

RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS AND MARITAL  
SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATOR ROLES OF RELATIONAL EQUITY AND  
APPRECIATION

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS AND MARITAL SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATOR ROLES OF RELATIONAL EQUITY AND APPRECIATION**

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The aim of the present study is to examine the influence of self-reported and perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, positivity), relational equity, felt and expressed appreciation on marital satisfaction. For this purpose, two structural models were tested. In the first model, felt appreciation and relational equity were investigated as mediators of the relationships between self-reported use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction. In the second model, relational equity and expressed appreciation were investigated as mediators of the relationships between perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction.

The sample of the study consisted of 602 married individuals. Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement, Relational Equity Scale, Appreciation in Relationships Scale, Relationship Assessment Scale, and Demographic Information Form were used to gather data. Each model was tested through the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

SEM results of the first model revealed that the indirect associations between self-reported use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction were provided by the mediator roles of (1) felt appreciation, and (2) felt appreciation and relational equity. On the other hand, SEM results of the second model indicated that the indirect associations between perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction were provided by the mediator roles of (1) relational equity, (2) expressed appreciation, and (3) relational equity and expressed appreciation.

Overall, the results supported the hypothesized models and findings were discussed in light of the relevant literature. Implications for theory, research and practice, and recommendations for further studies were presented.

**Keywords:** marital satisfaction, relationship maintenance behaviors, relational equity, appreciation, structural equation modeling

## ÖZ

### İLİŞKİ SÜRDÜRME DAVRANIŞLARI VE EVLİLİK DOYUMU: İLİŞKİSEL EŞİTLİK VE TAKDİRİN ARACI ROLÜ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı kişilerin kendilerinin ve eşlerinin kullandıklarını algıladıkları ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı, olumluluk), ilişkisel eşitliğin ve algılanan ve ifade edilen takdirin evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki etkisini araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla iki yapısal model test edilmiştir. Birinci modelde, algılanan takdirin ve ilişkisel eşitliğin kişilerin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkileri anlamadaki aracı rolü araştırılmıştır. İkinci modelde, ilişkisel eşitliğin ve ifade edilen takdirin kişilerin eşlerinin kullandıklarını algıladıkları ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkileri anlamadaki aracı rolü sınanmıştır.

Çalışmanın örneklemini 602 evli birey oluşturmuştur. İlişki Sürdürme Davranışları Ölçeği, İlişkisel Eşitlik Ölçeği, İlişkilerde Takdir Ölçeği, İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu veri toplama amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Her bir model Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) kullanılarak test edilmiştir.

Birinci modelin YEM sonuçlarına göre, kişilerin kendi kullandıkları ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki dolaylı ilişkiler (1) algılanan takdir ve (2)



algılanan takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik aracılığı ile sağlanmıştır. Öte yandan, ikinci modelin YEM sonuçları, kişilerin eşlerinin kullandıklarını algıladıkları ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki dolaylı ilişkilerin (1) ilişkisel eşitlik, (2) ifade edilen takdir ve (3) ilişkisel eşitlik ve ifade edilen takdir aracılığı ile sağlandığını göstermiştir.

Genel olarak, bulgular hipotez edilen modelleri doğrulamış ve sonuçlar ilgili alanyazın ışığında tartışılmıştır. Çalışmanın kuram, araştırma ve uygulama açısından sunduğu katkılar belirtilmiş ve ileride yapılacak araştırmalar için öneriler sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** evlilik doyumu, ilişki sürdürme davranışları, ilişkisel eşitlik, takdir, yapısal eşitlik modellemesi

To myself

&

To my family

&

To my husband and our marriage

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Humans are social beings and therefore interpersonal relationships have a fundamental role in individuals' lives. Undoubtedly, individuals' needs and motives to be in a relationship with others have been noticed for ages and accepted as universally valid. People establish various kinds of interpersonal relationships throughout their lives with anyone whom they are in a close interaction with such as friends, colleagues, family members, peers and so forth. These types of close relationships have been usually characterized by individuals as one of the most fulfilling and significant relationship in their lives and an influential determinant of their happiness and life quality (Berscheid & Regan, 2005; Perlman & Vangelisti, 2006).

As a particular form of close relationships, establishing intimate relationships (e.g., dating and married) is vitally important and desired for individuals which is embraced as being one of the most essential life tasks over the course of life (Erikson, 1968). People are inevitably driven to interact with others intimately to meet their needs to be belonged, bonded, committed, loved, and cared (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Cox, 2006; Miller, 2015). Despite the fact that intimate relationships could sometimes be costly for individuals and even cause detrimental outcomes (e.g., loss of a partner, partner aggression and violence), most of the people pursue the urge to be in a relationship with an intimate partner (Berscheid & Regan, 2005).

Marriage as a particular type of an intimate relationship is a first attempt that brings partners together in a way of being a family which contributes to the construction of societies (Kublay & Oktan, 2015). The merit of marital relationships in individuals' lives has prompted the researchers in a number of disciplines such as psychology, sociology and the other related fields to illuminate the question of how people would benefit from being in a marital relationship. Subsequently, an immense amount of theoretical and empirical evidence has been accumulated over the decades presenting that being connected to a marital partner as compared to being single, cohabiting, divorced, or widowed provides various advantages for individuals (e.g., physical, economical, mental, emotional) (Brown, 2004; Coombs, 1991; Frech & Williams, 2007; Marks & Lambert, 1998) that claimed to be universal (Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi, 2000). Marriage is also considered as an effective determinant of the fulfilling and satisfied life across cultures (Fowers, 1993; Ng, Loy, Gudmunson, & Cheong, 2009).

In decades, the decline in the number of marriages and increase in rates of divorce have been emerged across the globe as a challenge for marital union and sustaining healthy marriages. Despite the fact that statistics showed differences across countries, the crude divorce rate (the number of divorce/marriages during the year per 1000 people) was found to be high as compared to a few decades ago both in Europe and the United States (European Commission, 2015; Kreider & Ellis, 2011; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Family Database, 2016; United Nations Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2003). For instance, divorce rates have been reported to be usually high in OECD countries since 1970s (OECD Family Database, 2016) and almost half of the marriages has been reported to end in divorce in the United States in most of the studies (e.g., Harvey & Weber, 2004; Raley & Bumpass, 2003). Especially for western countries, the pattern in the escalation of divorce is derived from the drastic changes in the dynamics and formation of marriages such as increase in the mean age at first marriages, number of children born in outside marriage, and rise of

cohabitation as an alternative living arrangement (Cherlin, 2010; Huston & Melz, 2004; Miller, 2015).

What is the situation in Turkey? According to the marriage and divorce statistics of Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI), though there are some alterations year by year, there exists a consistent evidence for the decrease in rates of marriage and increase in divorce rates especially starting from 2008 up until 2015. Remarkably, the recent TSI statistics showed that there exists a slight decrease in divorce rates in 2016 while the rate of marriage is still in decrease. It should also be noted that Turkey is still represented as a country with lower crude divorce rates in comparison to the other westernized countries (OECD Family Database, 2016).

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that the trend of increase in divorce does not prevent people to cherish the union of marriage, get married, and desire to be in a satisfying marriage. For instance, it was presented in the marriage and divorce rate report that four-in-five people were found to get married for the first time in their lives among the OECD countries (OECD Family Database, 2016). Scott, Schelar, Manlove, and Cui (2009) also displayed in their research brief that young adults in the U.S are high in expectation to get marry over the course of their lives and consider marriage as an important and positive union regardless of gender, race, and ethnicity. The attributed value to marriage is also highly valid for individuals in Turkey. Recent studies conducted with various university student samples in Turkey revealed that students have positive attitudes and feelings towards marriage and have faith in getting married in the future (e.g., Günay & Bener, 2013; Karabacak & Çiftçi, 2017; Koçyiğit Özyiğit, 2017). Accordingly, Turkey is ranked among the European countries with higher crude marriage rates (Eurostat, 2017). Consequently, it is an obvious fact on a global scale that marriage is still dignified and perceived to be a worthwhile union that people desire to be a member of it.



It is surely beyond doubt that divorce is an undesired outcome of getting married and marriages are ideally expected to be lifelong commitments to be continued with high levels of satisfaction; however, marital satisfaction, as a widely used indicator of marital quality, may deteriorate depending on many reasons (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). It is also known that unhappy and dissatisfied marriages create detrimental and disappointing outcomes for partners such as depression, infidelity, and divorce (e.g., Mashek & Aron, 2004; Previti & Amato, 2004; Whisman & Bruce, 1999); on the other hand, happy and satisfied marriages entail various kinds of benefits for individuals (e.g., higher well-being, Glenn & Weaver, 1981 and life satisfaction, Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007), for parent-child relationships (Erel & Burman, 1995), and ultimately for societies (Polatci, 2015). Marital satisfaction has also a positive influence on individuals' commitment level which make them desire to continue their marriages (Rusbult, Olsen, Davis, & Hannon, 2001). Hence, researchers have never stopped going after the simple questions of 'what constitutes satisfying marriages' and 'how marital satisfaction could be promoted' for ages which are complex to answer. Indeed, the research on marriage dates back to 1930s with an interest of understanding the role of psychological factors on marital happiness (e.g., Terman, Bittenwieser, Ferguson, Johnson, & Wilson, 1938), has become systematic since 1970s, and accelerated in the 1990s with the ongoing focus on determining the associates of marital satisfaction (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000).

Not surprisingly, the research published until today has provided extensive amount of information about the indicators of marital satisfaction which range in a wide variety from demographic characteristics to contextual factors (Regan, 2011). Fincham and Beach (2010), in their decade review, concluded that the focus of marital research has undergone changes over the years and some variables have currently been focused and started to be examined inclusively (e.g., strengths of marriage, diversity) while some others (e.g., health outcomes) have kept their significance in understanding marital quality.

As part of the accumulated research investigating the contributors of marital satisfaction, considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to explore relationship maintenance behaviors with the underlying assumption that relationships are not self-maintaining but require partners' engagement in some efforts and activities (Canary & Stafford, 1994; Duck, 1988). People desire to maintain their close relationships including friendships, family members, relationships in work settings, and even their unwanted relations (Canary & Dainton, 2003). Therefore, it is clear to comprehend the researchers' close interest to find out how some marriages are maintained while others are falling apart and how the engagement in relationship maintenance behaviors help couples to feel satisfied in their marriages. Based on the literature, maintenance in the present study was recognized as a state that marital relationships are not either in initiation or termination stage (Dindia, 1994). Moreover, relationship maintenance was accepted as a process (Canary & Stafford, 1994) in which people engage in maintenance behaviors to preserve their relationships and promote desired relationship characteristics (marital satisfaction).

Existing theoretical perspectives and numerous typologies have identified certain types of behaviors that have a unique influence on romantic relationship maintenance (e.g., Ayres, 1983; Bell, Daly, & Gonzalez, 1987; Dindia & Baxter, 1987; Rusbult et al., 2001). In the present study, the researcher preferred to use the most recognized relationship maintenance typology in the literature which was developed by Stafford and Canary in 1991. The study on relationship maintenance typology was grounded on social exchange theory, in particular, on the principles of *equity framework* which has also been cited as the most influential theoretical perspective on relationship maintenance (Hatfield [formerly Walster], Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne, & Hay, 1985; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978b). Moreover, this typology has been advanced by the researchers over the years (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford, Dainton, & Haas, 2000; Stafford, 2011). Across the revisions and adaptations in years, the typology yielded in consistent behaviors of

relationship maintenance: openness (relationship-talk and self-disclosure), assurances, sharing tasks, positivity (global positivity and understanding), and social networks. Along with the individuals' own use of maintenance behaviors, individuals' perceptions of their partners' use of maintenance behaviors have come to the forefront in the literature and both have been demonstrated to be important and unique predictors of marital satisfaction (e.g., Dainton, Stafford, & Canary, 1994; Johnson, 2009; Stafford, 2011; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2008). The associations between the use of relationship maintenance behaviors and satisfaction were found to vary across the type of maintenance behaviors and whether those behaviors are self-reported or perceived from a partner (Lee, 2006; Ogolsky & Bowers, 2013). For instance, across a number of studies, positivity and assurances behaviors, either used or perceived, were mostly found to be strong, positive, and consistent predictors of satisfaction (Dindia & Emmers-Sommer, 2006; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2001); on the other hand, the influence of openness behavior on satisfaction was found to be less consistent, and researchers were suggested to reach conclusion carefully about its role on satisfaction (Stafford, 2003; Dainton, 2000).

According to the equity theory which formed a basis to relationship maintenance research, partners in intimate relationships exchange variety of rewards and costs with each other and perceptions of relational equity is determined when the ratio of partners' rewards to cost is proportionate (Hatfield, Utne, & Traupmann, 1979; Sprecher & Schwartz, 1994). In the adaptation of principles of equity theory, self-reported use of relationship maintenance behaviors are considered as individuals' costs for themselves whereas perceived partners' use of relationship maintenance behaviors are considered as rewards for themselves (Canary & Stafford, 1992). In the application of equity theory perspective on relationship maintenance research, perceptions of equity has been initially proposed to function as an antecedent of individuals' and their partners' engagement in maintenance behaviors (Canary & Stafford, 1994). Meanwhile, considering the function of maintenance behaviors to ensure desired relationship characteristics (Canary & Stafford, 2001; Dainton &

Zelley, 2006), perceptions of equity as a desired relational state has also been proposed to be promoted by engagement in maintenance behaviors (self-reported and perceived). In other words, judgement of equity has been suggested to work both as a filter and outcome of engagement in relationship maintenance behaviors. Research implementing equity theory to the exploration of relationship maintenance has provided a great deal of empirical evidence in two main ways: (1) perceived equity is a significant predictor of individuals' self-reported and perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors, and (2) people are more inclined to feel satisfied in the existence of greater perceptions of equity in their relationships (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2016; Perry, 2004; Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990; Weigel, Bennett, & Ballard-Reisch, 2006). On the other hand, the indicator role of the use of maintenance behaviors in prediction of perceived equity has been in progress to be explored.

Another subject matter that has been paid attention to understand its unique contribution to romantic relationship satisfaction is *appreciation*. Appreciation has been articulated as a desirable and efficacious element of satisfying relationships both in samples of newlyweds and long-term marriages (Schramm, Marshall, Harris, & Lee, 2005; Sharlin, 1996). Appreciation involves two related dimensions: feelings of being appreciated from a partner and appreciative feelings towards a partner. In other words, people in intimate relationships desire and need to feel appreciated, valued, and cared by their intimate partners (i.e., felt appreciation) and also show care, concern, and appreciativeness towards their partners (i.e., expressed appreciation) (Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis, & Keltner, 2012). Despite of the recent focus on the exploration of appreciation within the context of romantic, particularly in marital relationships, the preceding theories and available empirical studies have provided consistent evidence for the protective role of appreciation (felt and expressed) both for the recipients and expressers, and clarified that appreciation is effective in promoting relationship maintenance, increasing partners' engagement in prosocial behaviors, and improving satisfaction (Algoe,

Gable, & Maisel, 2010; Gordon et al., 2012; Gordon, Arnette, & Smith, 2011; Joel, Gordon, Impett, MacDonald, & Keltner, 2013; Lambert & Fincham, 2011).

Moreover, existing research has demonstrated that the link between appreciation and relationship maintenance is bidirectional, and partners' use of relationship maintenance behaviors also function as a driving force for the experiences of appreciation (e.g., Kubacka, Finkenauer, Rusbult, & Keijsers, 2011). In a word, recent but growing body of literature has highlighted the dual function of appreciation in motivating to and generating from the experiences of higher relationship/marital satisfaction and maintenance of relationships/marriages (Gordon et al., 2012; Kubacka et al., 2011). Furthermore, still scarce and mostly conducted with only-wife samples, there exist studies in which appreciation has also been linked to (in)equity perceptions of marital partners. In those studies, it was found that individuals who felt appreciated by their partners were more likely to perceive their relationships to be equitable and individuals' feelings of being appreciated temper the negative influence of perceived inequity in engagement of costly behaviors (e.g., task sharing, household labor, and sacrifices) on relationship satisfaction (e.g., Berger & Janoff-Bulman, 2006; Blair & Johnson, 1992; Hawkins, Marshall, & Meiners, 1995; Klumb, Hoppmann, & Staats, 2006). Specifically, it seems clear that experiences of felt appreciation has an impact to buffer relationships in the existence of individuals' experiences of negative relational outcomes (i.e., inequity and a sense on imbalance between the distribution of rewards and costs). However, the available literature has not provided evidence yet for the potential associations between expressed appreciation and perception of (in)equity. Eventually, the research regarding the role of appreciation in romantic relationships has moved beyond its infancy; nonetheless, it appears important to conduct further research to achieve consensus on its relation with positive and/or negative relational outcomes, and the use of different types of maintenance behaviors in dating and/or marital relationships both in western and non-western cultures.

Close inspection of Turkish literature on relationship maintenance, equity, and appreciation revealed that studies in Turkey have remained limited in number and scope. A few studies have examined the specific contributions of use of maintenance behaviors in predicting marital satisfaction (e.g., Torun, 2005); nevertheless, how the theoretical framework of equity functions and whether the concepts of relational equity as well as appreciation become influential in the context of romantic relationships have remain unanswered. Hence, the present study sought to extend the literature on maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciation by testing theory-driven models interrelating maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction, and specifying appreciation and relational equity perceptions as mediators of these associations. More specifically, it was mainly proposed that partners' own efforts (costs for individuals) that they engaged in to maintain their relationships would be effective on marital satisfaction through the feelings of being appreciated and perceptions of relational equity. Concordantly, the influence of perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (rewards for individuals) on individuals' marital satisfaction would be cultivated through the perceptions of relational equity and appreciative feelings towards a partner.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of the study was to investigate marital satisfaction of individuals by examining the relationships among self-reported and perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (i.e., openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), relational equity, and appreciation in relationships (i.e., feelings of being appreciated and appreciative feelings). In line with this purpose, two models were tested. In the first model, the relationships among self-reported maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), feelings of being appreciated, and relational equity in explaining marital satisfaction were examined. In the second model, the relationships among perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), relational equity, and appreciative feelings in explaining marital satisfaction were explored. Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 depict the

conceptual structure of the proposed models, respectively. It should be noted that only the maintenance behaviors of openness, sharing tasks, and positivity were investigated within the scope of current study based on the generated factor structure of the relationship maintenance behaviors measurement (a more detailed explanation of the factor structure of Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement was provided in the method chapter 3.3.1.4.2.1.). Following are the research questions generated for each model:

Research questions of the first model:

RQ1. How do married individuals' self-reported use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), feelings of being appreciated, and perceived relational equity relate to marital satisfaction?

RQ1.1. How does self-reported use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity) relate to marital satisfaction?

RQ1.2. How do feelings of being appreciated and perceived relational equity relate to marital satisfaction?

RQ1.3. How do feelings of being appreciated relate to perceived relational equity?

RQ1.4. How do feelings of being appreciated and perceived relational equity indirectly relate to the potential effects of self-reported use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity) on marital satisfaction?

Research questions of the second model:

RQ2. How do perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), perceptions of relational equity, and appreciative feelings relate to marital satisfaction?

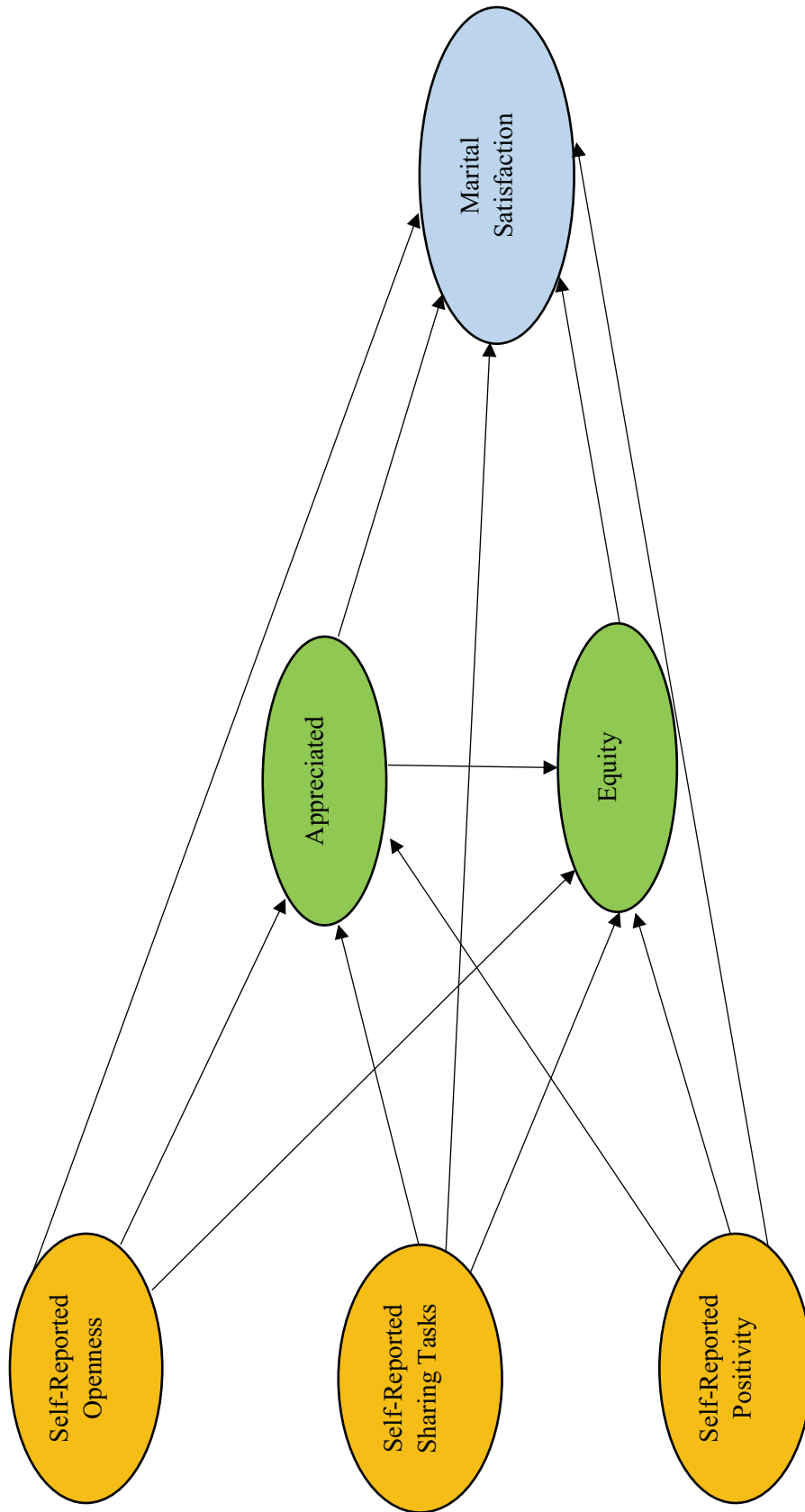
RQ2.1. How does perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity) relate to marital satisfaction?

RQ2.2. How do perceived relational equity and appreciative feelings relate to marital satisfaction?

RQ2.3. How does perceived relational equity relate to appreciative feelings?

RQ2.4. How do perceived relational equity and appreciative feelings indirectly relate to the potential effects of perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity) on marital satisfaction?





*Figure 1.1* The conceptual diagram of the first hypothesized model

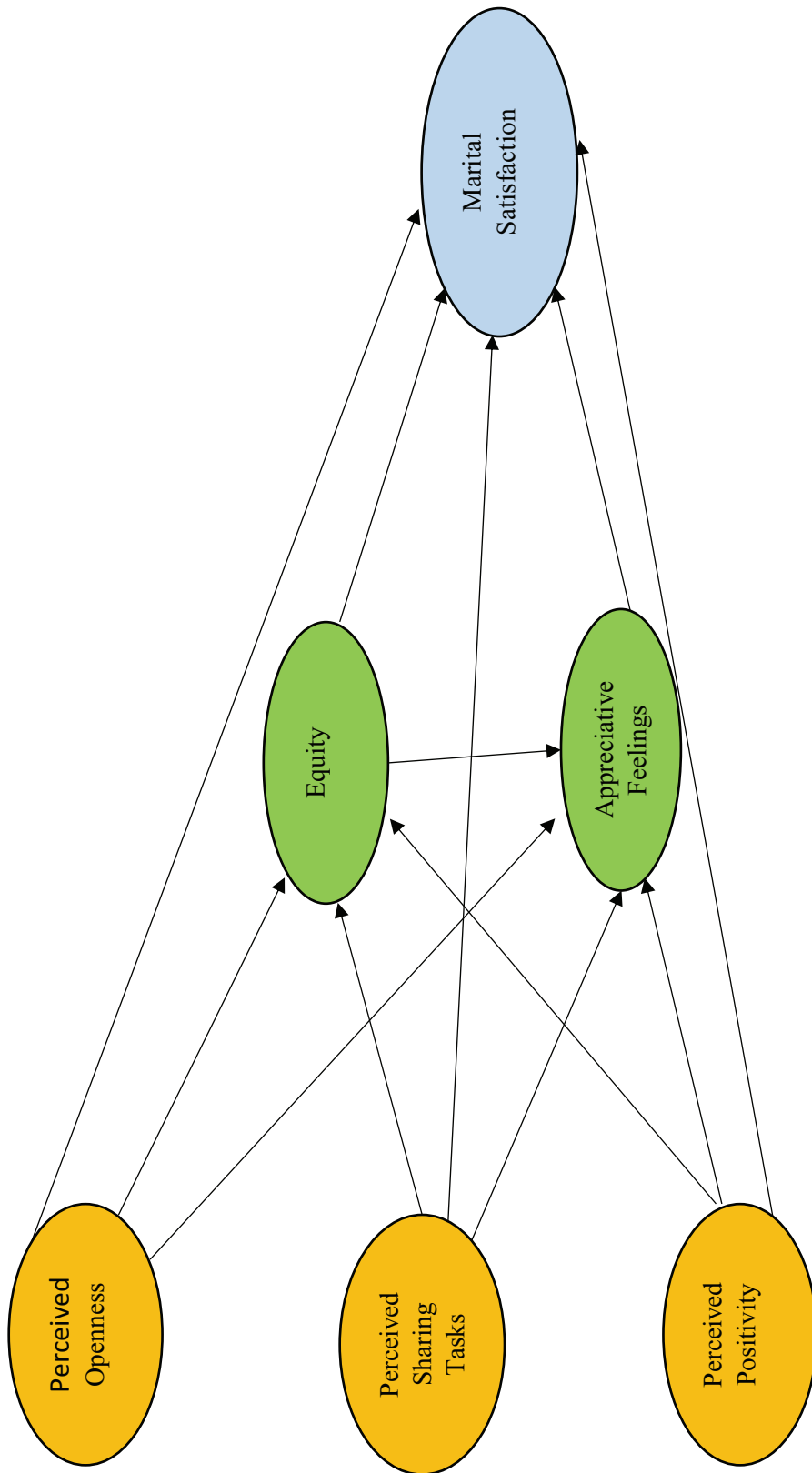


Figure 1.2 The conceptual diagram of the second hypothesized model

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

Being one of the studies that aims to understand the determinants of marital satisfaction, current study contributes to the existing literature in some respects.

Considering the whole body of knowledge thoroughly and being inspired from the gap in the literature, this study provided a novel look at the role of relational equity in understanding the link between use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction. In other words, previous studies have focused on the role of relational equity as a motivator of self-reported and perceived partner use of maintenance behaviors (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2016; Jackson, 2010; Stafford & Canary, 2006; Yum & Canary, 2009). Current study was an attempt to seek antecedent role of maintenance behaviors on relational equity by considering a long-debated issue and recommendations of researchers in the literature (Dainton, 2011; Stafford, 2003). Explicitly, testing equity theory principles in ongoing relationships from a new perspective would provide supplementary evidence regarding the function of perceived relational equity as a mediator between the use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction.

In the present study, the question of “what other influential variables would help to better understand marital satisfaction in relation to self-reported and perceived partner use of maintenance behaviors and perceived relational equity” would become clear with the inclusion of appreciation concept. Taking into account the feelings of being appreciated as a positive outcome that individuals could benefit from and the appreciative feelings as a positive input that individuals offer to their partners, the exploration of appreciation would provide additional information for the application of equity theory perspective on maintenance and satisfaction in marital relationships. More importantly, through the test of two structural models, the joint effects of the study variables of maintenance behaviors, perceived relational equity, and appreciation were explored simultaneously in examining marital satisfaction. Thus, along with the direct effects of each study variable on

marital satisfaction, the indirect effects via the perceived relational equity and appreciation (felt and expressed) were investigated which provided a further and deeper information to the existing literature.

Moreover, in consideration of the fact that the associations among appreciation, maintenance, and relational outcomes (e.g., satisfaction) have yet been examined in a few studies comprised of married individuals mostly from the U.S (e.g., Gordon et al., 2012; Gordon et al., 2011; Kubacka et al., 2011) and rarely in other countries such as Taiwan (e.g., Li & Chen, 2002), the present study would also extended the empirical research on appreciation/gratitude via its focus on this concept in a sample of married individuals from a different culture. The positive contribution of appreciation to individuals' lives and quality of their relationships has been discussed to be universal and valid for ages (Emmons & McCullough, 2003); however, considering the literature in Turkey on appreciation has not been established yet, the function of the appreciated and appreciative feelings remains speculative on romantic relationships in samples from Turkey. This study would bring a new perspective to the relationship literature in Turkey by introducing the concept of appreciation for the first time to be included in the agenda of further research on romantic, particularly marital relationships.

It should be noted that the findings obtained in this study are noteworthy as a result of exploring both self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors, and both feelings of being appreciated and appreciative feelings. More precisely, taking advantage of the prior literature which emphasized the differences that originate from the self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors in predicting relational characteristics (Dindia, 2003; Ogolsky & Bowers, 2013), the researcher has due consideration to find out the unique function of the maintenance behaviors when they used by the individuals or perceived to be used by their partners. Furthermore, most of the previous studies have focused on examining only one side of the appreciation - the extent to which partners feel appreciation towards their partners, and been criticized to delimit the potential role of appreciation on

relational outcomes in romantic relationships. Evidence also demonstrated that both appreciative feelings and feelings of being appreciated were effective in advancing relational outcomes and maintenance (Gordon et al., 2012). Therefore, this study aimed to eliminate this limitation and extend the literature by studying the separate roles of both felt and expressed appreciation. In addition, earlier research has examined the associations between felt appreciation and sense of equity merely in specific to division of labor and child-care between partners (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Hawkins et al., 1995). Hence, present study would enlarge the scope of relational equity research by investigating the associations among felt appreciation, expressed appreciation, and relational equity considering not only sharing tasks but also including other types of maintenance behaviors. Overall, a closer look at each of these concepts from a theoretical perspective of equity will obviously fill the lacuna in romantic relationship literature in Turkey and offer some insights into the international literature as revealing how the links among the given variables may alter in a sample married individuals from Turkey.

Despite the fact that it was not stated as one of the purposes of study, current research represents the first attempt to adapt the relational equity and appreciation measures into Turkish and examine the psychometric properties of them. Furthermore, though the earliest version of the Relationship Maintenance Strategies Measurement (Stafford & Canary, 1991) was adapted into Turkish earlier by Torun (2005), the adaptation study was carried out with a very limited sample (forty-four married individuals) and has never been confirmed in further studies. What's more, the original measure developed by Stafford and Canary (1991) has lately been revised by Stafford (2011). Therefore, the latest revised version of the Relationship Maintenance Behavior Measurement was adapted into Turkish in the present study. Consequently, it was expected that this study would take the first but leading step in stimulating scholars who would like to investigate these constructs with highly educated, urban married samples from Turkey in future and/or conduct cross-cultural studies by using the psychometrically tested measures in current study.

Lastly, the unique outcomes obtained in this study would suggest some clinical and policy implications regarding the role of maintenance behaviors, equity, and appreciation in marital satisfaction. More precisely, mental health practitioners and policy makers might utilize the results of current study in designing relationship/marriage intervention programs, raising the awareness of public by targeting specific maintenance behaviors and emphasizing the role of equity and appreciation to escalate relationship satisfaction and stability.

#### **1.4 Definition of Terms**

*Marital Satisfaction* is described as “the subjective and global perception of happiness and contentment with one’s marriage” (Woszidlo & Segrin, 2013, pp. 525-526).

*Relationship Maintenance* refers to the relationships “between their initial development and their possible decline” (Duck, 1994, p. 45).

*Relationship Maintenance Behaviors* reflect an umbrella term to refer to activities, efforts, actions, and strategies that people use to maintain their relationships/marriages and keep their relationships/marriages in a desired state (Canary & Stafford, 1994; Dindia, 1994).

*Openness (Self-Disclosure and Relationship Talk)* refers to partners’ self-disclosure about their own thoughts, feelings, fears, and talks about the relationship (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford, 2011).

*Sharing Tasks* is defined to participate in common tasks including household responsibilities (Canary & Stafford, 1994; Stafford, 2011).

*Positivity (Global Positivity and Understanding)* involves acting in a positive, cheerful ways and being understanding, forgiving, and uncritical towards a partner (Stafford, 2011).

*Relational Equity* indicates “the degree to which individuals feel that, all things considered, the outcomes they derive from their relationships are proportionate to their investments” (Sabatelli & Cecil-Pigo, 1985, p. 933).

*Appreciation* refers to “general feelings of gratitude for whom a person is and for what a person does” (Gordon et al., 2012, p. 258).

*Feelings of Being Appreciated (Felt Appreciation)* emerge from “when individuals perceive that their partners see them as valuable” (Gordon et al., 2012, p. 258).

*Appreciative Feelings (Expressed Appreciation)* remind people that “they are in a relationship with a good partner, someone who is worth the investment” (Gordon et al., 2012, p. 258). People with appreciative feelings towards their partners see their partners as valuable.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter comprised of three main sections which present the review of the literature in line with the aim of the present study. The first section began with the definitions of marriage and marital satisfaction and followed by the conceptualizations of each study variable (relationship maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciation). In that section, the categorization of relationship maintenance behaviors and the theoretical perspective that the current study grounded on were presented. Then, the second section critically addressed the previous studies investigating marital satisfaction in relation to maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciation. In the final section, a brief summary of the literature review was presented.

#### **2.1 Marriage and Marital Satisfaction**

People explore many types of romantic relationships starting from the adolescence into the adulthood years. On the spectrum of relationships from casual dating to more serious bonds, marriage has been described as the most fundamental human relationship in one's entire life course, ensuring durable support and intimacy. Despite the increasing divorce rates across the globe (Adams, 2004; Toth & Kemmelmeier, 2009), the desire to pursue lifelong committed marriages has still been prominent and universal across in almost all countries (Halford, 2011).

Marriage has been described differently in various contexts and communities. However, across definitions, marriage has mostly been understood as a social union (Wardle, 2006). Strong, DeVault, and Cohen (2005) described marriage as “a legally recognized union between a man and woman in which they are united



sexually, cooperate economically, and may give birth to, adopt, or rear children” (p. 7). Among other interpretations, marriage has been defined from a revisionist point of view as “the union of two people (whether of the same sex or of opposite sexes) who commit to romantically loving and caring for each other and to sharing the burdens and benefits of domestic life” (Girgis, George, & Anderson, 2011, p. 246). Fowers (1993) identified marriage as the crucial relationship of the good and fulfilling life. Marriage is also likened to a contract which requiring a formal commitment (Cott, 2000; Stassen & Bates, 2010). Accordingly, Pinsof (2002) defined marriage as “mutual and voluntary commitment to a life-long monogamous partnership” (p. 137). Across cultures, marriage puts the family together as an important interpersonal relationship and social institution, is based on love and happiness, and contributes to the overall population health (Canel, 2013; Zhang & Hayward, 2006).

Social scientists have consistently emphasized the positive impacts of marriage and discussed the notion that marriage provides a greater degree of economic, physical, psychosocial, and emotional support. Considerable support has demonstrated that compared to those who are unmarried, married individuals generally have better physical and mental health (Horwitz, White, & Howell-White, 1996), psychological well-being (Kamp Dush & Amato, 2005; Proulx et al., 2007; Wood, Rhodes, & Whelan, 1989), lower risk of mortality (Hu & Goldman, 1990; Rogers, 1995), and global happiness and satisfaction (Glenn & Weaver, 1981; Stack & Eshleman, 1998). Despite the nature of marriages has changed over the years, the positive impact of marriage on general levels of happiness has remained the same for individuals (Regan, 2011). Another perspective holds that individuals are married because they are positive and happy, but rather that they feel happy because they are in a marital relationship (Myers, 2004). The benefits provided by marriage and influence of marital status on the happiness and well-being of individuals have also been replicated across different samples and cultural contexts. For instance, in their comprehensive study, Stack and Eshleman (1998) investigated whether the

relationship between marital status and happiness is valid across 17 industrialized nations and they found that this relationship was consistently significant and positive across nations. In another study, Diener et al. (2000) examined the relation between marital status and subjective well-being across diverse samples from 42 nations and found this relation to be fairly universal, and not differentiated by gender.

Not only did a marital status by itself resulted in positive outcomes but also marital satisfaction (marital quality in general manner) is strongly related to overall happiness and life satisfaction of individuals, which contributes in turn to population health (Halford, 2011; Hünler & Gençöz, 2003; Huston & Melz, 2004). In other words, marital status has been interacted with the quality of the current marriage in explaining individuals' perceived happiness and satisfaction from life. Individuals in low-quality marriages do not experience the positive impact of marriage on their psychological well-being and physical health same as the individuals in high-quality marriages (Hawkins & Booth, 2005). In low-quality marriages, the impact of marital status even turns into negative and lower levels of marital quality might result in marital dissolution and divorce (Glenn & Weaver, 1981). Due to these reasons, the interest of research on marital satisfaction has emerged and remained central for many decades in the field of marriage and family. Additionally, increasing rates of divorce on a global scale has directed researchers to explore the suspects of marital dissatisfaction as well as factors contributing to marital success (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Glenn, 1998). Moreover, marital satisfaction has also attracted the attention of researchers whose purpose is to develop intervention and prevention programs to improve marital satisfaction and avert marital distress and lower divorce rate (e.g., Halford, 2011; Larson, 2004; Markman, Renick, Floyd, Stanley, & Clements, 1993). The literature on marital satisfaction that has accumulated up to the present time is immense and there is still an ongoing interest in understanding marital quality and its associates (Jose & Alfons, 2007).

How is marital satisfaction conceptualized and assessed in the literature over the years? Marital satisfaction is a complex and multi-dimensional concept which inclines lack of consensus in its conceptualization. Glenn (1990) reviewed the literature on marital quality and noted the confusion in regard to the conceptualization and measurement of marital quality. In his review, two perspectives in approaching marital quality were mentioned. In the first approach (intrapersonal), marital quality is evaluated based on the separate feelings of spouses about their marriage. In the second approach (interpersonal), the researchers inclined to view marital quality as a relational characteristic between partners. For that matter, the confusion in its conceptualization gave rise to the use of various terms in the literature to correspond marital quality as an overarching concept such as satisfaction, success, adjustment, and happiness (Fincham & Rogge, 2010). These terms have often been used interchangeably; however, in current study, the term of *marital satisfaction* (or relationship satisfaction) was preferred to use. The term of marital satisfaction has been mostly approached from an intrapersonal perspective which is simply based on individuals' personal and subjective judgments about their marriage (Bahr, Chappell, & Leigh, 1983; Fincham & Rogge, 2010). Accordingly, marital satisfaction has been generally defined as “an individual’s attitude toward the partner and the relationship, typically in terms of the perceived quality of the relationship” (Dainton et al., 1994, p. 90). In another definition, marital satisfaction is described as “attitudes, feelings, and self-report about one's marriage” (Boland & Follingstad, 1987, p. 287). It also briefly refers to individuals’ expectations and needs met in their marriages (Sperry, 2010).

Differences in the meanings attributed to marital satisfaction has also changed the way researchers have assessed marital satisfaction and/or quality. Numerous instruments have been developed to assess marital satisfaction over the years which varied from 3-item instruments (e.g., Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, Schumm et al., 1986) to 280-item inventories (e.g., Marital Satisfaction Inventory, Snyder,

1979). At the early stages of the research on marital quality, the researchers tended to measure marital quality by bringing correlated relational dimensions together (e.g., Snyder, 1979; Spanier, 1976); subsequently, the researchers focused their attention on global individual assessments of marriage (Bradbury et al., 2000; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). In regard to global assessments of marital quality, researchers have pointed out that an individual who is identified as satisfied in their marriages should not be identified as dissatisfied; in other words, spouses can experience both the positive and negative sides of the continuum at the same time (Fincham & Linfield, 1997; Huston & Melz, 2004). This 2-dimensional construct had also been reflected in the measurement of marital quality including the positive and negative evaluations (Fincham & Linfield, 1997), and distinguishing the unique factors of satisfying and dissatisfying marriages becomes important (Bradbury et al., 2000). Researchers have also developed generic measurements to assess relationship satisfaction that can be applied to dating couples, same-sex couples, cohabiting couples as well as married couples (e.g., Hendrick, 1988; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998). Both global and unidimensional and multidimensional measurements of marital quality have still been preferred to catalyze the research on investigating the marital satisfaction and its associates. Further, marital satisfaction has mostly been assessed using self-report measurements (Fincham & Rogge, 2010; Funk & Rogge, 2007). Moreover, conceptualizations and assessments of marital satisfaction mostly based on spouses' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards marriage at one point in time; however, the researchers have pointed out the necessity to consider the variability in the judgment of marital satisfaction and have begun to implement longitudinal studies and collect multiple waves of data to evaluate changes in marital satisfaction since 1990s until today (e.g., Karney & Bradbury, 1995; McNulty, Wenner, & Fisher, 2016).

Over the past eighty years, a vast majority of research has been conducted to understand underlying factors of marital satisfaction. Although an excessive number of variables have accumulated in predicting marital satisfaction, it is

possible to group those in three main categories: personal (e.g., demographic variables, gender role, personality characteristics, and depression and problems in mental and physical health), relational (e.g., marital length, communication skills and communicative patterns, sexual satisfaction, division of labor and role strain, and conflict-handling behaviors), and environmental/contextual (e.g., existence of children, experiences of difficulties and stressful events, religiousness, and cultural factors) (Berscheid & Regan, 2005; Regan, 2011). Across studies, research on marriage and marital quality outcomes has been conducted on a large scale from newlyweds (e.g., Gottman, Coan, Carrere, & Swanson, 1998; Lavner & Bradbury, 2010) to long-term married individuals who have been married for 20 years or more (e.g., Duba, Hughey, Lara, & Burke, 2012; Finkel & Hansen, 1992; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1993) as well as re-marrieds (Mirecki, Chou, Elliott, & Schneider, 2013; Vemer, Coleman, Ganong, & Cooper, 1989). Meanwhile, the research toward understanding the determinants and consequences of marital satisfaction has been expanded across the globe. Thus, the various impacting factors discussed above in understanding marital satisfaction have also been a subject of marital research in various cultural contexts and countries including Turkey (e.g., Chi et al., 2011; Curun & Çapkın, 2014; Çağ & Yıldırım, 2013; Lincoln & Chae, 2010; Madathil & Benshoff, 2008; Rehman & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2007; Tezer, 1994; Wong & Goodwin, 2009).

It goes without saying that marital satisfaction has become an object of curiosity on a global scale and relationship scholars have never become disinterested to enlighten the factors that promote satisfied relationships. It is also a known fact that although individuals enter into marriage with higher expectations of marital satisfaction, they usually face challenges to keep their marriages at a specified state or level of satisfaction. Why some relationships stay standing a long period of time while others do not succeed and what partners do to maintain their marriages and keep it in a satisfactory condition have remained the most frequently asked questions to understand what does work and does not work for couples (Dindia &

Emmers-Sommer, 2006; Wenzel & Harvey, 2001). It is evident that every close relationship requires maintenance work (Duck, 1988), thereby scholars have steered their specific attention to investigate *relationship maintenance* and conducted research in order to reveal how maintenance is related to marital satisfaction through the exploration of the determinants and consequences of relationship maintenance. Hence, relationship maintenance process takes its place in the research on marriage and marital satisfaction since 1980s up to the present.

In current study, the variables of relational equity and appreciation in relationships have been given the focus considering their influential role in understanding the associations between relationship maintenance and marital satisfaction. Before moving on to review of available research in the literature regarding the study variables in relation to marital satisfaction, a primary outlook on each study variable in the model in line with the purpose of the study was presented in the following three sections. First, how relationship maintenance has been conceptualized, measured, and categorized were explicitly presented. Next, the perspective of equity theory that current study is grounded on was clarified along with the referral to relational equity dimension. Lastly, the other study variable of appreciation in relationships was addressed. In the subsequent sections, findings of a group of studies investigating the associations between marital satisfaction and study variables (maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciation in relationships) were illuminated in line with the aim of current study.

### **2.1.1 Relationship Maintenance and Typologies of Maintenance Behaviors**

At the beginning of 2000s, the research on relationship maintenance was still considered scarce (Perlman, 2001); however, in parallel with the increasing divorce rates, the focus on relationship maintenance gained prominence and a considerable amount of literature on maintenance has accumulated in the last decades. The growing body of literature has been surrounded by the conceptualization of

relationship maintenance, categorization of relationship maintenance behaviors in typologies, and investigation of the associations between maintenance behaviors and relational characteristics which were summarized and discussed hereinafter.

In the regarding literature, it is possible to find several definitions of relationship maintenance proposed by several researchers. Maintained relationships were simply defined as “relationships that are beyond the initiation stage and have not reached a dissolution phase” (Dainton, 1994, p. 1). Duck (1994) referred to relationship maintenance “as a shared meaning system” (p. 45). Baxter and Simon (1993) conceptualized relationship maintenance from the dialectical perspective as “the process of sustaining a relationship’s quality, particularly the satisfaction levels of partners, in the presence of ongoing dialectical flux” (p. 226). From another perspective, Dindia and Baxter (1987) proposed the overlap between relationship maintenance and repair, and indicated that relationship maintenance involves “an effort to continue the present relational state without anything necessarily having gone wrong” (p. 144). Relationship maintenance has also been defined as “adaptability to relationship fluctuations over time” (Ogolsky, 2009, p. 100). By and large, Dindia and Canary (1993) discussed the common definitions of relationship maintenance including “(1) keeping a relationship in existence, (2) keeping a relationship in a specified state or condition, (3) keeping a relationship in satisfactory condition, and (4) keeping a relationship in repair” (p. 163). The first definition refers keeping a relationship continued; specified state or condition in the second definition corresponds the main relational qualities of commitment, liking, and intimacy; the third definition refers maintaining relationship satisfaction for both partners to be able to provide maintenance; and the last definition implies to prevent relationships to require repairment as well as repair a relationship when it is needed (Dindia & Canary, 1993; Dindia & Emmers-Sommer, 2006). As it is understood from the different conceptualizations of relationship maintenance, scholars approached maintenance either as a *state* of existence or viewed maintenance as *processes* to keep the relationship within that state to keep its

continuance (Stafford, 1994). On the other hand, some other scholars deduced that maintenance can be regarded both as a state and processes (behaviors and activities that people use) (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1994; Dindia, 2000).

Despite the various definitions of maintenance, none of the definitions seem to have priority over any other and have even been used interchangeably in the literature. Accordingly, researchers attempted to enlighten the question of what partners do to maintain their close relationships. Duck (1988) has also posed the question of “Do relationships fall apart unless they are maintained, or do they stay together unless they are taken apart?” and posited that individuals expend efforts and make decisions to stay in their relationships. To help illuminate these questions, researchers have concentrated on the mechanisms, efforts, strategies, and activities (behaviors in general terms) that are exhibited by individuals to maintain their relationships. Although it is certain that each individual in close relationships can use their own behaviors to maintain their relationships, the researchers have attempted to organize those behaviors; thereby they developed different typologies over years. In the following title, different typologies organizing maintenance behaviors were briefly discussed and the main focus was given to mostly used and cited typology which was primarily developed by Stafford and Canary (1991).

Considering the essence of communication to have and maintain relationships, communication scholars have made the earlier attempts to conduct research on relationship maintenance and proposed various communicative behaviors that people apply for maintaining their relationships (e.g., Davis, 1973; Kaplan, 1975/1976). Researchers subsequently began to study relationship strategies and aggregated these strategies into various typologies based on their conceptualization of relationship maintenance and the theoretical perspective that they grounded their study on. For instance, in the typology developed by Ayres (1983), 38 strategies were generated which yielded three types of strategies to maintain interpersonal relationship stability: avoidance, balance, and directness. Findings of the same study indicated that participants reported to use balance strategies the most followed



by avoidance and directedness strategies regardless of perceived partner relational intent and the stage of the relationship. Bell et al. (1987) developed another typology of affinity-maintenance strategies consisting of 28 strategies. Nine of these strategies became central among the others which were honesty, listening, openness, physical and verbal affection, physical attractiveness, self-concept, confirmation, sensitivity, and supportiveness. In another study, the typology of relationship maintenance and repair strategies was developed which yielded in 12 types of behaviors (Baxter & Dindia, 1990; Dindia & Baxter, 1987). In specific, the given categories corresponded to the general use of communication strategies, prosocial behaviors, metacommunication, seeking outside help, togetherness and so forth. Further, some strategies differentiated in terms of being maintenance and repair strategies. Applying interdependence theory, Rusbult, Olsen, Davis, and Hannon (2004) defined maintenance behaviors to be used to serve long-term and functioning relationships and grouped them into two categories based on the regarding literature: behavioral mechanisms which involve accommodative behaviors, willingness to sacrifice, and forgiveness of betrayal and cognitive mechanisms comprising cognitive interdependence, positive illusions, and derogation of alternatives (Rusbult et al., 2004).

Before moving forward with the typology of Stafford and Canary (1991), it should be noted that several researchers suggested their views about maintenance behaviors based on their research in addition to the typologies discussed above. Other conspicuous maintenance behaviors can be summarized as communication skills (Burleson & Denton, 2014), cognitive processes and attributions (Karney, McNulty, & Frye, 2001), emphatic accuracy (Simpson, Ickes, & Orina, 2001), minding (Harvey & Omarzu, 1997), proactive prosocial behaviors (Dainton & Stafford, 1993), constructive conflict behaviors (Gottman, 1994), and exit-voice-loyalty-neglect behaviors (Rusbult, Drigotas, & Verette, 1994). Furthermore, although relationship maintenance behaviors have mostly been considered and studied as prosocial behaviors, some researchers also attempted to identify and

classify negative maintenance behaviors in romantic relationships such as avoidance, infidelity, jealousy induction, spying, allow control and so forth (e.g., Dainton, 2008, 2015; Goodboy & Bolkan, 2011).

Obviously, the variety in maintenance behaviors and typologies bringing into those behaviors are pretty large. Notwithstanding this variety, one typology came into prominence and has been mostly used and cited among the others. For that reason, the current study has exclusively addressed this typology and review of literature has centered upon at the core of the regarding research. This typology of maintenance behaviors was initially developed by Stafford and Canary (1991) and formed and revised afterwards (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford et al., 2000; Stafford, 2011) and studied on the grounds of equity theory which will be discussed in the following section. Stafford and Canary described maintenance behaviors as “actions and activities used to sustain desired relational definitions” (Canary & Stafford, 1994, p. 5) and proposed a series of propositions in order to illuminate the conceptual framework of maintenance (Canary & Stafford, 1994). Each proposition was addressed throughout this section in respect to subject matter. Indeed, the first proposition leads the researchers to place great emphasis on the research of relationship maintenance in romantic relationships: “all relationships require maintenance behaviors or else they deteriorate” (Canary & Stafford, 1994, p. 7).

In the initial attempt to develop a typology of maintenance behaviors, Stafford and Canary (1991) conducted couple of studies and grouped the strategies of what marital partners do to maintain their marriages into 5 main factors: *positivity*, *openness*, *assurances*, *sharing tasks*, and *social networks*. This typology and instrument (Relationship Maintenance Strategies Measurement, RMSM) developed to assess each maintenance strategy of this typology (hereafter will be referred as five-factor typology) was revised and varied across studies over the years (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford et al., 2000). When the definitions of each maintenance behavior was reviewed, *positivity* is described as “interacting with the partner in a cheerful, optimistic, and uncritical manner” and *openness* as “directly

discussing the nature of the relationship and disclosing one's desires for the relationship" (Canary & Stafford, 1992, p. 243). According to Canary and Stafford (1994) positivity behaviors also involve "...being courteous and polite in conversation" and openness comprises "...setting aside times for talks about the relationship" (pp. 11-12). *Assurances* factor was defined as "including messages that stress one's continuation in the relationship" and *sharing tasks* as "attempting to maintain the relationship by performing one's responsibilities, such as household chores" (Canary & Stafford, 1992, p. 244). Lastly, *social networks* factor refers to "surrounding the relationship with valued friends and/or family who support the relationship, spending time with one another's family and friends, and similar activity" (Canary & Stafford, 1994, p. 12). Maintenance actions do not just include interactive behaviors which are based on partners' direct communication to each other such as positivity and openness but also includes noninteractive behaviors such as sharing tasks and social networks (*Proposition 5*, Canary & Stafford, 1994).

The RMSM has been applied in many studies in which the same five-factor structure was replicated and the use of consistent maintenance strategies among romantic couples was verified (e.g., Dainton & Aylor, 2002; Ragsdale, 1996). Dindia (2000) questioned why five-factor typology and the RMSM have been extensively cited and utilized in the field of relationship maintenance and noted several points. As stated by Dindia (2000), the close-ended nature of the RMSM provides convenience to researchers to understand how people maintain their relationships; five-factor typology was developed based on the most common definition of maintenance which is maintaining relationship satisfaction; and it involves several characteristics of relationship maintenance. Moreover, it should also be noted that RMSM allows to assess both self-enacted maintenance behaviors and perceived partner use of maintenance strategies through the change in wording of the items. Indeed, researchers have sustained their focus on both self-enacted and perceived maintenance activities in further studies.

Despite an extensive use of five-factor typology in the relationship maintenance literature over the past 25 years, researchers reconceptualized the five maintenance factors based on their revisions of the RMSM (e.g., Canary, Stafford, Hause, & Wallace, 1993; Stafford et al., 2000; Stafford, 2011). In the preliminary studies introduced above, relationship maintenance activities and the name of the measurement itself were entitled as strategies which are defined as intentionally engaged activities that individuals think about it, plan it and do it to sustain the relationship or continue the desired relational state (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Dindia, 1994). However, other researchers suggested an alternative perspective and argued that maintenance behaviors also involve routine and everyday acts and interactions of relational partners along with strategic planning (*Proposition 6*, Canary & Stafford, 1994). Routine behaviors generally require a lower level of consciousness and are not used intentionally for the purposes of maintenance; however serve to maintain a relationship (Dainton & Stafford, 1993). It is also possible to act same behavior both strategically and routinely. Accordingly, researchers have considered the role of routine interactions as well as strategic behaviors in their further efforts to identify and measure maintenance activities. For instance, in their revised measurement, Stafford et al. (2000) found a seven-factor typology including both strategic and routine use of maintenance behaviors. These seven factors comprised of advice-giving, conflict-management, assurances, positivity, openness, social networks, and sharing tasks. Positivity factor split into two factors in this study: positivity and conflict-management and similarly openness factor split into two factors: openness and advice-giving.

Recently, Stafford (2011) attempted to identify and improve the potential weaknesses of the frequently used RMSMs (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford et al., 2000) and suggested a revised and more viable measure of relationship maintenance – ‘Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement (RMBM)’. As it understood from the name of the measurement, Stafford (2011) preferred to use the term of *maintenance behaviors* as an overarching term by referring both

maintenance strategies and routine behaviors. In this study, Stafford (2011) conducted four studies with four different samples in order to (1) overcome item-construction problems and conceptual concerns of the previously developed RMSMs in a sample of 152 married individuals, (2) investigate whether those proposed RMSMs were still viable after item-construction and conceptual problems were eliminated in a sample of 486 married individuals, (3) test the viability of currently developed RMBM and investigate its predictive ability on relational construct compared to five-factor RMSM (Canary & Stafford, 1992) with 411 couples, and finally (4) confirm the current factor structure of RMBM with a new sample of 232 married couples. As a result of this study, Stafford (2011) concluded that none of the RMSMs were viable after the refinements of problems in item-construction and measurement while RMBM stayed viable. Additionally, the revised RMBM explained greater (although the difference was small) variance in relational outcomes (e.g., satisfaction) than the five-factor RMSM. Consequently, the factor structure of the revised RMBM composed of 28 items and seven factors: *positivity, assurances, relationship talk, self-disclosure, understanding, networks, and tasks*. Despite some of the items varied slightly, the factors of positivity, assurances, and tasks were conceptualized in the same way as Canary and Stafford (1992) described in their study (explained previously). Further, in the revised RMBM, relationship talk factor took the place of openness while another aspect emerged as conceptually similar but separate from relationship-talk: self-disclosure. Self-disclosure means “more global sharing of thoughts and feelings not focused on the relationship” (Stafford, 2011, p. 284). Similarly, positivity divided into two distinct factors: global positivity and understanding. Global positivity stayed same as its previous conceptualization while the term of understanding corresponds to the feelings of being understood by a partner as a broader term than conflict management.

Moreover, the content of social network factor was expanded to include both activities with friends and families and help and aid asked from family members.

These aspects also resulted in differences in predicting relational outcomes (Stafford, 2011). Finally, it should be noted that Stafford (2011) assessed perceived partner use of maintenance behaviors of married individuals or couples over their four studies.

Although variations in the instruments exist, the initial five factor typology of relationship maintenance behaviors were either confirmed or slightly changed across the studies. Contrary to Stafford's (2011) critique indicating that none of the RMSMs were viable but the revised RMBM was, Canary (2011) suggested to use the five factor RMSM as a guide for further studies which "should and have been adopted and expanded to examine different relational types and maintenance forms" (p. 310).

Overall, considering the major influence of Stafford and Canary's studies on relationship maintenance literature, it was important to review the development of and change in their maintenance typologies and instruments they developed and revised in time. It can be concluded that researchers could create typologies and measurements correspondingly by utilizing the previously determined maintenance behaviors or they could simply choose one of the present measurements in accordance with their purposes (Canary, 2011). Moreover, it has been already stated that individuals may engage in a range of behaviors to maintain their relationships and these behaviors may or may not correspond to maintenance behaviors detected in the studies of Stafford and Canary. However, researchers may prefer to study and measure maintenance behaviors either "in isolation or combination with other maintenance behaviors to variously affect the nature of the relationship" (*Proposition 4*, Canary & Stafford, 1994, p. 9). One should remember that each maintenance behavior may have different influences and functions to sustain a relationship and explain desired relational characteristics.

Lastly, it should also be noted that "maintenance activities vary according to the development and type of the relationships" (*Proposition 3*, Canary & Stafford,

1994, p. 8). For that purpose, maintenance behaviors have been examined in samples of romantic relationships varying from dating to marital relationships. Furthermore, although majority of the available research has focused on understanding maintenance processes in romantic relationships, researchers have also sought to examine relationship maintenance processes developed by Stafford and her colleagues in the same-sex individuals (e.g., Haas & Stafford, 2005; Ogolsky, 2009; Ogolsky & Gray, 2016); friendships (e.g., Dainton, Zelle, & Langan, 2003); parents and family relationships (e.g., Myers & Glover, 2007; Vogl-Bauer, Kalbfleisch, & Beatty, 1999); sibling relationships (e.g., Veluscek, 2015); and opposite-sex friends (Messman, Canary, & Hause, 2000). Moreover, research on relationship maintenance behaviors have gone beyond the studies conducted in samples of White, middle-class romantic relationships in the United States and Western Europe and the impact of culture on how relationships might be maintained has been explored in diverse cultures and samples (e.g., Ballard-Reisch, Weigel, & Zaguidouline, 1999; Yum & Canary, 2003, 2009).

### **2.1.2 Equity Theory and Relational Equity**

In this section, the most influential theoretical approaches, which have provided a basis for researchers to categorize maintenance behaviors and create taxonomies as well as understand how relationship satisfaction and stability are provided in intimate relationships, were covered. Researchers have utilized various theoretical perspectives and grounded their studies either on general theories explaining relationship processes or theories in which the specific focus is given on how relationships are maintained and/or how positive relational outcomes are provided.

*Social exchange theory* has become a primary influential mechanism on the research of close relationships and theoretical applications of the social exchange theory have been implemented in understanding development, maintenance, satisfaction, and dissolution of relationships (Sabatelli, 1984). From social exchange perspective, romantic involvements bring both rewards and costs for

individuals (Nakonezny & Denton, 2008). Social exchange theory is not a single theory but it is a frame of reference composed of aggregation of different theoretical approaches and models holding the same underlying assumption that “individuals are motivated to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs and thus have an overall profit or positive outcome from their relationships” (Sprecher, 1992, p. 47). In the early writings, pioneering scholars of social exchange theory defined social exchange as “an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons” (Homans, 1961, p. 13). According to Blau (1964), social exchange refers to “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others” (p. 91). Individuals who exchange various sources in their romantic relationships stay in or exit from relationships depending on the ratio of their rewards (outcomes) to costs (inputs) against their partners’ rewards to costs (Sprecher, 1992).

Exchange of resources is the key element of any kind of close relationship and social exchange principles can be readily adopted in research on examining relational processes in interpersonal relationships. The two main theories utilizing the principles of social exchange were: *interdependence theory* (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) – *investment model* (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult et al., 1994) and *equity theory* (Hatfield et al., 1985; Walster, Walster, & Traupmann, 1978a). Both investment model and equity theory have stimulated research on relationship maintenance processes and relational characteristics over decades. Despite the fact that the main theory utilized in the present study is equity theory, it is also worth to overview how interdependence theory, investment model in specific, has discussed maintenance and stability in relationships to be able to provide a supplementary perspective.

Interdependence theory is developed based on the essence of understanding interactions between partners (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). In interdependence theory, the concepts of relationship satisfaction and dependence were distinguished and satisfaction level was defined in terms of the ratio of



rewards and costs as stated earlier. However, in their unique contribution, Thibaut and Kelley (1959) discussed that not only the absolute value of outcomes (ratio of rewards to costs) but also a comparison of the outcomes with a given standard is also important for individuals' evaluations of satisfaction in their close relationships. Namely, individuals compare their outcomes with what they expect to receive (comparison level) and when their actual outcomes are higher than what they expect, they become more satisfied. On the other hand, the level of dependence is discussed to be determined by individuals' comparisons of their outcomes with what would be available to them in alternative relationships (comparison level of alternatives); thereby individuals decide whether to pursue or leave their relationships if actual outcomes are higher than what they might have in other relationships (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

It is essential to mention investment model at this point. Investment model emerged out of several principles of interdependence theory and was developed to explore why and how relationships are maintained (Rusbult, 1980; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). In investment model, dependence was represented by the term of commitment which corresponds to individuals' desire and intentions to maintain their current relationship (Rusbult, 1983). However, in investment model the degree to which an individual committed to his/her relationship is determined by the combination of interrelated concepts of satisfaction, quality of other alternatives, and investment size as well (Rusbult et al., 1994). Investments are evaluated as what partners put into the relationships that they cannot take it back when the relationship is over. According to investment model, individuals become more committed to their relationships when they feel satisfied, the quality of their alternatives are poor, and they heavily invested to their relationships; hereby individuals who feel greater commitment to their relationships decide to remain in and maintain their relationships (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998; Rusbult et al., 2004). Hence, investment model asserts that perceived higher commitment promotes individuals to engage in several different maintenance mechanisms (behavioral and cognitive

mechanisms) which acted as rewards in relationships and were used in situations of relationship dilemmas.

A number of studies provided empirical evidence for the predictions of investment model and revealed that greater commitment motivates greater use of maintenance mechanisms such as willingness to sacrifice, forgiveness, accommodation behaviors, and develop positive illusions (e.g., Martz et al., 1998; Miller, 1997; Rusbult et al., 1991; Van Lange et al., 1997). As is seen, investment model proposes that greater levels of commitment motivate individuals' use of variety of maintenance mechanisms; however, the directionality between maintenance behaviors and relational outcomes (e.g., commitment and satisfaction) has been discussed and continued to be tested from different theoretical perspectives. For instance, equity theory perspective, discussed right below, approaches relationship maintenance from a different angle and mostly explored whether relational outcomes (e.g., commitment and satisfaction) can be motivated by the use or perception of relationship maintenance behaviors.

Equity theory is a general theory which has been influenced by other influential social exchange theories. Principles of equity theory can be applied to any kind of human relationships and equity theory has become quite successful in understanding intimate relationships for several decades (Adams, 1965; Walster et al., 1978a). Herein, it is important to note the theoretical debate in the application of principles of equity theory with individuals involved in intimate relationships. Although available empirical evidence has supported the applicability of equity theory within the field of intimate relationships, some scholars questioned its applicability and proposed that the loving, caring, selflessness nature of intimate relationships should transcend the equity concerns (Murstein, Cerreto, & Donald, 1977). For instance, Chadwick-Jones (1976) as an exchange theorists indicated that "On the topic of love, exchange theorists tended to have very little to say for the very good reason that, in love, and in unconditional commitment, there can be no exchange (p. 2)". Furthermore, romantic relationships were evaluated as

exemplifiers of communal relationships in which there is no debt or obligation to return the benefit received before and exchange and fairness in relationships are not a concern (Clark & Mills, 1979, 1993). Nevertheless, other prominent group of theorists have pursued their systematic research over the years on the use of equity principles in intimate relationships and provided evidence that individuals consider and care about the rewards, fairness, and equity in intimate relationships (Hatfield et al., 1979; Hatfield et al., 1985; Sprecher & Schwartz, 1994).

Equity theory has initially grounded on the norm of *distributive justice* which is ensured when each person's profits are proportional to investments (Homans, 1961). Homans (1961, 1974) compared reward and cost ratios between partners and emphasized profits as the difference between the rewards a person gets and costs a person foregoes in the exchange relations. When the rule of distributive justice is failed to either a person's disadvantage or advantage (i.e., individuals profits are not equal to their investments), the more likely a person becomes dissatisfied and experiences and displays negative emotions such as anger or guilt (Homans, 1961). Afterwards, Adams (1965) built his own version of equity theory on the concept of distributive justice, preferred to use the term of equity instead of justice, and focused on understanding the antecedents and consequences of the absence of equity in exchange relationships with regard to the terms of outcomes and inputs. It is important to define these terms since most of the scholars utilized these terms in order to conceptualize judgments of equity and inequity. The term of *outcomes* (rewards) refers to any potential resources that an individual benefits such as perception of support, intimacy from a partner, money, and sex; on the other hand, *inputs* (costs) correspond to any potential resources that an individual contributes to the exchange relationship such as social support, intimacy, and kindness (Dainton & Zelle, 2006). Individuals evaluate their inputs and outcomes, which are correlated, and the extent to which inputs and outcomes are perceived proportional determines the perceived level of equity in that relationships. On the other hand, the imbalance between one's outcomes and inputs results in perceptions of inequity

(Adams, 1965). Herein, it is also worth to indicate that although the concepts of equity and equality theoretically overlap and even have similar influence on relational outcomes, it is important to distinguish equity from equality, which refers to the term of fairness and occurs when both partners' outcomes are the same regardless of their inputs - who has contributed more than the other (Deutsch, 1985; Michaels, Edwards, & Acock, 1984; Steil & Makowski, 1989).

The work of Adams's on equity led subsequent research in this area in the 1960s and the 1970s. In those earlier attempts (e.g., Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961), theorists examined equity theory principles within the context of casual relationships (e.g., employer-employee); however, Walster [Hatfield] and her colleagues extended the earlier theories through their major focus on investigating whether principles of equity theory employ in love relationships which made their version of equity theory popular and seminal in the field of intimate relationships. For this purpose, Walster and her colleagues attempted to develop their own integrative conceptual framework on equity theory including the insights of reinforcement, cognitive, psychoanalytic, and social exchange theories (Hatfield et al., 1979; Hatfield et al., 1985; Walster et al., 1978a). This version of equity theory contains following main propositions: (1) individuals desire to maximize their outcomes; (2) groups attempt to develop systems of equity and reward individuals of the groups who treat others equitably; (3) individuals become distressed in inequitable relationships while they feel satisfied in their relationships when the ratios of inputs and outcomes are equal; and (4) individuals in inequitable relationships desire to restore equity and thereby decrease their stress level (Hatfield & Traupmann, 1981; Hatfield et al., 1985). Much like the aforementioned definitions of equity and inequity, Hatfield et al. (1979) defined an equitable relationship "to exist when the person scrutinizing the relationship—who could be Participant A, Participant B, or an outside observer—concludes that all participants are receiving equal relative gains from the relationship" (p. 101). Individuals in intimate relationships perceive (in)equity depending upon their subjective

assessments of own inputs and outcomes compared to their partners' inputs and outcomes (Hatfield et al., 1985; Sprecher & Schwartz, 1994). In every dyadic relationship where exchange between partners occurs, there is also a potential that one of the partners may perceive inequity which emerges in two conditions: under-benefiting inequity and over-benefiting equity. The person is under-benefited (individuals give more receives less) when the ratio of the outcomes to inputs is smaller whereas the person is over-benefited (individuals give less receives more) when the ratio of the outcome to input is larger (Hatfield et al., 1979; Walster et al., 1978a). People in inequitable relationships become dissatisfied with their relationships regardless of being under-benefited or over-benefited but react in different ways to dissatisfaction (Floyd & Wasner, 1994). For instance, people indicated the feelings of guilt and shame in over-benefited relationships while the anger and offended feelings emerge for people in under-benefited relationships (Hatfield et al., 1979; Hatfield et al., 1985).

Regarding the operational definition of equity, several measurements were developed to gauge perceived equity in the literature. In these measurements, the observer assesses the ratio of outcomes and inputs in his/her relationship and equity is evaluated based on the perception of the observer and mostly measured through self-report instruments. To measure perceived equity, global measures were developed to determine whether individuals feel equitably treated, over-benefited, or under-benefited as an initial step. In the Hatfield Global Measure of Equity, respondents were expected to evaluate their relationships considering what they and their partners put into their relationship compared to what they and their partners get out of it (Hatfield et al., 1979). In addition to this simple general question, Sprecher (1986) generated one more supplemental question and asked which partner contributes to the relationship more when an imbalance occurs. Although many other measurements were developed to assess global equity, Hatfield's and Sprecher's measurements, used individually or in combination, stand out in the literature. Furthermore, researchers continued to develop instruments to evaluate

the degree to which individuals feel that the outcomes they derive from their relationships are proportionate to their investments (e.g., Sabatelli & Cecil-Pigo, 1985). Additionally, equity was also assessed through detailed instruments which aim to understand individuals' perceptions of the differences between their own and their partners' inputs and/or outcomes in several salient areas of the relationship such as household labor, paid work, childcare, love, emotion, money etc. (e.g., Michaels et al., 1984; Schafer & Keith, 1980; Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990; Walster et al., 1978b). Consequently, different instruments were selected to assess perceived equity based on how equity was operationally defined and the purpose of the researcher.

How relationship maintenance and relationship satisfaction are discussed at the heart of equity theory? As stated previously, Stafford and her colleagues have grounded their study of relationship maintenance on equity theory, which has extensively applied to understand the relationship maintenance behaviors. The guideline in their studies was the principle that "people are more motivated to maintain equitable relationships than inequitable relationships" (*Proposition 2*, Canary & Stafford, 1994, p. 7). Considering the concepts of equity theory, one's self-reported maintenance behaviors are seen as one's inputs to the current relationship while these inputs (costs) become outcomes (rewards) for the other partner (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford, 2003). In the main application of equity theory to relationship maintenance, it was proposed that individuals in equitable relationships are motivated to engage in more maintenance behaviors and perceive that their partners' also engage in more maintenance behaviors to pursue their relationships; on the other hand, individuals who are in inequitable relationships engage in fewer maintenance behaviors and perceive that their partners' engagement in maintenance behaviors is fewer as well (Canary & Stafford, 2001; Stafford, 2003; Stafford & Canary, 2006). In other respects, it is also discussed that the desired relational states of satisfaction and equity in relationships could be provided by the use of maintenance behaviors (Dainton & Zelle, 2006). It is also

important to note that equity theory has provided a prevalent ground for research on relationship/marital satisfaction and the available empirical evidence supported the determinant role of perceived (in)equity in intimate relationships. Briefly, equity theory proposed that individuals are more satisfied in their romantic relationships when they are in inequitable relationships as compared to individuals in inequitable relationships (Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990; Weigel et al., 2006).

As a concluding comment about the theoretical approaches that the relationship maintenance literature has grounded on, it should be noted that the theory of maintenance has not completed yet because of its wide and multidimensional nature (Stafford & Canary, 2006). Therefore, an exploration of relationship maintenance via the principles of proposed theories and approaches needs to be continued in the future. In current study, associations among study variables and their predictor roles on marital satisfaction were tested and discussed in light of the equity theory.

### **2.1.3 Appreciation in Relationships**

Alongside the concepts of relationship maintenance and equity, another impacting concept, *appreciation in relationships*, was included in the present study in an attempt to comprehend how marital relationships are perceived as satisfying. In the literature, the concept of appreciation has not only been interested in relation to relationship/marital satisfaction but also examined as a distinctive factor in promoting maintenance of romantic relationships and individuals' perceptions of relational equity. Therefore, in parallel with the aim of current study, the literature unraveling the role of appreciation from the perspective of equity theory and in relation to maintenance needs to be discussed as well.

The role of appreciation has been recognized in interpersonal relationships in ages. For instance, in his early and classical writing, William James (1981/1890) indicated the importance of appreciation by saying that "the deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated" (as cited in Lambert & Fincham,

2011, p. 53). Although the positive psychology perspective reinstated the attention of research to the concepts of appreciation and gratitude (Emmons & Shelton, 2002), studies on appreciation has recently come in an appearance within the context of romantic relationships, particularly in marital relationships. Before moving on with presenting the results of relevant research, it is essential to disclose the definitions of appreciation in the literature and how these definitions find place in romantic relationships. In definition of and existing literature on appreciation, one will frequently come across with another concept: gratitude. Despite the fact that the terms of appreciation and gratitude are relevant and have been used interchangeably in the literature (Gordon et al., 2012; Lambert, 2008), the distinction between these terms needs to be specified. Gratitude has been considered as a trait, mood, virtue, and life orientation in number of definitions (McCullough, Tsang, & Emmons, 2004; Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010); however, it is mostly defined as a positive feeling and emotional response. Briefly, gratitude is described as "... felt sense of wonder, thankfulness, and appreciation for life" (Emmons & Shelton, 2002, p. 460) or "a positive emotional reaction to the receipt of a benefit that is perceived to have resulted from the good intentions of another (Tsang, 2006, p. 139). On the other hand, appreciation is described as "a cognitive and emotional acknowledgment of and connection to the positive value and meaning that a phenomenon—an event, a person, a practice (i.e., ritual practice or behavior), a material object, or a circumstance—has for us" (Adler, 2002, p. 7). Schneider (2001) conceptualized appreciation which "involves being alert to the positive aspects of the current situation and feeling thankful for what one has and for one's circumstances" (p. 255). Berger (2000) described appreciation as a cognitive evaluation of anything valuable while described gratitude as an experience of feelings in relation to something beneficial received from other. Berger (2000) also suggested that people experience appreciation of the other person in interpersonal relationships when they started to know each other, and do something showing care and concern for the other.



To conclude, some scholars conceptualized gratitude as a feature of appreciation and some others used the term of appreciation to refer to feelings of gratitude towards a person or the things done by a person. Although it is not clear-cut to distinguish these terms conceptually, both appreciation and gratitude have two dimensions that researchers draw attention: felt and expressed appreciation/gratitude. Accordingly, gratitude/appreciation as a positive feeling and valuableness was perceived by beneficiaries (felt) and provided by benefactors (expressed).

Limited amount of available research within the context of romantic relationships has already provided evidence that both felt and expressed appreciation/gratitude contribute to the development and maintenance of relationships as well as sustaining the desired relational outcomes such as marital satisfaction and perceived equity in relationships (e.g., Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008; Berger & Janoff-Bulman, 2006; Gordon et al., 2012; Gordon, Arnette, & Smith, 2011). Therefore, in current study, felt appreciation from a spouse and expressed appreciation towards a spouse were both incorporated with the enactment of relationship maintenance behaviors and perceptions of equity in understanding marital satisfaction as an influential concept.

## **2.2 Marital Satisfaction and its Relations to Maintenance Behaviors, Relational Equity, and Appreciation**

Both theoretical and empirical research in the literature provided evidence for the associations of marital satisfaction with the study variables of relationship maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciation in relationships. In each following section, review of the literature begun with each study variable's unique role in contributing marital satisfaction and followed by the available research investigating the associations among all the study variables. It should be initially noted that although the focus group of current study is married individuals and marital satisfaction was the outcome variable of the study, studies investigating

relationship satisfaction, which was measured within the samples of individuals in romantic relationships (dating, cohabiting, and engaged), were also included in the present review.

### **2.2.1 Relationship Maintenance**

The curiosity and interest in understanding how some individuals keep their romantic relationships at a certain state or level of satisfaction have led researchers to explore the associations between maintenance behaviors and relational characteristics. As noted previously, initial attempts in relationship maintenance literature have been directed in conceptualizing and categorizing maintenance behaviors; however, research in this area has blossomed over the years and numerous relationship maintenance behaviors have been associated with various relational outcomes, predominantly with relationship satisfaction. To better understand research on relationship maintenance in the literature, some issues should be clarified first.

The *first issue* is that research on relationship maintenance has gathered around countless maintenance behaviors emerged from different theoretical perspectives and typologies as presented above. The *second issue* is that perceptions of different reporters (perceptions of own and partners' use of maintenance behaviors) have been varied in the measurement of maintenance behaviors. Past research has investigated individuals' self-enacted behaviors (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1993; Stafford et al., 2000), perceptions about their partner's use of maintenance behaviors (e.g., Guerrero, Eloy, & Wabnik, 1993; Stafford & Canary, 1991), or rarely both self-enacted and perceived behaviors (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992; Lee, 2006). The *third issue* is that studies aiming to understand the role of maintenance behaviors have also varied in terms of their target populations which sometimes involve only dating individuals, only married individuals, mixed sample of dating, engaged, and married individuals. The *forth issue* is that there is a scarcity in research assessing maintenance behaviors through the revised and current

version of the RMBM (Stafford, 2011); thus, accumulated research addressing the associations between relationship/marital satisfaction and maintenance behaviors mostly used the earliest versions of the revised instrument. However, it should be noted that the current categorization of the RMBM is conceptually akin to its prior versions.

A number of studies have provided empirical evidence that self-reported and perceived partner's use of maintenance behaviors promote relational quality outcomes in either dating or marital relationships. Relationship satisfaction, commitment, liking, love, and control mutuality have been prevalently studied as related but separate relational quality outcomes. At this juncture, although the focus was reviewing the associations among relationship maintenance and relationship/marital satisfaction, the other mostly cited relational quality outcomes were also occasionally addressed in relation to relationship maintenance activities.

In their earlier studies aiming to develop typology of maintenance strategies, Stafford and Canary (1991) investigated the role of perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors on the relational features of satisfaction as well as commitment, control mutuality, and liking in the sample of 956 married and non-married individuals. In this study, the explained variances of the relational features by perceived maintenance behaviors were strong and ranged between .54 and .57. Perceived maintenance behaviors explained each relational feature differently except sharing tasks which had a common and an important influence on each relational outcome. Moreover, perceived assurances and positivity were the positive and primary predictors of relational satisfaction, respectively. Other perceived maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks and social networks also positively predicted marital satisfaction. Perceived openness was not as highly correlated with relational outcomes as the other strategies and even found not significant in explaining control mutuality, liking, and commitment when the other strategies were controlled (Stafford & Canary, 1991).

Although they did not examine satisfaction as a relational outcome, Canary and Stafford (1992) supported and enhanced the findings of the previous study with 200 married couples through the assessments of both self-reported and perceived use of maintenance strategies in relation to commitment, control mutuality, and liking. Specifically, for husbands and wives, self-reported positivity was the primary predictor of control mutuality and perceived partner positivity and social networks were the most influential strategies of liking. For husbands, assurances and sharing tasks were strong predictors of commitment when they were perceived, while for wives, these strategies predicted commitment when they were self-reported. Self-reported use of openness behavior was negatively associated with both commitment and control mutuality.

Stafford et al. (2000) investigated the enactment of both strategic and routine maintenance behaviors and explored the roles of these behaviors in predicting relational outcomes of control mutuality, liking, satisfaction, and commitment with the data from 520 married individuals. Findings of the study indicated that self-enactment of routine maintenance behaviors were significantly correlated with all relational outcomes along with strategic behaviors. Further, self-reported use of assurances was again found to be the most influential predictor of all relational outcomes; conflict management predicted only control mutuality; and the negative predictor role of openness was remained same on satisfaction, after controlling for positivity. Similarly, Dainton and Aylor (2002) assessed self-reported routine along with strategic behaviors and examined how differently individuals enact strategic and routine maintenance behaviors, and tested the influence of these behaviors on satisfaction and commitment in a sample of 189 individuals in romantic relationships. The use of positivity and sharing tasks behaviors was found to be more routine than strategic. Routine use of maintenance behaviors was found slightly more important than the use of strategies in predicting both satisfaction and commitment. After controlling for strategic use of maintenance behaviors, routine

use of assurances was strongly predicted satisfaction as followed by positivity and advice-giving.

Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (1999a) tested the role of self-reported maintenance behaviors on perceptions of marital quality variables of satisfaction, commitment, and love in the influence of marital type with 141 married couples. Findings of this study demonstrated that the relationship between the use of maintenance behaviors and marital quality outcomes varied according to the marital types of couples. In more detail, for traditional couples; positivity use was found significantly and positively related to all marital quality outcomes. In specific to marital satisfaction, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks were significant and positive predictors of marital satisfaction. On the other hand, openness was not found significant in predicting any of the marital quality variables for this type of couples. For independent couples, satisfaction was found positively related to the use of positivity, openness, and assurances. Lastly, for separate couples, the use of openness, assurances, and social networks positively predicted satisfaction. In another study, Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (1999b) investigated the influence of the use of maintenance behaviors with 129 married couples and extended the previous study through investigating the role of maintenance behaviors on joint couple-level outcomes of marital quality (couple love, couple commitment, and couple satisfaction) instead of individual level analyses. They revealed that maintenance behaviors were not only related to individual perceptions of marital quality but also related to joint couple-level perceptions.

In specific to marital satisfaction, Dainton et al. (1994) examined the role of perceived maintenance strategies and physical affection in order to understand marital satisfaction in a sample of 200 married couples. They found that husbands' satisfaction was predicted positively by perceived partners' use of assurances and positivity whereas wives' marital satisfaction was predicted positively by perceived positivity, assurances, social networks, and sharing tasks respectively; yet, negatively predicted by perceived openness. As it is seen, the results indicating

positive and strong predictor roles of assurances and positivity while negative role of openness on marital satisfaction were pertinent to previous studies.

Subsequently, in a different study, the impact of the discrepancy between expectations from a partner and perceived partners' use of maintenance strategies were tested in relation to marital satisfaction based on the principles of interdependence theory in a sample of 283 individuals in romantic relationships (55 of them were married) (Dainton, 2000). Results of this study provided evidence for the importance of both actual and discrepancies between actual and expected maintenance behaviors of partners in predicting relationship satisfaction; however, perceived partners' actual use of assurances, openness, and positivity revealed to be more important than discrepancies to predict satisfaction. Perceived use of assurances and positivity was a positive while as consistent with previous studies, openness was a negative predictor of marital satisfaction. On the other hand, unexpectedly, the results were non-significant for perceived use of sharing tasks and social networks.

Currently, Stafford (2011) examined the perceptions of partner maintenance behaviors by implementing revised-RMBM in predicting four relational characteristics (satisfaction, liking, commitment, and love) in a sample of 411 married couples. Results demonstrated that perceptions of partner positivity, assurances, understanding, relationship-talks, and networks strongly and positively predicted marital satisfaction for husbands and wives. The most influential maintenance behaviors were found to be positivity and assurances in coherent with previous studies. Relationship-talk which corresponds to openness factor in the earlier typologies of maintenance behaviors came up to be a negative predictor of satisfaction whereas perceived maintenance behavior of self-disclosure did not significantly predict marital satisfaction (while significantly predict other relational outcomes of commitment, love, and liking). Herein, non-significant results for self-disclosure and significant results for relationship-talks revealed the variation of partners' global sharing of their thoughts and feelings versus talking about

relational issues. Negative role of relationship-talk was found consistent with previous research (e.g., Dainton, 2000; Stafford et al., 2000) while self-disclosure was discussed not to be as influential as other maintenance behaviors (Stafford, 2003). Sharing tasks also did not predict satisfaction significantly in this study which displays a consistent pattern with the studies in which perceived partners' use of tasks did not predict marital satisfaction (e.g., Dainton, 2000) but an inconsistent pattern with the previous studies which provided significant and positive association between sharing tasks and satisfaction (e.g., Stafford & Canary, 1991).

In the regarding literature, limited numbers of studies exist in which the revised-RMBM was utilized to assess the use of maintenance behaviors. Exceptionally, Fowler (2014) used the revised-RMBM along with some items from the RMSM in a sample of 80 married participants and explored the association between marital satisfaction and maintenance strategies (positivity, understanding, self-disclosure, and assurances). A correlation between the use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction was found non-significant while each behavior was found to be significantly correlated with commitment to spouse. The revised-RMBM was also used and associated with marital satisfaction in another study (Stafford, 2016). In this study, Actor Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) was tested in a sample of 244 married couples in order to test the mediator role of self-reported use of maintenance behaviors in understanding the relationships between one's marital sanctity and his/her partner's marital satisfaction. Results of this study provided evidence that self-reported use of maintenance behaviors was a significant mediator and was positively associated with partners' marital satisfaction regardless of gender. However, maintenance behaviors were not evaluated individually in this study; instead, a composite score was computed.

Another study also tested APIM to understand the impact of individuals' self-reported maintenance behaviors on their own marital satisfaction and their partners' marital satisfaction with 193 married couples (Johnson, 2009). Results

demonstrated that both actor and partner effects were strong for positivity and assurances and significant but not that strong for other maintenance behaviors of openness, social networks, and sharing tasks in explaining marital satisfaction. In this model, individuals' own use of maintenance behaviors were more predictive of their marital satisfaction than their partners' use of these behaviors.

Similarly, Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (2008) also applied APIM; however, as different from Johnson's (2009) study, they explored the predictive role of perceived satisfaction in understanding self-reported and partner-reported maintenance behaviors with data gathered from 117 married couples. In specific to actor effects, both husbands and wives were found to use all five maintenance behaviors more when they experienced greater levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, the more both husbands and wives were satisfied, the more their partners reported to use assurances, openness, positivity, and social networks. Moreover, the strength of perceptions of satisfaction in predicting maintenance behaviors was found indistinguishable for actors and partners.

As different from the research presented so far, Dainton and Gross (2008) pointed out the influence of negative maintenance behaviors and analyzed the relationships between both negative and positive self-reported maintenance behaviors and relationship satisfaction by recruiting 151 individuals in romantic relationships. The negative maintenance behaviors of allowing control, destructive conflict, jealousy induction, and infidelity were found significantly and negatively associated with satisfaction while assurances, conflict-management, and positivity were among the positive maintenance behaviors in a positive and significant relation to satisfaction.

Currently, Dainton (2015) investigated the extent to which marital satisfaction was predicted by perceived partners' use of both positive and negative maintenance behaviors with 90 individuals in interracial marriages. Results showed that only two positive behaviors of conflict management and social networks significantly and positively whereas two negative maintenance behaviors of infidelity and avoidance



significantly and negatively predicted marital satisfaction. The author suggested the importance of communication through maintenance behaviors for relationship satisfaction between partners in interracial marriages.

Despite the fact that clear majority of research has found significant relationships between relationship satisfaction and both self-enacted and perceived partner's use of maintenance behaviors, some exceptions were found as well. In the study in which the associations between the frequency of maintenance strategy use and marital satisfaction (perceived outcomes with respect to expectations) were examined with 103 married couples, Ragsdale (1996) did not find strong evidence to prove the associations between self-reported maintenance strategies and satisfaction. However, Stafford and Canary (2006) criticized the methodology that Ragsdale (1996) conducted and concluded that nonsignificant results in Ragsdale's study originated from the assessment of maintenance strategies which were listed and asked participants to respond through daily tallies.

The aforementioned studies were all cross-sectional by nature. Although there were a few, scholars also conducted longitudinal studies to develop a better understanding of the impact of maintenance behaviors on perceptions of relational outcomes over time and address the potential causality among these variables. Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (2001) collected data from 142 married couples once, followed by the second data collection one year later from 40 couples who participated in two studies. Results of the study revealed that higher frequency in use of wives' and husbands' positivity and social networks were related to higher marital satisfaction for individuals one- year later.

Canary, Stafford, and Semic (2002) conducted a panel study with 150 married couples and gathered data at three times with one-month intervals. As predicted, they found that perceived use of partner's maintenance strategies was linked to relational outcomes of satisfaction, commitment, liking, and control mutuality concurrently; but these significant associations declined after a short time which

provided evidence for the impact of partners' continued use of maintenance behaviors on relational outcomes. In another longitudinal study, Guerrero et al. (1993) collected data from 180 individuals in romantic relationships twice and second data collection occurred 8 weeks after the first. Results of the study indicated that although perceived frequent use of maintenance behaviors were positively related to stability in relationships, no difference was found after 8 weeks in terms of perceived maintenance behaviors for individuals in stable relationships.

Overall, according to the results of the longitudinal studies summarized above, it can be concluded that self-reported use of maintenance behaviors seems to be effective to predict future perceptions of perceived satisfaction; nevertheless, perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors need to be engaged in continually to remain effective in predicting perceived satisfaction.

As a conclusion, it is worth mentioning a current meta-analytic review of Ogolsky and Bowers (2013), which was a review across 35 studies exploring the associations between various relational outcomes and five maintenance strategies (positivity, openness, assurances, sharing tasks, and social networks) from different versions of RMSMs (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford et al., 2000; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Results of this systematic review showed positive and mostly significant associations among all maintenance strategies and relational outcomes. In specific to relationship satisfaction, all five of the maintenance strategies were found to be significantly and positively correlated to satisfaction with the largest effects for the positivity and assurances and moderate effects for the other three of the maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and social networks). The moderator role of the reporter (self-reported or perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors) was also examined and correlations between maintenance behaviors and satisfaction were found to be higher when individuals reported perceptions of their partners' use of maintenance behaviors than when individuals reported their own use of maintenance behaviors.

Apart from the previous studies, researchers have also examined the role of some of the maintenance behaviors emerged in Stafford and Canary's typologies (e.g., openness and self-disclosure and sharing tasks) without specifically focusing on the function of these behaviors to maintain relationships. Herein, some of those studies were briefly adverted and exemplified. For instance, disclosing self to a spouse and being open to a spouse about a relationship have been found crucial in functioning of marriages and been investigated in understanding marital satisfaction. One spouse's self-disclosure was found predictive of both one's own and the other spouse's marital satisfaction (Forness, 2002; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Hendrick, 1981). There also exist studies which found the correlation between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction to be less strong (e.g., Levinger & Senn, 1967). Davidson, Balswick, and Halverson (1983) examined the association between self-disclosure and marital adjustment among married individuals through the perspective of equity theory and showed that spouses' perceptions regarding the balance and similarity of affective self-disclosure exchange were strongly related to marital adjustment. In another study, Zietlow (1986) found that understanding and self-disclosure were positively related to marital satisfaction among elderly married individuals. The other maintenance behavior of sharing tasks which refers to performing responsibilities including household chores has also been frequently studied with regard to marital satisfaction. In other words, a vast majority of research has provided evidence for the predictor role of sharing tasks and participation in housework on marital satisfaction. Generally, these studies demonstrated that individuals', particularly women's marital satisfaction was higher when they felt their spouses share the housework and the division of housework is balanced (e.g., Coltrane, 2000; Piña & Bengtson, 1993; Shelton & John, 1996).

As stated previously, scholars have extended their research to different nations and cultures in order to find out associations between maintenance behaviors and relational characteristics in intimate relationships. For instance, Ballard-Reisch et al. (1999) conducted a study with 321 Tatar, Russian, and Russian-Tatar married

couples and results showed that 26% of the variance in marital satisfaction explained by self-reported use of maintenance strategies while the explained variance by perceived partners' use of maintenance strategies dropped to 15%. Specifically, self-reported use of assurances, sharing tasks, positivity, and openness as well as partners' use of assurances, positivity, and sharing tasks were positive predictors of marital satisfaction. Although there were some alterations by gender with regard to the predictor roles of maintenance behaviors, self-reported use of assurances and positivity and partners' use of positivity were related to marital satisfaction both for husbands and wives.

Yum and Li (2007) tested the role of attachment styles on use and perceptions of maintenance behaviors and relational quality features of satisfaction, liking, control mutuality, and commitment in a diverse sample of 311 university students in romantic relationships from the U.S, 218 from South Korea, and 194 from Hawaii. Results of this study demonstrated that participants from the U.S and Hawaii, compared to Koreans, reported similar patterns in terms of engaging in and perceiving higher maintenance behaviors.

Given studies supported the positive impact of use and perceptions of maintenance behaviors on marital satisfaction in non-western societies and potential differences in engagement in maintenance behaviors across cultures. Some other cross-cultural and comparative studies investigating maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction with the inclusion of other study variables (e.g., relational equity) were discussed later on.

In Turkey, substantial amount of research has been conducted to better understand the correlates of marital satisfaction and variety of relational constructs have been examined in relation to marital satisfaction over the years. However, there is a scarcity in the studies investigating the role of relationship maintenance behaviors on marital satisfaction and/or other relational outcomes. The only study which specifically investigated what couples do to maintain their relationships and

maintenance behaviors in relation to marital satisfaction was conducted by Torun (2005). Within the context of that study, the first and the earliest version of RMSM (Stafford & Canary, 1991) was adapted into Turkish in a sample of 44 married individuals. The Turkish adaptation process and results of the adaptation study were not presented in detail in the study; however, sufficient Cronbach alpha coefficients were reported. In addition, the predictor roles of self-reported and perceived strategies on marital adjustment and satisfaction were investigated in a sample of 31 young, modern, highly educated and urban married couples living in Turkey. Results showed that all self-reported except openness and all perceived maintenance strategies were correlated with partners' marital satisfaction. In predicting marital adjustment and satisfaction, self-reported use of positivity was the only significant predictor. In terms of perceived maintenance behaviors, positivity followed by social networks, sharing tasks, and assurances were positive and significant predictors of marital adjustment while assurances followed by social networks and sharing tasks were positive and significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Both self-reported and perceived use of openness were not a significant predictor of either marital adjustment or satisfaction. Moreover, perceptions of partner's use of maintenance strategies had a greater influence in predicting marital satisfaction than self-reported maintenance strategies.

Additionally, 23 individuals in the study were asked to indicate the maintenance strategies that they used (in addition to the listed strategies in the RMSM) and they reported to common use of being patient with one another, listening to each other, compromising during conflict, and emphasizing love and commitment to maintain their marriage. Torun (2005) pointed out that the results of this study have parallels with the previous studies in the literature in terms of the usage of maintenance behaviors and the links between maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction. These results were discussed to originate by reason of the sample in this study (urban, highly educated, and modern) which is alike to samples in studies holding Western values.

By the researcher's knowledge, except Torun's (2005) study, no further study that explore Stafford and Canary's typology of maintenance behaviors in a Turkish sample has been identified. Although Torun's study is important for being the only study examining maintenance behaviors in a married sample from Turkey, in that study, the earliest version of the RMSM was adapted into Turkish in a very limited sample and associations between variables were examined again in a small and homogenous sample. Additionally, perspective of equity theory was not considered and tested in that study.

Parallel to international literature, the concepts of sharing tasks and self-disclosure to a spouse in relation to marital satisfaction have also directed attention of relationship scholars in Turkey. Yet again, these variables have not been studied within the conceptualization of maintenance behaviors and the available empirical research is limited. For instance, Gündoğdu-Aktürk (2010) conducted a study with 204 married women and found that division of house chores significantly and positively predicted women's marital satisfaction and the associations between these variables were found to be influenced by the structure of marriage (egalitarian versus traditional). In another study, Hortaçsu (2007) sought to understand marital relationships of urban Turkish family in a sample of 430 married couples. Results indicated that task division was associated positively with satisfaction with the division as being dependent on the marriage type (family initiated versus couple initiated). In terms of self-disclosure to a spouse, only a few research studies have attempted to understand the role of self-disclosure within the context of marital relationships. In two recent studies, Çağ and Yıldırım (2017) developed an instrument to assess married individuals' spousal self-disclosure, and self-disclosure to a spouse was found to be a significant and positive predictor of marital satisfaction in a sample of 549 married individuals living in Turkey (Çağ, 2016). Eventually, it is clear that research on relationship maintenance and its association to relational characteristics is in its infancy and needs to be flourished through further studies.

In sum, both self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors have an impact on relationship/marital satisfaction. Indeed, the impact of perceived use of maintenance behaviors emerged to be a stronger predictor of relational characteristics in some of the studies (e.g., Lee, 2006; Ogolsky & Bowers, 2013). Although the unique contribution of each maintenance behaviors varies across studies and relational outcomes, frequently stated maintenance strategies with a strong impact in predicting satisfaction could be identified as positivity and assurances (Dindia & Emmers-Sommer, 2006; Stafford, 2011; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2001). On the other hand, the impact of openness is considered ambiguous from two aspects. Some researchers found openness as not influential and significant as other maintenance behaviors (e.g., positivity and assurances) in predicting relationship/marital satisfaction and suggested to study the role of openness cautiously by considering cultural factors, expectations of individuals, and the function of openness whether it involves self-disclosure or relationship-talk (Stafford, 2003; 2011). On the other hand, some other researchers found significant but negative role of openness on relationship/marital satisfaction (Dainton, 2000; Dainton et al., 1994; Stafford et al., 2000). Future research is recommended to clarify the function of used and perceived openness and its impact on relational quality outcomes. Moreover, positive and moderate associations were commonly evidenced in terms of the associations between relationship/marital satisfaction and the remaining maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks and social networks.

### **2.2.2 Relational Equity**

Past research has investigated how individuals' judgments of (in)equity have been linked to the experiences of relationship/marital satisfaction as well as how the combined roles of equity and maintenance behaviors become influential in predicting satisfaction. Bulk of the research supported that equity is an important predictor of the quality of intimate relationships and provided evidence that when the individuals perceive their relationships as equitable, they feel more satisfied with their relationships and they are more likely to committed and remain in that

relationship. For instance, Utne, Hatfield, Traupmann, and Greenberger (1984) found that 118 newlywed couples in equitable marriages feel more content and stable in their marriages. Similarly, Aida and Falbo (1991) designed a study with 42 married couples and demonstrated that couples who perceived themselves as equal partners experienced greater levels of marital satisfaction. In another study, Buunk and Mutsaers (1999) collected data from 290 remarried individuals and examined the equity perceptions to understand marital satisfaction in the former and current marriages. Results indicated that marital satisfaction was higher when individuals perceived higher equity and felt more advantaged both in their former and current relationships. Weigel et al. (2006) asked 107 married couples to report their perceptions of equity in considering their own influences in their marriages and once more found that spouses' perceptions of the level of equity of influence was associated with higher perceptions of marital satisfaction.

Van Yperen and Buunk (1991) even called attention to the potential differences of the impact of equity in intimate relationships in different nations and gathered data from 133 participants from the United States and 143 participants from the Netherlands. In this study, American individuals were found to be highly satisfied when they perceived greater equity but not under-benefited or over-benefited equity; however, Dutch individuals were found to be the most satisfied when they felt advantaged in their relationships followed by perceived equity.

Apart from the previous studies, which were mainly cross-sectional in nature, longitudinal studies have also been conducted. In one of the earliest studies, Cate, Lloyd, and Long (1988) investigated individuals' perceptions of reward level and equity at Time 1 in predicting changes in relationship satisfaction at Time 2 (the second data collection occurred three months later than the first one) in a sample of 90 individuals in romantic relationships. According to the results, although perceptions of equity was found related to relationship satisfaction, perceived equity at Time 1 did not predict satisfaction at Time 2 and reward level found to be a better predictor than equity in predicting changes in satisfaction over time.



Additionally, Sprecher (2001) conducted a longitudinal study and collected data in five waves with the purpose of understanding whether assessments of equity predict change in satisfaction and commitment over time. At Time 1, 101 dating couples were recruited and 74 individuals (out of 41 couples who were still together) took place in all five waves of this study. Results revealed that perceived global equity was a unique predictor of satisfaction; however, very little evidence again supported that equity at one time increased the perceptions of satisfaction at a later time. Furthermore, in the same study, Sprecher also provided evidence for the causal direction between equity and relationship satisfaction (i.e., satisfaction as a predictor of equity); nevertheless, these causal relationships did not remain significant across time.

Likewise, Van Yperen and Buunk (1990) collected data twice in which the second data collection completed after a period of 1 year. In the first data collection, 259 Dutch married couples were invited to participate in the study, and in the second data collection, 171 of them took part. Results indicated that relationship satisfaction at Time 2 was found to be predicted by perceived equity (individuals' reports of their relationships as equal based on a global measure of equity) at Time 1.

Bearing in mind that equity theory is influential in understanding the relationships between maintenance and satisfaction, empirical research has also focused on investigating the associations between perceived equity and maintenance behaviors and researchers have tested the combined role of these concepts on marital satisfaction. Starting from the seminal study of Canary and Stafford (1992), equity was found as a notable property in the use and perceptions of partners' use of maintenance strategies, at least when wives defined equity. However, the pattern related to husband defined equity was not as definite as wives' defined equity. In other words, when wives reported their marriages equitable, both husbands and wives engaged in greater use of positivity and assurances and additionally, husbands reported greater use of openness and social networks. Accordingly, when

wives assessed their marriages as equal, both husbands and wives perceived that their partners engage in more maintenance behaviors; particularly, husbands perceived that their wives use positivity, openness, assurances and networks more while wives perceived that their husbands' greater use of positivity and assurances (Canary & Stafford, 1992). Similarly, Canary and Stafford (2001) explored the predictive role of equity and satisfaction (in terms of comparison level) in a sample of 142 individuals in romantic relationships. Results indicated that perceived partners' use of each maintenance behavior was linked to the perceptions of inequity. The authors claimed that judgments of equity could be a result of perceived maintenance behaviors from a partner and equity perceptions could be a predictor of use of maintenance behaviors.

Dainton (2003) recruited 219 participants in romantic relationships, and assessed the roles of equity and uncertainty in predicting self-reported maintenance behaviors and relationship satisfaction. Perceived inequity was found negatively and significantly correlated to only the use of conflict-management and positivity. Moreover, perceived inequity significantly and negatively predicted relationship satisfaction. In another study in which both positive and negative maintenance behaviors were measured, Dainton and Gross (2008) did not find support for the predictor roles of perceived equity in the use of each maintenance behavior. The only significant maintenance behaviors were the use of assurances and avoidance which increased depending on the higher equity perceptions.

Stafford and Canary (2006) tested the unique and combined roles of perceived equity and relationship satisfaction in predicting use of maintenance behaviors in a sample of 236 married dyads. Results indicated that the most satisfied marriages were the most equitable ones and individuals who perceived greater equity, engaged in more maintenance behaviors to maintain their relationships. Specific to gender, for women, the use of maintenance behaviors except sharing tasks and openness, and for men, the use of all maintenance behaviors except openness were significantly affected by wife-defined equity and increased along with the higher

equity perceptions. Moreover, women's use of maintenance behaviors were predicted by the combination of perceived equity and satisfaction. In another study, Dainton (2016) did not find interaction between gender and perceived equity in predicting self-reported maintenance behaviors of 547 married individuals.

Jackson (2010) also investigated associations among perceived equity, use of maintenance behaviors, and relational satisfaction in a sample of 133 individuals who were coping with stress. According to the results, perceived equity was significantly correlated with all of the maintenance behaviors except openness, and the use of assurances and social networks were significantly and positively and sharing tasks were significantly and negatively predicted by perceived equity. In other words, individuals engaged in assurances and social networks more when they perceived greater equity while the more individuals perceived inequity the more they engaged in sharing tasks. Furthermore, as expected, the experience of relational satisfaction increased when they perceived their relationships as equal.

In their subsequent study, Ragsdale and Brandau-Brown (2007) debated with the findings and arguments of the previous studies in the relationship maintenance literature in some respects. For instance, the authors criticized the application of equity theory in relationship maintenance and stated that previous studies (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992) did not support the effective role of equity in the self-reported and perceived reports of relationship maintenance behaviors as it was proposed. Furthermore, the authors also asserted some methodological concerns in terms of assessments of equity and relationship maintenance behaviors in the previous study which was conducted by Stafford and Canary (2006). In their reply to Ragsdale and Brandau-Brown (2007), Canary and Stafford (2007) counter-argued their claims and reported that their criticisms were not strong. Moreover, they justified how equity predicted maintenance behaviors by stressing the existing research which clearly supports the applicability of equity theory in relationship maintenance. On the other hand, the authors also mentioned that they do not claim that equity is the only indicative in explaining the variance of the use of

maintenance behaviors. Following this controversy, Ledbetter, Stassen-Ferrara, and Dowd (2013) compared the equity and self-expansion theory as predictors of maintenance behaviors in a sample of 714 participants in romantic relationships, and provided evidence that not all the maintenance behaviors but maintenance behaviors of positivity, assurances, and conflict management were predicted by perceived inequity. In addition, Dainton (2011) tested the predictive role of equity theory along with other theories (theories of uncertainty, attachment, and reciprocity), and found that self-reported maintenance behaviors of positivity, sharing tasks, and conflict-management were significantly and negatively predicted by perceived inequity.

In a current study, Dainton (2016) attempted to clarify the arguments raised by Ragsdale and Brandau-Brown (2007) and found that five of the maintenance behaviors (positivity, assurances, social network, sharing tasks, and conflict-management) were predicted by inequity when it was measured on a continuous scale. Six of the maintenance behaviors (assurances, social network, positivity, openness, conflict-management, and sharing tasks) were found to be varied across equity groups and explained variances were found to be small (ranging from 1% to 8% across different measurements of equity). In that study, approaches of equity, reciprocal exchange (equality: self-reported maintenance behaviors minus perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors), and self-interest (perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors) were also investigated in predicting marital satisfaction. Results provided further support that perceived equity significantly predicted marital satisfaction even after controlling for reciprocal exchange and self-interest, and 57% of the total variance in marital satisfaction was explained by the combination of these variables. Dainton (2016) concluded that equity theory was effective in predicting not all but some of the maintenance behaviors and suggested to explore additive perspectives and variables along with equity in understanding the whole picture of relationship maintenance process. Even if equity theory is a conceptually well developed, empirically supported theoretical

perspective, and forms a basis for understanding relationship maintenance processes and relational outcomes, it is important to note that relationship maintenance scholars have not premiated that equity theory accounts for all of the variance in maintenance behaviors (Stafford & Canary, 2006).

Apart from the previous studies, prediction of equity theory has become influential in a large body of research, which has been conducted to investigate the concept of sharing tasks in terms of division of household labor. Although scholars did not give particular attention to the function of sharing tasks to maintain the relationships in those studies, the results mainly demonstrated that division of household is an important factor in affecting individuals' sense of equity which also predicted marital satisfaction through the feelings of perceived fairness in terms of partners' participation in household (e.g., Hawkins et al., 1995; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Wilkie, Ferree, & Ratcliff, 1998).

In the literature, the causal relationships and bidirectionality among relational outcomes, maintenance behaviors, and equity still need to be studied and the researchers have been encouraged to consider and seek to explore relational equity and relationship satisfaction both as antecedents and consequences of the maintenance behaviors in further studies (Stafford, 2003). Thus, the accumulated research in this area would be flourished. In addition, although the assumptions of equity theory have been mostly examined in the North America and Western Europe, predictions of equity theory with regard to the relationship maintenance and satisfaction have also been studied in different nations and cultures. For instance, Yum and Canary (2009) recruited 868 participants from the United States, South Korea, Japan, China, Spain, and the Czech Republic, and examined whether the predictions of equity theory on maintenance change depending on the country of the participants and value orientation. According to the initial results, frequency of engagement in use of maintenance behaviors varied across countries. For instance, the greatest frequency of maintenance behaviors was found in participants from the United States and Spain, followed by the participants from the Czech

Republic, China, South Korea, and Japan. Moreover, associations between perceived equity and the use of maintenance behaviors were found significant for entire sample; however, equity did not predict the use of maintenance behaviors for China, South Korea, and the Czech Republic. In another study, Perry (2004) also provided evidence for the predictor role of equity on marital quality across all racial subsamples of Caucasians, African Americans, and Hispanics. In a recent cross cultural study, the curvilinear association between equity and maintenance strategies were found significant only for the romantic partners from the United States but not for the partners from Malesia and Singapore (Yum, Canary, & Baptist, 2015).

In brief, past scarce research addressed the differences and similarities of relationships among the use and perceptions of maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and marital satisfaction across different nations and cultural backgrounds. In Turkey, the theoretical perspective of equity theory has been neglected and perceived equity has rarely been studied within the context of romantic relationships. To the knowledge of the researcher, no study in Turkish literature has been found examining individuals' perceptions of relational equity in terms of their own outcomes in proportion to their investments in the relationships. Furthermore, impact of perceived relational equity on individuals' experiences of marital satisfaction is still blur and perceived equity has not been examined regarding relationship maintenance behaviors, yet. Therefore, in current study, the researcher sought to examine perceived relational equity in understanding marital satisfaction along with maintenance behaviors and appreciation on the ground of equity theory.

### **2.2.3 Appreciation in Relationships**

How appreciation has found a place in romantic relationships and linked to satisfaction in relationships? Despite the insufficient literature on appreciation in romantic relationships, current literature has provided evidence for the benefits of appreciation for romantic partners in promoting quality of relationships. It should

also be noted that because the concepts of appreciation and gratitude have been used interchangeably (as discussed before) in the literature, research on both appreciation and gratitude in relation to relationship/marital satisfaction and relationship maintenance was summarized here to better represent current literature.

Showing appreciation to another was found to function as a protective factor along with the others (e.g., respect, effective communication) in predicting marital satisfaction and adjustment in a study conducted with 1,010 newlyweds (Schramm, Marshall, Harris, & Lee, 2005). DeMoss (2004) implemented an intervention for 28 days with 20 couples in romantic relationships and similarly found that the intervention which asked individuals to show verbal gratitude to their partners as a way of positive communication in a daily manner was effective in improving couples' relationship satisfaction.

Furthermore, Algoe, Gable, and Maisel (2010) conducted a daily-diary study with 67 cohabiting couples for two weeks in order to test how experience of gratitude (including appreciation) is associated with relationship satisfaction of the benefactor and recipient of the responsive behavior. Results demonstrated that, regardless of gender, relationship satisfaction was significantly predicted by the felt gratitude on the previous day and people with grateful partners reported higher satisfaction than the previous day. That is, the positive and unique impact of gratitude on relationship satisfaction for each partner was evidenced.

In another daily-diary study, Gordon et al. (2011) investigated the associations between daily felt and expressed gratitude towards a spouse and marital satisfaction over two-weeks among 50 long-term married couples. In parallel with the previous study, results showed that individuals' felt and expressed gratitude predicted their own level of satisfaction. Additionally, not expressed gratitude but individuals' felt gratitude was positively related to their spouses' marital satisfaction. A study from a different culture resulted in similar findings, as well. Mutual appreciation was

chosen by 50 mostly Israeli born couples as one of the primary relational characteristic of satisfying relationships regardless of gender (Sharlin, 1996).

The function of gratitude/appreciation has also been investigated in relation to relationship maintenance behaviors and stability of relationships. Kubacka et al. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study with newlywed couples and collected data from 195 Dutch couples for three times in a 4-year period (157 couples remained at Time 3 data collection). In this study, they investigated the function of experiences of gratitude (appreciation) to a partner in a dyadic model in order to determine its function in relationship maintenance and use of maintenance behaviors with the influence of partner responsiveness. Results of the dyadic model indicated that across time one's (Partner A) gratitude was significantly associated with his/her own use of maintenance behaviors (motivator role of gratitude), and one's use of maintenance behaviors was significantly associated with his/her partner's (Partner B) gratitude. These findings also remained same after controlling for partners' relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, Partner A's use of maintenance behaviors was mediated by perceived partner responsiveness of Partner B in predicting Partner B's gratitude (detector role of gratitude). Moreover, longitudinal analyses showed that gratitude predicted to and was predicted by the use of greater maintenance behaviors at the intrapersonal level over time. Additionally, the benefits of gratitude were found gender invariant and valid in later stages of marriages. Overall, results of this study provided evidence both for intra and interpersonal effect of gratitude as well as its function both as a detector and motivator of relationship maintenance.

As being complementary to the previous study, Lambert and Fincham (2011) explored expressed gratitude and tested whether it would be linked to the use of maintenance behaviors across four studies. In this study, maintenance behavior was formed as comfort in voicing concerns about a relationship, which is akin to maintenance behavior of openness in Stafford and Canary's categorization. Participants of the study comprised of romantic partners and close friends. The



positive impact of expressed gratitude on comfort in voicing relationship concerns was evidenced across three studies with experimental and longitudinal designs. Furthermore, results of another experimental study (Study 4) showed that participants who assigned to a group which aimed to increase their experiences of expressing gratitude to a close friend reported to have higher positive perceptions of their friends and engage in greater maintenance behavior of voicing concerns after 3 weeks.

In another study, Gordon et al. (2012) developed the Appreciation in Relationships Scale and tested both feelings of being appreciated and appreciative feelings in predicting relationship maintenance via different methods among 715 individuals in romantic relationships across four studies. It should be noted that relationship maintenance in this study was assessed through responsiveness to partners' needs, relationship stability, and commitment to the relationship. Across studies, individuals who reported to feel being appreciated more by their partners also reported to experience more appreciative feelings towards their partners. Furthermore, results indicated that greater appreciative feelings led to greater responsiveness and commitment in the following day and after 9 months across daily-diary and longitudinal studies. Moreover, being more appreciative of partners was found to be related to relationship stability and likelihood to still stay in the relationship at the 9-month period. Additionally, the relationship between feelings of being appreciated and maintenance of relationship was mediated by appreciative feelings. The authors contributed to the former literature by developing a scale of appreciation in specific to sample of romantic partners and taking into account of both felt and expressed appreciation among romantic partners even though in previous research the focus was mostly on expressed appreciation/gratitude.

In another current study, 3 separate studies with experimental, daily-diary, and longitudinal designs were conducted and results across studies supported that individuals who perceived higher investments (resources) of their partners to the relationship reported to feel higher gratitude towards their partners, experienced

higher commitment and reported increases in commitment over time (Joel et al., 2013). Additionally, results indicated that the significant mediator role of gratitude in understanding the relationship between the partner investment and feeling committed was remain influential after controlling for individuals' relationship satisfaction. In the study, different types of partner investments in relation to gratitude and relational outcomes of commitment and stability were suggested to be investigated in further studies.

Young and Curran's (2016) recent study was a supplementary of the previous research and they investigated how intimate sacrifices for a partner (as another form of maintenance behavior) predict relationship satisfaction under conditions of partner appreciation among 200 cohabiting individuals. Results showed that higher partner appreciation was associated with relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction was found to be the lowest when individuals engaged in frequent intimate sacrifices but perceived lower appreciation from their partners.

In a scarce but recently growing body of literature on appreciation, experience and expression of appreciation have also been linked to romantic partners' perceptions of equity mostly in terms of division of household labor. Undoubtedly, scholars have become interested in understanding whether receiving appreciation from a partner contributes to increase in one's perceptions of equity despite the actual costs or unfair division of labor. In the 2012 reissue of her formative book, Hochschild and Machung concluded that feelings of being appreciated by the partner for any task made for the partner and/or relationship as a very important determinant of couples' happiness (Hochschild & Machung, 2012).

Across studies conducted with married women, women's sense of fairness on division of housework and child care was found to be predicted by the feelings of being appreciated by their husbands (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Hawkins et al., 1995; Hawkins, Marshall, & Allen, 1998). Similarly, Berger and Janoff-Bulman (2006) conducted two studies: first one was with students in romantic relationships and the

second one was with cohabiting and married women. The results across studies demonstrated that individuals who felt more appreciated by their partners reported to be more satisfied even if they engaged in more relational costs which were assessed through communal behaviors and family work that partners made.

In conclusion, limited amount of studies in the relevant literature has illuminated that felt appreciation from partners boosts the sense of individual' fairness and promotes their engagement in prosocial activities even these activities will be costly. However, available research is limited to individuals' perceptions of equity in terms of allocation of family work and household labor, and only one aspect of appreciation (felt but not expressed) has still been considered in those studies. Though growing body of literature has provided consistent evidence for the importance of gratitude/appreciation in maintenance of relationships as well as its influential role as a mechanism to promote engagement in prosocial behaviors and relationship satisfaction even under situation of perceived inequity, further research is recommended by aforementioned studies in order to better understand the hosts and consequences of gratitude/appreciation and causal associations between gratitude/appreciation and relational variables. For instance, Gordon et al. (2012) emphasized the reciprocal nature of the links between appreciation, maintenance of relationships, and relational outcomes. It should also be noted that although different types of relationship maintenance behaviors (e.g., sacrifices, investments, and voicing concerns) were investigated in relation to appreciation in the previous research, the only study in which Stafford and her colleagues' typology of relationship maintenance behaviors assessed was conducted by Kubacka et al. (2011). However, composite scores of maintenance behaviors were used in that study and the unique role of each maintenance behavior pertain to gratitude/appreciation remained missing.

Considering that the research on appreciation in romantic relationships is in its early stages, it is not surprising that the role of appreciation has rarely been discussed from the different cultural and societal perspectives. In exceptional studies, Bello,

Brandau-Brown, Zhang, and Ragsdale (2010) conducted a cross-cultural study including 79 U.S and 121 Chinese participants, and found that individuals use various methods to express their appreciation and the use of these methods (verbal or nonverbal) changes depending on the culture. The authors suggested to explore expression of appreciation in further studies to understand how it would associate with satisfaction in different cultures. In another study, once again Chinese marriages were examined in a sample of 455 married individuals and the culture specific concept of marital enqing which corresponds to the expression of gratitude feelings to a partner was found to be a significant predictor of marital quality (Li & Chen, 2002).

The gratitude concept has also recently drawn attention of scholars in Turkey. In the very first attempt to study gratitude, scholars adapted Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ, McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002) into Turkish. The GQ aims to assess dispositional gratitude and preliminary studies have provided evidence for its validity and reliability among college students (Yüksel & Oğuz-Duran, 2012). There exist only a few further studies in which gratitude was gauged by the Turkish version of GQ in a sample of university students. Among those studies, the first one was experimental and conducted to examine the effect of gratitude writing and life goals writing on subjective well-being (Duran & Tan, 2013). The second study was implemented to test a mediator role of gratitude in understanding the relationship between forgiveness and vengeance (Satıcı, Uysal, & Akın, 2014). Recently, Akın and Yalnız (2015) adapted the Expression of Gratitude in Relationships Measure to Turkish (EGRM, Lambert, Clark, Durtschi, Fincham, & Graham, 2010) and provided evidence that this measurement is valid and reliable to be used in samples from Turkey. Although EGRM allows to assess one side of the gratitude experience which is expressed gratitude, an attempt to adapt this instrument to Turkish is also a sign of interest to study gratitude in the national literature. By the researchers' knowledge, empirical studies on gratitude/appreciation has been limited to

aforementioned studies in Turkey and the concepts of gratitude and appreciation have been neglected thus far within the context of romantic relationships.

### **2.3 Summary of the Literature**

For decades, relationship scholars have implemented studies to explore facilitating factors and obstacles in experiences of marital satisfaction among marital partners in maintained relationships. Abundant literature showed that various theoretical perspectives have provided insight to better understand why and how romantic relationships are maintained and individuals are satisfied. There appears various kinds of acts and behaviors available for individuals to maintain their own marriages and keep their marriages in a desired state and level of satisfaction. Among these behaviors, the categorization of maintenance behaviors provided by Stafford and Canary (1991) and revised by Stafford (2011) was included in the scope of current study based on its prevalent use and empirically tested structure in the literature. Furthermore, empirical studies have verified the significant role of one's own engagement in maintenance behaviors along with perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors on individuals' marital satisfaction. Equity theory has also provided an influential perspective among the other theoretical approaches in addressing relationship maintenance and marital satisfaction. The positive impact of perceived equity on marital satisfaction, and both self and perceived use of maintenance behaviors have been evidenced in bulk of the studies.

Moreover, the thorough review of literature enlightened the salient role of appreciation (both felt and expressed) in promoting relationship maintenance, use of maintenance behaviors, relational equity perceptions, and marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, previous studies have investigated the relationships between each factor separately and/or by pieces, and mostly in samples gathered from Western societies. Meanwhile, the review of Turkish literature unveiled the paucity of studies, and a need for further research examining the associations among these variables. Hence, the aim of this study is to bring these variables (self and perceived

use of maintenance behaviors, perceived equity, and felt and expressed appreciation) together and test the proposed models to reveal relative and joint contributions of each variable in understanding marital satisfaction in a sample of married individuals in Turkey.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

In this chapter, methodological procedures followed in the current study were presented. First, overall design of the study was described. Later, characteristics of the participants of the main study were introduced. Afterwards, characteristics of the participants of the pilot study, data collection instruments along with the validity and reliability studies of the questionnaires, and data collection procedures for the pilot and main studies were presented. Subsequently, description of variables and data analyses methods were explained briefly. Lastly, the limitations of the study were addressed.

#### **3.1 Overall Design of the Study**

The purpose of the current study is to explore the relationships among self-reported and perceived maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), relational equity, and appreciation in relationships (feelings of being appreciated and appreciative feelings), and their impact on marital satisfaction in a sample of married individuals. The design of this study is correlational which aims to study relationships among variables and mainly defines “the degree to which two or more quantitative variables are related, and it does so by using a correlation coefficient” (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012, p. 331). Moreover, correlational research requires complex correlational techniques (e.g., structural equation modeling, hierarchical linear modeling) to investigate the associations among variables and predict outcome variable. In this study, Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement, Relational Equity Scale, Appreciation in Relationships Scale, Relationship Assessment Scale, and the demographic information form were utilized to collect data. The analyses of the study include (1) descriptive analyses to

understand the relationships among characteristics of married individuals, and (2) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships among variables and test the structural models.

### **3.2 Participants**

The data for the main study were recruited from voluntary married individuals who were married for at least one year at the time of the data collection process. In order to collect data, two methods were followed: paper-pencil and online survey. Questionnaires were distributed to 622 married individuals living in different cities in Turkey. Most of the participants were living in Ankara (66.9%) and the rest of them were from other cities (e.g., İstanbul, İzmir, Sakarya, Bursa etc.). When the dataset was screened, 12 cases were excluded from the study considering their improper way of responding to questionnaires (i.e., responding all items with the same value, filling out just one questionnaire but not the others, and filling out questionnaires with a lot of missing values) and 8 cases who did not meet the inclusion criteria of being married for at least one year at the time of the study were also omitted. At last, the total sample size of the main data comprised of 602 cases.

Out of 602 married individuals, a total of 482 (80.1%) individuals participated in the paper-pencil survey and 120 (19.9%) individuals participated in the online survey. Although the samples sizes of these two groups were not equal, groups were compared in terms of outcome variable (marital satisfaction) of the study by conducting one-way ANOVA. Because group sizes were unequal the alternative  $F$ -ratio of Welch's  $F$  was used. Results showed that there was no significant mean difference between these two groups in terms of marital satisfaction, Welch's  $F(1, 200.80) = .03, p = .86$ . Nevertheless, considering that these groups did not differ in terms of the outcome variable and the scope of this study did not measure anything about using online sources, these groups were united together and the demographic characteristics of the entire sample were presented below.



Of 602 married individuals, 335 (55.6%) were female and 265 (44%) were male. Two of the participants (0.3%) were missing on the gender variable. The mean age for overall sample was 38.47 years ( $SD = 9.67$ ), ranged from 21 to 67 years. Of the participants, 13 individuals (2.2%) did not report their ages.

In terms of educational level, majority of the participants ( $n = 259$ , 43.0%) reported to be a university graduate followed by high-school graduate ( $n = 137$ , 22.8%) and a master or Ph.D graduate ( $n = 92$ , 15.3%). The rates were similar for spouses' educational levels. Participants reported their spouses' as university graduate ( $n = 249$ , 41.4%), followed by a high school graduate ( $n = 130$ , 21.6%) and master or Ph.D graduate ( $n = 97$ , 16.1%). As seen, most of the participants reported to have at least a high school graduation and the sample represented a highly-educated profile. Table 3.1 presents the demographic characteristics of the main study participants.

Table 3.1

*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants of the Main Study (N = 602)*

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Female	335	55.6
Male	265	44.0
Educational Level		
Elementary School	10	1.7
Middle School	18	3.0
High School	137	22.8
Two-Year Degree	86	14.3
University	259	43.0
Master and/or Ph.D	92	15.3
Spouse's Education Level		
Elementary School	26	4.3

Table 3.1 (continued)

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
Middle School	28	4.7
High School	130	21.6
Two-Year Degree	71	11.8
University	249	41.4
Master and/or Ph.D	97	16.1

In addition to the demographic variables, relationship characteristics of the sample were also explored. Table 3.2 presents the results. Most of the participants were in their first marriages ( $n = 570$ , 94.7%) and only 31 individuals (5.1%) reported that current marriage was not their first marriage. Of 31 individuals, 24 (4.0%) reported that current marriage was their second marriage and the rest of the participants did not provide this information. Most of the participants ( $n = 451$ , 74.9%) described the type of their marriage as companionate and only 38 (6.3%) participants indicated that their marriage was prearranged. The mean for marital length was 11.92 years ( $SD = 9.93$ ) ranging from 1 year to 45 years.

Two hundred and seven (34.4%) participants reported to have one child and 227 (37.7%) participants reported to have more than one child. On the other hand, 156 (25.9%) of them did not have a child. Three (0.5%) participants did not answer to this question. Of 443 participants, 207 (34.4%) reported to have one child, 201 (33.4%) reported to have two children, 23 (3.8%) reported to have three children, and 3 (0.5%) reported to have more than three children. Nine participants reported that they had a child but did not mention how many. The mean age of the firstborn was 12.83 ( $SD = 9.95$ ) ranging from less than 1 year to 43 years ( $n = 406$ ).

Table 3.2

*Relationship Characteristics of the Participants of the Main Study (N = 602)*

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
How many times did you get married?		
First marriage	570	94.7
Remarried	31	5.1
How would you define type of your marriage?		
Companionate marriage	451	74.9
Prearranged but marriage was our own decision	98	16.3
Prearranged marriage	38	6.3
Other	15	2.5
Do you have children?		
Yes	443	73.6
No	156	25.9
How many children do you have?		
1	207	34.4
2	201	33.4
3	23	3.8
More than 3	3	0.5

### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments

In the present study, a survey package comprised of Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement (Appendix A), Relational Equity Scale (Appendix B), Appreciation in Relationships Scale (Appendix C), and Relationship Assessment Scale (Appendix D) was administered to the participants. Additionally, demographic information form was utilized to gather information about the demographic and marital characteristics of the participants (Appendix E).

### **3.3.1 Pilot Study**

Pilot study was conducted to implement Turkish adaptation processes of the instruments of the Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement, Relational Equity Scale, and Appreciation in Relationships Scale as well as to examine the validity and reliability of these instruments. Additionally, the psychometric properties of the Turkish version of Relationship Assessment Scale were also explored in the pilot study.

#### ***3.3.1.1 Sample Characteristics of the Pilot Study***

The sample of the pilot study comprised of 421 married individuals (298 females, 70.8% and 123 males, 29.2%) living in various cities in Turkey. Most of the participants were living in Ankara (69.1%) and the rest of them were from other cities (e.g., İstanbul, İzmir, Bursa, Eskişehir etc.). Similar to the main study, the data were collected through two methods: paper pencil and online survey. Out of 421 individuals, a total of 254 (60.3%) individuals participated in the paper-pencil survey whereas 167 (39.7%) individuals participated in the online survey. Although the sample sizes of paper-pencil survey and online survey groups were not equal, these groups were compared in terms of marital satisfaction by conducting one-way ANOVA. Welch's  $F$  test was used again considering the unequal group sizes. There was no significant mean difference between these two groups in terms of marital satisfaction, Welch's  $F(1, 330.53) = .25, p = .62$ . Consequently, online and paper-pencil group data were merged because these groups did not differ in terms of the outcome variable and the scope of this study was not related to the use of online sources.

The mean age for overall pilot sample was 35.68 years ( $SD = 8.59$ ), ranged from 22 to 68 years. Six individuals (1.5%) did not report their ages. Regarding educational level, most of the participants indicated a graduation from university ( $n = 173, 41.1\%$ ) and held master/Ph.D degrees ( $n = 159, 37.8\%$ ). Additionally, most of the

participants reported that their spouses' were either university graduate ( $n = 175$ , 41.6%) or master/Ph.D graduate ( $n = 131$ , 31.1%). As similar to the main study sample, the pilot sample represented a highly educated profile. See Table 3.3 for demographic characteristics of the pilot study participants.

Table 3.3

*Demographic Characteristics of the Participants of the Pilot Study (N = 421)*

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Female	298	70.8
Male	123	29.2
Education Level		
Elementary School	4	1.0
Middle School	5	1.2
High School	42	10.0
Two-Year Degree	38	9.0
University	173	41.1
Master and/or Ph.D	159	37.8
Spouse's Education Level		
ElementarySchool	11	2.6
Middle School	10	2.4
High School	55	13.1
Two-Year Degree	39	9.3
University	175	41.6
Master and/or Ph.D	131	31.1

In addition to the demographic characteristics, marital characteristics of the participants were also obtained (See Table 3.4). The marital length of the participants was ranged from 1 to 45 years ( $M = 9.11$  years,  $SD = 9.03$ ). The

majority of the participants reported that current marriage was their first marriage ( $n = 404$ , 96.0%). Sixteen (3.8%) participants indicated that this was their second marriage. Most of the participants ( $n = 360$ , 85.5%) described the type of their marriage as companionate; only 16 (3.9%) reported that their marriage was prearranged. Almost half of the participants (59.1%) reported that they had a child or children. Three (0.7%) participants did not answer to this question. Out of 249 participants, 149 (35.4%) had one child, 88 (20.9%) had two children. Only 1.4% reported that they had 3 or 4 children. Six individuals stated that they had a child but did not indicate how many. The age of the firstborn was ranged from less than 1 year to 38 years ( $n = 222$ ) with the mean age of 10.79 ( $SD = 9.73$ ).

Table 3.4

*Relationship Characteristics of the Participants of the Pilot Study (N = 421)*

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
How many times did you get married?		
First marriage	404	96.0
Remarried	17	4.0
How would you define type of your marriage?		
Companionate marriage	360	85.5
Prearranged but marriage was our own decision	41	9.7
Prearranged marriage	16	3.9
Other	2	0.5
Do you have children?		
Yes	249	59.1
No	169	40.1
How many children do you have?		
1	149	35.4
2	88	20.9
3 or 4	6	1.4

### ***3.3.1.2 Preliminary Analysis of Pilot Data***

Before conducting validity and reliability analyses of the instruments adapted into Turkish, the original pilot data was primarily screened for the accuracy of data entry entirely. No incorrect entries were detected. Afterwards, pilot dataset was separated and screened for each instrument individually in order to conduct confirmatory factor analyses. In screening, cases in which the participants did not respond to the items of the given scale properly or responded to the entire items with the same value etc. were initially omitted from the dataset. Prior to the CFA, the assumptions of CFA were examined. The researcher followed the same procedure in the same order for each instrument in order to test the assumptions of missing values and sample size, univariate and multivariate normality and outliers, linearity, and multicollinearity (Kline, 2011; Ullman, 2013). The criteria for deciding the validation of each assumption was described and discussed for the first instrument adapted into Turkish (see the section of 3.3.1.4.2.1) and followed for each model estimation of the other instruments.

### ***3.3.1.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Procedure***

After all the assumptions checked and confirmed, a series of CFAs were conducted in order to test the validity of factorial structure of each instrument via LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). In the consideration of model fit, researcher utilized some of the approximate fit indices which were classified into three categories: absolute, incremental, and parsimony-adjusted (Kline, 2011). In this study, fit indices representing each category were reported in order to evaluate the validity of the factorial structure for each instrument. The selected fit indices in this study are: the Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square (Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$ ), Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$ /degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) ratio, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) from the group of absolute fit indices; Non-Normed-Fit Index (NNFI, also known as the Tucker-Lewis index, TLI) and the Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI) from the group of incremental fit indices; Root Mean Square Error of

Approximation (RMSEA) from the group of parsimony-adjusted fit indices (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011) with the confidence intervals (CI) (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). In current study, overall evaluation of the factorial structure for each instrument was carried out based upon these fit indices. The fit indices and their suggested cutoff-values were summarized and presented in Table 3.5. Moreover, it should be noted that the researcher preferred to choose an alternative method of estimation which was not developed under the assumption of multivariate normality because any of the dataset for each instrument did not meet the multivariate normality assumption. Therefore, corrected normal theory method which uses robust standard errors and corrected model test statistics was conducted (Hu, Bentler, & Kano, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2011). Satorra-Bentler scaling-corrected (SCALED) test statistic (Satorra & Bentler, 1994), as the most common corrected model test statistics and straightforward method to conduct, was used to adjust the inflated chi-square statistic. Moreover, although the chi-square value is recommended to evaluate model fit, this value is found to be sensitive to sample size. In large samples, chi-square value tends to increase and become statistically significant along with the sample size. Therefore, researchers attempt to decrease this sensitivity by computing normed chi-square value through a calculation of  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio.

Table 3.5

*Fit Indices and Acceptable Cutoff-Values*

Fit indices	Acceptable cut-off values
$\chi^2$	< .05
$\chi^2/df$ -ratio	$\chi^2/df < 3$ (Kline, 1998; Ullman, 2001). $\chi^2/df < 5$ (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).



Table 3.5 (continued)

Fit indices	Acceptable cut-off values
SRMR	SRMR < .08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR close to .09 (or .10) with a cut-off value close to .95 for NNFI (or CFI) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR $\leq$ .08 with CFI above .92 when $N > 250$ and $12 < m < 30$ (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).
NNFI	NNFI $\geq$ .93 (Byrne, 1994). NNFI $\geq$ .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).
CFI	CFI $\geq$ .93 (Byrne, 1994). CFI $\geq$ .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). CFI $\geq$ .90 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).
RMSEA	Close fit: RMSEA < .05 ; Mediocre fit: .05 < RMSEA < .10 ; Poor fit: RMSEA > .10 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Mediocre fit: .08 < RMSEA < .10 (MacCallum et al., 1996). Good fit: RMSEA < .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Close fit: .05 < RMSEA < .08 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010).

*Note.*  $N$  = sample size,  $m$  = number of variables.

#### **3.3.1.4 Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement (RMBM)**

The Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement was initially developed by Stafford and Canary (1991). They entitled this measurement as Relationship Maintenance Strategies Measurement (RMSM) based on the underlying assumption that relationship maintenance behaviors were strategic. As a result of several exploratory factor analyses with a sample of 956 participants, five-factor structure comprising 24 items was verified. Five factors were: positivity (10 items,

$\alpha = .89$ ), openness (6 items,  $\alpha = .84$ ), assurances (4 items,  $\alpha = .84$ ), sharing tasks (2 items,  $\alpha = .71$ ), and social networks (2 items,  $\alpha = .76$ ). Next, researchers made a slight refinement on RMSM (Canary & Stafford, 1992). Later, Stafford et al. (2000) revised the RMSM (Canary & Stafford, 1992) and results of exploratory factor analyses suggested 7-factor structure with 31 items.

Recently, Stafford (2011) pointed out the common problems in the prior relationship maintenance measures (both in original five-factor RMSM, and revised 7-factor RMSM), revised the items, compared the proposed Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement (RMBM) to the original five and seven-factor measures, and replicated the factor structure of the RMBM. In that study, the proposed seven-factor RMBM structure (28 items) was confirmed in a sample of 411 married heterosexual couples. The results of CFAs showed an acceptable fit both for husbands,  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 2.96, TLI = .94, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .04, and for wives,  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 2.90, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05. The factors were named as: positivity (4 item,  $\alpha = .95$ ), understanding (4 item,  $\alpha = .90$ ), self-disclosure (4 item,  $\alpha = .89$ ), relationship-talks (3 item,  $\alpha = .93$ ), assurances (4 item,  $\alpha = .88$ ), tasks (4 item,  $\alpha = .92$ ), and networks (5 item,  $\alpha = .82$ ). Subsequently, the researcher refined the factor structure of the seven-factor RMBM with another sample of 232 married heterosexual couples. Model fit of the RMBM was again found acceptable both for husbands,  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 2.98, TLI = .94, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .05, and for wives,  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 2.48, TLI = .96, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05.

In the revised measurement, the problem in the content validity of network factor was resolved and the scope of this factor was expanded. In terms of factor structure, the original openness factor was separated into two: relational talk (openness) and self-disclosure. Similarly, the initial positivity factor was divided into two: understanding and (global) positivity. In the implementation of the RMBM, the participants would be asked to report either their perceptions of their own use of maintenance behaviors “the extent to which you believe you currently perform each

behavior in order to maintain the relationship” or their perceptions of their partners’ use of maintenance behaviors “the extent to which you believe your spouse currently performs in order to maintain the relationship”. The responses were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) and higher scores indicated higher self-reported and perceived partner use of maintenance behaviors.

In current (pilot) study, the revised and the most recent version of the seven-factor RMBM (Stafford, 2011) was used and adapted into Turkish. In the current study, participants were instructed to consider the given instructions above to assess their perceptions about their own use of each maintenance behavior (*self-reported use of maintenance behaviors*) as well as their perceptions of their partners’ use of each maintenance behavior (*perceived use of maintenance behaviors*) consecutively. Therefore, the RMBM became 56-item measurement when asked twice.

#### ***3.3.1.4.1 Translation and Adaptation Process of the RMBM***

At the beginning of the adaptation process, a permission of the corresponding author of the scale was obtained. With the object of performing an effective adaptation process, the steps determined by Hambleton and Patsula (1998) were considered. These steps include (1) forward translation, (2) back-translation, (3) examination of the consistency between the original and adapted instrument in terms of meaning and conceptualization of items, and (4) acquiring others’ opinions to evaluate the assumed consistency. As following these steps, the scale was first translated by three graduate students of psychological counseling and guidance who are proficient in both Turkish and English languages. Then, the researcher and her advisor selected the best fitted translations of items. Next, a graduate student from English Language field was asked to back-translate the chosen items to English. Afterwards, the researcher and her advisor ensured that there is no difference between the original items and back-translations in terms of meaning. Later, a Turkish language teacher controlled the Turkish version of the scale for any kind

of problems in grammar, fluency, and punctuation. Any problem needs to be corrected in this step was handled by the researcher based on the suggestions. Afterwards, cognitive interviewing was conducted with ten married individuals which helps to understand how respondents perceive and interpret items and whether they realize any uncertainty and ambiguity in wording that may cause response error (Drennan, 2003). Participants reported minor problems in wording and meaning of some of the items in the cognitive interviewing process which were handled by the researcher. Subsequently, expert opinion was gathered from two faculty members from Psychological Counseling and Guidance field. Lastly, the researcher finalized the Turkish version of the RMBM.

The same translation procedures were followed for each measurement which were adapted into Turkish within the scope of the current study as presented in subsequent sections.

#### ***3.3.1.4.2 Validity and Reliability of Turkish RMBM***

In order to test validity and reliability of the RMBM, the data from pilot study was used. Considering individuals' perceptions about their own and their partners' use of maintenance behaviors were asked separately, validity and reliability analyses of the Turkish RMBM were also conducted separately for each set of items. After the deletion of the same 3 cases with many missing values on the RMBM items of self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors, sample comprised of 418 participants; 295 (70.6%) were females and 123 (29.4%) were males.

##### ***3.3.1.4.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analyses of the RMBM***

Assumptions were checked via SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013) and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted for the RMBM items twice for the self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors separately via LISREL 8.8. At first, the assumptions of the CFA were controlled.

To begin with the self-reported use of maintenance behaviors, the amount of missingness was detected at first. Second, missing data analysis was conducted to test whether the data loss pattern is ignorable (missing completely at random, MCAR) or non-ignorable (not missing at random, NMAR). In this dataset, the missingness was less than 1%; however, Little's MCAR test was found significant  $\chi^2 = 414.75$  ( $df = 270$ ;  $p = .00$ ). If the chi-square value for Little's MCAR test (Little & Rubin, 1983) is not significant, then the data is accepted as MCAR; otherwise, missing data pattern is assumed NMAR. However, chi-square test is sensitive to sample size which may lead to a significant value with samples larger than 200 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this case, the pattern of missingness was suggested to be analyzed through the comparison of cases with complete scores and cases with missing values based on the variables in the study (Allison, 2002). Comparison tests and the results of the chi-square tests and t-tests were found non-significant for the study variables (e.g., gender, marital satisfaction). Herein, multiple methods can be carried out to deal with missing data. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) recommended that if the amount of missing data is less than 5%, any method (e.g., listwise deletion or data imputation) would yield similar results. Considering the amount of missingness is less than 5% and non-significant results for comparison tests, data imputation was implemented through expectation maximization (EM) algorithm which "forms a missing data correlation matrix by assuming the shape of a distribution for the partially missing data and basing inferences about missing values on the likelihood under that distribution" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, p. 102). Subsequently, the researcher decided whether sample size is enough for conducting CFA. Sample size of this dataset ( $n = 418$ ) was found to be higher than the recommended sample size which was addressed as about 200 cases to be able to provide the sufficient power to analyze the data (Hoelter, 1983; Kline, 2011).

Then, normality tests were employed, and univariate and multivariate normality assumptions were checked respectively. Univariate normality was assessed by statistical indices of skewness (symmetry of a distribution) and kurtosis

(peakedness of a distribution) via SPSS 22. In a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values are zero; however, there is no clear consensus on cut-off values for skewness and kurtosis indicating non-normality. Kline (2011) suggested that variables with absolute skewness and kurtosis values greater than 3 are accepted as indicators of non-normal patterns. Finney and DiStefano (2006) addressed that studies examining non-normality suggested that values approaching to 2 for skewness and 7 for kurtosis are potential indicators of non-normality. Additionally, Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) suggested that the influence of deviation from normality in terms of departure from zero skewness and kurtosis decreases in a large sample ( $> 200$ ). In this dataset, the skewness values were found lower than 3 (highest value was -2.03) and the highest kurtosis value (5.33) was smaller than 7 in which the distribution could be named as moderately non-normal. Multivariate normality was assessed through the use of Mardia's (1985) coefficient with multivariate kurtosis. Normalized coefficients greater than 3.0 (Ullman, 2006) are accepted as indicators of multivariate non-normality. The result of Mardia's test (Mardia's coefficient = 1290.82,  $p < .01$ ) showed a severe deviation from multivariate normality in this dataset.

Next, univariate and multivariate outliers were checked respectively. To detect univariate outliers, frequency distributions of standardized  $z$  scores were checked and scores exceeding the absolute value of 3.29 ( $p < .001$ , two tailed test) were accepted as indicative of an outlier (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In this dataset, for some items (e.g., item\_1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 21), the critical value of -3.29 was exceeded but not severely (ranged between -3.35 and -5.59) which indicated that univariate outlier assumption was not met for these items. Then, in order to detect the multivariate outliers, Mahalanobis distance values were calculated. Cases exceeding the critical chi-square value for Mahalanobis distances ( $p < .001$ , two tailed test) were named as outliers. The critical  $\chi^2$  value was 56.89 for  $df = 28$ ,  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and 45 cases were detected as outliers exceeding the critical value in the present dataset. However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2013)

claimed that “mahalonobis distance can either “mask” a real outlier or “swamp” a normal case” (p. 108) and that is why it should be used by caution. For that reason, in the measurement validation process, rather than deleting the potential multivariate outliers, two different datasets were created: one with outliers and one without outliers, and CFA was conducted with these two datasets separately.

Afterwards, linearity assumption was controlled. Visual inspection of bivariate scatter plots between pairs of items showed no violation of linearity assumption.

Lastly, multicollinearity assumption was checked. Three different criteria were considered to detect multivariate collinearity: observation of *squared multiple correlation* ( $R^2$ ) between each variable  $> .90$ , *tolerance* values  $(1 - R^2) < .10$ , and *variance inflation factor* (VIF) which equals  $1/(1 - R^2) > 10.0$  (Kline, 2011). In the present dataset, inter-correlations among the items did not exceed the cut-off value of .90 ( $r = .77$  max.). Furthermore, tolerance values were ranged from .23 to .71 and the highest VIF value was 4.34. Taken together, multicollinearity assumption was met.

After the assumption checks were completed, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to test seven-factor structure of the RMBM for the self-reported use of maintenance behaviors with the datasets with and without outliers. Since the results did not show a better fit for the dataset without outliers, only the results of the CFA conducted with the dataset with outliers ( $N = 418$ ) were presented below.

To validate the hypothesized factor structure of the RMBM in this study, the researcher utilized several fit indices and the suggested cut-off values for each index (see Table 3.5, pp. 78-79). Results of CFA for the *self-reported* use of maintenance behaviors showed that the Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square test fit was significant  $\chi^2 (329, N = 418) = 1029.79, p = .00$ . The normed chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 3.13) was lower than the recommended value of 5 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). For this model, CFI = .97, NNFI = .97 were above the cut-off value (Hu & Bentler,

1999). SRMR = .07 which was accepted as adequate when CFI above .92 (Hair et al., 2010). RMSEA = .07 (90% CI = .07, .08) was an indicator of a mediocre fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum et al., 1996). According to the results of CFA, model fit indices pointed out a good fit of the model to the data.

Assumptions were controlled and CFA was conducted for the second time for the RMBM items of perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors. The amount of missingness was less than 1%; however, Little's MCAR test was found significant  $\chi^2 = 514.84$  ( $df = 348$ ;  $p = .00$ ). Comparison tests and the results of the chi-square tests and t-tests were found non-significant. Hence, EM algorithm was conducted. After, normality tests were employed and both the skewness and kurtosis values were found lower than 3 which provided that univariate normality assumption was met (Kline, 2011). However, the result of Mardia's test (Mardia's coefficient = 1250.88,  $p < .01$ ) showed that multivariate normality assumption was not met. Next,  $z$  scores were checked to detect univariate outliers. The critical value of -3.29 was slightly exceeded (ranged between -3.35 and -3.58) for some items (e.g., item\_1, 4, 7, 10, 21, 22, 26, 27) which indicated that univariate outlier assumption was not met for these items. Later, in order to detect the multivariate outliers, Mahalanobis distance values were calculated. The critical  $\chi^2$  value was 56.89 for  $df = 28$ ,  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), and 48 cases were detected as outliers exceeding the critical value. Afterwards, two different datasets were created; one with the outliers and one without the outliers. Visual inspection of bivariate scatter plots between pairs of items showed no violation of linearity assumption. Inter-correlations among the items did not exceed the cut-off value of .90 ( $r = .80$  max.), tolerance values were ranged from .22 to .70, and the highest VIF value was 4.34. Consequently, multicollinearity assumption was satisfied.

Results of CFA for the *perceived* use of maintenance behaviors also indicated that the Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square test fit was significant  $\chi^2$  (329,  $N = 418$ ) = 974.79,  $p = .00$ . The normed chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df = 2.96$ ) was lower than the recommended values of 3 or 5 (Kline, 1998; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). For this



model, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98 were above the cut-off value (Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR = .07 which was accepted as adequate. RMSEA = .07 (90% CI = .06, .07) was an indicator of a mediocre fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum et al., 1996). According to the results of CFA, model fit indices indicated a good fit of the model to the data.

Although the fit indices provided enough evidence to be convinced of good fit of each model to the data, when the correlations among factors were examined higher correlations which indicate multicollinearity ( $r > .90$ , Kline, 2011) were detected. Specifically, for the first model (self-reported maintenance behaviors), higher correlations were found between understanding and positivity ( $r = .85$ ), self-disclosure and relationship-talks ( $r = .97$ ), assurances and understanding ( $r = .86$ ), assurances and positivity ( $r = .89$ ), and self-disclosure and assurances ( $r = .92$ ). Similarly, for the second model (perceived maintenance behaviors), higher correlations were found between understanding and positivity ( $r = .88$ ), self-disclosure and relationship-talks ( $r = .97$ ), assurances and understanding ( $r = .90$ ), assurances and positivity ( $r = .89$ ), and self-disclosure and assurances ( $r = .90$ ).

The higher correlations among these factors are more likely to address that these factors gauge the same construct. Although openness construct was divided into two factors (self-disclosure and relationship-talks) and similarly positivity construct was divided into two factors (positivity and understanding) in Stafford's (2011) study, in the present study, self-disclosure and relationship-talk factors seem to come together and measure openness in general, and positivity and understanding factors seem to gather under the same factor to assess positivity in general. Moreover, the assurances factor did not seem to be disassociated from the factors of positivity, understanding, self-disclosure, and relationship-talk considering the higher correlations of this factor with the others. Additionally, Kline (2011) also suggested to analyze highly correlated factors which may cause a nonadmissible solutions and unstable results. For these reasons, researcher decided to conduct Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to locate the underlying dimensions of the

current data sets. EFA was conducted for the RMBM items twice for the self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors separately. Results of the EFAs were alternately presented below for the self-reported maintenance behaviors and the perceived maintenance behaviors.

#### ***3.3.1.4.2.1.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Self-reported RMBM***

All of the assumptions of EFA (sample size and missing data, normality, outliers, linearity, and multicollinearity, Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) have already been controlled and satisfied before conducting CFA for the self-reported RMBM; however, the Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index were additionally tested in advance of EFAs (Field, 2009). Results of Bartlett's sphericity test  $\chi^2 (378, N = 418) = 7427.71, p < .01$ , indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large and  $KMO = .92$  verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis.

Next, EFA was conducted on the 28 items through the extraction method of principle axis factoring (PAF) with oblique rotation (promax). PAF was chosen as the extraction method since Mardia's test was found significant which denoted the violation of multivariate normality assumption. Five factors had eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 and in combination explained 65.1% of the variance. The scree plot also demonstrated a break and continuing stable pattern after the five factors. Given the consistence between the Kaiser criterion and scree plot, five factors were accepted as the number of components in this study. After, pattern matrix was examined to analyze which items clustered on the same factors. Nine items clustered on the first factor, 10 items clustered on the second factor, 4 items clustered on the third factor, 2 items clustered on the fourth factor, and 2 items clustered on the fifth factor.

Stafford (2011) found in her original study that positivity factor divided into two factors of positivity and understanding. However, results of EFA for the current

sample revealed that the items of the understanding and positivity factors did not load on separate factors, instead these items loaded on one factor which was labeled as *positivity* by the researcher. Similarly, Stafford (2011) found in her original study that openness factor divided into two factors of self-disclosure and relationship-talks. However, items of the self-disclosure and relationship-talks factors did not load on separate factors in the current study as different from the original study. Instead, these items loaded on one factor which was labeled as *openness* by the researcher. The factor structure determined in the current study resembles the previous categorization of maintenance behaviors in which positivity and openness factors were represented by one factor (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford & Canary, 1991).

Additionally, the pattern matrix showed that items of the assurances factor did not cluster on a separate factor. Instead, two items of the original assurance factor loaded on positivity factor while the other two items loaded on openness factor in the current study. Assurances factor was conceptually defined as “including messages that stress one’s continuation in the relationship” (Canary & Stafford, 1992, p. 244). Two items of the assurances factor in the original study which loaded on positivity factor in this study were: “I tell him/her how much he/she means to me” and “I show him/her how much he/she means to me”. The other two items of the assurances factors in the original study which were loaded on the openness factor in the current study were: “I talk about future events (e.g., having children, or anniversaries, or retirement, etc.)” and “I talk about our plans for the future”.

As consistent with the original study, four items of the third factor loaded on the respective factor which corresponds *sharing tasks*. Lastly, items of the social network component in the original study loaded on two different factors (see 4<sup>th</sup> factor and 5<sup>th</sup> factor) in the current study. As stated, social network factor conceptually defines “both friends and family as well as both activities and aid” (Stafford, 2011, p. 288). In the current study, two items (“I include our friends in our activities” and “I do things with our friends”) which represent having time with

friends clustered on one factor (4<sup>th</sup> factor) while the other two items (“I ask a family member for help” and “I turn to a family member for advice”) corresponding to ask aid from the family members clustered on another factor (5<sup>th</sup> factor). However, the remaining item (Item\_6, “I spend time with our families”) of the social network factor cross loaded on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> factor with low factor loadings. This item (Item\_6) indicates spending time with partners’ families, but did not correspond asking help and advice from a family member or having time with a friend. Therefore, it did not either load on 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> factor. Furthermore, deletion of this item improved reliability for each factor. For these reasons, researcher decided to omit this item from the scale in this step. In sum, 27 items clustered on 5 factors in the current study: *openness, positivity, sharing tasks, social network of friends, and lastly social network of family*. Item-factor loadings and factor correlations for 27 items (i.e., Item\_6 omitted and 27 items remained) were illustrated below in Table 3.6.

Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient was used as an estimate of the reliability of the scale. In the current sample, Cronbach’s alpha value of the first factor (openness) was .92, second factor (positivity) was .91, third factor (sharing tasks) was .85, fourth factor (social network of friends) was .85, and fifth factor (social network of family) was .81.

Table 3.6

*Factor Loadings for Promax Five-Factor Solution for the Self-Reported RMBM*

Item	Factor Loadings
Factor 1: Openness	
Item_2	.95
Item_3	.84
Item_4	.93
Item_7	.61
Item_9	.52

Table 3.6 (continued)

Item	Factor Loadings
Item_11	.83
Item_17	.57
Item_18	.56
Item_25	.61
Factor 2: Positivity	
Item_1	.44
Item_8	.68
Item_10	.63
Item_13	.69
Item_15	.27
Item_16	.87
Item_19	.49
Item_22	.85
Item_23	.57
Item_26	.92
Factor 3: Sharing Tasks	
Item_5	.78
Item_14	.63
Item_21	.90
Item_27	.78
Factor 4: Social Network of Friends	
Item_20	.96
Item_28	.73
Factor 5: Social Network of Family	
Item_12	.92
Item_24	.71

Table 3.6 (continued)

	Factor Correlations				
	1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1	–				
Factor 2	.70	–			
Factor 3	.39	.45	–		
Factor 4	.41	.48	.31	–	
Factor 5	.10	.05	.02	.18	–

In order to confirm the current factor structure emerged in this study with 27 items and 5 factors, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with the main study data for the self-reported RMBM. The characteristics of the main data was described in the heading of 3.2. Results of CFA for the *self-reported* maintenance behaviors showed that the Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square test fit was significant  $\chi^2$  (314,  $N = 602$ ) = 1001.59,  $p = .00$  which indicated that the model did not fit to the data. The value of  $\chi^2/\text{df}$ -ratio was 3.19 (1001.59/314) which was lower than the recommended value of 5 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). For this model, CFI = .97 and NNFI = .97 were above the cut-off value (Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR = .05 and RMSEA = .06 (90% CI = .06, .07) provided evidence for an adequate fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). In the inspection of modification indices (MI), the researcher decided to add path between item\_8 and item\_16 and item\_13 and item\_19 with greater values of MI. The fit indices became slightly better and showed an acceptable fit  $\chi^2$  (312) = 867.14,  $p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2/\text{df}$ -ratio = 2.92, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .05, and RMSEA = .05 (90% CI = .05, .06).  $t$  values for each indicator were all significant by being greater than  $|1.96|$  (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). All standardized estimates were above .30, ranged between .41 and .89.  $R^2$  values were above 20%, ranged between .31 and .78 (except item\_23,  $R^2 = .17$ ).

#### ***3.3.1.4.2.1.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Perceived RMBM***

All of the assumptions of EFA (sample size and missing data, normality, outliers, linearity, and multicollinearity, Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) have already been controlled and satisfied before conducting CFA for the perceived RMBM. Additionally, the Bartlett's test of sphericity and KMO index were tested (Field, 2009). Results of Bartlett's sphericity test  $\chi^2 (378, N = 418) = 8745.18, p < .01$ , indicated that correlations between items were sufficiently large and KMO = .94 verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis.

EFA was conducted on the 28 items through the extraction method of principle axis factoring with oblique rotation (promax). PAF was chosen since the multivariate normality assumption was violated. Results demonstrated five factors with eigenvalues over Kaiser's criterion of 1 which in combination explained 69.10% of the variance. The scree plot also demonstrated a break and continuing stable pattern after the five factors. In consideration of the consistence between the Kaiser criterion and scree plot, five factors were accepted as the number of components in this study. Next, pattern matrix was examined to analyze which items clustered on the same factors. The factor structure and items loading on each factor showed a similar pattern with the results of EFA for self-reported RMBM. Nine items clustered on the first factor, 10 items clustered on the second factor, 4 items clustered on the third factor, 2 items clustered on the fourth factor, and 2 items clustered on the fifth factor.

Similar to the factor structure of the self-reported RMBM, items of the perceived understanding and positivity factors loaded on the same factor and were labeled as *perceived positivity*. Items of the perceived self-disclosure and relationship-talks also loaded on the same factor, and were labeled as *perceived openness*. Moreover, the pattern matrix again showed that items of the assurances factor did not cluster on a separate factor; instead, the same two items of the original assurance factor

loaded on positivity factor while the other two items loaded on openness factor for perceived maintenance behaviors.

In parallel with the original study and the results of EFA for self-reported RMBM, four items of the third factor loaded on the respective factor which corresponds *sharing tasks*. Finally, a coherent pattern was found for the social network items which loaded on two different factors (see 4<sup>th</sup> factor and 5<sup>th</sup> factor). Two items which indicate spending time with friends loaded on 4<sup>th</sup> factor (*perceived social network of friends*) and other 2 items which correspond asking help from families loaded on the 5<sup>th</sup> factor (*perceived social network of family*). Again, the remaining item of the original social networks factor cross loaded on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> factor with lower factor loadings. Moreover, deletion of this item improved reliability of each factor. Therefore, the researcher omitted this item from the scale for the perceived RMBM as well. In brief, 27 items clustered on 5 factors in the current study: *openness*, *positivity*, *sharing tasks*, *social network of friends*, and lastly *social network of family*. Item-factor loadings and factor correlations for 27 items (i.e., Item\_6 omitted and 27 items remained) were illustrated below in Table 3.7.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was used as an estimate of the reliability of the scale. In the current sample, Cronbach's alpha value of the first factor (openness) was .94, second factor (positivity) was .93, third factor (sharing tasks) was .92, fourth factor (social network of friends) was .82, and fifth factor (social network of family) was .79.



Table 3.7

Factor Loadings for Promax Five-Factor Solution for the Perceived RBMBM

Item	Factor Loadings
Factor 1: Openness	
Item_2	.98
Item_3	.91
Item_4	.91
Item_7	.60
Item_9	.62
Item_11	.68
Item_17	.53
Item_18	.47
Item_25	.41
Factor 2: Positivity	
Item_1	.56
Item_8	.71
Item_10	.75
Item_13	.68
Item_15	.59
Item_16	.87
Item_19	.63
Item_22	.75
Item_23	.60
Item_26	.80
Factor 3: Sharing Tasks	
Item_5	.84
Item_14	.75
Item_21	.90
Item_27	.77

Table 3.7 (continued)

Factor 4: Social Network of Friends					
Item_20					.81
Item_28					.84
Factor 5: Social Network of Family					
Item_12					.76
Item_24					.86
Factor Correlations					
	1	2	3	4	5
Factor 1	–				
Factor 2	.75	–			
Factor 3	.51	.63	–		
Factor 4	.36	.49	.22	–	
Factor 5	.26	.27	.10	.31	–

Overall, results of EFAs both for self-reported and perceived RMBM yielded in same factor structure and the same items clustered on the same factors across two studies. As presented above (see the heading of 3.3.1.4.2.1), results of CFA revealed higher correlations among positivity, understanding, self-disclosure, relationship-talks, and assurances which directed the researcher to test factor structure by conducting EFA. Results of EFAs provided insight to understand the higher correlations among these components when it is considered that the items of positivity and understanding clustered on the same (positivity); the items of self-disclosure and relationship-talks clustered on the same factor (openness), and lastly the items of assurances divided into two and clustered both on positivity and openness factors. As it can be understood, across EFAs, factor structures stayed same for social networks which divided into two factors and sharing tasks which also demonstrated a consistent pattern with the original study of Stafford's (2011).

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found good for each factor across two studies.

In order to confirm the current factor structure emerged in this study with 27 items and 5 factors, confirmatory factor analysis was also conducted with the data from the main study ( $N = 602$ ) for the perceived RMBM. The characteristics of the main data was described in the heading of 3.2. Results of the CFA for perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors showed that the Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square test fit was significant  $\chi^2 (314, N = 602) = 1004.87, p = .00$  which indicated that the model did not fit to the data. The normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ) was calculated for the test of model fit (Kline, 1998) and the value of  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio was 3.20 ( $1004.87/314$ ) which was lower than the recommended value of 5 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). For this model, CFI = .98 and NNFI = .98 were above the cut-off value (Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR = .045 and RMSEA = .06 (90% CI = .06, .07) indicating an adequate fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). In the inspection of modification indices (MI), the researcher decided to add path between item\_18 and item\_7 and item\_9 and item\_25 with greater values of MI. The fit indices showed an acceptable fit  $\chi^2 (312) = 909.93, p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 2.92, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .045, and RMSEA = .056 (90% CI = .07, .10).  $t$  values for each indicator were greater than |1.96|. All standardized estimates were above .30, ranged between .43 and .91.  $R^2$  values which explain how much variance is accounted for in each item were above the suggested criterion of 20% (Hooper et al., 2008) and ranged between .31 and .85 (only for item\_23,  $R^2$  was found to be .18).

#### ***3.3.1.5 Relational Equity Scale (RES)***

Relational Equity Scale was developed by Sabatelli and Cecil-Pigo (1985) within a sample of 301 married individuals to assess "the degree to which individuals feel that, all things considered, the outcomes they derive from their relationships are proportionate to their investments" (p. 933). The items of the scale examine whether a respondent perceives that his/her relationship is equitable and whether s/he

believes equally contributing into the relationship. The scale yielded in one factor consisting of 10 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree). The total score is ranged from 10 to 50. Higher scores on the RES represent higher perception of relational equity. Although researchers did not mention the existence of the reversed items in the RES in their study, the RES includes four reversed items (Item\_2, Item\_5, Item\_7, and Item\_9) which were positively worded (e.g., All things considered, my partner and I contribute equally to our relationship, Item\_7) while rest of the items were negatively worded (e.g., I often feel I put more into our relationship than I get out, Item\_1). Turkish adaptation of the RES was conducted in the current (pilot) study.

In order to be consistent with the other instruments administered in this study, respondents were asked to respond items of the RES on a 5-point scale, 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Therefore, in the current study, higher scores on the RES indicated lower perceptions of equity.

#### ***3.3.1.5.1 Translation and Adaptation Process of the RES***

In the translation and adaptation process of the RES, the same steps explained in detail above (see 3.3.1.4.1) were pursued by the researcher. At the end of the translation process, the finalized Turkish version of the RES was used in the pilot study to analyze its psychometric properties.

#### ***3.3.1.5.2 Validity and Reliability of Turkish RES***

The data from pilot study was used to test validity and reliability of the RES. Three cases (out of 421) with many missing values on RES items were omitted. Out of 418 participants, 296 (70.8%) were female and 122 (29.2%) were male.

##### ***3.3.1.5.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the RES***

Prior to conducting CFA, the assumptions of CFA were checked in the same order based on the aforementioned criteria. The amount of missing was less than 1% (for

items\_2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8); however, Little's MCAR test was found significant  $\chi^2 = 100.67$  ( $df = 61$ ;  $p = .00$ ) showing that the data is not MCAR. Results of chi-square analyses and t-tests showed no significant difference between the cases with and without missing data in terms of gender, marital length, and marital satisfaction. Therefore, the researcher decided to replace missing values through EM algorithm. Next, for the test of univariate normality assumption, skewness and kurtosis values were controlled and these indices were less than 3 (ranged from -0.13 and 2.09 for skewness and -0.08 and 3.40 for kurtosis). This distribution can be named as moderately non-normal (Finney & DiStefano, 2006; Kline, 2011). The result of Mardia's test showed that multivariate normality assumption was not met, the Mardia's coefficient was 173.19 ( $p < .01$ ).

Further, z scores were checked to detect univariate outliers. There were no cases out of the range of the critical value 3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Sixteen cases were detected as multivariate outliers (ranging from 29.69 to 51.90) exceeding the critical Mahalanobis distance value,  $\chi^2 (10) = 29.588$ ,  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Visual inspection of bivariate scatter plots between pairs of items showed no violation of linearity assumption. Lastly, inter-correlations among the items were controlled to detect multivariate collinearity and no correlations were found exceeding the cut-off value of .90 ( $r = .77$  max.). Moreover, tolerance (ranged from .35 to .74) and VIF (2.88 max.) values also demonstrated that multicollinearity assumption was satisfied.

After all the assumptions were satisfied, items of the RES recoded by the researcher in order to make the interpretation of the total score easier. In other words, after recoding, higher scores on the RES corresponded to higher perception of relational equity while lower scores on the RES indicated lower perception of the relational equity.

Next, CFA was conducted to evaluate one factor structure of the RES among married individuals who were living in Turkey. As discussed, at first, CFA was conducted for the datasets with and without outliers separately and results did not show a better fit for the dataset without the outliers. Thus, the following results indicated the results of CFA which performed with the dataset with outliers ( $N = 418$ ). The Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square test fit was found significant  $\chi^2 (35, N = 418) = 263.36, p = .00$  which indicated that the model did not fit to the data. The normed chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 7.52) was higher than the recommended values of 3 or 5 (Kline, 1998; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) and indicated a poor-fit. For this model, CFI = .93 and NNFI = .91 which was under the cut-off value (Hu & Bentler, 1999). SRMR = .07 which was accepted as adequate when CFI above .92 was slightly higher in this study (Hair et al., 2010). RMSEA = .13 (90% CI = .07, .09), was an indicator of a poor fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Herein, the model did not seem to fit the data accurately. For that reason, the modification index (MI) estimates were checked in order to understand the decrease in overall model chi-square statistic if a specific parameter were freely estimated (Kline, 2011). The researcher started to add a path to the model starting from the greater value of the modification indices. For the RES, three modification indices with high values were detected between item\_2 and item\_7 and item\_3 and item\_6. When error terms of these items were freely estimated, the results showed a better and acceptable fit  $\chi^2 (33) = 124.38, p = .00; \chi^2/df$ -ratio = 3.77, CFI = .97, NNFI = .96, SRMR = .05, and RMSEA = .08 (90% CI = .07, .10). Moreover,  $t$  values for each indicator were greater than  $|1.96|$ . All standardized estimates were above .30, ranged between .45 and .75 and  $R^2$  values were above 20%, ranged between .20 and .56.

Cronbach's alpha value was .87 for the RES which provided evidence for the reliability of the Turkish adaptation of RES.

### ***3.3.1.6 Appreciation in Relationships Scale (AIRS)***

Appreciation in Relationships Scale was developed by Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis, and Keltner (2012) to assess “both the extent to which people feel appreciated by their partners and the extent to which they are appreciative of their partners” (p. 260). Two- factor structure of the AIRS was provided as a result of confirmatory factor analysis which was performed with a sample of 347 U.S adults. The AIRS comprised of two subscales with 16 items in total (9 items for appreciative subscale,  $\alpha = .74$  and 7 items for appreciated subscale,  $\alpha = .86$ ) rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Appreciative subscale includes three reversed items and appreciated subscale includes two reversed items which were negatively worded. Higher scores indicate individuals’ greater appreciative feelings and feelings of being appreciated. Evidence for convergent and discriminant validity of the AIR subscales was also provided with several relevant measures (e.g., gratitude & indebtedness, positive interpersonal traits, attachment orientations, and relationship satisfaction). Turkish adaptation of the AIRS was conducted in the current (pilot) study.

#### ***3.3.1.6.1.1 Translation and Adaptation Process of the AIRS***

In the translation and adaptation process of the AIRS, the same steps explained in detail above (see 3.3.1.4.1) were pursued by the researcher. At the end of the translation process, the finalized Turkish version of the AIRS was used in the pilot study to analyze its psychometric properties.

#### ***3.3.1.6.2 Validity and Reliability of Turkish AIRS***

In order to test validity and reliability of the AIRS, the data from pilot study was utilized. Out of 421 married individuals, 5 cases with many missing values on the AIRS items were deleted. Out of 416 participants, 294 (70.7%) participants were female and 122 participants (29.3%) were male.

### ***3.3.1.6.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the AIRS***

At first, assumptions of the CFA were checked as described above. The amount of missingness was equal to 1% for item\_4 and less than 1% for items\_3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, and 13. However, Little's MCAR test was found significant  $\chi^2 = 151.48$  ( $df = 117$ ;  $p = .02$ ). The results of comparison tests of the chi-square and t-tests were found non-significant. Therefore, EM algorithm was employed. Next, skewness and kurtosis values were checked to test univariate normality assumption. Both the skewness (ranged from -1.48 and 1.28) and kurtosis (ranged from -1.13 and 1.57) indices were lower than 3 which provided evidence for univariate normality (Finney & DiStefano, 2006; Kline, 2011). On the other hand, the result of Mardia's test (Mardia's coefficient = 404.86,  $p < .01$ ) showed that multivariate normality assumption was not met.

Next, z scores were checked to detect univariate outliers. No outliers were detected in excess of  $\pm 3.29$  except for item\_3 and item\_9 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For these items, z scores (-3.47 and -3.46 respectively) were slightly exceeded the critical value. Twenty-six cases were detected as multivariate outliers (ranging from 39.82 to 82.69) exceeding the critical Mahalanobis distance value,  $\chi^2(16) = 39.252$ ,  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Visual inspection of bivariate scatter plots between pairs of items showed no violation of linearity assumption. Inter-correlations among the items did not exceed the cut-off value of .90 ( $r = .78$  max.). Furthermore, tolerance values were ranged from .23 to .79 and the highest VIF value was 2.22 which indicated that multicollinearity assumption was satisfied.

Once the assumption checks were completed, CFA was conducted to test two-factor structure of the AIRS with the datasets with and without outliers. The results did not show a better fit for the dataset without outliers. According to the results of CFA which was conducted with the dataset with outliers, Satorra-Bentler Scaled Chi-Square test fit was found significant  $\chi^2(103) = 442.15$ ,  $p = .00$ ; however, the normed chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 4.29) was lower than the recommended value of 5



(Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). For this model, other fit indices provided evidence for the mediocre fit of the two-factor structure:  $CFI = .97$ ,  $NNFI = .96$ ,  $SRMR = .065$ ,  $RMSEA = .089$  (90% CI = .08, .10). In the inspection of modification indices, the highest value was found between item\_4 (“At times my partner takes me for granted”) and item\_13 (“At times I take my partner for granted”). When the items were evaluated, it was obvious that the content and wording similarities between these items might yield in shared variance. However, the researcher decided not to freely estimate the error terms of item\_4 and item\_13 since the value for the modification index was not quite high (71.1) and these items belong to different subscales. Additionally, the current model has already reached a mediocre fit. In this model, except the standardized estimates of item\_12 (.26) and item\_13 (.21), all standardized estimates were above .30, ranged between .49 and .88. Moreover,  $t$  values for each indicator were greater than  $|1.96|$ .  $R^2$  values were above 20%, ranged between .30 and .77. However,  $R^2$  values were also low for the item\_12R (.07) and item\_13R (.04) which had the lowest standardized estimates.

As an evidence of reliability of the AIRS, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value was found .85 for appreciative subscale and .90 for appreciated subscale.

### ***3.3.1.7 Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)***

Hendrick (1981) developed the Marital Assessment Questionnaire (MAQ) with 51 married couples (102 individuals) to measure marital satisfaction. Later, she (Hendrick, 1988) extended the focus of MAQ to all kinds of romantic relationships, revised and explored the psychometric characteristics of the measurement, and created Relationship Assessment Scale. RAS comprised of 7 items on a 5-point Likert scale. In this scale, the word ‘mate’ was replaced by ‘partner’ and the word ‘marriage’ replaced by ‘relationship’ and two items from the earlier version of MAQ were included again. The scale includes two reverse coded items (Item\_4 and Item\_7). Total score varies from 7 to 35, and higher scores indicate higher relationship satisfaction. Factor analysis to test the structure of the scale was

conducted with 125 undergraduate students who reported that they were ‘in love’. One factor solution was verified accounting for 46% of the variance as a result of principal-component-factor analysis. The item-total correlations ranged from .57 to .76. The convergent validity was calculated with Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the correlation was found .80. In the second part of her study, Hendrick (1988) implemented the RAS with 57 dating couples and confirmed the univariate structure of the scale accounting for 57% of the variance. The internal consistency coefficient was found .86.

Turkish adaptation of the RAS was conducted by Curun (2001) with 70 dating couples (140 individuals). For construct validity, factor analysis was conducted which resulted in one factor with eigenvalue greater than 1 and explained 52% of the variance. The alpha coefficient was .86. Item factor loadings varied from .56 to .88. The factor structure was found as consistent with the original factor structure of the scale.

The permission to use the RAS in the present study was gathered both from Hendrick and Curun. The Turkish adaptation of the RAS was implemented to assess the perceptions of individuals’ marital satisfaction and one-factor structure was also tested through CFA in the pilot sample of the current study.

#### ***3.3.1.7.1 Validity and Reliability of Turkish RAS***

The data from pilot study was used to test validity and reliability of the RAS. Four cases with many missing values on RAS items were omitted and the number of participants reduced to 417 married individuals ( $n = 296$ , 71% for females and  $n = 121$ , 29% for males).

##### ***3.3.1.7.1.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the RAS***

As explained before, assumption check was followed by CFA. The amount of missing was equal to 1% for item\_1 and less than 1% for items\_2, 3, 4, 6. Little’s

MCAR test was found significant  $\chi^2 = 100.67$  ( $df = 61$ ;  $p = .00$ ). Next, the results of the comparison tests of chi-square and t-tests were found non-significant. Therefore, EM algorithm was employed to deal with missingness. Next, skewness and kurtosis values were controlled to test univariate normality assumption. The skewness index was lower than 3 (ranged from -2.20 and 1.36) and the highest kurtosis value (5.33) was smaller than 7 in which the distribution can be named as moderately non-normal with skewness values smaller than 2 (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). The result of Mardia's test showed that multivariate normality assumption was not met, the Mardia's coefficient is 102.95 ( $p < .01$ ). Later,  $z$  scores were checked to detect univariate outliers. There were a few cases slightly exceeding the cut-off value of -3.29 for items\_1, 2, 3, and 6 (ranged from -3.47 to -4.93) indicating existence of potential univariate outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Eleven cases were detected as multivariate outliers (ranging from 24.40 to 66.46) exceeding the critical Mahalanobis distance value,  $\chi^2 (7) = 24.322$ ,  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Visual inspection of bivariate scatter plots between pairs of items showed no violation of linearity assumption. Finally, inter-correlations among the items did not exceed the cut-off value of .90 ( $r = .797$  max.). Moreover, tolerance (ranged from .20 to .50) and VIF (4.93 max.) values also provided that multicollinearity assumption was met.

After all the assumptions were checked, CFA was conducted to verify one factor structure of the RAS for the datasets with and without outliers. The results did not show a better fit for the dataset without the outliers. The results of CFA performed with the dataset with outliers showed almost perfect fit for the one-factor structure of the RAS,  $\chi^2 (14) = 27.59$ ,  $p = .02$ ,  $\chi^2/df$ -ratio = 1.97,  $CFI = 1.00$ ,  $NNFI = .99$ ,  $SRMR = .02$ ,  $RMSEA = .05$  (90% CI = .02, .08). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient value was found .92.

### ***3.3.1.8 Demographic Information Form***

Demographic information form was developed by the researcher. First, participants were asked to answer demographic questions such as gender, age, level of education and level of their partners' education. Next, they were asked to respond questions about characteristics of their marriage such as the way how they got married (e.g., prearranged marriage, companionate marriage), marital length in years, whether they got married before, if yes; how many times they got married before, whether they have children from their current marriage, if yes; how many children they have, and age of the firstborn.

## **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

The pilot and main data were collected by the researcher in 2016, consecutively. Target population of this study was individuals who were married for at least a year, living in Turkey, and willing to participate in the study. Similar procedures were followed for the data collection processes of pilot and main studies. In each implementation, no identifying information such as participant's name/surname or email address was required.

### **3.4.1 Data Collection Procedure for Pilot Study**

In the very first step, an ethical permission was granted from the Middle East Technical University (METU) Human Subjects Ethics Committee (see Appendix F for permission) to implement instruments. After the approval was obtained, both the paper-pencil forms and online survey of instruments were prepared by the researcher. Paper-pencil forms were applied by the researcher and they were given to and retrieved from the participants in envelopes in order to keep their responses private. Meanwhile, informed consent forms were provided and obtained from the participants. The faculty and staff members, and graduate students of METU, and married individuals whom could be reached by the researcher were asked to participate in the study. Moreover, snowball technique was followed and the

participants were asked to refer the survey form to other married individuals they know in order to increase the number of participants. Online survey was preferred as a convenient method to be able to reach more married individuals who could not be reached in person. Not only the participants who were not reached in person but also individuals, who preferred to participate in online rather than paper-pencil survey, were sent the online link of the survey. The researcher designed online survey using ‘Googleforms’ and announced it via e-mails and social media accounts (e.g., facebook). At the beginning of the online survey, participants were asked to declare that they are voluntarily participating to the study. Consequently, the sample for the pilot study was recruited through non-random sampling.

### **3.4.2 Data Collection Procedure for Main Study**

At first, another ethical permission was granted from METU Human Subjects Ethics Committee (see Appendix G for permission). In a way similar to the pilot study, both paper-pencil forms and online survey were prepared. Individuals who met the criteria (i.e., married for at least a year and willing to participate in the study) and did not participate in the pilot study were invited to the study. Paper-pencil forms of the survey with the informed consent forms were again conveyed to the faculty and staff members and graduate students of METU who were not participated in the pilot study. Further, the researcher implemented the forms to the married individuals who work in various institutions (e.g., birth registration office, hospital, electronic company) in Ankara. Similar to the pilot study, online survey for the main data implementation was designed using ‘Googleforms’ and announced via e-mails and social media accounts (e.g., facebook) and individuals, who could not be reached in person and did not prefer to participate in paper-pencil survey, were sent the online link of the survey. At the beginning of the online survey, participants were asked to declare that they are voluntarily participating to the study. The sample of the main study was recruited through non-random sampling.

### **3.5 Description of Variables**

#### **3.5.1 Exogenous Variables**

*Relationship Maintenance Behaviors:* In the present study, relationship maintenance behaviors of *openness*, *sharing tasks*, and *positivity* were selected as exogenous variables. As stated in the previous chapter, the researcher decided not to include the social network factors in the test of models due to the fact that only two items represent social network factors in regard to results of EFA in this study.

Self-reported use of maintenance behaviors was measured through the total scores of the openness, sharing tasks, and positivity subscales of the Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement.

Perceived partner's use of maintenance behaviors was measured through the total scores of the openness, sharing tasks, and positivity subscales of the Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement.

#### **3.5.2 Mediator Variables**

*Relational Equity:* Total scores of Relational Equity Scale was used to assess married individuals' perceptions of equity in their marriages.

*Perceived Appreciation:* Total scores of Appreciated sub-scale of Appreciation in Relationships Scale was utilized to assess married individuals' feelings of being appreciated by their spouses.

*Appreciativeness:* Total scores of Appreciative sub-scale of Appreciation in Relationships Scale was utilized to assess married individuals' appreciative feelings towards their spouses.

### **3.5.3 Endogenous Variable**

*Marital Satisfaction:* Total scores of Relationship Assessment Scale was used to assess individuals' perceived level of marital satisfaction.

### **3.6 Data Analyses**

The current study aimed to test two models that investigate the relationships among self-reported and perceived maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), relational equity, and appreciation in relationships (appreciated and appreciative feelings) and their impact on marital satisfaction. For this purpose, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized models. Prior to conducting SEM, the assumptions were controlled, descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations were examined using SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013). Next, the measurement and structural models were tested consecutively via LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993).

### **3.7 Limitations of the Study**

There are number of limitations of the current study that warrant to be presented. The results should be interpreted in consideration of these limitations. Firstly, non-random sampling method was used to recruit the participants to the study which bases on availability and willingness of the individuals to participate (Gravetter & Forzano, 2012). Therefore, the generalizability of the study results should be interpreted considering the limitation of sampling method. The result patterns might change with the selection of different samples.

Secondly, there were also some limitations in the study with regard to sample characteristics since some of the demographic variables were not equally represented. For instance, although participation rates of females and males were close in the main study ( $n = 335$ , 55.6% for females and  $n = 265$ , 44% for males), the number of female participants ( $n = 298$ , 70.8%) were higher than male

participants ( $n = 123$ , 29.2%) in the pilot study. Additionally, majority of the participants was recruited from Ankara both in the pilot and the main studies and the rest of the participants were also mostly from urban metropolises. Moreover, the participation rates were not equal for the individuals who participated in the study via paper-pencil forms and online survey link. Due to the disadvantage of the use of snowball sampling method, the sample was specific in terms of some characteristics. For instance, the participants and their spouses represented highly educated profile both in the pilot and the main datasets. In other words, participants predominantly graduated from university and a considerable number of participants had graduate degree. Moreover, the way how the participants got married was largely companionate. Furthermore, although the range of marital length was large in the sample, the average marital length (almost twelve years) indicated that participants were predominantly in long-term marriages.

Thirdly, the relationship maintenance behavior of social network (family and friend) was not included in this study because each factor represented by only two items according to results of the factor structure in current study. It might lead to the limitation of understanding self and perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors.

Lastly, in the current study, the only measurement technique used in obtaining data was self-report measurements. Although the self-report measurement technique may lead participants to respond to the questionnaires in a certain and socially desirable way, it is a commonly preferred technique to observe relational constructs from individuals' perspective. Moreover, in this study, only one spouse of a dyad was included into the study and they were asked to report their perceptions about their partners' use of relationship maintenance behaviors; however, their partners' reports were not considered.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

Results of the main study were presented in this chapter. First, the findings of preliminary analyses including assumption checks, descriptive statistics by study variables, and bivariate correlations among study variables were provided. Second, results of the measurement models were explained. Finally, findings of the structural models were illustrated.

#### **4.1 Preliminary Analyses**

Prior to conducting SEM analyses, dataset was screened by the researcher in order to detect any mis-entries. For this purpose, frequency tables for each item were checked and the researcher ensured that all the minimum and maximum values were correct and there were no unusual number entered. Then, the reversed items of the measurements were recoded. All preliminary analyses were conducted by using SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013) and the results were explained below.

##### **4.1.1 Assumptions of SEM**

After the researcher decided the accuracy of data entries, the assumptions of SEM (e.g., sample size and missing data, normality, influential outliers, linearity and homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity) were tested respectively.

##### ***4.1.1.1 Sample Size and Missing Data***

The data was screened to detect the amount of missing values and the pattern of missing data. The amount of missingness for all items was less than 1.4%. Little's MCAR tests (Little & Rubin, 1983) resulted in a significant chi square value for

each measurement showing that the pattern of missingness is not at random. Considering the sensitivity of Little's MCAR test to sample size (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), the pattern of missingness was analyzed as comparing cases with complete scores and cases with missing values in terms of the items of the relevant measurement and some of the study variables (Allison, 2002) by conducting a series of crosstabs - chi square test and t-tests. Results of these tests showed that cases with and without complete scores did not differ in terms of demographic variables (e.g., gender, education level, type of marriage, and number of children) and the given study variables. Herein, considering non-significant results of comparison tests and Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommendation (any method would result in same results with missing data lower than 5%), the researcher decided to use data imputation through EM algorithm. Consequently, the dataset comprised of 602 cases which met the sufficient sample size criterion ( $N > 200$ ) to implement SEM (Kline, 2011).

#### ***4.1.1.2 Normality***

Skewness and kurtosis values for items were checked to assess univariate normality assumption. The skewness indices were ranged between the cut-off value of  $\pm 3$  (Kline, 2011); however, there were a few cases exceeding the cut-off values of 3 and 7 for kurtosis indicating a moderate non-normality. Then, Mardia's (1985) test was used to assess multivariate normality. The results of Mardia's test indicated non-normal patterns for all study variables. The researcher handled this departure from non-normality by selecting Satorra-Bentler scaling-corrected test statistic which does not require the assumption of multivariate normality (Satorra & Bentler, 1994).

#### ***4.1.1.3 Influential Outliers***

Univariate outliers were detected through standardized z scores and there were a few cases slightly exceeding the cut-off value of  $\pm 3.29$  indicating the existence of

potential univariate outliers. Since the existence of a few  $z$  scores in large sample sizes is considered as possible (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), the researcher decided to keep these cases in the study. Mahalanobis distance values were calculated to detect multivariate outliers. Forty-eight cases were named as multivariate outliers which exceeded the critical value of  $\chi^2 (10) = 29.588$ ,  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Then, as consistent with the method chosen in the pilot study, rather than omitting these cases from the dataset, the researcher preferred to create two different datasets: one with the outliers and one without the outliers to conduct SEM with these two datasets to examine if any differences occur. Results showed no differences; hence, the outliers were kept in the dataset and results were reported obtained from the dataset with outliers.

#### ***4.1.1.4 Linearity and Homoscedasticity***

Linearity and homoscedasticity among residuals were tested to provide further evidence for multivariate normality. Linearity assumption is that ‘there is a straight-line relationship between two variables’ and homoscedasticity assumption is that ‘the variability in scores for one continuous variable is roughly the same at all values of another continuous variables’ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, pp. 117-119). Partial regression plots were created through the separate regression analyses via SPSS 22 and visual inspection of the plots showed no violation for the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity.

#### ***4.1.1.5 Multicollinearity***

Lastly, multicollinearity among study variables was checked. All the inter-correlations among variables were less than the cut-off value of .90 ( $r = .77$  max.) (Kline, 2011). Additionally, to provide further evidence, the cut-off values for tolerance ( $1 - R^2$ )  $< .10$  and variance inflation factor (VIF) which equals  $1/(1 - R^2) > 10.0$  were checked (Kline, 2011). Based on the tolerance (ranged from .20 and

.81) and VIF (ranged from 1.23 to 5.10) values for the variables in this study, there was no evidence for the violation of multicollinearity assumption.

## 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Before running the main analyses, means and standard deviations of the study variables across gender were described. Then, a series of ANOVAs were conducted to examine whether gender create significant mean differences for the study variables.

Prior to report the results of ANOVAs, homogeneity of variance assumption was controlled. The results of Levene's test were found non-significant ( $p > .05$ ) for self-reported use of openness, both self-reported and perceived use of positivity, relational equity, and marital satisfaction indicating that homogeneity of variance assumption was not violated. For these variables, alpha value was adjusted to .005 (0.05/10) in interpretation of ANOVA results. For the rest of the variables (perceived openness, self-reported and perceived use of sharing tasks, feelings of being appreciated, and appreciative feelings) Levene's test was found significant ( $p < .05$ ). For these variables, the alpha level was set at .04 and adjusted to .004 (0.04/10) for interpreting the results of ANOVAs. These adjustments (Bonferroni correction) were applied to reduce Type I error due to multiple comparisons. Cohen's  $d$ s were also computed to evaluate effect sizes and Cohen's criteria was followed: Cohen's  $d$  of 0.2 as small, 0.5 as medium, and 0.8 as large (Cohen, 1988).

Means and standard deviations for study variables in total and across gender were presented in Table 4.1. In terms of gender differences, significant results were found between the scores of females and males both for the self-reported use of openness  $F(1, 598) = 8.61, p = .003, \text{Cohen's } d = .24$  and perceived use of openness  $F(1, 598) = 18.01, p = .000, \text{Cohen's } d = -.35$ . Females ( $M = 52.06, SD = 9.78$ ) engaged in more openness behavior to maintain their relationships than males ( $M = 49.60, SD = 10.68$ ). On the other hand, perceived use of openness behaviors of females

( $M = 46.39$ ,  $SD = 13.01$ ) was found less than perceived use of openness behaviors of males ( $M = 50.60$ ,  $SD = 10.80$ ). The differences were small to medium according to Cohen (1988). Significant results were found between the scores of females' and males' self-reported use of sharing tasks  $F(1, 598) = 31.51$ ,  $p = .000$ , *Cohen's d* = .45 and perceived use of sharing tasks behaviors  $F(1, 598) = 13.92$ ,  $p = .000$ , *Cohen's d* = -.17. Females reported to use more sharing tasks behaviors ( $M = 25.95$ ,  $SD = 2.83$ ) than males ( $M = 24.37$ ,  $SD = 4.02$ ). In terms of perceived use of sharing tasks behaviors, males reported to perceive greater partners' use of sharing tasks behaviors ( $M = 24.62$ ,  $SD = 4.15$ ) than females' perceptions ( $M = 23.15$ ,  $SD = 10.80$ ). The difference was small to medium for the self-reported use of sharing tasks while it was small for the perceived use of sharing tasks. Both for the self-reported and perceived use of positivity behaviors, non-significant results were found across gender  $F(1, 598) = 3.44$ ,  $p = .062$ ;  $F(1, 598) = 2.11$ ,  $p = .147$ , respectively. For the relational equity component, the result was non-significant for gender differences,  $F(1, 598) = 1.12$ ,  $p = .289$ . Further, the results revealed no gender differences in terms of feelings of being appreciated  $F(1, 598) = 2.60$ ,  $p = .107$ , and appreciative feelings  $F(1, 598) = .23$ ,  $p = .629$ . Lastly, no significant difference was found for marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) across gender,  $F(1, 598) = 5.63$ ,  $p = .018$ .

Table 4.1

*Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables*

Variables	Range	Total ( $n = 602$ )		Female ( $n = 335$ )		Male ( $n = 265$ )	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Openness	9-63	50.99	10.25	52.06	9.78	49.60	10.68
Openness_P	9-63	48.23	12.24	46.39	13.01	50.60	10.80
Tasks	4-28	25.25	3.49	25.95	2.83	24.37	4.02

Table 4.1 (continued)

Variables	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Tasks_P	4-28	23.78	4.86	23.15	5.25	24.62	4.15
Positivity	10-70	56.71	9.97	56.02	9.95	57.54	9.96
Positivity_P	10-70	55.04	11.76	54.40	11.52	55.81	12.05
Equity	10-50	21.40	7.48	21.67	7.66	21.02	7.24
Appreciated	7-49	36.59	9.60	36.03	10.17	37.31	8.83
Appreciative	7-63	48.64	9.96	48.80	10.44	48.41	9.36
Satisfaction	7-35	29.45	5.17	29.00	5.34	30.00	4.91

*Note.* 2 participants did not report their gender. Therefore, total sample is 602 while sample for females is 335 and sample for males is 265. Openness, Tasks, Positivity represent self-reported use of maintenance behaviors. Openness\_P, Task\_P, Positivity\_P represent perceived partner's use of maintenance behaviors.

#### 4.2.1 Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables

As a final step, bivariate correlations among all the study variables were calculated through Pearson correlation coefficients for overall sample and presented in Table 4.2. In the interpretation of the strength of the correlations, the cut-off values as recommended by Field (2009) were considered:  $\pm .10$  represents a small effect,  $\pm .30$  represents a medium effect, and  $\pm .50$  represents a large effect.

All fifteen bivariate correlations among the self-reported and perceived relationship maintenance behaviors were found significantly and positively correlated. Maintenance behaviors were found correlated varying from medium (e.g., between self-reported use of task and perceived use of openness,  $r = .35$ ,  $p < .05$ ) to large effect (e.g., between perceived partner's use of openness and positivity,  $r = .77$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Married individuals with higher scores on their own use of maintenance

behaviors tended to perceive their partners' use of maintenance behaviors (e.g., openness, sharing tasks, and positivity) higher as well. In terms of self-reported use of maintenance behaviors, the strongest relationship was found between openness and positivity behaviors ( $r = .74, p < .01$ ). Similarly, the strongest relationship was found between openness and positivity ( $r = .77, p < .01$ ) for perceived use of maintenance behaviors.

Relational equity was found significantly and negatively correlated with the maintenance behaviors of the self-reported and perceived use of openness, sharing tasks and positivity behaviors ( $r$  changes from .15 to .64,  $p < .01$ ) indicating that married individuals who perceived greater equity in their marriages tended to get higher scores on their own engagement and perceived partners' engagement maintenance. Relational equity was also positively correlated with the feelings of appreciated ( $r = .67, p < .01$ ) and appreciative feelings ( $r = .56, p < .01$ ); in that individuals who perceived their marriages more equitable were more prone to feel appreciated and appreciative of their spouses. Here, one should remember that items of the RES recoded by the researcher to make the interpretation of the total score easier same as the researcher did in the pilot study. In other words, after recoding, higher scores on the RES corresponded higher perception of relational equity while lower scores on the RES indicated lower perception of the relational equity.

Individuals' appreciated and appreciative feelings were positively and significantly correlated with all the maintenance behaviors ( $r$  changes from .22 to .76,  $p < .01$ ). Namely, individuals who reported to feel higher appreciation by their partners and be more appreciative of their partners tended to engage in more maintenance behaviors and perceive their partners' use of maintenance behaviors to be greater as well. The correlation between feelings of appreciation and appreciativeness was also found positive and large in magnitude ( $r = .73, p < .01$ ).

Regarding marital satisfaction, expectedly, all maintenance behaviors were significantly and positively correlated with marital satisfaction ( $r$  changes from .19

to .72,  $p < .01$ ). Significant and positive correlation was also found between relational equity and marital satisfaction ( $r = .67$ ,  $p < .01$ ) which explains that individuals who perceived higher relational equity in their marriages were more prone to feel satisfied. Expectedly, feelings of greater appreciation ( $r = .69$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and appreciativeness ( $r = .68$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were positively correlated with marital satisfaction. Overall, the given correlations provided preliminary evidence to understand the relationships among exogenous variables and mediator variables as well as endogenous variable.

Table 4.2

*Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables*

	1 Openness	2 Openness_P	3 Tasks	4 Tasks_P	5 Positivity	6 Positivity_P	7 Equity	8 Appreciated	9 Appreciative	10 Satisfaction
1.	-									
2.	.70**	-								
3.	.49**	.35**	-							
4.	.44**	.56**	.41**	-						
5.	.74**	.65**	.52**	.53**	-					
6.	.69**	.77**	.42**	.63**	.76**	-				
7.	.45**	.56**	.15**	.53**	.46**	.64**	-			
8.	.56**	.72**	.22**	.51**	.56**	.76**	.67**	-		
9.	.65**	.57**	.33**	.47**	.72**	.68**	.56**	.73**	-	
10.	.52**	.59**	.19**	.56**	.59**	.72**	.67**	.69**	.68**	-

*Note.* Inter-correlations for total sample were presented ( $N = 602$ ), \*\* $p < .01$ . Openness, Tasks, Positivity represent self-reported use of maintenance behaviors. Openness\_P, Task\_P, Positivity\_P represent perceived partner's use of maintenance behaviors.



### 4.3 Model Testing

#### 4.3.1 Measurement Models

Prior to conduct SEM, measurement models were tested to determine the relationships between the latent and observed variables (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). In line with the research questions in this study, two different measurement models were tested. In the first model, the relationships among the latent variables of self-reported maintenance behaviors, feelings of being appreciated, relational equity, and marital satisfaction, and in the second model, perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors, relational equity, appreciative feelings, and marital satisfaction were investigated.

##### *4.3.1.1 Results for the First Measurement Model*

Results of CFA for this model showed a good fit  $\chi^2 (1015) = 2330.81, p = .00; \chi^2 /df\text{-ratio} = 2.30, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .06$ , and  $RMSEA = .046$  (90% CI = .04, .05).  $t$  values for each indicator were greater than  $|1.96|$ . All the standardized estimates were significant and ranged between .28 and .92. See Table 4.3 for standardized and unstandardized regression weights, squared multiple correlations, and  $t$  values. Subsequently, the correlations among the latent variables were presented in Table 4.4. The first measurement model with standardized estimates and latent factor correlations was also depicted in Figure 4.1.

Table 4.3

*Standardized Regression Weights (SRW), Unstandardized Regression Weights (URW), Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC), and t Values for the First Measurement Model*

	SRW	URW	SMC	<i>t</i>
OPENNESS				
MB_2	.74	1.03	.54	21.49
MB_3	.66	1.15	.43	19.67
MB_7	.69	0.90	.48	20.46
MB_9	.70	1.05	.49	21.51
MB_11	.72	1.29	.52	23.63
MB_17	.52	0.90	.27	13.12
MB_18	.69	0.89	.47	19.10
MB_23	.78	1.25	.61	27.28
MB_25	.72	1.21	.52	22.74
TASKS				
MB_4	.78	0.80	.62	20.74
MB_14	.60	0.75	.35	15.44
MB_21	.81	0.80	.66	21.88
MB_27	.78	0.82	.61	19.74
POSITIVITY				
MB_1	.47	0.63	.22	11.24
MB_8	.76	1.07	.57	23.77
MB_10	.72	0.86	.52	19.57
MB_13	.73	0.99	.54	23.23
MB_15	.54	0.80	.30	13.87
MB_16	.78	1.10	.61	26.27
MB_19	.76	1.19	.58	24.84
MB_20	.41	0.78	.17	10.01

Table 4.3 (continued)

	SRW	URW	SMC	<i>t</i>
MB_22	.71	0.89	.51	20.36
MB_26	.80	1.03	.61	26.51
FEELING APPRECIATED				
APTED_2	.85	1.55	.72	30.73
APTED_4R	.35	0.74	.13	8.78
APTED_7	.84	1.66	.70	29.89
APTED_8	.72	1.22	.52	21.05
APTED_10	.81	1.55	.66	28.05
APTED_14	.82	1.52	.68	28.39
APTED_16R	.38	0.69	.14	9.59
RELATIONAL EQUITY				
EQ_1	.28	0.40	.08	6.21
EQ_2R	.61	0.67	.37	15.09
EQ_3	.57	0.66	.33	14.15
EQ_4	.46	0.63	.21	11.96
EQ_5R	.64	0.82	.41	17.72
EQ_6	.51	0.56	.26	12.18
EQ_7R	.68	0.80	.46	19.65
EQ_8	.46	0.60	.21	11.65
EQ_9R	.68	0.81	.46	18.44
EQ_10	.30	0.41	.09	7.00
MARITAL SATISFACTION				
SAT_1	.75	0.66	.57	22.36
SAT_2	.92	0.80	.86	32.18
SAT_3	.84	0.71	.70	23.78
SAT_4R	.72	0.77	.52	21.21
SAT_5	.84	0.84	.71	28.27

Table 4.3 (continued)

	SRW	URW	SMC	<i>t</i>
SAT_6	.72	0.54	.52	16.24
SAT_7R	.61	0.62	.38	16.37

*Note.* MB = Self-reported Maintenance Behaviors (Openness, Sharing Tasks, and Positivity), APTED = Feelings of Being Appreciated, EQ = Relational Equity, SAT = Marital Satisfaction. The letter of “R” at the end of item numbers refers reversed items.

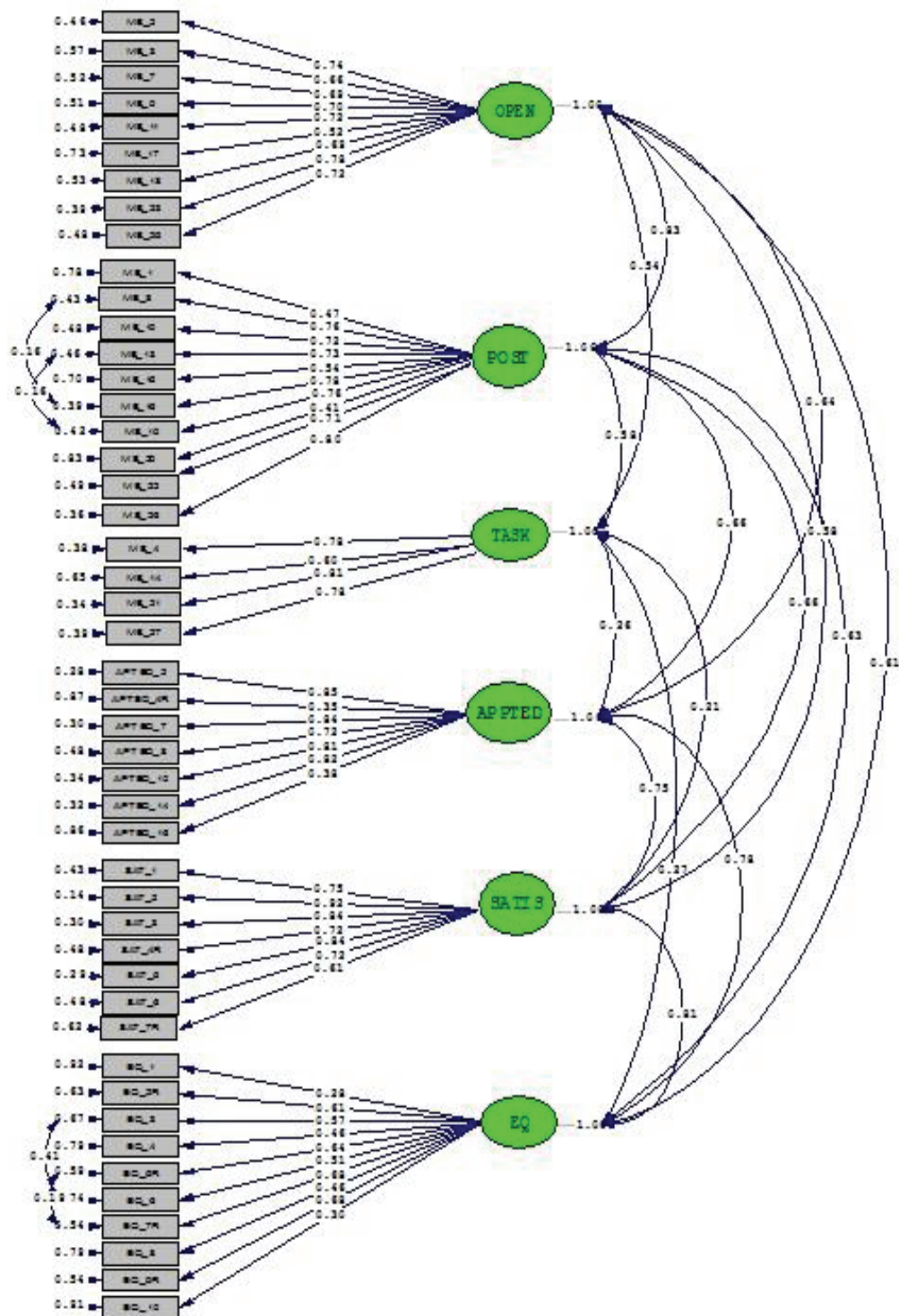


Figure 4.1 First measurement model with standardized estimates and latent factor correlations.

Table 4.4

*Intercorrelations among Latent Variables for the First Measurement Model*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Openness	1					
2. Tasks	.54**	1				
3. Positivity	.83**	.58**	1			
4. Feeling Appreciated	.64**	.26**	.66**	1		
5. Relational Equity	.61**	.27**	.63**	.78**	1	
6. Marital Satisfaction	.58**	.21**	.66**	.75**	.81**	1

*Note.* \*\*  $p < .01$

**4.3.1.2 Results for the Second Measurement Model**

Results of CFA for the second model also showed a good fit  $\chi^2 (1108) = 2566.01$ ,  $p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 / df$ -ratio = 2.32, CFI = .99, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .05, and RMSEA = .047 (90% CI = .04, .05).  $t$  values for each indicator were greater than  $|1.96|$ . All the standardized estimates were significant and ranged between .13 and .92. See Table 4.5 for standardized and unstandardized regression weights, squared multiple correlations, and  $t$  values. The correlations among the latent variables were presented in Table 4.6. The second measurement model with standardized estimates and latent factor correlations was depicted in Figure 4.2. Cronbach alpha coefficients of each instrument in the first and the second model were tested with the main data and presented in Appendix H.

Table 4.5

*Standardized Regression Weights (SRW), Unstandardized Regression Weights (URW), Squared Multiple Correlations (SMC), and t Values for the Second Measurement Model*

	SRW	URW	SMC	<i>t</i>
PERCEIVED OPENNESS				
MB_2p	.77	1.32	.59	25.61
MB_3p	.77	1.39	.59	25.80
MB_7p	.70	1.08	.49	20.62
MB_9p	.75	1.36	.56	24.31
MB_11p	.74	1.39	.54	23.20
MB_17p	.72	1.26	.52	20.31
MB_18p	.70	1.04	.49	19.36
MB_23p	.77	1.36	.59	25.26
MB_25p	.77	1.48	.60	25.86
PERCEIVED TASKS				
MB_4p	.81	1.11	.65	23.68
MB_14p	.70	1.18	.50	19.05
MB_21p	.85	1.14	.72	23.36
MB_27p	.79	1.10	.63	23.42
PERCEIVED POSITIVITY				
MB_1p	.55	0.82	.30	14.21
MB_8p	.78	1.21	.61	25.45
MB_10p	.77	1.10	.60	23.75
MB_13p	.80	1.22	.63	25.85
MB_15p	.67	1.25	.45	21.02
MB_16p	.80	1.16	.65	25.64
MB_19p	.80	1.39	.65	25.64
MB_20p	.43	0.83	.19	10.33

Table 4.5 (continued)

	SRW	URW	SMC	<i>t</i>
MB_22p	.75	1.04	.56	24.06
MB_26p	.81	1.06	.65	28.70
APPRECIATIVE FEELINGS				
APTV_1	.77	1.54	.59	25.40
APTV_3	.51	0.77	.26	12.50
APTV_5	.71	0.97	.50	20.36
APTV_6	.83	1.27	.69	27.11
APTV_9	.84	1.19	.70	26.29
APTV_11R	.49	0.94	.24	13.56
APTV_12R	.13	0.28	.02	2.98
APTV_13R	.32	0.54	.10	7.18
APTV_15	.83	1.49	.68	29.49
RELATIONAL EQUITY				
EQ_1	.28	.40	.08	6.33
EQ_2R	.61	.67	.37	15.32
EQ_3	.57	.66	.33	14.06
EQ_4	.46	.62	.21	11.76
EQ_5R	.65	.82	.42	17.83
EQ_6	.50	.56	.25	12.10
EQ_7R	.69	.82	.48	20.02
EQ_8	.45	.59	.20	11.50
EQ_9R	.68	.80	.46	18.31
EQ_10	.29	.40	.09	6.90
MARITAL SATISFACTION				
SAT_1	.76	.67	.58	22.69
SAT_2	.92	.80	.85	32.01
SAT_3	.84	.71	.70	23.91



Table 4.5 (continued)

	SRW	URW	SMC	<i>t</i>
SAT_4R	.72	.77	.52	21.17
SAT_5	.84	.84	.70	28.03
SAT_6	.72	.54	.52	16.34
SAT_7R	.61	.62	.37	16.28

*Note.* MB = Perceived Partner Maintenance Behaviors (Openness, Sharing Tasks, and Positivity), APTV = Appreciative Feelings, EQ = Relational Equity, SAT = Marital Satisfaction. The letter of “R” at the end of item numbers refers reversed items.

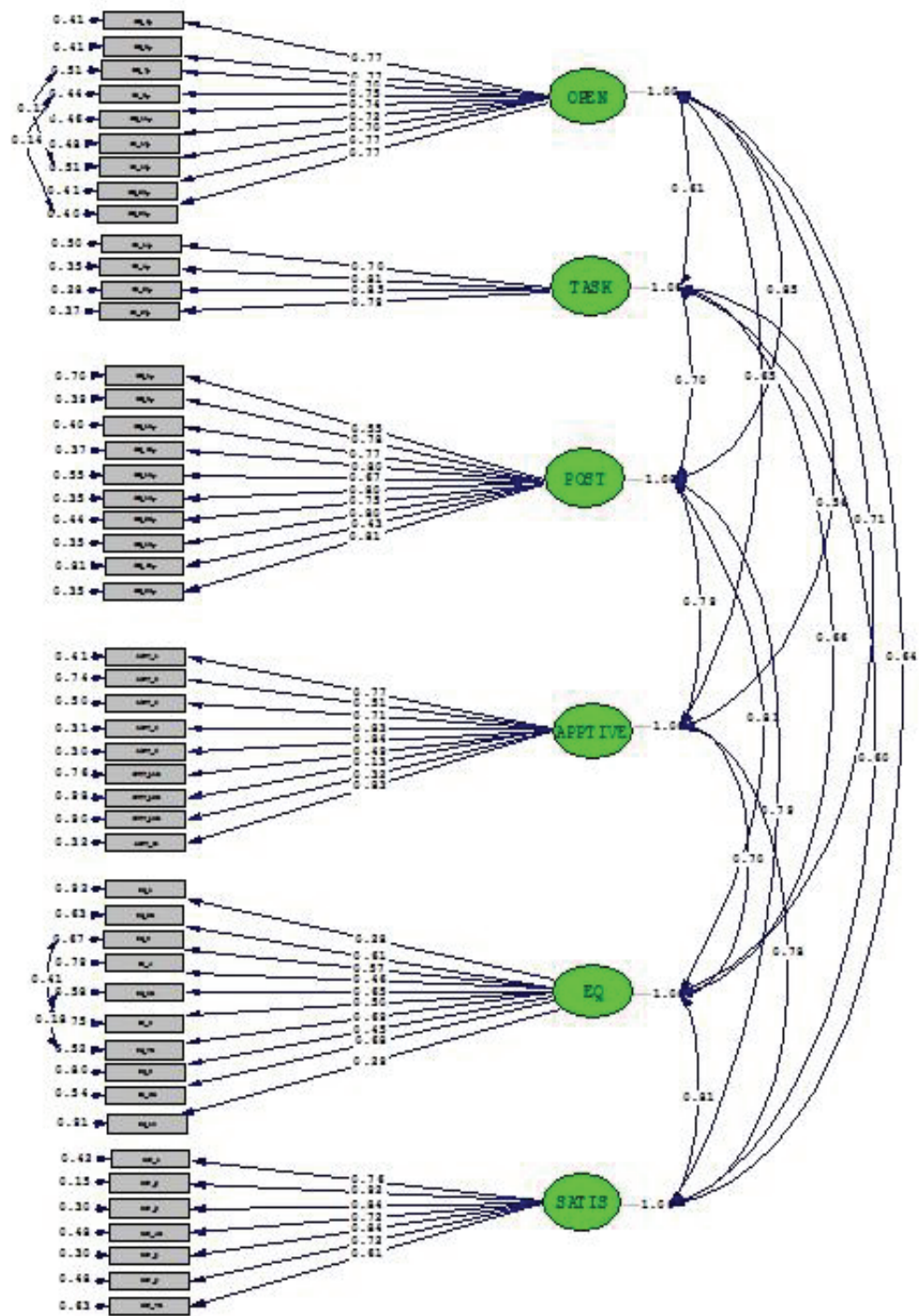


Figure 4.2 Second measurement model with standardized estimates and latent factor correlations.

Table 4.6

*Intercorrelations among Latent Variables for the Second Measurement Model*

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Perceived Openness	1					
2. Perceived Tasks	.61**	1				
3. Perceived Positivity	.85**	.70**	1			
4. Appreciative Feelings	.65**	.56**	.79**	1		
5. Relational Equity	.71**	.66**	.81**	.70**	1	
6. Marital Satisfaction	.64**	.60**	.79**	.78**	.81**	1

*Note.* \*\*  $p < .01$

### 4.3.2 Structural Models

In this part, results of the two hypothesized structural models were presented. Structural Equation Modeling was implemented to investigate the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables. Structural models were tested by using LISREL 8.80 with robust Maximum Likelihood estimation. For that purpose, Satorra-Bentler scaling-corrected test statistic was used to adjust the inflated chi-square statistic. In order to interpret the results of structural models, the researcher utilized previously used fit indices ( $\chi^2/df$ -ratio, CFI, NNFI, SRMR, and RMSEA) and the suggested cut-off values for each index (see Table 3.5).

#### 4.3.2.1 Results of the First Structural Model

The first hypothesized model tested the direct and indirect associations of the latent variables of self-reported maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), feelings of being appreciated, and relational equity in explaining marital satisfaction (RQ1). In this model, the direct associations between the self-reported

maintenance behaviors of openness, sharing tasks, and positivity (exogenous variables) and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) were tested (RQ1.1). Additionally, the direct associations between feelings of being appreciated and relational equity (mediator variables) and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) (RQ1.2) as well as the direct relationship between feelings of being appreciated (mediator variable) and relational equity (mediator variable) (RQ1.3) were tested. Furthermore, the indirect relationships between the self-reported maintenance behaviors of openness, sharing tasks, and positivity (exogenous variables) and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) were tested via the indirect roles of feelings of being appreciated and relational equity (RQ1.4).

Results of the first structural model showed a good fit,  $\chi^2 (1015) = 2330.81, p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 / df\text{-ratio} = 2.30$ , CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .06, and RMSEA = .046 (90% CI = .04, .05). The measurement part of the model demonstrated that all of the factor loadings were significant and ranged between .28 and .92. See Figure 4.3 for the first hypothesized model. Only the latent variables were included in the figure in order to make the model easy to read. According to the structural part of the model, 8 paths out of 12 direct paths (from the exogenous variables to mediators, from the exogenous variables to endogenous variable, from the mediators to endogenous variable, and from the one mediator to the other mediator) were found significant. Significant direct paths were from openness, sharing tasks, and positivity to feeling appreciated (3 paths); from sharing tasks and positivity to marital satisfaction (2 paths); from feeling appreciated to marital satisfaction and relational equity to marital satisfaction (2 paths); from feeling appreciated to relational equity (1 path). The significant direct paths and non-significant direct paths (depicted in red) were presented in Figure 4.3 with the values of standardized parameter estimates.

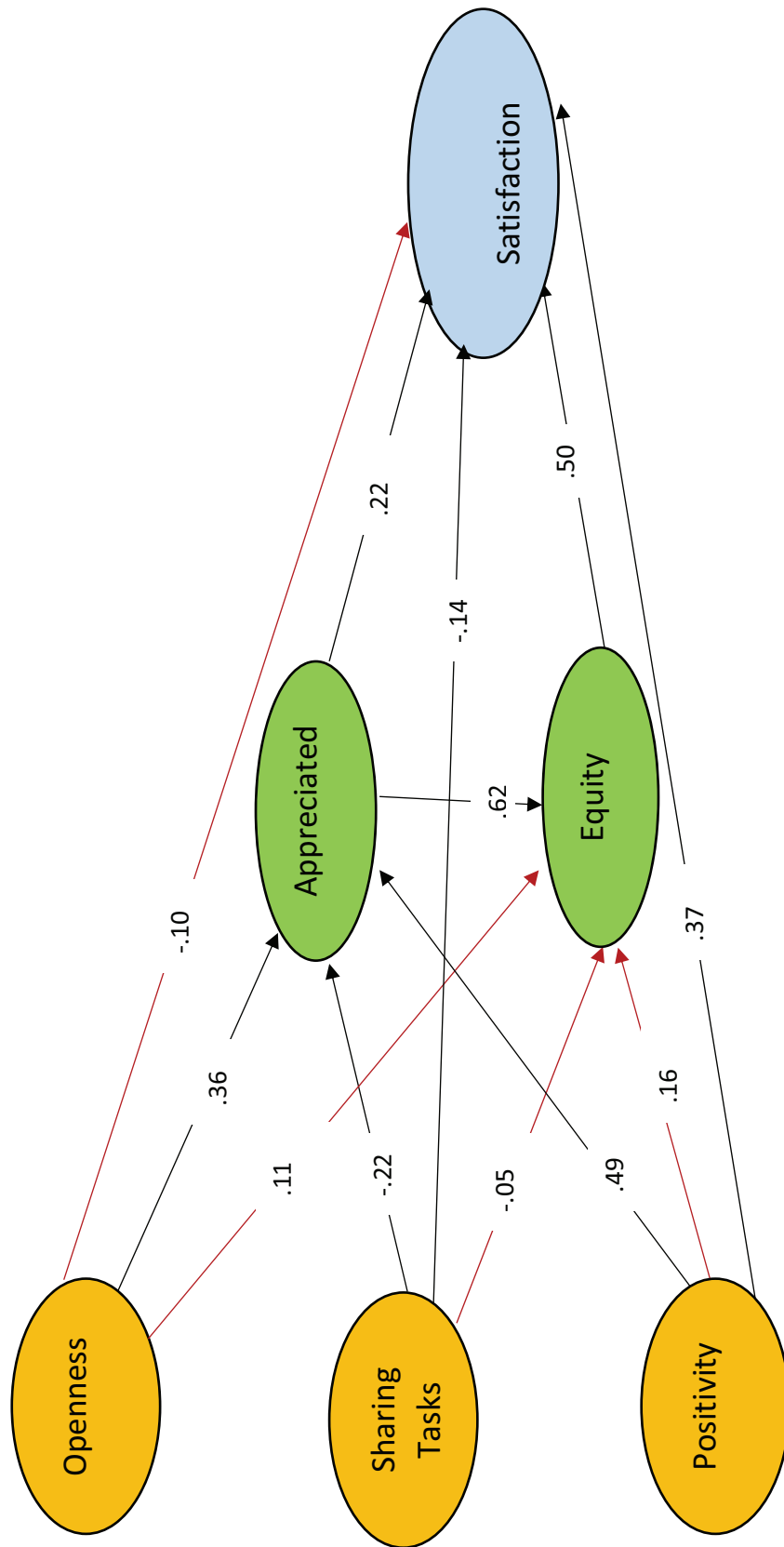


Figure 4.3 The first hypothesized model with standardized estimates and significant and non-significant paths

The squared multiple correlation coefficients ( $R^2$ ) were checked in order to detect the proportion of variance that was explained by the latent variables of the model. Self-reported maintenance behaviors of openness, sharing tasks, and positivity explained 49% of the variance in feelings of being appreciated, and 64% of the variance in relational equity together with the feelings of being appreciated. Overall, self-reported maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), feelings of being appreciated, and relational equity explained 73% of the variance in marital satisfaction. All squared multiple correlation coefficients were summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

*Squared Multiple Correlations for the First Hypothesized Structural Model*

	$R^2$
Feeling appreciated (Mediator)	.49
Relational Equity (Mediator)	.64
Marital Satisfaction (Endogenous Variable)	.73

**4.3.2.1.1 Direct Effects for the First Structural Model**

In Figure 4.3, the significant and non-significant direct paths among the latent variables of the first structural model were presented. In more detail, first, the relationships between the exogenous variables and mediators were assessed. Each self-reported maintenance behaviors of openness ( $\beta = .36, p < .01$ ), sharing tasks ( $\beta = -.22, p < .01$ ), and positivity ( $\beta = .49, p < .01$ ) had significant direct paths on the mediator of feeling appreciated. That is, married individuals who engaged in more maintenance behaviors of openness and positivity also reported to feel more appreciated by their spouses. On the other hand, married individuals who engaged in more maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks reported to feel less appreciated by

their spouses. In contrast to hypothesized structural model, the direct paths of self-reported maintenance behaviors of openness ( $\beta = .11, p > .05$ ), sharing tasks ( $\beta = -.05, p > .05$ ), and positivity ( $\beta = .16, p > .05$ ) on relational equity were not significant. Moreover, the direct effect of the mediator variable of feeling appreciated on the other mediator variable of relational equity was significant ( $\beta = .62, p < .01$ ). This significant direct path showed that when married individuals experienced higher feelings of being appreciated by their spouses, they reported greater perception of relational equity in their marriage. Furthermore, the mediators of feeling appreciated and relational equity had significant and positive direct paths on marital satisfaction, ( $\beta = .22, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .50, p < .01$ , respectively). Namely, higher levels of appreciated feelings and relational equity resulted in greater levels of marital satisfaction. Lastly, when the direct paths between exogenous variables and endogenous variable were examined, the variables with significant direct effects on marital satisfaction were self-reported maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks ( $\beta = -.14, p < .01$ ) and positivity ( $\beta = .37, p < .01$ ). These findings revealed that when married individuals engaged in higher sharing tasks they reported to experience less satisfaction in their marriages; on the other hand, higher engagement in positivity behaviors resulted in higher marital satisfaction. The direct path between the maintenance behavior of openness and marital satisfaction was not significant ( $\beta = -.10, p > .05$ ).

#### ***4.3.2.1.2 Indirect Effects for the First Structural Model***

In addition to direct effects, ten indirect paths out of 13 were found significant. The indirect effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variable through the mediator of feelings of being appreciated were all significant. In more detail, the indirect effects of the self-reported maintenance behaviors of openness and positivity on marital satisfaction through the appreciated feelings were significant and positive ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .11, p < .01$ , respectively). The indirect effect of the self-reported maintenance behavior of sharing tasks on marital satisfaction through the appreciated feelings was significant and negative ( $\beta = -.05, p < .01$ ).

Overall, feelings of being appreciated indirectly affected the relationships between each maintenance behavior and marital satisfaction. That is, when married individuals engaged in maintenance behaviors of openness and positivity more, they reported to perceive greater appreciation from their spouses, and they also experienced higher marital satisfaction. On the other hand, married individuals who reported to engage in maintenance behavior of sharing tasks more, perceived lower levels of appreciation from their spouses, and thus experienced lower marital satisfaction. As is seen, although maintenance behaviors of openness did not predict marital satisfaction directly, openness had a small and positive indirect effect on marital satisfaction through the feelings of being appreciated. Moreover, the indirect effects of each exogenous variable on relational equity through the mediator role of feelings of being appreciated were all significant. The indirect effects of maintenance behaviors of openness and positivity on relational equity through the feelings of being appreciated were significant and positive ( $\beta = .22, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .30, p < .01$ , respectively). On the other hand, the indirect effect of maintenance behavior of sharing tasks on relational equity through the feelings of being appreciated was significant and negative ( $\beta = -.14, p < .01$ ). These significant indirect effects showed that married individuals who engaged in maintenance behaviors of openness and positivity more, also reported to perceive appreciation from their spouses more, and experienced higher relational equity. Furthermore, married individuals who engaged in maintenance behavior of tasks more, indicated lower levels of appreciated feelings from their spouses, and thus they experienced lower relational equity.

The indirect effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variable through the mediator role of relational equity were all non-significant. More specifically, the indirect effect of relational equity was not significant in explaining the relationships between the self-reported maintenance behaviors of openness ( $\beta = .05, p > .05$ ), task ( $\beta = -.02, p > .05$ ), positivity ( $\beta = .08, p > .05$ ) and marital satisfaction.



The indirect effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variable through the mediators of feelings of being appreciated and relational equity were all significant. In specific, the indirect effects of self-reported maintenance behaviors of openness and positivity on marital satisfaction through the feelings of being appreciated and relational equity were significant and positive ( $\beta = .11, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .15, p < .01$ , respectively). That is, married individuals who engaged in more maintenance behaviors of openness and positivity, also reported to perceive more appreciation from their spouses and those who were highly appreciated also indicated higher perceptions of relational equity in their marriages, and finally experienced higher marital satisfaction. Contrary to these findings, the indirect effect of self-reported maintenance behavior of sharing tasks on marital satisfaction through the feelings of being appreciated and relational equity was significant and negative ( $\beta = -.07, p < .01$ ). Specifically, when married individuals reported to engage in maintenance behavior of sharing tasks more, they reported that they perceived appreciation from their spouses less, relational equity in their marriage less, and finally experienced marital satisfaction less. Finally, the relationship between feelings of being appreciated and marital satisfaction was found significant and positive through the indirect role of relational equity ( $\beta = .31, p < .01$ ). Married individuals who reported to perceive higher appreciation from their spouses, also reported to perceive higher perceptions of relational equity in their marriage, and thus they experienced higher marital satisfaction.

Consequently, the indirect effects of exogenous variables on marital satisfaction followed two pathways: (1) through the feelings of being appreciated and (2) through the appreciated feelings and relational equity. All direct, indirect, and total effects were provided below in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

*Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of the First Hypothesized Structural Model*

Direct Effects	$\beta$
Openness → Appreciated	.36**
Task → Appreciated	-.22**
Positivity → Appreciated	.49**
Openness → Equity	.11
Task → Equity	-.05
Positivity → Equity	.16
Appreciated → Equity	.62**
Appreciated → Satisfaction	.22**
Equity → Satisfaction	.50**
Openness → Satisfaction	-.10
Task → Satisfaction	-.14**
Positivity → Satisfaction	.37**
Indirect Effects	
Openness → Appreciated → Satisfaction	.08**
Task → Appreciated → Satisfaction	-.05**
Positivity → Appreciated → Satisfaction	.11**
Openness → Appreciated → Equity	.22**
Task → Appreciated → Equity	-.14**
Positivity → Appreciated → Equity	.30**
Openness → Equity → Satisfaction	.05
Task → Equity → Satisfaction	-.02
Positivity → Equity → Satisfaction	.08
Appreciation → Equity → Satisfaction	.31**
Openness → Appreciated → Equity → Satisfaction	.11**
Task → Appreciated → Equity → Satisfaction	-.07**
Positivity → Appreciated → Equity → Satisfaction	.15**

Table 4.8 (continued)

Total Effects	$\beta$
Openness → Satisfaction	.14
Task → Satisfaction	-.28**
Positivity → Satisfaction	.71**
Openness → Equity	.33**
Task → Equity	-.18**
Positivity → Equity	.46**
Appreciated → Satisfaction	.53**
Appreciated → Equity	.62**
Equity → Satisfaction	.50**
Total Indirect Effects	
Openness → Satisfaction	.24**
Task → Satisfaction	-.14**
Positivity → Satisfaction	.34**

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$

#### 4.3.2.2 Results of the Second Structural Model

The second hypothesized model tested the direct and indirect associations of the latent variables of perceived partner maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), relational equity, and appreciative feelings in explaining marital satisfaction (RQ2). In this model, the direct associations between the perceived partner maintenance behaviors of openness, sharing tasks, and positivity (exogenous variables) and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) were tested (RQ2.1). Additionally, the direct associations between relational equity and appreciative feelings (mediator variables) and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) (RQ2.2) as well as the relationship between relational equity (mediator variable) and appreciative feelings (mediator variable) were tested (RQ2.3). Furthermore, the indirect relationships between perceived partner maintenance

behaviors of openness, positivity, and task (exogenous variables) and marital satisfaction (endogenous variable) were tested via the indirect roles of relational equity and appreciative feelings (RQ2.4).

Results of the second structural model showed a good fit,  $\chi^2 (1018) = 2566.01, p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 / df$ -ratio = 2.32, CFI = .99, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .05, and RMSEA = .047 (90% CI = .04, .05). The measurement part of the model demonstrated that all factor loadings were significant and ranged between .13 and .92. See Figure 4.4 for the second hypothesized model. Only the latent variables were included in the figure in order to make the model easy to read. According to the structural part of the model, 8 paths out of 12 direct paths (from the exogenous variables to mediators, from the exogenous variables to endogenous variable, from the mediators to endogenous variable, and from the one mediator to the other mediator variable) were found significant. Significant direct paths were from sharing tasks and positivity to relational equity (2 paths); from positivity to appreciative feelings (1 path); from openness and positivity to marital satisfaction (2 paths); from relational equity and appreciative feelings to marital satisfaction (2 paths); from relational equity to appreciative feelings (1 path). The significant direct paths and non-significant direct paths (depicted in red) were presented in Figure 4.4 showing the values of standardized parameter estimates.

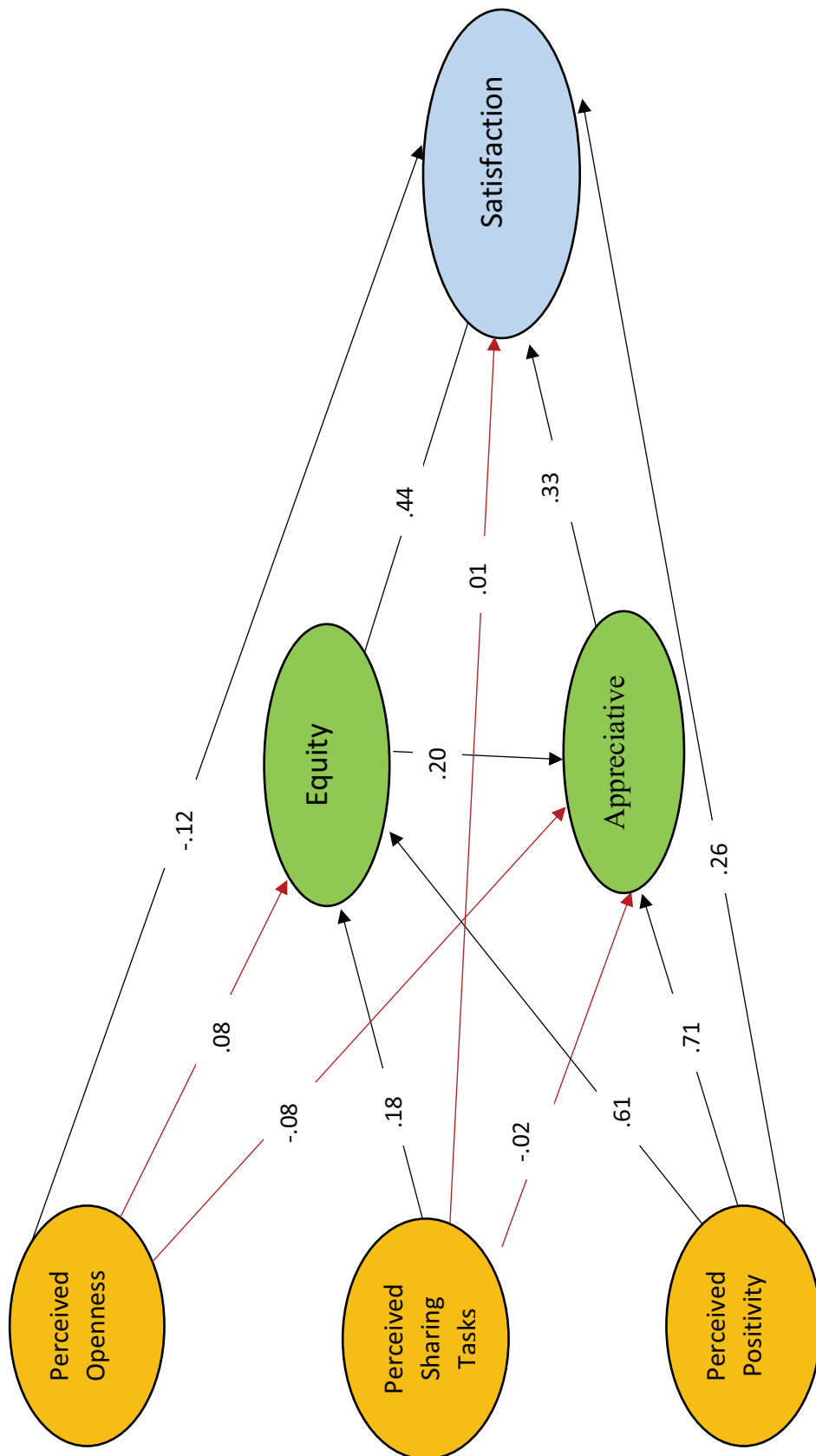


Figure 4.4 The second hypothesized model with standardized estimates and significant and non-significant direct paths

The squared multiple correlation coefficients ( $R^2$ ) were checked in order to detect the proportion of variance that is explained by the latent variables of the model. Perceived partner maintenance behaviors of openness, sharing tasks, and positivity explained 67% of the variance in relational equity and 64% of the variance in appreciative feelings together with relational equity. Overall, perceived partner maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity), relational equity and appreciative feelings explained 75% of the variance in marital satisfaction. All squared multiple correlation coefficients were summarized in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9

*Squared Multiple Correlations for the Second Hypothesized Structural Model*

	$R^2$
Relational Equity (Mediator)	.67
Appreciative Feelings (Mediator)	.64
Marital Satisfaction (Endogenous Variable)	.75

**4.3.2.2.1 Direct Effects for the Second Structural Model**

In Figure 4.4, the significant and non-significant direct paths among latent variables of the second structural model were presented. In detail, first, the relationships between the exogenous variables and mediators were observed. Perceived partner maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks ( $\beta = .18, p < .01$ ) and positivity ( $\beta = .61, p < .01$ ) had significant and positive direct paths on the mediator of relational equity. That is, married individuals who perceived their partners' higher engagement in sharing tasks and positivity behaviors also reported to perceive higher relational equity in their marriages. However, perceived partner maintenance behaviors of openness ( $\beta = .08, p > .05$ ) did not directly contribute to relational equity. When the direct paths from exogenous variable to the other mediator of appreciative feelings

were examined, only the direct effect of perceived partner maintenance behaviors of positivity ( $\beta = .71, p < .01$ ) on appreciative feelings was found significant. This effect indicates that when married individuals perceived that their partners engage in positivity behavior more, they also reported to have more appreciative feelings towards their spouses. On the other hand, perceived partner maintenance behaviors of openness ( $\beta = -.08, p > .05$ ) and sharing tasks ( $\beta = -.02, p > .05$ ) did not have a direct effect on appreciative feelings. Furthermore, the direct effect of the mediator variable of relational equity on the other mediator variable of appreciative feelings was significant ( $\beta = .20, p < .05$ ). This significant direct path shows that when married individuals experienced higher relational equity in their marriage, they also had higher appreciative feelings towards their spouses. Moreover, the direct effects of mediators of relational equity and appreciative feelings on marital satisfaction were also significant and positive ( $\beta = .44, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .33, p < .01$ , respectively). Namely, married individuals with higher levels of relational equity and appreciative feelings were more likely to experience higher marital satisfaction. Lastly, when the direct paths between exogenous variables and endogenous variable were examined, the variables with significant direct effects on marital satisfaction were the perceived partner maintenance behaviors of openness ( $\beta = -.12, p < .05$ ) and positivity ( $\beta = .26, p < .01$ ). These findings showed that when married individuals perceived that their partners engage in more openness behaviors to maintain their marriages, their marital satisfaction was less. On the other hand, in terms of positivity, the result was in the opposite direction which means that when married individuals perceived that their partners engage in more positivity behaviors to maintain their marriages, their marital satisfaction was more as well. The direct path between the maintenance behavior of sharing tasks and marital satisfaction was non-significant ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ).

#### ***4.3.2.2.2 Indirect Effects for the Second Structural Model***

Eight indirect paths out of 13 were found significant. The indirect effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variable through the mediator of relational

equity were significant for sharing tasks and positivity. In more detail, the indirect effects of the perceived partner maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks and positivity on marital satisfaction through relational equity were significant and positive ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ;  $\beta = .27, p < .01$ , respectively). The indirect effect of the perceived partner maintenance behavior of openness on marital satisfaction through relational equity was not significant ( $\beta = .04, p > .05$ ). That is, when married individuals perceived their partners' higher engagement in maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks and positivity, they reported to perceive higher relational equity in their marriage, and they also experienced higher marital satisfaction. Although the perceived partner behavior of sharing tasks did not predict marital satisfaction directly, it had a small and positive indirect effect on marital satisfaction through relational equity. Furthermore, the indirect effects of exogenous variables on appreciative feelings through the mediator of relational equity were also significant only for the perceived partner maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks and positivity ( $\beta = .04, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .12, p < .05$ , respectively). Similar pattern was observed and the indirect effect of perceived partner maintenance behavior of openness on appreciative feelings through relational equity was found non-significant ( $\beta = .02, p > .05$ ). The significant indirect effects indicated that married individuals who perceived higher partner use of sharing tasks and positivity behaviors, also reported to perceive more relational equity and feel higher appreciativeness towards their spouses.

The indirect effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variable through the mediator of appreciative feelings were significant only for the perceived partner maintenance behavior of positivity ( $\beta = .24, p < .01$ ). In specific, married individuals who perceived that their partners engage in more positivity behaviors, also reported to have appreciative feelings towards their spouses more, and finally experienced marital satisfaction more. This mediation was moderate. However, the indirect effect of appreciative feelings was non-significant in explaining the relationship between the perceived partner maintenance behavior of openness and



marital satisfaction ( $\beta = -.03, p > .05$ ) and perceived partner maintenance behavior of sharing tasks and marital satisfaction ( $\beta = -.01, p > .05$ ).

When the indirect effects of exogenous variables on endogenous variable through the mediators of relational equity and appreciative feelings were observed, again, a similar pattern was detected and only the perceived partner maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks and positivity on marital satisfaction were significantly and indirectly affected by relational equity and appreciative feelings ( $\beta = .01, p < .05$ ;  $\beta = .04, p < .01$ , respectively). That is, married individuals who perceived that their partners engaged in more maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks and positivity, also reported to perceive more relational equity in their marriages, felt more appreciativeness towards their spouses, and finally experienced higher marital satisfaction. These indirect effects were small. On the other hand, the indirect effect through relational equity and appreciative feelings was non-significant in explaining the relationship between perceived partner maintenance behavior of openness and marital satisfaction ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ). Lastly, the indirect effect of relational equity on marital satisfaction through appreciative feelings was found significant and positive ( $\beta = .06, p < .05$ ). Married individuals who reported to perceive higher relational equity in their marriages, also reported higher appreciative feelings towards their spouses, and thus they experienced higher marital satisfaction. This indirect effect was also small.

In conclusion, the indirect effects of exogenous variables on marital satisfaction followed three pathways depending on the predicted exogenous variable: (1) through the relational equity, (2) through appreciative feelings, and (3) through the relational equity and appreciative feelings. All direct, indirect, and total effects were provided below in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

*Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of the Second Hypothesized Structural Model*

Direct Effects	$\beta$
Openness → Equity	.08
Task → Equity	.18**
Positivity → Equity	.61**
Openness → Appreciative	-.08
Task → Appreciative	-.02
Positivity → Appreciative	.71**
Equity → Appreciative	.20**
Appreciative → Satisfaction	.33**
Equity → Satisfaction	.44**
Openness → Satisfaction	-.12*
Task → Satisfaction	.01
Positivity → Satisfaction	.26**
Indirect Effects	
Openness → Equity → Satisfaction	.04
Task → Equity → Satisfaction	.08**
Positivity → Equity → Satisfaction	.27**
Openness → Equity → Appreciative	.02
Task → Equity → Appreciative	.04*
Positivity → Equity → Appreciative	.12*
Openness → Appreciative → Satisfaction	-.03
Task → Appreciative → Satisfaction	-.01
Positivity → Appreciative → Satisfaction	.24**
Equity → Appreciative → Satisfaction	.06*
Openness → Equity → Appreciative → Satisfaction	.01

Table 4.1 (continued)

Indirect Effects	$\beta$
Task → Equity → Appreciative → Satisfaction	.01*
Positivity → Equity → Appreciative → Satisfaction	.04**
Total Effects	
Openness → Satisfaction	-.10
Task → Satisfaction	.10
Positivity → Satisfaction	.80**
Openness → Appreciative	-.06
Task → Appreciative	.02
Positivity → Appreciative	.83**
Equity → Satisfaction	.51**
Appreciative → Satisfaction	.33**
Equity → Appreciative	.20*
Total Indirect Effects	
Openness → Satisfaction	.01
Task → Satisfaction	.08*
Positivity → Satisfaction	.54**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$

#### 4.4 Summary of the Results

Descriptive statistical analyses provided initial information about the role of gender on study variables. Results showed significant gender differences only on the self-reported and perceived use of openness and sharing task behaviors. No gender differences emerged in terms of the other exogenous variables, mediator variables, and endogenous variable. Therefore, gender was not included into the model as a

control variable in this study. Bivariate correlations demonstrated significant, positive, and mostly large effects among the study variables as it was expected.

Across two models, the measurement models and structural models fitted the data well. According to the results of the measurement models, items loaded on the corresponding factors well and exogenous variables were found be correlated with each other and endogenous variable as expected. Results of the structural models indicated that 73% of the variance on marital satisfaction in the 1<sup>st</sup> model explained by the self-reported use of maintenance behaviors, feelings of being appreciated, and relational equity, and 75% of the variance on marital satisfaction in the 2<sup>nd</sup> model explained by the perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciative feelings. Both significant and non-significant direct and indirect effects were evidenced across two models. In explaining the relationships between the exogenous variables and marital satisfaction, the significant indirect effects were observed through the feelings of being appreciated and feelings of being appreciated and relational equity in the first model, and the significant indirect effects were observed through relational equity, appreciative feelings, and relational equity and appreciative feelings in the second model.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

In this final chapter, the results of the study were discussed at first regarding research questions and hypothesized models in the light of the relevant literature. Then, the implications of the results for theory, research, and practice were highlighted. Lastly, recommendations for further studies were presented depending on the results and limitations of the current study.

#### **5.1 Discussion of the Findings**

Moving beyond the available research and contributing to the gaps in the existing literature, the current study aimed to investigate marital satisfaction by examining self-reported and perceived maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, positivity), relational equity, and appreciation in relationships (feelings of being appreciated and appreciative feelings) in a married sample from Turkey. For this purpose, two structural models were tested. In the first model, relationships among the variables of self-reported use of maintenance behaviors, feelings of being appreciated, and relational equity and in the second model, relationships among the variables of perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciative feelings were investigated in understanding marital satisfaction.

Before testing each structural model, an initial phase was completed by piloting the data collection instruments and providing preliminary validity and reliability evidence of each instrument. As an evidence of construct validity of RMBM, confirmatory factor analysis revealed a different factor structure from the originally proposed seven-factor model. Instead, the adaptations of the RMBM for both self-reported and perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors yielded in five

factors (named as openness, sharing tasks, positivity, social network of friends, and social network of family). A few studies in the prior literature used current version of the RMBM (Stafford, 2011); however, the given factor structure of the scale was presumed but not verified for the samples of those studies (e.g., Anderegg, 2013; Fowler, 2014; Veluscek, 2015). Therefore, the factor structure provided in this study was compared and discussed in terms of the available studies and the earliest versions of maintenance instruments (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford & Canary, 1991). One should be reminded that in current version of the RMBM, Stafford (2011) utilized items of the previous versions of the RMSMs in addition to the revised and/or newly added items along with the previously generated factor structures.

The factor structure obtained in current study has differed from the revised-RMBM in some ways. First, assurances factor which was found to be one of the most influential and consistent maintenance behaviors in predicting relational outcomes did not appear as a separate factor. According to the results, two items of the assurances factor that emphasize one's talks about future of the relationships ("I talk about future events" and "I talk about our plans for the future") were perceived as being open to a spouse and loaded on the openness factor. Moreover, the other two items of this factor indicating telling and showing how much a partner means to another ("I tell him/her how much he/she means to me" and "I show him/her how much he/she means to me") were perceived as showing positivity to a spouse and loaded on the positivity factor. Similar to the findings of current study, Ragsdale and Brandau- Brown (2004) also found that assurances factor was eliminated and some assurances items loaded on positivity factor as a result of a series of exploratory factor analyses in which they evaluated the five factor structure of the RMSM. Although assurances factor remained conceptually the same in the revised RMBM, items differed from the earliest versions and some of the words (e.g., commitment and love) which were directly referring to continuation of the relationship were removed. This could be the reason why the items of the assurances

factor in the revised RMBM were not perceived as messages and behaviors that individuals use for stressing continuation of their marriages specifically in the present study. Second, as being inconsistent with the factor structure proposed by Stafford (2011), items of positivity and understanding factors loaded on the positivity factor, and items of self-disclosure and relationship-talk factors loaded on the openness factor in current study. Factor structures of positivity and openness have showed alterations in previous studies as well. For instance, as comparable with the Stafford's (2011) study, two separated factors for positivity (global positivity and conflict-management) and openness (openness and advise-giving) were also proposed by Stafford et al. (2000) in their revision of maintenance strategies measurement. Still, results of current study showed a similar factor structure with the earliest versions and previous implementations of the RMSMs (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Stafford & Canary, 2006) in which the items of positivity and understanding as well as relationship-talk and self-disclosure were aggregated and treated as one unitary factor in those categorizations. The aggregated structure in this study is also not surprising since these factors (positivity and understanding; self-disclosure and relationship-talk) are conceptually similar, and the items of these factors have remained almost the same across different versions of the relationship maintenance measurements. For instance, items of understanding factor in the RMBM were also set in positivity factor in the earliest versions of the RMSMs.

Finally, social network factor which has remained challenging across different versions of the maintenance instruments in terms of its content and the number of items resulted in a different factor structure in the present study and the original items of social network factor were split into two factors with two items in each. In the RMBM (Stafford, 2011), the scope of this factor was expanded and items corresponding to ask for help from family members were inserted in addition to the items indicating spending time with friends and families. Obviously, two items referring to asking help from social network of families loaded on one factor (social

network of family) and the other two items referring to engagement in activities with social network of friends loaded on another factor (social network of friends). Although both spending time with friends and asking help from family refer to individuals' social network, spending time with friends which is a relationship of choice seems contextually different from asking for help and advice from family members. In a sample of Turkish urban and rural participants including 308 dyads of mothers and their adolescent children, Turkey as a culture with collectivist background, is accepted to represent the characteristics of emotionally interdependent family model which indicates the existence of being emotionally close to family and asking family support while staying autonomous at the same time (Mayer, Trommsdorff, Kagitcibasi, & Mishra, 2012). Moreover, in a study conducted with 12.056 families in Turkey from urban and rural areas, the first source that participants ask for help to solve their problems in marriage was family members regardless of age and socio-economic status (T.R. Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2014b). Thus, the distinction found between the family and friend networks in a current study might be rooted in the roles assigned to family members culturally in terms of supporting couples and advising and mediating couples' concerns. As stated earlier, these two factors that were represented by only two items were not included in the scope of current study considering the potential measurement limitations of them. Consequently, five-factor structure was identified and confirmed in two different samples of this study (pilot and main). The five-factor remained the same for both self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors which provided further evidence for the consistency of the presented factor structure. Moreover, results of current study which revealed a relevant but not exactly the same factor structure with the existing instruments could be thought as expected because of the cultural differences in the samples that were drawn (Ragsdale & Brandau- Brown, 2004; Stafford, 2003).

The strength of the present study is conducting further exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to find out the unique factor structure of the revised-RMBM in a



different sample instead of using the factor structure that is already in existence. Results of this study could be instructive for further studies which would adapt the RMBM into a different language and examine its factor structure in a sample with distinctive characteristics and/or from a different culture. Furthermore, according to results of the adaptation studies for the other two scales of relational equity and appreciation in relationships, the same factor structures of the original studies were verified in this study. Namely, one factor structure of relational equity scale and two factor (felt and expressed) structure of appreciation in relationships scale were provided.

The main aim of the present study was to test two structural models and following the preliminary analyses, structural models were tested. Consistent with the previous studies, both self-reported and perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors were examined in understanding individuals' marital satisfaction through the indirect roles of perceptions of relational equity and appreciation in relationships. For this purpose, two separate but related models were hypothesized based on the principles of equity theory. The unique contributions of self-reported and perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors on marital satisfaction were investigated in those models. In the first model, feelings of being appreciated by a spouse while in the second model, appreciative feelings towards a spouse were included as mediators in addition to the relational equity which was a consistent mediator across two models. Although the exogenous and mediator variables (except relational equity) in understanding marital satisfaction varied across two models, the study variables were incorporated into these models based on the same theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence. Hence, findings of each model were discussed together and comparative discussions were made if possible; yet, unique findings of each model were also noticed and mentioned individually. Additionally, considering the neglected perspective of equity theory in romantic relationship literature and scarcity of research regarding the maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciation in the national literature, it is difficult to compare

the results of this study with the previous studies' findings. Then, results of current study were discussed considering the accumulated research that was mostly conducted in the United States and Europe.

Consequently, the two models fitted to the data well and majority of the proposed direct and indirect paths were found significant. The researcher did not prefer to trim the hypothesized models by eliminating the non-significant paths. The results of direct and indirect paths in each model were discussed in order of research questions of this study.

### **5.1.1 Discussion of the Direct Effects**

In order to address the research questions in each model, the direct effects between self-reported use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity) and marital satisfaction (first model, RQ1.1) as well as the perceived use of maintenance behaviors (openness, sharing tasks, and positivity) and marital satisfaction (second model, RQ2.1) were initially discussed.

To begin with the openness behavior, self-reported use of openness was not significantly related to the marital satisfaction in the first model while perceived partners' use of openness was found to be significant and had negative relationship with individuals' marital satisfaction in the second model. Contradictory findings exist in relationship maintenance literature for the role of openness behavior in understanding relationship/marital satisfaction. Negative but non-significant direct effect of self-reported use of openness on satisfaction is inconsistent with the previous studies which found self-reported openness/self-disclosure behavior as a significant and negative (e.g., Stafford et al., 2000) or significant but positive predictor of relationship satisfaction (e.g., Lee, 2006) while consistent with the research which revealed the role of openness to be not as strong as other maintenance behaviors on relationship satisfaction (Johnson, 2009; Stafford & Canary, 1991). The negative but significant direct effect of perceived partners' use

of openness behavior on marital satisfaction was again found to be parallel to some studies addressing the negative impact of perceived partners' use of openness behaviors (Dainton, 2000; Dainton et al., 1994; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Stafford (2011) also found that perceived partners' use of relationship-talk was a significant and negative predictor of marital satisfaction regardless of gender. It was also argued in the literature that individuals may experience lower marital satisfaction when the amount of perceived partner openness is more than average or less than expected (Jorgensen & Gaudy, 1980). Based on the social exchange perspective, Hendrick (1981) proposed that self-disclosure needs to be considered including both its positive and negative impacts for individuals who disclosed themselves and who were exposed to self-disclosure of their partners. Non-significant role of self-reported and significant role of perceived use of openness were partially in line with the results of the only study investigating maintenance behaviors in a sample of married couples in Turkey. In that study, Torun (2005) found that both self-reported and perceived use of openness were not significant predictors of either marital satisfaction or adjustment. On the other hand, the non-significant and negative roles of self-reported and perceived use of openness in the present study were inconsistent with the substantial amount of research in romantic relationship literature indicating the positive and significant role of both one's own and his/her partners' self-disclosure on relationship/marital satisfaction (e.g., Çağ, 2016; Davidson et al., 1983; Forness, 2002; Sprecher, 1987). Nevertheless, as previously mentioned, the concept of self-disclosure or openness was not examined in those studies as a specific dimension of the typology of relationship maintenance behaviors as it was conceptualized and used in this study.

From another point of view, it was proposed that self-disclosure may lose its importance in long-term marriages and increasing amount of self-disclosure might not have an impact on the increase of satisfaction in marriages after a certain point (Hendrick, 1981; Rosenfeld & Bowen, 1991). Instead, self-disclosure about oneself and relational issues might be beneficial in terms of experienced satisfaction for

individuals at the beginning stages of marriages but its effect was found to decrease when the marriages continue (Antill & Cotton, 1987; Derlaga & Berg, 1987). It can also be concluded that individuals' and their partners' openness on their feelings, thoughts, and how to make the marriage desired and more satisfying might not be as influential and even might be aversive on experiences of marital satisfaction in current sample which consisted of married individuals with an average marital length of almost twelve years.

The non-significant or negative influence of openness behavior was also concluded to be a result of higher and influential variations in relationship/marital satisfaction explained by the use of other maintenance behaviors (Stafford & Canary, 1991). This influential variable might be positivity behavior (includes being understanding and to be understood) in current study which has a consistent and strong contribution to marital satisfaction. Accordingly, Zietlow (1986) found in his study with elderly marital couples that self-disclosure was associated with higher marital satisfaction only for couples who understood each other. Moreover, the prior literature also provided evidence that the impact of use of openness on marital satisfaction might be dependent on various other factors such as marital type. For instance, Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (1999a) indicated that the use of openness was not significant in predicting marital quality in traditional couples while other behaviors were. Overall, despite the fact that being open to one another is declared as an essential way of communication and healthy relationships, variation in these findings for the effects of self-reported and perceived use of openness overlaps with the previous literature which has identified the impact of openness behavior on relational outcomes to be doubtful or as not influential as expected or to be dangerous (Cozby, 1972; Dainton, 2000; DeVito, 2002; Stafford, 2003).

Secondly, self-reported use of sharing tasks was significantly and negatively whereas perceived partner's use of sharing tasks was not significantly related to marital satisfaction. Explicitly, individuals experienced higher marital satisfaction when they reported to engage in less behaviors to share tasks and responsibilities

while unexpectedly, perceived partners' use of task behaviors was not influential on individuals' marital satisfaction. Starting from the self-reported use of sharing tasks, this finding mainly addresses similarities with the previous studies in which one's own use of sharing tasks was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction and other positive marital outcomes (e.g., commitment). However, in those studies, one's own engagement in behaviors to share mutual tasks was found to be in a significant, moderate, and positive relationship with relationship/marital satisfaction (Johnson, 2009; Stafford & Canary, 1991). From another point of view, considering the nature of task sharing behaviors which requires routine engagement (Dainton & Aylor, 2002), individuals might be perceiving their contribution to sharing tasks and responsibilities as costly to themselves which may in turn result in lower satisfaction.

The previous literature indicated mixed results for the relationship between the perceived partners' use of sharing tasks and marital satisfaction. The non-significant association in this study aligned with the other studies in the literature in which the perceived use of maintenance behavior of tasks did not significantly predict individuals' relationship/marital satisfaction (e.g., Dainton, 2000; Klumb et al., 2006; Stafford, 2011); still, this result is not consistent with the studies in which the perceived use of tasks was found to be a significant and positive predictor of marital satisfaction (e.g., Ballard-Reisch et al., 1999; Dainton et al., 1994). Sharing tasks emerged to be a highly expected behavior from a marital partner (Dainton, 2000). Hence, it can be concluded that satisfaction of individuals' expectations in terms of task sharing rather than perceived partners' actual engagement in tasks and responsibilities may influence marital satisfaction. Furthermore, another explanation could be that individuals might overlook or be less aware of their partners' engagement in sharing task behaviors since task sharing is expected, routine, and less communicative (Johnson, 2009). From another aspect, if individuals perceive that their partners contribute to task sharing with motives to avoid negative outcomes rather than with motives to care their partners and

relationships (Impett, Gere, Kogan, Gordon, & Keltner, 2014), the potential positive influence of partner support on individuals' marital satisfaction might be ruled out.

Lastly, the results of the current study revealed that the use of positivity behavior has a significant and positive direct impact on marital satisfaction. Namely, both the individuals' own engagement and perceptions about their partners' engagement in positivity behaviors which include one's acting and communicating in cheerful, understanding, nice, and optimistic ways with his/her partner were associated with increase in their own experiences of high marital satisfaction. In line with this result, the use of positivity behavior either self-reported or perceived was revealed to be a primary and viable associate and predictor of relationship/marital satisfaction starting from the earliest studies to the current ones in the relevant literature (Dainton & Gross, 2008; Dainton et al., 1994; Gottman, 1995; Johnson, 2009; Stafford, 2011; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Gottman (1995) indicated that both perception and expression of positivity are dramatically important for partners to maintain satisfying marriages and Carstensen, Gottman, and Levenson (1995) found that positive emotions and affection stand out in happy compared to unhappy marriages. The positive associations between positive communicative behaviors and marital satisfaction have also been evidenced by various studies conducted in different cultural contexts (e.g., Rehman & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2007). Moreover, self-reported use of positivity (of the other maintenance behaviors) was found be mostly associated with marital satisfaction even when it was assessed one year later (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2001). The strong influence of the positivity in this study was also parallel to the findings of the only study which investigated maintenance behaviors in a Turkish sample (Torun, 2005). In that study, the self-reported and perceived positivity was also found a strong and positive predictor of marital satisfaction. Likewise, in a recent study with long-term married individuals in Turkey, participants reported to use smiling and saying nice things to each other,

which are indicators of positivity behaviors, in order to solve their marital problems (Demir & Durmuş, 2015).

Before moving on the discussion of indirect effects, the discussion was followed by the direct effects of each mediator variable (relational equity and felt and expressed appreciation) on marital satisfaction which were found significant and positive across two models. More clearly, according to the results of the first model, individuals were highly satisfied in their marriages when they felt to be highly appreciated by their spouses and perceived higher relational equity in their marriages (first model, RQ1.2). Similarly, the results of the second model showed that when individuals perceived higher relational equity and expressed higher appreciativeness towards their spouses they reported to be highly satisfied in their marriages (second model, RQ2.2). The positive and strong direct effect of perceived equity on marital satisfaction was in line with both theoretical propositions of equity theory and empirical findings. A large number of cross-sectional and longitudinal empirical studies provided consistent evidence for the positive contribution of perceptions of relational equity on individuals' level of romantic relationship satisfaction (e.g., Buunk & Mutsaers, 1999; Sprecher, 2001; VanYperen & Buunk, 1991; Weigel et al., 2006). The transition of Turkey from patriarchal to egalitarian society in the recent times (Sunar & Fişek, 2005) could also be supportive of the positive impact of perceived equity on a desired relational state of marital satisfaction. Accordingly, the strong and positive direct effects of feelings of being appreciated and appreciative feelings on marital satisfaction were in the expected direction when compared to the results of previous studies and the theories which enlighten the study of appreciation in relationships (Algoe et al., 2010; Gordon et al., 2012; Schneider, 2001; Schramm et al., 2005). In that, feelings of being appreciated by a spouse and having appreciative feelings towards a spouse might remind individuals that they are in a marriage with a partner who is aware of the value of themselves (recipient of appreciation) and who is perceived as valuable

and worthy (benefactor of appreciation) and these feelings then were associated with individuals' higher levels of marital satisfaction.

In accordance with these findings, the direct effect of feelings of being appreciated on perceived relational equity (first model, RQ1.3) and the direct effect of perceived relational equity on appreciative feelings (second model, RQ2.3), were all significant and positive. The amount and scope of previous studies are limited in examining the relations between relational equity and appreciation in relationships. The significant direct influence of individuals' felt appreciation on their judgements of relational equity in the first model verified and moved beyond the results of the previous studies. Earlier studies demonstrated that feelings of being appreciated was a strong and an important predictor of sense of fairness about the division of household labor and/or child-care mostly in wife-only samples (e.g., Hawkins et al., 1995; Hawkins et al., 1998). No prior research was found examining the association between relational equity and appreciative feelings; however, it could confidently be stated that individuals' perceptions of equity as a desired state in marriages awaken their positive perceptions and appreciative feelings toward their spouses.

### **5.1.2 Discussion of the Indirect Effects**

In order to address the remaining research questions, the indirect effects of feelings of being appreciated and relational equity (first model, RQ1.4), and relational equity and appreciative feelings (second model, RQ2.4) in understanding the effects of each self-reported and perceived partners' use of maintenance behavior on marital satisfaction were discussed. In discussion of the indirect effects in each model, the researcher was allowed to investigate the indirect effects either through each individual mediator (e.g., being appreciated or relational equity) or via both mediators in series (e.g., being appreciated and relational equity). To be more precise, in the first model, the indirect effect of felt appreciation and perceived relational equity in series refers to the perceived relational equity resulted from felt



appreciation and in the second model, the indirect effect of perceived relational equity and appreciative feelings in series refers to the appreciative feelings resulted from perceived relational equity.

To begin with the first model, the individual indirect effect of the felt appreciation and indirect effects of the felt appreciation and perceived relational equity (which in fact resulted from felt appreciation) were significant in predicting the relationships between each of the self-reported maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction. The significant indirect effects were positive between marital satisfaction and the use of openness and positivity while negative between marital satisfaction and sharing tasks. Specifically, married individuals with higher use of openness and positivity behaviors also felt appreciated by their partners more and perceived greater relational equity, and ultimately experienced greater marital satisfaction. Conversely, when individuals' own engagement in maintenance behaviors of sharing tasks was more but feelings of being appreciated and perceived relational equity were less, they ultimately experienced lower levels of marital satisfaction. As stated earlier, relational equity was suggested to be examined not only as a motivator but also as a consequence of the use and perceptions of maintenance behaviors (Dainton, 2011; Stafford, 2003). On the other hand, the indirect effects through the perceived relational equity were non-significant in explaining the relations between self-reported use of each maintenance behavior and marital satisfaction. Yet, results of current study expanded the existing relationship maintenance literature by illustrating that the self-reported maintenance behaviors which might be considered by individuals as relational costs to themselves did not have a direct impact on their perceived relational equity, and perceived relational equity did not have an indirect influence on the associations between the use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction unless individuals reported to feel appreciated by their spouses. Clearly, satisfaction of individuals' expectations and feelings in terms of being appreciated by a spouse emerged as a protective factor through its indirect role in explaining the relations

between the self-reported maintenance behaviors and perceived relational equity as well as the self-reported maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction. Herein after, the indirect effects were discussed in specific to the relationships between each maintenance behavior and marital satisfaction in turn.

Regarding the openness behavior, although the direct association between the self-reported use of openness behavior and marital satisfaction could not be demonstrated (discussed above), this association was evidenced through the indirect influence of felt appreciation and perceived relational equity. Additionally, self-reported use of openness did not directly contribute to judgments of relational equity without the indirect influence of feelings of being appreciated. Individuals might be perceiving enactment in voicing relational concerns and self-disclosure about themselves including their feelings and fears as relational costs and expecting their openness to be cared and repaid by their partners. Therefore, the higher feelings of being appreciated might be prompting their perceptions of being cared and valued in consequence of their intimate disclosure which in turn increase their sense of equity and marital satisfaction. Otherwise, self-reported openness does not seem to be influential in predicting individuals' marital satisfaction. This result also extended the findings of the previous study in which the expression of gratitude was significantly related to increase in relationship maintenance behavior of voicing relational concerns (akin to openness) to a romantic or friendship partner (Lambert & Fincham, 2011). Furthermore, it was found in the previous study that dating individuals were interested in reciprocity and discrepancy between the given and received disclosure in their relationships which affect their relationship satisfaction in turn (Millar & Millar, 1988). Although the discrepancy was not assessed in this study, it could be estimated that the perception of equity might have had an indirect role between the lower discrepancy in the use of openness behavior instead of its actual use and marital satisfaction.

It is worth mentioning here that the indirect effects of the perceived relational equity and appreciative feelings were not found significant either individually or in series

in understanding the influence of perceived partners' use of openness behaviors on marital satisfaction. One could expect that the perceived relational equity and appreciative feelings in turn might buffer the negative direct effect of perceived partners' use of openness behavior on marital satisfaction; however, the non-significant results for indirect effects did not confirm this expectation. Gratitude towards the benefactors was discussed to be less when the benefactors were intimately close to the beneficiaries and expected to engage in relational benefits (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). Consistent with this premise, individuals might believe that their partners are naturally obligated to open themselves to maintain their marriages and might not consider perceived partners' openness as a relational benefit. Hence, it could be considered that partner openness which is not seen as a contributing partner input to exchange in the evaluation of individuals' relational equity might not also be stimulating positive perception of a partner and arouse individuals' appreciative feelings towards their partners. Therefore, the effect of partner openness on marital satisfaction was not provided through the indirect effects of relational equity and appreciativeness.

From another perspective, rather than actual partner openness, what kind of issues and the ways in which partners disclose themselves could be important for individuals' perceptions of relational equity and their appreciative feelings towards partners which ultimately influence the level of marital satisfaction. Moreover, as discussed previously in the discussion of the direct effects, the significant and effective role of perceived partner use of positivity on marital satisfaction could also be mitigating the influence of partner openness on mediators and marital satisfaction. Correspondingly, it should be kept in mind that every individual does not have to utilize or perceive each maintenance behavior in their relationships (Canary & Stafford, 1994). This could be effective in this study for the perceived use of openness considering that individuals do not seem to benefit or suffer from their partners' engagement in openness behaviors in terms of their marital

satisfaction even through the indirect influences of perceptions of relational equity and appreciative feelings.

For the second maintenance behavior of sharing tasks in the first model, the indirect influence of appreciation was negative in predicting the relationship between sharing tasks and marital satisfaction. In other words, when individuals reported to engage in higher maintenance behavior of sharing tasks and felt less appreciation by their partners, they experienced lower level of marital satisfaction. This result indicates consistency with the previous studies in which higher levels of felt appreciation motivated greater satisfaction under the conditions of use of relationally costly behaviors such as family work and chores (e.g., Berger & Janoff-Bulman, 2006; Berger, 2000). This indirect influence of appreciation is also consistent with a recent study in which the mediator role of perceived appreciation was negative in explaining the relationship between sacrifice frequency (another type of costly maintenance behavior) and relationship satisfaction (Young & Curran, 2016). Accordingly, results of the present study also evidenced the significant and negative indirect effect of felt appreciation and perceived relational equity in series which indicated that when engagement in maintenance behavior of sharing tasks is more but felt appreciation and perceived relational equity are less, individuals are less satisfied in their marriages. This finding is confirmed by the previous studies in which perceptions of equity were found to be destroyed when partners did not feel to be appreciated for their own engagement in household share and the negative influence of inequity on satisfaction disappeared when the felt appreciation was reported to be high (Hawkins et al., 1998; Klumb et al., 2006). As it is seen, the indirect influence of felt appreciation also regulated the sense of equity along with the experience of marital satisfaction. Time and effort investment were among the perceived costs that romantic partners reported to have in their relationships (Sedikides, Oliver, & Campbell, 1994); however it is also proposed that engagement in family work may lead to positive outcomes such as feelings of being appreciated (Mikula, 1998). Hence, considering more routine and less

exciting nature of participation in tasks and responsibilities, individuals might be perceiving their own acts to share tasks as highly costly investments to themselves which associates decrease in their marital satisfaction when they did not feel appreciated and perceive to be in an equitable marriage. In other words, lack of felt appreciation and perceived equity emerge to be detrimental in predicting satisfaction in marriages when the engagement of behaviors to share tasks is reported to be high.

When we look at the other side of the coin, the positive indirect effects of the perceived relational equity and appreciative feelings in explaining the relationship between perceived partners' engagement in sharing tasks and marital satisfaction are complementary to the findings of the first model. Although there were a few studies examining the felt appreciation, the previous literature has not examined the role of expressed appreciation in relation to task sharing. By the nature of marriage, individuals participate in common tasks and responsibilities (routine, mundane, and not easy to avoid) to maintain their relationships even these behaviors were not desired or even perceived as costly to the individuals. Therefore, perceived partner engagement in common tasks and responsibilities could be expected to directly contribute to individuals' appreciative feelings towards their partners and experience of marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, in current study, perceived partner use of sharing tasks did not directly and significantly relate to appreciative feelings and marital satisfaction and the individual indirect influence of appreciative feelings was also not significant. Yet, the association between perceived partners' use of sharing tasks and marital satisfaction as well as perceived partners' use of sharing tasks and appreciative feelings turned into being significant and positive via the indirect effect of higher perceptions of relational equity. In a nutshell, although the indirect effect was small, when individuals perceived their partners engage in higher sharing tasks behaviors and perceived higher relational equity and appreciativeness towards their partners, they experienced greater level of satisfaction. The significant indirect influence of relational equity is parallel with

the previous studies which provided support for the influential role of contentment and perceived (in)equity of household labor and family work in understanding the associations between partners' actual share in tasks and marital satisfaction (Lavee & Katz, 2002; Perry-Jenkins & Folk, 1994; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999).

Additionally, though it is not assessed within the scope of current study, the direct and indirect links among self-reported and perceived tasks sharing, relational equity, appreciation, and satisfaction might also be shaped depending on the individuals' gender role ideologies (e.g., egalitarian versus traditional, Greenstein, 1996; Hatun, 2013; Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2001). Considering the fact that individuals desire to stay in equitable relationships to feel more satisfied (Hatfield et al., 1985) and egalitarian gender role attitude is increasing in romantic relationships (Brehm, 1992; Cunningham, 2007), the existence of perceived equity might foster the potential positive and rewarding role of partner engagement in sharing tasks which make them perceive their partners in a more positive and appreciative manner and experience higher marital satisfaction. Additionally, individuals with egalitarian attitudes are more likely to believe that tasks should be divided equally between partners (Buunk, Kluwer, Schuurman, & Siero, 2000) and experience greater levels of satisfaction when they perceived greater partner support in terms of task sharing (Piña & Bengtson, 1993). Bearing in mind the results of the first model, individuals with more egalitarian attitudes might need to feel more appreciation of their partner for their participation in task sharing to perceive their marriage as equitable and satisfying.

Finally, the indirect effects for the association between maintenance behavior of positivity and marital satisfaction were discussed. To begin with the first model, it seems obvious from the present study findings that self-reported positivity moves individuals' marriages forward in terms of higher marital satisfaction through the indirect effect of more felt appreciation and higher level of perceived equity. This finding also remained consistent and similar for the perceived partners' use of positivity behavior in the second model. More clearly, higher perceptions of

partners' use of positivity behaviors were associated with higher marital satisfaction through the indirect effect of higher level of perceived equity and expressed appreciation. Previous research is scarce in terms of examining the associations between maintenance behavior of positivity and appreciation in relationships. However, results of the present study with the inclusion of indirect effects have validated and extended the previous research in which positivity appears to be one of the most powerful strategies to make the relationship satisfied (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1993; Gordon & Baucom, 2009; Gottman, 1995; Sedikides et al., 1994).

Notwithstanding self-reported positivity contributes to create a rewarding and satisfying environment for individuals (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1993; Gottman, 1995), individuals' own attempts to keep acting in a positive way in communication, being understanding, forgiving, and non-judgmental toward their partners to sustain a marriage might become overwhelming for themselves and also might be expected to be reciprocated and /or appreciated. For instance, Kollock, Blumstein, and Schwartz (1994) found that the more individuals perceive themselves to be expressive which includes being understanding of partner, compassionate, and affectionate (akin to positivity behaviors), they perceive their partners to be more benefitted in the relationship compared to themselves. Therefore, higher feelings of being appreciated by partners might overcome individuals' possible doubts to be able to keep the relationship in an equitable and satisfied state while they are engaging in higher positivity behaviors with the purpose of maintenance.

In a similar vein to the previous discussion for the self-reported use of positivity, when perceived partner use of positivity is more, individuals are more likely to experience marital satisfaction through the greater perception of relational equity and appreciative feelings. The strong individual indirect roles of perceived equity and appreciativeness may emphasize that partner positivity is a desired and expected behavior for individuals to be enacted by partners with the intention of relationship maintenance to make them experience higher marital satisfaction.

Moreover, considering the scope of positivity behaviors including nice, optimistic, and understanding behaviors, perceived partner positivity may arouse the benefactors' appreciative feelings towards their partners as being a reminder to celebrate their partners' worth and value which in turn promote individuals' closeness and satisfaction. Additionally, this study extended the limited amount of previous research which has yet provided evidence for the predictor role of appreciative feelings on perceived partner positivity (Lambert & Fincham, 2011).

Overall, either via direct or indirect effects, the consistent and strong role of self-reported and partner used positivity on marital satisfaction seems to be attesting Fredrickson's (2004) suggestion that engagement in positive emotions encourages people to feel better and flourishing in their marriages and their lives. Over and above, this result confirms the premise that being positive in communication both through non-verbal and verbal messages and understanding to each other are crucial necessities to be in an intimate relationship (Noller & Feeney, 1991; Prager & Roberts, 2004).

Furthermore, the significant and positive indirect effects of perceived equity and expressed appreciation between perceived partners' maintenance behaviors of positivity and sharing tasks and marital satisfaction provided coherent and supplementary evidence to the previous study in which perceived higher partner investment was associated with greater relationship commitment through the mediator role of expressed gratitude toward a romantic partner (Joel et al., 2013). As a result, the indirect effects followed varying paths in understanding the associations between self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction. Results supported that in understanding marital satisfaction, even if exchange of resources are inevitable in marriages, individuals' perceptions of equity was influenced by felt appreciation when they reported to engage in maintenance behaviors and individuals' perceptions of equity is influential on their expressed appreciation when their partners reported to engage in maintenance behaviors.



## **5.2 Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice**

The present study provides some valuable information and insight for the future research in the field of romantic relationships. In the following sections, the implications of current study in terms of theory, research, and practice were presented.

### **5.2.1 Implications for Theory and Research**

In the literature, various types of models and theoretical approaches have been proposed to understand how individuals maintain their marriages and accordingly how individuals remain satisfied in their marriages (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult et al., 1994). The hypothesized structural models in this study were derived from the equity theory perspective to understand the roles of maintenance behaviors, appreciation in relationships, and relational equity on marital satisfaction. The choice of equity theory perspective in this study has provided implications for theory and research both in the international and national literature. First of all, the significant indirect and direct effects of perceived relational equity on marital satisfaction in relation to other study variables have provided initial evidence to verify the main premise of equity theory that individuals in romantic relationships are concerned whether the ratio of their inputs and outcomes is equitable to their partners' inputs and outcomes (Hatfield et al., 1985). On the contrary to the accumulated research which has already proved the applicability of equity theory within the context of intimate relationships mostly in western cultures (e.g., Sprecher, 2001; VanYperen & Buunk, 1991), to the best of researcher's knowledge, the equity theory framework in intimate relationships has not been the research interest in national literature. Therefore, current study findings would be an encouragement for theoretical and empirical applications of equity theory in cultures representing a similar structure with the present sample. Despite the fact that the highly educated and largely companionate structure of Turkish married individuals in the present sample can be considered as resembling to the structure

of marriages and values in Western industrial countries, results of the present study are still noteworthy in terms of demonstrating how equity theory perspective functions in a sample from a different cultural perspective. Indeed, this study has also contributed to the prior examination of how equity theory explains relationship maintenance and relationship satisfaction in other countries and diverse cultures (Ballard-Reisch et al., 1999; Yum & Canary, 2009; Yum et al., 2015).

In this study, the assumptions of equity theory in relation to maintenance behaviors were examined from another angle. The majority of research has examined perceived relational equity as an antecedent of the self-reported and perceived partner use of maintenance behaviors and revealed that individuals are motivated to engage in more and perceive their partners to use more maintenance behaviors and experience higher levels of marital satisfaction when they are in equitable relationships (e.g., Canary & Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2003). However, previous research has also recommended to examine perceived relational equity both as an antecedent and consequence of use of maintenance behaviors (Stafford, 2003). Further evidence was provided in the current study for the accumulated research on relationship maintenance by addressing the impact of perceived equity as an outcome of self-reported and perceived partner use of maintenance behaviors. Additionally, the application of equity theory framework in maintenance of intimate relationships has been moved beyond the premise that people are more likely to use and perceive maintenance behaviors when they are in equitable relationships.

The findings of the current study have also built on the theoretical perspectives and growing body of research on gratitude/appreciation in intimate relationships (e.g., Algoe et al., 2010; Gordon et al., 2012; Kubacka et al., 2011) by highlighting the importance of both felt and expressed appreciation for married partners. By the researcher's knowledge, there is no published study on the concept of appreciation within the context of romantic relationships in Turkey yet; therefore, this study is the first attempt to investigate partner appreciation in a sample of married individuals. The findings of current study provided evidence for the direct and

indirect roles of felt appreciation to make the individuals feel more equitable and satisfied even when their inputs might be costly. Furthermore, preliminary but novel evidence was provided that perceived equity is found to be indirectly effective for the associations between perceived partners' use of maintenance behaviors (sharing tasks and positivity), appreciative feelings, and marital satisfaction. Previous research suggested that further studies should be conducted to investigate how felt gratitude towards partners vary across different types of partner investments (Joel et al., 2013). In the present study, this suggestion was considered by examining different maintenance behaviors such that perceived partner use of positivity behavior was found to be the only indicator of appreciative feelings and the individual indirect effect of appreciative feelings was again found significant only for the association between perceived partner use of positivity behavior and marital satisfaction. In consequence, the researcher uncovered how felt appreciation functions as a filter of perceived equity and how appreciative feelings function as a result of perceived equity in examining the relations between maintenance behaviors and marital satisfaction. The results provided further information for the potential hosts and outcomes of felt and expressed appreciation. Thus, uncovering the utility of felt and expressed appreciation in terms of maintenance of relationships and the spouses' marital contentment appear to be a fruitful research area.

Furthermore, Ogolsky and Bowers (2013), in their meta-analytic review, suggested that researchers need to consider the utility of each maintenance behavior that may vary based on the reporter in terms of marital satisfaction. Along with this suggestion, assessment of both self-reported and perceived partner use of maintenance behaviors provided an opportunity to researchers to grasp the similarities and differences as a function of the reporter (self-reported or perceived). Results of current work demonstrated that the benefits of positivity on marital satisfaction was strong and consistent both when the use of positivity behaviors is self-reported and perceived from a partner. On the other hand, the roles of other

maintenance behaviors (openness and sharing tasks) varied depending on whether these behaviors are self-reported or perceived from partners. For instance, although direct effect of self-reported sharing tasks was significant and negative on marital satisfaction, the effect of perceived partner engagement in task sharing was not significant. Moreover, the results indicated that the influence of self-reported and perceived use of maintenance behaviors may also vary by the indirect functions of perceived relational equity and appreciation (felt or expressed). For instance, although direct effect of self-reported use of openness was not significant on marital satisfaction, this effect became significant and positive through the higher feelings of appreciation and perceptions of relational equity. The contribution of indirect effects in this study is also substantially valuable due to demonstrating unique findings which could not have been revealed through the direct effects.

### **5.2.2 Implications for Practice**

Along with the theoretical and empirical applications, the results of current study provide implications for counselors, psychologists, marriage and family therapists, counselor educators, and policy makers.

Marriage and relationship education programs have been implemented for many years both with prevention and intervention purposes. Although the content of these programs diversifies depending on their specific aims, the ultimate purpose invariably remained the same which is to help individuals to flourish their romantic relationships/marriages, reduce relational/marital distress, and consequently maintain functioning relationships/marriages (Blanchard, Hawkins, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2009; Duran & Hamamcı, 2010; Halford, Markman, Kling, & Stanley, 2003). Teaching communication skills, improving positive interaction, and expression of positive affectivity, which were proven empirically as the significant contributors of individuals' relationship/marital satisfaction, have been the substantial and common focus of many of these programs both in the international and national literature (Butler, 1999; Duran & Hamamcı, 2010; Hahlweg,

Markman, Thurmaier, Engl, & Eckert, 1998; Markman et al., 1993; Stanley et al., 2001). As previously stated, the most consistent predictor of marital satisfaction in current study is the use of positivity behaviors which include conveying positive and understanding messages to the partner and interacting in a nice, cheerful and optimistic way with the partner. This result lays further emphasis on the significance of encouraging and teaching romantic partners to be in a positive interaction with each other. Although the use of each type of relationship maintenance behavior might be undoubtedly considered as potentially influential to be included within the content of marriage and relationship education programs, contradictory findings of the present study for the self-reported and perceived use of openness on marital satisfaction should be a warning for the developers and practitioners of these programs. Moreover, the results of current study demonstrated that perceived partner openness negatively predicts individuals' marital satisfaction and unless people felt to be appreciated by their partners and perceive greater equity in their relationships, their self-reported openness did not contribute to their marital satisfaction. Therefore, researchers and practitioners might want to reconsider the potential negative or ineffectual role of openness for satisfaction while designing relationship education programs.

Furthermore, based on the findings of the present study, the perception of being in an equitable relationship and feelings of being appreciated and valued by partners as well as expressing the given value and worth towards a partner could be included into the content of these programs as being protective factors of relational/marital satisfaction. Accordingly, individuals who attend these kinds of programs and seek help from mental-health professionals can also be encouraged to appreciate their partners' maintenance efforts and behaviors which might in turn influence their perceptions of equity and marital satisfaction. The available evidence-based preventive and marriage enrichment programs on the relationship satisfaction that were implemented with premarital and married individuals in Turkey (e.g., Kalkan & Ersanlı, 2008; Yalçın & Ersever, 2015; Yılmaz & Kalkan, 2010) have not given

a specific place for perceptions of equity and appreciation concepts yet. In this regard, the findings of this study could also be a premise for the further designs of these programs.

Moreover, according to the results of the recent research on family structure, participants reported that the most problematic issue in their marriage is sharing household responsibilities (TSI, 2016). The results of the present study also showed that self-reported engagement in sharing tasks negatively predicted marital satisfaction and this effect stayed negative if the perceived equity and felt appreciation were less. Couples who are suffering from the problems in allocation of household tasks might be promoted to talk in the counseling sessions about their expectations of task sharing in marriage, whether they expect to be appreciated by their partners, how their perceptions of equity in terms of sharing responsibilities could be met and so forth. Additionally, these issues might be discussed in the prevention and intervention programs on relationship/marriage enhancement to respond to one of the major concerns of individuals. Thereby, individuals' own engagement in sharing tasks might stop being a problem in their marriages and they ultimately may experience greater level of marital satisfaction.

It is worth mentioning here that an effective way that marriage and relationship education programs could reach to large masses in the society is collaborating with the policy makers in bringing them to work on these programs together. General Directorate of Family and Social Research (2009) and T.R. Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MFSP, 2014a) conducted studies with samples of divorced individuals and revealed that most of the participants reported to be unaware of the institutions providing marriage and family support services or believe that those institutions would not be effective in marriage enhancement. Accordingly, the results of another research investigating Turkish family structure demonstrated that the percentage of individuals who think of seeking help from professional people or institutions when they experience a significant problem with their spouse is only 3% (MFSP, 2014b). These findings could be explained by the lack of institutions

and centers which aim to make the education and counseling services available to individuals and families with the help of professionals (counselors, psychologists, social service specialist etc.) to prepare individuals to marriage, flourish their marital satisfaction, and reduce the divorce rates. On the other hand, the need and willingness of individuals to get help from counseling services and get informed by education programs should not be ignored. In fact, Hamamcı, Buğa, and Duran (2011) found that university students are enthusiastic about participating in premarital education programs to be informed about the effective relationship enhancing skills. Likewise, Pinar (2008) found that university students are willing to seek premarital counseling. In addition, T.R. Ministry of Family and Social Policies developed a Family Education Program which aims to educate family members and prepared a textbook entitled ‘Marriage and Family Life’ to be used in this program. The textbook briefly emphasizes the importance of collaboration in sharing tasks, being positive in communication, the consistency on expectations of partners about marriage (egalitarian versus traditional), and appreciating the partner for satisfying marriages (Canel, 2012). Within the scope of the tenth development plan, T.R. Ministry of Family and Social Policies (2015) declared that their effort to strengthen family structure and well-being by extending premarital and family education programs and family counseling services to public would continue. From this point forth, the findings of current study may serve to the policy makers in their further attempts to prepare and implement premarital and marriage education programs, and provide family and marriage counseling services for dating, married, and divorcing couples. For instance, the findings may provide an empirical basis for the comprehensive focus on these concepts (maintenance behaviors, equity, and appreciation) within the content of further premarital and marriage education programs, manuals, books, brochures, and seminars which are prepared by policy planners and stakeholders of MFSP.

The aforementioned practical implications are applicable not only to be included in prevention and intervention programs of relationship/marriage enhancement but

also to be utilized by marriage and family counseling practitioners who are working with dating, married, and divorcing couples. For instance, in a recent pilot project in Turkey, mental health professionals (counselors, psychologists etc.) have been employed in family courts to work closely with couples in divorce processes in order to help them to reconstitute their marriages (Filiz, 2011). Both the professionals working in family courts and private practice with divorcing couples who seek help of family counseling may also benefit from the findings of the present study to raise individuals' awareness about how to keep their marriages in a satisfied state. Based on the study findings, individuals could be informed about the use of effective relationship maintenance behaviors and the importance of appreciation and perception of equity in marriages. Above all, educating people in terms of what they might need to do to keep their relationships/marriages in a desired state of satisfaction would ensure the relationship maintenance and avert the possibility of divorce. Before anything else, individuals should be imbued the idea that relationships require effort to stay well-maintained and satisfied.

Lastly, the results of this study may inform counselor educators. Most of the psychology and psychological counseling and guidance undergraduate and graduate programs offer various courses on close relationships and/or marriage and family counseling. Additionally, marriage and family counseling graduate programs have become prevalent in recent years. The counselor educators can integrate the topics of relationship maintenance, relational equity, partner appreciation into the educational curriculum and the scope of the materials, readings, and activities utilized in those courses and programs. Educating counselors about different theoretical approaches along with equity theory perspective which is evidenced to be valid in predicting marital satisfaction in current study would expand their knowledge and help them to better understand the expectations, concerns, and problems of dating/marital couples in counseling sessions.



### **5.3 Recommendations for Future Research**

Current study is not free from its theoretical and methodological limitations. Therefore, recommendations and directions for further research need to be presented.

First, this study was the first attempt to translate the revised RMBM into Turkish and test its psychometric properties in a sample of married individuals. In that sample, a new factor structure different from the original one was found. Moreover, in current study, the maintenance behavior of social network comprised of two factors (family and friend) and was not included in the hypothesized model because each factor was represented by only two items. Hence, researchers who aim to use the Turkish adaptation of the revised RMBM are suggested to examine the psychometric properties of the measure to verify the proposed factor structure of current study. Additionally, along with the revised RMBM, researchers might give a specific focus on investigating unique maintenance behaviors used in married individuals' samples in Turkey. Therefore, mixed design studies can be conducted to develop a culture specific relationship maintenance behaviors instrument.

Second, some recommendations should be considered in future research regarding the sample and generalizability of the findings. Explicitly, current study sample comprised of married individuals from different cities in Turkey. However, majority of the participants were recruited from Ankara and the rest were largely from urban cities. In addition, as stated previously, the sample substantially represented highly-educated profile owing to the limitation of snowball sampling. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to replicate the present study and collect data by better representing the variety in geographic locations including both urban and rural areas and educational and socio-economic level.

Third, gender was also not included as a control variable into the structural model in consideration of the non-significant gender differences found for marital

satisfaction and the most of the other study variables. The gender differences stay controversial in the literature. There exist studies indicating either non-significant or significant (but small in magnitude) gender differences in terms of marital satisfaction (Jackson, Miller, Oka, & Henry, 2014) and the use of maintenance behaviors (e.g., Ogolsky & Bowers, 2013; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Hence, the researchers who are interested in investigating gender differences are recommended to conduct multi-sample structural equation modeling to explore whether the proposed model(s) in current study vary by gender.

Fourth, current study was focused on the sample comprised of only married individuals; nevertheless, the literature reveals that use of maintenance behaviors might function differently for individuals in other types of intimate relationships such as casually or seriously dating and engaged (Stafford & Canary, 1991). Further studies are recommended to investigate the differences across those relationship types.

Fifth, the data of the study were obtained based on the self-reports of the participants. Thus, future researchers are recommended to utilize alternative measurement methods. Collecting data from each member of the dyads may provide further information to researchers especially on the interpersonal variables. Moreover, observational methods can be applied in which the outside observer gives information for the dyadic behaviors of the partners on a given topic (e.g., being appreciative toward partners) in laboratory settings to vary the partners' own reports.

Sixth, marital satisfaction which has been an important and commonly assessed determinant of marital quality is the only outcome variable of the present study. Nonetheless, other important marital outcomes such as commitment, love, and intimacy have been cited in the literature. Therefore, more research is needed to examine in what ways the use of maintenance behaviors vary in predicting other

marital outcomes via indirect influences of relational equity and appreciation; so that thorough information can be obtained to see the big picture of marital quality.

Seventh, although large amounts of variance in marital satisfaction were explained by the study variables across two models, there exist other complementary variables that deserve attention of further research based on the equity theory perspective. For instance, the variables of gender role ideology (egalitarian versus traditional) (e.g., Shechory & Ziv, 2007; Stafford et al., 2000; VanYperen & Buunk, 1991) and exchange orientation of partners (e.g., Sprecher, 1992, 1998) might come to light as important moderators in understanding the associations among performance of maintenance behaviors, perceived level of equity, appreciation, and marital satisfaction. Accordingly, the indirect influence of perceived equity and appreciation might also change under the influence of individuals' gender role and exchange orientations. Moreover, understanding individuals' and their partners' motives behind their use of relationship maintenance behaviors, whether they engage in maintenance behaviors to experience higher marital satisfaction and equity or avoid negative outcomes such as marital dissatisfaction or inequity (e.g., Impett et al., 2014), can also be a focus of further research. Further to that, perceived relational equity was assessed as a continuous variable in this study and whether participants' perceptions of inequity derived from under-benefited or over-benefited inequity was not examined. The indirect effects of under or over benefited inequity perceptions in relation to the concept of appreciation should be considered in future research.

Eight, as stated before, current study was the initial attempt to examine the felt and expressed appreciation among married individuals in Turkey. The evidenced positive role of felt and expressed appreciation in relation to maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and marital satisfaction might be an important premise for future research. The concept of appreciation in relation to the given study variables or its other correlates should be kept investigated with different romantic relationship types (e.g., dating, engaged, and cohabiting). Additionally, the average

length of marriage demonstrates that the current sample is mostly constituted of long-term married individuals. However, the role of appreciation in further studies should attempt to understand how felt and expressed appreciation function in formation of the marriages and/or in samples of newlyweds and remarriages from Turkey. Along with the self-reported and perceived maintenance behaviors, other types of partner investments that people use to pursue their relationships and/or stay satisfied should also be examined in further studies as being hosts of felt and expressed appreciation and perceived equity in romantic relationships.

Lastly, the design of the current study was correlational and cross-sectional by nature which does not allow to infer causality among the study variables. However, considering the potential bidirectionality among the variables of maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and relationship satisfaction (Dainton, 2011; Lavner, Karney, & Bradbury, 2016; Stafford, 2003) as well as the relations among appreciation, maintenance behaviors and relational outcomes (Gordon et al., 2012), researchers should not lose their interest in examining causal sequences of the given variables in further longitudinal, daily diary, and experimental studies. That may make it possible to observe changes in marital satisfaction regarding the used and perceived maintenance behaviors, relational equity, and appreciation over time. For instance, the impact of positivity in partner communication was found to be nonsignificant or inconsistent in predicting future marital satisfaction and it was suggested not to generalize short-term findings to long-term changes in satisfaction (Lavner et al., 2016; Markman, Rhoades, Stanley, Ragan, & Whitton, 2010). Additionally, one member of a dyad was included in the study; however, due to the dyadic nature of marriage, in future research, collecting data from two members of a dyad and analyzing dyadic data through Actor Partner Interdependence Model can provide more detailed information by addressing how one individual's use or perceived use of maintenance behaviors affect his/her partner's perceived marital satisfaction through the indirect effects of partner's perceived equity and appreciation. Furthermore, conducting qualitative studies by utilizing observations

and/or interviews with married partners would provide more detailed information about partners' own use of maintenance behaviors in their marriages, their perceptions and expectations of relational equity and feelings of being appreciated and appreciative.

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## APPENDICES

### A. Sample Items from the Turkish Version of RMBM İlişki Sürdürme Davranışları Ölçeği

1. İlişkimiz hakkında eşimle konuşurum.
2. Ortak sorumluluklarla ilgili kendi payıma düşeni yaparım.
3. İlişkimiz hakkında bir aile üyesinden yardım isterim.
4. Eşimle birlikteyken neşeli davranırım.
5. Benim için ne kadar değerli olduğunu eşime davranışlarımla gösteririm.
6. Etkinliklerimize arkadaşlarımızı dahil ederim.
7. Eşime karşı anlayışlıyım.

## **B. Sample Items from the Turkish Version of RES**

### **İlişkisel Eşitlik Ölçeği**

1. Genellikle ilişkimize verdiklerimin aldıklarımdan daha fazla olduğunu hissedirim.
2. Eşim ve ben ilişkimizdeki gücü eşit olarak paylarıırız.
3. Genellikle eşimin beni kendi çıkarları için kullandığını hissedirim.

### **C. Sample Items from the Turkish Version of AIRS**

#### **İlişkilerde Takdir Ölçeği**

1. Eşim takdir edildiğimi hissetmemi sağlar.
2. Çok ufak bile olsa, onun için bir şeyler yaptığımda eşim bana teşekkür eder.
3. Eşimin hayatımda olduğunu düşündüğümde kendimi şanslı hissederim.
4. Eşime onu ne kadar takdir ettiğimi sıklıkla söylerim.

**D. Sample Items from the Turkish Version of RAS**  
**İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği**

1. Genel olarak, evliliğinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?
2. Evliliğinizde ne kadar problem var?
3. Evliliğiniz sizin başlangıçtaki beklentilerinizi ne derece karşılıyor?

**E. Demographic Information Form**  
**Katılımcı Bilgi Formu**

**Cinsiyetiniz:** Kadın ☐ Erkek ☐

**Yaşınız:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Yaşadığınız şehir:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Eğitim durumunuz** (En son bitirdiğiniz okulu işaretleyiniz).

İlkokul ☐ Ortaokul ☐ Lise ☐ Yüksek Okul/Ön Lisans ☐

Lisans/Üniversite ☐ Yüksek Lisans/Doktora ☐

**Eşinizin eğitim durumu** (En son bitirdiği okulu işaretleyiniz).

İlkokul ☐ Ortaokul ☐ Lise ☐ Yüksek Okul/Ön Lisans ☐

Lisans/Üniversite ☐ Yüksek Lisans/Doktora ☐

**Evlenme şeklinizi aşağıdaki seçeneklerden hangisi en iyi şekilde tanımlar?**

Görücü usulü ☐ Görücü usulü tanıştırılıp kendi kararımızla ☐

Tanışarak / Anlaşarak ☐ Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz) ☐

.....

**Kaç yıldır evlisiniz?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bu ilk evliliğiniz mi?**

Evet ☐ Hayır ☐ ; “Hayır” ise kaçınıcı evliliğiniz? \_\_\_\_\_

**Şu andaki evliliğinizden çocuğunuz var mı?**

Hayır ☐ Evet ☐ ; “Evet” ise kaç çocuğunuz var? \_\_\_\_\_

İlk çocuğunuzun yaşı nedir? \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Approval Letter from Middle East Technical University  
Human Subjects Ethics Committee (for Pilot Study)**

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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10 ŞUBAT 2016

Gönderilen: Doç.Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu SÜMER

Araş. Gör. Nazlı Büşra AKÇABOZAN

Eğitim Bilimleri

Gönderen: Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER

İnsan Araştırmaları Komisyonu Başkanı

İlgi: Etik Onayı

Sayın Doç.Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu SÜMER ve Araş. Gör. Nazlı Büşra AKÇABOZAN'ın " İlişki Sürdürme Davranışları, İlişkisel Eşitlik, Evrensel Eşitlik ve İlişkilerde Takdir ( Minnetkarlık) Ölçeklerinin Türkçe Uyarlanması ve Psikometrik Özelliklerinin İncelenmesi" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Komisyonu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2016-EGT-014 protokol numarası 22.02.2016-04.04.2016 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER

Uygulamalı Etik Araştırma Merkezi

İnsan Araştırmaları Komisyonu Başkanı

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**H. Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of the Scales and Subscales  
with the Main Data**

Scales	$\alpha$
Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement	
Self-Reported Openness	.89
Perceived Openness	.92
Self-Reported Tasks	.82
Perceived Tasks	.86
Self-Reported Positivity	.88
Perceived Positivity	.91
Appreciation in Relationships	
Feelings of Being Appreciated	.87
Appreciative Feelings	.82
Relational Equity	.80
Marital Satisfaction	.91

## **I. Turkish Summary / Türkçe Özet**

### **İLİŞKİ SÜRDÜRME DAVRANIŞLARI VE EVLİLİK DOYUMU: İLİŞKİSEL EŞİTLİK VE TAKDİRİN ARACI ROLÜ**

#### **1. GİRİŞ**

Kişilerarası ilişkiler, sosyal varlıklar olan bireylerin yaşamında önemli bir role sahiptir. Bireylerin başka kişilerle ilişki içerisinde olma ihtiyacı ve motivasyonu yüzyıllardır bilinmekte ve bu durumun geçerliği evrensel olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bireylerin arkadaşlarıyla, çalışma arkadaşlarıyla ve aile üyeleriyle kurdukları yakın ilişkiler yaşamlarında önemli bir yer oluşturmakta, mutluluklarına ve yaşam kalitelerine katkı sağlamaktadır (Berscheid ve Regan, 2005; Perlman ve Vangelisti, 2006).

Romantik ilişkiler bireylerin son derece önemli gördüğü ve arzuladığı bir yakın ilişki türü olarak karşımıza çıkmakta ve aynı zamanda yaşam sürecindeki önemli bir yaşam görevi olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Erikson, 1968). Romantik bir ilişki içerisinde olan bireyler romantik ilişkiler aracılığı ile ait olma, bağlanma, sevilme ve önemsenme ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaktadır (Baumeister ve Leary, 1995; Cox, 2006; Miller, 2015).

Bireyleri aile olma yönünde bir araya getiren bir romantik ilişki türü olarak evlilik, birçok araştırmacıyı evlilik ilişkisinin kişilere nasıl fayda sağladığını anlamaya yöneltmiştir. Böylece yıllar içerisinde biriken çok miktardaki kuramsal ve ampirik bulgu, evli olmanın bireylere sağladığı avantajları (örn. fiziksel, ekonomik, ruhsal ve duygusal) ortaya çıkarmış (Brown, 2004; Coombs, 1991; Frech ve Williams, 2007; Marks ve Lambert, 1998) ve bu avantajların evrenselliğini göstermiştir (Diener, Gohm, Suh ve Oishi, 2000).

Dünya genelinde evlenme oranları azalmakta, boşanma oranları ise artmaktadır (European Commission, 2015; Kreider ve Ellis, 2011; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Family Database, 2016; United Nations Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2003). Örneğin, OECD ülkelerinde boşanma oranları 1970li yıllardan bu yana çoğunlukla yüksek olarak rapor edilmiş (OECD Family Database, 2016), birçok çalışmada da Kuzey Amerika'daki her iki evlilikten birinin boşanma ile sonuçlandığı belirtilmiştir (Harvey ve Weber, 2004; Raley ve Bumpass, 2003). Türkiye'deki duruma bakıldığında ise, Türk İstatistik Kurumu'nun özellikle 2008-2015 yılları arasında sağladığı istatistikler evlilik oranlarındaki azalmaya ve boşanma oranlarındaki artışa dair kanıt sunmaktadır. Ancak, batılı diğer ülkelerle kıyaslandığında Türkiye, halen düşük boşanma oranına sahip bir ülke olarak nitelendirilmektedir (OECD Family Database, 2016).

Boşanma oranlarındaki artış bireylerin evlenmesi ve mutlu bir evlilik sürdürmek istemesi yönünde bir engel olmamakta hem batı toplumlarında hem de Türkiye'de evliliğe atfedilen önem korunmaktadır. Örneğin, güncel çalışmalar üniversite öğrencilerinin evlilik kurumuna karşı olumlu tutum ve duygu beslediklerini, gelecekte evlenmeyi düşündüklerini göstermekte (Günay ve Bener, 2013; Karabacak ve Çiftçi, 2017; Koçyiğit Özyiğit, 2017) ve buna paralel olarak Türkiye, Avrupa'daki yüksek evlenme oranlarına sahip ülkeler arasında gösterilmektedir (Eurostat, 2017). Sonuç olarak, evliliğin bireylerin yaşamındaki önemini halen koruduğu görülmektedir.

Mutlu ve evlilik doyumu yüksek olan bireylerin bu durumdan birçok fayda sağladığı (örn. öznel iyi oluş, Glenn ve Weaver, 1981; yaşam doyumu, Proulx, Helms ve Buehler, 2007) ve evlilik doyumunun bireylerin evliliklerine bağlılıklarını olumlu yönde etkilediği bilinmektedir (Rusbult, Olsen, Davis ve Hannon, 2001). Bu sebeple, evlilik doyumunu belirleyen etmenler uzun yıllardır araştırılmış, kişisel değişkenlerden çevresel değişkenlere kadar uzanan birçok farklı etmenin evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki rolü ortaya konulmuştur (Regan, 2011).

İlişkilerin devamlılığı için bireylerin belirli bir çaba göstermesi ve çeşitli davranışlar sergilemesi gerekliliği yönündeki varsayım (Canary ve Stafford, 1994; Duck, 1988), ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının evlilik doyumunu anlamadaki etkisinin araştırıldığı çok sayıda çalışmanın yürütülmüş olmasına aracı olmuştur.

İlişkilerin devamlılığını açıklamada etkisi olan birçok davranış, belirli kuramsal bakış açılarına dayanarak farklı şekillerde gruplandırılmış olsa da (örn. Ayres, 1983; Bell, Daly ve Gonzalez, 1987; Dindia ve Baxter, 1987; Rusbult ve ark., 2001), bu çalışmada ilgili alanyazında en sıklıkla kullanılan, Stafford ve Canary tarafından 1991 yılında geliştirilmiş ve daha sonra başka çalışmalarda tekrar gözden geçirilmiş (Canary ve Stafford, 1992; Stafford, Dainton ve Haas, 2000; Stafford, 2011) ilişki sürdürme davranışları tipolojisinin en güncel hali kullanılmıştır. Bu tipoloji şu davranışlardan oluşmaktadır: açıklık (ilişki hakkında konuşma ve kendini açma), bağlılık, görevlerin paylaşımı, olumluluk (genel olumluluk ve anlayışlılık) ve sosyal çevre.

Bu sınıflandırmanın ilişkisel sonuç değişkenleriyle ilişkilerinin incelendiği araştırmalarda, bireylerin kendi kullandıkları ve eşlerinin kullandıklarını algıladıkları ilişki sürdürme davranışları araştırılmış, her iki bakış açısının da evlilik doyumunu açıklamada etkili olduğu bulunmuştur (örn. Dainton, Stafford ve Canary, 1994; Johnson, 2009; Stafford, 2011; Weigel ve Ballard-Reisch, 2008). İlişki sürdürme davranışları ve doyum arasındaki ilişkilerin davranışın türüne ve kişinin kendi kullandığı ya da eşinin kullandığını algıladığı davranış olmasına göre değişiklik gösterdiği görülmüştür (Lee, 2006; Ogolsky ve Bowers, 2013).

İlişki sürdürme davranışlarının bu sınıflandırma kapsamında çalışıldığı araştırmalar eşitlik kuramı bakış açısına dayandırılmıştır (Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne ve Hay, 1985; Walster, Walster ve Berscheid, 1978b). Eşitlik kuramının ilkelerine göre ilişkisel eşitlik algısı, öncelikli olarak ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının yordayıcısı olarak önerilmiş (Canary ve Stafford, 1994) ancak aynı zamanda ilişki sürdürme davranışları kullanımının sonuç değişkeni olarak da test edilebileceği öne

sürülmüştür (Stafford, 2003). Bugüne kadar eşitlik kuramı bakış açısına dayalı olarak yapılan ilgili araştırmalar, ilişkisel eşitlik algısının kişinin kendi kullandığı ve eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının ve ilişki/evlilik doyumunun önemli bir belirleyicisi olduğunu göstermiştir (Canary ve Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2016; Perry, 2004; Van Yperen ve Buunk, 1990; Weigel, Bennett ve Ballard-Reisch, 2006). Öte yandan, ilişki sürdürme davranışlarını kullanmanın ilişkisel eşitlik algısını nasıl açıkladığını belirlemek için yeni çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

İlişki sürdürme davranışları ve eşitlik algısı ile birlikte ilişki doyumunu anlamada katkı sunan bir diğer değişken olarak *takdir* kavramı dikkat çekmektedir. Takdir kavramı iki boyuttan oluşmaktadır: algılanan takdir ve ifade edilen takdir. Başka bir ifadeyle, romantik ilişkilerdeki bireyler partneri tarafından takdir edilmek ve değer görmek isterken (algılanan takdir) aynı zamanda eşlerine verdikleri değeri ve duydukları takdiri de gösterirler (ifade edilen takdir) (Gordon, Impett, Kogan, Oveis ve Keltner, 2012). Takdir kavramının romantik ilişkiler ve özellikle evli bireyler örneğinde araştırıldığı güncel çalışmalar oldukça sınırlı sayıdadır. Ancak, mevcut çalışmalar incelendiğinde, algılanan ve ifade edilen takdirin ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının kullanımı ve ilişki doyumu ile olumlu yönde ilişkili olduğu görülmektedir (Algoe, Gable ve Maisel, 2010; Gordon ve ark., 2012; Gordon, Arnette ve Smith, 2011; Joel, Gordon, Impett, MacDonald ve Keltner, 2013; Lambert ve Fincham, 2011). Ayrıca, yine sınırlı sayıda çalışmalarda, eşten algılanan takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik algısı arasındaki bağlantı da incelenmiş, bireylerin ev işleri paylaşımına dair eşitsizlik algılarının önemli bir belirleyicisinin eşten algılanan takdir olduğuna dair kanıt sunulmuştur. Ancak, eşitlik algısı ve partnere ifade edilen takdir arasındaki ilişkiyi araştıran bir çalışmaya henüz rastlanmamıştır. Sonuç itibarıyla, takdir kavramının olumlu ve olumsuz ilişkisel sonuç değişkenleri ve farklı ilişki sürdürme davranışları ile arasındaki ilişkinin farklı kültürlerde incelendiği çalışmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

İlişki sürdürme davranışları, eşitlik ve takdir kavramlarının Türkiye örnekleminde nasıl ele alındığı yakından incelendiğinde, araştırmaların hem sayı hem de kapsam olarak oldukça sınırlı olduğu açıktır. İlişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkileri incelediği araştırmasında Torun (2005), bu davranışların evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki rolünü oldukça küçük bir örnekleme ( $n = 31$  evli çift) çalışmıştır. Öte yandan, ilişkisel eşitlik ve takdir kavramlarının romantik ilişki yaşayan kişiler örnekleminde ele alındığı herhangi bir çalışmaya ise ulusal alanyazında henüz rastlanmamıştır. Ayrıca, romantik ilişkilerin araştırıldığı çalışmalarda eşitlik kuramı bakış açısının da ihmal edilmiş olduğu göze çarpmaktadır. Mevcut durum, Türkiye’de romantik ilişki yaşayan bireyler örnekleminde bu kavramların araştırılmasına yönelik ihtiyacı göstermektedir.

Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmada, ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamada ilişkisel eşitlik ve takdirin (algılanan ve ifade edilen) aracı rolü, eşitlik kuramına dayalı iki model ile sınanmıştır. Böylece, bugüne dek bu kavramların evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki bireysel etkilerinin yanı sıra birbirleriyle etkileşim halindeki örüntülerinin de evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki etkisi incelenmiştir.

### **1.1 Araştırmanın Amacı ve Araştırma Soruları**

Bu çalışmanın amacı bireylerin kendi kullandığı ve eşlerinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk), ilişkisel eşitliğin, eşten algılanan ve eşe ifade edilen takdirin evlilik doyumuna etkisini incelemektir. Bu amaçla iki model test edilmiştir. İlk modelde, bireylerin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk), algılanan takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik değişkenlerinin, ikinci modelde ise bireylerin eşlerinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk), ilişkisel eşitlik ve eşe ifade edilen takdirin evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki rolü incelenmiştir. Bu araştırmada sadece açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk davranışları test edilmiştir. Bu karar, ilişki

sürdürme davranışları ölçeğinin bu çalışmada ortaya çıkan faktör yapısına dayanarak alınmıştır. Bu amaçlar ışığında, aşağıda belirtilen araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmıştır.

Birinci model:

1. Kişinin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk), eşten algılanan takdir ve ilişkiyel eşitlik algısı, evlilik doyumu ile nasıl ilişkilidir?
  - 1.1. Kişinin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk) evlilik doyumu ile nasıl ilişkilidir?
  - 1.2. Eşten algılanan takdir ve ilişkiyel eşitlik algısı evlilik doyumu ile nasıl ilişkilidir?
  - 1.3. Eşten algılanan takdir ve ilişkiyel eşitlik algısı, kişinin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk) ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi dolaylı olarak nasıl açıklamaktadır?

İkinci model:

2. Kişinin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk), ilişkiyel eşitlik algısı ve eşe ifade edilen takdir, evlilik doyumu ile nasıl ilişkilidir?
  - 2.1. Kişinin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk) evlilik doyumu ile nasıl ilişkilidir?
  - 2.2. İlişkiyel eşitlik algısı ve eşe ifade edilen takdir evlilik doyumu ile nasıl ilişkilidir?
  - 2.3. İlişkiyel eşitlik algısı ve eşe ifade edilen takdir, kişinin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk) ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi dolaylı olarak nasıl açıklamaktadır?

## 1.2 Araştırmanın Önemi

Bu araştırma, ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamada ilişkisel eşitlik algısının rolüne dair özgün bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Alanyazındaki birçok çalışma, ilişkisel eşitlik algısının ilişki sürdürme davranışlarını açıklamadaki yordayıcı rolünü sınamıştır (Canary ve Stafford, 1992; Dainton, 2016; Jackson, 2010; Stafford ve Canary, 2006; Yum ve Canary, 2009). Bu çalışmada ise alanyazında tartışılan ve araştırılması önerilen bir ilişkiye dikkat çekilerek, ilişkisel eşitlik algısını açıklamada evli bireylerin kullandıkları ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının yordayıcı rolü incelenmiştir (Dainton, 2011; Stafford, 2003). Böylece, eşitlik kuramı ilkeleri yeni bir bakış açısına göre test edilmiş, eşitlik algısının ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye nasıl aracılık ettiğine dair tamamlayıcı bir bilgi sunulmuştur.

“Evlilik doyumu ile ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve ilişkisel eşitlik değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamada etkili olabilecek diğer değişkenler nelerdir?” sorusuna verilecek yanıt, bu çalışma kapsamına dahil edilen ilişkilerde takdir kavramının araştırılması ile daha net bir hale gelmektedir. İki ayrı yapısal modelin testi ile evlilik doyumunu açıklamada ilişki sürdürme davranışları, ilişkisel eşitlik ve takdir (algılanan ve ifade edilen) değişkenlerinin birlikte etkileri eş zamanlı olarak test edilmiş ve bu şekilde değişkenlerin doğrudan etkilerinin yanı sıra ilişkisel eşitlik ve takdir değişkenleri aracılığı ile sağlanan dolaylı etkileri de araştırılmıştır.

Ayrıca, ilişkilerde takdir, ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve ilişkisel sonuç değişkenleri (örn. doyum) arasındaki bağlantıların evli bireyler örnekleminde çoğunlukla Amerika’da (Gordon ve ark., 2012; Gordon ve ark., 2011; Kubacka, Finkenauer, Rusbult ve Keijsers, 2011) ve nadiren başka ülkelerde (Li ve Chen, 2012) ele alındığı düşünüldüğünde bu çalışmanın, takdir kavramının farklı bir kültürdeki evli bireyler örneklemindeki yansımaları göstererek bu konuda şimdiye kadar yapılan ampirik çalışmalara katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.



Bu çalışmanın amaçlarından biri olarak belirtilmiş olmasa da, ilişkisel eşitlik ve ilişkilerde takdir kavramlarını ölçen ölçme araçları (Gordon ve ark., 2012; Sabatelli ve Cecil-Pigo, 1985) ve ilişki sürdürme davranışlarını ölçen ölçeğin güncellenmiş formu (Stafford, 2011), araştırma kapsamında Türkçe'ye uyarlanmış ve psikometrik özellikleri test edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın, bu kavramları ileride Türkiye'deki evli bireyler örneklemlerinde (eğitim seviyesi yüksek ve büyük şehirde yaşayan) incelemek ve kültürler arası çalışmalar yürütmek isteyen araştırmacılara öncülük etmesi beklenmektedir.

Son olarak, çalışmanın araştırma ve uygulamaya yönelik katkısının vurgulanması da önemli görülmektedir. İlişkiyi/evliliği geliştirici önleme ve müdahale programlarını geliştirecek, ilişki/evlilik doyumunu etkileyen faktörler konusunda toplumun farkındalığını artırmayı hedefleyen çalışmalar yapacak araştırmacılar, ruh sağlığı uzmanları ve politika yapıcılar için araştırma bulgularının katkı sağlaması ön görülmektedir.

## **2. YÖNTEM**

### **2.1. Araştırmanın Deseni**

Bireyin kendi ve eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı, olumluluk), ilişkisel eşitlik ve ilişkilerde takdir (algılanan ve ifade edilen) değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkileri incelemek ve bu değişkenlerin evlilik doyumunu üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak amacıyla yürütülen bu çalışma ilişkisel bir araştırma desenine sahiptir (Fraenkel, Wallen ve Hyun, 2012).

### **2.2 Örneklem**

Bu çalışmanın örneklemini en az bir yıldır evli olan 335'i kadın (% 55.6) ve 265'i erkek (% 44), 602 evli birey oluşturmaktadır. 2 (% 0.3) katılımcı cinsiyetlerini bildirmemiştir. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu Ankara'da (% 66.9), geri kalanı diğer şehirlerde yaşamaktadır (örn., İstanbul, İzmir, Sakarya, Bursa vb.). Katılımcıların

yaşları 21 ile 67 yaş aralığında değişmektedir ( $Ort. = 38.47$ ,  $Ss = 9.67$ ). Katılımcıların büyük bir çoğunluğu üniversite mezunudur ( $n = 259$ , % 43). Bunu lise mezunu olan katılımcılar ( $n = 137$ , % 22.8) ve master/doktora mezunu olan katılımcılar ( $n = 92$ , % 15.3) takip etmektedir. Görüldüğü üzere, çalışmanın örneklemini eğitim seviyesi yüksek bir profili yansıtmaktadır. İlişkisel değişkenler açısından bakıldığında, katılımcıların çoğunluğu ilk evliliklerinde olduklarını belirtmiş ( $n = 570$ , % 94.7) ve eşleriyle evlenme biçimlerini tanışarak/anlaşarak evlenme olarak tanımlamışlardır ( $n = 451$ , % 74.9). İki yüz yedi katılımcı (% 34.4) bir çocuğu olduğunu, 227 (% 37.7) katılımcı ise birden fazla çocukları olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Evlilik süresi 1-45 yıl aralığında değişmektedir ( $Ort. = 11.92$ ,  $Ss = 9.93$ ).

## **2.3 Veri Toplama Araçları**

Bu çalışmada, İlişki Sürdürme Davranışları Ölçeği-Gözden Geçirilmiş Formu (Stafford, 2011); İlişkisel Eşitlik Ölçeği (Sabatelli ve Cecil-Pigo, 1985); İlişkilerde Takdir Ölçeği (Gordon ve ark., 2012); İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği (Hendrick, 1988) ve katılımcı bilgi formu veri toplama amacıyla kullanılmıştır.

### **2.3.1 İlişki Sürdürme Davranışları Ölçeği-Gözden Geçirilmiş Formu (İSDÖ)**

Gözden geçirilmiş formu Stafford (2011) tarafından geliştirilen İSDÖ, 7'li Likert tipinde (1 = tamamen katılmıyorum, 7 = tamamen katılıyorum), toplam 28 maddelik ve 7 altboyutu olan bir ölçektir. Ölçeğin alt boyutları: ilişki hakkında konuşma (3 madde); kendini açma (4 madde); olumluluk (4 madde); anlayışlılık (4 madde); sosyal çevre (5 madde); görevlerin paylaşımı (4 madde); bağlılık (4 madde) şeklindedir. Aynı soruların bireylerin eşlerinin kullandığı davranışlara dair algılarını da ifade etmeleri için sorulmasıyla, ölçek 56 maddeye ulaşmaktadır. Ölçekten alınan yüksek puan, bireylerin kullandığı ve eşlerinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının daha fazla olduğunu ifade eder. Bu

çalışmada iç tutarlık katsayısı ( $\alpha$ ) her bir boyut için .82 ve .95 aralığında değişmektedir. Ölçeğin Türkçeye uyarlanması, geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışmaları bu tez kapsamında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Türkçe'ye uyarlama aşamasında, öncelikle, ölçek maddeleri üç uzman tarafından Türkçeye çevrilmiş ve ardından bir uzman tarafından geri çevirisi yapılmıştır. Orijinal maddeleri en iyi temsil eden çevirilere karar verildikten sonra, bir Türkçe öğretmeninden de destek alınarak yazım, imla ve akış açısından bir sorun olmadığından emin olunmuştur. En son aşamada, 10 evli bireye ölçekler uygulanmış, uygulama aşamasında herhangi bir sorunla karşılaşp karşılaşmadıkları gözlenmiş, alandaki öğretim üyelerinden uzman görüşü alınmış ve ardından ölçek uyarlama süreci tamamlanmıştır. Bu tez kapsamında Türkçeye uyarlanan her bir ölçek için aynı uyarlama süreci takip edilmiş ve pilot veri seti kullanılmıştır ( $n = 421$  evli birey).

Ölçeğin orijinal faktör yapısı doğrulayıcı faktör analizi (DFA) aracılığı ile test edilmiş ancak analiz sonuçlarına göre faktörler arasında yüksek düzeyde korelasyon tespit edilmiştir. Bu nedenle hem kişinin kendi kullandığı hem de eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları için ayrı ayrı açıklayıcı faktör analizleri (AFA) yapılmış ve her iki AFA sonucunda da tutarlı bir şekilde beş faktörlü bir yapının ortaya çıktığı görülmüştür. Buna göre, orijinal ölçekteki ilişki hakkında konuşma ve kendini açma faktörlerine ait maddeler aynı faktör altında bir araya gelmiş ve bu çalışmada açıklık olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Benzer bir şekilde, olumluluk ve anlayışlılık faktörlerine ait maddeler aynı faktör altında toplanmış ve bu çalışmada olumluluk olarak adlandırılmıştır. Görevlerin paylaşımı faktörü orijinal yapı ile tutarlı olarak aynı dört madde ile temsil edilmiştir. Bağlılık faktörü ayrı bir faktör olarak ortaya çıkmamış ve bu faktörün iki maddesi açıklık diğer iki maddesi de olumluluk faktörü altına yüklenmiştir. Son olarak, orijinal ölçekte tek faktörle ölçülen sosyal çevre faktörünün maddeleri bu çalışmada iki faktör tarafından temsil edilmiş ve sosyal çevre-aile ve sosyal çevre-arkadaşlar olarak adlandırılmıştır. Bu faktörler yalnızca iki madde ile temsil edildikleri için çalışmanın kapsamına dahil edilmemiştir. AFA sonuçlarına göre ortaya çıkan beş

faktörlü yapı, ana veri setinde DFA aracılığı ile test edilmiştir. Beş faktörlü yapı hem kişinin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları için Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$  (312) = 867.14,  $p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 / df$ -oranı = 2.92, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .05 ve RMSEA = .05 (90% CI = .05, .06) hem de eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları için Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$  (312) = 909.93,  $p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 / df$ -oranı = 2.92, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .045 ve RMSEA = .056 (90% CI = .07, .10) doğrulanmıştır. Aşağıda verilen iç tutarlık katsayıları faktörlerin geçerliğine ilişkin kanıt sağlamaktadır. Kişinin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları için: açıklık ( $\alpha = .92$ ), görevlerin paylaşımı ( $\alpha = .85$ ) ve olumluluk ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Kişinin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları için: açıklık ( $\alpha = .94$ ), görevlerin paylaşımı ( $\alpha = .92$ ) ve olumluluk ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### 2.3.2 İlişkisel Eşitlik Ölçeği (İEÖ)

İlişkideki eşitlik algısını ölçmek için Sabatelli ve Cecil-Pigo (1985) tarafından geliştirilen 10 maddelik 5’li Likert tipindeki (1 = tamamen katılıyorum, 5 = tamamen katılmıyorum) ölçek kullanılmıştır. Bu ölçekten alınan yüksek puanlar, evlilikte algılanan eşitliğin daha fazla olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışmada ölçeğin iç tutarlık katsayısı ( $\alpha$ ) .85 olarak belirlenmiştir. Ölçeğin Türkçe uyarlaması, geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması bu tez kapsamında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ölçeğin orijinal faktör yapısı DFA aracılığı ile test edilmiş ve tek faktörlü yapı doğrulanmıştır, Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$  (33) = 124.38,  $p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 / df$ -oranı = 3.77, CFI = .97, NNFI = .96, SRMR = .05 ve RMSEA = .08 (90% CI = .07, .10). Ölçeğin iç tutarlık katsayısı bu çalışmada  $\alpha = .87$  olarak bulunmuştur.

### 2.3.4 İlişkilerde Takdir Ölçeği (İTÖ)

Gordon ve arkadaşları (2012) tarafından geliştirilen İTÖ “hem bireylerin partnerleri tarafından ne ölçüde takdir edildiklerini hissettiklerini hem de eşlerini ne ölçüde takdir ettiklerini” (s. 260) ölçen, iki boyutlu, toplamda 16 maddeden oluşan, 7’li Likert tipinde (1 = tamamen katılmıyorum, 7 = tamamen katılıyorum) bir ölçme

aracıdır. Birinci boyut (takdir etme; ifade edilen takdir) 9 maddeden,  $\alpha = .74$  ve ikinci boyut (takdir edilme; algılanan takdir) 7 maddeden,  $\alpha = .86$  oluşmaktadır. Ölçekten alınan yüksek puanlar partnere ifade edilen ve partnerden algılanan takdirin fazla olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Ölçeğin Türkçe uyarlaması, geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışmaları bu tez kapsamında gerçekleştirilmiştir. DFA aracılığı ile test edilen faktör yapısı ölçeğin iki faktörlü orijinal yapısını doğrulamaktadır, Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2 (103) = 442.15, p = .00, \chi^2/df$ -oranı = 4.29, CFI = .97, NNFI = .96, SRMR = .065 ve RMSEA = .089 (90% CI = .08, .10). Bu çalışmada, ölçeğin iç tutarlık katsayısı, ifade edilen takdir için  $\alpha = .85$  ve algılanan takdir için  $\alpha = .90$  olarak bulunmuştur.

### **2.3.5 İlişki Değerlendirme Ölçeği (İDÖ)**

Hendrick (1988) tarafından geliştirilen İDÖ, algılanan ilişki doyumunu ölçmek amacıyla kullanılmaktadır. 7 maddeden oluşan bu ölçek 5'li Likert tipindedir. Ölçekten alınan yüksek puanlar ilişki doyumunun fazla olduğunu göstermektedir. Ölçeğin Türkçe uyarlama çalışması Curun (2001) tarafından yapılmış ve orijinal ölçekteki tek faktörlü yapı doğrulanmıştır. İç tutarlık katsayısı hem orijinal çalışmada hem de uyarlama çalışmasında  $\alpha = .86$  olarak bulunmuştur. Ölçeğin faktör yapısı bu tez çalışmasında da sınanmış ve tek faktörlü yapı yeniden doğrulanmıştır, Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2 (14) = 27.59, p = .02, \chi^2/df$ -oranı = 1.97, CFI = 1.00, NNFI = .99, SRMR = .02 ve RMSEA = .05 (90% CI = .02, .075). Ölçeğin bu çalışmadaki iç tutarlık katsayısı ( $\alpha$ ) .92'dir.

### **2.3.6 Katılımcı Bilgi Formu**

Katılımcı bilgi formu, cinsiyet, yaş, eğitim durumu gibi kişisel bilgileri, evlenme şekli, evlilik süresi ve çocuk sayısı gibi ilişkisel bilgileri elde etmek amacıyla araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanmış ve uygulanmıştır.

## **2.4 Veri Toplama Süreci**

Araştırmada ilk olarak Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan gerekli etik izinler alınmıştır. Bu aşamadan sonra çalışmada kullanılacak ölçekler basılı hale getirilmiştir. Basılı ölçek paketi, cevapların gizliliğini korumak adına çalışmaya katılmaya gönüllü olan katılımcılara zarf içerisinde ulaştırılmış ve aynı şekilde geri alınmıştır. Eş zamanlı olarak ölçekler Googleforms kullanılarak sanal ortama aktarılmış ve elde edilen link aracılığı ile çevrimiçi ortamlarda da katılımcılara ulaştırılmıştır. Her iki uygulamada da katılımcılardan gönüllü katılım formunu doldurmaları istenmiştir. Örneklem kolay ulaşılabilirlik yöntemi ile seçilmiştir.

## **2.5 Veri Analizi**

Bu araştırmada, bireyin kendi kullandığı ve eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı, olumluluk), ilişkisel eşitlik, ilişkilerde takdir (takdir edilme ve takdir etme) ve evlilik doyumu değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkileri test edebilmek amacıyla kurulan iki model, Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) analizi kullanılarak LISREL 8.8 (Jöreskog ve Sörbom, 1993) programı aracılığı ile sınanmıştır. YEM uygulanmadan önce, SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013) programı kullanılarak YEM'in varsayımları kontrol edilmiş ve betimsel analizler gerçekleştirilmiştir.

## **3. BULGULAR**

Bu araştırma kapsamında, ilişki sürdürme davranışları, ilişkisel eşitlik, algılanan ve ifade edilen takdir ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesi amacıyla iki ayrı yapısal model önerilmiş ve ardından YEM aracılığı ile test edilmiştir. Birinci modelde, ilişkisel eşitlik ve eşten algılanan takdir değişkenlerinin, bireyin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı, olumluluk)

ile evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık etmedeki rolü incelenmiştir. İkinci modelde ise, ilişkisel eşitlik ve eşe ifade edilen takdir değişkenlerinin, bireyin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları (açıklık, görevlerin paylaşımı, olumluluk) ile bireyin evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık etmedeki rolü incelenmiştir.

YEM analizlerinin sonuçları Tablo 3.5’de verilen uyum iyiliği indeksleri (Satorra-Bentler  $\chi^2$ ,  $\chi^2/df$ -oranı, CFI, NNFI, SRMR ve RMSEA) ve bu indeksler için geçerli olan sınır değerler çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir.

Önerilen yapısal modellerin test edilmesinden önce, araştırmada kullanılan tüm ölçeklerin model içerisinde çalışıp çalışmadıkları ve değişkenlerin aralarındaki ilişkileri değerlendirmek amacıyla ölçüm modelleri sınanmıştır. DFA sonuçları her iki modelin de iyi uyum gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Birinci modelin,  $\chi^2/df$ -oranı 2.30, CFI ve NNFI değerleri .98, SRMR değeri .06 ve RMSEA değeri .05; ikinci modelin,  $\chi^2/df$ -oranı 2.32, CFI değeri .99, NNFI değeri .98, SRMR ve RMSEA değeri .05 olarak bulunmuştur.

YEM analizlerinin sonuçları, hem önerilen birinci yapısal modelin,  $\chi^2$  (1015) = 2330.81,  $p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 /df$ -oranı = 2.30, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .06 ve RMSEA = .046 (90% CI = .04, .05) hem de ikinci yapısal modelin  $\chi^2$  (1018) = 2566.01,  $p = .00$ ;  $\chi^2 /df$ -oranı = 2.32, CFI = .99, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .05 ve RMSEA = .047 (90% CI = .04, .05) iyi uyum gösterdiğine işaret etmektedir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre birinci modelde, evlilik doyumu içindeki varyansın %73’ü ilişki sürdürme davranışları, algılanan takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik değişkenleri tarafından, ikinci modelde ise varyansın %75’i eşin kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları, ilişkisel eşitlik ve ifade edilen takdir değişkenleri tarafından açıklanmıştır.

Birinci modelde önerilen 12 doğrudan yolun 8’i ve 13 dolaylı yolun 10’u anlamlı bulunmuştur (Şekil 4.3). Doğrudan yollar incelendiğinde, sonuç değişkeni olarak ele alınan evlilik doyumu, ilişki sürdürme davranışlarından olumluluk davranışı

tarafından anlamlı ve olumlu; görevlerin paylaşımı davranışı tarafından anlamlı fakat olumsuz bir şekilde yordamaktadır. Açıklık davranışı ise evlilik doyumunu anlamlı bir şekilde yordamamaktadır. Olumluluk ve açıklık davranışları, algılanan takdir aracı değişkenini anlamlı ve olumlu; görevlerin paylaşımı davranışı ise anlamlı ve olumsuz yönde açıklamaktadır. Ancak, hiçbir ilişki sürdürme davranışı, algılanan ilişkisel eşitlik aracı değişkenini anlamlı bir şekilde yordamamaktadır. İlişkisel eşitlik ve algılanan takdir aracı değişkenleri ile evlilik doyumu arasındaki doğrudan yollar da olumlu yönde ve anlamlıdır. İlişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki dolaylı etkilerin (1) algılanan takdir ve (2) algılanan takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik yolları aracılığı ile sağlandığı gözlenmiştir. İlişkisel eşitlik değişkeninin ise herhangi bir dolaylı etkisinin olmadığı görülmüştür (Tablo 4.8).

İkinci modelde önerilen 12 doğrudan yolun 8'i ve 13 dolaylı yolun 8'i anlamlı bulunmuştur (Şekil 4.4). Doğrudan yollar incelendiğinde, evlilik doyumu değişkeni, bireyin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarından açıklık davranışı tarafından anlamlı ve olumsuz; olumluluk davranışı tarafından ise anlamlı ve olumlu bir şekilde yordamaktadır. Ancak, eşin kullandığı görevlerin paylaşımı davranışı, evlilik doyumunu anlamlı bir şekilde yordamamaktadır. Eşten algılanan olumluluk davranışı, ilişkisel eşitlik algısını ve eşe ifade edilen takdir; görevlerin paylaşımı davranışı ise sadece ilişkisel eşitlik algısını anlamlı ve olumlu bir şekilde açıklamaktadır. İlişkisel eşitlik algısı ve ifade edilen takdir aracı değişkenleri ile evlilik doyumu arasındaki doğrudan yollar, olumlu yönde ve anlamlıdır. Bireyin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı davranışlar ile kendi evlilik doyumu arasındaki dolaylı etkilerin (1) ilişkisel eşitlik, (2) eşe ifade edilen takdir ve (3) ilişkisel eşitlik ve eşe ifade edilen takdir aracılığı ile sağlandığı belirlenmiştir (Tablo 4.10).

#### **4. TARTIŞMA**

Bu çalışma kapsamında, kişinin kendi kullandığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamada, algılanan takdir, ilişkisel eşitliğin ve



kişinin eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları ile evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamada, ilişkisel eşitlik ve ifade edilen takdirin aracı rolü araştırılmıştır. Bu modelleme çalışması, romantik ilişkiler bağlamında sıklıkla kullanılan eşitlik kuramı çerçevesine dayandırılmıştır (Hatfield, Traupmann, Sprecher, Utne ve Hay, 1985; Walster, Walster ve Traupmann, 1978).

Model testi sonuçları, kişinin kendi kullandığı ve eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları ile evlilik doyumu arasında hem anlamlı hem de anlamlı olmayan doğrudan ilişkiler olduğuna işaret etmektedir (Araştırma Soruları 1.1 ve 2.1). Kişinin kendi kullandığı açıklık davranışından evlilik doyumuna giden yol anlamlı değilken, eşin kullandığı algılanan açıklık davranışından evlilik doyumuna giden yol olumsuz yönde ve anlamlıdır. Bu bulgular, eşe kendini açma davranışının hem kişinin kendisi hem de eşi tarafından kullanılmasının ilişki/evlilik doyumunu olumlu yönde etkileyeceğini bulan çalışmalarla tutarsız (Çağ, 2016; Davidson, Balswick ve Halverson, 1983; Forness, 2002; Lee, 2006; Rosenfeld ve Bowen, 1991; Sprecher, 1987) ancak, bu davranışın ilişki/evlilik doyumunu açıklamada diğer ilişki sürdürme davranışları kadar etkili olmadığını, hatta olumsuz yönde bir etkisinin bulunduğunu gösteren çalışmalarla tutarlıdır (Dainton, 2000; Johnson, 2009; Stafford, 2011; Stafford ve Canary, 1991; Torun, 2005). Bu çalışmada, evlilik doyumu ile kişinin kendi kullandığı görevlerin paylaşımı davranışı arasındaki anlamlı ve olumsuz yöndeki ilişki, bu iki değişken arasındaki olumlu yöndeki ilişkiye işaret eden çalışmalardan farklılık göstermektedir (Johnson, 2009; Stafford ve Canary, 1991). Öte yandan, eşin kullandığı algılanan görevlerin paylaşımı davranışının evlilik doyumunu açıklamada doğrudan bir rolünün olmaması benzer bulgularla tutarlıdır (Dainton, 2000; Klumb, Hoppmann ve Staats, 2006; Stafford, 2011). Son olarak, hem kişinin kendi kullandığı hem de eşinin kullandığı algılanan olumluluk davranışının evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki anlamlı ve olumlu yöndeki rolü, bu davranışın ilişki/evlilik doyumunu açıklamada güçlü ve tutarlı bir değişken olduğunu ortaya koyan birçok çalışma ile paraleldir (Dainton ve Gross, 2008;

Dainton, Stafford ve Canary, 1994; Gottman, 1995; Johnson, 2009; Stafford, 2011; Stafford ve Canary, 1991).

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, aracı değişken olarak sınanan ilişkisel eşitlik, algılanan ve ifade edilen takdir değişkenleri ile evlilik doyumu arasında doğrudan ve olumlu yönde bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir (Araştırma Soruları 1.2 ve 2.2). Buna göre, evliliklerinde eşitlik algısı yüksek olan bireyler doyumlarının yüksek olduğunu ifade etmektedir. Bu bulgu, alanyazındaki önceki çalışmalar tarafından da desteklenmektedir (Buunk ve Mutsaers, 1999; VanYperen ve Buunk, 1991; Weigel, Bennett ve Ballard-Reisch, 2006). Ayrıca, eşleri tarafından takdir edildiklerini algılayan ve eşlerine hissettikleri takdiri ifade eden bireyler, evliliklerinde daha yüksek doyuma sahiptir. Bu bulgu da alanyazındaki benzer çalışmaların bulgularıyla örtüşmektedir (Algoe, Gable ve Maisel, 2010; Gordon ve ark., 2012; Schneider, 2001; Schramm, Marshall, Harris ve Lee, 2005). Sonuç olarak, evlilikte algılanan eşitliğin, eşten algılanan ve eşe ifade edilen takdirin, bireylerin evlilik doyumunu açıklamada olumlu birer faktör olduğu göze çarpmaktadır.

Son olarak, çalışma bulguları, algılanan takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik (birinci model) ve ilişkisel eşitlik ve ifade edilen takdir (ikinci model) değişkenlerinin aracı rolü ışığında incelenmiştir (Araştırma Soruları 1.3 ve 2.3). Birinci modelde, algılanan takdir ve dolayısıyla algılanan ilişkisel eşitliğin dolaylı etkisinin, kişinin kendi kullandığı her bir ilişki sürdürme davranışı ile evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamada anlamlı olduğu görülmüştür. Buna göre, açıklık ve olumluluk davranışını daha fazla kullandıklarını ifade eden evli bireylerin, eşleri tarafından daha fazla takdir edildiklerini ve ilişkilerinde daha eşit hissettiklerini, bunun sonucunda da evlilik doyumlarının daha yüksek olduğunu belirttikleri bulunmuştur. Görevlerin paylaşımı davranışını daha fazla kullandıklarını ifade eden evli bireylerin ise, eşleri tarafından daha az takdir edildiklerini ve ilişkilerinde daha az eşit hissettiklerini, bunun sonucunda da evlilik doyumlarının daha düşük olduğunu belirttikleri görülmektedir. Ayrıca, ilişki sürdürme davranışları ile eşitlik algısı arasında anlamlı olmayan doğrudan ilişkiler, algılanan takdirin aracı rolü ile anlamlı

hale gelmiştir. Bu bulgu, önceki çalışmalarda eşten algılanan takdire bağlı olarak ev içi görevlerin paylaşımı konusunda algılanan eşitliğin arttığını gösteren çalışmaların sonuçlarıyla paraleldir (Hawkins, Marshall ve Allen, 1998; Klumb ve ark., 2006). Aynı zamanda bu bulgu, farklı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının etkisini göstermesi yönünden, önceki çalışmaların kapsamını da genişletmektedir. Genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde, algılanan takdirin ve algılanan takdire bağlı olarak artan eşitlik algısının, bireylerin kendileri için maliyetli olabileceği öne sürülen ilişki sürdürme davranışlarını kullanmalarının, evlilik doyumlarına etkisini açıklamada koruyucu bir rol oynadığı ortaya çıkmaktadır.

İkinci modelde ise, ilişkisel eşitlik algısı ve dolayısıyla eşe ifade edilen takdirin dolaylı etkisi, eşin kullandığı algılanan olumluluk ve görevlerin paylaşımı ile evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkileri açıklamada, anlamlı bir aracı rol üstlenmiştir. Bir başka deyişle, eşlerinin görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk davranışlarını daha çok kullandıklarını algılayan evli bireylerin, ilişkisel eşitlik algılarının ve eşlerine ifade ettikleri takdirin daha yüksek, bunun sonucunda da evlilik doyumlarının daha yüksek olduğunu belirttikleri görülmüştür. Eşin kullandığı algılanan açıklık davranışı ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişki ise, ilişkisel eşitlik ve ifade edilen takdir aracı değişkenlerinin dolaylı etkisi aracılığı ile anlamlı bir şekilde açıklanmamıştır. İlgili alanyazında, ifade edilen takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen bir çalışmaya henüz rastlanmamıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, evlilikteki eşitlik algısının bireyler tarafından ödül olarak algılanan eşin kullandığı görevlerin paylaşımı ve olumluluk davranışları ile bireylerin eşlerine ifade ettikleri takdir arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamada olumlu bir rol oynadığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonuç olarak, çalışmanın bulguları, kişinin kendi kullandığı ve eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkileri açıklayan dolaylı etkilerin farklı yollar aracılığı ile sağlandığına dair kanıt sunmaktadır.

#### **4.1 Kuram, Araştırma ve Uygulamaya Yönelik Çıkarımlar**

Bu çalışma kapsamında ele alınan değişkenlerin evlilik doyumunu açıklamadaki etkililiğinin eşitlik kuramı çerçevesinde incelenmesi, hem ulusal hem de uluslararası alanyazına katkı sağlamaktadır. Eşitlik kuramı ilkelerinin romantik ilişkiler alanında uygulanabilirliğinin ve ilişki/evlilik kalitesini açıklamadaki rolünün araştırıldığı çalışmalar sıklıkla Batı kültürünü temsil eden örneklerle yapılmış (Sprecher, 2001; VanYperen ve Buunk, 1991); ancak bu kuramın sunduğu bakış açısı Türkiye’de yapılan çalışmalarda ihmal edilmiş ve ampirik çalışmalarla henüz test edilmemiştir. Bu araştırmanın örnekleme, eğitim seviyesi yüksek ve çoğunluğu büyük şehirlerde yaşayan ve eşleriyle tanışarak ve anlaşarak evlendiklerini ifade eden bireylerden oluşan yapısı itibari ile batı toplumlarındaki evlilik yapısına ve değerlerine benzetilebilecek olsa da, bu çalışmanın bulguları eşitlik kuramının farklı kültürdeki bir örnekleme nasıl işlediğini göstermesi açısından halen önemlidir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma eşitlik kuramının ilişkilerin sürdürülmesi ve ilişkilerdeki doyumu açıklamadaki rolünün farklı ülkelerde ve kültürlerde araştırıldığı önceki çalışmaları da zenginleştirmektedir (Ballard, Weigel ve Zaguidouline, 1999; Yum ve Canary, 2009; Yum, Canary ve Baptist, 2015).

Bugüne kadar yapılan birçok çalışmada, ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının ilişkilerin kalitesi ve devamlılığındaki rolünün eşitlik kuramı ilkeleri açısından araştırıldığı ilişki eşitlik algısı, bireyin kendi kullandığı ve algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının yordayıcısı olarak ele alınmıştır (Canary ve Stafford, 1992; Canary ve Stafford, 2001; Dainton, 2003; Jackson, 2010). Araştırmacılar tarafından da önerildiği ve tartışıldığı üzere ilişki eşitlik algısı, ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının sonuç değişkeni olarak da ele alınmalıdır (Stafford, 2003). Bu sebeple, bu çalışma, bireylerin kendi kullandığı ve eşinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarını ilişki eşitliğinin yordayıcısı ve buna ek olarak, ilişki eşitliği bu

davranışlar ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklamada aracı değişken olarak test ederek, önceki çalışmalardan farklı ve yeni bir bakış açısı sağlamaktadır.

İlişkilerde takdir kavramının romantik ilişkiler alanyazınında incelendiği çalışmalar gelişim göstermekte; ancak, güncelliğini de korumaktadır (Algoe ve ark., 2010; Gordon ve ark., 2012; Kubacka, Finkenauer, Rusbult ve Keijsers, 2011). Türkiye’de ise takdir değişkeni henüz yeni yeni araştırmacıların dikkatini çekmeye başlamış ve sınırlı sayıda yapılan çalışmalarda da takdir kavramı ile kavramsal olarak örtüşen minnetkarlık kavramı araştırılmıştır (Duran ve Tan, 2013; Satıcı, Uysal ve Akın, 2014; Akın ve Yalnız, 2015). Ancak, araştırmacının bildiği kadarıyla bu çalışma, takdir kavramını romantik ilişki (evlilik) örnekleminde ele alan ulusal alanyazındaki ilk basılı çalışmadır ve önemli ampirik bulgular ortaya koyarak öncül bir araştırma niteliğindedir.

Bu araştırma kapsamında hem bireylerin kendi kullandığı hem de eşlerinin kullandığını algıladığı ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının birlikte ele alınması, doğrudan ve dolaylı etkilerin test edilen modeller arası karşılaştırmalı olarak tartışılmasına imkan sağlamıştır. Ayrıca, doğrudan etkilerin yanı sıra, ilişki eşitlik ve takdir kavramlarının aracı rolünün incelemesi, ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve evlilik doyumu arasındaki doğrudan ilişkilerin dolaylı etkiler aracılığı ile nasıl ve ne şekilde farklılaştığının anlaşılmasını sağlamıştır.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları uygulama açısından da bazı çıkarımlar içermektedir. İlk olarak, bu çalışmanın sonuçlarının, evli ve evlilik öncesindeki bireylere yönelik olarak ilişkilerini/evliliklerini geliştirme ve ilişkilerinin/evliliklerinin devamlılığını ve işlevselliğini artırma amaçlarıyla (Blanchard, Hawkins, Baldwin ve Fawcett, 2009; Halford, Markman, Kling ve Stanley, 2003) geliştirilecek önleyici ve müdahale edici evlilik ve ilişki eğitim programlarının içeriğine katkı sağlayabileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, hem bu programların geliştirilmesinde rol alan araştırmacıların, program uygulayıcılarının hem de bu programların toplumla buluşmasına etkili bir şekilde aracılık edebilecek politika

yapıcıların (örn. T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı), araştırmanın sonuçlarından faydalanabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, evlilik ve aile danışmanlığı hizmeti vererek, flört eden, evli ve boşanmakta olan/boşanmış bireylerle çalışan alan uygulayıcılarının da kendi danışma uygulamalarında bu bulgulardan faydalanabileceği düşünülmektedir. Örneğin, hem önleyici ve müdahale edici programlar kapsamında hem de uygulayıcıların danışma süreçlerinde bireyler, evlilik doyumunu açıklamada olumlu etkisi gözlenen ilişki sürdürme davranışları kullanımı, evlilikte sağlanan eşitlik, eşten algılanan takdir ve eşe ifade edilen takdirin önemi konusunda eğitilebilirler. Böylece, bireyler, evliliklerindeki stres ve doyumsuzluk deneyimini önleyici ve evliliklerini geliştirici bir hizmet edinmiş olabilirler.

Bu çalışmanın bulgularının psikolojik danışman yetiştiren akademisyenler tarafından ele alınabilecek bazı çıkarımlarının olabileceği de düşünülmektedir. Birçok psikoloji/ psikolojik danışma ve rehberlik programı, lisans ve lisansüstü düzeyde yakın ilişkiler ve evlilik ve aile danışmanlığı dersleri vermektedir. Ulusal alanyazındaki ampirik çalışmalar tarafından henüz çok fazla ele alınmamış ilişki sürdürme davranışları, ilişkisel eşitlik ve ilişkilerde takdir kavramları akademisyenler tarafından bu derslerin kapsamına dahil edilebilir ve danışman adayları romantik ilişkilerde eşitlik kuramının rolü, uygulanabilirliği ve etkililiği hakkında bilgilendirilebilir.

#### **4.2 Gelecekteki Araştırmalar için Öneriler**

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalar için bazı yol gösterici öneriler sunmaktadır. İlk olarak, bu çalışmadaki örneklemin getirdiği bazı sınırlılıklar düşünülerek birtakım öneriler sunulmuştur. Bu çalışmada katılımcılar her ne kadar farklı coğrafi bölgelerden seçilmiş olsa da çoğunluğu, Ankara'dan katılan bireyler ve geri kalanını genellikle büyük şehirlerde yaşayan bireyler oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışmanın örneklemi büyük oranda yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip bireylerden oluşmaktadır. Çalışma bulgularının

genellenebilirliğini artırmak amacıyla ilerideki arařtırmalar, Trkiye’deki farklı blgeleri (kırsal ve kentsel) temsil edecek ve eēitim seviyesi ve sosyo-ekonomik aıdan eřitliliēi saēlayacak rneklerle yrtlmelidir.

Bu arařtırmada cinsiyet deēiřkeni evlilik doyumunun anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olarak bulunmadıēı iin yapısal modele kontrol deēiřkeni olarak dahil edilmemiřtir. Ancak nerilen yapısal modellerin cinsiyete gre farklılařıp farklılařmadıēı ilerideki alıřmalarda ok rneklemli YEM kullanılarak arařtırılabilir.

Bu arařtırmanın rneklemi sadece evli bireylerden oluřturulmuřtur. Ancak, ilgili alanyazın iliřki srdrme davranıřları ve evlilik doyumunu arasındaki iliřkinin farklı iliřki trlerinde ve evrelerinde (rn. flrt iliřkisi, niřanlılık) farklılařabileceēini ne srmektedir (Stafford ve Canary, 1991). Bu nedenle, bu alıřmada ele alınan deēiřkenler ve nerilen modeller, farklı iliřki trlerini kapsayan rneklerde de test edilebilir.

Bu arařtırmanın verileri, evli bireylerin anketlere verdiēi yanıtlar ile elde edilmiřtir. Bireylerin eřlerinin kullandıēını algıladıkları iliřki srdrme davranıřlarını ifade etmeleri istenmiř olsa da evli iftlerden toplanacak veriler, her iki eřin de bakıř aısına dair fikir vererek, zellikle kiřilerarası deēiřkenlerin birbirleriyle olan iliřkilerini anlamada daha detaylı bir bilgi saēlayacaktır.

Evlilik kalitesinin belirleyicisi olarak sınanan evlilik doyumunu, bu alıřmanın tek sonu deēiřkenidir. Ancak, iliřki srdrme davranıřları, iliřkisel eřitlik ve takdir kavramlarının yordayıcı rol, evlilik kalitesini belirlemede rol oynayan baēlılık, ařk ve yakınlık gibi diēer deēiřkenleri aıklamada farklılık gsterebilmektedir. Bu nedenle, evlilik doyumunun yanı sıra, bu deēiřkenler de ileride yapılacak arařtırmalarda sonu deēiřkeni olarak kullanılabilir.

Bu alıřmada ele alınan deēiřkenler evlilik doyumundaki varyansın byk bir blmn her iki modelde de aıklamıř olsa da eřitlik kuramı, arařtırmacıların dikkatini ekebilecek bařka deēiřkenlerin varlıēından ve etkisinden sz etmektedir.

Örneğin, cinsiyet rolü ideolojisi (Shechory ve Ziv, 2007; Van Yperen ve Buunk, 1991) ve değişim yönelimi (exchange orientation) (Sprecher, 1992, 1998), ilişki sürdürme davranışları, algılanan eşitlik, ilişkilerde takdir ve evlilik doyumu değişkenleri arasındaki bağlantıları açıklamada düzenleyici değişken olarak araştırılabilir.

Bu çalışma, algılanan ve ifade edilen takdirin, Türkiye'deki evli bireyler örnekleminde test edildiği ilk basılı çalışmadır. Takdir kavramının araştırmadaki diğer değişkenler ile anlamlı bir ilişki içerisinde olduğunu gösteren bulgular, bu kavramın romantik ilişkiler bağlamında farklı örneklemelerde de (örn. flört ilişkisi yaşayan, birlikte yaşayan, yeni evli ve yeniden evlenen bireyler) test edilmeye devam edilmesi için önemli bir göstergedir. Gelecekte yapılacak çalışmalarda, takdir ve ilişkisel eşitlik değişkenlerinin yordayıcıları olarak ilişki sürdürme davranışlarının yanı sıra, bireylerin ilişkilerini sürdürmek amacıyla yaptıkları diğer yatırımların da incelenmesi, elde edilen verileri zenginleştirecektir.

Son öneri ise, bu araştırmada kullanılan ilişkisel desenin getirdiği sınırlılıkların ilerideki çalışmalarda giderilmesine yöneliktir. İlişki sürdürme davranışları, ilişkisel eşitlik ve doyum arasındaki ilişkiler ile (Dainton, 2011; Lavner, Karney ve Bradbury, 2016; Stafford, 2003) takdir, ilişki sürdürme davranışları ve ilişkisel sonuç değişkenleri (Gordon ve ark., 2012) arasındaki ilişkilerin ikiyeönlülüğü düşünüldüğünde, ileride yapılacak boylamsal ve deneysel çalışmalar ile bu değişkenler arasındaki neden-sonuç ilişkileri gözlenebilir.



## **J. Curriculum Vitae**

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### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

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- 2014-2015 2214 International Doctoral Research Fellowship, TÜBİTAK, Turkey
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### **PUBLICATIONS**

**Akçaboza, N. B.,** McDaniel, B. T., Corkery, S. A., & Curran, M. A. (2016). Gender, sacrifices, and variability in commitment: A daily diary study of pregnant unmarried cohabitators and their male partners. *Sex Roles*, 77(3), 194-208. doi: 10.1007/s11199-016-0716-9.

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## PRESENTATIONS

**Akçaboza, N. B. &** Hatipoğlu Sümer, Z. (2017, April). *İlişkilerde Takdir Ölçeği'nin Türkçeye adaptasyonu: Geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması* [Turkish adaptation of the Appreciation in Relationships Scale: Validity and reliability study]. Paper presented at the meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Educational Sciences, Side-Antalya, Turkey.

**Akçaboza, N. B. &** Hatipoğlu Sümer, Z. (2017, April). *İlişkisel Eşitlik Ölçeği'nin Türkçe uyarlaması ve psikometrik özelliklerinin incelenmesi* [Turkish adaptation of the Relational Equity Scale: Validity and reliability studies]. Paper presented at the meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Educational Sciences, Side-Antalya, Turkey.

Toplu-Demirtaş, E., **Akçaboza, N. B.,** & Hatipoğlu-Sümer, Z. (2016, April). *Ayrımcılık Karşıtı Ders: Öğretmen adaylarının cinsel yönelim olgusuna ilişkin görüşleri* [A course against discrimination: Views of prospective teachers about sexual orientation]. Paper presented at the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Educational Sciences, Antalya, Turkey.

**Akçaboza N. B.,** McDaniel B. T., Corkery S. A, Curran M. A. (2016, July). *Gender, sacrifices, and commitment: A daily diary study of pregnant unmarried cohabitators and their male partners*. Paper presented at the meeting of The International Association of Relationship Research, Toronto, Canada.

Gonzalez J. M., **Akçaboza N. B.,** Gamble H., Curran M. A. (2016, November). *Variability in daily relationship quality: Roles of daily sacrifice motives and gender*. Poster presented at the meeting of National Council on Family Relations, Minneapolis, MN.

**Akçaboza, N. B., & Hatipoğlu-Sümer Z.** (2015, October). *The role of personality traits in understanding conflict-handling behaviors of married individuals*. Paper presented at the meeting of XIII. National Congress of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Mersin, Turkey.

**Akçaboza, N. B., Chavez, C., Pech, A., & Curran, M. A.** (2015, November). *Actor and partner attachment styles and relationship quality for cohabitators*. Poster presented at the meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

**Akçaboza, N. B., Curran, M. A., & Young, V.** (2015, June). *Perceived appreciation of intimate sacrifices and depressive symptoms for cohabitators*. Paper presented at the mini-conference of the International Association for Relationship Research, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

**Akçaboza, N. B., & Hatipoğlu-Sümer Z.** (2015, June). *The role of conflict-handling behaviors and frequency of conflict on marital satisfaction*. Poster presented at the meeting of the Mini-Conference of the International Association for Relationship Research, New Brunswick, NJ.

Mesutoğlu, C., **Akçaboza, N. B., Muyan, M., Aydın, G., Ünlü-Kaynakçı, F. Z., & Sancak-Aydın, G.** (2014, April). *Değişen Kıyafet Yönetmeliğine Yönelik Öğretmen, Öğrenci ve Veli Görüşleri* [Teacher, student and parent's opinions regarding the change in application of clothing in schools]. Paper presented at the meeting of the 1st Eurasian Educational Research Congress, İstanbul, Turkey.

**Akçaboza, N. B., Young, V., Curran, M. A.,** (2014, November). *Appreciation of intimate sacrifices and depressive symptoms for cohabitators*. Poster presented at College of Agriculture & Life Sciences Poster Forum, Tucson, AZ.

**Akçaboza, N. B., & Hatipoğlu Sümer, Z.** (2013, September). *The role of conflict-handling behaviors and personality traits on marital satisfaction*. Paper presented at the meeting of the XII. National Congress of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, İstanbul, Turkey.

Aydın, Y., **Akçaboza**, N. B., Aslan, S., Muyan, M., & Engin-Demir, C. (2013, September). *Advising relationship at a Turkish public university: Satisfaction and perceived support*. Paper presented at the meeting of the European Conference on Educational Research, İstanbul, Turkey.

**Akçaboza**, N. B., & Muyan, M. (2012, December). *The role of school counselors at disaster and disaster recovery*. Paper presented at the meeting of the IV. National Congress of Applied Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Ankara, Turkey.

**Akçaboza**, N. B. (2012, December). *The role of psychological counselors at disasters*. Panel presentation at the meeting of the IV. National Congress of Applied Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Ankara, Turkey.

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

Hatipoğlu Sümer, Z. & **Akçaboza** N. B. (2012). Conflict-Handling Behaviors and Personality Traits on Marital Satisfaction. Scientific Research Project (ODTÜ-BAP); Position: Researcher.

Hatipoğlu Sümer, Z. & **Akçaboza** N. B. (2015). Turkish Adaptation and Examination of Psychometric Properties of Relationship Maintenance Behaviors Measurement, Relational and Global Equity Scale, and Appreciation in Relationships Scale. Scientific Research Project (ODTÜ-BAP); Position: Researcher.

## LANGUAGE

Advanced English

## MEMBERSHIPS

Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association

## K. Tez Fotokopisi İzin Formu

### **ENSTİTÜ**

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

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Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

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Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

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Enformatik Enstitüsü

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Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

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### **YAZARIN**

Soyadı: Akçabozan Kayabol

Adı: Nazlı Büşra

Bölümü: Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce): RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE BEHAVIORS AND MARITAL SATISFACTION: THE MEDIATOR ROLES OF RELATIONAL EQUITY AND APPRECIATION

**TEZİN TÜRÜ**: Yüksek Lisans

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Doktora

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1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

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**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**