Perceived influence of parenting styles over irrational belief in romantic relations

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The aim of this study is to investigate if perceived parenting styles have any influence on irrational belief in romantic relations among university students. To determine the students’ irrational belief in romantic relations “Belief Inventory in Relations” by Kalkan and to determine their perception for parenting styles “Scale of Parent Dependence” by Tosun and Sümer are used. The study is applied on a randomly selected sample of 266 students studying at OndokuzMayıs University. The students’ average age is 22.01; 193 of them are females and 73 are males. T-test and Pearson correlation are used to analyze the data. It has been determined that irrational beliefs in romantic relations and perceived parenting styles do not vary in terms of gender. Moreover, whilst a negative-oriented relationship between belief and mother concern, father concern, father autonomy is observed in romantic relations, no meaningful relation is found between lower dimensions of mothers’ overprotection, mother autonomy and fathers’ overprotection.

Key words: Word, irrational belief in romantic relations, romantic relation, commitment to parents, parentage styles Heading 1: use this style for level one headings.

INTRODUCTION

Intimate relationships make up a very important and indispensable aspect of life. For many people, an ideal life means close relationships such as marriage, love, and friendship with other people. Although all sorts of close relations are important, emotional relationships hold quite different meanings from the others (Büyükşahin, 2006). In this paper, romantic relationships that are considered within the context of intimate relationships are defined as relation consisting of a combination of passion, commitment and intimacy developing between a woman and man (Sternberg, 1986). Romantic relationships have significant effects on individuals' development of identity and personality along with their academic, social and emotional development; they also specify the quality of peer and family relationships.

Depending on the cultural context, irrational beliefs for romantic relationship could be related to several factors including types of parenting styles, experience in the period of early adulthood, gender, role of gender rather than gender itself, dissatisfaction and satisfaction in the relationship, partner attachment, interpersonal characteristics, as well as, difficulties in a romantic relationship. This paper is specifically concerned with the questions of how gender impact both irrational beliefs for romantic relationship and the perception of parenting styles, as well as, the question of how irrational beliefs for romantic
relationship and perceptions of parenting styles are correlated. Thus, this paper expects to investigate these relations in Turkey.

The importance of generating and maintaining a satisfying and fulfilling intimate relationship has prompted many researchers to identify the unique contribution that specific factors in the family of origin make to varying aspects of intimate relationships (Elnav, 2014). In particular, romantic relationships experienced in early adulthood have a distinctive importance since youths are in a developmental process for their adult roles. Therefore, it is possible to mention the romantic relationships they establish during university years which include individuals' period of early adulthood, determine the nature of their close relationships that will be established in adulthood and mate selection in the process of marriage (Furman, 2002). Furthermore, the importance of close relationships is quite remarkable with regard to acceleration of the adaptation process to the university and ensuring reliable and positive transitions between the developmental periods (Ponzetti and Cate, 1988; Mosher and Danoff-Burg, 2007; Moss and Schwebel, 1993).

While rational beliefs are logical, flexible and compatible with reality, irrational beliefs are thoughts which are unreasonable, constant, entrenched and incompatible with the reality. As a result of irrational beliefs, people may have unhealthy emotions, non-functional behaviors and psychological disorders (Ellis, 1993). In other ways undesirable, nonproductive, negative behaviors are the products of feeling that are responses to irrational thoughts or beliefs (Schwartz, 2000; cited in Ghumman and Shoaib, 2013). Irrational beliefs involve strict obligations and demands like the sense of "... must ... or ... have to..." that a person has related to one's self, others, and the world one lives in; rather than desires and preferences. From the perspective of developmental psychology, in general irrational beliefs of the early childhood period can also persist in periods of adolescence and adulthood (Ellis, 1993). People's irrational thinking tendencies such as self-destruction, elaborateness, and intolerance are usually handed down by the family and the culture which they are immersed in (Can, 2006).

Irrational beliefs for romantic relationships are extensively unrealistic thoughts about people's selves, spouses, and nature of the relationship; they cause frustrations resulting from individuals' expectations not coming true in their relations (Ellis, 1993; 2003; Sharp and Ganong, 2000). According to Ellis (1986), how individuals perceive the fact of relationship is important. Rational and functional thinking increases the harmony in relationships. Irrational beliefs lead one to give harm to their own; and thus decrease the harmony in the romantic relationship (Greene, 2006).

In the study that influence of unrealistic relationship beliefs aimed at behavioral and emotional disorders was investigated, Cash (1984) assessed some basic beliefs and situations prone to reality and unreality in relations. Cash has observed that unrealistic relationship beliefs are considerably external control-focused, are comprised of negative cognitive processes, and that an individual is inclined to manifest depressive symptoms. It has been found that the individuals having firm unrealistic relationship beliefs are less optimistic and socially feisty for the success and failure in romantic relationships.

Some other variables, which are thought to be associated with irrational beliefs, have also been investigated. In the study of Coleman and Ganong (1992), they investigated the effect of gender and the role of gender on irrational beliefs. This study shows that irrational beliefs are influenced by the role of gender rather than gender itself. Metis and Cupach (1990) examined the relations between irrational relationship beliefs, reactions to dissatisfaction in the relationship and relationship satisfaction. A negative correlation has been found between irrational beliefs and "abandoning" and "neglecting" which are both reactions of destructive dissatisfaction; but a positive one between "loyalty" and "expressing" which are reactions of positive dissatisfaction. Both irrational beliefs and dissatisfaction have shown a negative correlation with relationship satisfaction. Stackert and Bursik (2003) examined the relationship between attachment styles and cognitive distortions of university students whom are having a romantic relationship. As a result of the research, it has been found that young adults with "anxious" and "avoiding" attachment styles have more cognitive distortions. Insecure attachment creates many more cases of individuals being offended; this leads to use of more cognitive distortions. It is stated that women are much more susceptible to the problems in relationships and therefore, experience conflict. Another finding of the study is that both insecure attachment style and cognitive distortions are associated with low relationship satisfaction at a meaningful level. Kilmann et al. (2012) examined the relations between partner attachment and interpersonal characteristics. They also found gender differences in the association between attachment orientations and interpersonal styles.

An individual is influenced by the family and social environment more due to undergoing environmental impacts in early childhood (Can, 2006). Therefore, the development process of irrational beliefs starting at such an early period is maintained through inculcation and teachings (Ellis and Dryden, 1997). Ellis (1986, 1993) emphasizes the impact of family and culture on irrational beliefs of and states the impact is experienced more intensely at early ages. The way that parents raise a child plays a significant role in increasing, reducing or preventing children's emotional and behavioral problems. Therefore, it could be thought that the perception of youngsters for their parents' parenting styles is determi-
nant of irrational beliefs of their future romantic relationships.

Baumrind (1973, 1978) suggested there were three types of parenting styles which are permissive, authoritarian, and explicative-authoritarian parenting. In authoritarian parenting emphasizing obedience and compelling discipline, parents, who are relied on, obeyed, and respected, establish rules, and accordingly others are expected to adhere to them. Violation of these rules is confronted with strict discipline. It is more common in families with low socio-economic level. On the other hand, authoritarian parents give weight to listening to advice for a child while they show them less affection. Permissive parents who allow freedom to a large extent are incapable of laying down limits on a child’s behavior or guiding him/her despite behaving in a friendly manner. There are very few rules in permissive parenting—there may not be at all, and parents make it possible for children or adolescents to act as they like deliberately or by neglecting. Once need for discipline arises, they are generally ambivalent. The effects of such a parenting style are not clear. According to Elder (1975), some adolescents develop self-confidence and independence under a permissive parental style.

The democratic parenting style which shows direction yet allows individuality comprises deeds of guiding a child clearly and in an understandable way so that he will acquire some significant behaviors and values as well as compassion. In democratic style, while parents have the ultimate authority and establish the rules to obey, they also give children and adolescents the opportunities of being different, taking responsibility for their own behavior, and making more decisions. Discipline involves reasoning and explaining rather than strict punishment (Coopersmith, 1967). When parents are placed at either end of authorization or permission-giving, their relations with children are greatly weakened. Moderate or democratic approach facilitates a positive self-concept and independence. However, authorization obstructs progress towards the objectives to a great extent (Gander and Gardiner, 1993). Behavior performed by parents provides children with learned methods that they will use in organizing their relations with others (Bailey, 2005).

It is reported that one of the reasons why university students apply to Centres of Psychological Counseling and Guidance is the difficulties these students are having in their romantic relationships. Identification of functional or nonfunctional romantic relationship beliefs individuals have will provide considerable support for understanding the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of individuals who are experiencing difficulties in romantic relationships in particular (Creasey and Ladd, 2004). Therefore, it is foreseen that improvement of various preventive and developmental activities for these students will provide a significant contribution to romantic relationship that university student sex experience on irrational beliefs through identification of the influence of basic beliefs and perceived parenting styles.

From this perspective, this study is to answer the following questions:

1a. Do irrational beliefs of young people concerning romantic relationships vary according to gender?

b. Do their perception of parenting styles vary according to gender?

2. Is there a meaningful relation between their perception of parenting styles and youngsters’ irrational beliefs concerning romantic relationships?

METHOD

Study framework and pattern

While students studying at Ondokuz Mayıs University constitute the population of research, its sample is constituted by 266 students chosen by random sampling method and who study at various faculties in Ondokuz Mayıs University in 2009-2010 school year. 193 students are girls, 73 are males and the average age is 22.01.

Measure

"Belief Inventory in Relationships" by Kalkan (2006) has been used to determine students’ irrational beliefs in romantic relationships and "Parental Commitment Scale" by Tosun and Sümer (2006) has been used to determine the perceptions of parenting styles. Also, "Personal Information Form" has been applied to determine the personal characteristics of university students involved in the research.

Belief inventory in relationships

Belief Inventory in Relationships (BIR), formed by Kalkan (2006) in order to measure individuals’ irrational beliefs in romantic relationships, is made up of 20 items. BIR’s validity study revealed there are two factors named “helplessness” and “antipathy” which account for 35.84% of the variance. In calculation of similar scales in the validity of the inventory, the Irrational Belief Scale (IBS) and Nonfunctional Attitudes Scale (NAS) were used. The findings indicate the correlation between the scores taken from BIR and WARS is .24 (p<.01). While the coefficient of internal consistence regarding the whole inventory was ascertained at .87, the test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated to .74. Coefficient of internal consistence for the lower dimension “helplessness” is .78, the test-retest reliability coefficient is .69; coefficient of internal consistence for the lower dimension “antipathy” is .80, and the test-retest reliability coefficient is .71. These present values are at a level which may be deemed sufficient for the reliability of BIR (Kalkan, 2006).

Parental commitment scale

Adaptation of the scale developed to measure individuals’ perceptions of their parents’ parenting styles into Turkish was made by Tosun and Sümer (2006). The results of the scale factor analysis show that it consists of three subscales graded separately for
Table 1. T-Test results of belief inventory grades in relationships according to gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Ss</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief in relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>48.0674</td>
<td>8.77500</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>-.140</td>
<td>.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>48.2329</td>
<td>8.16755</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. T-Test results of parental commitment scale grades according to gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Ss</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>83.8704</td>
<td>6.73375</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>83.1286</td>
<td>6.62652</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overprotection</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>19.8642</td>
<td>2.74033</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>19.7000</td>
<td>2.91597</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of perception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>63.8704</td>
<td>6.19571</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>1.021</td>
<td>.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63.0000</td>
<td>5.36224</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>80.7789</td>
<td>8.12688</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>.751</td>
<td>.453</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>79.9726</td>
<td>6.85965</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overprotection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>19.7368</td>
<td>3.44791</td>
<td>261</td>
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<td>.417</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>19.3699</td>
<td>2.78142</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of concern</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>61.1105</td>
<td>7.00819</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>.537</td>
<td>.592</td>
</tr>
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<td>73</td>
<td>60.6164</td>
<td>5.72914</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

"mother" and "father". Accordingly, varying amounts in the subscales of concern, overprotection and autonomy clarify as follows: While concern for mother has been determined as 31.99%; overprotection, 6.55%; autonomy, 9.63%; concern for father is 34.52%, overprotection, 5.70%; and autonomy, 12.94%. The correlation between the scale and Scales of Child Rearing Styles (SCRS) was examined and found that the acceptance subscale of SCRS is related to the concern subscale at the level of .89, to overprotection at the level of -.37. It has also been determined that the supervision subscale of SCRS is related to the concern subscale at the level of -.38, to overprotection at the level of .78, and to autonomy at the level of .60. As for alpha coefficients of the scale, it has been calculated as .83 for mother concern subscale, .75 for mother overprotection subscale, .78 for mother autonomy subscale, .91 for father concern subscale, .71 for father overprotection subscale, and .85 for father autonomy subscale (Tosun and Sümer, 2006).

Statistical analyses
Measurement tools were applied to students who volunteered to participate in the research. The analysis of the data collected was fulfilled using SPSS 15.0. T-test and Pearson correlation analysis have been used as statistical analysis technique.

RESULTS
1. Do irrational beliefs of young people concerning romantic relationships vary according to gender?

   The t-test is used to test the primary objective of the research (a). Accordingly, in Table 1, it is shown whether youngsters’ irrational beliefs in romantic relationships differ according to gender or not.

   As seen in Table 1, there is not any meaningful difference between university students’ irrational beliefs in romantic relationships according to gender.

2. Do their perception of parenting styles vary according to gender?

   The t-test is used to test the primary objective of the research (b). Accordingly, in Table 2 it is shown whether there is any difference between the levels of youngsters’ perceptions of parenting styles according to their gender.

   As seen in Table 2, no meaningful difference has been found between the levels of university students’ perceived parenting styles according to gender.

3. Is there a meaningful relation between their perception of parenting styles and youngsters’ irrational beliefs concerning romantic relationships?

   In order to test the second hypothesis of the research the
Table 3. Pearson correlation test results concerning the relation between irrational beliefs in romantic relationships and parenting styles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief in relationships</th>
<th>Concern of mother</th>
<th>Overprotection of mother</th>
<th>Autonomy of Mother</th>
<th>Concern of father</th>
<th>Overprotection of father</th>
<th>Autonomy of father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.146*</td>
<td>-.102</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>-.138*</td>
<td>-.048</td>
<td>-.135*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p< .01.

test of Pearson correlation is used. Accordingly, in Table 3 the relation between youngsters’ irrational beliefs in romantic relationships and parenting styles is displayed.

As seen in Table 3, there is a reverse relation with a weak significance between belief and the lower dimensions of concern of mother (r=-.146, p<.05), concern of father (r=-.138, p<.05), and autonomy of father (r=-.135, p<.05) in romantic relationships. No meaningful relations between lower dimensions of overprotection of mother (r=-.102, p>.01), autonomy of mother (r=-.099, p>.01), overprotection of father (r=-.048, p>.01) and beliefs in romantic relationships have been found.

DISCUSSION

In this study, whether university students’ perceptions of their parents’ parenting styles vary their irrational beliefs according to gender in romantic relationships, and the relation between their perceptions of their own parents’ parenting styles and their irrational beliefs in romantic relationships have been investigated. As a result of the study it has been observed that there is no meaningful relation between the students’ gender and their beliefs for romantic relationship as well as the parenting styles which they perceive; it is revealed that there is a reverse meaningful relation between irrational beliefs in romantic relationships and the lower scales of concern of mother, concern of father, and autonomy of father.

Hamamcı (2005) has examined married individuals’ nonfunctional relationship beliefs in marital relations, however, not yet observed any meaningful difference in nonfunctional relationship beliefs in terms of gender. The findings of this research confirm the results of the study. Referring to the relevant literature, studies involving various findings also exist. There are some basic differences between how women and men perceive and experience romantic relations (Giordane et al., 2008; Frazier and Esterly, 1990; Rubin et al., 1981; Sari, 2008; Abowitz et al, 2009;Stackert and Bursik, 2003; Coleman and Ganong, 1987; Carlson and Rose, 2007); women's expectations are more detailed than those of men in the process of relation and women scrutinize their own relations more carefully and closely compared to men (Sprecher and Toro-Morn (2002)). Also it has been determined that women are more independent and unrestricted than men are in terms of evaluating what they have experienced in romantic relationships.

Considering the development of romantic relationship beliefs, these beliefs mostly develop in early childhood years through the observation of parental relations although they change over time to some extent. Also, in Beşikçi’s (2008) study it is seen that the acceptance perceived from the mother has influence from the commitment to romantic relation. Depending on the behavior of problematic parents a child develops irrational beliefs (Grieger and Boyd, 2006).

In the study, it is seen that there is no meaningful relationship between the perception of parenting styles and gender. Findings of Kenny and Galagher, (2002), Ryan and Lynch (1989) and Armsdenet al. (1990)’s studies show there is no meaningful relationship between girls and boys in terms of commitment to parents and these findings support the result of the work. Booth and Amato (1994) emphasize child-raising styles pertaining to parenting might either make a combined impact or various impacts on girls or boys.

The nature of the relationship established with the parents determines a child’s personality development as well as the nature of relationships they will establish with other people (Bowbly, 1980). While parents’ insufficient concern or overprotective behavior creates a risk factor in terms of psychopathology, their inconsistent, rejecting behavior and overprotective attitudes lead to impediment in the normal development of children (Parker, 1983; Bowbly, 1988). From childhood to adulthood, the parent-child relationship continues its impact in different ways on the nature of romantic relationships and the course of those relationships(Connolly and Johnson, 1996). A positive relationship can be mentioned to exist between parental support and the nature of romantic relationship in adulthood (Conger et al., 2000).

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS

The findings of this research are important as they reveal the impacts of parenting styles in childhood, parental attitudes and behaviours on romantic relationships.
People who do psychological assistance jobs can share the subject of irrational beliefs and their impacts in the studies they will carry out with families. Considering individuals inherit behaviour and interaction patterns which they perform in their romantic relationships during adulthood period, it can be thought that the effective solution for their current relationship problems is to change the traces of past (Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 1996). For this reason, it can be mentioned that detection of perception of parenting styles in childhood will also make considerable contributions for pre-marriage psychological counseling and marriage counseling.

It is thought that in addition to university students' gaining awareness for the irrational romantic relationship beliefs in which they hold, and assisting them to change their irrational beliefs, will provide considerable contributions for the psychological counseling process.

**Conflict of Interests**

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

**REFERENCES**


