

**THE PREDICTIVE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION ON THE
RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN MARRIED INDIVIDUALS WITH
AND WITHOUT CHILDREN AND IN COHABITING INDIVIDUALS:
THE MODERATING ROLE OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION**

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ABSTRACT

THE PREDICTIVE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION ON RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN MARRIED INDIVIDUALS WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN AND IN COHABITING INDIVIDUALS: THE MODERATING ROLE OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION

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The major aims of the present study have been to investigate the predictive role of communication patterns and sexual satisfaction on relationship satisfaction; and to investigate the moderating role of sexual satisfaction on this relationship for married individuals both with and without children and for cohabiting individuals. In order to evaluate these, the Communication Pattern Questionnaire (CPQ), the Golombok-Rust Sexual Satisfaction Inventory (GRSSI), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and Demographic Information Form were administered to 74 married individuals with children, 68 married individuals without children, and 66 cohabiting individuals. To examine relationship statuses differences on communication patterns, sexual and relationship satisfaction, analysis of variance was performed. The results showed that relationship statuses do not differ on these variables. After controlling

for the effects of age and duration of relationship, the main and interaction effects of communication patterns and sexual satisfaction on relationship satisfaction were assessed with a hierarchical regression analysis. The results revealed that a lower level of destructive communication, a higher level of constructive communication, and sexual satisfaction were separately associated with greater relationship satisfaction for all relationship status. However, emotional-logical communication was positively associated with relationship satisfaction only among married individuals with children and that aggressive communication was negatively associated with relationship satisfaction among married individuals without children and cohabiting individuals. Moreover, the interaction effect was found that sexual satisfaction moderated the effect of destructive communication on relationship satisfaction only among married individuals without children. Results are discussed with reference to related literature together with implications and the limitations of the study.

Keywords: Communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, married individuals, cohabiting individuals.

ÖZ

EVLİ ÇOCUKLU/ÇOCUKSUZ VE BİRLİKTE YAŞAYAN BİREYLERDE İLETİŞİM ŞEKİLLERİNİN İLİŞKİ DOYUMU ÜZERİNE YORDAYICI ROLÜ: DÜZENLEYİCİ DEĞİŞKEN ROLÜ OLARAK CİNSEL DOYUM

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Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, evli çocuklu/çocuksuz ve birlikte yaşayan bireylerde değişik iletişim şekillerinin ve cinsel doyumun ayrı ayrı ve cinsel doyumun düzenleyici değişken olarak ilişki doyumunu yordayıcılığını araştırmaktır. Bu değerlendirmenin yapılması amacıyla, 68 evli çocuklu, 74 evli çocuksuz ve 66 birlikte yaşayan bireyden oluşan örnekleme İletişim Şekilleri Ölçeği (İŞÖ), Golombok-Rust Cinsel Doyum Ölçeği (GRISS), Çift Uyum Ölçeği (ÇUÖ) ve Demografik Bilgi Formu uygulanmıştır. Farklı ilişki durumları için iletişim şekilleri, cinsel doyum ve ilişki doyumunun nasıl değiştiğine varyans analizi yapılarak bakılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, farklı ilişki durumlarının her bir değişkende anlamlı bir fark yaratmadığı bulunmuştur. Yaşın ve ilişki süresinin etkisi kontrol edilerek farklı iletişim şekilleri ve cinsel doyumun ilişki doyumuna üzerine temel ve ortak etkilerine regresyon analizi yapılarak bakılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, bütün gruplar

iin yksek seviyede yapıcı iletiřim řekli, cinsel doyum ve dřk seviyede yıkıcı iletiřim řeklinin ayrı ayrı daha yksek iliřki doyumunu yordadığını gstermiřtir. Ancak, duygusal-mantıklı iletiřim řeklinin iliřki doyumuyla arasındaki pozitif iliřki sadece evli ocuklu bireyler iin; saldırgan iletiřim řeklinin ise iliřki doyumuyla arasındaki negatif iliřki sadece evli ocuksuz ve birlikte yařayan bireyler iin grlmřtir. Ayrıca evli ocuksuz bireyler iin cinsel doyumun yıkıcı iletiřim řekli ve iliřki doyumunu arasındaki iliřkiyi dzenlediğı bulunmuřtur. Bulgular ilgili literatr erevesinde arařtırmanın sınırlılıklarıyla birlikte tartıřılmıřtır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İletiřim řekilleri, cinsel doyum, iliřki doyum, evli grup, birlikte yařayan grup.

To my parents and my sister,

with love...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this section, background information on the topic of study is presented first. Secondly, the aims of the study are presented. Thirdly, the research questions of the study are enumerated. Lastly, the significance and implications of the study are discussed.

1.1. Background Information on the Topic of Study

People tend to consider some relationships, such as dating and marriage, more intimate than the others. Intimacy is seen as an important basis for emotional, psychological and physical well-being (Burman & Margolin, 1992) and a person's satisfaction with his/her relationship has a tendency to be a key issue in his/her overall happiness (Young et al., 1998). Bird and Melville (1994) suggested that a supportive partner performs the role of a barrier between individuals and the problems of life. Consequently, it is essential to understand the factors that positively or negatively impact satisfaction in intimate relationship.

Although the range of analysis on relationship satisfaction in the literature has been broad, relationship satisfaction has been conceptualized in different ways. Some researchers conflate different terms that surround the notion of relationship

satisfaction. For example, according to Timm (1999), terms such as happiness, adjustment, stability and quality are used as synonyms of relationship satisfaction. Similarly, Vangelisti (2004) defined relationship quality as overall quality of life within a relationship, measured in terms of adjustment, stability and satisfaction. Karlsson (1963) defined relationship satisfaction as the relation between what the spouses want from the relationship to what they get from it. On the other hand, Kurdek and Schmitt (1986, p. 711) described relationship satisfaction as “the extent of agreement between partners on matters of importance to dyadic functioning; satisfaction with demonstrated affection and sexual relations; the degree of tension in the relationship as well as the frequency with which each partner has considered ending the relationship; the amount of activity shared by the partners; and the favorability of attitude toward one’s relationship”. Hoult (1969; cited in Fıfılođlu & Demir, 2000) defined relationship satisfaction as a complex issue consisting of amount of conflict and shared activities, and concluded that these factors related to happiness or success of marriage. Relationship satisfaction was also used as a general concept that encapsulated both the terms satisfaction and happiness, based on Spanier and Cole’s (1976) definition, which was used in present study.

In the literature, relationship satisfaction is a widely investigated area that contains individual and relationship issues. The researchers found different variables such as age, length of marriage, education, employment status, number of marriages (Jose & Alfons, 2007), gender (e.g. Jose & Alfons, 2007; Renaud, Byers, & Pan, 1997; Sprecher, 2002), absence/number of children (e.g. Jose & Alfons, 2007; White &

Edwards, 1990), relationship status (e.g. Hsueh, Morrison, & Doss, 2009; Kurdek & Schmitt, 1986), personality traits (e.g. Fisher & McNulty, 2008; Gattis et al., 2004; Reath et al., 1980), attachment (e.g. Clymer, 2009; Egeci & Gençöz, 2006) and psychological problems (e.g. Lemmens et al., 2007; Shek, 1994) to be associated with relationship satisfaction.

Communication is also thought to be a key variable in understanding relationship satisfaction (Bodenmann et al., 1998). It is believed to be the most essential social and demographic factor in a relationship (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Communication is crucial to the social phenomenon, which is a requirement from birth (Huang, 1999), and which assist in the development of a range of interactional skills for adulthood (Dwyer, 2000). Communication in intimate relationships is defined as the verbal and/or non-verbal interactions that occur between men and women (Smith, 2007). Sullaway and Christensen (1983) defined communication as the patterns of messages individuals typically use to deal with problems in relationships.

Communication is related to several individual and relationship variables, such as age (e.g. Yelsma, 1986; as cited in Dwyer, 2007), gender (e.g. Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Malkoç, 2001) number of children (e.g. Malkoç, 2001), attachment (e.g. Pistole, 1994; Collins & Read, 1990), psychological problems (e.g. Lemmens et al., 2007), relationship satisfaction (e.g. Byers, 2005; Malkoç, 2001; Doohan & Manusov, 2004), sexual satisfaction (e.g. Byers, 2005; Litzenger & Gordon, 2005) and stability of relationship (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

The association between communication and relationship satisfaction has been investigated in many studies. For instance, the research of Noller and White (1990) among 96 married couples demonstrated that individuals who report high relationship adjustment tend to show more mutual discussion, expression, negotiation, understanding and resolution than individuals who report moderate or low relationship adjustment. To the contrary, individuals who report moderate or low relationship adjustment show more mutual avoidance, threat, blame, reconciliation, withdrawal and withholding than individuals who report high relationship adjustment. The results showed that couples who feel more satisfied in their relationship demonstrate higher levels of mutuality, and that couples who feel less satisfied in their relationships indicate higher levels of destructivity, coercion and post-conflict distress.

Karney and Bradbury (1995) contributed to the literature with 115 longitudinal analyses about how satisfaction and stability of marriages change over time. The results indicated that the quality of communication among married and cohabitant individuals is closely linked to relationship satisfaction and stability. In other words, better communication is related to better relationship satisfaction and stability, whereas poor communication is associated with poor relationship satisfaction and instability. The results indicated that communication is one of the important indicators not only of relationship satisfaction, but also of relationship stability.

The research conducted by Malkoç (2001) also examined the association between communication patterns and relationship satisfaction in married groups. The results

indicated that communication patterns are related to relationship satisfaction. It was demonstrated that individuals with poor marital adjustment use more destructive communication approaches than individuals with better marital adjustment. Moreover, individuals with better adjustment show more constructive and less destructive communication approaches than individuals with poor marital adjustment.

A longitudinal study was designed by Byers (2005) with 87 individuals in long-term relationships. The aim of the research was to investigate the association between communication and changes in relationship satisfaction. Results indicated that communication is related to changes in relationship satisfaction. More specifically, poor communication leads to a decrease in relationship satisfaction. Additionally, individuals who were successful at communicating constructively tended to show higher relationship satisfaction than individuals who failed to communicate constructively.

In Litzenger and Gordon's study (2005), 387 married couples were used to predict relationship satisfaction. The aim of the study was to contribute the association between communication and relationship satisfaction with married couples. The results indicated that constructive communication patterns have a predictive role on relationship satisfaction. Individuals, both male and female, who indicated better communication, also reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

Smith et al. (2008) conducted a one-year longitudinal study with 45 cohabiting couples. One of the aims of the study was to predict the association between conflict communication and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated that female subjects who used avoidance and withholding in their communication styles tended to decrease both their own and their husbands' relationship satisfaction. However, males' avoidant communication style had no effect on relationship satisfaction.

Cross-cultural studies show consistent findings with the literature. For instance, a cross-cultural investigation conducted by Bodenmann et al. (1998) with 140 German and 73 Swiss married couples. It was shown that for both groups, increased levels of avoidant and withdrawn communication is associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction. The results also indicated that constructive communication is not only related to lower aggression, but also higher degrees of affection and commitment, and therefore of greater relationship satisfaction.

Another example of cross-cultural research was Christensen et al.'s study (2006) conducted in Brazil, Italy, Taiwan, and the United States with a total of 363 participants. Similar results were demonstrated among different cultural groups. This indicated that good communication led to improvement in relationship satisfaction among all countries' participants. It was also shown that constructive communication had a predictive role in relationship satisfaction cross-culturally.

Beyond communication, sexual satisfaction is also thought to have be connected with relationship satisfaction. Lawrance and Byers (1995) explained sexual satisfaction to

be an effective reaction arising from one's personal evaluation of the positive and negative aspects associated with one's sexual relationship. Some researchers, such as Renaud et al. (1997) and Zhou (1993) stated that sexual satisfaction is the absence of dissatisfaction. In addition, MacNeil and Byers (2005) defined sexual satisfaction as the exchange of positive and negative aspects of sexual satisfaction between self and partner.

In the literature, sexual satisfaction is a broadly investigated area. Some individual and relationship factors studied are gender (e.g. Renaud et al., 1997; Sprecher, 2002; Timm, 1999), age (e.g. Barrientos & Paez, 2006; Gilford & Bengtson, 1979), education (e.g. Basat, 2004; Jose & Alfons, 2007), personality (e.g. Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997; Whitley & Poulsen, 1975), attachment (e.g. Butzer & Campbell, 2008; Clymer 2009), gender role (e.g. Clymer 2009), body image (e.g. Calvert, 2008; Holt & Lyness, 2007), communication (e.g. Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997; Timm, 1999), religiosity (e.g. Abadjian-Mozian, 2005; Davidson & Moore, 2004) and orgasm (e.g. Waterman & Chiauuzzi, 1982; Rudd, 2009).

Sexual satisfaction is a central variable in close relationships (Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997). Young et al. (2000) studied an age-stratified sample of 641 married women. The purpose of the study was to determine the association between sexual satisfaction and overall satisfaction of relationships. It was shown that greater levels of sexual satisfaction were related to overall relationship satisfaction. The results demonstrated that an escalation in sexual satisfaction is associated with escalation in

relationship satisfaction, similar with Frank et al.'s (1979) and Schenk et al.'s studies (1983).

Sprecher (2002) designed a study combining a cross-sectional analysis with a longitudinal analysis of 101 dating couples. The purpose of the study was to investigate the association between sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. It was concluded that when sexual satisfaction escalates, relationship adjustment also escalates. This relationship is stronger among men than women. Furthermore, the author investigated the association between changes in sexual satisfaction and changes in relationship satisfaction. Change in sexual satisfaction is related to change in relationship satisfaction, in the same direction.

A longitudinal study (Byers, 2005) with 87 individuals in long-term relationships also examined the association between sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction over time. The results showed that change in sexual satisfaction is associated with changes in relationship satisfaction in long-term relationships. Higher levels of relationship satisfaction are related to increases in sexual satisfaction. In addition, the author suggested that lower levels of sexual satisfaction have a predictive role in decreases in relationship satisfaction.

Litzenger and Gordon (2005) contribution to the study of sexual satisfaction aimed to predict relationship satisfaction using 387 married couples. The authors found that greater sexual satisfaction is associated with higher relationship satisfaction. Moreover, it was reported that lower levels of sexual satisfaction are associated with

lower levels of relationship satisfaction. The results demonstrated that changes in sexual satisfaction have a predictive role on relationship satisfaction.

In the longitudinal study of Yeh et al. (2006), carried out with 283 married couples, the relationship between sexual satisfaction, relationship quality and relationship instability was assessed. The authors demonstrated that higher sexual satisfaction resulted in improvement of relationship quality in terms of happiness and satisfaction. Moreover, the outcome indicated that individuals who characterized their relationships as 'highly satisfied' tended to report decreases in marital instability. The authors reported that for both spouses, results provided support for the causal sequences that extended from sexual satisfaction to marital quality, from sexual satisfaction to marital instability, and from marital quality to marital instability.

Communication and sexual satisfaction are not only separately related to relationship satisfaction, as mentioned above, but also jointly contribute it. Litzenger and Gordon (2005) demonstrated that the interaction between communication and sexual satisfaction is related to relationship satisfaction. The authors contended that good communication leads to greater relationship satisfaction than does poor communication. More specifically, if good communication is observed between couples, sexual satisfaction fails to determine relationship satisfaction. On the other hand, sexual satisfaction buffers the effects of poor communication. This means that if communication is poor, couples who define themselves more sexually satisfied

report greater relationship satisfaction than couples who define themselves less sexually satisfied.

Differences in relationship status are other indicators of relationship satisfaction. The institution of marriage is described as an official and durable sexual union of one man and woman conducted within a set of designated rights and duties (Lantz & Snyder, 1969). These rights and duties are taken both by the individual and through social structure. Cohabitation is defined as a relationship status consisting of a heterosexual couple whose members are not married to each other, who live in the same house, and who share an intimate relationship (Chevan, 1996). Cohabitation is also seen as a step in the courtship process between dating and marriage (Krishnan, 1998). It generally includes sharing a residence and personal resources, and precludes intimate relations with others (Brown & Booth, 1996).

Kurdek and Schmitt (1986) conducted a study that included 44 married, 35 heterosexual cohabiting and 50 gay and 56 lesbian cohabiting couples who had no children living with them. The primary aim of the study was to investigate relationship quality among different groups. Relationship quality was examined in three dimensions, including love for partner, liking of partner and relationship satisfaction. The results showed that cohabitant partners report less relationship satisfaction and lower degree of love for partner than married partners.

Similar findings resulted from another study performed by Brown and Booth (1996). The study consisted of 452 cohabiting and 1576 married individuals using data from

the 1987-1988 National Survey of Family and Households. The study examined relationship quality, or satisfaction, which contains disagreement, fairness, happiness, conflict management and interaction. It was reported that cohabiting individuals tended to report poorer relationship quality than married individuals. Moreover, Stanley et al. (2004) compared the relationship satisfaction of 908 married, engaged and cohabiting individuals. The results showed that married subjects reported higher relationship satisfaction than cohabiting subjects.

A longitudinal study was conducted by Stafford et al. (2004) with 280 individuals, among whom were 96 married-married individuals (who went directly into marriage), 86 cohabiting-cohabiting individuals (who are long-term cohabiters) and 96 cohabitated married (who cohabitated and then married). In the study, longitudinal and cross-sectional data was used from the 1987-1988 and 1992-1994 National Survey of Families and Households. One of the aims of the study was to clarify how relationship satisfaction varied among these groups. The results showed that married couples tended to report greater satisfaction than both cohabitants and cohabitants who marry.

Another longitudinal study resulted in contradictory findings to those explained above. Willetts (2006) conducted a study with 4824 individuals, including long-term cohabiting (at least 4 years) and legally married couples, using the Survey data. One of the aims of the study was to examine differences in relationship satisfaction among cohabiting and married individuals. The results demonstrated that cohabiting and married individuals did not differ in relationship satisfaction.

Legkauskas (2008) examined relationship satisfaction and stability among 90 couples. These couples consisted of 30 couples who were cohabiting, 30 couples who were married and had prior experience of cohabitation with the same partner, and 30 couples were married without any prior cohabitation experiences. The results indicated that both male and female cohabiting individuals tended to describe themselves as less satisfied with their relationships than the other two groups.

Having a child is another variable related to relationship satisfaction. In the literature, contradictory conclusions were drawn by some researchers. For example, Jose and Alfons (2007) conducted a study among 787 married adults, 424 of whom were in their first marriage and 363 of whom had been remarried. The authors investigated the effects of demographics on relationship satisfaction. The results showed that the nonexistence of children had a positive effect on marital happiness and satisfaction. In other words, couples without children are more satisfied than couples with children. It was also found that increased numbers of children is associated with decrease in relationship satisfaction. The results are consistent with the findings of White and Edwards (1990), who suggested that overall an “empty nest” has a positive impact on relationship satisfaction.

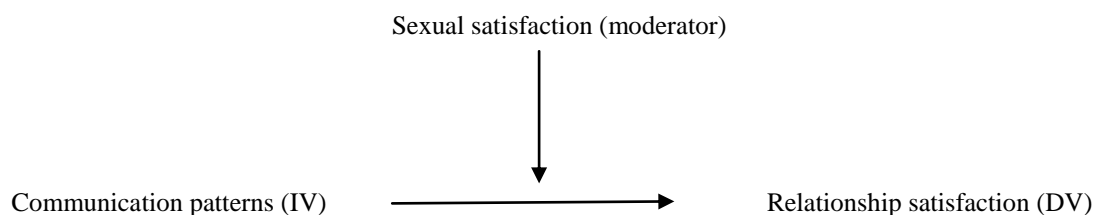
In Witting et al.’s report (2008), 2081 women were studied. The aim of the study was to investigate the association between number of children and overall relationship satisfaction. It was found that the existence of children was not related to relationship satisfaction. The authors found no difference between groups having no children, one child or more than one child.

Belsky et al. (1985) conducted a longitudinal study with 67 married couples. The study examined the changes in relationship satisfaction following the birth of the first child. The results showed that couples who defined themselves happy in their relationships experienced a decline in their relationship satisfaction following the birth of a first child.

1.2. Aims of the Study

One of the main aims of the present study to examine how relationship statuses differ in terms of communication patterns, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. Moreover, in the light of the literature introduced, communication and sexual satisfaction are both separately and together related to relationship satisfaction. Therefore, another main aim of the current study was to investigate how different communication patterns and sexual satisfaction separately predict relationship satisfaction among married individuals with and without children, and among cohabiting individuals. The present study was also aimed to investigate the buffering or intensifying role of sexual satisfaction on different communication patterns while predicting relationship satisfaction among different relationship statuses.

Figure 1. Moderating role of sexual satisfaction



1.3. Research Questions of the Study

Specifically, the current study examines the questions below to investigate the relationship among communication, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction for different relationship statuses of marriage with and without children and of cohabiting individuals:

- How do married individuals with and without children, and cohabiting individuals differ in terms of communication patterns, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction?
- How do communication and sexual satisfaction separately contribute to the prediction of relationship satisfaction among different relationship statuses?
- How does sexual satisfaction buffer or intensify different communication patterns while predicting relationship satisfaction among individuals in different relationship statuses?

1.4. Significance and Implications of the Study

As mentioned above parts, communication and sexual satisfaction are related to relationship satisfaction (e.g., Christensen et al., 2006; Litzenger & Gordon, 2005; Young et al., 2000). Studies, conducted commonly among married populations, have demonstrated that relationship satisfaction is based on communication and sexual satisfaction both separately (e.g. Christensen et al., 2006; Malkoç, 2001; Young et al., 2000) and together (Litzenger & Gordon, 2005). However, the current study

includes different relationship statuses. Specifically, this is the first study to examine the buffering or intensifying role of sexual satisfaction on different communication patterns while predicting relationship satisfaction for married individuals with and without children, and with cohabiting individuals. Consequently, it will be helpful in the understanding of how some domains of relationship satisfaction in terms of communication and sexual satisfaction vary among married individuals with and without children, and among cohabiting individuals separately.

Although a few studies of relationship satisfaction have been conducted in Turkey (e.g. Yıldırım, 1993; Hamamcı, 2005; Hünler & Gençöz, 2005), a study of relationship satisfaction among cohabiting individuals is new in the Turkish literature. Therefore, the present study can be helpful in the understanding of some characteristics of cohabiting couples with regard to communication, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction in Turkish culture. To show similarities and differences between cohabiting and married individuals can be helpful for future studies about why people choose to get married or while others choose to cohabitate.

For therapists, an understanding of the factors related to satisfaction and to construct better principles for assessing and treating individuals is also crucial. Communication patterns (e.g. Fitzpatrick, 1988; Malkoç, 2001) and sexual satisfaction (e.g. Haavio-Mannila & Kontula, 1997) has been shown to be crucial for relationship satisfaction. To investigate the relationship between the variables of communication, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction will be helpful to professionals. In therapy,

by creating awareness of all facets of these variables, relationship satisfaction can be enhanced.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, a review of the related literature is summarized. Firstly, communication, secondly sexual satisfaction and then relationship satisfaction are reviewed. Relationship satisfaction in Turkish literature and the connection between the literature review and aims of the current study will conclude this section.

2.1. Communication

Under the communication topic, first, definition of communication is given. Then, individual variables related to communication are explained. Last, relationship variables related to communication are presented.

2.1.1. Definition of Communication

In a general sense, communication is defined as the exchange of information, ideas, emotion and skills (Trenholm & Jensen, 1996; as cited in Blahnik, 2007). Communication is also usually described as the reciprocity between two individuals (Cutler, 2009). Moreover, communication is also viewed as mutual message exchange occurring in a particular fashion, aspects of which create strong bonds between individuals during a lifespan (Segrin & Flora, 2005).

Communication is crucial to the social phenomenon, which is a requirement from birth (Huang, 1999), and which assists a range of interactional skills for adulthood (Dwyer, 2000). Communication is believed to be the most vital social and demographic factor in a relationship (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Communication in intimate relationships is defined as the verbal and/or non-verbal interactions that occur between men and women (Smith, 2007). In addition, Sullaway and Christensen (1983) reported that communication patterns are defined as the patterns of communication that people typically use to deal with problems in relationships.

2.1.2. Individual Variables Related to Communication

The relationship of gender to communication as a demographic variable is significant. Inconsistent results have been shown in the literature about this relationship, however. Lundgren and Rudawsky (2000) investigated gender patterns in communication and found that women tend to be more conforming in their interactions with others and more positive in their individual reactions. Moreover, Gottman and Krokoff (1989) indicated that in relationships women are more demanding and men are more withdrawn. Christensen and Heavey (1990) demonstrated that males tend to show more avoidance and withdrawal from communication than females. Inconsistently, in Malkoç's study (2001), it was found that among males and females, there is no difference in usage of constructive, destructive, emotional-logical and aggressive communication patterns.

Other demographic variables such as age and having children have been shown to be related to communication. Yelsma (1986; as cited in Dwyer, 2007) showed that younger individuals reported having more effective communication style than older individuals. However, Bodenmann et al. (1998) indicated that increase in age is associated with mutual avoidance of communication. Authors reported that older age couples tend to express more distant and avoiding communication styles. In addition, Malkoç (2001) demonstrated that destructive communication escalates and constructive communication reduces with an increase in the number of children. Bodenmann et al. (1998) also reported that while no relationship was found between number of children and communication patterns among German couples, Swiss couples stated that the more children they had, the less mutual constructive communication continued; the more mutual avoidance of communication; the more withdrawal from communication, and the more destructive the process became.

The association between attachment and communication has also been investigated. Pistole (1994) indicated that attachment is the starting point for the growth of couples' relational structure and the establishment for patterns of communication. Collins and Read (1990) found that securely attached people tend to report better communication than avoidant and ambivalently attached people. Moreover, it was shown that individuals with an avoidant and ambivalent attachment style show more destructive communication patterns than individuals who have a secure attachment style.

Communication patterns are also impacted by psychological problems. Lemmens et al. (2007) demonstrated that both depressed patients and their partners report lower levels of mutual constructive communication and higher levels of mutual avoidance communication than non-clinical couples. Harper and Sandberg (2009) showed that depression in one or both spouses tends to lead to worse communication scores than non-depressed spouses. Moreover, it was revealed that if both husbands and wives are depressed, effective communication and problem solving are worse than when only one is depressed.

The relationship between personality and communication is another area of investigation. Donnellan et al. (2004) showed that higher rates of neuroticism are associated with more negative interactions. Moreover, it was found that higher degrees of openness are related to less negative interactions. Furthermore, Caughlin et al. (2000) indicated that partners who exhibit higher neuroticism tend to be more negative in communication with their partners.

2.1.3. Relationship Variables Related to Communication

Intimacy and length of relationship are some indicators for communication. Robinson and Blanton (1993) showed the relationship between communication and intimacy. Authors stated that high effectiveness of communication is related to higher levels of intimacy. In addition, for duration of relationship, Malkoç (2001) demonstrated that destructive communication escalates during the course of relationships. The author reported that the increased length of relationships is

associated with a lower level of constructive communication. Moreover, Bodenmann et al. (1998) indicated that longer relationship duration is related to poorer communication. The authors stated that longer relationship length leads to mutual avoidance of communication.

The association of relationship satisfaction and communication is also examined. Communication is the foundation that assists support and promotes relationship satisfaction (Doohan & Manusov, 2004). The study that was conducted by Malkoç (2001) demonstrated individuals who have poor marital adjustment use more destructive communication approaches than individuals who have better marital adjustment. Moreover, individuals who have better adjustment show more constructive and less destructive communication approaches than individuals who have poor marital adjustment. Byers (2005) showed that poor communication leads to a decrease in relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, individuals who indicated better communication reported higher relationship satisfaction.

Communication is associated not only with relationship satisfaction, but also stability of relationships. The study by Karney & Bradbury (1995) indicated that the quality of communication among married individuals and cohabitants is closely linked to relationship satisfaction and stability. The results showed that better communication is related to better relationship satisfaction and stability. Conversely, poor communication is associated with poor relationship satisfaction and instability.

Egalitarianism, which stresses personal happiness, friendship, self-expression (Burges et al., 1971), role-sharing and mutuality (Laws, 1971), is perceived to be another predictor for communication. Pollock et al. (1990) noted that more egalitarian couples show better relationship communication in the marital union than more traditional couples. Couples who define themselves as very egalitarian also show better relationship communication than couples defining themselves as moderately egalitarian.

2.2 Sexual Satisfaction

On the topic of sexual satisfaction, first, a definition of sexual satisfaction is articulated. Then, individual variables related to sexual satisfaction are explained. Last, relationship variables related to sexual satisfaction are presented.

2.2.1. Definition of Sexual Satisfaction

Sexuality is defined as “a basic need for closeness in human relationships that comes through a process that involves physical, psychological, social and environmental aspects” (Johnson, 2001, p.20). Sexuality contains people’s experience of their selves in their bodies and in the world, the alternatives one chooses regarding relationships with self and with others, and the meanings that one absorbs in order to make sense of these embodied experiences (Johnson, 2001). Moreover, sexuality is a personal experience, and individuals have their specific beliefs, feelings, thoughts and attitudes (Masters et al., 1995). Therefore, it can be understood from these definitions that sexuality has different and special meanings for humans and relationships.

Sexual satisfaction is a term that is diverse in its definitions, and there is no consensus on its meaning. Lawrance and Byers (1995) explained sexual satisfaction as an effective reaction arising from one's personal evaluation of the positive and negative aspects associated with one's sexual relationship. On the other hand, some researchers such as Renaud et al. (1997) and Zhou (1993) stated that sexual satisfaction is the absence of dissatisfaction. In addition, MacNeil and Byers (2005) defined sexual satisfaction as the exchange of positive and negative aspects of sexual satisfaction between the individual and partner. Consequently, it is clear that there is no consensus on the conceptualization of sexual satisfaction.

2.2.2. Individual Variables Related to Sexual Satisfaction

The association between gender and sexual satisfaction is examined by some researchers. Lawrance and Byers (1995), Timm (1999), and Young et al. (1998) demonstrated that people who defined themselves as sexually satisfied showed no gender differences in their sexual satisfaction than people who defined themselves as not sexually satisfied. However, although Renaud et al. (1997) and Sprecher (2002) showed that women indicated greater sexual satisfaction than men, Jose and Alfons (2007), and Oliver and Hyde (1993) indicated that women report more sexual problems or anxiety than men. Men show higher sexual satisfaction than women (Barrientos & Paez, 2006; Basat, 2004; Cheung et al., 2008; Jose & Alfons, 2007; McCabe, 1999). Consequently, results of association between gender and sexual satisfaction are contradictory.

Inconsistent results were also shown in the association between age and sexual satisfaction in the literature. Although Basat (2004) noted no relationship between age and sexual satisfaction, some researchers indicated that sexual satisfaction decreases with age (Gilford & Bengtson, 1979; Jose & Alfons, 2007) and young people tend to show more sexual satisfaction (Barrientos & Paez, 2006). In contrast, Whitley and Poulsen (1975) stated that sexual satisfaction enhances with age for women. Similarly, in research with postmenopausal women, older women showed higher sexual satisfaction than younger women (McCall-Hosenfeld et al., 2008).

Some other demographic variables are also demonstrated to be related to changes in sexual satisfaction. Education was reported to be related to differences in sexual satisfaction. Though Barrientos and Paez (2006) and Basat (2004) found that the higher education level, the higher sexual satisfaction, Jose and Alfons (2007) showed that women have high education level have a higher rate of sexual adjustment problems, and consequently less sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, Barrientos and Paez (2006) divided socioeconomic levels into upper, middle and lower class and reported that higher socioeconomic level is associated with higher sexual satisfaction.

Relationship status is also investigated to explain sexual satisfaction. Even though more sexual initiations were recorded between cohabiting individuals than married individuals (Byers & Heinlein, 1989), cohabitants reported lower sexual satisfaction than married individuals (Stanley, Whitton, & Markman, 2004). Moreover, McCall-Hosenfeld et al.'s (2008) study with postmenopausal women demonstrated that

married or partnered individuals showed higher sexual satisfaction than never-married, divorced or separated, and widowed individuals. Furthermore, Jose and Alfons (2007) showed the effect of first/re-marriage and concluded that re-married people tended to show higher levels of sexual adjustment problems when compared with those in their first marriages.

Number of children is also associated with sexual satisfaction and contrary results can be seen in the literature. Jose and Alfons (2007) demonstrated that nonexistence of children has a positive effect on the sexual adjustment of women and an increased number of children is related to an escalation in sexual adjustment problems among individuals in their first marriages. Similar research has also found such increased numbers of children to be related to lower sexual satisfaction (Colebrook Seymour III, 1998) and the absence of children to be related to higher levels of sexual satisfaction (Calvert, 2008). To the contrary, although Witting et al. (2008) noted that women with no children tended to show lower sexual satisfaction than women with children, regardless of the number, Abadjian-Mozian (2005) found that having children and the ages of the children not to be associated with sexual satisfaction. On the other hand, Colebrook Seymour III (1998) contended that couples with children ages 5-12 were reportedly more sexually satisfied than couples with children 0-6 months, 1-2 years 3-4 years.

Body image is also shown to have an influence on sexual satisfaction. Ackard et al. (2000) stated that women with high body image satisfaction reported more sexual activity, orgasm, and initiation of sex. In addition, Calvert's (2008) study with

female subjects, as well as Holt and Lyness's (2007) study with both males and females found that the higher the body image satisfaction, the higher the sexual satisfaction.

Personality and self-esteem are other predictors of sexual satisfaction. Whitley and Poulsen's (1975) study with employed professional women showed that as assertiveness accelerated, sexual satisfaction and sexual intercourse accelerated. Similarly, Haavio-Mannila and Kontula (1997) indicated that assertive women tended to report greater sexual satisfaction. Davis (1986) noted that extroverted people reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction. Moreover, authors asserted that sexual satisfaction was lowest when the male was extroverted and the female introverted. Abadjian-Mozian (2005) studied the positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and self-esteem. According to this perspective, women who view themselves as being assertive, good leaders, who have influence over others, and who experience personal power report higher sexual satisfaction than those who do not. In a similar manner, Basat (2004) stated that people who report higher self-esteem show higher sexual satisfaction.

The link between attachment and sexual satisfaction has been investigated in several studies. Clymer et al. (2006) discussed the positive association between ambivalent or avoidant attachment style and sexual problems. Specifically, individuals who reported more ambivalent or avoidant attachment styles also tended to report more sexual problems, and by extension to lower sexual satisfaction. Therefore, individuals with more secure the attachment styles demonstrated higher levels of

sexual satisfaction (Clymer, 2009; Clymer et al., 2006). Similar findings came from Butzer and Campbell's (2008) study, in which it was asserted that anxiously or avoidantly attached individuals reported lower sexual satisfaction. Individuals whose spouses had an avoidant attachment style also reported lower levels of sexual satisfaction. Furthermore, using a sample of Israeli women, Birnbaum (2007) found that individuals who had a more anxious attachment style showed lower sexual and relational satisfaction than either individuals with either avoidant or secure attachment styles.

Gender roles are also demonstrated to be related to changes in sexual satisfaction. Clymer (2009) demonstrated that individuals with androgynous (including both the feminine and the masculine) or feminine general gender role identities reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction and lower levels of sexual problems. The author noted, however, that androgyny is not significantly higher than femininity; individuals in androgynous roles indicated the highest level of sexual satisfaction. Similarly, Rosenzweig and Dailey (1989) found that individuals with more androgynous roles in sexual life tended to show high levels of sexual satisfaction. To the contrary, Leary and Snell, Jr. (1988) indicated that more masculine features are shown to be related to greater sexual experiences and more relaxed feelings about sex. Similarly, Obstfeld, Lupfer, & Lupfer, (1985) showed that both males and females who defined themselves as more masculine tended to show higher sexual function and satisfaction than average persons of the same sex, and that both males

and females who defined themselves as more feminine reported fewer positive outcomes relating to sexuality.

The effect of psychological and physical health on sexuality is also examined by some researchers. Psychological factors such as anxiety, depression, stress and previous traumas are indicated to have a negative effect on sexual satisfaction (Crowe, 1995). Moreover, it was shown that emotionally healthier individuals tended to show greater sexual satisfaction (McCall-Hosenfeld et al., 2008). Furthermore, organic problems such as spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, hormonal and pelvic problems are noted to have a negative effect on sexual satisfaction (Crowe, 1995).

The relationship between sexual dysfunction and sexual satisfaction has been investigated in the literature. In a study among erectile dysfunctional (ED) individuals, Althof et al. (2010) showed that the severity of erectile dysfunction was positively associated with sexual dysfunction. Similarly, Gralla et al. (2008) observed that higher levels of worry about sexual and relationship function lowering sexual desire and sexual satisfaction were related to the severity of the ED. In addition, the authors noted that at all levels of ED severity, younger men described lower levels of sexual satisfaction than older men, the reasons for this being explained by younger men's greater concern about their sexual function. Additionally, in research about ED treatment conducted by Fugl-Meyer et al. (2009), the researchers indicated that as treatment diminished the severity of ED among individuals who previously reported higher levels of dysfunction, sexual satisfaction also greatly improved. Sexual dysfunction related to women was examined by

Ferenidou et al. (2008), and the research indicated that “presence of a sexual problem may not affect women’s satisfaction from their sexual function,” and it is shown that there is no association between women’s sexual dysfunction (desire problem, reduced genital sensation, vaginal dryness, orgasmic disorder, pain) and sexual satisfaction.

2.2.3. Relationship Variables Related to Sexual Satisfaction

Length of marriage is shown to have a contradictory influence on sexual satisfaction. Some researchers, such as Whitley and Poulsen (1975), indicated that escalation in length of marriage related to escalation in sexual satisfaction. On the other hand, Jose and Alfons (2007) showed a positive correlation between length of marriage and occurrence sexual adjustment problems. The authors reported increase in duration of relationship to be associated with increase in problems of sexual adjustment. Colebrook Seymour III (1998) and Basat (2004) found that increment in length of marriage is associated with decrement in sexual satisfaction.

Love and commitment are other indicators for sexual satisfaction. Sprecher (2002) showed that people who reported themselves to be sexually satisfied tended to show higher degrees of love and commitment. The author also showed that change in sexual satisfaction led to change in love and commitment in the same direction. Similarly, it was demonstrated that being in love with one’s partner led to high sexual satisfaction (Barrientos & Paez, 2006). Abadjian-Mozian (2005) stated that

women who felt worthy of love and able to express love tended to show more satisfaction with their sexual activities than those who did not.

Association between religiosity and sexual satisfaction has been investigated by some researchers. Abadjian-Mozian (2005), Davidson and Moore (2004), and Young et al. (1998) showed similar results indicating that religion was not associated with sexual satisfaction. On the contrary, Waite and Joyner (2001) noted that religiosity had positive effects on sexuality. The authors found that individuals who reported more frequent attendance of religious services tended to demonstrate greater levels of satisfaction related to sex.

Sexual communication is also demonstrated to be associated with changes in sexual satisfaction. Haavio-Mannila and Kontula (1997) demonstrated that dialogue about sexual likes and dislikes positively impacts satisfaction. In a similar way, MacNeil and Byers (1997) also showed that better communication on the disclosure of specific sexual likes and dislikes was associated with improvement in sexual satisfaction. However, another study with women conducted by Rudd (2009) revealed no relationship between sexual communication and sexual satisfaction.

The effects of orgasm consistency and frequency on sexuality are inconsistent in the literature. Waterman and Chiauuzzi (1982) indicated that orgasm consistency was positively related to sexual satisfaction for females but not for males. On the other hand, Rudd (2009) suggested that orgasm consistency was not associated with sexual satisfaction. Higher frequency of orgasm was related to higher sexual satisfaction

especially among women (Basat, 2004; Meadow, 1982). Sexual frequency is also associated with sexual satisfaction. It was shown that higher frequency of sexual relations was related to higher sexual satisfaction (Basat, 2004; Cheung et al., 2008; Colebrook Seymour III, 1998; Meadow, 1982; Young et al., 1998). In addition, Renaud, Byers, and Pan (1997) suggested that higher levels of sexual satisfaction were related to the greater frequency of affectionate and sexual behavior, fewer sexual concerns, fewer sexual problems for self and partner, and greater relationship satisfaction. Rudd (2009) also demonstrated an association between satisfaction and the variety of sexual activities and sexual satisfaction.

2.3. Relationship Satisfaction

On the topic of relationship satisfaction, first, a definition of relationship satisfaction is articulated. Then, individual variables related to relationship satisfaction are explained. Last, relationship variables related to relationship satisfaction are presented.

2.3.1. Definition of Relationship Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction is a term that is diverse in its definitions, and there is no consensus on its meaning. Some researchers have conflated different terms under the umbrella of relationship satisfaction. For example, according to Timm (1999), terms such as happiness, adjustment, stability and quality have been used as synonymous with relationship satisfaction. Similarly, Vangelisti (2004) defined relationship

quality as overall quality of life within relationships, consisting of adjustment, stability and satisfaction.

Karlsson (1963) defined relationship satisfaction as the correlation between what spouses want from the relationship and what they get from it. On the other hand, Kurdek and Schmitt (1986, p.711) described relationship satisfaction as “the extent of agreement between partners on matters of importance to dyadic functioning; satisfaction with demonstrated affection and sexual relations; the degree of tension in the relationship as well as the frequency with which each partner has considered ending the relationship; the amount of activity shared by the partners; and the favorability of attitude toward one’s relationship”. Hoult (1969; cited in Fışıloğlu & Demir, 2000) described it as a complex issue in which the amount of conflict and shared activities is assumed to be related to happiness or success of marriage. Furthermore, relationship satisfaction has been used as a general concept containing the terms satisfaction and happiness with one’s partner and relationship, a usage based on Spanier and Cole’s (1976) definition.

2.3.2. Individual Variables Related to Relationship Satisfaction

The association between gender and relationship satisfaction has been investigated by some researchers, with contrary findings about the connection between gender and relationship satisfaction. Some researchers, such as Renaud et al. (1997) and Hamamcı (2005) stated that men and women do not differ in their relationship satisfaction. In a similar way, Christensen et al. (2006) also showed that gender is not

a significant predictor for relationship satisfaction. On the other hand, some researchers, such as Basat (2004) and Jose and Alfons (2007) demonstrated that women report more marital problems than men, meaning that women tend to report lower relationship satisfaction than men. Additionally, Guo and Huang (2005) showed men's level of relationship satisfaction to be higher than women's relationship satisfaction among married people.

Some other demographic variables, such as education and age, have also been shown to be associated with changes in relationship satisfaction. Findings about education and relationship satisfaction have also been contradictory. Jose and Alfons (2007) indicated that education had no significant impact on relationship satisfaction. However, Basat (2004) and Guo and Huang (2005) demonstrated that the higher level of education, the greater relationship satisfaction. Authors stated that individuals with higher education levels report greater satisfaction with their relationship. In contrast, Colebrook Seymour III (1998) found that increased levels of education are related to decreases in relationship satisfaction. Age is also found to be related with relationship satisfaction. Some researchers, such as Jose and Alfons (2007), found that age has a negative impact on relationship satisfaction. Authors indicated that older individuals reap less satisfaction from their relationships. On the other hand, some researchers, such as Argyle and Furnham (1983), have asserted that older individuals tend to report greater satisfaction from their relationships. However, Hill (2008) indicated that there is no relationship between age and relationship satisfaction.

Association between relationship status and relationship satisfaction is investigated by some researchers. Although cohabitation and marriage are similar insofar as they are both relationships of intimacy and cohabitation, relationship satisfaction is different among cohabiting and married individuals. Based on a study conducted by Kurdek and Schmitt (1986), cohabitant partners reported lower relationship satisfaction than married partners. In another study conducted by Moore, McCabe, and Brink (2001), the results indicated that both married couples and cohabiting couples showed higher levels of relationship satisfaction than couples who were dating without living together. Married couples reported the highest relationship satisfaction scores. In addition, Jose and Alfons (2007) conducted a study with first-time/re-married individuals and concluded that re-married people tended to show higher levels of relationship satisfaction than first-time married people.

Number of children is also related to relationship satisfaction. Some studies have shown that nonexistence of children has a positive effect on marital happiness and satisfaction (Jose & Alfons, 2007; White & Edwards, 1990), and that an increase in the number of children is related to an increase in marital problems and a decrease in relationship satisfaction (Colebrook Seymour III, 1998; Jose & Alfons, 2007). Additionally, Belsky et al. (1985) showed that couples, who defined themselves as happy in their relationships felt a decline in their relationship satisfaction following the birth of a first child. Conversely, Guo and Huang (2005) suggested that there is a positive association between number of children and relationship satisfaction. However, another study resulted in further inconsistencies in findings. Hamamci

(2005) and Witting et al. (2008) demonstrated that number of children is not statistically associated with relationship satisfaction.

Personality traits and self-esteem are other predictors of relationship satisfaction. For example, Fisher and McNulty (2008) found that neuroticism in both oneself and in a partner is related to relationship satisfaction. It means that a higher level of neuroticism in both the self and the partner are tied to lower satisfaction in relationships. Gattis et al. (2004) noted that higher neuroticism, lower agreeableness, lower conscientiousness, and less positive expressivity led to a reduction in relationship satisfaction. Other researchers, such as Reath et al. (1980), investigated assertiveness and found no association between assertiveness and relationship satisfaction. To the contrary, Hafner and Spence's (1988) study, it was found that relationship satisfaction among those in long marriages (those lasting at least 16 years) was related to assertiveness. Moreover, the authors suggested that relationship satisfaction for intermediate marriages (those lasting for 7 to 16 years) was related to hostility. Relationship satisfaction was associated with self-esteem (Bird & Melville, 1994), and it has been shown that people who show greater levels of self-esteem also show greater levels of sexual satisfaction (Basat, 2004).

Attachment style is another indicator of relationship satisfaction. Securely attached people tended to be better satisfied with their relationships and have greater stability than insecurely attached people (Clymer, 2009; Egeci & Gençöz, 2006; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007a; as cited in Clymer, 2009). Insecure attachment is associated with lower levels of stability, length, and satisfaction in relationships (Kirkpatrick &

Davis, 1994). Moreover, Clymer et al. (2006) noted that a higher level of ambivalence or avoidance in attachment led to lower levels of relationship satisfaction. In addition, when agreeability and conscientiousness were low, individuals exhibited lower satisfaction with their relationships (Shackelford et al., 2008). Furthermore, in relationships wherein the self or the partner was anxiously attached, lower relationship satisfaction was reported (Butzer & Campbell, 2008). Authors also suggested that individuals with an avoidance attachment style reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction.

Romantic attachment is demonstrated as another predictor of relationship satisfaction. Lowyck et al. (2008) indicated that individuals with secure romantic attachments tended to report higher relationship satisfaction than individuals with insecure romantic attachments. Moreover, it was found that all insecure romantic attachment styles were related to lower levels of relationship satisfaction. It was also found that relationship-specific securely attached individuals demonstrated greater relationship satisfaction (Cozzarelli et al., 2000). Furthermore, Cowan and Cowan (2001) found that individuals who defined themselves as securely attached to partners/relationships described their relationships as happier and more satisfied than individuals who defined themselves as insecurely attached to partners/relationships.

The link between gender role and relationship satisfaction has been investigated. Individuals who reported themselves as androgynous indicated a higher level of relationship satisfaction (Clymer, 2009). Sexual gender roles have also been shown to be associated with relationship satisfaction. Clymer (2009) noted that people with

androgynous and feminine sexual gender role identities demonstrated higher relationship satisfaction and lower relationship problems than those with masculine or undifferentiated sexual gender role identities. The author suggested that both femininity and androgyny produced the highest relationship satisfaction.

Psychological problems are also demonstrated to be related to changes in relationship satisfaction. Shek (1994) showed that relationship quality among married people to be positively associated with positive mental health and negatively associated with psychiatric symptoms. McLeod (1994) indicated that married people with anxiety disorders such as phobias, panic disorder and generalized anxiety disorder perceived their relationships to be less satisfactory. In addition, depressed patients reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction than their partners and than nonclinical people (Lemmens et al., 2007). Marchand (2004) demonstrated that increment in husbands' depressive symptoms led to decrement in overall relationship satisfaction, but wives' depressive symptoms did not impact relationship satisfaction.

2.3.3. Relationship Variables Related to Relationship Satisfaction

The association between relationship duration and satisfaction has been investigated by researchers. Guo and Huang (2005) found that marriage duration unrelated to relationship satisfaction. Jose and Alfons (2007) demonstrated length of marriage to be negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. The authors reported increment in duration of marriage to be related to decrement in the level of relationship satisfaction. Moreover, it was indicated that married people in their

middle years compared to early and late years tended to show lower levels of relationship satisfaction. The studies conducted by Kurdek (1992; 2005) showed that individuals reported a reduction in their relationship satisfaction over time. Additionally, this decrease in relationship satisfaction is higher among women than among men (Kurdek, 2005). Similarly, the study conducted by Moore, McCabe, and Brink (2001) among dating, cohabiting and married individuals indicated that the longer individuals had been in their relationships, the higher the level of relationship satisfaction they experienced.

Hill (2007) showed that love factors, including passion, intimacy and commitment, were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction. Hill (2008) further found that a positive association between compassionate love and relationship satisfaction. Individuals who described themselves as being in understanding and supportive relationships tended to exhibit greater relationship satisfaction (Barker & Lemle, 1984). This is significant since expectations are an important indicator of relationship satisfaction. Larson et al. (1998) demonstrated that couples having different expectations for and perspectives on their relationship indicated lower relationship quality.

Communication has also been shown to be associated with relationship satisfaction (e.g. Christensen et al., 2006; Gottman & Krokoff, 1989; Malkoç, 2001). Litzenger and Gordon (2005) showed constructive communication patterns to be related to higher relationship satisfaction among married couples. Similar results were shown by Christensen et al. (2006), in that success in communication resulted in

improvement in relationship satisfaction. This means relationship satisfaction is predicted by constructive communication. Bodenmann et al. (1998) also reported that destructive communication pattern is associated with lower level of relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, the authors showed communication avoidance and withdrawal to be negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction among married individuals. Problem solving abilities also tended to correlate to relationship satisfaction. People with confidence in their problem solving abilities reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction than people who employ an avoidance approach or personal control in their problem solving repertoire (Eğeci & Gençöz, 2006).

Sexual satisfaction is the other indicator of relationship satisfaction that has been examined in the literature. Litzenger and Gordon (2005), Purnine and Carey (1997), Renaud et al. (1997) and Sprecher (2002) demonstrated that greater satisfaction in sexuality was associated with higher relationship satisfaction among married couples. Byers (2005) stated that changes in sexual satisfaction were associated with changes in relationship satisfaction in long-term relationships. It has further been found that sexual satisfaction is related to the overall quality of relationships. Schenk et al. (1983) and Young et al. (2000) showed that greater sexual satisfaction was associated with overall quality of relationship among married individuals. Similarly, Yeh et al. (2006) found that higher sexual satisfaction resulted in improved relationship quality in terms of happiness and satisfaction among married couples. Frequency of sexual relations was also a predictor of relationship satisfaction. Higher levels of frequency of sexual relations led to higher levels of relationship satisfaction

(Colebrook Seymour III, 1998). Similarly, Renaud et al. (1997) indicated that higher levels of relationship satisfaction were related to higher frequency of sexual behavior and fewer sexual concerns.

2.4. Relationship Satisfaction in Turkish Literature

The concept of relationship satisfaction has been examined in various studies in Turkish literature. Studies in this area have paid great attention to understand and clarify the role of different variables on relationship satisfaction. In this section, studies found in Turkish literature that relate to the issues of concern in the present study are summarized.

Tezer (1986) conducted a study to investigate the association between conflict behaviors and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated that higher levels of avoidance behavior are associated with lower levels of relationship satisfaction. In addition, it was demonstrated that in conflict situations, dissatisfied females perceived more forceful and avoidant behaviors on the part of their husbands. Meanwhile, males tended to report that they preferred compromise and collaboration with their wives even when their wives perceived a high degree of frequency in conflict and tension created by conflict.

Yıldırım (1993) examined the relationship between the adjustment level, or relationship satisfaction, of married couples and other variables that impact spousal relationships (i.e., mutual sharing of feelings and opinions, satisfaction in sexual life, refusal of sexual wishes from the wife/husband, and domestic violence by the

wife/husband). The results revealed a positive association between mutual sharing of feelings and opinions on relationship satisfaction. Moreover, a positive relationship was found to exist between satisfaction in sexual life and adjustment level. In addition, the results revealed significant negative relations between refusal of sexual wishes by the wife/husband and adjustment level, and between domestic violence by the wife/husband and adjustment level.

Malkoç (2001) investigated the relationship between communication patterns and relationship satisfaction among a sample of married people. A negative association between communication patterns and relationship satisfaction was revealed. That is, individuals who reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction tended to indicate more destructive communication patterns than individuals who reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction. The results also revealed that duration of relationship, gender, number of children and education level are the other predictive variables of relationship satisfaction.

Ertan (2002) conducted a study to examine relationship satisfaction and compare relationship satisfaction to a given spouse's attachment style at different stages of marriage. The results revealed that the most common marital dyad was dual insecure couples, who demonstrated a higher level of affectionate expression during non-critical stages of marriage than during critical stages. The results also indicated that in both critical and non-critical stages, when at least one spouse in the marital dyad was secure, this had a positive effect on dyadic satisfaction. Furthermore, it was

revealed that dual secure couples in both stages tended to report the highest dyadic satisfaction scores.

Eğeci (2005) investigated the association between conflict distress, conflict attribution, perceived conflict behaviors, and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated that greater conflict distress and perceived difference on conflict behaviors were related to lower satisfaction with relationships. In addition, the results showed that in predicting women's relationship satisfaction, conflict distress accounts were the only variable, whereas for men, both perceived similarity in conflict behaviors and self-blaming were associated with relationship satisfaction. Moreover, it was found that one partner's conflict distress, partner blame, and perceived difference in conflict behavior were negatively correlated to the other partner's relationship satisfaction.

Hamamcı (2005) examined the relationship between dysfunctional relationship beliefs and marital relationships in among a Turkish sample. The results showed that married individuals with lower levels of dyadic satisfaction had significantly more dysfunctional relationship beliefs than did those with greater levels of dyadic satisfaction. Additionally, the results demonstrated that dysfunctional relationship beliefs, especially with respect to misperceptions of closeness to one's partner, and with prediction of negative consequences, are negatively correlated with the marital satisfaction of men. Meanwhile, belief in the ability to know what the partner is thinking is positively correlated with the marital satisfaction of women.

Hünler and Gençöz (2005) investigated the effects of religiousness on relationship satisfaction among a sample of Turkish married people, as well as the mediating role on perceived marital problems between religiousness and relationship satisfaction. The results yielded indicated that after controlling for the effects of duration of marriage, marital style, education level, hopelessness, and submission, religiousness has a predictive role on relationship satisfaction. However, the mediator role in problem solving was not observed.

In brief, several studies have been conducted to pinpoint the concept of relationship satisfaction in Turkey. It appears that studies in Turkey have focused on variables such as attachment styles, communication patterns, conflict distresses, conflict attributions, perceived conflict behaviors, dysfunctional relationship beliefs, and religiousness, as related to relationship satisfaction. The studies that have been conducted in Turkey are promising, and need to be further developed.

2.5. Connection between the Literature Review and Aims of the Study

According to a review of the literature, different communication patterns and sexual satisfaction have an important predictive role on relationship satisfaction. However, the prediction of different communication patterns and sexual satisfaction has generally been examined separately until now. Investigating the effect of interaction between different communication patterns and sexual satisfaction on relationship satisfaction has not been broadly studied. Since there is limited research on the moderating effect of sexual satisfaction on communication patterns that predict

relationship satisfaction, the primary aim of the current study is to examine the buffering or intensifying roles of sexual satisfaction on communication while predicting relationship satisfaction.

Another variable that can be associated with relationship satisfaction is relationship status, such as married individuals with and without children, and cohabiting individuals. Generally, previous research has focused on married groups. Therefore, the contribution of the current study resides in the fact that by incorporating a study of cohabiting individuals into one of married individuals with and without children will increase the broad applicability of such studies.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In this section, firstly, characteristics of participating individuals were given. Secondly, characteristics of the scales and forms that were used in the current study were presented. And also, information about procedures of data collection was mentioned. Finally, a general outline of data analysis was stated.

3.1. Participants

Although 567 question forms were distributed by the researcher or by the personal acquaintances of the researcher, 266 completed forms were returned (return rate = 46.91%) and 208 of them were appropriate for the analysis. The subjects developed in this study were 208 participants consisting of 103 females (49.5%) and 105 males (50.5%). As seen in Table 1, participants in current study were between the ages of 23 and 46, the mean age of participants was 30.17, and standard deviation was 4.11. Specifically, for female participants age ranging between 23 and 44, mean age was 29.18, and standard deviation was 3.50. Additionally, for male participants age ranging between 23 and 46, mean age was 31.16, and standard deviation was 4.43.

For education level, 59.1% participants had university degree, 34.6% participants had graduate/doctorate degree, and 6.3% participants had high school degree.

Specifically, 59.2% of female participants had university degree, 35.9% of them had graduate/doctorate degree, and 4.9% of them had high school degree. In addition, 59% of male participants had university degree, 33.3% of them had graduate/doctorate degree and 7.6% of them had high school degree.

Relationship status was defined participants who were cohabitant, married with children and married without children. 33% of female participants, 30.5% of male participants, and totally 31.7% participants were cohabitant. 31.1% of female participants, 34.3% of male participants, and totally 32.7% participants were participants married with children. 35.9% of female participants, 35.2% of male participants, and totally 35.6% participants were participants married without children.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics (Quantitative Variables)

Variable	Female (N=103)			Male (N=105)			Total (N=208)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Age	29.18	3.50	23-44	31.16	4.43	23-46	30.17	4.11	23-46
Relationship duration (months)	28.80	18.76	3-60	29.82	18.32	3-60	29.31	18.50	3-60

Mean relationship duration for the sample was 29.31 months (*SD* = 18.50) ranging between 3 and 60 months. For female participants, mean relationship duration was 28.80 months (*SD* = 18.76) ranging between 3-60 months and for male participants, mean relationship duration was 29.82 months (*SD* = 18.32) ranging between 3-60 months.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics (Categorical Variables)

	Female (N=103)		Male (N=105)		Total (N=208)	
Variable	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Gender						
Female					103	49.5
Male					105	50.5
Education						
High school	5	4.9	8	7.6	13	6.3
University	61	59.2	62	59	123	59.1
Graduate	37	35.9	35	33.3	72	34.6
Relationship status						
Cohabitant	34	33	32	35.5	66	31.7
Married with children	32	31.1	36	34.3	68	32.7
Married without children	37	35.9	37	35.2	74	35.6
Existence of children						
Yes	32	31.1	36	34.3	68	32.7
No	71	68.9	69	65.7	140	67.3

3.2. Instruments

The instrumentation included three scales and a demographic form. The three scales chosen for current study were the Communication Pattern Questionnaire (CPQ) by Christensen and Sullaway (1984), the Golombok-Rust Sexual Satisfaction Inventory (GRISS) by Rust and Golombok (1983), and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) by Spanier (1976) were administered.

3.2.1. Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ)

Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ) is a 35-item self-report scale was developed by Christensen, and Sullaway (1984; cited in Malkoç, 2001). The aim of the scale is to assess spouse's behaviors when some problems in the relationship arises, during discussion of a relationship problem and after a discussion of a relationship problem. Each item is rated on a 9-point Likert-type scale and response options range from "very unlike (1)" to "very likely (9)". Scores of communication patterns are calculated by summing up associated item scores after necessary items are converted. Low scores on each communication pattern indicates that individual is good at the specified pattern.

CPQ determines partners' behaviors during three stages of conflict; when some problems in the relationship happens; during discussion of a relationship problem; after a discussion of a relationship problem. CPQ includes three communication patterns in original scale; demand-withdraw communication, demand/withdraw role and mutual constructive communication.

For three communication patterns, it is reported interpartner agreement of .73, .74 and .80, respectively. Cronbach's alphas for this scale were ranging from .62 to .82. The discriminant validity of CPQ was demonstrated by Noller and White (1990) and Christensen and Shenk (1991). In Noller and White's study (1990), discriminant validity of the scale was obtained through applying the scale to both happy with their marriages and unhappy with their marriages groups and showing that the scale distinguished those groups. Nevertheless, factor analysis was conducted and four different factors from original study were found that was labeled as coercion, mutuality, post-conflict distress and destructive process.

CPQ was translated and adapted into Turkish by Malkoç (2001). Differently from original scale, Turkish version includes four subscales that are destructive, constructive, emotional-logical and aggressive communication. Additionally, because of grammatical differences, Turkish form was separated into women and men form. Participants were 108 female and 92 male subjects. CPQ was shown to be a valid and reliable instrument. In this study, Cronbach's alphas of communication patterns were reported in the range from .65 to .80 for women and from .57 to .85 for men. Moreover, for total communication score, Cronbach's alphas reported .86 for women and .84 for men. In the current study, Cronbach's alphas of communication patterns were reported in the range from .61 to .73 for women and from .66 to .75 for men. Specifically, the construct validity and convergent validity was examined in the Turkish version study. Construct validity of the CPQ was examined by factor analysis. Convergent validity was investigated by assessing the correlation between

the scores of CPQ and the scores of DAS of the spouses. The results showed that significant negative associations between DAS and the communication patterns reveals that destructive communication behaviors reduce according to DAS scores.

3.2.2. Golombok-Rust Sexual Satisfaction Inventory (GRISS)

Golombok-Rust Sexual Satisfaction Inventory (GRISS) is a 28-item self-report scale was developed by Rust and Golombok (1983). The aim of the scale is to measure the quality of sexual relationship and the existence and severity of both male and female sexual problems. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale and response options range from “never” to “always”. Scores of scale are calculated by summing up item scores after necessary items are converted. Higher scores demonstrate higher level of sexual dysfunction and lower level of sexual quality.

GRISS has two different forms for men and women. It includes 7 subscales and 5 of them are the same for both men and women forms; avoidance, satisfaction, communication, sensuality and frequency of sexual activity. Additionally, women form consists of vaginismus and anorgasmia subscales and men form contains premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction subscales. The total score of GRISS gives information about general aspect of sexual functioning and, subscales gives detailed information for different aspects of sexual functioning and can be used as a diagnostic tool. Split-half reliability was reported .87 for women and .94 for men and also, internal consistency reliability for subscales ranged between .61 and .83. Validity of the scale was assessed through applying the scale to both patients having

sexual dysfunction and sexually healthy individuals and showing that the scale distinguished those groups except for sensuality, avoidance and communication subscales for male and communication subscale for female.

GRISS was translated and adapted into Turkish by Tuğrul et al. (1993). Participants were 73 female and 66 male in group diagnosed as sexually dysfunctional and 53 female and 51 male in group not diagnosed. In this study, Cronbach's alpha value was reported .92 for males and .91 for females for the total scale and for subscales, Cronbach's alphas reported between .51 and .88 for women and between .63 and .91 for men. In addition, the split-half reliability coefficients calculated .91 ($p < .001$) in females and .90 ($p < .001$) for males. Additionally, the split-half reliability coefficients reported .59 for premature ejaculation and .77 for vaginismus. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha value was reported .84 for males and .87 for females for the total scale. Discriminant validity of the scale was obtained through applying the scale to both clinical and nonclinical groups and showing that both total scores and subscale scores distinguished those groups except for communication subscale for female in adaptation study. Additionally, construct validity of the GRISS was examined by factor analysis that revealed 7 factors for both men (premature ejaculation, communication, avoidance, erectile dysfunction, frequency of sexual activity, sexual intercourse, and quality) and women (vaginismus, communication, avoidance, quality, anorgasmia, sensuality, and satisfaction). Even if factor analysis suggested different results when compared to Rust and Golombok's findings (1983;

cited in Tuğrul et al., 1993), items obtaining sexual dysfunctions gathered under different factors and this was a similar finding as indicated.

3.2.3. Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) is a 32-item self-report scale was developed by Spanier (1976). The purpose of the scale is to assess the quality of relationship of cohabiting and married couples. DAS contains not only Likert-type response such as 5-point, 6-point and 7-point, but also dichotomous items that are answered either “yes” or “no”. Score of scale are calculated by summing up items after necessary items are converted. The total score changes in range from 0-151 and higher scores show greater relationship satisfaction.

The scale measures four subscales which are dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus and affectional expression. In this study, Cronbach’s alphas were reported .96 for overall scale. Moreover, reliability of the subscales was calculated as .90, .94, .86, .73 for dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, and affectional expression, respectively. Content, criterion-related and construct validity were assessed. For content validity, items contained in the scale were evaluated by three judges. Criterion-related validity of the scale was obtained through applying the scale to both married and divorced sample and showing that the scale distinguished those groups. Construct validity was investigated by assessing the correlation between the scores of DAS and the scores of Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale. Therefore, DAS was shown that it is both valid and reliable scale.

DAS was translated and adapted into Turkish by Fıfılođu and Demir (2000). Participants were 132 female and 132 male subjects. In this study, Cronbach's alphas were reported .92 for overall scale and it ranges from .75 to .83 for subscales. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was reported .90 for overall scale. In addition, criterion validity was obtained by the correlation between translated DAS and translated Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test ($r = .82$) and construct validity was assessed showing the original four factors in the Turkish version.

3.2.4. Demographic Information Form

Demographic information form was developed by the researcher in order to get information about gender, age, education and work status, relationship status, duration of relationship (in terms of living together or marital length) and number of children. These variables were selected to control their effects on study's main variables.

3.3. Procedure

At the beginning of the study, all necessary permissions were applied for and obtained from The Applied Ethics Research Center of Middle East Technical University for research with human participants. To test the research questions, a snowball sampling method (Kumar 1996) was used in an effort to reach potential participants, and purposive sampling procedure (Kerlinger, 1986) was employed in order to select the participants this group. For this research, it was preferred to study with individuals, instead of couples.

Participant research instruments were either delivered by hand in envelopes or posted via mail by the researcher or by personal acquaintances of the researcher. Participants were informed that completed surveys may be returned by hand in sealed envelopes or posted via mail with the researcher paying postage costs. The envelopes were distributed in 6 cities (Adana, Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, İzmit, and Samsun) in Turkey.

567 forms were distributed and 266 completed forms were returned (return rate = 46.91%). Participants who reported that they were remarried or re-cohabitant who also had an education level below a high school diploma were excluded (because of confounding effect). Additionally, forms with scales left entirely blank were eliminated, and with data screening, two cases were identified as multivariate outliers and these results were also deleted. Thus, 208 cases were designated appropriate for the analyses. Data collection continued for eleven months between the dates of February 2009 and January 2010.

The instruments of research were provided and collected in sealed envelopes. The package included an informed consent form which provided information about the aim of the study, the confidentiality measures taken by the researcher, and the importance that the participants complete all scales on the survey. Additionally, CPQ and DAS had their own instructions, which were included in the package. Because CPQ and GRISS use different forms for men and women, the research instrument were separated to include “women’s forms” and “men’s forms”. Participants were cautioned to complete the form corresponding to the gender stated on the

demographic information page. Participants were guaranteed of confidentiality and were asked to read and sign the written information form to indicate their consent to participate in the study under the conditions articulated above. Administration of the research instruments took approximately 15-20 minutes.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analyses were conducted using different functions of Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 15.0 for Windows. Data were screened prior to analysis to examine for missing values, fit their distributions, the assumption of multivariate analysis and testing research question with SPSS DESCRIPTIVES, SPSS FREQUENCIES, SPSS GLM, and SPSS REGRESSION.

For testing group differences, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. With this method, how married individuals with and without children, and cohabiting individuals differ in terms of communication patterns, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction were analyzed. For this analysis, independent variable was relationship statuses and dependent variables were different communication patterns, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction.

For testing research question, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted for obtaining moderation analysis. With this method, both independent and joint predictions of independent and moderator variables were seen. Independent variable of the study was communication patterns (destructive, constructive, emotional-logical, and aggressive communication), which was evaluated by quality of

communication patterns. Moderator variable was sexual satisfaction that was assessed by quality of sexual relationship and dependent variable was relationship satisfaction that is evaluated by quality of relationship.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this section, first, screening the data prior to analysis was given. Second, descriptive statistics of the variables were presented. Third, group differences were given. Last, regression analysis was mentioned.

4.1. Screening the Data Prior to Analysis

In the current study, prior to conducting the analyses, all variables were examined for accuracy of data entry, missing values, and fit between their distributions and the assumptions of multivariate statistics, namely normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance, and homogeneity of regression through SPSS DESCRIPTIVES and SPSS FREQUENCIES (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The count of missing values was less than 5% of all cases and a statistically nonsignificant result ($\chi^2 = 19.456$, $df = 20$, $p = .492$) was achieved and because it indicates that the pattern of missing values were random, they were replaced by imputed values. To improve pairwise linearity and to reduce the extreme skewness and kurtosis, aggressive communication was logarithmically transformed. In addition, with using of a $p < .001$ criterion for Mahalanobis distance, two cases (about .95%) were identified as multivariate outliers and they were deleted.

Therefore, remaining 208 cases (103 female and 105 male participants) were included in the main analysis.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Prior to the main analyses, descriptive statistics of the sample were used for testing the research question and it was investigated through SPSS DESCRIPTIVES. Descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviations and range of the variables, for the final 208 participants are given in participant part and Table 3.

The subjects developed in this study were 208 participants consisting of 103 females (49.5%) and 105 males (50.5%). For education level, most participants had at least university degree (59.1% had university degree and 34.6% had graduate/doctorate degree) and 6.3% participants had high school degree. Relationship status was defined participants who were cohabitant, married with children and married without children. 31.7% participants were cohabitant, 32.7% participants were participants married with children and 35.6% participants were participants married without children. 32.7% participants had at least one child and 67.3% participants had no children. Most participants had one child (88.2%), 5.9% participants had two children and 2.9% participants had three children.

As can be seen in Table 3, participants in the current study were between the ages of 23 and 46, the mean age of participants was 30.17, and standard deviation was 4.11. Mean relationship duration for the sample was 29.31 months ($SD = 18.50$) ranging between 3 and 60 months.

Regarding the main variables of the study, the mean score for the mean score for CPQ-destructive was 48.64 ($SD = 15.82$), the mean score for CPQ-constructive was 40.34 ($SD = 11.01$), the mean score for CPQ-emotional-logical was 36.78 ($SD = 8.07$), the mean score for CPQ-aggressive 1.18 was ($SD = .20$), the DAS was 115.35 ($SD = 15.56$), and the mean score for the GRISS was 25.26 ($SD = 10.76$).

Table 3. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD) and Ranges for Variables of the Study

Variable (N=208)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Age	30.17	4.11	23-46
Relationship duration	29.31	18.50	3-60
Destructive communication	48.64	15.82	13-85
Constructive communication	40.34	11.01	14-72
Emotional-Logical communication	36.78	8.07	13-54
Aggressive communication	16.83	8.41	7-49
Sexual satisfaction	25.26	10.76	0-61
Relationship satisfaction	115.35	15.56	69-146

4.3. Testing Group Differences

One-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed in order to examine the group differences on different communication patterns, sexual

satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. Independent variable consisted of different relationship statuses that are married individuals with and without children and cohabiting individuals. Analyses were performed by SPSS GLM.

4.3.1. Testing Group Differences: Destructive Communication Pattern as Dependent Variable

Means and standard deviations of the destructive communication pattern scores of the subjects which were grouped by relationship status were presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of the Destructive Communication Pattern Scores of the Subjects Grouped by Relationship Status

Relationship status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Married with children	47.70	16.57	13-76
Married without children	49.41	15.05	16-79
Cohabiting individuals	48.74	16.06	15-85

Whether relationship status make a difference between groups on the scores of destructive communication pattern was tested through one-way between-subjects ANOVA. Results reveal that relationship status ($F(2, 205) = 0.207, p > .05$) did not differentiate the groups on destructive communication pattern (see Table 5).

Table 5. Results of the One-Way Between-Subjects ANOVA when Dependent Variable is Destructive Communication Pattern

Variable	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Destructive communication				
Between groups	104.29	2	52.15	.207
Within groups	51687	205	252.14	
Total	51792.29	207		

4.3.2. Testing Group Differences: Constructive Communication Pattern as Dependent Variable

Means and standard deviations of the constructive communication pattern scores of the subjects which were grouped by relationship status were presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Means and Standard Deviations of the Constructive Communication Pattern Scores of the Subjects Grouped by Relationship Status

Relationship status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Married with children	41.07	11.41	14-72
Married without children	38.42	9.41	20-62
Cohabiting individuals	41.74	12.07	23-70

Whether relationship status make a difference between groups on the scores of constructive communication pattern was tested through one-way between-subjects ANOVA. Results reveal that relationship status ($F(2, 205) = 1.826, p > .05$) did not differentiate the groups on constructive communication pattern (see Table 7).

Table 7. Results of the One-Way Between-Subjects ANOVA when Dependent Variable is Constructive Communication Pattern

Variable	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Constructive communication				
Between groups	439.51	2	219.75	1.826
Within groups	24668.72	205	120.34	
Total	25108.23	207		

4.3.3. Testing Group Differences: Emotional-Logical Communication Pattern as Dependent Variable

Means and standard deviations of the emotional-logical communication pattern scores of the subjects which were grouped by relationship status were presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Means and Standard Deviations of the Emotional-Logical Communication Pattern Scores of the Subjects Grouped by Relationship Status

Relationship status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Married with children	37.10	8.28	16-54
Married without children	36.35	8.09	14-54
Cohabiting individuals	36.94	7.93	13-51

Whether relationship status make a difference between groups on the scores of emotional-logical communication pattern was tested through one-way between-subjects ANOVA. Results reveal that relationship status ($F(2, 205) = 0.107, p > .05$) did not differentiate the groups on emotional-logical communication pattern (see Table 9).

Table 9. Results of the One-Way Between-Subjects ANOVA when Dependent Variable is Emotional-Logical Communication Pattern

Variable	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Emotional-logical communication				
Between groups	22.35	2	11.18	.170
Within groups	13460.83	205	65.66	
Total	13483.18	207		

4.3.4. Testing Group Differences: Aggressive Communication Pattern as Dependent Variable

Means and standard deviations of the aggressive communication pattern scores of the subjects which were grouped by relationship status were presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Means and Standard Deviations of the Aggressive Communication Pattern Scores of the Subjects Grouped by Relationship Status

Relationship status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Married with children	1.18	0.20	0.90-1.66
Married without children	1.18	0.21	0.90-1.69
Cohabiting individuals	1.17	0.20	0.85-1.58

Whether relationship status make a difference between groups on the scores of aggressive communication pattern was tested through one-way between-subjects ANOVA. Results reveal that relationship status ($F(2, 205) = 0.92, p > .05$) did not differentiate the groups on aggressive communication pattern (see Table 11).

Table 11. Results of the One-Way Between-Subjects ANOVA when Dependent Variable is Aggressive Communication Pattern

Variable	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Aggressive communication				
Between groups	.008	2	.004	.092
Within groups	8.49	205	.041	
Total	8.50	207		

4.3.5. Testing Group Differences: Sexual Satisfaction as Dependent Variable

Means and standard deviations of the sexual satisfaction scores of the subjects which were grouped by relationship status were presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Means and Standard Deviations of the Sexual Satisfaction Scores of the Subjects Grouped by Relationship Status

Relationship status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Married with children	23.42	9.18	3-46
Married without children	27.47	12.53	0-60
Cohabiting individuals	24.67	9.81	1-47

Whether relationship status make a difference between groups on the scores of sexual satisfaction was tested through one-way between-subjects ANOVA. Results reveal that relationship status ($F(2, 205) = 2.706, p > .05$) did not differentiate the groups on sexual satisfaction (see Table 13).

Table 13. Results of the One-Way Between-Subjects ANOVA when Dependent Variable is Sexual Satisfaction

Variable	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Sexual satisfaction				
Between groups	616.81	2	308.41	2.706
Within groups	23361.54	205	113.96	
Total	23978.36	207		

4.3.6. Testing Group Differences: Relationship Satisfaction as Dependent Variable

Means and standard deviations of the relationship satisfaction scores of the subjects which were grouped by relationship status were presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Means and Standard Deviations of the Relationship Satisfaction Scores of the Subjects Grouped by Relationship Status

Relationship status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Married with children	115.72	16.06	69-140
Married without children	115.58	15.98	72-146
Cohabiting individuals	114.71	14.77	88-142

Whether relationship status make a difference between groups on the scores of relationship satisfaction was tested through one-way between-subjects ANOVA. Results reveal that relationship status ($F(2, 205) = .082, p > .05$) did not differentiate the groups on relationship satisfaction (see Table 15).

Table 15. Results of the One-Way Between-Subjects ANOVA when Dependent Variable is Relationship Satisfaction

Variable	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Relationship satisfaction				
Between groups	40.17	2	20.08	.082
Within groups	50092.24	205	244.35	
Total	50132.41	207		

4.4. Regression Analysis

To test moderating effects, by examining the interaction among communication patterns, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, sequential regression was carried out. Analysis was performed using SPSS REGRESSION and SPSS Plot Syntax.

Firstly, communication (destructive, constructive, emotional-logical and aggressive communication) scores are centered to reduce multicollinearity among predictor variables in the regression equation. Secondly, sexual satisfaction scores are dichotomized into two groups: completely sexually satisfied and not completely sexually satisfied (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Then, each communication pattern is multiplied with sexual satisfaction (destructive X sexual satisfaction; constructive X sexual satisfaction; emotional-logical X sexual satisfaction; aggressive X sexual satisfaction). Lastly, each communication pattern, sexual satisfaction and interaction terms with that communication pattern were inserted into program and results were reached.

Four hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted for married individuals with and without children, and cohabiting individuals. In each regression model, different communication pattern was used. For all hierarchical regression models, age and duration of relationship were entered in the first step to control for their effect. In the second step, one communication pattern and sexual satisfaction were entered into the equation. In the final step, the interaction between communication pattern and sexual satisfaction were entered into the equation.

4.4.1. Association between Destructive Communication Pattern, Sexual

Satisfaction and Relationship Satisfaction

Table 16 demonstrates the correlations among destructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children. For married individuals with children, sexual satisfaction was negatively and significantly correlated with destructive communication ($r = -.354, p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .528, p < .01$), and negatively and significantly correlated with destructive communication ($r = -.448, p < .01$). Finally, the correlations provide support for the associations among destructive communication, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction, such that communication, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction were all significantly correlated.

Table 16. Correlations among destructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.528*	-	
3	-.448*	-.354*	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means destructive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

As shown in Table 17, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .414, p < .01$). Moreover,

destructive communication pattern had a significant and negative main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.296, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between destructive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 17. Moderated hierarchical regression results with destructive communication as IV for married individuals with children

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.266	.071	2.44	2, 64
Age	-.204				
Duration of relationship	-.141				
2. Step		.634	.332	17.20*	2, 62
Sexual satisfaction	.414*				
Destructive communication	-.296*				
3. Step		.635	.001	.149	1, 61
Interaction of destructive communication and sexual satisfaction	-.134				

Note: * $p < .01$

Table 18 demonstrates the correlations among destructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals without children. For married individuals without children, sexual satisfaction was not significantly correlated with destructive communication. Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .284, p < .01$) and negatively and significantly correlated with destructive communication ($r = -.294, p < .01$).

Table 18. Correlations among destructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals without children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.284*	-	
3	-.294*	-.173	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means destructive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

As shown in Table 19, for married individuals without children, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .269, p < .05$). In addition, destructive communication pattern had a significant and negative main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.267, p < .05$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, as both main effects were significant, interaction between destructive

communication pattern and sexual satisfaction was also significantly predict relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.881, p < .05$).

Table 19. Moderated hierarchical regression results with destructive communication as IV for married individuals without children

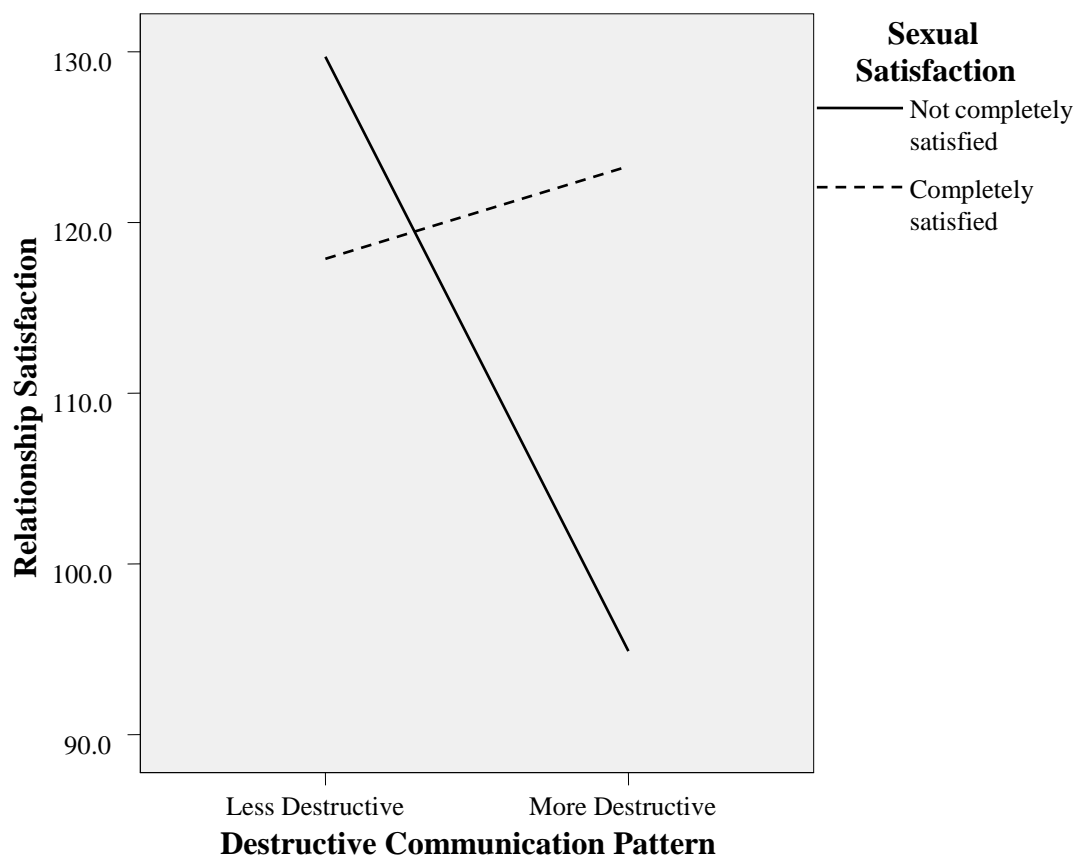
	β	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ² change	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>
1. Step		.204	.042	1.54	2, 71
Age	-.022				
Duration of relationship	-.193				
2. Step		.453	.163	7.09**	2, 69
Sexual satisfaction	.269**				
Destructive communication	-.267**				
3. Step		.514	.059	.543**	1, 68
Interaction of destructive communication and sexual satisfaction	-.881				

Notes: * $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

Plotting of this interaction reveals that the relationship between destructive communication pattern and relationship satisfaction varied for individuals with completely and not completely sexually satisfied for married individuals without children. Specifically, among individuals with completely sexually satisfied, level of destructive communication pattern were not associated with relationship satisfaction; the simple slop for completely satisfied group was not significant ($t(70) = .540, p >$

.05). In contrast, among individuals with not completely sexually satisfied, as their destructive communication pattern increases, their relationship satisfaction decreases. The simple slope was significant for those with not completely sexually satisfied group ($t(70) = -3.725, p < .01$). As seen in Figure 1, those individuals with not completely sexually satisfied but less destructive communication pattern reported the highest level of relationship satisfaction.

Figure 2. Interaction between destructive communication-sexual satisfaction on relationship satisfaction for married individuals without children



As shown in Table 20, for cohabiting individuals, sexual satisfaction was negatively and significantly correlated with destructive communication ($r = -.436, p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .615, p < .01$) and negatively and significantly correlated with destructive communication ($r = -.528, p < .01$). Finally, the correlations provide support for the associations among destructive communication, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction, such that communication, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction were all significantly correlated.

Table 20. Correlations among destructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for cohabiting individuals

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.615*	-	
3	-.528*	-.436*	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means destructive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

As shown in Table 21, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction for cohabiting individuals. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .479, p < .01$). Moreover, destructive communication pattern had a significant and negative main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.313, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of

relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between destructive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 21. Moderated hierarchical regression results with destructive communication as IV for cohabiting individuals

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.072	.005	.165	2, 63
Age	-.070				
Duration of relationship	-.014				
2. Step		.680	.457	25.94*	2, 61
Sexual satisfaction	.479**				
Destructive communication	-.313**				
3. Step		.687	.009	1.02	1, 60
Interaction of destructive communication and sexual satisfaction	.351				

Notes: * $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

4.4.2. Association between Constructive Communication Pattern, Sexual Satisfaction and Relationship Satisfaction

As shown in Table 22, for married individuals with children, sexual satisfaction was not significantly correlated with constructive communication. Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .528, p < .01$) and constructive communication ($r = .340, p < .01$).

Table 22. Correlations among constructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.528*	-	
3	.340*	.192	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means constructive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$; ** Correlation is significant at $p < .05$

As shown in Table 23, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .468, p < .01$). In addition, constructive communication pattern had a significant and positive main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .310, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between

constructive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 23. Moderated hierarchical regression results with constructive communication as IV for married individuals with children

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.266	.071	2.44	2, 64
Age	-.204				
Duration of relationship	-.141				
2. Step		.641	.340	17.86*	2, 62
Sexual satisfaction	.468*				
Constructive communication	.310*				
3. Step		.641	.000	.009	1, 61
Interaction of constructive communication and sexual satisfaction	.032				

Note: * $p < .01$

As seen in Table 24, for married individuals without children, sexual satisfaction was not significantly correlated with constructive communication. Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .284, p < .01$) and constructive communication ($r = .491, p < .01$).

Table 24. Correlations among constructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals without children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.284*	-	
3	.491*	.086	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means constructive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

For married individuals without children, as seen in Table 25, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .277, p < .01$). Moreover, constructive communication pattern had a significant and positive main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .463, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between constructive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 25. Moderated hierarchical regression results with constructive communication as IV for married individuals without children

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.204	.042	1.54	2, 71
Age	-.022				
Duration of relationship	-.193				
2. Step		.591	.308	16.32*	2, 69
Sexual satisfaction	.277*				
Constructive communication	.463*				
3. Step		.603	.014	1.54	1, 68
Interaction of constructive communication and sexual satisfaction	.373				

Note: * $p < .01$

Table 26 demonstrated that for cohabiting individuals, sexual satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with constructive communication ($r = .376$, $p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with

sexual satisfaction ($r = .615, p < .01$) and constructive communication ($r = .610, p < .01$).

Table 26. Correlations among constructive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for cohabiting individuals

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.615*	-	
3	.610*	.376*	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means constructive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

For cohabiting individuals, as seen in Table 27, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .451, p < .01$). In addition, constructive communication pattern had a significant and positive main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .469, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between constructive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 27. Moderated hierarchical regression results with constructive communication as IV for cohabiting individuals

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.072	.005	.165	2, 63
Age	-.070				
Duration of relationship	-.014				
2. Step		.757	.568	40.63*	2, 61
Sexual satisfaction	.451*				
Constructive communication	.469*				
3. Step		.763	.009	1.22	1, 60
Interaction of constructive communication and sexual satisfaction	.365				

Note: * $p < .01$

4.4.3. Association between Emotional-Logical Communication Pattern, Sexual Satisfaction and Relationship Satisfaction

Table 28 showed that for married individuals with children, sexual satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with emotional-logical communication ($r = .297, p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .528, p < .01$) and emotional-logical communication ($r = .495, p < .01$).

Table 28. Correlations among emotional-logical communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.528*	-	
3	.495*	.297*	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means emotional-logical communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$; ** Correlation is significant at $p < .05$

As seen in Table 29, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .421, p < .01$). In addition, emotional-logical communication pattern had a significant and positive main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .369, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between

emotional-logical communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 29. Moderated hierarchical regression results with emotional-logical communication as IV for married individuals with children

	β	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ² change	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>
1. Step		.266	.071	.244	2, 64
Age	-.204				
Duration of relationship	-.141				
2. Step		.667	.374	20.87*	2, 62
Sexual satisfaction	.421*				
Emotional-logical communication	.369*				
3. Step		.668	.002	.20	1, 61
Interaction of emotional-logical communication and sexual satisfaction	-.163				

Note: * $p < .01$

Table 30 showed that for married individuals without children, sexual satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with emotional-logical communication ($r = .234, p < .05$). Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .284, p < .01$), but not significantly correlated with emotional-logical communication.

Table 30. Correlations among emotional-logical communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals without children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.284*	-	
3	.170**	.234**	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means emotional-logical communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$; ** Correlation is significant at $p < .05$

As seen in Table 31, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .300, p < .05$). However, both main effect of emotional-logical communication pattern and the interaction between emotional-logical communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction after controlling age and duration of relationship.

Table 31. Moderated hierarchical regression results with emotional-logical communication as IV for married individuals without children

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.204	.042	1.54	2, 71
Age	-.204				
Duration of relationship	-.141				
2. Step		.380	.103	4.16**	2, 69
Sexual satisfaction	.421*				
Emotional-logical communication	.369*				
3. Step		.381	.001	.060	1, 68
Interaction of emotional-logical communication and sexual satisfaction	-.163				

Notes: * $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

Table 32 demonstrated that for cohabiting individuals, sexual satisfaction was not significantly correlated with emotional-logical communication. Relationship satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r =$

.615, $p < .01$). However, relationship satisfaction was not significantly correlated with emotional-logical communication.

Table 32. Correlations among emotional-logical communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for cohabiting individuals

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.615*	-	
3	.158	.119	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means emotional-logical communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

For cohabiting individuals, as seen Table 33, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .613$, $p < .01$). However, both main effect of emotional-logical communication pattern and the interaction between emotional-logical communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction after controlling age and duration of relationship.

Table 33. Moderated hierarchical regression results with emotional-logical communication as IV for cohabiting individuals

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.072	.005	.165	2, 63
Age	-.070				
Duration of relationship	-.014				
2. Step		.631	.392	19.87*	2, 61
Sexual satisfaction	.613*				
Emotional-logical communication	.092				
3. Step		.631	.000	.011	1, 60
Interaction of emotional-logical communication and sexual satisfaction	.036				

Note: * $p < .01$

4.4.4. Association between Aggressive Communication Pattern, Sexual Satisfaction and Relationship Satisfaction

Table 34 showed that for married individuals with children, sexual satisfaction was significantly and negatively correlated with aggressive communication ($r = -.350$, $p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .528$, $p < .01$), but significantly and negatively aggressive communication ($r = -.368$, $p < .01$).

Table 34. Correlations among aggressive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.528*	-	
3	-.368*	-.350*	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means aggressive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

For married individuals with children, as seen in Table 35, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .451$, $p < .01$). However, both main effect of aggressive communication pattern and the interaction between

aggressive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction after controlling age and duration of relationship.

Table 35. Moderated hierarchical regression results with aggressive communication as IV for married individuals with children

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.266	.071	2.44	2, 64
Age	-.204				
Duration of relationship	-.141				
2. Step		.601	.290	14.10*	2, 62
Sexual satisfaction	.451*				
Aggressive communication	-.204				
3. Step		.602	.002	.156	1, 61
Interaction of aggressive communication and sexual satisfaction	.135				

Note: * $p < .01$

Table 36 demonstrated that for married individuals without children, sexual satisfaction was negatively and significantly correlated with aggressive communication ($r = -.193, p < .05$), Relationship satisfaction was positively and significantly correlated with sexual satisfaction ($r = .284, p < .01$) and negatively and significantly correlated with aggressive communication ($r = -.365, p < .01$).

Table 36. Correlations among aggressive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for married individuals without children

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.284*	-	
3	-.365*	-.193**	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means aggressive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$; ** Correlation is significant at $p < .05$

As shown in Table 37, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction for married individuals without children. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .259, p < .05$). Moreover, aggressive communication pattern had a significant and negative main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.292, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between aggressive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 37. Moderated hierarchical regression results with aggressive communication as IV for married individuals without children

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.204	.042	1.54	2, 71
Age	-.022				
Duration of relationship	-.193				
2. Step		.466	.175	7.72*	2, 69
Sexual satisfaction	.259**				
Aggressive communication	-.292*				
3. Step		.495	.028	2.53	1, 68
Interaction of aggressive communication and sexual satisfaction	-.620				

Notes: * $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

Table 38 showed that, for cohabiting individuals, sexual satisfaction was significantly and negatively correlated with aggressive communication ($r = -.486$, $p < .01$). Relationship satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with

sexual satisfaction ($r = .615, p < .01$), but significantly and negatively aggressive communication ($r = -.622, p < .01$).

Table 38. Correlations among aggressive communication pattern, sexual satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction for cohabiting individuals

Variables	1	2	3
1	-		
2	.615*	-	
3	-.622*	-.486*	-

Notes: In table, 1 means relationship satisfaction; 2 means sexual satisfaction; 3 means aggressive communication.

* Correlation is significant at $p < .01$

As shown in Table 39, age and duration of relationship did not predict relationship satisfaction for cohabiting individuals. Sexual satisfaction significantly and positively predicted relationship satisfaction ($\beta = .416, p < .01$). In addition, aggressive communication pattern had a significant and negative main effect on relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.432, p < .01$). After controlling age and duration of relationship, both main effects were significant but the interaction between aggressive communication pattern and sexual satisfaction did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction.

Table 39. Moderated hierarchical regression results with aggressive communication as IV for cohabiting individuals

	β	R	R^2 change	F	df
1. Step		.072	.005	.165	2, 63
Age	-.070				
Duration of relationship	-.014				
2. Step		.729	.526	34.20*	2, 61
Sexual satisfaction	.416*				
Aggressive communication	-.432*				
3. Step		.729	.001	.116	1, 60
Interaction of aggressive communication and sexual satisfaction	-.111				

Note: * $p < .01$

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this section, first, evaluation of the findings is provided. Second, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are listed. Third, implications of findings are presented. Finally, conclusion is given.

5.1. Evaluation of the Results

Results of the present study indicated that married individuals, both with and without children, and cohabiting individuals do not differ in their communication patterns in terms of destructive, constructive, emotional-logical, and aggressive communication patterns. However, Malkoç (2001) found that number of children is not related to emotional-logical and aggressive communication patterns, but is instead related to destructive communication patterns. The results showed that an increased number of children is associated with decrement in constructive communication patterns and increment in destructive communication pattern. The differences relating to existence of children may occur due to duration of relationship. Bodenmann et al. (1998) indicated that longer relationship duration is related to poorer communication. In the present study, the mean duration of relationship is 2 years and 9 months, ranging between 3 months and 5 years, while in Malkoç's study, the mean duration of

relationship was 12 years, ranging between 3 months and 39 years. Moreover, it is possible that increase in age of children may therefore be an effective indicator of usage of different communication patterns.

The results of this study indicated that married individuals without children and cohabiting individuals do not differ in terms of sexual satisfaction. However, even though more sexual encounters were initiated between cohabiting individuals than married individuals (Byers & Heinlein, 1989), Stanley, Whitton, and Markman (2004) found that cohabitants reported lower sexual satisfaction than married individuals. A cultural consideration must be considered. In Turkey, premarital sexuality generally is not approved of because of social determinants (Duyan et al., 2001), and cohabitation is a relatively new concept. Therefore, cohabitants can see their relationship as similar to marriage and sexually behave as though in a marital relationship.

The results of this study indicated that married individuals with and without children do not differ in terms of sexual satisfaction, as Abadjian-Mozian (2005) also found. On the other hand, the current study's findings differ in some ways from previous research. Jose and Alfons (2007) demonstrated that nonexistence of children had a positive effect on the sexual adjustment of women and an increase in the number of children related to an escalation in sexual adjustment problems in first-time married individuals. Similarly, it was also found that increased numbers of children related to lower sexual satisfaction (Colebrook Seymour III, 1998) and the absence of children

related to higher levels of sexual satisfaction (Calvert, 2008). Contrarily, Witting et al. (2008) noted that women with no children tended to exhibit lower sexual satisfaction than women with children, regardless of the number.

Willetts (2006) similarly showed that married individuals without children and cohabiting individuals did not differ in terms of relationship satisfaction. This finding is inconsistent with previous findings by Kurdek and Schmitt (1986), Brown and Booth (1996), Stafford et al. (2004), and Legkauskas (2008) among married and cohabiting individuals. Based on studies conducted by Kurdek and Schmitt (1986), Brown and Booth (1996), Stafford et al. (2004), and Legkauskas (2008) cohabitant individuals tended to report lower levels of relationship satisfaction than married individuals. Similar to sexual satisfaction, a cultural consideration is necessary. Because cohabitation is a new and generally not approved of concept in Turkey, cohabitants may determine carefully, and only decide to cohabit if they are very sure about their commitment. Cohabitants therefore may conceptualize their relationship as analogous to marriage. Consequently, the result in this study indicating non-differences between married individuals without children and cohabiting individuals in relationship satisfaction may be expected.

As Hamamcı (2005) and Witting et al. (2008) demonstrated similarly that the existence of children is not related to relationship satisfaction in the present study. Findings indicated that married individuals with and without children do not differ in relationship satisfaction. This finding is inconsistent with the previous findings of

Jose and Alfons (2007), White and Edwards (1990), and Guo and Huang (2005) with regard to the existence of children. According to Jose and Alfons (2007) and White and Edwards (1990), nonexistence of children has a positive effect on marital happiness and satisfaction. On the other hand, Guo and Huang (2005) found a positive association between number of children and relationship satisfaction.

The association between destructive or constructive communication and relationship satisfaction was investigated in the current study. Results indicated that both destructive and constructive communication patterns are associated with relationship satisfaction for all groups, married individuals with and without children and cohabiting individuals. Destructive communication patterns were negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. In other words, individuals exhibiting less destructive communication reported greater relationship satisfaction. On the other hand, constructive communication patterns were positively associated with relationship satisfaction, and increment in constructive communication patterns was related to increment in relationship satisfaction. The results are consistent with previous studies. Litzenger and Gordon (2005) showed that constructive communication patterns were related to higher relationship satisfaction. Christensen et al. (2006) similarly showed that success in communication led to an increase in relationship satisfaction, and Byers (2005) found that poor communication led to a decrease in relationship satisfaction. Therefore, communication is the foundation that assists support and promotes relationship satisfaction (Doohan & Manusov, 2004).

As a result, communication plays an important role in determining satisfaction in marriage and close relationships (Fletcher, 2002).

In the current study, emotional-logical and aggressive communication patterns were examined. The consequences demonstrated that emotional-logical communication pattern did not significantly predict relationship satisfaction for all groups. The association between emotional-logical communication patterns and relationship satisfaction was only significant among married individuals with children. The results indicated that greater emotional-logical communication patterns lead to greater relationship satisfaction for married individuals with children. The results also showed that aggressive communication patterns were significantly predictive for relationship satisfaction among married individuals without children and cohabiting individuals, but for not married individuals with children. The results also demonstrated that individuals who report more aggressive communication patterns tend to declare lower relationship satisfaction among married individuals without children and cohabiting individuals. These findings may be the result of the existence of children. Having children might suppress the effect of aggressive communication patterns and promote the effect of emotional-logical communication patterns on relationship satisfaction. Moreover, nonexistence of children might promote the effect of aggressive communication on relationship satisfaction and suppress the effect of emotional-logical communication patterns on relationship satisfaction.

When independently considered, the main effect of sexual satisfaction is was positively associated with relationship satisfaction for all three groups represented in the study. In other words, increment in sexual satisfaction was found to be related to increment in relationship satisfaction, and decrement in sexual satisfaction was found to be related to decrement in relationship satisfaction for all groups. These results are consistent with previous research. Litzenger and Gordon (2005) demonstrated that greater satisfaction in sexuality is associated with higher relationship satisfaction. Similarly, some studies indicated that people who define themselves as sexually satisfied also report high relationship satisfaction (Purnine & Carey, 1997; Renaud et al., 1997). Moreover, Sprecher (2002) stated that while sexual satisfaction escalates, relationship adjustment also escalates. As a result, the finding from this study which reveals a strong association between sexual and relationship satisfaction is expected. Crowe (1995) suggested that sexual relationship of a couple is a microcosm of their general relationship, and this suggestion was born out in the present study, as the association of sexual and relationship satisfaction is assumed.

Litzenger and Gordon (2005) demonstrated that the interaction between communication and sexual satisfaction is related to relationship satisfaction. The authors indicated that sexual satisfaction buffered the effects of poor communication. This means that if communication is poor, couples who defined themselves more sexually satisfied reported greater relationship satisfaction than couples who defined themselves as less sexually satisfied. Similarly, in the current study, it was found that the effects of destructive communication on relationship satisfaction were moderated

by sexual satisfaction when controlling for age and duration of relationship in married individuals without children. Specifically, these results suggest that when individuals are sexually satisfied, destructive communication pattern fails to contribute significantly relationship satisfaction. However, when individuals are not sexually satisfied, they will have greater relationship satisfaction if they have a less destructive communication pattern than if they have a more destructive communication pattern. It can be asserted, though, that if individuals communicate more destructively, higher relationship satisfaction will follow higher sexual satisfaction. In addition, individuals who reported both low levels of sexual satisfaction and a more destructive communication pattern reported the lowest level relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, interestingly, individuals who exhibited both less destructive communication and lower levels of sexual satisfaction reported the highest level of relationship satisfaction. Therefore, the findings may be seen as an optimistic view for individuals. If individuals have greater level of sexual satisfaction, it may be that their destructive communication pattern has less impact on their relationship satisfaction than for individuals in less sexually satisfying relationships. Individuals who are more sexually satisfied may feel satisfied as an individual, and so it may be less important to communicate more destructively. This result also demonstrates that less destructive communication patterns might be predictive on relationship satisfaction if individuals less sexually satisfied. Therefore, increased levels of sexual satisfaction might compensate for some of the negative effects of destructive communication on relationship satisfaction.

5.2. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

The present study clarified the importance of the association of communication and sexual satisfaction together on relationship satisfaction. Moreover, different relationship statuses were emphasized. Nonetheless, there are some limitations that should be pointed out, which will be followed by recommendations for future research that may be pursued.

The general applicability of the findings to the broader population is a limitation of the present study. Although every effort was made to obtain a heterogeneous sample of cohabitants and married persons with and without children, this study utilized a limited age sample (between 23 and 46 years), respondents were living mostly in big cities (i.e., Adana, Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, İzmit, and Samsun). Therefore, the findings presented here may not also apply to people, who live in rural areas, or who are younger or older than this study's respondent group. Future research should be conducted with more heterogeneous samples, including younger or older adults and individuals living in more rural areas in order to increase the representativeness and applicability of the findings obtained.

The snowball technique used in the present study and participation was voluntarily. It is possible that the sample was weighted toward populations persons with more liberal and more positive attitudes about sexuality and about sharing personal information about their relationships. Therefore, for future studies, it is suggested

that more heterogenous sample can be more helpful in order to gain more detailed understanding.

Moreover, the current study is based only on self-reported assessments. A repeat of the study that employed supplementary data collection techniques (i.e., diaries, observer ratings, etc.) would be valuable to help understand both actual and perceived satisfaction and behavior. Furthermore, the findings from the present study were based on a cross-sectional design. Though the findings would be considered beneficial in several respects, this perspective presupposes the relationships to be stable. On account of this, future investigations on communication, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction would benefit from the collection of longitudinal data.

5.3. Implications of the Results

The current findings may have treatment implications for individuals dealing with relationship satisfaction problems. It seems likely that sexual satisfaction and destructive communication patterns should be addressed in the assessment and treatment of relationship satisfaction of individuals. Developing a treatment approach for dealing with the negative effects of destructive communication patterns on relationship satisfaction, or understanding the compensatory effect of sexual satisfaction may be beneficial in dealing with problems.

The results of the current study lead to some suggestions for professionals in the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies. Especially in the

case of cohabiting individuals, there is no information in the Turkish literature. For that reason, professionals may benefit from this research by being informed about the situation of cohabitant individuals. Furthermore, being aware of the associations between communication, sexual and relationship satisfaction can be helpful to understand the characteristics of cohabitant individuals in the context of couple therapy.

Moreover, cohabiting individuals demonstrated some similarities and differences about relationship satisfaction with married individuals without children. Their communication patterns, sexual satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and the main effects of different communication patterns and sexual satisfaction on relationship satisfaction were similar for each group. However, the moderating role of sexual satisfaction on relationships between destructive communication and relationship satisfaction is of note. These similarities and differences might be helpful to understand different dynamics among these groups and to reflect these similarities and differences in therapy.

Additionally, some different associations were found among married individuals with and without children in the present study. Specifically, emotional-logical and aggressive communication patterns showed diverse connections on relationship satisfaction between these two groups. An emotional-logical communication pattern was significantly related to relationship satisfaction among married individuals with children but not among married individuals without children, whereas aggressive

communication patterns were significantly related to relationship satisfaction among married individuals without children but not for married individuals with children. Therefore, in developing a treatment approach, the existence of children might be a challenging factor.

5.4. Conclusion

The present study is the first to investigate the buffering or intensifying role of sexual satisfaction on different communication patterns while predicting relationship satisfaction among the three groups focused on. Moreover, in Turkey, it is the first study to include cohabiting individuals in its analysis. This study has attempted to contribute perspective on the situation of cohabiting individuals and on the moderating role of sexual satisfaction on the association between communication patterns and relationship satisfaction. It was found that married individuals with and without children and cohabiting individuals do not differ in their communication patterns, sexual satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. Moreover, it was indicated that the main effect of different communication patterns and sexual satisfaction are positively associated with relationship satisfaction for all groups discussed in the study. In addition, it was shown that sexual satisfaction moderates only the relationship between destructive communication and relationship satisfaction. In brief, the current study contributed to an understanding cohabitation in Turkey and of the moderating role of sexual satisfaction on the association between different

communication patterns and relationship satisfaction in different relationship statuses.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COMMUNICATION PATTERN QUESTIONNAIRE

(İLETİŞİM ŞEKİLLERİ ÖLÇEĞİ)

Sample Items from Female Form:

A. İLİŞKİYLE İLGİLİ BİR SORUN ORTAYA ÇIKTIĞINDA

1. Her ikimiz de sorunu tartışmaktan kaçınırız. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
2. Her ikimiz de sorunu tartışmaya çalışırız. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

B. İLİŞKİYLE İLGİLİ BİR SORUNU TARTIŞIRKEN:

7. Eşim bana bir konuda baskı yaparken, ben buna karşı
direnirim. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
- Ben eşime bir konuda baskı yaparken, eşim buna karşı
direnir. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

C. İLİŞKİYLE İLGİLİ BİR SORUNU TARTIŞTIKTAN SONRA:

5. Tartışmadan sonra her ikimiz de birbirimize özellikle
iyi davranmaya çalışırız. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Yazışma Adresi: Psikolog Berna Malkoç, Bilkent Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili Meslek
Yüksek Okulu, Ankara/Türkiye.

APPENDIX B

GOLOMBOK-RUST INVENTORY OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION

(GOLOMBOK-RUST CİNSEL DOYUM ÖLÇEĞİ)

Sample Items from the Male Form:

	Hiçbir		Çoğu	Her
	Zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Zaman Zaman
2. Eşinize, cinsel ilişkinizle ilgili olarak nelerden hoşlanıp nelerden hoşlanmadığınızı söyleyebilir misiniz?	(....)	(....)	(....)	(....) (....)
11. Eşinizle olan cinsel ilişkinizde sevgi ve şefkatin eksik olduğunu hisseder misiniz?	(....)	(....)	(....)	(....) (....)

Sample Items from the Female Form:

8. Cinsel ilişki sırasında doyuma (orgazma) ulaşır mısınız?	(....)	(....)	(....)	(....) (....)
13. Eşiniz sizinle sevişmek istediğinde rahatsız olur musunuz?	(....)	(....)	(....)	(....) (....)

Yazışma Adresi: Doç. Dr. Elif Kabakçı, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi, Ankara/Türkiye.

APPENDIX C
DYADIC ADJUSTMENT SCALE
(ÇİFT UYUM ÖLÇEĞİ)

Sample Items:

23. Eşinizi öper misiniz?

Her gün Hemen hemen Ara sıra Nadiren Hiçbir zaman
her gün

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24. Siz ve eşiniz ev dışı etkinliklerinizin ne kadarına birlikte katılırsınız?

Hepsine Çoğuna Bazılarına Çok azına Hiçbirine

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APPENDIX D
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM
(DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİ FORMU)

S1. Doğum yılınız?

.....

S2. Eğitim düzeyiniz?

- 1 ☐ İlkokul
2 ☐ Ortaokul
3 ☐ Lise
4 ☐ Üniversite – Yüksekokul
5 ☐ Lisansüstü

S3. Mesleğiniz?

.....

S4. İlişki şekliniz?

- 1 ☐ Evliyim (resmi nikâh)
2 ☐ Evliyim (imam nikâhı)
3 ☐ Birlikte yaşıyoruz (resmi nikâh veya imam nikâhı yok)

S5. Ne kadar zamandır evlisiniz/birlikte yaşıyorsunuz?

..... yıl..... ay

S6. Evliyseniz, řu anki evlilięiniz kaçınıcı evlilięiniz?

.....

S7. Daha önce aynı evi paylařtıęınız (ortak bir evinizin olduęu)bir iliřkiniz oldu mu?

1 ☐ Evet

2 ☐ Hayır

S8. Çocuęunuz var mı?

1 ☐ Evet (*sayısını yazınız.....*)

2 ☐ Hayır