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The Predictive Role of Self-Esteem, Attachment Styles, and Family of Origin Functions in Explaining Conflict Resolution in Romantic Relationships

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The Predictive Role of Self-Esteem, Attachment Styles, and Family of Origin Functions in Explaining Conflict Resolution in Romantic Relationships¹

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the predictive role of self-esteem, attachment styles, and family of origin functions in explaining conflict resolution in romantic relationships. A total of 265 adult participants were administered Demographics Form, Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R), and Family Assessment Device (FAD). Correlational design was used to examine relationships between variables. Multiple linear regression analysis was carried out within the aim of the study. According to the results, the predictive role of attachment styles and family of origin functions on conflict resolution was significant. However, self-esteem was not found to have a significant predictive role in conflict resolution. Findings were discussed along with current literature, and theoretical implications and suggestions for future research were presented.

Keywords: Conflict resolution, Self-esteem, Attachment styles, Family of origin functions

Introduction

Conflict is a natural and vital part of life. It is a structure that enables new ideas to emerge, encourages social change, enables the definition of our group relationships, helps to form our own sense of personal identity, and a part of all forms of society (Schellenberg, 1996). Conflict is essential in every environment where people exist and establishes relationships. Therefore, it is also inevitable for adult individuals to experience conflicts in romantic relationships. Thus, it is important to understand the content of the conflict and conflict resolution strategies (Deutsch et al., 2006).

Since conflict is an important part of both romantic and marital relationships, how spouses deal with this conflict affects the continuity and maintenance of relationships. In addition, the conflict resolution methods affect both the well-being of partners at the individual level and the perceived satisfaction from the relationship or marriage at the dyadic level (Özen, Salman-Engin, & Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2016). The strategies partners use in their romantic relationships are generally divided into four categories: (1) being able to cope with the existing conflict actively and constructively, (2) showing aggressive and destructive behavior, (3) avoiding and withdrawing from conflict, and (4) complying and obeying the wishes of the partner (Özen et al., 2016).

The self-esteem level of individuals affects the dynamics of their romantic relationships (Mruk, 2006). According to Satir (1989), how the individual chooses to deal with problems is related to the level of self-esteem. The higher the self-esteem of individuals, the less they need approval from their partners, while individuals with low self-esteem constantly seek assurances regarding the relationship. Studies have revealed that individuals with high self-esteem show more constructive relationship patterns that reduce the use of

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negative conflict resolution styles and the likelihood of breakup. In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem tend to display problematic behaviors such as excessive assurance seeking, negatively interpreting their partner's ambiguous behavior, and reducing their closeness to the partner in times of relationship conflict (Murray et. al., 1996a, 1996b). As we can see from the literature, self-esteem is one of the important factors that affect our relationships with others and significant ones.

Attachment is the tendency of people to form strong emotional bonds with others that are important to them (Bowlby, 1982). Subsequently, researchers continued to work on adult attachment. Based on Bowlby's theory of attachment, Bartholomew (1990) developed a new attachment model for adults called the four-category model of attachment. According to this model, there are four adult attachment styles based on positive or negative model of self and positive or negative model of others. These styles are secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful attachment. Later on, scientists proposed dividing up the population into distinct groups based on their attachment styles. style posed some difficulties and developed the two-dimensional attachment model (Fraley et. al., 2015). According to this model, there are two dimensions in adult attachment and degrees of anxiety and avoidance determines human behavior. These two dimensions are called as "attachment related anxiety" and "attachment related avoidance" (Selçuk et. al., 2005). How people handle difficulties in romantic relationships is also influenced by their attachment style. Relational conflicts are more common and more severe for anxious people. For them, unfavorable interactions between partners are always deliberate and consistent. They don't pay attention to their partners' wants and needs, and their partners end up having to provide more care and comfort as a result.' On the other hand, avoidant individuals try to maintain a sense of independence and control. They tend to become defensive, and they experience emotional withdrawal and reduced expressions of support (Feeney & Karantzas, 2017). Securely attached individuals experience more satisfactory and successful relationships. They are better at handling conflict, less likely to view discussion as a threat, and better at recovery after conflict (Pistole & Arricale, 2003; Salvatore et al., 2011).

It is seen that both self-esteem and attachment styles are variables that are formed through family interactions in infancy and affect the relationships established in adulthood (Bowlby, 1982; Bartholomew, 1990; Mruk, 2006; Satir, 1989). Family functioning can be defined as the interactions and reactions of family members with each other, the boundaries between generations and family subsystems, and flexibility towards changes in the family (Walsh, 2012). In other words, family functioning is the ability of the family members to work together, meet the basic needs of family members, and to manage conflicts (Staccini et al., 2015). Family functioning has a multidimensional structure. This structure includes the goals of the family, the emotional support that the family provides to family members, and the incentives they show for family members to improve their well-being. At the same time, family functioning reflects the family's actions and their effective or ineffective interactions (Walsh, 2012). The way the family functions affects how individuals cope with conflict situations. According to Kerr and Bowen (1988), when a family's adaptability is exceeded, chronic anxiety increases, and family functions decline. While functional families can cope with conflict situations with a stable emotional state, non-functional families cannot overcome the problems brought about by their life cycle without experiencing them (Falcão, as cited in Oliveira et. al., 2014). According to research, children of families with unhealthy family functioning tend to use negative conflict resolution methods such as showing aggressive behavior and violence (Kabasakal, 2013). Adolescents find the opportunity to try and experience conflict resolution styles with their parents and siblings in their family conflicts. Studies show that the ways of conflict resolution styles experienced and observed within the family are similar between couples (Reese-Weber & Bartle-Haring, 1998).

Conflict and the strategies for dealing with it is a factor that is present in both romantic and marital relationships and affects the well-being of couples, the satisfaction they obtain from their relationships, and the continuity and sustainability of the relationships (Özen et al., 2016). When the studies of researchers such as Kurdek (1995), Gottman and Krokoff (1989), and Cramer (2000) are examined, it is seen that the factor that affects dyadic satisfaction is not the conflict itself, but the strategies used by partners to resolve the conflict. Related literature in Turkey (Akdağ, 2014; Bahadır, 2006; Demirci, 2004; Kaya Balkan, 2009; Zeytinoğlu, 2013) shows that the variables of conflict resolution, self-esteem, attachment styles and family of origin functions in romantic relationships are generally studied on married individuals and studied separately. The literature has not found a study that handles these variables together. For this reason, studies on conflict and conflict resolution methods in romantic relationships and its relationship with self-esteem, attachment styles, and family of origin functions are important and will enrich the literature. And the connections to be made with these variables can be a resource that mental health professionals working with relational problems can benefit from. When considered in an individual context, the analysis of the reflections of early experiences on relational conflicts can create an important awareness in the prevention of these conflicts. The goal of this study is to find out if a person's self-esteem, attachment style, and how well their first family works can predict how they handle conflicts in their romantic relationships.

Method

Design

Correlational design was used in this study, which was conducted as quantitative research. The dependent variable of the research is conflict resolution styles in romantic relationships, while its independent variables are self-esteem, attachment styles, and family of origin functions.

Participants

Participants consisted of 265 individuals aged 19 to 56 years with a mean age of 29.15 (SD =8.12) reached via online questionnaires. The instruments used in this study were turned into an online survey via Google Forms and presented to participants between January and February 2021. Convenience sampling method was used in the study. During the application, the criteria were that the participants were adults and had at least 1 romantic relationship in the past. 86 (%32.5) are males and 179 (%67.5) are females. Participants consist of married and single individuals. Some of the singles are in a relationship and some of them are not. Individuals who are currently single have, on average, one romantic relationship in their past that lasted for six months or longer. Seventy-three (27.5%) are married, while the remaining 192 (72.5%) are all unattached. There are 116 (60.4% of the total) single people who are already in a relationship, while there are 76 (39.6% of the total) single people who are not in a relationship right now (39.6). Data from 76 people who are not in a committed relationship at the present time were excluded from the analysis because of the relationship duration variable. Average relationship length is 6.03 years (SD =7.23), with a range of 0–31 years. Twenty-three participants (8.7%) had completed education beyond a bachelor's degree, eighty-five (69.8%) had completed their undergraduate degrees, and fifty-seven (21.5% had completed their graduate degrees). Table 1 shows the demographic breakdown.

Table 1. Demographics

| Variables | N | % | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|------|
| Gender | Male | 86 | 32.5 |
| | Female | 179 | 67.5 |
| | Sum | 265 | 100 |
| Marital status | Married | 73 | 27.5 |
| | Single | 192 | 72.5 |
| | Sum | 265 | 100 |
| Educational level | None-undergraduate | 23 | 8.7 |
| | Undergraduate | 185 | 69.8 |
| | Graduate | 57 | 21.5 |
| | Sum | 265 | 100 |
| Relationship status (for singles) | In a relationship | 116 | 60.4 |
| | Not in a relationship | 76 | 39.6 |
| | Sum | 192 | 100 |
| Age | 19-22 | 47 | 17.7 |
| | 23-28 | 111 | 41.9 |
| | 29-33 | 47 | 17.7 |
| | 34-39 | 25 | 9.4 |
| | 40+ | 35 | 13.2 |
| | Sum | 265 | 100 |
| Relationship duration (year) | 0-5 | 129 | 68.3 |
| | 5.1-10 | 28 | 14.8 |
| | 10.1-20 | 15 | 7.9 |
| | 20+ | 17 | 9 |
| | Sum | 189 | 100 |

Instruments

Demographics Form: The researchers formed the Demographics Form to get information about participants. The form includes statements about gender, age, marital status, duration of the relationship, and education level.

Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS): The Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS) was developed by Özen (2006) to develop a valid and reliable scale to measure couples' conflict resolution styles. The CRSS examines each partner's conflict resolution style by using four sub-dimension structure; positive conflict resolution, negative conflict resolution, subordination, and retreat (Özen, Salman-Engin, & Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2016). The CRSS consists of 25 items that are answered using a 6-point Likert-type scale. The responses given to the scale are scored between 1 = completely disagree, and 6 = completely agree. The CRSS does not give total scores. It is based on the scores of the subscales. The high scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale indicate how frequently related conflict resolution style is used, and low scores indicate less use of related conflict resolution style (Özen, Salman-Engin, & Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2016).

The scale's criterion validity was assessed by the correlation between the subscales of CRSS and Kurdek's (1994) Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI), which were reported as .75 for negative conflict resolution, .61 for positive conflict resolution, .45 for retreat, and .39 for subordination. CRSS had strong internal reliability with Cronbach's alphas .80 for the positive conflict resolution subscale, .82 for the negative conflict resolution subscale, .74 for the retreat subscale, and .73 for the subordination subscale. In this study, the reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale are as follows: .72 for positive conflict resolution, .80 for negative conflict resolution, .76 for subordination, and .75 for retreat.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): Rosenberg developed Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) for evaluating individual self-esteem. The scale consists of a total of 63 items and 12 sub-fields, which are structured from multiple choice questions. In this study, the Self-Esteem subscale composed of 10 items was used. Self-esteem subscale is a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with 5 positive (1, 2, 4, 6, 7) and 5 negatives (3, 5, 8, 9, 10) statements. The scores that can be obtained from the scale range from 10 to 40. High scores obtained from the scale after reversing the items show the high self-esteem of the individual (Gray-Little et al., 1997).

The reliability and validity studies in Turkey were made by Çuhadaroğlu (1989). In the Turkish validity and reliability study of RSES, 0–1-point state high self-esteem, 2–4 points state medium self-esteem, and 5–6 points state the low self-esteem of the participants. In the validity studies of the scale, the validity coefficient for self-esteem was found as .71. Test-retest reliability coefficient was found as .75 for the self-esteem subscale. In this study, the reliability coefficients of the scale were found as .90.

Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R): The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) was developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000). ECR-R consists of 36-item self-report questions which examines individuals' attachment styles in two subscales: attachment related to anxiety and attachment related to avoidance. Each subscale has 18 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale graded between 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Even-numbered questions measure the avoidance dimension, while odd-numbered questions measure the anxiety dimension. There are a total of 14 reverse items in the scale. Anxiety and avoidance scores were calculated for each participant by collecting and averaging the items measuring the relevant dimensions separately.

Selçuk, Günaydın, Sümer made the reliability and validity studies in Turkish, and Uysal (2005). Both avoidance and anxiety dimensions have a high level of internal consistency, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for these dimensions are .90 and .86, respectively. The anxiety dimension had a test-retest reliability of 0.82, while the avoidance dimension had a test-retest reliability of 0.81. In this study, the reliability coefficients for the scale's anxiety and avoidance dimensions were determined to be 0.90 and 0.91, respectively.

Family Assessment Device (FAD): The Family Assessment Device (FAD) was created by Epstein, Baldwin, and Bishop (1983) in the United States within the framework of the Family Research Program at Brown University and Butler Hospital in order to assess various dimensions of family functioning. The scale includes 7 subscales of problem-solving, communications, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behavior control, and general functions. It can be applied to all family members from the age of 12. FAD consists of 60 items that are answered through a 4-point Likert-type scale graded between 1 = strongly agree and 4 = strongly disagree. There are a total of 34 reverse items in the scale. Scores between 1 to 4 can be obtained from the subscales. A score of 1 or close to 1 indicates healthy family functioning, whereas a score of 4 or close to 4 indicates unhealthy family functioning.

Bulut conducted the Turkish adaptation study of the scale (1990). The Cronbach alpha range for subscale internal consistency coefficients was between 0.38 and 0.86. The construct validity of the scale was determined by comparing the scores of the divorced and non-divorced groups. It was discovered that the scale significantly

distinguished between these two groups. In this study, the reliability coefficient of the scale was found as .97 for the total scale, .83 for the problem-solving subscale, .86 for the communications subscale, .80 for the roles subscale, .90 for the affective responsiveness subscale, .72 for the affective involvement subscale, and .70 for the behavior control subscale.

Findings

Descriptive Findings

Mean scores and standard deviations for the variables of the study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive findings

| Variables | N | Mean | SD |
|------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| CRSS | | | |
| Positive Conflict Resolution | 265 | 4.61 | .87 |
| Negative Conflict Resolution | 265 | 2.34 | .92 |
| Subordination | 265 | 3.59 | 1.01 |
| Retreat | 265 | 3.62 | 1.11 |
| Self-Esteem | 265 | 2.00 | 1.86 |
| ECR-R | | | |
| Anxiety | 265 | 3.53 | 1.17 |
| Avoidance | 265 | 2.69 | 1.09 |
| FAD | | | |
| Problem-Solving | 265 | 2.08 | .76 |
| Communications | 265 | 2.06 | .71 |
| Roles | 265 | 2.08 | .58 |
| Affective Responsiveness | 265 | 2.03 | .86 |
| Affective Involvement | 265 | 1.90 | .58 |
| Behavior Control | 265 | 1.98 | .53 |

Correlations

To examine relationships among all variables, Pearson correlations were calculated. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation between variables

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|--------------------------------|---|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1-Positive Conflict Resolution | 1 | -.19** | .56 | -.14* | -.21** | -.41** | -.13* | -.28** | -.24** | -.24** | -.28** | -.25** | -.29** |
| 2-Negative Conflict Resolution | | 1 | -.15* | -.07 | .11 | .12* | .26** | .03 | .07 | .02 | .01 | .09 | .12* |
| 3-Subordination | | | 1 | .29** | .10 | .02 | .19** | -.08 | -.01 | -.01 | .02 | .03 | .02 |
| 4-Retreat | | | | 1 | -.02 | .20** | .03 | -.06 | .05 | .02 | .07 | .02 | -.03 |
| 5-Self-Esteem | | | | | 1 | .38** | .56** | .44** | .48** | .45** | .45** | .40** | .43** |
| 6-Avoidance | | | | | | 1 | .50** | .35** | .39** | .33** | .41** | .38** | .36** |
| 7-Anxiety | | | | | | | 1 | .28** | .37** | .31** | .30** | .34** | .32** |
| 8-Problem Solving | | | | | | | | 1 | .77** | .69** | .73** | .69** | .68** |
| 9-Communications | | | | | | | | | 1 | .72** | .85** | .67** | .61** |
| 10-Roles | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .69** | .68** | .73** |
| 11-Affective Responsiveness | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .72** | .64** |
| 12-Affective Involvement | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | .71** |
| 13-Behavior Control | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

n =265, **p*<.05, ***p*<.01

These correlations suggest that individuals who use positive conflict resolution styles in their romantic relationships are less likely to use negative conflict resolution and retreat styles. They are more likely to have a high sense of self-worth. They are less likely to exhibit avoidant or anxious attachment styles. Additionally, they are more likely to have healthy family functioning in their families of origin. Negative conflict resolution styles are significantly associated with anxious and avoidant attachment styles. And their families of origin are more likely to have unhealthy behavior control. Anxious attachment is more prevalent among those who use the subordination style. Avoidant attachment is more prevalent among retreat-style users. People with low self-esteem are more likely to exhibit anxious and avoidant attachment styles, as well as unhealthy family functioning. Lastly, individuals with avoidant and anxious attachment tend to have unhealthy family of origin functioning.

Regression Findings of Positive Conflict Resolution Style

As seen in Table 4, avoidance in attachment and behavior control in family of origin significantly negatively predicts positive conflict resolution style. Anxiety in attachment significantly predicts positive conflict resolution style in a positive way. 20% of the variance ($R^2=.20, F=22.48, p<.05$) can be explained by this model. This indicates that having avoidant attachment negatively affects positive conflict resolution style, while having healthy behavior control in the family of origin and having anxious attachment positively affects positive conflict resolution style (Low points on Family Assessment Device indicates healthy functioning).

Table 4. Regression findings of positive conflict resolution style

| Positive Conflict Resolution | B | SE | β | t | p |
|------------------------------|------|-----|---------|-------|-------|
| (Constant) | 5.76 | .20 | | 27.88 | .00** |
| Avoidance | -.32 | .05 | -.40 | -6.17 | .00** |
| Behavior Control | -.30 | .09 | -.18 | -3.13 | .00** |
| Anxiety | .09 | .04 | .12 | 1.98 | .04* |

$n=265, R=.45, R^2=.20, F=22.48, *p<.05, **p<.01$

Regression Findings of Negative Conflict Resolution Style

As seen in Table 5, attachment anxiety significantly and positively predicts a negative conflict resolution style. 7% of the variance ($R^2=.07, F=20.57, p <.05$) can be explained by this model. This suggests that anxious attachment positively influences negative conflict resolution style.

Table 5. Regression findings of negative conflict resolution style

| Negative Conflict Resolution | B | SE | β | t | P |
|------------------------------|------|-----|---------|------|-------|
| (Constant) | 1.59 | .17 | | 9.19 | .00** |
| Anxiety | .21 | .04 | .26 | 4.53 | .00** |

$n=265, R=.26, R^2=.07, F=20.57, **p<.01$

Regression Findings of Subordination Conflict Resolution Style

As seen in Table 6, anxiety in attachment significantly positively predicts subordination style. Problem solving in family of origin significantly negatively predicts subordination style. 5% of the variance ($R^2=.05, F=7.79, p<.05$) can be explained by this model. This indicates that having anxious attachment and having healthy problem-solving in the family of origin affects the subordination style positively (Low points on Family Assessment Device indicate healthy functioning).

Table 6. Regression findings of subordination conflict resolution style

| Subordination | B | SE | β | t | P |
|-----------------|------|-----|---------|-------|-------|
| (Constant) | 3.29 | .22 | | 14.49 | .00** |
| Anxiety | .20 | .05 | .23 | 3.71 | .00** |
| Problem Solving | -.19 | .08 | -.14 | -2.35 | .01** |

$n=265, R=.23, R^2=.05, F=7.79, **p<.01$

Regression Findings of Retreat Conflict Resolution Style

As seen in Table 7, avoidance in attachment and affective responsiveness in family of origin significantly positively predicts retreat style. Problem solving significantly negatively predicts retreat style. 7% of the variance ($R^2=.07$, $F=7.40$, $p<.05$) can be explained by this model. This indicates that having avoidant attachment and healthy problem-solving in the family of origin affects retreat style positively while having healthy affective responsiveness in the family of origin affects retreat negatively (Low points on Family Assessment Device indicate healthy functioning).

Table 7. Regression findings of retreat conflict resolution style

| Retreat | B | SE | B | t | P |
|--------------------------|------|-----|------|-------|-------|
| (Constant) | 3.37 | .22 | | 15.32 | .00** |
| Avoidance | .23 | .06 | .23 | 3.50 | .00** |
| Problem Solving | -.40 | .12 | -.27 | -3.14 | .00** |
| Affective Responsiveness | .23 | .11 | .18 | 2.01 | .04* |

$n=265$, $R=.28$, $R^2=.07$, $F=7.40$, $*p<.05$, $**p<.01$

Discussion

Positive conflict resolution style in romantic relationships can be defined as trying to find the root of the problems, discussing the problems constructively, trying to produce alternative solutions, and trying to reach an agreement that both parties are willing to accept (Kurdek, 1994; Özen, 2006). Avoidant attachment indicates fear of intimacy and having close relationships. People with avoidant attachment styles tend to become distant in their romantic relationships, especially during conflicts, and they tend to ignore their partners and reduce their intimacy with them (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Feeney & Karantzas, 2017). On the other hand, anxious attachment style indicates having high levels of anxiety, obsession, tension, anger, and jealousy. People with anxious attachment styles tend to ignore their partner's needs and force them to give more attention to themselves. They feel insecure about their partner's availability, love, and responsiveness and tend to worry about rejection or abandonment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Feeney & Karantzas, 2017; Fraley et al., 2015). Behavior control functioning in the family of origin refers to family monitoring and controlling behaviors, and family members create their own norms and definitions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. It refers to the behavioral patterns the family uses to deal with various situations such as conflicts within the family environment (Miller et al., 2000; Epstein et al., 1978).

People with an avoidant attachment style tend to ignore, avoid problems, and reduce their relationships with the other party rather than constructively solving problems in conflict situations in their romantic relationships. This may be the negative relationship between positive conflict resolution and anxious attachment. On the other hand, people with anxious attachment style may prefer to solve problems in their romantic relationships constructively, as they have an intense fear of abandonment and neglect. This situation may predict the tendency of individuals with an anxious attachment style to use positive conflict resolution. The behavior control functioning in the family of origin determines how the family copes with conflict situations and which behaviors are acceptable. In families where this function is carried out in a healthier way, individuals may be able to cope better with conflict situations. Individuals may reflect these conflict resolution skills they acquired in their families of origin to their romantic relationships. This situation may predict individuals with healthy behavior control functioning in the family of origin to use positive conflict resolution.

When the relevant literature examined, Feeney and Karantzas (2017) stated that anxious individuals use negative conflict resolution style while avoidant individuals use retreat style. They found that anxious individuals experience more frequent and intense conflicts in their romantic relationships. Bahadır (2006) stated that anxious individuals use forcing, avoiding, accommodating, and collaborating conflict resolution styles while avoidant individuals use avoiding, accommodating, and compromising conflict resolution styles. According to Shi (2003), anxious individuals tend to use dominating and obliging conflict styles. Marshall et al. (2013) stated that anxious individuals are more likely to experience social network jealousy.

As can be seen, when the relevant literature is examined, individuals with an anxious attachment style experience intense anxiety about abandonment and neglect in their romantic relationships. This may cause them to ignore their partner's needs, become more demanding, show intense jealousy, and doubt their partner's love for them. This state of intense anxiety may predict that individuals who cannot cope constructively with conflict situations and who cannot control their behavior prefer more aggressive and negative conflict resolution styles.

Subordination style in romantic relationships can be defined as being too accepting, sacrificing own wishes and demands, compromising, fulfilling the other party's wishes, and trying not to make the problem worse (Kurdek, 1994; Özen et al., 2016). Problem solving functioning in family of origin indicates how the family reacts to the problems that threaten their integrity and functional capacity. The family can solve the problem in the most effective way (Miller et al., 2000; Epstein et al., 1978).

When the relevant literature was examined, Bahadır (2006) stated that anxious individuals tend to use force, avoiding, accommodating, and collaborating conflict resolution styles. Pancaroğlu (2007) revealed that anxious and secure individuals tend to use compromising conflict resolution style. Soylu and Kağmcı (2015) found that there is a positive correlation between subordination style and marital adjustment. According to Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002), how people behave in their romantic relationships depends on the communication patterns learned in their families of origin. Ülker (2011) showed that relations with the family of origin significantly predicted the frequency and prevalence of marital conflict.

As described in the previous sections, people with an anxious attachment style are very concerned about losing the other party's love and being rejected in their relationships. They may resort to obedience to relieve these anxieties and end their romantic relationships' problems before they get worse. This situation may predict the relationship between subordination conflict resolution and anxious attachment. The family's problem-solving function helps individuals deal with the difficult situations they encounter. Having this function healthy in the family of origin will enable individuals to display more moderate, positive, and submissive behaviors in their future romantic relationships. This situation may predict the relationship between problem-solving functioning and subordination conflict resolution style.

Retreat style in romantic relationships can be defined as showing passive behaviors during conflict situations. Individuals who tend to use this style prefer to ignore problems, withdraw themselves, stay silent, stay away from the conflict, and leave the problems unsolved (Kurdek, 1994; Özen et al., 2016). Affective responsiveness functioning in the family of origin indicates the capacity of family members to react appropriately to an emotional stimulus. This means family members to interact with each other, show emotional support to each other, and show appropriate emotions such as love, happiness, joy, fear, anger, and sadness (Miller et al., 2000; Epstein et al., 1978).

Children who grow up in families with healthy problem-solving functioning might prefer more moderate, submissive, and positive conflict resolution methods in their adult life. This situation may predict the relationship between retreat conflict resolution style and problem-solving functioning. The affective responsiveness functioning includes the ability of family members to react emotionally appropriately to various stimuli. Retreat style can be predicted by the unhealthy affective responsiveness functioning in the origin family, as it is a passive style that leaves problems unsolved and does not involve showing appropriate emotions in certain situations. Individuals using retreat conflict resolution style emotionally pull themselves back in conflict situations and neglect the other party's need of emotional intimacy. The low affective responsiveness functioning can explain this in their families of origin. Avoidant attachment style is defined as the fear of establishing intimacy and refraining from having close relationships. When people with this attachment style encounter a conflict situation in their romantic relationships, they tend to be passive, ignore the conflict, and engage in withdrawal behaviors that reduce their intimacy and relationships with the other party. This may predict the relationship between avoidant attachment and retreat conflict resolution style.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the predictive role of self-esteem, attachment styles, and family of origin functions in explaining conflict resolution in romantic relationships. According to the results, the predictive role of attachment styles and family of origin functions on conflict resolution in romantic relationships was found significant. However, self-esteem was not found to have a predictive role in conflict resolution in romantic relationships.

This study was conducted with both married and single individuals. In the literature, the number of studies investigating the variables of self-esteem, attachment styles, and family of origin functioning in explaining conflict resolution is limited. It is thought that this research will contribute to the literature and will be a guide for similar studies to be conducted in the future. At the same time, it is thought that this study will help academicians and researchers. While conducting case studies in the academic field, the variables in this study can be considered. Couples need help and guidance to resolve conflicts for the sake of their own mental health

and the mental health of society as a whole, because dysfunctional conflict resolution styles can be passed down from generation to generation, having a negative impact on romantic relationships and even leading to intimate partner violence. In this context, it is thought that this study will also contribute to individual awareness of the relevant issues.

Since this study includes mostly young and inexperienced individuals in terms of romantic relationships, a similar study can be done with a wider study group and age range. At the same time, studies can be conducted with other variables that can have a predictive role on conflict resolution in romantic relationships. In this study, the predictive role of attachment styles and family of origin functions on conflict resolution in romantic relationships was found significant, but the predictive role of self-esteem was not significant. In this context, the self-esteem variable can be studied by evaluating it with a different sample and a different measurement method.

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Author (s) Contribution Rate

The thesis which this article was produced from was written by the first author under the supervision of the second author. In the article preparation process, the first author prepared the introduction part while the second author prepared the method and findings parts. The discussion part was prepared by both authors. The whole manuscript was reviewed by the second author and made ready to submission.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report.

Ethical Approval (only for necessary papers)

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