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## University Student's Relationship's Believes: Sample of Turkey

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study to determine Hacettepe University's students relationships' believes and factors which effects to these believes. According to this purpose, two questions were presented in this study: 1.Does university students' general relationships' believes', helplessness, unlovability grade averages differ according to gender and relationship which she/he had before? 2. Is there any significant relationship between university students' general relationships' believes', helplessness, unlovability grade averages and relationship's duration? Method: The study was conducted 159 students who study at Hacettepe University, in period of fall semester in 2012-2013 academic years. The participants were comprised of 110 women, 48 men. Relationship Belief Inventory was used in this study which was adapted in Turkish by Kalkan and Personal Information Form which was developed by researchers. Additionally, independent sample t-test and Pearson product-moment correlation were analysis methods which were used for analyzing the data. Findings: According to this research's results, it was determined that there was significant difference between gender and students' general relationship believes' ( $p < .05$ ,  $t = 3,967$ ), helplessness ( $p < .05$ ,  $t = 3,254$ ), unlovability grade averages ( $p < .05$ ,  $t = 3,829$ ). Additionally, there was not significant difference between relationship which she/he had before and general relationship believes ( $p > .05$ ,  $t = 572$ ), helplessness ( $p > .05$ ,  $t = 948$ ), unlovability grade averages ( $p > .05$ ,  $t = 443$ ). On the other hand, there was negative and significant correlations between relationship's duration and university students' general relationship believes ( $r = -0,172$ ,  $p < .05$ ) unlovability grade averages ( $r = -0,192$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In spite of that, there was not correlation between university students' helplessness grade average and their relationship's duration ( $r = -0,129$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

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## 1. Introduction

One of the vital main sources which helps individual to have life satisfaction, feel happy and safe is that be able to set successful close relationships by individuals (Gizir, 2012). The close relationship is defined as which spreads long period of time and is dependency that is strong, close and multiple (Kelley et al, 1983). Individuals have perceptions and expectations about their close relationships. Epstein and Eidelson (1981), romantic relationship beliefs are the most vital element to settle romantic relationship process on the basis of perception and expectations (Gizir, 2012). In other words, irrational relationship beliefs are based on unrealistic expectations (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). Ellis (2003) is defined irrational relationship beliefs as unrealistic beliefs which are about individuals' themselves, nature of their relationships and their partners. On the other hand, irrational beliefs in romantic relationship can cause that individual exhibits self-defence behaviour and lower level of couple adaptability (Greene, 2006). Because of this importance of the topic, irrational relationship belief is needed to determine.

According to literature of irrational beliefs in romantic relationships, some of the studies and results show that irrational beliefs differ by gender, some of them not (Haferkamp, 1994; Marcotte, 1996; Stackert & Bursik, 2003). Al-Salameh (2010) found that men have more irrational relationship beliefs than women. In contrast with this result, Hamamcı (2005) found that irrational beliefs in relationship do not differ by gender. At this point, it is thought that this study will be significant to present the individuals' view points and attribute meanings to relationship which can differ by gender.

Cobb et al. (2003) state that observations which are related with romantic relationship in one's family and case that person did not have any romantic relationship experiences or has less experience can lead individual to develop irrational expectations and misunderstanding in one's relationship.

According to social learning theory, individual has potential to think ahead and further and shape her/his behaviours by using foreknowledge after he/she gains some experiences about romantic relationship (Dembo, 1991). Thus, when individuals increase their romantic relationship experiences, they can learn to exhibit more rational expectations (Sarı, 2008) and case that one had or did not have relationship(s) before could form her/his experience, that's why it is thought that relationship beliefs can differ by "had or did not have relationship(s)" factor. Likewise individuals' romantic relationship experiences can differ by duration of relationship. In this sense, as duration of relationship increases, individuals start to trust each other more and more or decrease their trust levels by the reason of negative experiences in romantic relationship, these assumptions may effect individual to increase or decrease irrational relationship beliefs. Chen (2012) found in his study with college students that students, who have long period of romantic relationship behave intimate, show more love and less conflict to their partners. As mentioned before duration of relationship and irrational relationship beliefs may have mutual affinity. There might be more factors which can cause to develop romantic relationship belief. On the other side in this study, it is supposed that romantic relationship beliefs can differ by gender; state that one had or did not have relationship(s) before and also there would be correlation between irrational romantic beliefs and duration of relationship. Therefore, these variables are discussed in this study.

Purpose of this study is to examine Hacettepe University students' relationship beliefs and factors which effect these relationship beliefs. In line with this purpose, it was sought to find answers of these two questions:

1. Does university students' general relationship beliefs, helplessness beliefs and unlovability beliefs differ by gender and state that one had or did not have relationship(s) before?
2. Is there any significant correlation between university students' general relationship beliefs, unlovability beliefs, helplessness beliefs and duration of relationship?

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Working Group

Within the scope of the research 159 students who continued their education in Hacettepe University on 2012-2013 fall semester of Academic year were taken. 110 of students (62, 2%) are females, 48 of them (30, 2%) are males.

## 2.2 Data Collecting Tools

In the research Relationship Beliefs Inventory (RBI) developed by Kalkan (2006) and Personal Information Form developed by researchers were used in order to survey the beliefs of students in their relationships.

### 2.2.1 Relationship Belief Inventory

It was developed by Kalkan (2006) and in the research it was used in order to survey beliefs of persons about romantic relationships. Belief Inventory in Relationship is a scale that has 20 items, five point likert scale. High score obtained from inventory shows excess of unreasonable beliefs of person about romantic relationships.

Reliability of RBI and its subscales were analyzed by calculating internal coefficient of consistence and test retest reliability co-efficient (rxx). For the whole of Inventory internal, coefficient of consistence was found as .87 rxx=.74, for desperation subscale coefficient of consistence was found as .78, rxx=.69 and for unlovability subscale coefficient of consistence was found as .80, rxx= .71. Within the scope of this research reliabilities of RIB's and desperation and unlovability subscales were controlled and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was found respectively as .71, .87 and .85

Coefficient of inventory was implemented in two types. Initially factor analysis was applied in order to supply construct validity, construct validities of desperation and unlovability subscales were analyzed and every sub-level of factor construct was defined. Secondly; Unreasonable Belief Scale and Non-functional Attitude Scale were used in order to analyse validity of similar scales. Among scale scores of Relationship Belief Inventory and its subscales and Non-functional Attitude Scores, significant relationships were determined. As understood from that point Relationship Belief Inventory is surveying tool that has validity and reliability could be used with the intent of scientific research.

### 2.2.2 Personal Information Tool

“Personal Information Form” (PHF) was given to participants with Relationship Belief Inventory in order to gather information about genders of participants, whether or not having relationship situations in the past and relationship duration of participants.

## 2.3 Analysis of Data

In the research independent sample t-test was used to test if there was significant difference or not on whether students' relationship beliefs were changing according to situation of their genders and their having relationships in the past, Pearson product-moment correlation was used with analysis method to test if there was significant difference between university students' relationship beliefs and duration of their ongoing relationships or not.

## 3. Findings

In consequence of the research according to gender significant difference was detected among students' general relationships score averages ( $p < .05$ ,  $t=3,967$ ), desperation beliefs score averages ( $p < .05$ ,  $t=3,254$ ), unlovability beliefs score averages ( $p < .05$ ,  $t=3,829$ ). In addition to this according to whether their having relationships in the past or not significant difference could not be found among relationship belief scores averages ( $p > .05$ ,  $t=572$ ), helplessness belief score averages ( $p > .05$ ,  $t=948$ ) and unlovability belief score averages ( $p > .05$ ,  $t=443$ ). Significant relationship in negative way was found between university students' relationship beliefs ( $r = -0,172$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and unlovability beliefs ( $r = -0,192$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In spite of that significant difference could not be found between university students' helplessness beliefs and ongoing relationship durations ( $r = -0,129$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

In the research it was verified that men's unreasonable beliefs ( $n=52, 6, n=48$ ) in relationships are more than women's ( $n=46, 5, n=110$ ). As consequence of traditional Turkish gender roles men's unreasonable beliefs could be found more because of their desire for being free and distantiation in relationships (Hamamcı, 2005) and for this reason they could describe relationship as a process that restrict freedoms and need more responsibility.

According to whether university students' having relationships in the past or not significant difference could not be found among relationship belief score average ( $p>.05, t=572$ ), helplessness belief score averages ( $p>.05, t=948$ ) and unlovability belief score averages ( $p>.05, t=443$ ). Besides that when related literature is examined previous relationship experiences decrease person's unreasonable beliefs (Cobb et al., 2003; Sari, 2008). However, in this study it is seen that there is no relation between university students' unreasonable beliefs and their previous relationships. When the literature is examined it is emphasized that the more they have experiences in romantic relationships the more they can regulate themselves and their relationship process (Eryılmaz & Ercan, 2010). On the other hand Turan (2010) revealed that situation of university students' having relationship in the past did not have any impact on students' cognitive distortion in his research applied to university students. Thus it can be said that situation of experience of a relationship is not important for decreasing beliefs. Unreasonable beliefs don't always change based on person's own experiences. Ellis (2004) claimed that unreasonable beliefs could develop with environmental factors. From this point it can be said that university students can develop unreasonable beliefs in their romantic relationships by observing any kind of situation or environmental factors (artistic things like songs, films).

Significant relation in negative way was found among university students' relationship beliefs ( $r= -0,172, p<.05$ ), unlovability beliefs ( $r= -0,192, p<.05$ ) with their ongoing relationships. As it can be seen from this point, while the duration of ongoing relationships of university students increases unlovability beliefs including main themes such as unreasonable beliefs and feeling of worthlessness, to not be undesired, rejection, abandonment and not having reputation decrease. In this context it can be said that couples who have long term relationship have less conflicts so they behave warmly and show love to each other because of increase in their adoption level (Chen, 2012). Within this scope it is expected result that people who have long term relationships have less beliefs such as feeling of worthlessness or feeling of not to be desired, believing on rejection in their relationships.

On the other hand significant relation could not be found between university students' helplessness beliefs and their durations of ongoing relationships ( $r=-0,129, p>.05$ ). In other words there is no significant relation between their ongoing relationships' duration and helplessness beliefs including personal desperation, weakness, vulnerability, trapped, losing control, not being good, and failure. When related literature is examined a study about desperation could not be found. In addition to that when themes about helplessness are examined it is seen that they cover only their beliefs about relationships' nature, not directly their partner. Within this context it can be emphasized that in long term relationships helplessness beliefs that surround relationship are mostly related with nature (way) of relationship rather than couples themselves or duration of relationship.

#### 5. Conclusion

It was recognized that increasing in the duration of the relationship decreases unreasonable beliefs in relationship. With the increasing in duration of relationship expectations about getting more close and knowing each other closely can become more realistic. For this reason duration of relationship can affect decreasing in unreasonable beliefs and getting awareness on more reasonable aspects inside of relationship. The research was applied to students of Hacettepe University. The findings getting from this research can be generalized to other groups in extent of similar to the sample group is a limitation of this study.

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