

Irrational Beliefs in Romantic Relationships as the Predictor of Aggression in Emerging Adulthood*

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine irrational beliefs in romantic relationships as the predictor of aggression in emerging adults. The study is a quantitative study done using the relational survey model. The study group is composed of 351 fourth-year students, 201 females and 150 males, who were attending three universities in Central Anatolia during the 2016-2017 academic year. In order to collect the study data, 23-item "KAR-YA Aggression Scale with four sub-dimensions (Physical Aggression, Hostility, Anger, Verbal Aggression) was used. 30-item "Irrational Romantic Relationship Beliefs Inventory" with six dimensions (Over Expectations, Use of Social Time, Mind Reading, Different Thinking, Physical Intimacy, Gender Differences) was used to determine the irrational beliefs in romantic relationships. Also, "Personal Information Form" was used to obtain the participants' personal and socio-economic information. The data collected was analyzed using the SPSS 18 package program. T-test analysis was conducted to find the correlation and the gender differences between aggression and irrational beliefs in romantic relationships, and multi-hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine whether irrational beliefs in romantic relationships predict aggression or not. When the study findings are examined, it is seen that males' aggression levels and their irrational expectation regarding the social and free time activities are higher. In addition, in explaining emerging adults' aggression sex is a significant predictor of different thinking and gender differences variables from the IRBI sub-dimensions.

Keywords: aggression, irrational beliefs in romantic relationships, emerging adulthood

1. Introduction

One of the important concepts that humankind try to understand and deal with, is aggression which is defined as one's harmful and destructive behaviors towards oneself, other individuals or objects. The explanation of the concept of aggression includes biological and social theories. The debate over which one comes first is considered a part of the nature-nurture debate. According to biological approaches, aggression is an innate and instinctive behavior. In other words, aggression is caused by a genetically programmed innate instinct looking for ways of release and waiting for an appropriate situation to reveal itself. According to social theories, aggression is defined as an impulse caused by social and situations; it can be from birth or it can be learned (Hogo & Vaughan, 2006).

Just like aggression can be encountered in every situation in life, it can also be encountered in romantic relationships. As seen in the literature, many feelings like anger, guilt, fear, sadness and disappointment spring in conflict situations in romantic relationships (Sanford, 2007, p.66). As a destructive conflict resolution behavior, behaviors like verbal and physical abuse, relational aggression, threats and avoidance (Wolfe & Scott, 2001, p.291) as well as behaviors like getting angry, attack, rapid breathing, withdrawal, using ways of isolation or denial and avoidance of dealing with problems emerge (Fieldman & Kris, 1998, p.691). According to Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon and Shelley (2002, p.11-13), aggression-violence in romantic relationships includes certain behaviors: (i) physical violence that

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intentionally uses physical force like slapping, pushing, shaking, burning, poking, pulling hair or using weapon and may result in death or injury; (ii) sexual violence like physically forcing, having nonconsensual intercourse or abusing sexual intimacy; (iii) psychological/emotional violence like humiliation, control, hiding information, restricting communication with social environment, dragging the other to illegal activities and damaging the other's private's life or belongings. According to 2008 data of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 25% of adolescents are subjected to physical, psychological and sexual violence every year (Makin-Byrd & Bierman, 2013). According to the World Health organization report, 35% of women around the world are subjected to physical or sexual violence from their partners in their intimate relationship (WHO, 2017). In their study, Mason, Campbell, Zaharakis, Foster and Richards (2014) put forth that 26.1% of adolescents are exposed to psychological violence and 11.9% of them to physical violence in their ongoing relationships. A study conducted with Portuguese university students aged 18-23 found that many adolescents were harassed at least once in the last year by their female or male partners (Martins et al., 2014).

Lasting from ages 18 to 25, emerging adulthood is a life stage theoretically and empirically different than adolescence and adulthood where the individual is neither an adolescent nor an adult and feels in-between (Arnett, 2000). This stage is a transitional time between adolescence and adulthood when the person feels in-between. An important characteristic of emerging adulthood is that it is the life period with the best opportunities for identity studies on love, job and world views (Arnett, 2000). The identity exploration process that occurs during this period motivates emerging adults to be in close interactions with others (Arnett, 2000). It is a period in which young men and women who want to establish close relationships can emotionally grow mature (Burger, 2006). Murray discusses the need for being close to others, cooperating with them, commitment and being loyal which he named "intimacy". One of the forms of relationships established with other individuals is a romantic relationship (Hendrick, 2009). Romantic relationships are one of the important relationships that meet the need for closeness. According to Sternberg (1986, 1997), romantic relationships are relationships between couples that are established by free choices and has elements of desire, commitment and closeness in them. Activities that have been at an earlier age in the past, such as marriage, having children and taking responsibility for a home, have now shifted to the late 20s. Romantic relationships are quite important for emerging adults who have been experimenting on many different subjects during this period because they are the relationships that they make their identity explorations on love. Therefore, formation and maintenance of romantic relationships during this period has critical significance (Eryilmaz & Ercan, 2011; Fincham & Cui, 2011). People's need to establish relationships and form emotional ties with other individuals are influenced by affective and cognitive processes (Hendrick, 2009). Beliefs about relationships are important while beginning a romantic relationship and also during the relationship. If the couples' beliefs are realistic and rational, the relationship may progress. When the beliefs about relationships are not realistic and rational, the couples are more likely to have problems in their relationships (Friedman & Whisman, 1998). Irrational relationship beliefs are defined as individuals' exaggerated, rigid, unreasonable and change-resistant beliefs about the nature of the relationship, oneself and others (Ellis, 1986). Romans and DeBord (1995) expressed that couples with irrational beliefs expect to change each other's personalities (cited in Sarac, Hamamci & Guçray, 2015). On the other hand, rational and functional thinking style causes the individual to adapt better to the relationship (Metts & Cupach, 1990). When the literature is examined, a few studies examining the irrational beliefs in romantic relationships in emerging adulthood were found. In these studies, it was put forth that people who are in romantic relationships have more nonfunctional beliefs compared to people who are not in romantic relationships (Gizir, 2013), having nonfunctional beliefs regarding being too close to others in relationships lead to negative results (Hamamci, 2005a), and irrational beliefs differed between men and women (Sari, 2008).

1.1 The Objective of the Study

Although there are many studies examining aggression in adolescence, only a few studies were conducted on aggression during the emerging adulthood period (for example, Camadan & Yazici, 2017a; Çelikkaleli & Tümtaş, 2017; Goldstein, 2011; Hasta & Güler, 2013; Kurtyilmaz, 2011; Morsüm Bülbül, 2015). In these studies, self-esteem (Kurtyilmaz, 2011; Morsüm Bülbül, 2015), social exclusion (Çelikkaleli & Tümtaş, 2017), perfectionism, forgiveness (Camadan & Yazici, 2017a), attachment styles (Çelik, 2006), romantic relationships (Goldstein, 2011) and empathy (Hasta & Güler, 2013) were found important predictors of aggression in emerging adulthood. Two studies examining the relationships between aggression and irrational beliefs in romantic relationships were found. One of these determined that university students' irrational beliefs about relationships are related to physical and emotional abuse (Kaygusuz, 2013). In their study conducted with males who showed aggression in their romantic relationships, Persampiere, Poole and Murphy (2014) determined that scientific distortions, illogical beliefs and the anger reaction are positively related with impulsivity. Hence, when couples' beliefs about romantic relationships not functional, it is considered that resolutions of conflicts in relationships will be difficult, unresolved problems will hurt the relationships and the couples, and thus aggression-violence tendencies will increase. The lack of studies on this thought and subject is the starting point of this study. It is, of course, believed that addressing variables that may be associated with aggression in emerging adulthood will support the problem's identification, prevention and control processes. The findings of this study can guide psycho-educational group works and

individual and group psychological counseling works planned to reduce aggression in emerging adulthood, and help in setting objectives and determining measures to be taken. Thus, in this study, it was aimed to examine the irrational beliefs in romantic relationships as a predictor of aggression in emerging adults.

2. Methodology

Conducted to examine the irrational beliefs in romantic relationships as a predictor of aggression in emerging adults, this study is a quantitative study using relational survey model.

2.1 Study Group

Constituting the study group, participating emerging adults are fourth-year students who were attending three universities in Central Anatolia during the 2016-2017 academic year. Morsünbil (2015) stated that not everybody between the 19-26 age range in Turkey can be defined as emerging adult and that only the university students are included in the definition of emerging adulthood. Therefore, this study was conducted with university students. The participating university students were composed of 351 students, 201 females and 150 males. Their age range is between 18-28, and age mean is 21.09.

2.2 Data Collection Instrument

KAR-YA Aggression Scale (KAR-YA AS): For the psychometric properties of KAR-YA Aggression Scale, which was developed by Karataş and Yavuzer (2016), item analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, criterion validity, internal consistency coefficient, split half test method and test retest method were used. Exploratory factor analysis showed that the scale had four factors, Physical Aggression (PA), Hostility (H), Anger (A) and Verbal Aggression (VA). The total score can be taken from the scale. The exploratory variance of the 23-item scale ranged between 0.48 and 0.81. Total exploratory variance of the four factors was 51.7%. The scale's Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient for the total scale was calculated as 0.92, split-half test reliability coefficient for both parts as 0.92, and test retest reliability coefficient as 0.86. Confirmatory factor analysis results confirmed the four-factor structure of the scale (Karataş & Yavuzer, 2016).

Irrational Relationship Beliefs Inventory (IRBI): For the psychometric properties of IRBI, developed by Sarı and Korkut Owen (2015), exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, criterion validity and internal consistency coefficient were used. The exploratory variance showed that the scale had six factors, Over Expectations (OE), Use of Social Time (UST), Mind Reading (MR), Different Thinking (DT), Physical Intimacy (PI) and Gender Differences (GD). These six factors explained 51.70% of the total variance. OE explained 19.69% of the total variance, UST 10.10%, MR 6.49%, DT 5.71%, PI 5.15, and GD 4.55%. Calculated to determine internal consistency, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was 0.85 for the total scale, and coefficients ranged between 0.53 and 0.81 for the sub-dimension. The correlation between IRBI and Irrational Beliefs Scale is 0.34, and 0.45 between IRBI and Scientific Distortions About Relationships Scale. Confirmatory factor analysis results confirmed the six-factor structure of the scale. Total score of the scale and the scale's sub-dimensions' scores can be taken separately. *Over expectations* sub-dimension is a dimension describing the unrealistic expectations one has from the relationship and the person they are in relation with. *Use of Social Time* sub-dimension is a dimension where unrealistic expectation statements about social and free time activities are put forth. *Mind Reading* sub-dimension is a dimension where unrealistic expectation statements are put forth about assuming what the other has in his or her mind without discussing each other's feelings and thoughts. *Different Thinking* sub-dimension includes unrealistic statements about how different thoughts are destructive. *Physical Intimacy* sub-dimension is on the unrealistic statements about physical intimacy. *Gender Differences* sub-dimension is a dimension where unrealistic statements are put forth about the effect of gender differences on the relationship (Sarı & Korkut Owen, 2015).

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

In this study, it was aimed to examine the irrational beliefs in romantic relationships as a predictor of aggression in emerging adults. The study is a quantitative study using relational survey model. The data collected was analyzed using the SPSS 18 package program. In data analysis, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between aggression and irrational beliefs in romantic relationships, independent samples t-test to examine the difference in aggression in terms of gender, and multi-hierarchical regression analysis was to determine whether irrational beliefs in romantic relationships predict aggression or not. Before analyses, conformity of the data to normal distribution was tested by looking at its skewness and kurtosis values. Skewness values were between 1.21 and -0.42, and kurtosis values were between 1.72 and -0.24. Skewness and kurtosis values should ideally be between +1 and -1 but values between +2 and -2 are considered as acceptable (Karaatlı, 2006). When testing autocorrelation, the Durbin-Watson coefficient was used. Durbin-Watson values varied between 1.64 and 1.88. Tolerance and VIF values were also within acceptable limits. In addition, as reported in the methodological literature, correlation coefficients between predictor variables that are 0.80 or above (Stevens, 2002, p. 93) indicate a multicollinearity problem. In this study, correlation coefficients between variables varied between 0.05 and 0.78.

3. Findings

3.1 Findings Regarding Gender Differences

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Analysis results regarding the gender differences of aggression in emerging adulthood and irrational beliefs in romantic relationships are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Findings regarding gender differences

	Gender		<i>t</i> ₍₃₅₁₎	<i>p</i>		
	Female					
	Mean ± Sd	Male				
KAR-YA AS	46.20±14.70	55.66 ± 14.76	-5.14	0.00		
PA	11.83±4.66	17.25±5.27	-8.99	0.00		
H	14.55±5.28	15.61±5.38	-1.61	0.11		
A	10.86±4.44	12.17±4.49	-2.35	0.02		
VA	8.95±3.24	10.61±3.25	-4.10	0.00		
IRBI	96.80±15.34	97.01±12.65	-0.11	0.91		
OE	29.70±6.04	29.52±4.94	0.25	0.80		
UST	16.49±4.12	17.46±3.98	-1.90	0.06		
MR	20.30±4.51	19.95±4.15	1.16	0.24		
DT	10.87±2.38	11.27±2.73	-1.28	0.20		
PI	9.92±2.78	9.85±2.45	0.21	0.83		
GD	9.49±2.38	9.23±2.22	0.88	0.38		

Note: KAR-YA AS = KAR-YA Aggression Scale, PA=Physical Aggression, H=Hostility, A=Anger and VA=Verbal Aggression; IRBI= Irrational Relationship Beliefs Inventory, OE=Over Expectations, UST= Use of Social Time, MR=Mind Reading, DT= Different Thinking, PI= Physical Intimacy and GD= Gender Differences.

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that there was a significant difference between female and male young adults' KAR-YA AS total scale scores and PA, A and VA sub-dimension scores. There was no significant difference between H sub-dimension scores. It was, also, found that while there was no significant difference between female and male young adults' IRBI total scores and OE, MR, DT, PI and GD sub-dimension scores, there was a significant difference between UST sub-dimension scores. According to these findings, it can be said that males' aggression levels and their unrealistic expectations about the social and free time activities (UST) were high.

3.2 Findings Regarding Relationships Between Variables

Correlation coefficients between aggression and irrational beliefs in romantic relationships in emerging adulthood and arithmetic mean and standard deviation values regarding the variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Findings regarding relationship between variables

Variables	Mean ± Sd	KAR-YA AS	PA	H	A	VA	IRBI	OE	UST	MR	DT	PI	GD
KAR-YA AS	48.47±15.24	1											
PA	13.12±5.33	0.84**	1										
H	14.80±5.31	0.78**	0.46**	1									
A	11.18±4.48	0.87**	0.67**	0.54**	1								
VA	9.35±3.32	0.81**	0.59**	0.51**	0.69**	1							
IRBI	96.85±14.73	0.24**	0.13*	0.32**	0.14**	0.18**	1						
OE	29.66±5.79	0.07	0.03	0.13*	-0.00	0.06	0.78**	1					
UST	16.72±4.11	0.21**	0.16**	0.24**	0.14**	0.13*	0.63**	0.28**	1				
MR	20.14±4.43	0.19**	0.09	0.26**	0.11*	0.16**	0.80**	0.61**	0.27**	1			
DT	10.97±2.47	0.28**	0.14**	0.33**	0.26**	0.20**	0.47**	0.07	0.33**	0.32**	1		
PI	9.91±2.70	0.05	-0.01	0.16**	-0.03	0.05	0.65**	0.44**	0.41**	0.37**	0.26**	1	
GD	9.43±2.34	0.24**	0.15**	0.26**	0.20**	0.18**	0.49**	0.23**	0.19**	0.36**	0.24**	0.19**	1

***p*<0.01, **p*<0.05

Note: KAR-YA AS = KAR-YA Aggression Scale, PA=Physical Aggression, H=Hostility, A=Anger and VA=Verbal Aggression; IRBI= Irrational Relationship Beliefs Inventory, OE=Over Expectations, UST= Use of Social Time, MR=Mind Reading, DT= Different Thinking, PI= Physical Intimacy and GD= Gender Differences.

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that there was a positive relationship between KAR-YA AS total score and IRBI total score (*r*=0.24), UST (*r*=0.21), MR (*r*=0.19), DT (*r*=0.28) and GD (*r*=0.24) sub-dimension scores. There was no significant relationship between KAR-YA AS and IRBI OE and PI sub-dimensions. A positive significant relationship between the scores of PA, a sub-dimension of KAR-YA AS, and IRBI total score (*r*=0.13), UST (*r*=0.16), DT (*r*=0.14),

GD ($r=0.15$) was found. There was no significant relationship between KAR-YA AS PA sub-dimension score and IRBI OE, MR and PI sub-dimension scores. A positive significant relationship between the scores of H, a sub-dimension of KAR-YA AS, and IRBI total score ($r=0.32$), UST ($r=0.24$), MR ($r=0.26$), DT ($r=0.33$), PI ($r=0.16$) and GD ($r=0.26$) sub-dimension scores is seen. It is also seen that there is a positive significant relationship between the scores of A, a sub-dimension of KAR-YA AS, and IRBI total score ($r=0.14$), UST ($r=0.14$), MR ($r=0.11$), DT ($r=0.26$) and GD ($r=0.20$) sub-dimension scores. There is no relationship between KARYA A sub-dimension score and IRBI OE and PI sub-dimension scores. It is also seen that there is a positive significant relationship between the scores of VA, a sub-dimension of KAR-YA AS, and IRBI total score ($r=0.18$), UST ($r=0.13$), MR ($r=0.16$), DT ($r=0.20$) and GD ($r=0.18$) sub-dimension scores. A significant relationship between KAR-YA A sub-dimension score and IRBI OE and PI sub-dimension scores was not found.

3.3 Results of Regression Analysis

Whether irrational beliefs in romantic relationships predict aggression or not was examined with multi-hierarchical regression analysis. Since the aggression scores of female and male young adults differed, the gender variable was included in the regression analysis after redefining it as "dummy variable". In addition, the variables that would be included in the regression analysis were decided according to the findings given in Table 2. The analysis results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of regression analysis

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	R^2	<i>F</i>	β	<i>t</i>
KAR-YA AS	Gender	0.19	16.04**	0.26	5.26*
	UST			0.07	1.31
	MR			0.07	1.26
	DT			0.18	3.31*
	GD			0.17	3.30*
PA	Gender	0.23	25.32**	0.43	9.02*
	UST			0.07	1.34
	DT			0.05	0.97
	GD			0.15	2.97**
H	Gender	0.17	10.15**	0.08	1.51
	OE			-0.02	-0.35
	UST			0.10	1.79
	MR			0.13	1.04
	DT			0.22	3.87*
	PI			-0.01	-0.10
A	GD			0.16	2.90**
	Gender	0.10	7.75**	0.11	2.20**
	UST			0.04	0.64
	MR			-0.01	-0.16
	DT			0.20	3.59*
VA	GD			0.15	2.75
	Gender	0.11	8.54**	0.22	4.19*
	UST			0.02	0.32
	MR			0.09	1.50
	DT			0.12	2.14***
	GD			0.13	2.34***

** $p<0.001$, * $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.05$

Note: KAR-YA AS = KAR-YA Aggression Scale, PA=Physical Aggression, H=Hostility, A=Anger and VA=Verbal Aggression; IRBI= Irrational Relationship Beliefs Inventory, OE=Over Expectations, UST= Use of Social Time, MR=Mind Reading, DT=Different Thinking, PI= Physical Intimacy and GD= Gender Differences.

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that three variables (gender, IRBI's different thinking and gender differences sub-dimensions) are the significant predictors in explaining the levels of aggression in emerging adulthood (AS total score). When the findings are examined, it is also seen that scores of different thinking and gender differences, sub-dimensions of IRBI, explain the 19% of the total variance. Gender and IRBI's gender differences sub-dimension, which are the significant predictors in explaining levels of physical aggression in emerging adults, explain 23% of the total variance. According to Table 3, IRBI's different thinking and gender differences sub-dimensions are significant predictors in explaining the levels of hostility in emerging adults, and together they explain 17% of the total variance. It is seen that gender, IRBI's different thinking and gender differences sub-dimensions are significant predictors in explaining the levels of anger and verbal aggression in emerging adults, and together they explain 17% of the total variance. These variables together explain 10% of the anger total variance and 11% of the verbal total variance.

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In the study, it was aimed to examine the extent irrational beliefs in romantic relationships predict aggression in emerging adults. One of the study findings is that the aggression levels of males are high. Studies conducted on aggression in emerging adulthood both in Turkey and abroad show that males' aggression levels are high (for example, Camadan & Yazıcı, 2017b; Goldstein, 2011; Hasta & Güler, 2013; Johnson, Giordano, Manning & Longmore, 2015). This result, obtained in the study, can be explained by the social roles loaded on men and women. The reason why males' aggression levels are higher than females' aggression levels can be due to the fact that boys, during socialization, are taught to be courageous, bold and proud of their masculinity because of the patriarchal Turkish society, girls are taught to be cowardly, shy and passive. Boys' aggressive behaviors are being supported, aggression is considered a sign of masculinity and the fact that there are more social sanctions for girls' aggressive behaviors (Atay, 2004: 11 cited in Yavuzer, Karataş & Gündoğdu, 2013). It was also found that males' unrealistic expectations about the social and free time activities, one of the irrational beliefs of emerging adults in romantic relationships are higher than females' unrealistic expectations. Previous study findings also revealed that irrational beliefs about romantic relationships differ according to gender. In Sari (2008)'s study, females' over expectations and physical intimacy sub-dimension scores are higher than males' scores, and their use of social time and different thinking sub-dimension scores are lower than males' scores. Gizir (2013) determined that compared to female students, male students scored higher in "*We should do everything together*", "*We should meet each other's needs*" and "*we should be able to change each other*" beliefs, which are among the beliefs regarding romantic relationships. In studies conducted on romantic relationships, gender was one of the most researched variables. It is known that the majority of the differences between men and women in societies spring from gender roles (Winstead & Derlaga, 1993). In this context, it can be said that men in their emerging adulthood period consider themselves as a character who is strong and dominant. As a result of the analysis done, it is seen that gender and IRBI's different thinking and gender differences sub-dimensions are significant predictors in explaining levels of aggression (AS PA, H, A, VA) in emerging adults. IRBI Different Thinking sub-dimension consists of unrealistic statements about how different thoughts are destructive. Some of these include statements like "*I cannot bear it if the person I am with discusses their opposite views with me*" and "*If we do not think the same way about events, it would be meaningless to continue the relationship*". IRBI Gender Differences sub-dimension consists of unrealistic statements about the effect of gender differences on the relationship. Some of these include statements like "*Women and men probably will never understand the opposite sex enough*" and "*Biological differences between women and men are the main reason behind the couples' problems*". Beliefs about relationships consist of individuals' thoughts about how a relationship should be, their expectations from relationships and the way they perceive events (Addis & Bernard, 2002). When beliefs are rigid, unreasonable and resistant to change, the couples will inevitably experience problems in their relationships. As irrational beliefs increase, disagreements and frustrations arise among couples, and this can lead to conflicts and break-ups in romantic relationships (Addis & Bernard, 2002; Hamamci, 2015b). Therefore, according to findings of this study, the inability to tolerate conflicts, and men and women believing that they are emotionally and biologically different may negatively affect couples' communication and may lead to problems in their romantic relationships. These problems may also cause aggressive and violent behaviors. In previous studies, it was found that individuals with this type of irrational beliefs experience more communication conflicts in their romantic relationships and communicate more negatively (Reed & Dubow, 1997). Gizir (2013) determined that emerging adults' irrational beliefs in their romantic relationships are associated with physical and emotional abuse.

Consequently, thinking differently and having irrational beliefs about gender differences in romantic relationships is associated with aggression in emerging adulthood, and are significant predictors of physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility and anger, which are the types of aggression. These findings show that psychological counselors working particularly with young people who have aggression problems should focus on irrational beliefs in romantic relationships. This study has some limitations. The data was collected through emerging adults' self-assessments. Therefore, the participants' responses that were given through marking the items in the scale may not be similar to their real life behaviors. Another limitation is that participants were not asked whether they were involved in a romantic relationship or not. Future studies may examine emerging adults who are in romantic relationships or who flirt or who are engaged, and the relationship between aggression and the state of being in a romantic relationship may be investigated. In addition, models about examining variables (loneliness, adult attachment styles, self-concept, etc.) affecting aggression in emerging adulthood may be developed.

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