THE PREDICTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS FOLLOWING A
ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP DISSOLUTION: RELATIONSHIP
CHARACTERISTICS, PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS, AND SELF- ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

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The main purpose of the present study was to investigate whether gender, certain relationship characteristics (time elapsed since the dissolution, being the dissolver or the sufferer part, duration of the relationship, sexuality, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, any present partner, importance of the relationship, importance of the dissolution), problem solving skills, and self- esteem were predictors of psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. It was also aimed to examine the relationships between some relationship characteristics (duration of the relationship, and time elapsed since the dissolution), and psychological distress.

The sample consisted of 213 Middle East Technical University students who were out of a romantic relationship within the last year. The data were gathered by

administering Problem Solving Inventory, Brief Symptom Inventory, Rosenberg' s Self- Esteem Scale, and Demographic Information Form. Multiple hierarchical regression analyses, and analyses of variance were conducted to test the aims of the study.

According to the results of the study, the importance of the dissolution, the status of any present partner, time elapsed since the dissolution, impulsive style of problem solving skills, and self- esteem were found as significant predictors of psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. On the other hand, it was found that gender, duration of the relationship, sexuality, being the dissolver or the sufferer, importance of the relationship, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, and and the remaining five subscales (reflective style, avoidant style, monitoring, problem- solving confidence, planfulness) of problem solving skills did not emerge as significant predictors of psychological distress. In addition, time elapsed since the dissolution yielded significant effect on depression. The findings of the study were discussed in the light of the relevant literature.

Keywords: Psychological Distress, Romantic Relationship Dissolution, Self- Esteem, Problem Solving Skills, Relationship Characteristics, Gender

ÖZ

ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ BİTİMİ SONRASI PSİKOLOJİK SIKINTININ YORDANMASI: İLİŞKİ ÖZELLİKLERİ, PROBLEM ÇÖZME BECERİLERİ VE KENDİLİK DEĞERİ

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Bu araştırmanın temel amacı cinsiyet, ilişki özellikleri (ayrılıktan bu zamana kadar aradan geçen süre, ilişkide terk eden veya terk edilen taraf olma, ilişki süresi, cinsellik, ayrılık yaşanılan ilişkinin bugüne kadarki ilk ilişki olup olmadığı, herhangi bir güncel partnerin olup olmadığı, ilişkinin önemi, ayrılığın önemi), problem çözme becerileri ve kendilik değerinin romantik ilişki bitimi sonrası yaşanılan psikolojik sıkıntıyı yordayıcı olup olmadığını incelemektir. Bu çalışmada ayrıca ayrılıktan bu zamana kadar geçen süre ve ilişki süresi ile romantik ilişki bitimi sonrası psikolojik sıkıntının ilişkilerinin incelenmesi de amaçlanmıştır.

Örneklem, Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi' nin son bir yıl içerisinde romantik ilişki bitimi yaşamış 213 öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, katılımcılara Problem Çözme Envanteri, Kısa Semptom Envanteri, Rosenberg Kendilik Değeri Ölçeği ve

Demografik Bilgi Formu uygulanarak elde edilmiştir. Çalışmanın amaçlarını test etmek için çoklu hiyerarşik regresyon analizleri ve varyans analizleri kullanılmıştır.

Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre, ayrılığın önemi, herhangi bir güncel partnerin varlığı, ayrılıktan itibaren geçen zaman, problem çözme becerilerinin aceleci yaklaşımı ve kendilik değeri romantik ilişki bitimi sonrası psikolojik sıkıntıyı yordamaktadır. Öte yandan cinsiyet, ilişki süresi, cinsellik, terk eden veya terk edilen taraf olma, ilişkinin önemi, ayrılık yaşanılan ilişkinin bugüne kadarki ilk ilişki olması ve problem çözme becerilerinin geriye kalan beş alt ölçeğinin (düşünen yaklaşım, kaçıngan yaklaşım, değerlendirici yaklaşım, güvenli yaklaşım, planlı yaklaşım) romantik ilişki bitimi sonrası psikolojik sıkıntıyı yordamadığı bulunmuştur. Buna ek olarak, ayrılıktan itibaren geçen zaman ve depresyon arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Araştırma bulguları ilgili literatür eşliğinde tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Psikolojik Sıkıntı, Romantik İlişki Bitimi, Benlik Öz Saygısı, Problem Çözme Becerileri, İlişki Özellikleri, Cinsiyet

To My Family

Zerrin, Turgay and Başak Uzgel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date: 14.07.2004　　　　　　Signature:

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The need to belong is a basic human characteristic. People create romantic relationships to satisfy their belonging need. Close romantic relationships are mutual relationships that create responsibility for each member of the relationship. Each partner becomes in charge of the needs of the other (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001).

People bring various goals to their relationships. The main purpose of a romantic relationship is to gain and maintain the love of the other partner. When partners' goal are the same and their preferences reflect each other they can create involvement simply and get good results such as security, companionship and sexual fulfillment (Furman, Brown, & Feiring, 1999; Harvey & Wenzel, 2001; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Perlman & Duck, 1987).

People become highly dependent on their relationships according to high satisfaction level, fulfilled needs, poor alternatives, and high investment. As people become dependent on their relationship, they develop commitment (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001). It is the level of relational involvement each partner has developed for the relationship. Liking the partner, mutual control over the relationship, trust, commitment and satisfaction are crucial factors for sustaining relationships. There are five core approaches to get desired relationship characteristics: positivity (behaviors like being nice and polite, cheerfulness and avoiding criticism), openness (talking about the relationship, sharing thoughts and feelings, expressions of love and

commitment), social network (spending time with mutual friends and family), assurances (showing that the relationship has a future), and sharing tasks (equal responsibilities for tasks that need to be done) (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001). People believe that the essence of a good or successful relationship lies in good communication, similarity, good sex life, honesty, humor and support (Fletcher, 2002). Those actions and behaviors put the partners in a position in which they want to sustain their relationship. Those actions and behaviors help them to sustain the relationship (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001).

Each person carries her/ his weaknesses and strengths to the relationships. It would be impossible to continue the relationships without efforts to maintain them. Without efforts, coming from the point of view that partners have consensus about what it takes to maintain a romantic relationship, it would not be possible to keep the relationship in a satisfactory condition (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001).

People resist dissolving relationships. Studies (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001) show that good and continuing relationships are important for health and well-being. Disruption of a relationship may cause a decrease in the immune system. Positive emotional state and decreased stress promotes health. Satisfying romantic relationships are important for people's mental and physical health.

It is obvious that people experience some kind of distress following romantic relationship dissolution. It may be one of the most distressful events in life a person may face (Furman et al., 1999; Larson, Clore, & Wood, 1999; Sprecher, 1994). Although it can be a very distressing event, very little research has examined the romantic relationship dissolution and its predicting factors so far (Chung et al., 2002; Fine & Sacher, 1997; Simpson, 1987). Besides, factors concerning psychological

distress afterwards when there is the termination of the romantic relationship are also an under- researched part of relationship dissolutions.

Related to the fact that dissolution is not good for mental health (Chung et al., 2002; Helgeson, 1994), it is very likely that individuals who are happy with their current relationship are more likely to stay in their relationship. That way when such an individual experiences breakup from her/ his relationship, s/ he might experience strong emotional distress. Simpson (1987) argues that such relationships with high satisfaction and happiness are more vulnerable to emotional distress after a breakup.

After the breakup, people experience symptoms such as depression, loss of appetite, and sometimes suicide ideation related to the severity of the breakup (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001). The literature so far tells us little about the possible psychological distress following the dissolution of a romantic relationship (Chung et al., 2002).

However, although little in number, there are some studies done about romantic relationship and dissolution. Hortaçsu and Karancı (1987) did a study on a Turkish sample consisting 103 males and 32 females who has broken off a romantic relationship within the past year. They found that giving the decision for breakup seems to decrease negative affective reaction, whereas attributing the cause of dissolution to external circumstances seems to increase negative affective reaction. Dating- related variables, such as the duration of dating, time elapsed since dissolution were not found to be significant predictors of affective reaction.

In a study (Hortaçsu, 1989) consisted of 158 male and 123 female students from two major universities in Ankara, Turkey, whose relationships have been terminated within the past three years, it is found that longer duration of relationship

and being the person who is left were related to greater affect concerning dissolved relationships.

In another study (Fine & Sacher, 1997) consisting of at least one partner in 28 heterosexual dating couples whose relationships had been terminated within the six months of the study, it is found that distress following relationship termination was greater for males who perceived that their partner initiated the breakup. They also found that distress following relationship termination is greater to the extent that partners are invested in the relationship.

Related to that, Simpson (1987) found in another study individuals involved in relationships characterized by high investments (those that were close and of long duration) experienced greater levels of distress following dissolution. He also argues that when there is sexual nature, then there is more investment in the relationship, and when there is more investment, there is more stability. Hence, there will be strong emotional distress following the dissolution because of the unexpectedness of the situation.

Another study (Sprecher, Felmlee, Metts, Fehr, & Vanni, 1998) consisting of 257 young adults (83 male, 174 female) who had experienced the breakup of a close relationship within the previous 12 months found that duration of the relationship had a strong and positive effect on current upset. It is also found that the longer the period since the breakup, the less the current distress. Researchers discuss that when people use maladaptive coping mechanisms during a crisis there will be more negative outcome.

In another study (Chung et al., 2002) consisted of 60 heterosexual subjects who had experienced romantic relationship dissolution over the past 24 months,

significant correlations between the impact of dissolution and general health were found. Also, negative self- esteem predicted traumatic stress following dissolution.

Continuing with studies on psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution, another study (Frazier & Cook, 1993) consisting 34 males and 51 females who had experienced the breakup of a dating relationship within the past 6 months found that individuals who perceived the breakup as more controllable reported that the breakup had been less stressful, and individuals who reported higher self- esteem reported less stressful breakups.

Although several studies have examined factors associated with adjustment to divorce, very few studies have examined factors associated with the severity of distress experienced following the breakup of romantic relationships (Frazier & Cook, 1993). The literature tells us very little about the psychological distress that people could experience as a result of the dissolution of a romantic relationship (Chung et al., 2002).

The researcher thinks that the dissolution of a dating relationship is an under-researched area, and especially in Turkey there is very little information concerning that topic. Related to all the findings above, it is believed that a study about romantic relationship dissolutions will add important points to the Turkish clinical psychology literature concerning the fact that the dissolution of a romantic relationship might create negative outcomes for partner's psychological conditions.

Coming to the current study, psychological distress showing itself with depressive mood (Chung et al., 2002; Harvey & Wenzel, 2001), and psychological symptomatology (somatization, obsessions- compulsions, social anxiety, hostility, phobias, paranoid ideation, psychoticism) (Kurdek, 1990), and its possible predictors related to the literature such as gender, relationship characteristics (duration of the

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relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, being the dissolver or the sufferer, sexuality, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, importance of the dissolution), problem solving skills, and self- esteem will be investigated.

Beginning with self- esteem, it is the positive or negative belief about one's self (Rosenberg, 1975). It is the key factor in personal growth and development. Self-esteem is important in the development of a healthy personality (Leary, Terdal, Tambor, & Downs, 1995). One sees himself/ herself as positive and worthwhile while being aware of his/ her faults when his/ her self- esteem is high, and when it is low, one sees himself/ herself as a deficient person regarding his/ her weaknesses. People with low self- esteem are not sure of their behaviors and beliefs (Nir & Neumann, 1995).

Longmore & DeMaris (1997) believe that variables related to self such as self- esteem are important resources for a person's psychology. Self - esteem may act as a buffer between stressors and psychological distress. It may create differences, e. g. level of self- esteem may play a role in which some people get depressed and others do not at stressful situations.

It is found that people with low self- esteem experience more difficulty after divorce (Bloom, Asher, & White, 1978). People with high self- esteem use some internal coping skills, which lead to less distress following relationship dissolution (Frazier & Cook, 1993). High self- esteem predicts adaptation to relationship dissolution and general mental health (Helgeson, 1994). It is an effective way of coping with the dissolution (Chung et al., 2002). Those people with high self- esteem do have confidence in their own abilities. They are aware of their strengths and also weaknesses. That way, people are able to manage the negative emotions after the

romantic relationship dissolution (Kardum & Krapic', 2001).

Smith and Cohen (1993) hypothesized that university students' distress would be positively related to their proportion of self- complexity after a romantic relationship dissolution. Opening self- complexity, Linville (1987) defines a complex self as having different traits in different situations and a simple self as having the same attributes all over and over again in every situation. Self- complexity acts as a buffer (Linville, 1987). When a person's self - complexity is high, then that person's distress would be less, because only a small portion of his self would be affected. Smith and Cohen (1993) investigated the following reactions of college students after a romantic relationship breakup. They found that the more a self- part of the person overlaps with other parts, the more the person gets affected and distress get produced. Their data show descriptively that the termination of the romantic involvement was an upsetting and important event. The positive link between amount of negative life events and psychological distress gets weakened when self-complexity amount increased. It acts as a buffer mechanism.

The association between psychological distress and self- esteem in regard to the breakup of romantic relationships has not been studied much (Frazier & Cook, 1993). Also the literature above shows the importance of self- esteem in relation to romantic relationship dissolution and distress. That is why the present study aims to explore the importance of self- esteem on the psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution.

Continuing with problem solving skills, as the second important concept for romantic relationship dissolutions, it is the person's ability to identify and define problems, find and generate solutions and use the solutions and at the end see whether they are effective or not (Reinecke, DuBois, & Schultz, 2001). Active

problem solving exists with three parts: not ignoring the problem and believing to dissolve/ searching and finding the cause/ doing something about the problem (Ross & Minowsky, 1989).

D' Zurilla and Nezu (1990) defined social problem solving as the problem solving occurring in real world. It is the search for meaningful ways of coping when faced with everyday problems. It is the attempt to find effective coping styles (Heppner & Anderson, 1985). Literature search gives enormous amount of links for problem- solving deficits and maladjustments (Chang, 2002).

Use of problem solving skills is the response of people to distressing events (Mearns, 1991). When people plan and/ or use problem- solving strategies, more positive outcomes out of distressing events are possible (Billings & Moos, 1984; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Mearns (1991) used college undergraduates who had recently lived a breakup of a romantic relationship within the preceding 12 months as the sample. It was believed that duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer, the level of the love between partners, physical attractiveness and exclusivity of the relationship were important predictors of the depressive symptoms following the relationship dissolution; and developed a relationship survey for the study. At the end, it was found that people who have high- level expectancies of regulating their mood after relationship dissolution get less depressed and use active coping skills.

Although people experience similar conditions, they may show different reactions. Some individuals may experience a greater distress after a breakup than others and will need more time to recover themselves because of different coping resources and strategies (Felmlee, 1995). It is possible that they used poor coping techniques during such a crisis.

Again, the few number of studies investigating problem solving skills and psychological distress, and the importance of problem solving skills seen with the literature put the present study in a position of investigating the importance of problem solving skills on psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution.

Since the past literature shows that psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution is associated with relationship characteristics, it was aimed to gather also information about these characteristics. These variables included gender, duration of the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, being the dissolver or the sufferer, sexual nature of the relationship, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, and importance of the dissolution. Those relationship characteristics were chosen because of the possibility that they might be related to the aims of the study.

The variables the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, the status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, and importance of the dissolution were considered as important for the current study. The researcher believed that when the broken relationship is the first relationship ever, then the emotional impact of the dissolution would be big and heavy. Also with the same idea, if the importance of the relationship and the importance of the dissolution are big for the person, then the psychological distress following the dissolution would be strong. Love and attachment do not suddenly disappear even if the romantic relationship dissolves (Sprecher, 1994).

The status of any present partner after the dissolution is also thought by the researcher as a helping variable to overcome the psychological distress. Beginning a

new stage and opening a new page is thought to help the partner out of the broken relationship.

Although the literature does not much tell about those factors, studies of Hortaçsu and Karancı (1987), Simpson (1987), and Sprecher et al. (1998) gave the idea of these variables to the researcher. Those three studies mention the rating of the dissolved relationship (Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987), closeness and commitment in the relationship (Simpson, 1987), and considering alternative partners (Sprecher et al., 1998). The idea that there are no alternative partners increases the commitment level to the relationship (Frank & Brandstatter, 2002). Maybe that way it is more difficult to dissolve the relationship. It may be also possible that the idea of alternative partner decreases the psychological distress.

That way, the researcher thought that those four variables might be important in experiencing the psychological distress following the dissolution.

It is believed that since the dissolution of a dating relationship is an under-researched area, and since especially in Turkey there is very little information concerning that topic, the present study will make contributions to the Turkish clinical psychology literature.

1.1. Aims of the Study

In the light of the romantic relationship dissolution literature, it was aimed to investigate whether gender, relationship characteristics (duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer, time elapsed since the dissolution, sexuality, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, and importance of the dissolution), and personality characteristics (problem solving skills, and self- esteem) would be significant predictors of psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. It

was also aimed to investigate whether the time elapsed since the dissolution, and duration of the relationship would have significant effects on psychological distress following the dissolution.

1.2. Importance and Implications of the Study

The present study is important because there were so limited number of empirical studies associated with romantic relationships in Turkey (Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987; Hortaçsu, 1989), that it is not adequate to give knowledge about psychological features concerning Turkish people's postdissolution experience. The present study is one of the first attempts for investigating the link between some personality characteristics (self- esteem and problem solving skills) and some relationship characteristics in the context of psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution in the Turkish culture.

Many of the romantic relationships end in time. Some people live traumatic postdissolution phases, and some people not. This study is planned to find the relationship between psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution and self- esteem, problem solving skills, and some relationship characteristics such as being a female or male, duration of the relationship, sexual nature of the relationship, being the leaver or the left one, time elapsed since the dissolution, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, and importance of the dissolution. No study has directly dealt with relationships of those variables in a single study. This study is planned to fill that gap in the Turkish literature, as those variables appear to be important correlates of the psychological distress after a romantic relationship dissolution according to the literature. Besides, also a comparison between Turkish society and Western society would be possible.

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The present study will make contributions for mental health professionals. People generally live romantic relationships and breakups before marriages to find their right person. Dissolution of a relationship might lessen the potential costs breaking up afterwards (Hill, Rubin, & Peplau, 1976). Breakups foster people to seek help as therapy. College professors, counselors and mental health clinicians may use dating and related issues as a helping tool for dealing with problems people may face (Burke, Stets, & Pirog- Good, 1988; Frazier & Cook, 1993). When knowing the potential risks for a postdissolution psychological distress, the clinician may richen the therapy with those variables. The patient may learn how to deal with the distress in therapy according to those related factors. New personality traits with powering and enhancing self- esteem and coping skills may be trained. The results of the present study may be helpful in forming training programs, which inform people how to deal with psychological distress when faced with a breakup knowing the personal and relationship characteristics. Intervention programs dealing with self- esteem and problem solving skills may be created.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Psychological Distress

Psychological distress is defined more or less the same in studies. It is defined with psychological symptomatology (somatization, obsessions- compulsions, social anxiety, hostility, phobias, paranoid ideation, psychoticism) (Kurdek, 1990), and it was measured with the Symptom Checklist- 90- R (Derogatis, 1983) (Kurdek, 1990) or the Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis, 1992) (Yılmaz, 2002). Studies generally did not give a large explanation for the distress concept; they used their measures to explain it. Researchers used some measures, and at the end of their studies they used the scores of those measures to give an idea of psychological distress. Some examples are Daley and Hammen (2002), and Flannery and Wieman (1989) using the Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, 1975), Smith and Cohen (1993) using the Mental Health Inventory (Veit & Ware, 1983), Chung et al. (2002) using the General Heath Questionnaire (Goldberg & Hillier, 1979), Ystgaard (1997) using the 25- item version of the Hopkins Symptoms Checklist (Winokur, Winokur, Rickels, & Cox, 1984). Some others developed their own measures like Mearns (1991) adapting the Health and Daily Living Form (Moos, Cronkite, Billings, & Finney, 1983), Fine and Sacher (1997), Frazier and Cook (1993), Simpson (1987), and Sprecher et al. (1998). All of these measures serve the purpose of giving a level of psychological distress.

2.2. Gender

The possible gender differences of single people on daily concepts such as romantic relationships were not much deeply examined (Wood, Rhodes, & Whelan, 1989). Besides, research (Felmlee & Sprecher, 1997) found inconsistent results concerning gender differences on relationship issues. Some literature (Hill et al., 1976; Rubin, Peplau, & Hill, 1981) shows that there are gender differences considering the end of a romantic relationship. Men are more depressed and lonely, whereas women were less emotional and more realistic. However, Mearns (1991) found that women feel more depressed than men after breakups. Besides, some studies found no gender differences at all (Frazier & Cook, 1993; Helgeson, 1994; Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987; Knox, 1999; Mastekaasa, 1994; Simpson, 1987; Simpson, 1990).

Baumeister and Sommer (1997) believe that women feel socially powerful in dyadic close relationships, whereas men feel socially powerful in large groups. Men are also in need to belong like women. However, they do it with large numbered social relations unlike women. Men and women are equally social, however women seek their sociality in dyadic groups, whereas men seek it in larger groups.

When considering psychological distress, Nolen- Hoeksema & Girgus (1994) argue that females suffer more from depressive symptoms. For, they are more dependent on others and they are less assertive and have lower expectations. While on the other hand, masculine characteristics may act as a buffer tool against depressive symptoms. Males are more independent and more assertive. Leadbeater, Blatt, and Quinlan (1995) argue that the depressive style of personality shows itself with preoccupation of feelings of competency and loss of self- esteem especially for girls in adolescent years.

When considering romantic relationship dissolutions, it is found that women are initiators of breakups, mostly (Hill et al., 1976; Perlman & Duck, 1987). They also are more likely to end their relationship even though their involvement with the relationship is greater than their partner. Cross & Madson (1997) argue that women put an end to the relationship because they get tired of being abused and exploited by their partner. However, Baumeister and Sommer (1997) argue that if the reason for the breakup is the abuse of men, then lesbian relationships should last longer. However, that is not the case (Fine & Sacher, 1997; Hill et al., 1976). Men fall in love more easily than women, and women fall out of love more easily than men (Hill et al., 1976). Men find it more difficult to end the relationships. Couples tend to stay as friends when men take the decision. When there is the dissolution, it is more traumatic for men than women. Men report that they feel depressed, less happy, less free and less guilty. In other words, men cannot cope with the idea that they are no more loved. They feel rejected. Women, on the other hand, although they feel rejected, they also believe that they were loved after all. That way they can manage to cope with the breakup more easily than men.

Little research has been done on the topic of power issues between nonmarrried partners. Early interventions in dating relationships may be important for the mental health of people (Sprecher & Felmlee, 1997). The dependency rate of each partner in the romantic relationship affects his or her power balance. The partner with the less involvement and investment will be less dependent and therefore will be more influential in the dyad (Felmlee, 1994; Sprecher, 1985). Felmlee (1994) found that female partners are the ones who are more emotionally involved in the relationship. Felmlee and Sprecher (1997) found in their study that

people more likely say that men are more powerful in romantic relationships. Men make more of the decisions.

In addition, it is found that emotional infidelity is more distressing for women, whereas sexual infidelity is more distressing for men (Cramer, Abraham, Johnson, & Manning- Ryan, 2002). For women, infidelity is seen as a big threat to the emotional commitment of the partner. For men, infidelity is seen as a threat to the sexual exclusivity and thus paternity uncertainty. Buss et al. (1992) also found that emotional infidelity is more distressing for women, and sexual infidelity is more distressing for men. "Men think women have sex only when in love and women think men have sex without love" (Cramer et al., 2002). That way sexual infidelity is less distressing for women because men often have sex without being in love. For men, they believe that emotional infidelity is less distressing, for, when women are sexually unfaithful, they are also in love.

Another fact about gender differences is that women are more emotionally expressive and more sensitive to emotional events than men (Wood, Rhodes, & Whelan, 1989). Thus, women are more affected concerning well- being. That way, they report more mood related disorders, including depression (Nolen- Hoeksema, 1987). Women experience and internalize sadness more than men (Canary & Emmers- Sommer, 1997). Regarding romantic relationships, females get more depressed than males. For, females get more involved in their relationship than males (Joyner & Udry, 2000). Women report more expectations for their relationship than men (Honeycutt & Cantrill, 2000). That way, through deeper involvement and greater expectations, women's mood gets worsened.

Women think more about their romantic relationships and problems and conditions affecting the relationship. That characteristic is unique for women

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considering romantic relationships (Darling, Dowdy, Van horn, & Caldwell, 1999; Sprecher, 1994). Some argue that big interest and involvement make females more vulnerable than males. It is examined with studies that females get depressed while males become substance abusers (Horwitz & White, 1987).

Considering gender differences in handling negative emotions, Nolen-Hoeksema (1987) found that women express more negative emotions when dealing with depressive feelings, whereas men cope more actively and engage in distracting activities and ignore the unpleasant experience. Another finding is that females report effect of friends on health symptoms (Ystgaard, 1997). Women communicate about relationship problems more than men. Men are more likely to avoid from such interactions. Women are more likely to talk about their problems to their friends (Fletcher, 2002). It is also argued that women are more distressed than men because they have more personal networks and with negative events their social ties are more disturbed (Kessler & McLeod, 1984). As a couple, they have same friends. However, with dissolution those friendships are also disturbed.

Lastly, women are more sensitive to emotional mood changes than men, especially in close relationships (Wood et al., 1989). For the last 30 years or so, women had depression about twice as much as men all over the world (Boyd & Weisman, 1981; Cheng & Furnham, 2003; Klerman & Weissman, 1989).

2.3. Relationship Characteristics

The relationship characteristics found to be associated with psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution include sexuality, time elapsed since the dissolution, duration of the relationship and being the dissolver or the sufferer part of the broken relationship.

Sexuality

Romantic relationships consist of many stages (Furman et al., 1999; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992; Roche, 1986). It begins with learning each other, it develops with continuing interaction between the two individuals. As relationships become long-term, they begin to involve some level of commitment and exclusivity. As the partners get closer to each other, the emotional bonds become deeper (Furman et al., 1999).

For society, sexuality is something private and cannot be talked about much freely and easily (Bogart, Cecil, Wagstaff, Pinkerton, & Abramson, 2000). For defining sex in society terms, it is found that vaginal and anal sex were much more rated as sex than oral sex. Besides, when the person experiencing the intercourse with an orgasm, that person is more likely see that act as sex. Orgasm is important to define sex (Bogart et al., 2000).

Some people abstain from sexual activity because of some social norms, and moral standards, fears of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (Miller & Moore, 1990). However, nowadays women and men become more permissive considering sexuality (Peplau et al., 1977). An increasing proportion of dating couples engage in sex and sexual intercourse occurs earlier in the relationship (Moore & Rosenthal, 1993; Peplau et al., 1977). That is a difference from old days. Because women were expected to wait until marriage to have sex (Peplau, et al., 1977).

Sexuality is an integral part of romantic relationships (Furman et al., 1999; Perlman & Duck, 1987; Roche, 1986; Shulman & Kipnis, 2001). It is the desire to be with the other person (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992). A romantic sexual act shows that the partners are person to each other and not just objects of pleasure. Sex can be

an expression of love and caring in romantic relationships. Sex creates a sense of wholeness for each partner. It is seen as an important and inevitable part of the romantic relationship. It presents the emotional closeness in a relationship (Peplau et al., 1977).

Engaging in sexual intercourse is determined by the person with the level of emotional investment and love (Roche, 1986). At the later stages of the relationship, with increasing commitment and intimacy, the likelihood engaging in sex is higher. People experience sexuality as a reward in their romantic relationship when it is linked with emotional investment. Expressing positive feelings and being attracted to a person shows that the person wants to have future contact (Hill, 2002)..

In addition to that fact, Rosenthal, Burklow, Lewis, Succop, and Biro (1997) did a study to compare heterosexual romantic relationships between sexually experienced and inexperienced girls. The study showed that sexually experienced adolescent girls share more intimate and unique information with their boyfriends and spend more time with them. They also expect their relationships to be long- term ones. However, Peplau et al. (1977) found no significant results saying that sexuality or absence of sexuality in a relationship affects its duration. Besides, sexual intercourse brings seriousness to the relationship. Partners spend much longer times with each other, that brings more investment. However, it may be also possible that long- term relationships put people towards sexuality (Rosenthal et al., 1997).

Sprecher (2002) argues that no longitudinal research with premarital couples about sexual satisfaction and relationship quality exists. She asks whether a satisfying sex life helps to continue a relationship. She found that sexual satisfaction was positively associated with relationship satisfaction, love and commitment for both genders.

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Considering sexual contact in romantic relationships, premarital sex could have both positive and negative affects. Physical intimacy could bring partners closer to each other. It would be more difficult to dissolve the relationship. However, it is also possible that dissolution distress is stronger because of the intimacy established with sex (Kahn & London, 1991).

Some inconsistent findings exist in the literature. Hill et al. (1976) found that there was no effect of sexual intimacy on the relationship, it was not related to dissolution. However, it was also found with other studies (Felmlee et al., 1990; Simpson, 1987) that the presence of sexual intercourse had a significant positive effect on relationship stability meaning that sexuality brings partners closer to each other leading to investing more into the relationship, which strengthens the stability.

As a fact, it is found that there is a link between sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction (Byers, Demmons, & Lawrance, 1998; Purnine & Carey, 1997). When men and women are sexually satisfied in their relationships, the relationship improved itself. When the given and taken parts of the relationship (e.g. sexuality) are equal, then the satisfaction is higher (Cate, Long, Angera, & Draper; Hatfield et al., 1982).

In addition, romantic relationships and sexual involvements of adolescent children receive little attention (Diamond, Savin- Williams, & Dube, 1999). However, actually dating is an important process for adolescents while making the transition to adulthood. Most of the adolescents experience their first intercourse in the context of a stable romantic relationship (Diamond et al., 1999; Tang & Zuo, 2000). That way many people learn to manage their sexual desires and their sexuality with their romantic relationships (Brooks- Gunn & Furstenberg, 1989). Adolescents begin to have sex at younger ages (23% of 14- year- olds, 30% of 15- year- olds,

42% of 16- year- olds, 59% of 17- year- olds, and 71% of 18- year- olds) nowadays (Graber, Britto, Brooks- Gunn, 1999). Romantic relationships are seen as a step towards sex. It is done generally in committed relationships. However, it is also ture that many adolescents engage in sexual activities even if there is no commitment.

Christopher and Sprecher (2000) did a review for sexuality in marriage, dating and other relationships. Sexuality is explored in dating and it is an essential part of committed relationships. Sexual intercourse is seen as a completion. It creates a sense of wholeness (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992). Young adults who are single with no gender difference do have sex. Sexual desire is a part of being in love, of being in a committed romantic relationship (Fruman et al., 1999).

It is logical to examine gender differences of sexuality, because men and women often differ on that topic (Oliver & Hyde, 1993). Males expect the sexuality to appear sooner in the relationship (Cohen & Shotland, 1996; Roche, 1986). Peplau et al. (1977) investigated sexual intimacy in dating relationships, which generally were like man initiating the sexual act, and the woman limiting the intimacy, which was supported with Bernard's (1966) study. Females rela te sexuality with love and commitment (Roche, 1986). Nowadays, staying virgin before until marriage is not so popular as in the old days. McCabe (1987) emphasizes that more men than women desire and experience sex. However, with increments in involvements, and age, both men and women desire and experience sex. Males and females express similar feelings and attitudes towards sexuality when they are in committed relationships (Cohen & Shotland, 1996). Also, high education like college education, and holding non- traditional beliefs show that there is less contribution to gender- typed attitudes towards romantic relationships and sexuality (Canary & Emmers- Sommer, 1997). Sometimes females put more emphasis on the emotional side of the sexuality, and

that is consistent with the female gender- role. Generally, women experience the sexual intercourse when there is a high level of commitment in the relationship, and when they are older (McCabe, 1987). As involvement in the relationship gets increased, the level of affection also increases. Besides, both women and men engage in sexual behavior even if there is no desire (Beck, Bozman, & Qualthrough, 1991).

In addition, literature shows that women live their sexual desires as more romantic and interpersonal than men (Regan & Berscheid, 1995). It was also found that men's feeling related to sexual desire is less in context with love and intimacy than women in consistence with the literature (Davies, Katz, & Jackson, 1999). Robinson, Balkwell, and Ward (1980) found that women associate the word "intercourse" with relationship and intimacy, whereas men associate it with body parts. As a gender difference it was found that men see sexuality as an important dating purpose than women (Peplau et al., 1977). Peplau et al.'s study (1977) also found that women feel more love when they are having their first sexual intercourse to that specific partner. Besides, men feel more love when the woman loses her virginity to him.

It is also argued that men are stricter about the difference between love and sex (Canary & Emmers- Sommer, 1997). Women believe that love and sex belong to each other. They are in conclusion that being in a romantic involvement justifies sexual act. However, men are able to separate sex and romance. Men mostly look for sexual intimacy in romantic relationships, whereas women generally look for emotional connection and interdependence. Women mostly engage in sexual intercourse to satisfy their need for emotional intimacy, whereas men engage in sexual intercourse to satisfy their sexual tension. Women link sex with emotional involvement whereas men associate sex with physical involvement. Women are

likely to think that their romantic relationship is "close" when there is emotional interdependency, whereas men are likely to perceive "close" as involving sex in their romantic relationships.

Sexual involvement brings seriousness to the relationship, which in turn makes the relationship a more committed one. When there is more commitment, then there is a higher level of expectation that the relationship would last. That way, when there is dissolution, psychological distress afterwards may be worse than the one following a relationship without any sexual act. For, sex may be seen as a point, which makes the relationship more powerful against instabilities (Simpson, 1987).

Time Elapsed since the Dissolution

Some studies showed that when there is a breakup, time elapsed since the dissolution is important in experiencing the negative emotional aftermath (Attridge, Berscheid, & Simpson, 1995; Sprecher et al., 1998). The longer the period since the breakup, the less the current distress. With passing time people get used to the idea that the relationship is over and the impact of distress is not much as it was in the beginning.

In another study (Hortaçsu & Karancı) it was aimed to investigate the causal attributional dimensions used in the dissolution of premarital romantic relationships, and to examine the relationship between negative emotional aftermath and the attributional dimensions and some dating- related variables. Time elapsed since dissolution among dating variables was not found to be a significant predictor of affective reaction.

Another study (Sprecher et al., 1998) investigating factors associated with distress following the breakup of a close relationship found that the longer the period since the breakup, the less the current distress. As time passes it gets easier for

people to adapt themselves to the idea that they are no more in a relationship; that it is over.

Duration of the Relationship

Literature shows inconsistent results regarding the duration of the relationship. In some studies it was found that duration of the relationship was not a significant predictor of emotional impact of the separation (Fine & Sacher, 1997; Frazier & Cook, 1993; Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987). In other studies it was found that relationship duration was related to psychological distress following a relationship termination (Attridge et al., 1995; Berscheid, Synder, & Omoto, 1989; Hortaçsu, 1989; Simpson, 1987; Sprecher et al., 1998).

As people become dependent on their relationship, they develop commitment. It is the level of relational involvement each partner has developed for the relationship (Harvey & Wenzel, 2001). As the relationships become long- term, they begin to involve some level of exclusivity, seeing no other people than their partners, and deeper levels of caring besides commitment (Brown, 1999; Furman et al., 1999).

Long- term relationships have evolved over time and they have survived unstable stages over the development. That way, they are less vulnerable to dissolution. However, when there is dissolution, then it is likely that there would be more distress. For, it is an unexpected situation by long- term relationships. Long duration means high investment in the relationship. High investments bring high disappointments (Simpson, 1987).

Felmlee et al. (1990) argues that relationship dissolution is lower when the investment is high. The longer the partners are dating, the less likely is that they break up. Spending a long time with the partner may be seen as an investment in the relationship. It is known that people who invested a lot in their relationship

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experience depressed mood when the relationship is terminated (Fine & Sacher, 1997). Partners of breakup must adapt themselves to immediate changes, plus also to changes in the future (Sprecher et al., 1998).

Being the Dissolver or the Sufferer of the Broken Relationship

Very few of the breakups are mutual; generally it is one of the partner's decision (Hill et al., 1976). Vaughn (1979) explains the concept of breakup (or divorce) as going from being with another person to being single. The relationship termination means a life change for both of the partners. It is the end of an important point in a person's life. It is the end of companionship (Clark & Labeff, 1986).

Regarding end of a romantic relationship, there are inconsistencies among previous studies done on being the dissolver or the sufferer of the broken relationship. A study (Fine & Sacher, 1987) found that distress was found higher for males who believe that their partner initiated the breakup. That may be explained with self- esteem. Males may be more vulnerable than females when self- esteem is an issue. They may perceive themselves as rejected when the partner starts the breakup. Being the sufferer may affect their self- esteem, which leads to greater distress.

In another study (Hill et al., 1976), being the sufferer rather than the dissolver has been found to be related to depression after the premarital breakup. The dissolver part reported less depressive symptoms, less loneliness, more freedom, and more happiness. It is obviously easier to accept and cope with the breakup if it is a desired outcome, namely, being the dissolver. The study of Hortaçsu and Karancı (1987) also showed that making the decision for ending the relationship was a significant factor to predict the negative affective reaction. Being the dissolver seemed to decrease the negative aftermath.

Another study (Langhinrichsen- Rohling, Palarea, Cohen, & Rohling, 2000) showed that most breakup sufferers had shown at least one unwanted pursuit behavior (i.e. unwanted phone calls, unwanted in- person conversations) after the breakup. This may mean that the sufferers have still a hope for the relationship and that they may wait for the relationship to continue somehow.

Hortaçsu (1989) also showed that the decision makers about the dissolution had less negative affect scores than the ones who were the sufferers. In another study (Sprecher, 1994), the most relevant factor which is related to breakup distress was found as who initiated the breakup. The person who initiates the breakup is less distressed emotionally than the person who is left. "Leaver" vs. "left" brings out the problem of perceiving oneself having control over the breakup. That way "left" may feel having no control over the relationship and may feel distressed. Sprecher et al. (1998) showed that distress is most relevant when one is the sufferer, and left for another person, with no gender differences. Those who are left in the relationship experience more distress than those who leave (Frazier & Cook, 1993; Gray & Silver, 1990).

The dissolution initiated by the self may be seen as a factor of control over the breakup. Although feeling to have no control over the breakup put the person into stress (Peterson et al., 1985), it is also possible that perceiving oneself as responsible for the problems leading up to the breakup may be an undesirable control and is possibly associated with distress, whereas initiation of a breakup may a desirable control (Gray & Silver, 1990).

Lastly, contrary to all the findings, Simpson' s (1987) study found that intensity of distress was not reliably associated with who initiated the breakup. The

subjects did not show any difference on distress whether they were the dissolver or the sufferer.

2.4. Problem Solving Skills

Definition

Problem solving is the person's ability to identify and define problems, find and generate solutions and use the solutions and at the end see whether they are effective or not (Reinecke, DuBois, & Schultz, 2001). Problem solving exists with three parts: not ignoring the problem and believing to dissolve/ searching and finding the cause/ doing something about the problem (Ross & Minowsky, 1989).

Use of problem solving skills is the response of people to distressing events (Mearns, 1991). When people plan and/ or use problem- solving strategies, more positive outcomes out of distressing events are possible (Billings & Moos, 1984; Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Research (Nezu, 1987; Nezu & Ronan, 1985) points out that deficits in problem solving skills are associated with a variety of psychological problems including risk for depression. Problem- solving skills are important in better understanding how people cope with stressful situations.

Although people experience similar conditions, they may show different reactions. Some individuals may experience a greater distress after a breakup than others and will need more time to recover themselves because of different coping resources and strategies (Felmlee, 1995; Stein & Nyamathi, 1999). It is possible that they used poor coping techniques during such a bad period of time. Individuals with low problem solving skills are less likely to develop effective solutions when they encounter stressful situations, which may result in feelings of pessimism and hopelessness (Reinecke, DuBois, & Schultz, 1991; Schotte & Clum, 1987). Individuals who have deficits in problem solving skills are cognitively unprepared to

develop effective alternative solutions for adaptive coping under stressful life situations (Clum, Patsiokas, & Luscomb, 1979). When individuals are faced with high stress, they may become more careless in considering their options, or they may be more negative and critical in the way they view situations, which may lead to greater emotional distress (Chang, 2002; D' Zurilla, 1988). Exposure to high levels of stress is likely to deteriorate problem-solving skills.

Problem- Solving Skills & Studies Related to Depression

Mearns (1991) used college undergraduates who had recently lived a breakup of a romantic relationship within the preceding 12 months as the sample. It was found that people who have high-level expectancies of regulating their mood after relationship dissolution get less depressed and use active coping skills.

Marx, Williams, and Claridge (1992) did a study to explore the relationship between depression and social problem solving. At the end of the study they found that subjects with depression had deficits in problem solving measures. Those subjects created less effective solutions than normal and anxiety patients. Researchers believe that depressed and anxious patients probably have difficulties at some stages of problem- solving abilities.

Many investigators (Nezu, 1987; Nezu & Ronan, 1985) showed interest in the area of social problem solving in depression. They suggested that depressed people might have difficulties in their skills. Depressed people are faced with an accumulation of stressors and they use less effective coping strategies to deal with them than nondepressed people (Nezu & Ronan, 1985). However, it is not very clear whether depressed people really use non- efficient coping skills or whether they see themselves negative as in many other areas because of their depressed mood (Heppner, Baumgardner, & Jackson, 1985).

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Marx, Williams, and Claridge (1992) also found that depressed subjects had difficulties in their personal problems. In general, they hold a negative attitude towards problems and towards solving process of them. There is the belief that there may be something missing in depressed subjects' coping performance. Studies show that depressed people had difficulty in finding alternative solutions. However, they did not hold a negative view for their strategies. That finding did not match with the belief that there is a negative performance evaluation for depressed people (Gotlib, 1981). Marx et al. (1992) also found that depressed people generally have difficulties in the early cognitive levels of problem- solving behavior.

Penland, Masten, Zelhart, Fournet, and Callahan (2000) did a study on depression and coping styles among university students. They found that when a student is depressed, s/ he had a more negative view of self and s/ he used more avoidance coping strategies than the nondepressed students. Researchers argued that the idea of positive views of selves might act as a mediator between depression and coping skills.

Cannon et al. (1999) did a study on potential predictors of hopelessness in depression. They found that hopelessness was in association with greater depression severity and poor problem solving abilities. They argue that, in future, attention to dysfunctional attitudes and problem- solving skills may be important for eliminating hopelessness and maybe related suicidal risk.

Researchers argued that hopelessness is a result of negative worldview supported by poor problem- solving skills. It is known that a negative view of the future is an important correlate of depression (Beck, Steer, Kovacs, & Garrison, 1985). Problem- solving abilities are associated with dysfunctional attitudes (Miranda, Persons, and Byers, 1990). Cannon et al. (1999) examined dysfunctional

attitudes and poor problem- solving skills, which may contribute to hopelessness' feelings.

Nezu and Ronan (1988) found that college students experienced lower depressive symptoms when they used high ability problem solving skills than the ones using low effective problem solving skills. That study confirms again that problem- solving skills are an important element in the case of depression. It very much determines whether depressive symptoms will occur seriously or more softened.

Lakey (1988) also found that poor problem solving skills were predictors of depressive symptoms for university students. Individuals with depressive symptoms think of themselves as people with poor problem solving skills (Nezu, 1986). Wong and Whitaker (1993) support the idea that university students who define themselves as assertive, competitive, willing to take risks and willing to succeed hold a more positive attitude towards their problem solving skills. In other words, problem-solving skills are powerful tools.

D' Zurilla and Sheedy (1991) found that general problem - solving ability was negatively related to later stress. Lakey (1988) and Nezu & Ronan (1988) found in their studies that there is a predictive link between problem- solving ability and depression. D' Zurilla and Sheedy (1991) based their study on their assumption that problem solving ability of a person may prevent any psychological stress in that it enables the person to cope better with problematic situations and emotional impacts. They believe that with that idea in mind, it is possible that good problem- solving ability will bring lower psychological stress. Another suggestion of the results is that a subscale of the problem- solving scale, generation of alternative solutions, is a possible significant predictor of psychological stress.

Depressive persons compared to others see themselves especially unsuccessful; they overestimate their failures and underestimate their success (Blackburn, Davidson, and Kendell, 1990). Consistent with that fact, Haaga, Fine, Terrill, Stewart, and Beck (1993) found with their study that there is an association between problem solving deficiencies and clinical problems, e. g. depression.

Clum and Febbraro (1994) designed a study to see whether stress, social support, problem- solving appraisal/ skills predict suicide severity among college students. They found that problem- solving confidence is a significant predictor of level of suicide ideation. Stress, social support and problem solving skills are important for suicidal behavior (Dixon, Heppner, and Anderson, 1991). People with deficits in problem- solving ability are cognitively not able to create alternative solutions when faced with high stress (Clum, Patsiokas, & Luscomb, 1979). That way they become hopeless under high stress conditions. Priester and Clum (1993b) found that problem- solving deficits predicted depression.

Ross & Minowsky (1989) believed that feeling of control reduces depression because it supports active problem- solving behavior. Person feels more able to attempt to solve problems. Researchers found that high levels of education, income, being male, and being married are associated with lower levels of depression. All those mean that people control their own life rather than any powerful others or outside forces. Researchers say that perceived control and problem- solving decreases depression. People solving their problems on their own do possess a greater sense of control and self- esteem. Besides, as education gets higher, distress and depression get lower. The well- educated people feel that they have more control over their lives than the poor- educated ones (Ross & Minowsky, 1989). It is more likely that they search for the cause and go at the end until they solve it. They do not

ignore problems; on the other hand they try to solve them. Low education brings low levels of control and support.

It is known that problem- solving skills moderate the possibility of depressive symptoms after negative life events (Nezu & Ronan, 1988). Problem- solving abilities moderate depressive symptoms during stressful life events and effective problem- solvers reported lower depression scores than ineffective problem- solvers under stress. It is also found that depressed people have problem- solving deficits than people without depression (Nezu, 1986a). Nezu & Ronan (1985) found that often negative stressful life events lead to an increase of problematic situations; and problem solving skills of people help to cope with them and if they are effective, that leads to a decrease of depressive symptoms. It is found that people with effective problem solving skills under high stress reported lower levels of depression than people with ineffective problem- solving skills (Nezu, Saraydarian, Kalmar, & Ronan, 1986).

Problem- Solving Skills & Gender Differences

Marcotte et al. (1999) found that there is a gender difference in the case of depression, as girls reporting more depressive symptoms than boys. They also found an affect of the perception of problem solving abilities on depressive symptoms. Depressed youngsters reported themselves as being less powerful in control, as being less confident and as experiencing more stressful life events. Morton et al. (1993) supported that notion with the results of their study indicating depressed adolescents reporting being more negative and passive in their problem solving abilities. D' Zurilla, Maydeu- Olivares, and Kant (1998) found that males experience a more positive attitude towards problem orientation and a less negative problem orientation than women. It is found that men use coping styles, which are problem- focused,

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whereas women use coping styles which are emotion- focused when dealing with a stressful situation (Zuckerman, 1989).

2.5. Self- Esteem

Importance of Self- Esteem

Self- esteem is the positive or negative belief about one's self (Rosenberg, 1975). It is the key factor in personal growth and development. It is important in the development of a healthy personality (Leary et al., 1995). One sees himself/ herself as positive and worthwhile while being aware of his/ her faults when his/ her self- esteem is high, and when it is low, one sees himself as a deficient person regarding his/ her weaknesses. People with low self- esteem are not sure of their behaviors and beliefs (Nir & Neumann, 1995).

Longmore & DeMaris (1997) believe that variables related to self such as self- esteem are important resources for a person's psychology. Self - esteem may act as a buffer between stressors and psychological distress. It may create differences, e. g. level of self- esteem may play a role in which some people get depressed and others do not at stressful situations.

Although some researchers believe that self- esteem may not be a strong predictor in a collectivist society like it is in an individualistic society (Diener, 1999), Cheng and Furnham (2003) believe that self- esteem is important for a person's life happiness and mental health for all kinds of societies.

Self- Esteem & Studies Related to Depression

People with high self- esteem use some internal coping skills, which lead to less distress following relationship dissolution (Frazier & Cook, 1993). High self- esteem predicts adaptation to relationship dissolution and general mental health (Chung et al., 2003; Diener, 1984; Helgeson, 1994). It is an effective way of coping

with the dissolution (Chung et al., 2002). Those people with high self- esteem do have confidence in their own abilities. They are aware of their strengths and also weaknesses. That way, they are able to manage the negative emotions after the romantic relationship dissolution (Kardum & Krapic', 2001).

Longmore & DeMaris (1997) did a study to explore the effect of inequity on depression through self- esteem. They argue that high self- esteem buffers the impact of underbenefiting on depression. Depression generally occurs as an answer to unfair, uncontrollable and frustrating situations. Even unfairness in the division of housework creates psychological decrease in the well- being of the person (Krause & Markides, 1985). One general belief is that there is a negative association between self- esteem and depression (Seff, Gecas, & Ray, 1992). Roberts, Kassel, and Gotlib (1995) also established a study on stability of self- esteem as a predictor of depressive symptoms. They found that level of self- esteem is a strong predictor of depressive symptoms. Longmore & DeMaris (1997) believe that variables related to self such as self- esteem are important resources for a person's psychology.

It is found that people with low self- esteem are more likely to be depressed than those with high self- esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). It is also found that low self-esteem is a part of depressive symptoms (Blatt & Zuroff, 1992; Nolen- Hoeksema, 1994). Cheng and Furnham (2003) hypothesized that positive self- esteem would be a significant predictor of happiness, whereas negative self- esteem would be a significant predictor of depression. They found that negative self- esteem had no effect on happiness, whereas positive self- esteem had effect on all aspects of happiness. Both negative and positive self- esteem were found to be equally important as being predictors of depression.

It is argued that the ones in the relationship who have high self- esteem are probably more successful at continuing the relationship. However, it is also likely that those with high self- esteem are also more successful in taking the decision of ending the relationship (Felmlee, Sprecher, & Bassin, 1990).

The direction of the relationship between depression and low self- esteem is not clear (Cheng & Furnham, 2003). It is possible that people with low self- esteem are more vulnerable to depression, or that people who are depressed get faced with the decrement of their self- esteem. It is also unclear that whether people with high self- esteem tend to have better relationships, or having good relationships put them in a position with high self- esteem.

Self- Esteem & Relationships

Individuals go through many dating experiences before getting married (Burke, Stets, & Pirog- Good, 1988). The literature shows that there is a background of studies considering personal differences and the association with different romantic experiences (Dion & Dion, 1975). Studies found that high self- esteem people do love others more often and they experience satisfying relationships (Thornton & Ryckman, 1991). Dion & Dion (1975) explored that high self- esteem people reported experiencing romantic love more frequently than those with low self- esteem. Some studies found that there are gender differences in self- esteem (Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997; Lackovic, Girgin, & Dekovic, 1990). Dion & Dion (1973) found that females reported more of being in love than males, and they also reported that they are more euphoric during their relationships. Females also see their relationships as a step to marriage more than males. In their other study, Dion & Dion (1975) found that women reported their love as more rewarding than males. Like the ones low in self- esteem, women reported also greater love and liking and

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more trust towards their partner than males, i.e. they are more receptive to love than men.

A person's degree of self-esteem is considered to be a key point in romantic love (Dion & Dion, 1975). High self-esteem individuals respond better to a romantic partner than those with low self-esteem. Researchers believe that people with low self-esteem tend to be more open to romantic love because of their need for affection; they find romantic love more rewarding and they accept a romantic partner more favorably than those with high self-esteem. Dion and Dion (1975) found that people with high self-esteem and with low defensiveness had romantic love more frequently than low self-esteem people. However, people did not define their romantic relationship as more rewarding, more satisfying, more positive than those with low self-esteem. Dion and Dion (1975) guess that low self-esteem people may be less successful in engaging romantic relationships than being less receptive to love. Also, the need of low self-esteem people to protect their vulnerable selves may create avoidance from interpersonal situations. People with low self-esteem reported greater love and greater liking, and more trust for their partners. They also reported more intense experiences of romantic relationships.

Self-Esteem & Personality

Robins, Tracy, Trzesniewski, Potter and Gosling (2001) established a study to search for the relationship between self-esteem and the big five personality dimensions (openness- conscientiousness- extraversion- agreeableness- neuroticism). The Big Five predict many outcomes in job performance, divorce, personality disorders, academic achievement and so on (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Graziano & Ward, 1992; Cramer, 1993). Robins et al. (2001) also believed that personality and self-esteem are based on same developmental grounds. They also suggest that self-

esteem and personality may affect each other. High self-esteem people see themselves as desirable personalities and believe that they have no undesirable traits. The results of the study showed that high self-esteem people are generally extraverted, conscientious, emotionally stable, open and agreeable people. As McCrae and Costa (1997) are claiming, the Big Five traits do influence people's self-conceptions. People's self-concepts do not influence the Big Five.

Self-Esteem & Gender Differences

Research revealed many different results for gender differences in self-esteem. Some found that adolescent females had lower scores than adolescent males; some found that females have higher self-esteem than males, and some studies found no significant gender differences (in Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997). Josephs, Markus, and Tafarodi (1992) believe that high self-esteem males want to get ahead of others while high self-esteem females want to connect with others. In other words, these are gender-ascribed characteristics. Being separate, autonomous and independent and better than others are important features of being a male. For females, feeling good about oneself comes from being interdependent and sensitive with others.

Josephs, Tafarodi, and Markus (1992) argue that sources for males' and females' self-esteem are different. They asked themselves whether women and men have different ideas about their self-concepts. It is arguable that although it is a fact that women and men do not differ in the level of their of self-esteem, it is possible that they do differ in the resources. Women are more connected and collectivist considering their schema of the self, while men are more independent and individualist (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In such a schema, others are very much

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involved in the self for women. However, others are rather distinct in the case of men.

When males and females differ in their definition of the self (connecting vs. separating), then the fundamental basis of the self- esteem should vary (Josephs, Tafarodi, & Markus, 1992). Men define themselves as positive selves when they fulfill their gender based goals, i. e. being independent, autonomous and better than others. On the other hand, women feel good when they are interdependent with others, i. e. being sensitive and connected to others.

Josephs, Tafarodi, & Markus (1992) used Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale and found that men support their self- esteem through individuating achievements. High self- esteem men found themselves superior and having unique abilities in many areas. Men feel good when they think they are unique and different from others. Women feel good when they are in connection and good relation with others. The characteristic to see oneself different from others is an important source for men' s self- esteem.

The study (Josephs, Tafarodi, & Markus, 1992) also supported the idea that for women, the self- esteem is in connection and interdependence with others. Women are more comfortable in experiencing intimacy in their relationships (Fischer, 1981). Women put a strong emphasis on gaining relations and connections to others. For women, interpersonal relations are sources of power and importance.

Some studies explain that there are no gender differences for self- esteem (Lamke, 1982), while others argue that girls are higher in self- esteem (Crozier, 1995) especially for social and academic areas. The study of Bosacki, Innerd and Towson (1997) showed that there is no significant decrement of self- esteem for girls contrary to the previous literature. Actually, girls were higher than boys on peer and

school self- esteem. In another study (Stein & Nymathi, 1999), it is found that, within impoverished population, significant negative relationship exists between self-esteem and stress for both genders. However, the correlation is higher for women. For women, lower self- esteem is highly associated with more depression.

Self- Esteem & Children

Children take gender related information from their environment and build their self- esteem. That way, positive or negative images of their gender affect their self- image and in turn their self- esteem (Ochman, 1996). It is seen as a state of self-evaluation developed by the environment. O' Malley and Bachman (1983) found that self- esteem increases between the ages of 13 and 23. They also suggest that although there is a relationship between age and self- esteem, age is not the only cause for changes. Being an adult, taking responsibilities, increment in physical size all make contributions to the changes.

Continuing with early adolescence, it is argued that school environment is an important tool for the development of self- esteem (Bernstein, 1980). During early adolescence social differentiation occurs. Also, social interaction with schoolmate, and the demand for academic tasks all shape the concept of the self.

Considering adolescent ages, Samet and Kelly (1987) found a positive association between steady dating and perception of self- esteem. Romantic relationships may create positive effects on adolescent development. They hypothesized that adolescents with dates are considered to be high self- esteem people among their peers. Samet and Kelly (1987) in their study of adolescent dating found that adolescents with steady dates have higher self- esteem than the ones without steady involvements. Also, males were more affected by self- esteem with steady dating behavior than females.

Self- Esteem & Related Concepts

Smith and Cohen (1993) hypothesized that university students' distress would be positively related to their proportion of self- complexity after a romantic relationship dissolution. Linville (1987) defines a complex self as having different traits in different situations and a simple self as having the same attributes all over and over again in every situation. Self- complexity acts as a buffer (Linville, 1987). When a person's self- complexity is high, then that person's distress would be less, because only a small portion of his self would be affected. Smith and Cohen (1993) investigated the following reactions of college students after a romantic relationship breakup. They found that the more a self- part of the person overlaps with other parts, the more the person gets affected and distress get produced. Their data show descriptively that the termination of the romantic involvement was an upsetting and important event. The positive link between amount of negative life events and psychological distress gets weakened when self- complexity amount increased. It acts as a buffer mechanism.

Self- Esteem & Turkish Studies

Çanakçı (2000) did a study in the college population to learn about the relationship between self- esteem and dating. The students who defined themselves as always experiencing dating scored higher on self- esteem than those who have never experienced dating and those who were presently dating. Other results of Çanakçı (2000) also showed that students who were previously dating scored again higher on self- esteem than those who were presently dating. Also, there was a significant positive correlation between self- esteem and satisfaction of the relationship.

Most of the Turkish studies, which investigated gender differences in self-esteem, showed no significant differences between self- esteem levels of boys and girls (Durmuş, 1994; Duru, 1995; Gür, 1996). A study (Özoğlu, 1988) showed however that boys' self - esteem scores were significantly higher than girls' scores. In a study (Gür, 1996) it was found that there is a negative and high correlation between level of depression and level of self- esteem for adolescents.

2.6. Connection Between the Literature Review and Aims of the Study

The review of the literature showed that there is an association between dissolution of a romantic relationship and psychological distress. Personal strengths are important in overcoming the negative emotional aftermath following a dissolution. Literature especially showed that self- esteem level of a person and his/ her problem solving skills are important variables influencing the strength of the association between dissolution of a romantic relationship and psychological distress. In the light of this knowledge, it was aimed to investigate whether that self- esteem and problem solving skills would predict psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. To the extend that support for this relationship could be found, empirical knowledge could be provided for researchers and practitioners.

The dissolution of romantic relationships literature showed that relationship characteristics including duration of the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, sexual nature of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer part of the broken relationship, and gender are important dimensions in experiencing the psychological distress following a dissolution. Therefore it is important to examine these variables in relation to psychological distress. It was aimed to investigate whether that gender, duration of the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, relationship with sexual act, being the sufferer or the dissolver, the broken

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relationship being the first relationship ever, the status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, and importance of the dissolution would predict psychological distress.

A review of Turkish romantic relationship dissolution literature revealed that the number of studies on that topic was very limited (Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987; Hortaçsu, 1989). Within all these, there was a need to investigate the issue of psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution and the factors related to it in the context of Turkish culture.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

3.1. Subjects

The participants of the present study, who were chosen with the purposive sampling method, were 222 university students, who were out of a romantic relationship within the last year, consisting of 150 females (68 %), and 72 males (32 %). The students ranged in age from 17 to 31 with a mean of 21.13 ($\underline{SD}$= 2.20). All of the students were from various departments (psychology, sociology, philosophy, industrial engineering, business administration, political science, food engineering, chemical engineering, foreign language education, and civil engineering) of Middle East Technical University. Some characteristics of the group were given in Table 1, and Table 2.

Prior to analysis, all variables were examined through various SPSS programs for the assessment of accuracy of data entry and missing values. The original sample of 336 was reduced to 222 by excluding 114 participants who answered the question of "being out of a romantic relationship within the past 12 months" as "no". Also, 8 cases, which have been faced with another emotional event affecting them within the past 12 months except for the romantic relationship dissolution, and one case with the age of 38 as being an outlier among university students, were excluded from the data leaving 213 cases for the analyses.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Sample (N= 222)

Variables	Mean	SD
Age	21.21	2.23
	Frequencies	**Percentages (%)**
Gender		
Female	150	68
Male	72	32
Person ending the relationship		
Dissolver	151	68
Sufferer	71	32
Was the broken relationship the first romantic relationship ever?		
Yes	46	21
No	176	79
Importance of the relationship		
Not important at all	3	1
A little important	32	14
Important	63	28
Significantly important	76	34
Very important	48	21
Sexuality in the relationship		
Yes	132	60

(**Table 1.** Continued)

No	90	40

Importance of the dissolution

Not important at all	18	8
A little important	41	19
Important	60	27
Significantly important	60	27
Very important	43	19

Any present partner

Yes	72	32
No	150	68

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables

Variables (N= 213)	**M**	**SD**	**Range**
			(min- max)
1. Total Score of Problem Solving Inventory	87.89	20.65	(45 - 167)
2. Total Score of Rosenberg's Self - Esteem Scale	1.32	1.62	(0 - 6)
3. Age	21.13	2.20	(17 – 31)
4. Relationship Characteristics			
Duration of the relationship (in weeks)	56.66	59.73	(1 – 312)
Time elapsed since the dissolution (in weeks)	20.57	15.89	(0,5 – 52)
5. Total Score of Brief Symptom Inventory	57.71	36.70	(5 – 181)

3.2. Instruments

Four instruments were utilized in the current study. Participants were administered the Problem Solving Inventory (PSI, see Appendix A), the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI, see Appendix B), the Rosenberg' s Self - Esteem Scale (RSS, see Appendix C), and the Demographic Information Form (see Appendix D). The instruments are described below.

3.2.1. Problem Solving Inventory (PSI)

PSI (Heppner, 1988) is a 35- item Likert- type instrument designed to assess people' s perceptions of their problem - solving ability. The Cronbach' s $\alpha-$ score was .90. The scale was internally consistent ($\alpha-$scores are between .72 and .90). The test- retest reliability ranged between .83 and .89.

The responses to the items range between 1 (I always behave like that) to 6 (I never behave like that) to the question "How often do you behave like that?". The total score range is 32 to 192. The high scores indicate that the person perceives himself as inadequate in his problem solving abilities (Heppner, 1988). The items explained 3 factors as "problem solvin g confidence" (.85), "approaching - avoiding" (.84) and "personal control" (.72) (Heppner, 1988).

The standardization of the scale for the Turkish population was done (Şahin, Şahin, & Heppner, 1993). Cronbach' s $\alpha-$ score was found to be .88 for the total inventory. Test- retest reliability was found to be as .81. Estimates of validity were obtained. PSI score was significantly correlated with the Beck Depression Inventory, r(222)= .33, p< .001, and with State Trait Anxiety Inventory- T, r(222)= .45, p< .001. The PSI is able to identify Turkish anxious and dysphoric from Turkish nonanxious and nondysphoric individuals.

The items explained six factors as "impulsive style" (.87), "reflective style" (.76), "monitoring" (.69), "problem solving confidence" (.64), "avoidant style" (.74), and "planfulness" (.59) (Şahin, Şahin, & Heppner, 1993). For the purpose of the present study all the factors were used to provide information of the students' problem solving abilities.

3.2.2. Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)

BSI (Derogatis, 1992) is a 53- item Likert- type instrument designed to assess people's various psychological problems. It is the short form of SCL- 90 (Derogatis, 1977).

The responses to the items range between 0 (not) to 4 (a lot of) to the question "How much do you have these symptoms for the last week?" The total score range is 0 to 212. The high scores indicate the high frequency of the person's symptoms.

Cronbach's $\alpha-$ score was found to be between .71 and .85 for its 9 subscales (somatization, obsessive- compulsive disorder, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid thoughts, psychocism). The test- retest reliability score ranged between .68 (somatization) and .91 (phobic anxiety) (Derogatis, 1992).

For validity studies, correlations between MMPI and BSI were above .30, and those scores were similar or identical with SCL- 90 scores. Other studies show that BSI could differentiate smokers from nonsmokers (Chiles, Benjamin and Cahn, 1990 cited in Şahin& Durak, 1994); coronary heart disease from healthy control group (Kushner, Beitman and Beck, 1989 cited in Şahin& Durak, 1994); and schizophrenic patients with suicide risk from schizophrenic patients without suicide risk (Cohen, Test and Brown, 1990 cited in Şahin& Durak, 1994).

The standardization of the scale for the Turkish population was done (Şahin & Durak, 1994). Four different studies showed that the Cronbach's α– scores were found to be between .93 and .96. Scores for subscales ranged between .63 and .86.

Estimates of criterion validity were obtained. The correlations were like from -.14 to -.34 for Social Comparison Scale, from .16 to .42 for Submissiveness Scale, from .24 to .36 Stress Audit 4.2- OS, from .13 to .36 for UCLA- Loneliness Scale, from -.34 to -.57 for Offer Loneliness Scale, and from .34 to .70 for Beck Depression Inventory with BSI subscales and 3 global index scores. Factor analyses found 5 factors (anxiety, depression, negative self, somatization, hostility) (Şahin& Durak, 1994).

In the current study, the scores for depression subscale and distress severity index were used to assess the psychological distress of the students following a romantic relationship dissolution.

3.2.3. Rosenberg' s Self- Esteem Scale (RSS)

The Rosenberg' s Self - Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is a 10- item Likert- type instrument developed to assess self- esteem. The responses to the items range between 1 (completely agree) to 4 (completely disagree). The RSS is scored by using Guttman scoring format. Five of the ten self- esteem items are worded negatively and the other five positively. Examples are, "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself", and "I certainly feel useless at times".

The scores obtained from the scale are between 0 and 6. Scores 0- 1 indicate "high", scores 2 - 4 indicate "intermediate" and scores 5 - 6 indicate "low" self - esteem.

The test- retest reliability of the scale was found to be .88 (Rosenberg, 1979 cited in Melnick & Mookerjee, 1991) and .82 (Fleming & Courtney, 1984). The

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alpha reliability was found to be .82 (Vaux, 1988), .74 (Thomas, 1988), and .88 (Fleming & Courtney, 1984).

For validity studies, it has been found to be correlated with Eagly's version of the Janis- Field Feelings of Inadequacy Scale (r= .75) and Diggory's version of the Cutick's Self - Description Inventory (r= .64) (Kahle, 1976).

The translation and the standardization of the scale for the Turkish population was done (Çuhadaroğlu, 1985). The test- retest reliability was found to be .75 (Çuhadaroğlu, 1985) and .82 (Kartal, 1996).

Estimates of validity were obtained. The correlation coefficient was found to be .71 between psychiatric interviews and self- esteem scale (Çuhadaroğlu, 1985), .56 between self- esteem scale and semantic differential self- esteem scale (Frank & Morolla, 1976) (Kartal, 1996). Three subscales of SCL- 90 (Derogatis, 1977) were also used for validity. RSS correlated .66 with "depression" subsca le, .70 with "psychosomatic symptoms" subscale, and .45 with "interpersonal threat" subscale (Çuhadaroğlu, 1985).

3.2.4. Demographic Information Form

The demographic information form was prepared by the researcher in order to obtain information about the demographic and romantic relationship characteristics of the subjects (see Appendix D). The form consisted of 11 questions. Some of them were "multiple choice" type and some of them were "fill in the blanks" type of questions. Questions were like "Gender ?", "Were you the one who was dissolving the relationship or were you the sufferer?", "How long did your relationship last?", "Was sexuality a part of your relationship?" and so on.

3.3. Procedure

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and collected back during class hours of the students at the university. Permission to fill out the forms was obtained from the instructors of the courses. Although the participation was on a voluntary basis, some of the instructors gave extra credit for the students' participation in the study. The first page included a general introduction to the study and questions concerning demographic characteristics. Each scale had the necessary instructions about the points in filling them. Also, before the administration of the instruments, participants were given the chance for asking questions to the researcher if there were any. Except the cover page, which contained the demographic information, the scales were randomized in each booklet in order to eliminate the errors related to the ordering of scales. The completion of the scales took about 20 minutes.

3.4. Analysis of Data

At the beginning of the data analysis, descriptive statistics were used in order to find out general characteristics of the sample. Secondly, 2 separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate whether gender, a set of relationship variables, problem solving skills, and self- esteem would predict psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. The predictors were gender, relationship variables including duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer, having sexuality in the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, importance of the relationship, importance of the dissolution, status of any present partner, and being the broken relationship the first relationship ever, problem solving skills subscales (impulsive style, reflective style, problem- solving confidence, avoidant style, monitoring, planfulness), and self- esteem, while the

criterion variables were depression and distress severity index. Prior to regression analyses, variables were evaluated for multicollinearity. The statistical assumptions were satisfactorily met. Correlation matrix of the variables was examined to see the relationships among them. Gender and relationship related characteristics, namely, duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer, sexuality, time elapsed since the dissolution, importance of the relationship, importance of the dissolution, status of any present partner, and being the broken relationship the first relationship ever were firstly entered into the regression equation in order to control their effects on the remaining variables. At the second and the last step, problem solving skills subscales (impulsive style, reflective style, problem- solving confidence, avoidant style, monitoring, planfulness) and self- esteem as personality related characteristics were entered into the equation to investigate the prediction of psychological distress above and beyond all the other independent variables of the study. Lastly, separate univariate analyses of variance were performed to assess the effects of duration of the relationship (which was recoded with 2 categories as 4 weeks- 104 weeks, and as 105 weeks- 300 weeks) and time elapsed since the dissolution (which was recoded with 2 categories as first 6 weeks, and 7 weeks- 52 weeks) on psychological distress (which was measured separately by depression subscale, and distress severity index) among the subjects. All the analyses of this study were carried out by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 10.0 package.

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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In the present study, data from 213 university students were investigated. All of the students were from various departments of the Middle East Technical University. The students ranged in age from 17 to 31 with a mean of 21. 13 ($\underline{SD}$ = 2. 20). All of the students were administered four instruments: The Problem Solving Inventory (PSI), the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI), the Rosenberg's Self - Esteem Scale (RSS), and the Demographic Information Form.

4.1. Correlation Matrix of the Study Variables

The Pearson correlation coefficients of the variables used in the study are presented in Table 3. As can be seen from the table, the time elapsed since the dissolution was significantly negatively correlated with the depression score of the Brief Symptom Inventory ($\underline{r}$= -.15, $\underline{p}$ < .05) and the distress severity index ($\underline{r}$= -.19, $\underline{p}$ < .05). The Rosenberg's Self - Esteem Scale was positively correlated with the depression score of the Brief Symptom Inventory ($\underline{r}$= .43, $\underline{p}$ < .05) and the distress severity index ($\underline{r}$= .43, $\underline{p}$ < .05). It was also positively correlated with the six subscales of the Problem Solving Inventory (impulsive style $\underline{r}$= .20, $\underline{p}$ < .01, reflective style $\underline{r}$= .28, $\underline{p}$ < .05, avoidant style $\underline{r}$= .27, $\underline{p}$ < .05, monitoring $\underline{r}$= .19, $\underline{p}$ < .01, problem- solving confidence $\underline{r}$= .37, $\underline{p}$ < .05, and planfulness $\underline{r}$= .37, $\underline{p}$ < .01). Depression was positively correlated with five subscales of the Problem Solving

Inventory (impulsive style r= .23, p < .01, reflective style r= .19, p < .05, avoidant style r= .15, p < .05, problem- solving confidence r= .27, p < .05, and planfulness r= .25, p < .01), and was positively correlated with distress severity (r= .85, p < .05). Distress severity was positively correlated with five subscales of the Problem Solving Inventory (impulsive style r= .22, p < .01, reflective style r= .19, p < .05, avoidant style r= .15, p < .05, problem- solving confidence r= .23, p < .05, and planfulness r= .25, p < .01).

4.2. Results of the Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Two separate hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to evaluate whether gender, a set of relationship variables, problem solving skills, and self- esteem would predict psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. The predictors were gender, relationship variables including duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer, having sexuality in the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, importance of the relationship, importance of the dissolution, status of any present partner, and the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, problem solving skills with six subscales (impulsive style, reflective style, avoidant style, monitoring, problem-solving confidence, planfulness), and self- esteem, while the criterion variables were depression and distress severity of the subjects.

Table 4 displays the standardized regression coefficients (Beta), t, R^2, R^2_{change}, partial correlation and F_{change} after each step of the hierarchical regression for depression. After step two, with all independent variables entered into the regression equation, R= .51, F (16, 197)= 4.46, p< .001. In the overall model, gender, the set of relationship variables, problem solving skills, and self- esteem together accounted for

Table 3. Correlation Matrix of the Study Variables

(N= 213)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	1.00	-.02	.12	.15*	.05	-.14*	.02	.12	.13*	.02	.01	.06	-.09	.04	-.02	-.03	.14*	.08
2		1.00	.02	-.24*	.03	-.11	-.01	-.29*	.08	-.11	-.08	-.06	-.00	.04	.07	.09	-.02	.06
3			1.00	.04	.02	-.39**	.14*	.09	-.16*	.21*	.03	.02	.02	.08	.03	.06	.25*	.19**
4				1.00	.36*	.10	-.04	.69*	-.12	-.02	.04	-.02	-.04	-.07	-.03	-.13*	-.04	-.11
5					1.00	.12	.00	.27*	-.01	-.03	-.09	-.10	-.06	-.04	-.03	.03	-.04	.05
6						1.00	-.25*	.14*	.14*	-.02	.06	.06	.05	.05	.07	.05	-.08	-.01
7							1.00	-.10	.14*	-.03	-.15*	-.15*	.04	-.01	.04	.08	.08	.01
8								1.00	-.15*	.10	.16*	.10	-.07	-.04	-.03	-.03	-.06	-.02
9									1.00	-.08	-.15*	-.08	.04	.07	.03	.05	-.03	.04
10										1.00	.43*	.43*	.20**	.28*	.27*	.19**	.37*	.37**
11											1.00	.85*	.23**	.19*	.15*	.09	.27*	.25**
12												1.00	.22**	.19*	.15*	.07	.23*	.25**
13													1.00	.54*	.60*	.42**	.35*	.33**
14														1.00	.56*	.69**	.60*	.64**
15															1.00	.46**	.41*	.35**
16																1.00	.48*	.52**
17																	1.00	.74**
18																		1.00

Note: 1: gender, 2: dissolver/ sufferer, 3: first partner ever, 4: imp. of relationship, 5: duration of rel., 6: sexuality, 7: time elapsed, 8: imp. of dissolution, 9: present partner, 10: self- esteem, 11: depression, 12: distress severity, 13: impulsive style, 14: reflective sty., 15: avoidant sty., 16: monitoring, 17: problem- solving confidence, 18: planfulness
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two- tailed

a significant portion, approximately 26% of the variance in psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution.

Table 4. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results: Gender, Relationship Variables, Problem Solving Skills, and Self- Esteem on Depression

Variables	Beta	t_{value}	partial correlation	R^2	R^2_{change}	F_{change}
Step 1						
GEN	-.10	-.15	-.01	.08	.08	2.06*
DURREL	-.10	-1.54	-.11			
DURDIS	-.09	-1.39	-.10			
PART	.04	.55	.04			
SEX	.02	.32	.02			
IMPREL	-.07	-.75	-.05			
IMPDIS	.21	2.36*	.16			
PRESEN	-.14	-2.18*	-.15			
FIRST	-.07	-.95	-.07			
Step 2						
IMPUL	.29	3.45**	.24	.26	.18	7.03***
REFLEC	.05	.48	.03			
AVOID	-.14	-1.57	-.11			
MONIT	-.11	-1.25	-.09			
PRSOLV	-.01	-.07	-.01			
PLAN	.07	.68	.05			
TOTRSS	.34	5.03***	.33			

R= .51***, R^2= .26

Note. GEN: gender, PART: being the dissolver or the sufferer, SEX: sexuality, DURREL: duration of the relationship, DURDIS: time elapsed since the dissolution, IMPREL: importance of the relationship, IMPDIS: importance of the dissolution, PRESEN: any present partner, FIRST: first relationship ever, IMPUL: impulsive style of PSI, REFLEC: reflective sty. of PSI, AVOID: avoidant sty. of PSI, MONIT: monitoring of PSI, PRSOLV: problem- solving confidence of PSI, PLAN: planfulness of PSI, TOTRSS: total score of Rosenberg's Self - Esteem Scale
* p< .05, ** p< .01, *** p< .001

Gender, and relationship characteristics (duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer, having sexuality in the relationship, time elapsed since

the dissolution, importance of the relationship, importance of the dissolution, status of any present partner, and the broken relationship being the first relationship ever) were entered into the equation at the first step in order to control their effects on the personality variables. At the following step, the personality variables were entered into the equation by the decision of the researcher as the major important variables were left to the later steps to see what they add to the prediction over and above the nuisance variable which was given higher priority for entry in accordance with the procedure given by Tabachnick and Fidell (2000). First step resulted in a significant increment in R^2 with $\underline{R}^2_{change}$= .08, $\underline{F}_{change}$ (9, 197)= 2.06, $\underline{p}$ < .05. However, only importance of the dissolution ($\underline{B}$= .21, $\underline{p}$ < .05), and the status of any present partner ($\underline{B}$= -.14, $\underline{p}$ < .05) variables significantly increased the ability to predict depression indicating that importance of the dissolution, and status of any present partner predicted depression. At the second and last step, problem solving skills subscales (impulsive style, reflective style, avoidant style, monitoring, problem- solving confidence, planfulness), and self- esteem variables were entered into the equation to investigate the prediction of depression above and beyond all the other independent variables of the study. The second step resulted in a significant increment in R^2 with $\underline{R}^2_{change}$= .18, $\underline{F}_{change}$ (7, 197)= 7.03, $\underline{p}$ < .001). However, as the Table 4 shows, only self- esteem ($\underline{B}$= .34, $\underline{p}$ < .001), and impulsive style of PSI ($\underline{B}$= .29, $\underline{p}$ < .01) were accounted for a significant proportion of variance. As thought, self- esteem of the person, and impulsive style of PSI predicted depression.

Table 5 displays the standardized regression coefficients (Beta), t, R^2, $R^2_{change,}$ partial correlation and F_{change} after each step of the hierarchical regression for distress severity. After step two, with all independent variables entered into the regression

equation, $\underline{R}$= .54, $\underline{F}$ (16, 197)= 5.29, $\underline{p}$< .001. In the overall model, gender, the set of

relationship variables, problem solving skills, and self- esteem together accounted for

a significant portion, approximately 29% of the variance in psychological distress

following a romantic relationship dissolution.

Table 5. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results: Gender, Relationship Variables,

Problem Solving Skills, and Self- Esteem on Distress Severity

Variables	Beta	t_{value}	partial correlation	R^2	R^2_{change}	F_{change}
Step 1						
GEN	.06	.92	.06	.07	.07	1.83
DURREL	-.10	-1.52	-.11			
DURDIS	-.13	-2.10*	-.15			
PART	.03	.49	.03			
SEX	.02	.25	.02			
IMPREL	-.07	-.79	-.06			
IMPDIS	.14	1.57	.11			
PRESEN	-.10	-1.59	-.11			
FIRST	-.08	-1.17	-.08			
Step 2						
IMPUL	.22	2.64**	.18	.29	.22	9.10***
REFLEC	.08	.73	.05			
AVOID	-.10	-1.18	-.08			
MONIT	-.09	-1.07	-.08			
PRSOLV	-.08	-.82	-.06			
PLAN	.13	1.40	.10			
TOTRSS	.40	6.19***	.40			

R= .54***, R^2= .29

Note. GEN: gender, PART: being the dissolver or the sufferer, SEX: sexuality,
DURREL: duration of the relationship, DURDIS: time elapsed since the dissolution,
IMPREL: importance of the relationship, IMPDIS: importance of the dissolution,
PRESEN: any present partner, FIRST: first relationship ever, IMPUL: impulsive
style of PSI, REFLEC: reflective sty. of PSI, AVOID: avoidant sty. of PSI, MONIT:
monitoring of PSI, PRSOLV: problem- solving confidence of PSI, PLAN:
planfulness of PSI, TOTRSS: total score of Rosenberg's Self - Esteem Scale
* p< .05, ** p< .01, *** p< .001

Gender, and relationship characteristics (duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer, having sexuality in the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, importance of the relationship, importance of the dissolution, status of any present partner, and the broken relationship being the first relationship ever) were entered into the equation at the first step in order to control their effects on the personality variables. At the following step, the personality variables were entered into the equation by the decision of the researcher as the major important variables were left to the later steps to see what they add to the prediction over and above the nuisance variable which was given higher priority for entry in accordance with the procedure given by Tabachnick and Fidell (2000). First step did not result in a significant increment in R^2. However, although it was not a significant increment as a step, time elapsed since the dissolution was accounted for a significant proportion of variance ($\underline{B}$= - .13, $\underline{p}$ < .05), indicating that time elapsed since the dissolution predicted distress severity. At the second and last step, problem solving skills subscales (impulsive style, reflective style, avoidant style, monitoring, problem-solving confidence, planfulness), and self- esteem variables were entered into the equation to investigate the prediction of distress severity above and beyond all the other independent variables of the study. The second step resulted in a significant increment in R^2 with $\underline{R}^2_{change}$= .22, $\underline{F}_{change}$ (7, 197)= 9.10, $\underline{p}$ < .001). However, as the Table 5 shows, only self- esteem ($\underline{B}$= .40, $\underline{p}$ < .001), and impulsive style of PSI ($\underline{B}$= .22, $\underline{p}$ < .01) were accounted for a significant proportion of variance. As thought, self- esteem of the person, and impulsive style of PSI predicted distress severity.

In summary, as expected, the findings showed that importance of the dissolution, the status of any present partner, self- esteem, and impulsive style of problem solving skills predicted depression. It is also found that the time elapsed

since the dissolution, self- esteem, and impulsive style of problem solving skills predicted distress severity significantly. It can be said that self- esteem, and impulsive style increased the ability to predict psychological distress significantly beyond and above that afforded by the previous variables together.

4.3. ANOVA

4.3.1. Time Elapsed since the Dissolution & Duration of the Relationship

Table 6. Analysis of Variance for Depression

Source	SS	df	MS	F
duration	58.61	1	58.61	2.03
time elapsed	169.96	1	169.96	5.87*
dur. X time	44.15	1	44.15	1.53
Error	6134.31	209	28.94	
Total	21016.00	213		

* $p < .05$

Prior to analysis subjects were grouped on the basis of their answers as two groups for duration of the relationship (the variable was recoded, 4 through 104 weeks as one group, and 105 through 300 weeks as one group), and as two groups for time elapsed since the dissolution (the variable was recoded, first 6 weeks as one group, and the ones after 6 weeks through 52 weeks as one group).

Then, a 2X2 factorial analysis of variance was performed for the duration of the relationship, and time elapsed since the dissolution as the factors. The dependent variable was depression measured by the Brief Symptom Inventory.

Time elapsed since the dissolution ($F_{(1, 209)} = 5.87$, $p < .05$) was found to be significant (see Table 6). Subjects showed difference on their depression based on

their time elapsed since the dissolution. Duration of the relationship ($\underline{F}$ (1, 209)= 2.03, n.s.), and time elapsed since the dissolution and duration of the relationship interaction ($\underline{F}$ (1, 209)= 1.53, n.s.) were not found to be significant (see Table 6). The subjects did not show any difference on their depression based on duration of the relationship or the interaction of both variables.

4.3.2. Time Elapsed since the Dissolution & Duration of the Relationship

Table 7. Analysis of Variance for Distress Severity

Source	SS	df	MS	F
duration	1.09	1	1.09	2.35
time elapsed	1.08	1	1.08	2.34
dur. X time	1.14	1	1.14	2.48
Error	98.01	209	0.46	
Total	357.38	213		

A 2X2 factorial analysis of variance was performed for the duration of the relationship, and time elapsed since the dissolution as the factors. The dependent variable was distress severity measured by the Brief Symptom Inventory.

Time elapsed since the dissolution ($\underline{F}$ (1, 209)= 2.34, n.s.), duration of the relationship ($\underline{F}$ (1, 209)= 2.35, n.s.), and time elapsed since the dissolution and duration of the relationship interaction ($\underline{F}$ (1, 209)= 2.48, n.s.) were not found to be significant (see Table 7). The subjects did not show any difference on their distress severity based on duration of the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, or the interaction of both variables.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether gender, relationship characteristics (duration of the relationship, time elapsed since the dissolution, sexuality, being the dissolver or the sufferer, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, and importance of the dissolution), problem solving skills, and self-esteem were predictors of psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. In addition, it was also aimed to investigate whether time elapsed since the dissolution, and duration of the relationship would create any difference on psychological distress. The findings of the present study were presented in the Results section. Throughout this section, these findings will be discussed by referring to the related literature.

5.1. General Evaluation of the Results

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed in order to test which variables would predict psychological distress. Gender, time elapsed since the dissolution, duration of the relationship, being the dissolver or the sufferer part, sexual nature, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, the status of any present partner, importance of the relationship, and importance of the dissolution as relationship characteristics were entered at the first step into the equation, and, problem- solving skills with its six subcales (impulsive style, reflective style,

monitoring, problem- solving confidence, avoidant style, planfulness) and self-esteem as personality characteristics at the second, and the last step.

The results of the present study displayed support for the fact that self- esteem was a predictor for both depression, and distress severity index of psychological distress. Self- esteem may act as a buffer between stressors and psychological distress. People with high self- esteem are aware of their strengths and they use successful internal coping mechanisms to deal with their problems. That way, they are able to overcome the traumatic consequences of romantic relationship dissolutions. High self- esteem predicts adaptation to relationship dissolution (Helgeson, 1994). People may use their self- esteem as a coping tool against difficulties. Relationship dissolution may be an upsetting event. However, if people may face it as another temporary difficulty in their lives, and use their self- esteem to handle with it, it would be easier for them as found with the present study. This result was consistent with the literature. In many studies (Bloom et al., 1978; Chung et al., 2002; Frazier & Cook, 1993; Helgeson, 1994; Kardum & Krapic', 2001; Smith & Cohen, 1993) self- esteem was investigated in terms of its association with psychological distress following relationship terminations and it was demonstrated that this variable was a strong predictor of psychological distress. Subjects of the present study were a sample of people who have higher self- esteem than the regular population, because they have passed a difficult exam and deserved the right to be in one of the best universities in Turkey. That might help them to overcome distress.

The second possible prediction of the present study stressed the link between problem solving skills and distress, which was found as true for impulsive style of problem solving skills. Impulsive style presents a person who does not think much when faced with problems, and just does the thing, which comes first to mind.

Inpulsive style does not have a good affect on distress. Literature on problem solving skills and psychological distress revealed that people using effective problem solving skills were not faced with big emotional problems (Chang, 2002; Femlee, 1995; Mearns, 1991; Stein & Nyamathi, 1999). It is possible that people used good coping techniques during the bad times. Individuals with low problem solving skills are less likely to develop effective solutions when they encounter stressful situations, which may result in feelings of pessimism and hopelessness (Reinecke et al., 2001; Schotte & Clum, 1987). Individuals who have deficits in problem solving skills are cognitively unprepared to develop effective alternative solutions for adaptive coping under stressful life situations (Clum, Patsiokas, & Luscomb, 1979; D'Zurilla, 1988; Nezu & Ronan, 1988).

Although the literature showed an association between problem solving skills and psychological distress, some found no casual link (Cannon et al., 1999). Some researchers also argue that it is not clear whether depressive symptoms lead to poor problem solving skills or these poor problem- solving skills lead to depressive symptoms (Wong & Whitaker, 1993). Exposure to high levels of stress, which is possible after a relationship termination, is likely to deteriorate problem- solving skills (Chang, 2002; D'Zurilla, 1988). Another explanation might be that the sample consisted of university students for whom it was clear that relationship breakup is not the end of the world and that they will certainly have other dating relationships in the future. University students are the ones who are most open to form romantic relationships in Turkey (Aksu & Paykoç, 1985). That way, use of problem solving skills effectively or not would not have much affect on distress. The concept of having a relationship becomes important rather than dealing with problems when they are apparent. Besides, university students are more educated than the regular

population. That way, their problem- solving skills might be more developed, and they may be more confident about their problem- solving abilities.

The third possible prediction was not supported in the present study. Being the dissolver or the sufferer part of the broken relationship did not significantly predict psychological distress. This finding was not consistent with the literature. It was generally found that being the one who is dissolving the relationship is related to less psychological distress (Frazier & Cook, 1993; Fine & Sacher, 1997; Gray & Silver, 1990; Hill et al., 1976; Hortaçsu, 1989; Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987; Petit & Bloom, 1984; Sprecher, 1994; Sprecher et al., 1998). There was one study which was consistent with the present study which showed that being whether the dissolver or the sufferer did not have an affect on the psychological distress afterwards (Simpson, 1987). This literature inconsistent result again could be explained with the sample. Young university students might not care who dissolved the relationship. They are aware that the relationship is over, and they do not put much importance of the part who is dissolving it. When something is over, it is over. The result does not change whether you are the dissolver or the sufferer. Students live the end and carry on with their lives maybe. When there is distress, then it is related to the end of the relationship and its level does not change according to the parts of the broken relationship as the present study showed. Besides, most of the subjects were dissolvers, and mostly that broken relationship was not the first relationship ever. It is possible that subjects were getting used to breakups.

Another aim was whether duration of the relationship would predict distress following the dissolution. It was not found as a significant predictor. Many studies revealed the same result (Frazier & Cook, 1993; Fine & Sacher, 1997; Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987). However, some studies showed that longer duration of the

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relationship created greater distress following the dissolution (Attridge et al., 1995; Berscheid et al., 1989; Hortaçsu, 1989; Simpson, 1987; Sprecher et al., 1998). Additional analysis of variance showed that duration of the relationship did not create any difference on distress although he subjects were divided into two groups as shorter and longer duration. These inconsistent findings and the result of the present study emphasize the importance of future studies.

Another aim was whether time elapsed since the dissolution would predict psychological distress. In the present study, time elapsed since the dissolution predicted distress severity as consistent with the literature (Attridge et al., 1995; Sprecher et al., 1998). Additional analysis of variance showed that time elapsed since the dissolution created a difference on depression. Subjects who were in their first six weeks of the dissolution were worse considering depression. First six weeks are important when considering a crisis situation. The dissolution is still new, and impact is still heavy. It was also found that time elapsed since the dissolution was significantly negatively correlated with depression, and distress severity. As time passes, the traumatic emotions related to the end of the romantic relationship lose their affect. The sadness and maybe the upset lose their importance with time, and the person carries on his/ her life.

As another aim it was investigated whether the status of sexuality in romantic relationships would predict psychological distress when the relationship is over. The present study did not support this aim consistent with Hill et al. (1976)' s study. The finding that sexual nature of the relationship was not a significant predictor of psychological distress was inconsistent with the findings that sexuality creates commitment and investment into the relationship, which lead to distress when the stability is shaken, and the relationship is dissolved (Felmlee, 1990; Fine & Sacher,

1997; Simpson, 1987; Sprecher, 2002). This finding may help to change some belief such as that sexuality is still very important, and it is considered as a taboo as in the old days in the Turkish society. Less freedom was for girls for protecting their chastity (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1985). On the contrary, this finding showed that the young population of Turkey thinks and acts more free nowadays; and sex is not considered as much an important issue such as when a relationship is over, the world is over, because they had sex. However, it is also true that a population may create its own values, and that it does not necessarily predict the Turkish population. A change of values does not necessarily mean a change of behaviors.

The present study also demonstrated that gender did not predict psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. This finding was inconsistent with some findings that men and women undergo different levels of distress after the dissolution (Fine & Sacher, 1997; Hill et al., 1976; Mearns, 1991). On the other hand, literature consists of many studies that there are no gender differences considering psychological distress following the relationship termination (Frazier & Cook, 1993; Helgeson, 1994; Hortaçsu & Karancı, 1987; Knox, 1999; Mastekaasa, 1994; Simpson, 1987, 1990). At this point, it can be concluded that the finding was supportive of the research not reporting gender prediction in the relationship dissolution. However, males generally present themselves as strong persons who dot cry and so on. It is possible that maybe honesty was a factor affecting the results.

Importance of the dissolution predicted depression. When dissolution is seen as a bad and important experience, impact was bigger. It is also found that the status of any present partner predicted depression. Another partner after the dissolution may help the person to overcome the distress. A new partner acts as a tool, which supports the person emotionally. Those variables were created by the researcher

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based on the dimensions of breakups by Hortaçsu, and Karancı (1987). They established breakup dimensions such as self- control, partner' s control, and evaluative dimensions such as negative affective reaction and intensity of involvement. The researcher thought that those variables could have been important for the Turkish breakup literature, for they have been not studied that specifically before. Those findings should be a beginnng for further research for other comparisons.

To sum up, it is important to note that statistically supported results obtained from a sample of the Turkish society were consistent with many studies from the literature. According to the results of the study, importance of the dissolution, the status of any present patner, time elapsed since the dissolution, impulsive style of problem solving skills, and self- esteem appear to be useful in explaining Turkish young population' s psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. On the other hand, other characteristics found to be predictive of postdissolution psychological distress in the literature were not associated with Turkish people' s psychological distress. According to the results, gender, being the dissolver or the sufferer part of the broken relationship, duration of the relationship, sexual nature, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, importance of the relationship, and other five subscales of problem- solving skills (reflective style, avoidant style, monitoring, problem- solving confidence, planfulness) were not significant predictors of psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution.

With the present findings, it can be said that for the Turkish society, personality related characteristics, and some relationship related characteristics play

an important role in the psychological distress experience when there is a romantic relationship dissolution.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations of the present study. The first one concerns the generalization of the results. Since the study undertook an investigation of the psychological distress in a normal university student population by taking one university of Ankara, the results cannot be generalized to all university student populations. However, it is also true that Middle East Technical University students are much more representative than many other universities due to its cosmopolite and mixed structure (Aksu & Paykoç, 1985). The university is on the center of Turkey, and it gets many students from all over Turkey.

As other shortcomings, it can be said that measures of the study relied on self-reports. Wanting to be socially desirable may be a problem. In addition, sexual intercourse was not defined clearly. It was asked as "sexuality", and students were not asked whether it was something oral, anal, or vaginal regarding the intercourse. It was also not asked whether it was their first sexual experience losing virginity, which might be important for the impact of dissolution for Turkish society.

The present cross- sectional design that prevents causal inferences might be another limitation of the study. Although it is considered that self- esteem influences postdissolution distress, it is possible that actually postdissolution distress determines one's self - esteem. Self- esteem was measured only after dissolution. The problem of the literature was that whether self- esteem became lower after dissolution or it had been low already before the dissolution as a personality trait. Therefore, these possible reverse cause- effect relationships make impossible to reach conclusive causal inferences in one direction.

5.3. Therapeutic Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study have important implications for the clinical psychologist in his/ her theoretical and practical studies in order to search for and find the right prevention, assessment, and intervention.

Based on the results, it can be stated that having a high self- esteem decreases psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution. Therefore, in clinical settings, focusing on enhancing self- esteem can improve the negative emotions and psychological distress after the breakup.

Treatment goals should promote self- esteem and problem- solving skills, which are good ways to overcome psychological distress.

Alleviation of psychological distress should consider relationship factors as well as person related factors. Clinical psychologists, counselors, and college professors may use personal traits such as self- esteem, and relationship characteristics as helping tools for dealing with relationship termination problems. Therapists should be aware of the point that romantic relationships are an important issue in the lives of university students. That way, the dissolution of these relationships may create big problems.

To conclude, considering these person and relationship related issues in the whole process of the clinical intervention including the first assessment and the case formulation, and the application of the treatment plan would result in good outcomes for the person experiencing the psychological distress following the relationship dissolution. Not finding any relationship for some characteristics such as gender, duration of the relationship, sexuality, being the dissolver or the sufferer, the broken relationship being the first relationship ever, and importance of the relationship does

not necessarily mean that these characteristics are not useful in explaining psychological distress since only one study is not enough to reveal the whole factors.

5.4. Suggestions for Future Research

Future research dealing with psychological distress following a romantic relationship dissolution should conduct similar analyses in different samples. Older age groups, married couples, homosexual groups, different SES groups would be useful samples to enhance the findings of the present study.

Replication of the present study with a larger sample of is needed to enhance the generalizability of the results and ensure that the results were not unique to the present sample. Longitudinal and experimental research is necessary to investigate the causal effects. Such future studies are needed to clarify further and expand the findings of the present study.

Though, there were some limitations and there are some future study suggestions, the present study was important in showing some characteristics of romantic relationship issues and dissolution related factors for Turkish society. The present study was the first one in Turkey, which combines all those variables in a single study.

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PROBLEM SOLVING INVENTORY
(PROBLEM ÇÖZME ENVANTERİ)

Bu envanterin amacı, günlük yaşantınızdaki problemlerinize (sorunlarınıza) genel olarak nasıl tepki gösterdiğinizi belirlemeye çalışmaktır. Sözünü ettiğimiz bu problemler, matematik ya da fen derslerindeki alışmış olduğumuz problemlerden farklıdır. Bunlar, kendini karamsar hissetme, arkadaşlarla geçinememe, bir mesleğe yönelme konusunda yaşanan belirsizlikler ya da boşanıp boşanmama gibi karar verilmesi zor konularda ve hepimizin başına gelebilecek türden sorunlardır. Lütfen aşağıdaki maddeleri elinizden geldiğince samimiyetle ve bu tür sorunlarla karşılaştığınızda tipik olarak nasıl davrandığınızı göz önünde bulundurarak cevaplandırın. Cevaplarınızı, bu tür problemlerin nasıl çözülmesi gerektiğini düşünerek değil, böyle sorunlarla karşılaştığınızda *gerçekten* ne yaptığınızı düşünerek vermeniz gerekmektedir. Bunu yapabilmek için kolay bir yol olarak her soru için kendinize şu soruyu sorun: "Burada sözü edilen davranışı ben ne sıklıkla yaparım?"

Yanıtlarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendirin:

1. Her zaman böyle davranırım	4. Arada sırada böyle davranırım
2. Çoğunlukla böyle davranırım	5. Ender olarak böyle davranırım
3. Sık sık böyle davranırım	6. Hiçbir zaman böyle davranmam

Her Zaman

Hiçbir Zaman

1.Bir sorunumu çözmek için kullandığım çözüm yolları

başarısız ise bunların neden başarısız olduğunu

araştırmam...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

2. Zor bir sorunla karşılaştığımda ne olduğunu tam olarak

belirleyebilmek için nasıl bilgi toplayacağımı uzun boylu

düşünmem..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

3. Bir sorunumu çözmek için gösterdiğim ilk çabalar

başarısız olursa o sorun ile başa çıkabileceğimden şüpheye

düşerim..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

4.Bir sorunumu çözdükten sonra bu sorunu çözerken

neyin işe yaradığını, neyin yaramadığını ayrıntılı olarak

düşünmem..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

5. Sorunlarımı çözme konusunda genellikle yaratıcı ve etkili çözümler

üretebilirim...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

6. Bir sorunumu çözmek için belli bir yolu denedikten

sonra durur ve ortaya çıkan sonuç ile olması gerektiğini düşündüğüm sonucu

karşılaştırırım..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

7. Bir sorunum olduğunda onu çözebilmek için başvurabileceğim

yolların hepsini düşünmeye

çalışırım..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

8. Bir sorunla karşılaştığımda neler hissettiğimi anlamak için duygularımı

incelerim...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

9. Bir sorun kafamı karıştırdığında duygu ve

düşüncelerimi somut ve açık-seçik terimlerle ifade etmeye

uğraşmam...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

10. Başlangıçta çözümünü fark etmesem de sorunlarımın çoğunu çözme yeteneğim vardır...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

11. Karşılaştığım sorunların çoğu, çözebileceğimden daha zor ve karmaşıktır...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

12. Genellikle kendimle ilgili kararları verebilirim ve bu kararlardan hoşnut olurum...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

13.Bir sorunla karşılaştığımda onu çözmek için genellikle aklıma gelen ilk yolu izlerim...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

14. Bazen durup sorunlarımın üzerinde düşünmek yerine gelişigüzel sürüklenip giderim..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

15. Bir sorunla ilgili olası bir çözüm yolu üzerinde karar vermeye çalışırken seçeneklerimin başarı olasılığını tek tek değerlendirmem...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

16. Bir sorunla karşılaştığımda, başka konuya geçmeden önce durur ve o sorun üzerinde düşünürüm..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

17.Genellikle aklıma ilk gelen fikir doğrultusunda hareket ederim...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

18. Bir karar vermeye çalışırken her seçeneğin sonuçlarını ölçer, tartar, birbirleriyle karşılaştırır, sonra karar veririm...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

19. Bir sorunumu çözmek üzere plan yaparken o planı yürütebileceğime güvenirim..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

20. Belli bir çözüm planını uygulamaya koymadan önce, nasıl bir sonuç vereceğini tahmin etmeye çalışırım...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

21. Bir soruna yönelik olası çözüm yollarını düşünürken çok fazla seçenek üretmem..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

22. Bir sorunumu çözmeye çalışırken sıklıkla kullandığım bir yöntem; daha önce başıma gelmiş benzer sorunları düşünmektir..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

23. Yeterince zamanım olur ve çaba gösterirsem karşılaştığım sorunların çoğunu çözebileceğime inanıyorum..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

24. Yeni bir durumla karşılaştığımda ortaya çıkabilecek sorunları çözebileceğime inancım vardır..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

25. Bazen bir sorunu çözmek için çabaladığım halde, bir türlü esas konuya giremediğim ve gereksiz ayrıntılarla uğraştığım duygusunu yaşarım..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

26. Ani kararlar verir ve sonra pişmanlık duyarım..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

27. Yeni ve zor sorunları çözebilme yeteneğime güveniyorum..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

28. Elimdeki seçenekleri karşılaştırırken ve karar verirken kullandığım sistematik bir yöntem vardır..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

29. Bir sorunla başa çıkma yollarını düşünürken çeşitli fikirleri birleştirmeye çalışmam..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

30. Bir sorunla karşılaştığımda bu sorunun çıkmasında katkısı olabilecek benim dışımdaki etmenleri genellikle dikkate almam..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

31. Bir konuyla karşılaştığımda, ilk yaptığım şeylerden biri, durumu gözden geçirmek ve konuyla ilgili

olabilecek her türlü bilgiyi dikkate

almaktır..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

32. Bazen duygusal olarak öylesine etkilenirim ki,

sorunumla başa çıkma yollarından pek çoğunu

dikkate bile

almam...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

33. Bir karar verdikten sonra, ortaya çıkan sonuç

genellikle benim beklediğim sonuca

uyar..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

34. Bir sorunla karşılaştığımda, o durumla başa

çıkabileceğimden genellikle pek emin

değilimdir...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

35. Bir sorunun farkına vardığımda, ilk yaptığım

şeylerden biri, sorunun tam olarak ne olduğunu anlamaya

çalışmaktır..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)...(5)...(6)

BRIEF SYMPTOM INVENTORY
(KISA SEMPTOM ENVANTERİ)

Aşağıda, insanların bazen yaşadıkları belirtilerin ve yakınmaların bir listesi verilmiştir. Listedeki her maddeyi lütfen dikkatle okuyun. Daha sonra o belirtinin SİZDE BUGÜN DAHİL, SON BİR HAFTADIR NE KADAR VAROLDUĞUNU yandaki seçeneklerde uygun olan yerde işaretleyin. Her belirti için sadece bir yeri işaretlemeye ve hiçbir maddeyi atlamamaya özen gösterin.

Yanıtlarınızı aşağıdaki ölçeğe göre değerlendirin:
Bu belirtiler son bir haftadır sizde ne kadar var?

0. Hiç yok	3. Epey var
1. Biraz var	4. Çok fazla var
2. Orta derecede var	

Bu belirtiler son bir haftadır sizde ne kadar var?

Hiç   Çok fazla

1. İçinizdeki sinirlilik ve titreme hali...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

2. Baygınlık, baş

dönmesi..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

3. Bir başka kişinin sizin düşüncelerinizi kontrol ettiği

fikri...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

4. Başınıza gelen sıkıntılardan dolayı başkalarının

suçlu olduğu

düşüncesi..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

5. Olayları hatırlamada

güçlük..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

6. Çok kolayca kızıp

öfkelenme..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

7. Göğüs ve kalp bölgesinde

ağrılar..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

8. Meydanlık (açık) yerlerden korkma

duygusu...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

9. Yaşamınıza son verme

düşünceleri...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

10. İnsanların çoğuna güvenilmeyeceği

hissi..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

11. İştahta

bozukluklar..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

12. Hiçbir nedeni olmayan ani

korkular...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

13. Kontrol edemediğiniz duygu

patlamaları...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

14. Başka insanlarla beraberken bile yalnızlık

hissetme...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

15. İşleri bitirme konusunda kendini engellenmiş

hissetme...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

16. Yalnızlık

hissetme...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

17. Hüzünlü, kederli

hissetme...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

18. Hiçbir şeye ilgi

duymama...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

19. Ağlamaklı

hissetme...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

20. Kolayca incinebilme,

kırılma...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

21. İnsanların sizi sevmediğine, size kötü davrandığına

inanmak...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

22. Kendini diğerlerinden daha aşağı

görmek..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

23. Mide bozukluğu,

bulantı...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

24. Diğerlerinin sizi gözlediği ya da hakkınızda

konuştuğu

düşüncesi...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

25. Uykuya dalmada

güçlük...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

26. Yaptığınız eylemleri tekrar tekrar doğru mu diye

kontrol

etme...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

27. Karar vermede

güçlükler...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

28. Otobüs, tren, metro gibi umumi vasıtalarla

seyahatlerden

korkma...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

29. Nefes darlığı, nefessiz

kalma..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

30. Sıcak, soğuk

basmaları...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

31. Sizi korkuttuğu için bazı eşya ya da etkinliklerden

uzak

kalma..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

32. Kafanızın "bomboş"

kalması..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

33. Bedeninizin bazı bölgelerinde uyuşmalar,

karıncalanmalar..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

34. Günahlarınız için cezalandırılmanız

gerektiği

düşünceleri..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

35. Gelecekle ilgili umutsuzluk

duyguları...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

36. Konsantrasyonda (dikkati bir şey üzerinde toplamada)

güçlük/zorlanma...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

37. Bedenin bazı bölgelerinde zayıflık, güçsüzlük

hissi...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

38. Kendini gergin ve tedirgin

hissetme..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

39. Ölme ve ölüm üzerine

düşünceler...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

40. Birini dövme, ona zarar verme, yaralama

isteği...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

41. Birşeyleri kırma, dökme

isteği...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

42. Diğerlerinin yanındayken sürekli kendini gözleyip,

yanlış bir şeyler yapmamaya

çalışmak..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

43. Kalabalıklarda rahatsızlık

duymak..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

44. Bir başka insana hiç yakınlık

duymamak...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

45. Dehşet ve panik

nöbetleri..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

46. Sık sık tartışmaya

girmek...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

47. Yalnız bırakıldığında/kalındığında sinirlilik

hissetmek..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

48. Başarılarınız için diğerlerinden yeterince takdir

alamamak...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

49. Yerinde duramayacak kadar huzursuz

hissetmek..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

50. Kendini değersiz görmek/değersizlik

duyguları...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

51. Eğer izin verirseniz insanların sizi sömüreceği

duygusu...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

52. Suçluluk

duyguları...(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

53. Aklınızda bir bozukluk olduğu

düşüncesi..(0)...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

ROSENBERG' S SELF- ESTEEM SCALE
(ROSENBERG KENDİLİK DEĞERİ ÖLÇEĞİ)

Aşağıda kişilerin kendileriyle ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerini anlatan bazı cümleler verilmiştir. Lütfen her cümleyi dikkatle okuyunuz ve her cümlenin yanına o cümledeki anlatıma ne derece katıldığınızı belirtecek şekilde size uygun olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

Tamamen Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Hiç Katılmıyorum
1	2	3	4

1. Kendimi en az diğer insanlar kadar değerli
buluyorum...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

2. Bazı olumlu özelliklerimin olduğunu
düşünüyorum..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

3. Genelde kendimi başarısız bir kişi olarak görme
eğilimindeyim...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

4. Ben de diğer insanların birçoğunun yapabileceği kadar
bir şeyler
yapabilirim...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

5. Kendimde gurur duyacak fazla bir şey
bulamıyorum...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

6. Kendime karşı olumlu bir tutum
içindeyim..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

7. Genel olarak kendimden memnunum...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

8. Kendime karşı daha fazla saygı duyabilmeyi isterdim...(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

9. Bazen kendimin kesinlikle bir işe yaramadığını düşünüyorum..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

10. Bazen kendimin hiç de yeterli bir insan olmadığını düşünüyorum..(1)...(2)...(3)...(4)

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM
(DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİ FORMU)

Bu anket üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişki bitimi/ ayrılık davranışına ilişkin görüşlerini almak amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Bu amaçla çeşitli gruplarda toplanan soruları cevaplandırmanız istenmektedir. Soruları boş bırakmadan, size en uygun gelen seçeneği işaretlemeniz gerekmektedir. Kimliğinizi belirtecek bilgilere gereksinim yoktur. Sonuçlar kesinlikle gizli tutulacak ve yalnız araştırma amacıyla kullanılacaktır. İçtenlikle vereceğinize inandığımız yanıtlarınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz.

Psikolog Burcu Uzgel

Cinsiyetiniz   K( )   E( )

Yaşınız   ....

Bölümünüz   ....

Sınıfınız   ....

1. Son bir yıl içinde bir romantik ilişki bitimi (sevgiliden ayrılma) yaşadınız mı?

    ( ) Evet

    ( ) Hayır   (cevabınız hayırsa, lütfen 9. soruya geçiniz)

2. Bu ayrılıkta hangi taraf oldunuz?

    ( ) İlişkiyi bitiren

    ( )İlişkide terk edilen/ bırakılan

3. Bu kişi o güne kadar ilişki yaşadığınız ilk kişi miydi?

( ) Evet

( ) Hayır

4. İlişkiniz, sizin için ne kadar önemliydi?

    ( ) Hiç önemli değildi

    ( ) Biraz önemliydi

    ( ) Önemliydi (orta düzeyde)

    ( ) Oldukça önemliydi

    ( ) Çok önemliydi

5. İlişkiniz ne kadar süre devam etmişti? (ay- yıl gibi..)

    ....

6. İlişkiniz cinselliği içeriyor muydu?

    ( ) Evet

    ( ) Hayır

7. Ayrılıktan bu zamana (bu güne kadar) ne kadar zaman geçti? (gün- ay gibi..)

    ....

8. Ayrılık sizin için ne kadar önemliydi?

    ( ) Hiç önemli değildi

    ( ) Biraz önemliydi

    ( ) Önemliydi (orta düzeyde)

    ( ) Oldukça önemliydi

    ( ) Çok önemliydi

9. Şu anda devam etmekte olan romantik bir ilişkiniz (sevgiliniz) var mı?

    ( ) Evet

    ( ) Hayır

10. Son 1 yıl içerisinde, romantik ilişki bitimi haricinde, sizi duygusal açıdan etkileyen bir olay geldi mi başınıza?

    ( ) Evet

    ( ) Hayır

11. Cevabınız evet ise, olaydan bahseder misiniz.

    ....