Konu : Rana Safaz Kurul Onayı

İLGİLİ MAKAMA

Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Klinik Psikoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencilerinden Rana Safaz'ın "Benliğe ve Yakın Kişiye İlişkin Temsiller, Kişilerarası Yakınlık ve Örtüşme ile İlişki Doyumu Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi" başlıklı araştırmasının Beşeri Bilimler etik standartlarına uygunluğuna ilişkin Yeditepe Üniversitesi Beşeri ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu Onayı ekte sunulmuştur.

Gerekli iznin verilmesi hususunu bilgilerinize arz ve rica ederim.

İmza
Prof. Dr. Fatma Yeşim EKİNCİ
Rektör a.
Rektör Yardımcısı

Ek: Etik Kurul Onayı.pdf

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

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APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Bu araştırma Yeditepe Üniversitesi Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Programı bünyesinde Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar Uğurlar danışmanlığında Rana Safaz tarafından yürütülmektedir. Çalışmaya katılıp katılmama kararı tamamen size aittir. Katılmak isteyip istemediğinize karar vermeden önce araştırmanın neden yapıldığını, bilgilerinizin nasıl kullanılacağını, çalışmanın neleri içerdiğini, olası yararları ve risklerini ya da rahatsızlık verebilecek yönlerini anlamanız önemlidir. Lütfen aşağıdaki bilgileri dikkatlice okumak için zaman ayırınız. Çalışmaya katılmamakta veya çalışmadan herhangi bir zamanda ayrılmakta özgürsünüz. Çalışmaya katıldığınız için size herhangi bir ödeme yapılmayacak ya da sizden herhangi bir maddi katkı istenmeyecektir.

Bu çalışma kişinin kendine yönelik değerlendirmeleri ile diğer kişilere yönelik değerlendirmeleri arasındaki ilişkiyi ve bunların kişiliğin farklı yönleriyle arasındaki bağlantısını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Sizden bazı sıfat ve maddeleri hem kendiniz hem diğer kişi için değerlendirmeniz ve bazı demografik bilgilere yanıt vermeniz istenecektir. Bu anketin yaklaşık 10- 13 dakika sürmesi beklenmektedir.

Çalışmanın öngörülen bir riski yoktur. Bu ölçüm araçlarını kullanan diğer çalışmalarda herhangi bir olumsuz etki rapor edilmemiştir. Ancak yine de dilerseniz çalışmaya hiç katılmayabilir veya çalışmadan istediğiniz zaman ayrılabilirsiniz. Katılımınızla ilgili bir problem yaşarsanız veya çalışmaya dair herhangi bir sorunuz olursa araştırmacıya aşağıdaki e- posta adresinden ulaşabilirsiniz.

Çalışma dâhilinde kimlik bilgileriniz toplanmayacaktır. Sağladığınız diğer veriler yalnızca araştırma dâhilinde kullanılacaktır. Elde edilecek bilgiler araştırmacılar tarafından toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda rapor edilmek için kullanılacaktır.

Çalışmaya İlişkin Başvurulacak Kişiler:

Ad-Soyadı/E-posta adresi: Rana SAFAZ

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar UĞURLAR

Bu bilgilendirilmiş onam belgesini okudum ve anladım. Bu araştırmaya katılmayı hür irademle kabul ediyorum.

APPENDIX C: ADJECTIVE LIST

Katılımcılar sıfatların her birisini önce kendisi için değerlendirecek ve bu sıfatlar kendilerini tanımlıyorsa “benim” seçeneğini, tanımlamıyorsa “ben değilim” seçeneğini işaretleyeceklerdir. Daha sonra yanı sıra sıfat çiftlerini en yakın oldukları kişi için değerlendirmeleri istenecek ve bu sıfatlar o kişiyi tanımlıyorsa “o” seçeneğini, tanımlamıyorsa “o değil” seçeneklerini işaretleyeceklerdir.

DOMİNANT- DOMİNANT OLMAYAN

İDDİALİ - MÜTEVAZİ

KENDİNDEN EMİN - ÇEKİNGEN

GÜÇLÜ - GÜÇSÜZ

ÖZGÜVENLİ - UTANGAÇ

ŞEFKATLİ - ACIMASIZ

SICAKKANLI - SOĞUK

SEVECEN - KABA

İYİ YÜREKLİ - TAŞ KALPLİ

YARDIMSEVER - MERHAMETSİZ

DÜZENLİ- DÜZENSİZ

DERLİ TOPLU - DAĞINIK

PLANLI - PLANSIZ

DİSİPLİNLİ - DİSİPLİNSİZ

GÜVENİLİR - GÜVENİLMEZ

DERİN DÜŞÜNCELİ - YÜZEYSEL

KÜLTÜRLÜ - KÜLTÜRSÜZ

YARATICI - YARATICI OLMAYAN

MERAKLI - MERAKSIZ

DÜŞÜNÜR - DÜŞÜNMEYEN

TELAŞLI - TELAŞSIZ

GERGİN - RAHAT

KAYGILI - KAYGISIZ

ASABİ - SAKİN

HUYSUZ - HUZURLU

APPENDIX D: SELF-CONCEPT CLARITY SCALE

1. Kendime ilişkin inançlarım sıklıkla birbirleriyle çatışır.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Kendim hakkında bir gün bir görüş, başka bir gün ise farklı bir görüşüm olabilir.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Kişiliğimi nasıl tanımladığımı sorulsa, yapacağım tanım bir günden diğerine değişebilir.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Kendim hakkındaki görüşlerim çok sık değişiyor gibi.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Geçmişte nasıl bir kişi olduğumu düşündüğümde, gerçekte nasıl biri olduğumdan emin değilim.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Bazen, gerçekten göründüğüm gibi birisi olmadığımı hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Kişiliğimin farklı yönleri arasında pek çelişki yoktur.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Bazen başkalarını kendimi tanıdığımdan daha iyi tanıdığımı düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Nasıl bir kişi olduğumu merak etmekle çok zaman geçiririm.	1	2	3	4	5
10. İstesem bile başka birine, gerçekten nasıl biri olduğumu anlatabileceğimi sanmıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Genelde, kim ve nasıl bir kişi olduğum konusundaki görüşlerim açıktır.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Benim için, bir konu hakkında karara varmak oldukça güç, çünkü ne istediğimi gerçekten bilmiyorum.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E: SELF-CONSTRUAL SCALE

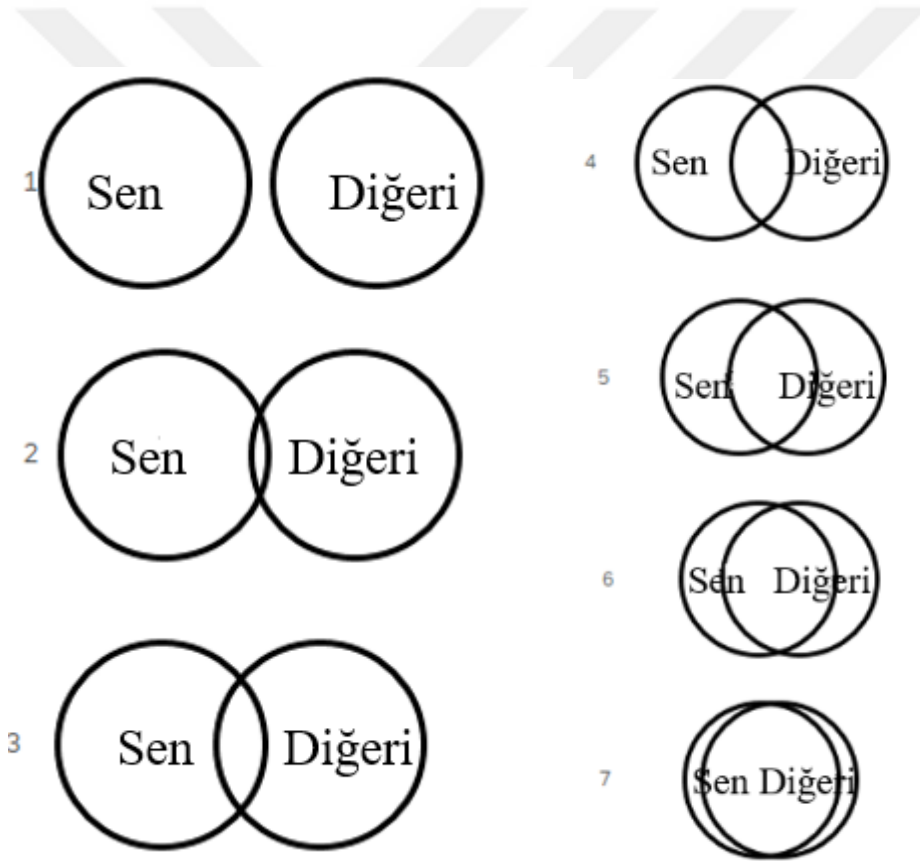
Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadelerin 1'den 7'ye sizi ne derece tanımladığını belirtiniz.

(1- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum 7- Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum)

- 1) Diğerlerine bağlı olmaktansa bağımsız olmayı tercih ederim.
- 2) Grubum tarafından verilen kararlara saygı duyarım.
- 3) Grubun yararı için kişisel çıkarlarımdan vazgeçebilirim.
- 4) Birine kendimi çok yakın hissettiğimde, genellikle o kişi kim olduğumun önemli bir parçasıymış gibi hissettirir.
- 5) Genelde, yakın ilişkilerim kendi imajımın önemli bir parçasıdır.
- 6) Bağımsız bir kişi olarak hareket edebilmek benim için önemlidir.
- 7) Dâhil olduğum gruplarda uyumlu bir tavır sergilerim.
- 8) Özel ve diğer insanlardan farklı olmaktan hoşlanırım.
- 9) Yakın ilişkilerim benim kim olduğumu önemli ölçüde yansıtır.

APPENDIX F: INCLUSION OF THE OTHER IN THE SELF SCALE

1. Lütfen, aşağıdaki yedi resim arasından siz ve yakın olduğunuz kişi arasındaki ilişkiyi en iyi tanımlayan seçeneği işaretleyiniz (Sağdaki daire diğerini, soldaki daire sizi temsil etmektedir).
2. Lütfen, aşağıdaki yedi resim arasından siz ve en yakın olduğunuz kişi arasında olmasını istediğiniz ilişkiyi en iyi tanımlayan seçeneği işaretleyiniz (Sağdaki daire diğer kişiyi ,soldaki daire sizi temsil etmektedir).



APPENDIX H: DEMOGRAPHICS

Eğitim durumunuz nedir? (Lütfen en son tamamladığınız eğitim düzeyini işaretleyiniz.)

- ☐ İlkokul
- ☐ Ortaokul
- ☐ Lise
- ☐ Ön Lisans
- ☐ Lisans
- ☐ Yüksek Lisans
- ☐ Doktora

Cinsiyetiniz ?

- ☐ Erkek
- ☐ Kadın
- ☐ Diğer

Yaşınız ?

APPENDIX I: DEBRIEFING FORM

Çalışma sona ermiştir. Katılımınız için teşekkürler. Bu çalışmada yakın ilişkilerde benliğin zihinsel temsili, kişilerarası yakınlık ve ilişki memnuniyeti arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmayı hedefledik. Bunun yakınlıkla bağlantılı farklı kavramların ilişki memnuniyetiyle ilişkisini aydınlatması çerçevesinde katkı sağlayacağını düşünmekteyiz. Çalışma kapsamında sağladığınız veriler ve çalışma sonuçları bilimsel ve mesleki etik ilkeleri çerçevesinde korunacak, sonuçlar toplu olarak yorumlanıp yalnızca bilimsel yayın amacıyla toplu bilgiler halinde paylaşılacaktır. Çalışmaya dair herhangi bir sorunuz olursa araştırmacılara aşağıdaki e- posta adreslerinden ulaşabilirsiniz.

Katılımınız için tekrar çok teşekkür ederiz.

Çalışmaya İlişkin Başvurulacak Kişiler :

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