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# The Mediator Role of Need Satisfaction between Subjective Well-Being and Romantic Relationships Quality

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**Abstract**

*Problem Statement:* The most important part of identity exploration for emerging adults is love. Establishing healthy intimate relationships support the process of identity exploration. In addition to the positive and negative factors that affect romantic relationships, the concept of quality is also very important in these romantic relationships. According to studies carried out, when the quality of a relationship is positive, their subjective well-beings are also positive. Identity exploration, and also leading a happy life, is also important for emerging adults, which may be supported by means of having a quality of romantic relationship and needs satisfied by it.

*Purpose of the Study:* The objective of this study is to investigate the mediator role of need satisfaction between romantic relationship quality and subjective well-being of emerging adults. To this end, three hypotheses have been developed: a) There is a positive relationship between satisfaction of needs and subjective well-being in emerging adults. b) There is a positive relationship between romantic relationship quality and subjective well-being in emerging adults. c) Need satisfaction plays a statistically significant mediator role in the relationship between subjective well-being and romantic relationships qualities of in emerging adults.

*Method:* The dependent variable of the study is subjective well-being and the independent variables are needed satisfaction and quality of romantic relationships. A structural equation model has been used in order to test

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the developed model. A total of 235 emerging adults (107 females and 128 males) participated in the study. The data was collected via the Quality of Relationship Scale, Need Satisfaction in General Scale, Positive and Negative Affects Scale, and Satisfaction with Life Scale. A structural equation model has been used to analyze the data.

*Findings and Results:* The results of the analysis indicate that in the model romantic relationship quality and satisfaction of needs and the total effect of the variables were directly and indirectly related to the subjective well-being of emerging adults. The direct and indirect effect of the quality of romantic relationship and satisfaction of needs variables to the subjective well-being of emerging adults was found to be significant. Fitness coefficients related to the developed model were within the acceptable limits. The value of NFI was .92, NNFI.94, IFI.96, CFI.96, GFI.96, RMSEA.065, AGFI.92, and $\chi^2/\mathrm{df}$ 1.97.

*Conclusions and Recommendations*: As a result, romantic relationship quality is an important variable in terms of subjective well-being. In addition to romantic relationship quality, satisfying one's needs also increases the subjective well-being levels of emerging adults. Hence, while emerging adults are helped by romantic relationship quality, it is important that the satisfaction of needs also be kept in mind.

*Keywords:* Subjective well-being, need satisfaction, relationship quality, emerging adults

Argyle, Martin and Crossland (1989) defined subjective well-being as a frequency and positive affect, or, joy and a high level of satisfaction over a period of time, as well as the absence of negative affects. In other words, subjective well-being signifies the experience of individuals experiencing frequent positive emotions and negative emotions rarely and the satisfaction they receive from their lives (Myers & Diener, 1995). The relations of individuals with people around them are important for the subjective well-being of individuals (Buss, 2000). In fact, one of the important strategies that increase subjective well-being is the establishment of positive relations by the individuals with their respective environments (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). This relationship establishment is an especially important tool for subjective well-being and the identity exploration of emerging adults.

In emerging adults, romantic relationships become a much more important task for individuals (Kan and Cares, 2006). Emerging adults make explorations into romantic relationships and through these attain a successful identity (Arnett 2000; 2004). During this period, a person attributes higher meanings to love. The relationships of emerging adults with the opposite sex include both emotional and physical intimacy (Roscoe, Dian, & Brooks, 1987). In their social relationships, emerging adults have the opportunity to learn about what they like and dislike in

others by way of what they find in other people. They also learn how people who want to know them more closely evaluate themselves (Feiring, 1996).

Studies about romantic relationships should be handled in two contexts. The first of these examines factors that provide the continuation and strengthening of the relationship and the commitment of the individuals to the relationship. The second handles destructive factors that cause the relationship to end or to continue in a problematic manner. Factors that help romantic relationships to continue are also regarded as factors that provide relationship satisfaction (Ugurlu, 2003). In various studies, these factors have been stated as forgiveness (Fenell, 1993), self confidence in relationships, relationship awareness, self-esteem, motivation, the use of functional coping strategies (Bowman, 1990; Lazarus, 2006), commitment (Rusbult, 1993), gains and rewards, and investment in the relationship (Rusbult, 1980). Factors that cause unhappiness in a relationship or cause the relationship to end are stated to be previous relationships, nonfunctional coping strategies, relationship anxiety, insufficiency in relationship motivation, nonfunctional beliefs about relationship (Abowitz, Knox, Zusman and McNeely, 2009), and perceived relationships alternatives (Attridge, Berscheid and Simpson, 1995).

In addition to these positive and negative factors that affect romantic relationships, the concept of quality is also very important to romantic relationships. Pierce, Sarason, and Sarason (1991) put forth the concept of relationship quality, and one that is valid for all types of close relationships. Relationship quality demonstrates the perception of individuals as to whether they experience social support, interpersonal conflict, and depth in their relationships or not (Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, & Solky-Butzel, 1997). The perception of social support includes evaluations as to how their spouses act when problems arises in their relationship. It also includes perceptions regarding if they make positive contributions to the solution or not. Interpersonal conflict perception contains perceptions regarding levels of negative feelings caused by spouses, discussion frequency, how much they hurt each other, and the status of unsolvable problems in their relationship. Depth dimension contains perceptions about the importance of their relationship in their lives, the level of trust between spouses, if the relationship can be continued or not, and how much care and trust the spouses show one another (Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, & Solky- Butzel, 1997).

Romantic relationships are important markers for both the completion of identity exploration of emerging adults (Arnet, 2000) and for them to feel better subjectively (Berscheid & Regan, 2005). According to the studies carried out, emerging adults are happier when they give social support to each other in their relationship, have less conflict, and when their commitment is strong. In other words, when the quality of their relationship is positive, their subjective well-beings are also positive (Demir, 2008, 2010; Prager, 1995). The concept of need has recently been studied within the scope of the self-determination theory put forth by Ryan and Deci (2000). There are three basic needs according to the self-determination theory: relatedness, competence, and autonomy. The need for relatedness is about the relationships of individuals. It signifies that individuals want to be involved in secure, deep, and

fulfilling relationships. The need for competence refers to the ability of individuals to be effective in dealing with problems that they face and their desire to reach goals. The need for autonomy is defined as the desire for individuals to decide to be the actors of their own actions (Ryan and Deci, 2000). When individuals satisfy their needs in these three areas they are healthier, feel better, and are happier. These needs are not satisfied, then the health of these individuals deteriorate and their subjective well-being is affected negatively (Sheldon, Ryan & Reis 1996; Sheldon & Bettencourt 2002; and Eryılmaz, 2012a, 2012b). According to Ryan and Deci (2000), these three basic needs must be handled in all stages of life, and therefore the relation between satisfaction of needs and subjective well-being can be observed throughout an individual's development. From this standpoint, it is important to investigate the relationship between satisfaction of needs and subjective well-being in emerging adulthood.

In literature, the relationship between romantic relationships and need satisfaction are examined both directly and indirectly. According to Moss and Schwebell (1995), mutuality is an important factor in romantic relationships. When the needs and desires of only one person in the relationship are satisfied, the relationship is damaged, and hence the risk of losing individual identities and control arises (Mashek & Sherman, 2004). In examining need satisfaction is examined within the context of romantic relationships, the way partners satisfy these needs is emphasized (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008). Accordingly, the need for relatedness in romantic relationships signifies the sharing by romantic partners of their identities, resources, emotions, perspectives, and activities (Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007). If the closeness between partners is not sufficient, the commitment of the partners to one another is lacking and the satisfaction they receive from the relationship decreases (Rusbult, Coolsen, Kirchner & Clarke, 2006). They cannot satisfy their needs for relatedness in their romantic relationship. Competence in romantic relationships is handled in various ways. For instance, there are different types of romantic competences, including competence for inclination towards romantic relationships, sexual competence, competence to adjusting the balance of power, and competence for accepting a romantic partner (Bouchey, 2007). Among these dimensions, the adjustment of the balance of power, one's acceptance by the romantic partner and experiencing love have been determined to be important for healthy relationships. In fact, it has been demonstrated that these dimensions are the basis of establishing intimacy (Reis & Shaver, 1998). Individuals who are competent in these areas have positive self perception, experience acceptance more in romantic relationships, and that their anxiety levels are low (Bouchey, 2007).

In addition to these studies, there are also theoretical and empirical studies that directly explain the relationship between the two variables. Within this context Patrick, Knee, Canavello, and Lonsbary (2007) put forth in their meta-analysis based studies that in parallel to the satisfaction of the competence, relatedness, and autonomy needs, individuals who experience positive emotions more and negative emotions less will have self-esteem levels increase and receive more satisfaction from their relationships. Ryan, La Guardia, Butzel, Chirkov, and Kim (2005) determined that depending on the level of satisfaction needed in individuals from their romantic

relationships, there is an increase in the emotional sharing by these individuals; thus, the partners move closer and their commitments increase. According to Patrick, Knee, Canavello, and Lonsbary (2007), individuals who satisfy the needs of their partners in romantic relationships experience less conflict are less defensive, gain more satisfaction from their relationships and their commitment levels from their relationships is higher. La Guardia (2007) concluded that in parallel to the satisfaction of the needs of individuals in romantic relationships, emotional awareness levels of these individuals increase and emotionally they open themselves more to their partner.

In this study, it was thought that need satisfaction plays a mediator role between relationship quality and subjective well-being. The results of previous studies in the literature, which states that, "the establishment of positive relationships with the environment increases the happiness of individuals," forms the basis of this thought (Eryılmaz, 2012a, Tkach & Lyumobirsky, 2006). Secondly, the study is based on the theory of self-determination, which states, "the needs of individuals are innate and individuals look for means of satisfying these needs in many areas of life (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The romantic relationships of emerging adults are also one of the areas of life touched upon (Ben-Ari & Lavee, 2007; and La Guardia & Patrick, 2008). Individuals first establish relationships and then look for answers to their needs. When they satisfy these needs they become happy (Patrick, Knee, Canavello & Lonsbary, 2007; and Ryan, La Guardia, Butzel, Chirkov & Kim, 2005). Based on all this information and these results, the mediating role of need satisfaction was been examined in this study.

Shortly, if individuals in romantic relationships understand the interests, preferences, and perspectives (satisfaction of needs for autonomy) of their partners, they put forth continuous, clear, concise, and reasonable expectations (satisfaction of needs for competence), and they are also loyal to their partners, take interest in their needs, focus their energy to acting with their partners, make their partners feel important, and take care of them (satisfaction of needs for relatedness), they will have taken steps to move their relationship in a positive direction (La Guardia & Patrick, 2008). On the other hand, if individuals are over-controlling, put forth unreasonable expectations, and struggle with their partners and reject them, the functionality of their relationships is damaged (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001). It is important in healthy relationships that individuals act functionally in order to attain happiness (La Guardia and Patrick, 2008). Studies about romantic relationship quality, subjective well-being, and need satisfaction can make a contribution to the literature by helping us to understand this process.

As a result, the objective of this study is to test the relationships between subjective well-being, need satisfaction, and romantic relationship quality using a structural equation model. To this end, three hypotheses have been developed: a) There is a positive relationship between satisfaction of needs and subjective well-being in emerging adults. b) There is a positive relationship between romantic relationship quality and subjective well-being in emerging adults. c) Need satisfaction plays a statistically significant mediator role in the relationship between subjective well-being and romantic relationships qualities of in emerging adults.

## Method

*Research Design*

The objective of this study is to develop a subjective well-being model limited with need satisfaction and romantic relationship quality for emerging adults attending university. The dependent variable of the study is subjective well-being, and the independent variables are need satisfaction and romantic relationship quality. In this study, frequency and percentage analyses have been used to analyze the demographic features of the participants. A structural equation model was used to test the developed model. The sample determination method is purposive sampling (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Inclusion criteria for the study were the following: participants should be between 18-27 years-old and be attending a state university. An exclusion criterion for the study was having a romantic relationship of less than one year.

A cross sectional model was also used in the study. Typically, this type of research design is used to collect information on a sample at a single point in time. A cross sectional model is one type of study in which participants of different ages are examined at the same time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Thus, all participants' ages were varied and data was collected in one try for the present study. Participants were informed about the research study and volunteers were asked to join. The application of data collection tools lasted 40-50 minutes. The data was obtained between April and May 2011.

Relationship Quality Scale is a scale that can be used to evaluate all the close relations of individuals. In this study, the scale began with a definition of romantic relationships. Afterwards, the individuals were asked to think about their romantic relationships and their partners in this romantic relationship. They were asked to evaluate the items on the scale based solely on their romantic relationships.

*Research Sample*

All participants were university students, not married, and of a varying age. As such, they were not adults but also were not adolescents. According to conceptualization of Artnet (2000), these individuals were in the emerging adult period, and as such, the emerging adult notion was used in the present study for the participants.

Participants of this study were university students studying education at Gazi Univerity (3th and 4th class) in Ankara, Turkey. In this present study, all ethical rules were considered while obtaining data and the principle of volunteering was considered. Starting with the application of the data collecting tools, certain information was provided for purpose of the study. In addition to this, scales were given to participants who wanted to take part in the study and have a romantic relationship.

Prior to the data analysis, the answers of the participants were reviewed. As a result of this review, 35 individuals who left most of the items of the scale blank (at least 5% of the items) or who were detected to have mistakenly checked the wrong

answer in the answer sheet were excluded from the data set. Thirty three emerging adults who have a romantic relationship of less than one year were also excluded from the data set. As a result, 107 of the participant was female (% 45.5) and 128 male (% 54.5). The age range of the participants was 18-27 and the age average was 21.73 (S=1.64).

*Research Instruments*

*Personal information form:* A personal information form was prepared in order to determine the demographic information of the participants. The form was composed of questions about age, class level, gender, perceived socio-economic standing and questions regarding the marital status of their parents. *Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS):* This scale was developed by Diener (1994) in order to measure the life satisfaction of individuals. *SWLS* is composed of 5 items and has a 7 point Likert type key. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was developed by Yetim (1993). Yetim (1993) reported the test-retest reliability of the scale as .85 and the coefficient of internal consistency as.76.

*Positive and Negative Affects Scale (PANAS):* This scale was developed by Watson, Tellegen, and Clark (1988) and has been adapted into Turkish by Gençöz (2000). The scale is composed of a total of 20 statements, 10 of which are positive and 10 of which are negative. PANAS has a 5 point Likert type key. Gençöz (2000) reported the internal consistency of the scale for positive affects sub-dimension as .83 and negative affects sub-dimension to be .86. The relationships between PANAS and Beck Depression Inventory and Beck Anxiety Inventory was analyzed and determined to be within the scope of criterion related validity.

*Scale for Basic Need Satisfaction in General:* This scale was developed by Deci and Ryan (1991). It has 21 items and three dimensions: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. It was adapted itno Turkish by Cihangir-Çankaya and Bacanlı (2003). Its internal consistency coefficients are .80 for the competence subdimension, .82 for the autonomy subdimension, and .81 for the relatedness subdimension. Obtaining high scores from the subdimensions of the scale indicates a satisfaction of needs.

*Relationship Quality Scale:* The Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI-The Quality of Relationship Inventory) developed in 1991 by Pierce et.al is used to evaluate the close relationships of individuals in three different fields, namely, social support, depth, and conflict. The reliability of the scale varies between 0.81 and 0.93. Test-re test reliability varies between .48 and .79 (Pierce et.al.,1997). During the Turkish adaptation of the scale, exploratory factor analysis was carried out by Özabacı (2007). It is a Likert type rating scale in which all items range between 4 levels from 1 (none) to 4 (a great deal). The test-retest reliability of the relationship quality scale was determined to be 0.72 for the whole scale. The relationship between RQS and Interpersonal Relationship Scale (Karakurt, 2001) has been analyzed within the scope of criterion related validity. The Interpersonal Relationship Scale is a scale used to measure relationship quality. As a result of the correlation analysis, RQS was determined to be moderately ($r$= .64, $p$= 000) related to the Interpersonal Relationship Scale.

## Results

*Descriptive statistical findings related to the dependent and independent variables*

Mean and Standard Deviation measures related to the dependent and independent variables in the study were calculated. The results of the analysis are given in Table-1.

**Table-1**

*Descriptive Statistics*

| | ***M*** | ***SD*** | ***N*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Autonomy Need | 33.54 | 5.20 | 235 |
| Relatedness Need | 33.98 | 5.46 | 235 |
| Competence Need | 28.86 | 5.42 | 235 |
| Conflict | 14.50 | 2.38 | 235 |
| Support | 15.75 | 2.56 | 235 |
| Depth | 9.9 | 2.11 | 235 |
| Satisfaction with Life | 20.88 | 5.81 | 235 |
| Negative Affect | 23.78 | 7.15 | 235 |
| Positive Affect | 33.32 | 6.55 | 235 |

**Findings related to the subjective well-being model for emerging adults attending a state university**

The structural equation model and findings related to the standardized coefficients representing the relation between the variables were developed for this study. The findings of the fitness of the model and their evaluations are presented below.

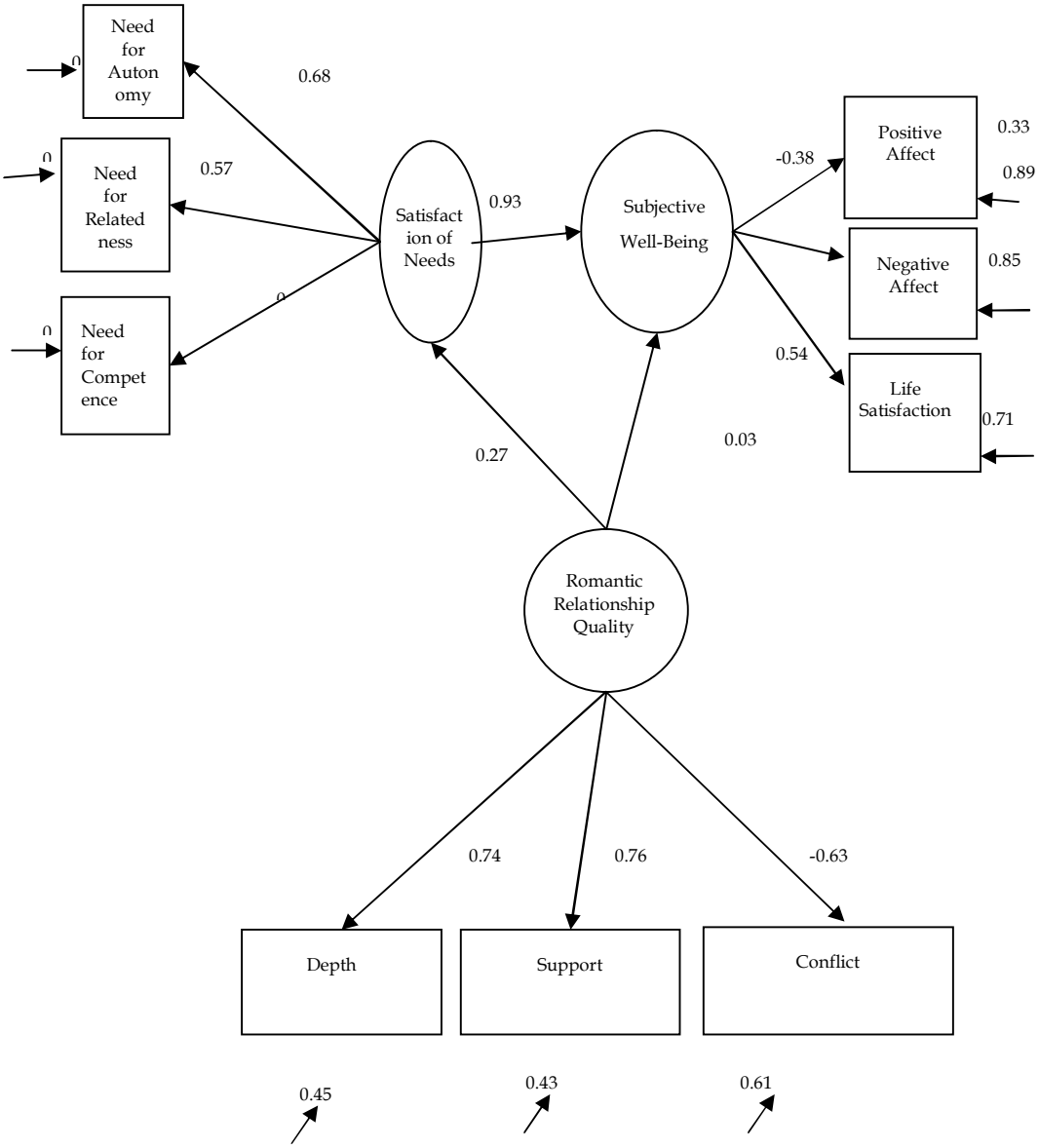


**Figure 1**

*The structural equation model.*

As shown in Figure 1, the structural equation model's standardized coefficients express the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The general fitness coefficients related to the developed structural model are given in Table 2.

**Table-2**

*General Fitness Coefficients Related to Post-Hoc Model Changes*

| *Fit Index* | *Value* |
|---|---|
| $\chi^2$ | 47.36* |
| df | 24 |
| $\chi^2/df$ | 1.97 |
| NFI | .92 |
| NNFI | .94 |
| IFI | .96 |
| CFI | .96 |
| GFI | .96 |
| AGFI | .92 |
| RMSEA | 0.065 |

*p < .01

As seen in Table-2, the fitness coefficients related to the developed model are above the acceptable limits. For example, the value of NFI is .92, NNFI.94, IFI.96, CFI.96, GFI.96, RMSEA.065, AGFI.92., and $\chi^2/df$ is is 1.97 According to Kline (2005), these values indicate that the model is acceptable.

It is necessary to clarify the meanings of model fitness coefficients, as well as the standardized and unstandardized values of model and the direct, indirect, and mediation relations. The effect size of the coefficients in the developed model was also taken into consideration in the evaluation of the model, which is shown in Table 3.

**Table-3**

*Evaluation of the Final Model*

| *Variables* | *Standardized Coefficients* | *Effect Size* |
|---|---|---|
| The Direct Effect of Need Satisfaction on Subjective Well-Being | .93 | High |
| The Direct Effect of Romantic Relationship Quality on Subjective Well-Being | .03 | Low |
| The Direct Effect of Romantic Relationship Quality on Need Satisfaction | .27 | Moderate |
| The Mediator Effect of Need Satisfaction on Subjective Well-Being | .25 | Moderate |
| The Total Effect of Romantic Relationship Quality on Subjective Well-Being | .28 | Moderate |

Standardized and unstandardized path coefficients were used to explain the effect of the independent variables on subjective well-being. Kline (2005) defines standardized path coefficients effect size as low if it is below .10, average if it is below .30, and high if it is above .50. Accordingly, the strongest predictor in the model is need satisfaction. A one unit increase in need satisfaction increases subjective well-being by .93. The second predictor in the model is romantic relationship quality. A one unit increase in romantic relationship quality increases subjective well-being by .03 points.

It can be seen from Table-3 that there is a mediating effect for need satisfaction between romantic relationship quality and subjective well-being in the model. In other words, emerging adults with high romantic relationship quality are able to satisfy their needs, which in turn increase their subjective well-being. The total effect of one variable on the other is defined as the total effect of all the direct and indirect effects between them. Based on this, the standardized total effect size of romantic relationship quality on subjective well-being is 0.28.

A general view of these findings is that the effect of romantic relationship quality and the direct and mediating effect of need satisfaction on subjective well-being is significant. The findings were therefore observed to support all the hypotheses of the research.

This study also used an alternative model to investigate whether romantic relationship quality has an indirect effect on the relationship between subjective well-

being and need satisfaction. According to SEM analysis results, romantic relationship quality does not have a meaningful indirect effect on the relationship between subjective well-being and need satisfaction, and the alternative model does not work.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, a subjective well-being model was developed for emerging adults attending a state university based on romantic relationship quality and need satisfaction. In subjective well-being literature, results were obtained that signify that the satisfaction of needs increase the subjective well-being levels of individuals (Sheldon & Bettencourt 2002). The relationship between the variables in question has been analyzed both adolescents and adults (Sheldon, Ryan & Reis 1996). Based on this, it is thought that this study will provide an important contribution to the literature about subjective well-being and need satisfaction.

In this study, statistically significant and positive relations were determined between the qualities of a romantic relationship and need satisfaction. Results state that in a romantic relationship, the mutual satisfaction of needs provides many positive results. For instance, need satisfaction enables individuals to share deep romantic feelings, helps them to increase their self-respect, and enables them to gain more satisfaction from their relationships (La Guardia, 2007; Patrick, Knee, Canavello & Lonsbary, 2007; and Ryan, La Guardia, Butzel, Chirkov & Kim, 2005). Due to all these gains, it can be stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between romantic relationship quality and need satisfaction.

An interesting result of this study is that romantic relationship quality has a low and positive relationship with subjective well-being. When the literature was examined, it was determined from studies carried out on emerging adults that romantic relationship quality affects subjective well-being at a ratio of % 4-6 (Demir, 2008, 2010). These results show that the relationship between romantic relationship quality and subjective well-being is similar even in different cultures. Even though in general has been shown that relationships are important signifiers of subjective well-being (Tkach & Lyumobirsky, 2006), this is quite different for romantic relationships. This may be due to the properties of emerging adulthood and the study group. In emerging adulthood, individuals are exploring their identity regarding love, work, and world view in order to discover their identity, and afterwards they make their commitments and move on to adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2004). In Turkey, for people living in cities, those who are educated and open to life live their emerging adulthood between the ages of 19-26 (Atak & Çok, 2010). When it is considered that the average age of individuals in this study group was 21.73, it can be seen that these individuals are in the midst of their emerging adulthood period. This means that these individuals are still continuing their identity explorations in romantic relationships. Of course it can be thought that in this identity exploration period the meaning that is given to the romantic relationship quality, which is characterized by social support, conflict, and depth, is not as significant as that at the end of emerging adulthood or during adulthood. Hence, relationship quality may have had a low impact on the subjective well-being of emerging adults who have not yet entered the

decision stage. Thus, testing this model on individuals who are at the beginning, middle, and end stages of emerging adulthood, along with single and married individuals in adulthood may contribute in putting forth a more detailed study on this subject.

Even though there are theoretical and empiric studies in literature regarding the direct relationship of these variables with subjective well-being, it has been observed that there are no studies that analyze the mediating relation of need satisfaction in the relationship between romantic relationship quality and subjective well-being (Demir, 2008, 2010; La Guardia, 2007; Patrick, Knee, Canavello & Lonsbary, 2007; and Sheldon & Bettencourt 2002**).** According to the model developed in this study, emerging adults combine need satisfaction with romantic relationship quality, and as a result, their subjective well-being levels increase.

Several suggestions can be made based on the findings of this study. Emerging adults can find help in satisfying their needs if their subjective well-being levels increase. For instance, in order to satisfy the need for competence, partners should encourage each other, and also in order to satisfy the need for relatedness, partners should strengthen their intimacy by using positive communication, gift giving, acting of service, etc. In order to satisfy the need of autonomy, partners should offer choices, and not to violate the borders given to each other. For Romantic relationship quality in emerging adults, increasing subjective well-being levels is *important but not sufficient*. In order to be more effective, romantic relationship quality may be supported by need satisfaction.

As a result, romantic relationship quality is an important variable in terms of subjective well-being. In addition to romantic relationship quality, satisfying one's needs also increases the subjective well-being levels of emerging adults. Hence, while emerging adults are helped by romantic relationship quality, it is important that the satisfaction of needs also be kept in mind.

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## İhtiyaç Doyumunun Öznel İyi Oluş ve Romantik İlişki Kalitesi Arasındaki Aracı Rolü

**Atıf:**

Eryılmaz, A., & Doğan, T. (2013). The mediator role of need satisfaction between subjective well-being and romantic relationship quality. *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of EducationalResearch,* 53, 79-96.

### Özet

*Problem Durumu:* Romantik ilişkiler, beliren yetişkinlerin yetişkinliğe geçmelerinde ve kimlik keşiflerini tamamlamalarında önemli bir araç olmanın yanında, bu ilişkilerin kalitesi beliren yetişkinlerin kendilerini öznel açıdan daha iyi hissetmelerinin de önemli bir aracıdır. Örneğin yapılan çalışmalara göre, beliren yetişkinlerin ilişkilerinde, ilişki ortakları birbirlerine sosyal destek sunduklarında, daha az çatışma yaşadıklarında ve birbirine bağlanmaları güçlü olduğunda, bir başka deyişle yaşadıkları ilişkinin kalitesi olumlu olduğunda öznel iyi oluş düzeyleri daha olumlu bir noktaya gelmektedir.

Bireylerin öznel iyi oluşlarını etkileyen önemli faktörlerden biri de ihtiyaç doyumudur. Öz belirleyicilik kuramına göre bireylerin doğuştan getirdikleri ve doyurmak durumunda oldukları üç temel psikolojik ihtiyaçları bulunmaktadır. Bunlar ait olma, özerklik ve yetkinlik olarak isimlendirilmektedir. İhtiyaç doyumu, romantik ilişkiler bağlamında ele alındığında, romantik ilişkilerde ait olma ihtiyacı, karşılıklı olarak eşlerin birbirleriyle kimliklerini, kaynaklarını, duygularını ve düşüncelerini paylaşmaları ve ortak faaliyetlerde bulunmaları anlamına gelmektedir. Eğer eşler arasındaki yakınlık yeterli düzeyde değilse, çiftlerin birbirlerine bağlanmaları eksik kalmakta ve ilişkiden aldıkları doyum da azalmaktadır Buna bağlı olarak da romantik ilişkide ait olma ihtiyaçları doyurulmamaktadır.

*Çalışmanın Amacı:* Bireylerin romantik ilişkilerinde hem işlevsel davranmaları hem de mutluluğu yakalamaları, sağlıklı bir ilişki için önemlidir. Literatür incelendiğinde, öznel iyi oluş, ilişki kalitesi ve ihtiyaç doyumu arasındaki ilişkileri bir bütün olarak yapısal modelle inceleyen çalışmaların olmadığı görülür. Bu noktada bu çalışmada romantik ilişki niteliği, öznel iyi oluş ve ihtiyaç doyumu araındaki ilişkilerin yapısal eşitlik modeli çerçevesinde ele alınıp incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda aşağıda yer alan hipotezlere yanıt aranmıştır:

a) Öznel iyi oluş ve ihtiyaç doyumu arasında pozitif bir ilişki vardır.
b) Öznel iyi oluş ve romantik ilişki kalitesi arasında pozitif bir ilişki vardır.
c) Öznel iyi oluş ve romantik ilişki kalitesi arasındaki ilişkide, ihtiyaç doyumunun aracılık ilişkisi anlamlıdır.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi*: Bu araştırmanın bağımlı değişkeni öznel iyi oluştur. Araştırmanın bağımsız değişkenleri ise ilişki kalitesi ve ihtiyaç doyumudur. Araştırmada bir yapısal eşitilik modeli geliştirilmiş ve test edilmiştir. Araştırmada amaçlı örnekleme tekniiği kullanılmıştır (Fraenkel ve Wallen, 1993). Araştırmada araştırmaya alınma öçütü olarak 18-27 yaşında ve üniversite öğrencisi olmak ile bir yıldan daha fazla süren romantik bir ilişkiye sahip olmak gibi öçütler belirlenmiştir.

Araştırmada yer alan beliren yetişkinler Gazi Üniversitesinde Eğitim Fakültesinde eğitim gören ve üçüncü ve dördüncü sınıfa devam eden bireylerden oluşmuştur. Çalışmada 107 kadın (% 45,5) ve 128 erkek (% 54,5) öğrenci yer almıştır. Çalışma grubunda yer alan bireylerin yaş ortalmaları 21.73 ve yaşlarının standart sapmaları ise 1.64'tür. Çalışmada Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği, Olumlu-Olumsuz Duygu Ölçeği, Genel İhtiyaç Doyumu Ölçeği ve Romantik İlişki Kalitesi Ölçekleri kullanılmıştır. Yapılan incelemeler sonucunda bu ölçeklerin güvenilir ve geçerli olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

*Bulgular ve Sonuçlar:* Araştırma bulularına göre, geliştirilen modelin iyi uyum değerleri gösterdiği sonucuna varılmıştır. Örneğin NFI değeri .92, NNFI değeri .94, IFI değeri .96, CFI değeri .96, GFI değeri .96, RMSEA değeri .065, AGFI değeri .92., $\chi^2$/df değeri ise 1.97 olarak bulunmuştur. Modeldeki en güçlü yordayıcı değişken ihtiyaç doyumudur. İhtiyaç doyumundaki bir birim artış, bireylerin öznel iyi oluşlarını 0.93 oranında yükseltmektedir. İkinci yordayıcı ise romantik ilişki kalitesidir. Romantik ilişki kalitesindeki bir birim artış, bireylerin öznel iyi oluş düzeylerini 0.03 oranında yükselmektedir. Geliştirilen modele göre ihtiyaç

doyumunun, öznel iyi oluş ile romantik ilişki kalitesi arasındaki aracı rolü anlamlı ve önemlidir. Buna göre romantik ilişki kalitesi ile ihtiyaç doyumunun toplam etki büyüklüğü 0.28 olarak bulunmuştur.

*Tartışma ve Öneriler*: Öznel iyi oluş literatüründe, bireylerin ihtiyaçlarının doyurmaları oranında onların öznel iyi oluş düzeylerinin yükseldiği bulunmuştur. İlgili çalışmaların daha çok ergenler ve yetişkinler üzerinde gerçekleştirildiği görülmektedir. Bu noktada bu çalışma beliren yetişkinler üzerinde gerçekleştirildiği için literature katkı sağlamıştır. Çalışmada ayrıca romantik ilişki kalitesi ile ihtiyaç doyumu arasında olumlu yönde anlamlı ilişkiler bulunmuştur. Bu durumun nedeni romantik ilişkilerde eşlerin karşılıklı olarak ihtiyaçlarını doyurmaları sonucunda elde ettikleri kazanımları olabilir. Bu çalışmanın ilginç bir bulgusu romantik ilişki kalitesinin öznel iyi oluşla düşük düzeyde ve pozitif yönde ilişkili olmasıdır. Literatür incelendiğinde Amerikalı beliren yetişkinler üzerinde yapılan çalışmalarda, romantik ilişki kalitesinin öznel iyi oluşu % 4-6 oranında açıkladığı bulunmuştur. Bu sonuçlar farklı kültürlerde de olsa romantik ilişki kalitesiyle öznel iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkinin benzer olduğunu göstermektedir.

Genel olarak ilişkilerin öznel iyi oluşun önemli bir belirleyicisi olduğu ortaya konmasına rağmen, romantik ilişkilerde bu durum farklılaşmaktadır. Bu durumun nedenleri beliren yetişkinlik döneminin ve çalışma grubunun özelliklerinden kaynaklanabilir. Türkiye'de kentli, eğitimli ve yaşam değişkenliğine açık gruplar için beliren yetişkinlik döneminin 19-26 yaşları arasında olduğu belirtilmektedir. Bu çalışma grubundaki bireylerin yaş ortalamasının 21.73 olduğu düşünüldüğünde bu bireylerin beliren yetişkinlik döneminin ortalarında oldukları görülmektedir. Bu da bu bireylerin romantik ilişki alanında hala denemelerini sürdürdükleri anlamına gelmektedir. Elbette ki deneme sürecinde sosyal destek, çatışma ve derinlik ile karakterize edilen romantik ilişki kalitesine yüklenen anlamın beliren yetişkinliğin sonlarındaki ve yetişkinlikteki kadar yoğun olmadığı düşünülebilir. Henüz karar aşamasına gelmemiş olan beliren yetişkinlerin öznel iyi oluşlarında, bu nedenle ilişki kalitesi düşük düzeyde etkili olmuş olabilir. Buradan hareketle ilerleyen süreçte hem beliren yetişkinliğin başlarında, hem ortalarında hem sonlarında bulunan ve de yetişkinlik döneminde yer alan bekâr ve evli bireyler üzerinde bu çalışmada elde edilen modelin sınanması bu konuda daha detaylı bilgilerin ortaya konmasına katkıda bulunabilir. Sonuç olarak beliren yetişkinlerin öznel iyi oluşları için ilişki kalitesi ile ihtiyaç doyumunun birlikte sürece dâhil edilmesi önemli görünmektedir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* İlişki doyumu, beliren yetişkinlik, romantik ilişki, ihtiyaç doyumu