



Romantic Relationship Issues Described by Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity Status and Anxious Attachment Style

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I confirm that all names and identifying information has been changed to protect confidentiality.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Sitrava", with a stylized flourish underneath.

Signed.....

*...to the survivors of the pandemic
that established
their emotional bonds with their
enduring 'attachment figures'...*

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Abstract

This research brings together the theoretical common ground between a specific (moratorium) ego identity status and anxious attachment and explores the relationship between the two empirically. It builds upon existing literature around ego identity statuses, attachment styles and psychosocial developmental theory and investigates the types of relationship difficulties experienced by Turkish young people.

To this aim I conducted two related studies, resulting in original quantitative and qualitative research findings. In Study 1 I explored the relationship between ego identity status categories and attachment styles, and between specific ego identity status categories and specific (anxious or avoidant) attachment styles. The findings led to Study 2, with a narrowed down sample group demonstrating moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment styles. I was able to conduct an in-depth exploration of the particular kinds of relationship and attachment difficulties that they experienced.

Overall, the research findings demonstrated a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and attachment anxiety, and moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment in particular. The key relational issues that emerged from my qualitative study included; different affection styles, power struggles, family intrusiveness, intrusiveness of the partner, perceived clinginess of the partner, dominance in terms of controlling behaviour, and cultural/religious differences. These findings offer a nuanced picture of how these young adults struggle with their romantic relationships in the context of autonomy and conflict that define the loosely collectivist social context.

This research makes original contributions to existing knowledge about the interaction of moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety during emerging adulthood through empirical findings by combining a qualitative approach with a quantitative methodology. This study also builds upon existing work by engaging with five groups of ego identity status. It adds to our understanding of how transitional ego identity status is a useful category of thought and documents this phenomenon within the Turkish context.

Throughout the research I considered my own experience, role as a researcher and the importance of reflexivity. I thought about the themes of transference and countertransference and tried to understand how the interviews contained elements of the participants' inner experiences. I connect the research findings to clinical implications and also make important recommendations for future research directions.

Keywords: ego identity statuses, adult attachment, romantic adult attachment, content analysis, mixed-methods research

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This chapter serves to introduce my research. I summarise its conceptualisation and significance for existing knowledge and present the research objectives and primary research questions. Finally, I outline the hypotheses that guide the quantitative examination.

1.1 Conceptualisation of the Study

Between 2011-2018 I was in clinical practice at a Psychological Counselling Centre of a private university in Istanbul. During counselling sessions my clients (aged 18 to 27 years) frequently described the emotional pain and turmoil that marked their romantic relationships. This interested me, and as a recurrent theme, inspired my doctoral research.

I have always stressed the importance of interpersonal relationships in my clinical practice. I realise that I tend to think through the constellation of my clients' emotional bonds as I listen to their problems, and that attachment theory has greatly enhanced my understanding of this subject. The Reflexivity section of this thesis (Chapter 4.8) describes my journey towards my doctorate. For now, let me note that my personal interest in attachment theory, and experience of its use in the clinical context, contributed to my specific doctoral research.

Throughout my practice I noticed that bonding styles sometimes impacted the issues clients struggled with in their romantic relationships. In the first part of my research, I thus decided to focus on how my sample group connected with and established emotional bonds with their partners. In my analysis of the clinical material, I draw upon attachment theory in order to better understand these bonds.

The pioneers of attachment literature, Bowlby and Ainsworth, were central here. As my research participants were young adults engaged in romantic relationships, I also draw upon the work of Hazan and Shaver (1987). Their theories of adult attachment in romantic relationships supplement the work of Bowlby and Ainsworth in their adult focus, showing that attachment theory is relevant beyond the study of parent-child relationships (Bowlby, 1980; Ainsworth et al., 1978). By focusing on the bonding types displayed by my participants I was better able to understand patterns within romantic relationships. Moreover, this would tell me more about patterns within their inner worlds and interpersonal relationships.

As I was listening to my clients' romantic relationship problems, I heard a great deal about their parents. Most of my clients were suffering from conflict between the expectations, wishes and desires of their parents, and their own. The theme of parental expectations frequently arose, and my clients reported pain around these conflicts. This caused me to wonder about the identities being experienced by these young people. Specifically, were they aware of their several identities? Were they attempting to establish their academic identity, or vocational identity, or interpersonal identity? I realised Erikson's theory of psychosocial developmental would be helpful in making sense of such questions.

The parents of my participants seemed so significant within the clinical material that I found myself thinking deeply about the specific cultural context. Turkey has experienced rapid economic, organisational, and social development over the last two decades. It has been described as both an individualistic and collectivist society for the last decade (Eryigit & Kerpelman, 2011), yet the collectivist features of the society emerged strongly in my research. In particular, parental expectations remain normative in Turkey, regardless of the age of the children. Although this may also occur in Western contexts, the shape and form of parental expectations is very much culturally informed in Turkey. That said, the Turkish context has its own specificities. The point that the parents would intrude into their children's lives would differ according to their learnt attachment style, and also according to the socio-economic level, the educational level, and the sub-culture where they were born and raised.

My sample focused on private university-educated Turkish youth in Istanbul. Whilst their particular sub-cultures may differ, their shared education points toward a certain socio-economic background. Therefore, the current study documents how these university-educated people experience their romantic relationships in conflict with their parental expectations. I wanted to systematically explore my observations in terms of the clients' ego identity statuses and adult attachment styles and found Erikson's work (especially around life-span psychosocial developmental theory and Ego analysis) particularly helpful in doing so.

The ego identity status

Erikson (1963) explored ego processes during adolescence. He described the basic task of this developmental stage as a consolidation and integration of all previous senses and self-images, which is “more than the sum of childhood identifications” (1963, p. 261), as the consistent core self emerges during this stage. This happens through an internal process of identity formation, where we find a psychosocial conflict between ego identity and the resulting role confusion.

Marcia (1966) elaborated on the identity formation process. He explored several identity-defining domains that adolescents pass through prior to making a commitment. He then qualitatively classified them into four categories, namely (i) achieved, (ii) foreclosure (iii) diffusion, and (iv) moratorium. Individuals with achieved identity status are able to explore alternatives within identity domains, such as their own beliefs, needs and goals. Such individuals are able to commit to their own preferences. In contrast foreclosure individuals do not take an active role in exploring their identity domains. Instead, they commit to the preferences of their parents as authority figures. A person with a diffusion status has no interest and takes no action in exploring and committing to any identity-related domains. The last category is moratorium, featuring individuals who explore the alternatives of identity domains, but have no firm or even vague commitments to any one of them. Marcia’s (1966) work on classification is productive for my research, enabling me to focus on moratorium ego identity status within the identity formation process.

Adult attachment in romantic relationships

Erikson (1963) explained that in the following psychosocial developmental stage of young adulthood, individuals generally engage in courtship and romantic relationships oriented towards “settling down”. Psychologically, they engage with the conflict of intimacy versus isolation. Upon resolving this dilemma, the concept of love develops. He posited that successful young adults have achieved the capacity to offer love and accept it, on both physical and emotional levels.

Attachment theory (i.e., Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969; 1973; 1980) draws on psychoanalytic assumptions to argue that attachment is vital across age groups. It highlights how close contact and shared intimacy (especially when experiencing a distressing situation) is important for healthy psychosocial functioning. Building on this central claim of attachment theory, Hazan and Shaver (1987) viewed adult intimate relationships as pair bonds, generated by individuals. They expanded the original child-focused attachment studies of Bowlby (1969; 1973) and Ainsworth et al. (1978) in order to theorise attachment styles of adults in romantic relationships. Ainsworth et al.’s (1978) Strange Situation study, conducted with babies and their mothers, defined a three-way classification. Their typology consisted of secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. In their adult attachment classification, Hazan and Shaver (1987) appropriated these three categories of infant attachment patterns to adult attachment styles. They argued that secure adults could be characterised as experiencing trust and positive emotions towards their partner, and avoidant adults lacked trust and feared closeness. The third group of anxious adults were described as preoccupied with their romantic relationships and had a painful, yet exciting struggle to merge with

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment their partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Marcia (2006) proposed that intimacy styles and attachment styles are mutually determined and reciprocally augmenting.

1.2. Stating the Problem

The empirical work of MacKinnon and Marcia (2002) revealed a significant relationship between ego identity status categories (as defined by Marcia (1966)) and adult attachment styles. They found that identity statuses and attachment style are influenced by each other. Building on this finding, Marcia (2006) suggested that intimacy styles connect with both the ego identity development process and adult attachment styles. More specifically they are mutually determined and reciprocally enhancing. My research follows the train of investigation started by MacKinnon and Marcia (2002) and Marcia (2006). In this study I wanted to better understand the ego identity statuses and attachment styles of young adults in their romantic relationships. To this aim I used a mixed-methods research design. I conducted two related studies and took a deductive approach. In Study 1, which was quantitative, I investigated the possible connections between the ego identity statuses and the attachment styles in my research sample. I posed the following three research questions (RQs):

RQ 1: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment?

RQ 2: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment?

RQ 3: Which of the ego identity statuses and adult attachment styles are significantly associated with each other?

In Study 1, I tried to answer these RQs. I assumed and hypothesised that there would be a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment style. Secondly, I hypothesised that there would be a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment style. Lastly, I hypothesised that there would be a significant relationship between a kind of ego identity status (moratorium) and a kind of attachment style (anxious attachment). In both we find individuals characterised as emotionally and mentally active within their attachment relationship. The ego identity status, which refers to being in an active role in terms of exploring alternatives without making any commitments, is moratorium, in which individuals are actively searching for the options. The adult attachment style, referring to actively investing emotional and mental effort in a hyper-vigilant way, is anxious attachment. Therefore, I assumed and hypothesised that there would be a significant relationship between moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment for the young adults.

I narrowed down my focus on the participants in the consecutive study, following the findings from Study 1. In Study 2, which was qualitative, I conducted an in-depth examination of the romantic relationship issues of a subset of my sample. These participants displayed the moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style. According to psychosocial developmental stages (Erikson, 1963), the young adults who were in moratorium, having not resolved their conflict and not achieved their firm ego identity, are expected to actively continue in the exploration process as “late adolescents”. This refers to these young adults not having yet resolved the identity formation conflict of the previous psychosocial developmental stage (i.e., adolescence), thus these individuals continue into young adulthood with

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment

unresolved previous dilemmas. Additionally, in the consecutive stage (i.e. young adulthood), these young people aim to reach 'love'. Within the period of young adulthood, they try to enlarge their capacities to love physically and emotionally. Therefore, the young adults, dealing with the dilemma of intimacy vs. isolation to gain the virtue of love in terms of the young adulthood stage of Erikson's (1963) psychosocial developmental theory, would be expected to be eager to "work" towards developing their love capacities. They would prioritise their time on spending their mental and emotional efforts on their romantic relationships.

Within their romantic relationships, their style of attachment towards their partner would be influential in their process of developing love capacities (Kerpelman et al., 2012). I chose to focus on the anxious adult attachment style, because individuals with anxious attachment tend to heavily spend their mental and emotional energy on their relationships. Since these individuals are primarily questioning and searching for the availability and responsiveness of their romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), they tend to spend excess time exploring their romantic relationship both mentally and physically. The individuals with anxious attachment were struggling to merge with their romantic partner by questioning and exploring their romantic relationship heavily (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). They are very much preoccupied with attachment-related issues, such as availability and/or responsiveness of their romantic partner. In addition, the individuals with moratorium ego identity status were in the process of forming their identity by actively exploring or searching (Marcia, 1966). Therefore, I assumed that the moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style shared a common ground, at least theoretically. Consequently, I focused on this particular group (concurrently having moratorium ego status and anxious adult attachment style).

As these young adults (moratorium ego identity and anxious attachment style) were suffering from a recurrent inner conflict (i.e., ego identity formation process), I wanted to investigate this connection further. I thus posed the RQ, “what are the relational issues that the young adults described as facing in their romantic relationships”. My RQs consisted of the three questions from Study 1. In Study 2 I posed a further question (RQ4), “What kinds of relational issues do young adults who concurrently have moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment describe as facing in their romantic relationship?”

1.3. Significance of the Research

This study was conducted in Turkey, a society where boundaries in family relations can be seen as semi-permeable. In her article, Gulerce (1991) describes how Turkish children experience a dichotomy of autonomy versus parental dependence.

In this context, healthy, educated mothers report aiming to raise self-confident children, which is the opposite of the traditional Turkish socio-cultural trend (Gulerce, 1991). In fact, they are afraid of raising dependent children, so encourage the children towards individuation, displaying and provoking the dependency vs. autonomy conflict (Gulerce, 1991).

Turkish parents often experience a dilemma around whether to ‘give’ autonomy to their children or keep their ‘dependency’. Therefore, processes of identity formation for young adults are not straightforward in this context. We could suggest that young adults born and raised in this cultural context, such as my research participants, may experience their identity formation and intimacy problems more noticeably than their western counterparts. Thus, this study

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment aimed to elucidate how the particular cultural context shaped their inner and relational conflicts.

In this research, I screened the young population in terms of their ego identity statuses and attachment styles and investigated possible associations between the ego identity statuses and attachment styles. Furthermore, I focused on a particular group of young people who displayed both moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment. I had the opportunity to research the experiences of my sample in depth and consequently was able to zoom in on relational conflicts in their romantic relationships.

There are many studies examining the relationship between ego identity statuses and attachment styles (e.g., Berman et al., 2006; Arseth et al., 2009) or between attachment styles and intimacy styles (e.g., Kerpelman et al., 2012). Furthermore, there are studies, which examine the effects of ego identity statuses and attachment styles on romantic relationships. These studies mostly focused on the achieved, foreclosure and diffusion ego identity status categories (e.g., Pittman et al., 2012, Ford et al., 2008). To my knowledge, there has been no study focusing solely on the moratorium ego identity status regarding romantic relationships. My research is thus the first, and unique in the cultural specificity that it conveys.

There is a wide range of existing literature on adult attachment in romantic relationships. Existing research documents avoidant attachment (e.g., Feeney, 2002; Zimmerman & Becker-Stroll, 2002), anxious attachment (e.g., Collins & Allard, 2001; McElwain et al., 2015), or both (e.g., Pittman et al., 2011; Cassidy, 2001; Kerpelman et al., 2012). I focused on anxious adult attachment as it is theoretically linked to moratorium ego identity status. Individuals with anxious attachment mostly question and search for the availability and

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment responsiveness of their romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Moreover, they tend to be extensively preoccupied with exploring their romantic relationship. Additionally, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are in the process of forming their identity by actively exploring before making decisions and commitments regarding their ego-identity related domains (Marcia, 1966). Therefore, the anxious attachment style and the moratorium ego identity status converge in active searching and exploration.

Although there have been a variety of studies focusing on anxious adult attachment in romantic relationships, my literature review revealed a gap in knowledge around the combination of moratorium ego identity status and an anxious adult attachment style in romantic relationships. My research aims to speak to this gap, providing the first study to demonstrate the theoretical overall between attachment anxiety and moratorium ego identity status.

This work is also original in scope. Existing studies of the relational issues of adolescence, young adulthood, and/or adulthood are numerous (e.g., Cadely, Kerpelman, & Pittman, 2018; Miga et al., 2010), yet the significance of both moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment within one group has been neglected. Finally, my work is the first to apply qualitative methodology (i.e., content analysis, see Chapter 4,) to examine relational issues in Turkey.

Although there have been a variety of studies investigating the relational issues in Turkish society (e.g., Morsunbul, 2015; Aslan et al., 2008; Toplu-Demirtas & Fincham, 2018), no study has focused on a particular group of people with any combination of ego identity status and attachment style in Turkish culture. Since Turkish families can give great importance to the individuality of their children, with parental attitudes oscillating between

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment dependency and autonomy (Gulerce, 1991), I consider this factor in my analysis. Relatedly, I show how the young people of my sample are affected by this dilemma and track how it shapes their experiences of ego identity and romantic relationship.

To best describe the Turkish context, a fifth category of ego identity status (transitional) has been added to the Western classification system (see Selcuk et al., 2005). I build on this category throughout my research, adding quantitative data to the existing literature. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to this embryonic field of knowledge about Turkey in both specific and broader ways.

Therefore, this research offers an original contribution to existing knowledge in five main ways. These are summarised as in the following.

1. Existing literature (from Western contexts or Turkey) on the subject of ego identity statuses and attachment styles has not specifically researched how moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety intersect during emerging adulthood. This study builds on existing empirical work by focusing on this particular age group, documenting the particular relationship difficulties experienced, and revealing some of the particularities of the Turkish context.

2. There is a common ground between existing theoretical work on moratorium ego identity status and an anxious attachment style. This study contributes to existing knowledge by exploring the overlap between the theoretical areas through empirical findings.

3. The third original contribution that this research makes is around the particular relationship problems experienced by young adults with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety. By identifying and detailing the

problems they encounter, this research expands our understanding of how this group experiences relationships.

4. This research is also original in terms of method in two ways. First, there are no qualitative studies that focus exclusively on young adults with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety, so this research fills a gap in existing literature. Secondly, this research is original in bringing a qualitative approach to the relationship experiences, enhancing empirical knowledge by combining the qualitative approach with a quantitative methodology.

5. Finally, this study builds upon existing work by engaging with five groups of ego identity status. This research adds to our understanding of how transitional ego identity status is a useful category of thought and documents its existence within my sample in the Turkish context.

1.4 Objectives of the Research

This project aimed to:

- a) assess the participants' (i) ego identity statuses and (ii) adult attachment styles,
- b) determine possible relationships between ego identity status categories and adult attachment styles,
- c) develop a deeper understanding of the romantic relationship issues expressed by Turkish university-educated young adults, who are concurrently classified as having moratorium identity status and anxious adult attachment.

1.5 RQs and the Primary Hypotheses

The first and the second RQs aim to meet the first objective of the study, which is to assess the participants' ego identity statuses and adult attachment styles.

RQ 1: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment?

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment.

RQ 2: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment?

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment.

The third RQ aims to meet the second objective, which is to identify possible relationships between ego identity status categories and adult attachment styles.

RQ 3: Which of the ego identity statuses and adult attachment styles are significantly associated with each other?

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style.

The fourth RQ aims to meet the third objective of the study, which is to develop a deeper understanding of the romantic relationship issues expressed by my sample (young adults concurrently classified as having moratorium identity status and anxious adult attachment).

RQ 4: What kinds of relational issues do young adults who concurrently have moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment describe as facing in their romantic relationship?

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced my research and the basic concepts (ego identity statuses and adult attachment) that I use within the following chapters. I explained how this research came to be, and was conceptualised, and outlined the cultural context of my research field. I outlined the primary RQs and the objectives of the study and showed the links between them. This chapter also outlined the significance of my research contribution to existing literature, both Western and Turkish.

In the next chapter I discuss the basic assumptions of my research in light of existing fields of knowledge. Of particular relevance is Erikson's work on ego identity status and psychosocial developmental theory (1963; 1968; 1982), and Marcia's classification of ego identity statuses (1966). More broadly I situate my research against attachment literature, so discuss the work of Bowlby (1973; 1980), and Hazan and Shaver's (1987) theorisation of romantic relationships.

Chapter 2. Background

2.1 Introduction

This study straddles two main theoretical areas: ego identity status and adult attachment in romantic relationships. In particular I engage with Erikson's (1963; 1968; 1982) psychosocial developmental theory, Marcia's (1966) classification of ego identity statuses, Bowlby's (1973; 1980) attachment theory, and the adult attachment theory in romantic relationships of Hazan and Shaver (1987). This chapter introduces the broader discussions within the existing literature, in order to clearly show where my work makes an original contribution.

2.2 The Ego Identity and Statuses

Erikson (1963, 1968) was the first theoretician to use the concept of ego identity. Specifically, he argued that individual ego identity generates healthy personality development, a process that he saw as starting during adolescence (Erikson, 1968).

From this perspective considered identity to be psychosocial (1963). In other words, a process constituted by an individual's biological and psychological capacities, as well as their social context. Erikson described identity as a mixture of individual and social components of human

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment development, one that follows persistent continuity. The individual component (known as ego identity), he argued, consists of commitments to distinct components of human experience, such as occupation, ideological values, spiritual beliefs and personal philosophy (Erikson, 1968). The social component (or self-identity) (Erikson, 1968) is composed of self-perceptions around social roles and interpersonal relationships. Thus, decisions about ideological, vocational and relational issues are first addressed during adolescence, and he considered identity formation to be a process occurs during this period.

Throughout his writings on identity, Erikson (1963, 1968) laid emphasis on the shifts in adolescent's relationship to society, noting that adolescents are reworking their previous identifications and obtaining recognition as a unique individual in the community. Therefore, they are trying to receive social recognition, and further define themselves. He explains this process of identity formation;

“finally begins where the usefulness of identification ends. It arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilation of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration, which, in turn, is dependent on the process by which a society identifies the young individual, recognizing him as somebody who had to become the way he is and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted. The community, often not without some initial mistrust, gives such recognition with a display of surprise and pleasure in making the acquaintance of a newly emerging individual” (Erikson, 1968, p. 159).

In his psychosocial developmental theory, Erikson (1963) proposed an eight-stage model of development, which are developmentally appropriate and describe self-relevant information being gained in the context of social relationships. Each stage of his model presents its own unique challenges, which he called 'crises' and conceptualised as dialectics. Each dialectic included a pair of opposites that characterised an aspect of psychosocial development. Erikson understood these pairs to find dominance during particular stages. According to this perspective, the task of each stage is to resolve the dialectic tension, and consequently reach the next stage of development. He suggested that although the timing, crises and virtues are predetermined according to developmental stages, the outcomes are not predetermined. Although Erikson did not mention the exact processes by which the dialectical tensions are resolved, he noted that each resolution contains both positive and negative experiences in the related stage, which combine the two poles of the dialectic. The resolutions would not be totally positive or negative; yet healthier development by reaching the virtues of the stages would be evident when the positive pole of the dialectic is more dominant in the resolution.

The first four stages of Erikson (1963) provide a foundation for the later stages and demonstrate the engagement of psychological and social processes that he saw as crucial for psychosocial development. In the fifth and sixth stages (occurring during adolescence and young adulthood), the earlier dominance of the caregiver recedes as peers and then romantic partners become more significance (Larson et al., 1996). During adolescence, which he theorised as the fifth stage, the task is to gain fidelity in terms of identity related domains. To this aim adolescents experience a conflict of identity versus role

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment confusion. Erikson believed that identity formation requires cognitive, physical and social maturity as follows;

“The emerging identity bridges the staged of childhood when the bodily self and parental images are given their cultural connotations; and it bridges the stage of young adulthood, when a variety of social roles become available, and, in fact, increasingly coercive” (Erikson, 1963; p. 235).

According to Erikson (1968), the most common route to successful identity development involves two complex processes, exploration (or moratorium) and commitment. He explains how;

“A moratorium is a period of delay granted to somebody who is not ready to meet an obligation or forced on somebody who should give himself time. By psychosocial moratorium, then, we mean a delay of adult commitments, and yet it is not only a delay. It is a period that is characterized by a selective permissiveness on the part of society and or provocative playfulness on the part of youth, and yet is also often leads to deep, if often transitory, commitment on the part of youth, and ends in a more or less ceremonial confirmation of commitment on the part of society” (Erikson, 1968; p. 157).

James Marcia (1966) expanded upon Erikson’s original theorisation of identity to include other components, exploration and commitment. He saw these as integral to Erikson’s four statuses of identity development, and defined identity as follows;

“[A personality structure that] consists of an individual’s organization of drives (needs, wishes) and abilities (skills, competencies) in the context of his or her particular culture’s demands (requirements) and rewards (gratifications)” (Marcia, 1994, p. 84).

Marcia (1994) added that identity also consists of an individual’s history and beliefs, emphasizing the tension between exploration and commitment in identity development. He further noted that a continuing reformulation of identity is a sign of psychological health. Marcia (1966; 1988) described exploration as a willingness to consider futures and directions that may differ to those presented by parents. As a process, exploration here includes an active evaluation of one’s own needs and abilities, alongside a separation from his/her origins. He defined commitment as a future-oriented ego synthesis or involvement in a course of action. When a person’s identity is conferred by parents and thus rigid (foreclosed), or undeveloped (diffused), Marcia (1966; 1988) assumed that future reformulation of identity is less likely to occur throughout the life cycle. However, once an individual’s initial attempt at identity formation is successful in terms of gaining exploration and presence of commitment, Marcia (1988; 1994) believes this person to be well equipped with an internal structure capable of accommodating and changing as life circumstances change.

In light of these definitions and operationalizing of Erikson’s (1963; 1968) construct of identity, Marcia (1966; 1988) placed individuals into one of four identity statuses. To do so he took the presence or absence of self-exploration and commitment in various areas of life (such as ideology, occupation, political,

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment and interpersonal aspects) as vital. These four ego identity statuses are explained in detail below (Marcia, 1966);

Identity achievement refers to a strong degree of commitment towards occupational and ideological choices. These individuals make their choices by thinking about and searching through alternatives and appear to be fairly stable. Importantly they are able to establish and follow realistic decisions and goals in their lives. They are also able to handle sudden shifts in their environment, on both personal and relational levels. They have an inner sense of identity comprised of their inner goals, expectations, and decisions.

Individuals who have achieved **foreclosure** are committed to an ideology and certain decision in their lives. However, this commitment does not emerge from their own decision-making process; rather, they accept the decisions, desires and expectations of their parents' and authority figures and act accordingly. Their identity is generally given to them by their parents during the adolescent years, and they assume this identity accurately according to their parents. When faced with sudden shifts in their environment, such individuals are not able to cope with change and may feel paralysed. This process could also occur in their relational patterns.

Identity diffusion individuals are neither committed nor have the tendency to undertake any identity. These individuals seem to be empty and aimless in their lives in terms of taking their decisions in their academic, personal, occupational, and romantic lives. They do not show the tendency to have and achieve a goal.

Individuals with **moratorium** ego identity status are those who are in an identity crisis, which refers to having vague commitments in their lives in relation to their decisions and goals. They have ambivalent attitude towards authority

figures. On the one hand they have the urge to fulfil the desires of the authority figure in their lives, yet on the other they have a tendency to rebel against their parents' expectations. These people are active in the decision-making process, but they put themselves in an ambiguous condition, which means that they are indecisive concerning their own wishes and the authority figure's expectations. Therefore, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are considered to be in an indecisive process in their relationships with themselves and others.

In addition to the Western classification of ego identity status categories, the Turkish version of the classification (Eryüksel & Varan, 1999) reveals a fifth category, called **transitional**. Individuals in the transitional period find themselves allocated to more than one identity status category (Eryüksel & Varan, 1999; Morsünbül & Atak, 2013), which may refer to being indecisive regarding their exploration and commitment processes. Such individuals do not have a clear idea of which track to follow to establish their identity.

This study focuses on both the exploration and commitment processes, for ego identity formation and for the attachment style of their emotional bond with their partners. As individuals with moratorium ego identity status are actively exploring their identity-relevant domains, this tendency is bound to be observed in interpersonal relationships (i.e., one of identity-related domains), such as their romantic relationship. Therefore, I focused on the attachment styles (the quality or the style of emotional bond) that these individuals with moratorium ego identity status establish and maintain with their romantic partners. The young people that I studied experience commitment in their relationship whilst also exploring their identity. This may represent the interpersonal aspect of identity-relevant domain. Considering this I wondered how attachment styles would affect individuals with moratorium ego identity

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment status within their intimate relationship. In order to help my hypothesis and analysis of these emotional bonds, I looked to Bowlby's attachment theory.

2.3 Attachment Theory

From 1958 Bowlby began to develop an empirical perspective on child development, diverging from his psychoanalytic origins. He emphasised the emotional bond between infants and carers as crucial, defining it in terms of 'attachment'. He continued to argue that this bond is as important to the maturational process as the psychoanalytic emphasis on sexuality. This perspective focuses on emotional experiences surrounding loss, distress, separation, and mourning. Bowlby was interested in the behavioural reactions to these kinds of situations and their relation to the affectional bond; firstly, amongst children, and then having implications for adult life.

In his first paper, Bowlby (1958) made explicit the ways that his ideas on attachment diverged from the psychoanalytic perspective. He proposed that attachment behaviour is separate from other instincts (such as feeding and sexual activity), being primarily related to social and emotional ties with significant others. Bowlby believed that these ties are inherent to human experience, stating that instinctual programming and biological functioning are (probably) developed during human evolution and related to survival and protection. This perspective clearly differs from the psychoanalytic one, which locates the motivational forces in human development in terms of the satisfaction of primary drives. Bowlby explained his approach as follows;

“Attachment theory regards the propensity to make intimate emotional bonds to particular individuals as a basic component of human nature, already present in germinal form in the neonate and continuing through

adult life into old age. [...] Although food and sex sometimes play important roles in attachment relationships, the relationship exists in its own right and has a key survival function of its own, namely protection” (Bowlby, 1969, pp. 120-121).

Bowlby looked at differences in how infants related to their primary carer around separation or loss and the subsequent experiences of distress. He further considered how loss is managed during childhood and adulthood. His theory of attachment was grounded in empirical observations and drew on ideas from psychoanalysis, ethology, and cognitive science. Thus, his attachment theory is interdisciplinary and provides a multifaceted perspective on infant attachment forms. He further showed how the basic infant attachment patterns continue through subsequent relationships, consequently shaping a whole lifetime of relationships.

Despite the importance attributed to the ‘feeling’ of attachment, Bowlby’s theory was mainly concerned with attachment behaviour, defined as “any proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world” (Bowlby, 1988, pp. 26-27). The emphasis on behaviour nevertheless derives, according to Bowlby, not from a behaviourist approach, but from the characteristics of the method used. He described his method as

“a prospective approach [i.e., to describe certain early phases of personality functioning and, from them, to extrapolate forward], a focus on a pathogen and sequela, direct observation of young children, and a use of animal data” (Bowlby, 1969, pp. 7-8).

Bowlby's theory of attachment postulated that attachment behaviour, such as parental, reproductive, explorative and feeding behaviours, has biological roots and is characteristic of individuals (1969; 1973; 1980). Attachment behaviour begins to develop as an organised pattern as early as the first year of life. This behaviour is guided by an organised control system based on neurophysiological processes that contain information about the physical and mental environment and allow behaviour to be planned and directed. In the course of development and from interactions with the carer, a child develops increasingly complex cognitive structures or representations of the world and of people, including self and others (attachment figures). These determine interpretation of the world and appropriate action. Described as "internal working models" (IWMs) (Bowlby, 1980, p. 55), these structures are produced by early relationships and environment and are therefore initially flexible. Once organised, however, they quickly tend to operate automatically. Thus, they have a tendency to be a stable property of the individual unless the person makes effort to change them (Dinero et al., 2011; Bretherhon & Munholland, 2016).

One consequence of the attachment system is the exploratory system, which balances information seeking behaviours with those that foster familiarity and stress-reduction. In effect this means that when a child has a 'secure base' to return to, s/he is free to move away from it and explore the environment. Bowlby (1973; 1980) claimed that when a child starts to explore the environment, the carer should recognise the need for independence whilst offering comfort and protection. Providing these three elements repeatedly, the child is able to build consistent and reliable IWMs for themselves. Recent research (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000; Bretherton, 2005; Cobb & Davila, 2009) has identified IWMs as schemata involving a dynamic template that

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment mediates patterns of cognition, affect, and behaviour (such as attention, perception, affect arousal and interpersonal behaviours) within the attachment relationship.

In this way, care given to infants by attachment figures during exploratory experiences contributes to the development of a secure base. A lack of care can consequently cause distress (Ainsworth et al., 1978). If the carer does not recognise the child's needs, or respond appropriately, then the child may build negative IWMs of themselves (Bowlby, 1973). These negative IWMs remain active in later years and include cognitive and affective components. They construct conscious and unconscious rules for organising information related to emotions, thoughts, expectations, and experiences with attachment figures in childhood and adulthood (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). Main and colleagues (1985) noted that linguistic patterns shown through the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) revealed representational models that had been built from recurrent experiences of the self (care-seeker) and the other (caregiver) interactions. This indicates that infant attachment experiences directly determine the representational system of adults.

Since attachment theory attends to how attachment behaviours are related to the carer's responses to emotionally distressing situations, it bridges both the objective (behaviour) and the subjective (emotional) experience. Attachment behaviour aims to obtain and/or maintain a desired proximity to the protective figure, and the attachment figure becomes the one that takes the greatest care of and is most responsive to the child during the period of bond formation. Specifically, affective bonds appear to result from the social interaction (intensity and quality of the interaction) with such figures (Bowlby, 1980), resulting in an enduring affective tie.

To better understand this phenomenon, Ainsworth et al. (1978) conducted one of the most exhaustive research studies to date. This study aimed to investigate affectional bonds (between the attachment figure and the child) and variations in how children respond to distress. Further, Ainsworth and colleagues aimed to identify the children's attachment styles. In the study, a 'Strange Situation' procedure was used to explore the reactions of 26 children aged from nine to 18 months, and who were exposed to distressing circumstances. The situations consisted of encountering a stranger in an unfamiliar room, separation from their mother, and reunion with their mother. The children's attachment styles to their mothers were identified through how they responded to the situation.

In the experiment, after a three-minute separation from their mother, approximately half of the children sought proximity with their mother after the separation and were categorised as 'secure'. The remaining children displayed a variety of behaviours and were considered to have an 'insecure' attachment style. Nearly one quarter of the children kept their distance and did not make contact their mother when reunited, and these children were categorised as 'insecure-avoidant'. Nearly 12% of the children approached their mothers with anger or clingy behaviours, or apparent passivity. This group of children was regarded as 'insecure-resistant' or 'insecure-ambivalent'. A small number of children showed no response and were categorised as 'insecure-disorganised'.

The children with a secure attachment displayed an ability to cope with negative affects while interacting with others. They were able to sufficiently auto-regulate the distressful separation and play autonomously. On the other hand, children with ambivalent attachment displayed intense distress, revealed through anger, and fear towards the attachment figure (Ainsworth, 1984). After

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reunion they behaved as if the mother was unavailable, displaying a mixture of anger and fear of abandonment in their attachment relationship. This strategy maintains the contact with the mother, but interferes with the child's self-confidence (Ainsworth, 1984). Children who have an avoidant attachment with their mother do not show anger or distress-related emotions; it is as if they had never experienced any negative situations (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988). They move away or turn their attention away from mother; instead, they rely on themselves using auto-regulation. This leads them to reduce the conflict and anger towards the attachment figure by keeping their distance and remaining passive (Main, 1981).

In the Strange Situation study, the children responded in different ways to physical distress and the temporary loss of their mothers. The mothers' various interpretations of their child's behaviour, such as attuning to the children's affect or ignoring them, play a crucial role in the child's development of self and how they learn to understand their feelings. Therefore, the pattern of early attachment leads to secure and insecure attachment types, which encompass the visible attachment behaviours and IWMs of the child (Bowlby, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978).

In attachment theory, "attachment behaviour" and "attachment bond" are key concepts. To have an attachment bond with someone does not simply mean to feel affection. It entails drawing a feeling of well-being and security from their proximity or availability. In this sense, one component of attachment may be present in other affective bonds. Attachment behaviour may be observed, especially during distress, at any age. However, Bowlby suggested that it becomes harder to activate and less intense over time (Bowlby, 1969). As individuals age, the main attachment figure tends to change and is often

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment identified as a romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), although established ties with parents may continue.

On the basis of the experimental studies undertaken by Ainsworth et al. (1978), three principal models of attachment were proposed: secure, insecure/ambivalent, and insecure/avoidant. Research into individual differences of attachment style has since been extended to include adults. Significant studies have explored the intergenerational transmission of attachment models (Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985) and the reproduction of attachment models in adult affective relationships, such as romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

2.4 Adult Attachment in Romantic Relationships

In 1987, Hazan and Shaver proposed that romantic love is an attachment process, (consisting of a shared affectional bond), and consequent studies have built on this approach (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Diamond, Blatt, & Lichtenberg, 2007; Simpson & Rholes, 2015; Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016).

This way of viewing romantic love positions it as both a biological and a social process (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988). In their early work they suggested that the early phase of a romance is not directly related to attachment. Instead;

“romantic love is a biological process designed by evolution to facilitate attachment between adult sexual partners, at the time love evolved and were likely to become parents of an infant who would need their reliable care” (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, p. 523).

That said, romantic love is administered by the attachment system, specifically by the pair-bonding system (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Hazan & Zeifman, 2008; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016), within which both parties seek comfort, soothing, availability, and responsiveness when they feel distressed or uncomfortable. From the attachment perspective, romantic love comprises intimacy and closeness (Collins & Feeney, 2004). Intimacy is conceptualised in attachment theory as a range of social interactions where thoughts and feelings are expressed and positively received. In other words, individuals in a romantic relationship want to feel understood, soothed, validated, and cared for (Reis & Shaver, 1988). In addition to the verbal sharing of feelings and thoughts, intimacy includes physical closeness, such as hugging, cuddling, kissing, and sexual contact. The realm of physical closeness allows both parties to express their true selves and experience care and acceptance from their partners (Reis & Patrick, 1996; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016).

Closeness refers to the level of cognitive, emotional and behavioural interdependence of romantic partners (Collins & Feeney, 2004; Simpson & Rholes, 2017). Interdependence means that both are invested in their partners' lives, and support each other to satisfy their social, physical, and emotional needs (Simpson & Rholes, 2017). While closeness represents the general pattern of interdependence, intimacy is basically a specific type of interaction.

In his theory of identity, Erikson (1968) made reference to romantic relationships as useful mirrors upon which adolescents and young adults receive feedback about their developing selves. He argued;

“To a considerable extent, adolescent love is an attempt to arrive at a definition of one’s identity by projecting one’s diffused self-image on

another and by seeing it thus reflected and gradually clarified” (Erikson, 1968, p.132).

In his psychosocial developmental theory, Erikson (1963; 1968) noted that following the identity formation process, young adults experience a conflict of intimacy versus isolation. The aim of this stage is a resolution to this dilemma. Consequently, individuals will have an increased capacity to offer and accept love, both physically and emotionally.

According to the epigenetic principle of Erikson’s (1963) theory, genuine intimacy should not be possible until issues of identity are reasonably well resolved. Erikson highlighted the importance of identity prior to intimate relationships as: “...intimacy is the ability to fuse your identity with somebody else’s without fear that you are going to lose something yourself” (Erikson, 1968, p. 135). Having an achieved identity helps individuals to establish and maintain an intimate relationship with others.

Erikson (1968) proposed that an integrated sense of identity comes from a healthy attachment system during childhood and a healthier character structure. Such individuals display consistency and continuity in their behaviours, which may be the reason for their sense of continuity of self (Erikson, 1968). When asked to describe themselves and their significant others, those with an integrated sense of identity give coherent narratives whilst considering self and others in a multi-dimensional way. Such narratives include different aspects of self and others (Erikson, 1968; Hesse, 2016). These individuals can picture their values, beliefs, attitudes, and also shortcomings with a sense of their stability. Erikson (1968) suggested that to establish

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment individualised and mature intimate relationships with romantic partners, a mature identity is necessary.

Young adulthood is a transition stage involving leaving adolescence and encountering the responsibilities of adulthood (Erikson, 1963). It is a very important period of development, where people generally become more aware of the patterns that develop and can work through these processes. Moreover, with respect to the second separation individuation process, Blos (1967) argued that young adults might fixate on detaching from their earlier familiar dependence and loosening infantile object ties. This is apparent in romantic relationships during emerging adulthood (Arseth et al., 2009).

Although an attachment system includes the same behavioural systems (an affectional bond and caregiving), they take different forms during infancy and adulthood (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). The major difference between child-parent attachment and adult-adult attachment is that this behavioural system is reciprocal between adults. Caregiving behaviours in adult partners are seen as mutual, for both parties display caregiving and attachment behaviours to each other in a shifting way (Ainsworth, 1991; Kunce & Shaver, 1994). Adult partners are not usually given a place as permanent attachment figures, as in the child-parent attachment system.

2.4.1 Different Perspectives Towards Romantic Relationship

Shaver and Hazan (1988) suggested that adult romantic love crossed three behavioural systems (attachment, caregiving, and sex) and included six parameters. The first parameter, they argued, was the idea that romantic love was an emotion. Secondly, they saw romantic love as related to Bowlby's concept of attachment in terms of affectional bond and behavioural systems.

Thirdly, they proposed that it integrated three behavioural systems: attachment, caregiving, and sex. Fourthly, by positioning romantic love as an attachment process, they argued that it follows the three attachment types proposed by Ainsworth et al. (1978); secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant. Fifthly, since romantic love was an attachment process, the attachment type employed would shape the care giving and sexual behaviours. The sixth parameter suggested that the attachment-theoretical approach could make sense of other perspectives of love (Shaver and Hazan, 1988).

More recently, Zeifman and Hazan (2016) proposed a model of adult romantic attachment which paralleled Bowlby's description of infant attachment. They identified four phases of attachment in infancy; pre-attachment, attachment in the making, clear-cut attachment, and goal-directed partnership. In the first phase of pre-attachment, Zeifman and Hazan (2016) postulated that when men and women of reproductive age were potentially interested in romance, they displayed flirtatious signals in social interactions. Potential mates exchanged sexually charged and playful signals, which might refer to attachment behaviours continued until the mates became involved.

Next, the behaviours of romantic partners in romantic love resemble the infant-caregiver interactions, such as cuddling, hugging, kissing, and prolonged mutual gazing (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). These behaviours are referred to as the second phase, which is being in the attachment. This paralleled Bowlby's (1979) idea regarding that "in terms of subjective experience, the formation of a bond is described as falling in love" (p. 69).

In the third phase, which refers to clear-cut attachment, adult partners choose one partner that they believe that they could trust. Thus, they become the reliably preferred target of proximity maintenance and safe-haven

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment behaviours and assuring secure-base and separation-distress behaviours (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016).

In the fourth phase of goal-directed attachment, the adults achieve the status of an attachment figure. They now serve as a secure base, encouraging each other to explore his/her environment with a greater sense of security (Feeney & Thrush, 2010). Therefore, in the fourth phase proposed by Zeifman and Hazan (2016), there is a decline in attachment behaviours between the romantic partners, and they have more space and direct their attention to other aspects of life, such as hobbies, work and friendships.

The attachment theory on human mating could be misunderstood in terms of emphasising a monogamous affectional bond between the partners (Schmitt, 2005; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). Although Bowlby (1973; 1980) mentioned that attachment was an affectional bond, this might not be always true for adolescents and/or adults in their later lives. They might only be interested in sexual mating, or in a short-term relationship, or they might be attracted emotionally, but not sexually. Apart from Zeifman and Hazan's (2016) adult attachment model, there are three other perspectives that are relevant here. These include: Sexual Strategies Theory (SST; Buss & Schmitt, 1993), Strategic Pluralism Theory (SPT; Gangestad & Simpson, 2000), and Sexual Behavioural System (SBS; Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015), which explain romantic relationship in different ways.

SST states that male and female individuals have different strategies in deciding whether to engage in a short-term or long-term relationship. SPT emphasises that male and female individuals embark on short-term or long-term mating strategies due to ecological factors. On the other hand, SBS focuses on

the link between attachment and sexuality. In their model, Birnbaum and Finkel (2015) proposed that SBS promotes enduring bonds between sexual partners.

Zeifman and Hazan's (2016) adult attachment model postulates that attachment is one of the interrelated behavioural systems operating in a pair bond, alongside the sexual/mating and caregiving systems. Empirical research reveals that these three systems are very different from each other in their neurobiological underpinnings, behavioural manifestations, and psychological dynamics (Fischer, 2000; Fischer, et al., 2002). It has been found that relationships can engage these systems somewhat independently. For example, sexual interaction can happen without attachment and/or affectional bond (Diamond, 2004). However, these three systems are integrated in the typical pair bond. Sexual desire motivates the kind of physical interaction between partners, and this interaction may foster mutual attachment and caregiving (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016).

The adult attachment model, SST, and SPT address behavioural systems differently. SST especially focuses on the sexual system, in which there are gender differences. For example, Buss and Schmitt (1993) found that young men of college age reported greater desire for short-term mating than young women. SPT focuses on the sexual system, and indirectly on the caregiving system. It looked at the form of parental investment, and the exchanges of effort between partners. The balance of effort allocated to the sexual system and caregiving is assumed to differ within gender differences as a function of ecological factors. For example, in highly unstable environments, both young men and women prefer to be in short-term relationships (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000). Although SPT mentions that long-term mating is a

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment behavioural norm, it does not explain the nature of the affectional bond that develops within these long-term relationships.

SBS was proposed by Birnbaum and Finkel (2015) and focuses on the partners' belief in functioning together harmoniously to create a mutually meaningful, satisfactory, and fulfilling relationship. This relationship could include a high level or low level of sexual desire. This model postulates that the functional implications of sexual desire differ across relationship stages, circumstances, and individuals. Sexual desire is crucial to relationship survival when, in those circumstances, the relationship is highly vulnerable. For example, this could occur early on in a relationship, when it is under threat, or contains unstable individuals. In such cases, the desire to experience sexual and emotional proximity becomes central. Further, sexual proximity functions to decrease emotional distance when a relationship is under strain. It may thus repair the vulnerable parts of the relationship whilst the inherent intimacy of sexual contact may soothe attachment insecurities (Birnbaum & Finkel, 2015). Sexual contact can be seen as providing a sharing environment where partners can resolve disagreements or tensions, therefore sustaining an intimate relationship.

The adult attachment model (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016) is not concerned with hypothetical mating behaviour or short-term mating. Instead, it is interested in enduring emotional bonds. This model is unique in the focus on the dynamics of a pair bond as the integration of sexual mating, caregiving, and attachment systems. Participants of the current study had experienced committed relationships; thus, my analysis draws on the perspective offered by Zeifman and Hazan's (2016) adult attachment model.

Focusing on romantic relationships, attachment theory identifies three systems: attachment behaviours, caregiving, and sex (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). Romantic love is initiated by biological processes (sexual desire), followed by mutual caregiving and maintaining a pair-bonding system, which is the basis of attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Attachment relationships involve the closest relationships because attachment bonds are framed by psychological and physical interdependence. This is difficult to achieve in other social connections (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). Attachment relationships differ from other close relationships, such as with peers and friends, in terms of their ability to put the individual's self at the centre of the relationship to satisfy their security needs (Cassidy, 2001). Additionally, within a romantic relationship containing an affectional bond, caregiving and sexual behaviour, partners have the opportunity to express their vulnerable emotions, such as being sad and hurt. This opportunity brings the attachment relationship to a more intimate level (Reis & Patrick, 1996; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). Further, sharing physical contact in a way that does not occur in other close relationships (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016) makes the attachment relationship quite particular. In other words, the attachment relationship, first formed between the infant and carer, continues in romantic relationships and other forms of attachment. This pattern provides a context for individuals to experience the dynamics of intimacy and closeness at the interpersonal level across their life span. Notably, shifting of the attachment behaviours may cause complexity in the romantic relationships depending on the different attachment backgrounds of the romantic partners (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). Marcia (2006) elaborated Erikson's theories on identity and psychosocial development to suggest that attachment styles of adults and their

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment intimacy styles (based on ego identity development) are determined mutually and enhance one another reciprocally. Furthermore, empirical studies (e.g. Arseth et al., 2009; Kerpelman, 2012; Cadely, Kerpelman, & Pittman, 2018) have shown that adult attachment styles impact romantic relationships.

In the present study I draw upon adult attachment theory to better understand how young adults in romantic relationships may experience their emotional bond through attachment behaviours. Since the current research explores relational issues, which often span emotionally distressing topics, attachment styles seem to be a crucial factor in making sense of my studies. Therefore, in the next section, I explain adult attachment styles in more detail.

2.5 Adult Attachment Styles

Bowlby (1979) noted that attachment behaviour starts from birth and ends with death; sharing intimacy and being close to a familiar person, especially during distress, is vital for humans. Hazan and Shaver (1987) argued that when adults perceive a threat, they tend to seek contact, comfort and protection from their romantic partner. Adults feel more secure when their romantic partner is nearby, responsive, and accessible. Thus, Hazan and Shaver (1987) expanded the child studies of Bowlby and Ainsworth into adult relationships in romantic relationships. Affectional bonds between the infant and primary caregiver are relevant to adult romantic relationships. Between adults, however, both partners seek a significant other for intimacy and security, when distressed or experiencing separation or loss (Weiss, 1986).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) developed a self-report questionnaire to explore associations between infant attachment and adult romantic attachment patterns. They applied Ainsworth's three categories of infant attachment

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment patterns (secure, insecure-anxious/ambivalent, insecure-avoidant) to adult attachment styles. The participants were asked to think about their most important love relationship (past or present) in completing the questionnaire. They were asked to first consider their attitudes, beliefs about intimate relationships in general, and then specific experiences with their romantic partner. The results showed that adult attachment typology resembled the three attachment patterns in childhood. Nearly 56% of the participants identified themselves as secure. One quarter of the participants (nearly 24%) identified themselves as avoidant, and nearly 10% identified themselves as anxious/ambivalent (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Individuals with these different attachment styles displayed different mental representations of themselves and their relationship. For example, the insecure group (especially those who were anxious/ambivalent) reported that they experienced more loneliness. Hazan and Shaver (1987) were successful in applying Ainsworth's attachment classification system to adult romantic relationships. They provided a conceptual model of adult attachment, which revealed the individual differences in adult attachment relationships with romantic partners.

During the same time period, Main and colleagues (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985) developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). They aimed to identify how adult attachment types linked to childhood experiences. In a semi-structured interview, the adult participants are posed questions regarding their family members, previous relationships with their parents, separations, losses, traumas, and coping skills related to these situations. The participants' responses to these questions are carefully coded, then analysed and the adult classifications are allocated to each participant. The AAI adult attachment

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment classifications are secure-autonomous, dismissive, preoccupied, and disorganised (or unresolved) (Hesse, 2016).

The AAI classifications showed that adult attachment styles may or may not be influenced by their previous childhood experiences. For example, although an adult had bad experiences with their attachment figures in childhood, s/he may not have developed an insecure state of mind, which leads them to be classified as secure-autonomous (Hesse, 2016). AAI aims to measure adult attachment through these retrospective narratives but is not limited to romantic relationships.

From the onset of the two-dimensional model of adult attachment, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) proposed a four-category classification of adult attachment. They based this on Bowlby's (1973; 1980) conception of IWMs of self and others. The classification system of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) can be better understood against Main's work on mental representation (of self and others). Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy (1985) suggested that mental representations influence an adult's thinking, feeling, remembering, and acting regarding the past experiences with caregivers. Both Main and Fonagy et al. highlighted the importance of self-representation in relation to understanding one's own experience with others (Main, 1991; Fonagy, Steele, Steele, 1991). Mental representations of self and the others form the basis for this categorisation. The four attachment patterns were explained in terms of two underlying dimensions: the positivity of one's model of self and the positivity of one's model of others.

Differences between models of self were descriptive, as worthy or unworthy of love and support, for example. Models of others were based on how available and supportive other people were expected to be. This research

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment found that positive models of self-correspond to lower anxiety and dependency on external approval. Positive models of others are associated with having less avoidance of intimacy and comfort within close relationships. Individuals feel comfortable when establishing close relationships, if they have a positive model of others, and do not need to create emotional distance. Thus, the four categories of adult attachment can be transformed into two attachment dimensions, within the axes of avoidant attachment and anxious attachment. This is displayed in Figure 1. Furthermore, Feeney (1995) proposed that avoidance is related to the model of others, and anxiety links to the model of self.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) proposed a four-category model to explain an adult's systematic way of relating to others, based on the dimensions of being anxious or avoidant in attachment. This model includes the attachment styles: secure, dismissive, preoccupied, and fearful. In this conceptual model, secure attachment is characterised by a positive model of both self and others. Individuals classified as having a secure attachment have intimacy in their close relationships and are comfortable with that intimacy. Further, they have a mental representation of themselves as worthy and loveable. Individuals with a safe attachment history become securely attached to significant others, meaning they have low anxiety and low avoidance towards others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). On the other hand, individuals with a negative model of self and a positive model of others are classified as having a preoccupied attachment. People within this category have a tendency to rely on others and expect to receive acceptance and approval from others. Individuals who are uncertain whether the attachment figure would be available in times of

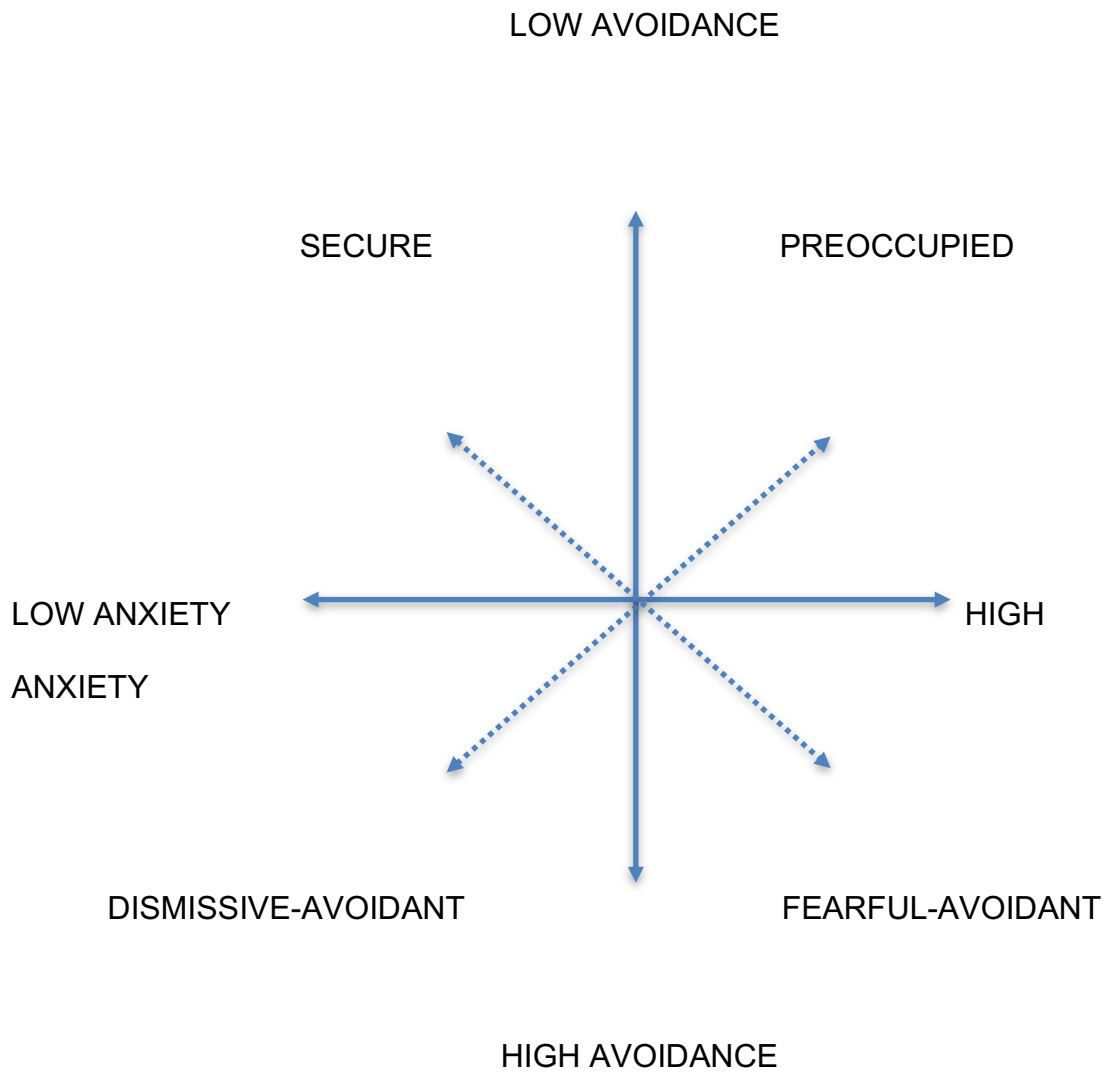


Figure 1. Two-dimensional four-category model of adult attachment. Adapted from *Attachment in Adulthood: Structure, Dynamics, and Change* (p. 89) by M. Mikulincer, and P. R. Shaver, 2007, New York: Guildford Press.

need become preoccupied with the predictability of the trustworthiness and dependability of the other person (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Those with a preoccupied attachment type experience strong desire to be close and intimate with their partners alongside much worry about being rejected and unloved. These people have a low level of avoidance and high level of anxiety.

In the Bartholomew and Horowitz model (1991), the avoidance dimension is divided into two different categories of dismissive-avoidant and fearful-avoidant. Infants who experienced their primary caregiver as unavailable during distress become adults uncomfortable with closeness, intimacy and commitment. They have difficulty trusting others, and therefore possess a dismissive type of attachment (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), containing a high level of avoidance and low level of anxiety (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). On the other hand, individuals who like to be emotionally close in relationships but feel too afraid of being hurt are of a fearful attachment type (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). This category experiences a high level of avoidance and anxiety.

2.5.1 Attachment Dimensions and Categories in Adult Attachment

Hazan and Shaver (1987) proposed three-categories of attachment styles in adult romantic love. More recently, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) focused on the two-dimensional model of adult attachment to create their four-category model. Therefore, these researchers emphasised that adult attachment could be measured as discrete categories. However, research that used taxometric techniques (Meehl, 1995; Waller & Meehl, 1998) displayed that the categorical models on attachment variability may lead to serious problems in measurement precision, conceptual analyses, and statistical power (Fraley & Waller, 1998).

This was followed by researchers (e.g., Levy & Davis, 1988; Collins & Read, 1990; Simpson, 1990), who emphasised that the categorical measure of attachment styles can be transformed into dimensions, referred to as a continuous rating of adult attachment. These dimensions were labelled as

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment avoidance and anxiety (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Avoidance referred to discomfort with dependency and closeness, and anxiety corresponded to the fear of abandonment and/or insufficient love (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). The researchers seem to have been influenced by Ainsworth and colleagues in transforming the categories into continuous dimensions. Ainsworth et al. (1978) presented a discriminant function analysis, which predicted attachment styles of infants in childhood using continuous rating scales. The coders of the Strange Situation procedure used the rating scales to classify infant behaviours, such as crying, resistance, and clinging. This analysis can be seen as the first step in developing the two-dimensional description of the attachment styles typology.

More recent research (e.g., Fraley & Waller, 1998; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) focused on dimensional models of attachment. Fraley, Waller and Brennan (2000) developed a self-report inventory to measure adult attachment in romantic relationships. They focused on creating multi-item inventories to assess individual differences on attachment dimensions. The psychometric properties of total scores are retrieved from the number of scale items and the properties of the sample under study (Hambleton, Swaminathan, & Rogers, 1991). To avoid this kind of problem, Fraley and Waller (1998) and then Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) developed an explicit model, which relates latent variables to item response behaviour. Item response theory (IRT; Hambleton & Shaminathan, 1995) offers a useful framework for relating latent variation in attachment patterns to observed scores on self-report attachment scales. Rather than fixing a category, Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) referred to the degree of continuity in attachment security, and the differential stability of various attachment patterns.

Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) considered attachment behaviours as compatible with two of the factors (the anxiety and avoidance dimensions) retrieved from the three attachment categories (secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-anxious/ambivalent) (Ainsworth et al., 1978). They argued that since the insecure-anxious/ambivalent attachment was mostly seen in the form of crying, clinging and/or angry resistance, the difference between secure and avoidant attachment reflects the anxiety dimension, the first factor. The second factor, connected to the avoidance dimension, was reflected in the difference between secure and anxious/ambivalent attachment. The avoidance dimension manifests as difficulty with emotional closeness, distance interaction, and avoiding contact. The discovery of these two dimensions supported a two-dimensional model of adult attachment.

To identify the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance attachment, Fraley and Waller (1998), and then Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) performed a principal-axis factor analysis on thirty clusters of homogeneous items, which were derived from a cluster analysis of the full 323-item pool. This factor analysis was advantageous in two ways. The first was the extent that individual items are less reliable than item clusters. Second, in a factor analysis, the number of items representing each factor domain defines factors; therefore, the resulting factors are more likely to be defined by theoretical content rather than item frequency. This leads the adult attachment dimensions in the two axes to be more reliable in assessing adult attachment.

In order to have a wider perspective on the quality and style of emotional bonds within my sample, attachment style dimensions were used. The classification model of Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) was used to present the differences between two attachment dimensions. The quantitative scale

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) was used to retrieve the attachment dimensions of the participants of the current research (see Chapter 4, for more details).

Further, the attachment styles were hypothesised as having a significant relationship with the ego identity status categories. In the present research I firstly hypothesised a significant relationship between ego identity status categories and attachment styles. To explore this hypothesis, I reviewed existing literature on psychosocial developmental theory and attachment theory. The discussion is presented in the next section.

2.6 The Relationship Between Ego Identity Formation Process and Adult Attachment

Both Bowlby (1980) and Erikson (1968) stressed the importance of trust in developing a healthier personality. This would occur in infancy (in attachment terms) and during the first stage (in psychosocial developmental theory terms) with the caregiver. Both thinkers argued that the quality of the relationship with the caregiver created trust. According to Erikson, this would continue throughout life. Erikson saw 'trust vs. mistrust' resolution as vital to healthy development, forming the basic capacity to resolve later crises. He suggested that earlier resolutions would shape later experiences, and that subsequent experiences could revise early resolutions. This seems to parallel Bowlby's (1980) concept of the 'internal working model (IWM)' which is formed through the first relationship (infant-caregiver) and continues in subsequent intimate (romantic) relationships (see Section 2.3, for details). IWMs refer to the affective and cognitive mental representation of one's self and others.

Internal psychological structures become increasingly complex and integrated with psychological maturity (Werner, 1948). More specifically, Marcia (1988; 2006) suggested that secure attachment representations, high levels of cognitive development, and identity formation might occur together in a reciprocally enhancing way. Marcia (1983, 1994; 1999) postulated that parents' accurate responsiveness or tuning into their children's needs constitutes the necessary conditions for the development of both affective attachment and cognitive skills. Both of these are seen as crucial for the formation of identity in adolescence (Marcia, 2006). Secure attachment fosters the growth of a strong sense of self, whereas advanced cognitive skills allow the explication of subsequent alternatives. Both are assumed to underlie the exploration and commitment processes of identity construction. Although there may be an initial sequence in early childhood moving from secure attachment to cognitive development to identity formation, in adulthood, these three aspects of development are expected to occur concurrently and support each other.

Exploration and commitment form the basic components of both attachment and identity formation. Marcia (1988; 1993) suggested that secure attachment facilitates achieved identity status because securely attached individuals explore their environment comfortably from the protected base provided by their families. In attachment theory, commitment is an important dimension of a satisfactory relationship, which is based on an emotional bond (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The identity formation process described by Marcia (1966; 1980) requires two kinds of commitment: the ability to make commitments after exploration (identity achievement) and also without exploration (foreclosure). Commitment without identity exploration (foreclosure) has been related to the combination of emotional attachment to parents and

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment
parental discouragement of exploration, independence, and expression of differences (Campbell et al., 1984; Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). A strong fear of abandonment and high nurturance needs on the part of young adult (insecure attachment) have also been associated with this foreclosed identity commitment position (Kroger, 1985; 1995). However, commitment after identity exploration (achieved identity) and also identity exploration itself (moratorium identity) have been linked to secure attachment patterns during young adulthood (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; Marcia, 1988; 1993).

For young adults in romantic relationships self-exploration is key. This involves the processes of identity formation and intimacy development. Thus, their willingness to engage in romantic relationships may be influenced by the attachment system (Bowlby, 1982; Pittman et al., 2011). Relatedly, central to the development of intimacy is attachment security (Allen & Land, 1999; Cassidy, 2001; Collins & Sroufe, 1999). Since attachments develop in the early relationship with caregivers and continue through later relationships, a model of self (reflecting representations of self as un/worthy of care) is formed. Simultaneously a model of others emerges (reflecting representations of others as un/reliable and un/available). A negative representation of self, associated with anxiety, is linked to concern about one's worthiness and fears of abandonment (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). A negative representation of others has been associated with avoidance, expressed as a pattern of distancing from others, difficulty trusting others, and fear of becoming too close to them (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; see Section 2.5, for details). In the context of adult intimate relationships, Feeney (2002) described these models in terms of "(dis)comfort with closeness" to capture the avoidant model and "anxiety with relationships" to encompass the anxious model.

For young adults engaging in intimate romantic-type relationships, the models of self and other are shaped in part by generalised relationship expectations, deriving from young adults' histories in other relationships. However, unique experiences in new relationships also contribute to the formation of these models within the intimate context (Collins & Read, 1994). Anxiety with relationships leads individuals to become preoccupied with the relationship as they seek self-affirmation from the closeness and approval of a romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Therefore, a positive association is expected between anxiety in relationships and exploration of the dating identity. This is hypothesised in Hypothesis 3; there is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious attachment. Since this exploration emerges out of anxiety, it may not have the same qualities that exploration has when it emerges from a secure orientation towards close relationships and the individuals' role in them. Nevertheless, the anxious orientation to relationships results in the 'anxious' individual being excessively attentive to the relationship (Collins & Allard, 2001). These people can be expected to gain a lot of identity relevant information from that attention. Alternatively, the discomfort with closeness, characterised by greater avoidance, is expected to be negatively related to exploration of the dating identity.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed the main theoretical concepts that this study draws upon: ego identity development, adult attachment, and the development of intimacy in romantic relationships during young adulthood.

On the theoretical level, at least, the ego identity status category of moratorium and anxious attachment share common ground. A young person

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment with moratorium ego identity status and a young person with attachment anxiety are active in the exploration process. The former would explore more regarding identity-related domains, and the latter would explore the attachment relationship and attachment figure more keenly. Both groups would not feel 'secure' enough to commit to an identity or a partner. This theoretical crossover is significant and relevant to ongoing discussions within existing literature. To my knowledge, existing work has not explored the important common ground between these two theories. Therefore, I aim to contribute to filling this gap in the literature.

In the following chapter, I review existing empirical research that is relevant to my hypotheses and research questions.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will review existing literature relevant to my study and summarise the key discussions and empirical findings that my hypothesis links to. To this aim I have divided discussion of the studies according to my research questions. First, I will analyse the empirical literature regarding the relationships between specific ego identity statuses and specific adult attachment styles. I will then further review the empirical literature regarding the relational issues that young adults encounter in their romantic relationships.

The relationship between ego identity status and attachment style has been the focus of various empirical studies. This body of work has proven a connection between attachment styles amongst young adults, and their identity formation processes.

The second section overviews existing works which document the links between different ego identity statuses and adult attachment types. I discuss these works in order to better show where my own research contributes, and how it makes an original contribution to the field.

3.2 The Relationship Between Specific Ego Identity Statuses and Specific Adult Attachment Styles

Empirical studies exploring the relationship between ego identity status and adult attachment style have produced mixed results. Some of the key works appear to suggest that there is no relationship between the two (Quintana and Lapsley, 1987; Scalzo, 1991). In contrast, other studies report a significant relationship between the two variables (most notably, (Lapsley, Rice, & Fitzgerald, 1990; Benson, Harris, & Rogers, 1992; Shultheiss & Blustein, 1994). Of key importance to my study is the work of Kroger (1985; 1997). She found that individuals who had experienced more identity exploration (ego statuses of achievement and moratorium) were more securely attached, and less anxious during separation, than individuals with foreclosed and diffused statuses.

The difference between these findings may be due to the research methods used to identify identity status or attachment type, either questionnaires or projective measures. However, the literature that denies any relationship between ego identity status and attachment style (Quintana and Lapsley, 1987; Scalzo, 1991) seems to contradict my hypotheses. With this in mind I sought to be as objective as possible in data collection. To this aim I used self-report inventories, resulting in scores showing the ego identity status and attachment style of participants. This method does not require human interpretation, so is considered more objective than projective measures. In particular I used the revised version of the Extended Objective Measurement of Ego Identity Status-II (EOM-EIS-II; Bennion & Adams, 1986; for Turkish version Eryüksel & Varan, 1999) to measure identity status. Additionally, the revised version of the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory (ECRI-R; Fraley,

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment Waller, & Brennan, 2000; for the Turkish version Selçuk et al., 2005) enabled me to measure adult attachment style.

The adult attachment inventory that my study is based on is fairly recent. Before it was developed there were other adult attachment scales (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), based on categorical classification (see Section 2.5, for details). Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) classification system assumes two attachment dimensions (anxiety and avoidance) which lead to types of attachment: secure, preoccupied, dismissive, and fearful. In their system, the latter two categories were forms of avoidant attachment. The preoccupied category resulted from the dimension of anxious attachment.

In this study I was interested in understanding how anxious and avoidant attachment styles may include a wide spectrum of attachment features. Consequently, the categorical classification was not the best fit for my research. Instead, I used a dimensional model (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) to capture the range of attachment-related characteristics for each of the dimensions, anxiety and avoidance.

Using a four-category system MacKinnon and Marcia (2002) found that secure attachment corresponded to ego identity status of achieved or foreclosed individuals. Those with moratorium and identity-diffused individuals appeared to fall under the fearful attachment type. Of relevance to this study is their discovery that those with foreclosed ego identity status were significantly preoccupied in their attachment and had less dismissive attachment styles than those with achieved identity status.

Focusing on exploration processes, MacKinnon and Marcia (2002) found that identity exploration was not directly linked to attachment styles. However, securely attached participants were significantly different to fearfully attached

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment individuals in terms of commitment. In other words, the committed participants (those with achieved and foreclosure identity statuses) were more secure and less fearful than uncommitted participants (those with moratorium and diffused identity statuses).

Relatedly, Zimmerman and Becker-Stroll discovered a positive correlation between dismissive attachment and identity diffusion (2002). Individuals with lower urges to explore or commit (diffusion identity status) tended to display an insecure (dismissive) attachment style. Likewise, in another study (Hoegh & Bourgeois, 2002), those with no desire to explore or commit (diffused identity) overwhelmingly met the criteria for an insecure (fearful) attachment style. Additionally, fearful attachment was found to be negatively correlated with identity achievement (Hoegh & Bourgeois, 2002).

Within these empirical findings secure attachment does not directly appear to result in identity exploration. Instead, the quality of exploration is different amongst attachment types. For example, securely attached individuals follow a more exhaustive exploration process than those with anxious attachment. Since anxiously attached people are preoccupied with attachment-related issues (such as the availability and/or responsiveness of the partner), this attachment style would hinder free exploration. Therefore, the different attachment styles determine how exploration is conducted. We thus find that a sufficiently thorough exploration process may lead to moratorium identity status.

Some people enter moratorium in order to change the dynamic with their families, or to have a reparative relationship experience. These individuals might remain in a long-term moratorium status, rather than engage in the continuous identity exploration that characterises a diffusion status. Of this group we find individuals minimising their exploration processes or getting

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment caught up in their parents' wishes for them (known as identity foreclosure). Alternatively, they may continue active exploration processes before committing and constructing a personally expressive identity (identity achievement). Those with moratorium ego identity status might consider be particularly attentive to their partners and relationships, in comparison to those with other ego identity statuses.

Recent empirical research has paid close attention to identity and intimacy during adolescence and young adulthood (e.g., Pittman et al., 2011; Kerpelman et al., 2012; McElwain, Kerpelman, & Pittman, 2015). Unsurprisingly these studies were based on contemporary scales that used dimensional classifications (e.g., ECRI-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). The ECRI-R inventory (see Section 2.5, for details) was based on two dimensions to define attachment styles: anxious and avoidant. Kerpelman et al. (2012) found a bidirectional relationship between identity exploration and attachment styles, corresponding to the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance within romantic attachment. This finding supports previous empirical studies.

Research has shown a relationship between attachment and identity formation within the context of dating (McElwain, Kerpelman, & Pittman, 2015; Pittman et al., 2012). Kerpelman et al. (2012) found that how young adults approached identity formation directly influenced their romantic attachments and was influenced by attachment styles. Notably, an avoidant attachment style led to less identity commitment. Anxious attachment was not directly associated with identity commitment (Kerpelman et al., 2012). Within these findings, moratorium and diffuse identity statuses were positive predictors of identity commitment. A foreclosed identity status was a negative predictor for the anxiety dimension. Thus, the anxiety attachment dimension negatively

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment predicted the foreclosure identity status and positively predicted the diffusion identity statuses, but there was no association with the moratorium identity status. Since a foreclosed identity status seemed to correspond with acceptance of parental expectations, this group was not in an active exploration process. Consequently, they displayed less anxiety regarding their interpersonal relationships. However, individuals with identity diffusion showed higher levels of attachment anxiety (Kerpelman et al., 2012).

Interestingly, this finding appeared to contradict previous studies, which showed a positive correlation between dismissive attachment (based on avoidant attachment) and identity diffusion (Zimmerman & Becker-Stroll, 2002), and a positive significant association between identity diffusion and fearful attachment (based on avoidant attachment) (Hoegh & Bourgeois, 2002). Kerpelman et al.'s (2012) study found that individuals with diffuse identity status had more attachment anxiety, and a diffuse identity status was a positive predictor for avoidant attachment in terms of commitment. Therefore, Kerpelman et al.'s (2012) study suggested mixed results regarding diffused identity status. In contrast, moratorium ego identity status was a negative predictor for the avoidance attachment dimension in terms of commitment. More specifically, this dimension negatively predicted a moratorium identity status and positively predicted a diffuse identity status (Kerpelman et al., 2012).

Interestingly, Pittman et al. (2012) and McElwain et al. (2015) showed that an avoidant attachment style resulted in less identity exploration. Anxious attachment was related to higher levels of identity exploration, especially within the dating context. Both studies suggested that avoidant attachment style was related to foreclosure and diffuse identity statuses, involving less or even

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment
minimum exploration processes. In contrast, anxious attachment was linked to
achieved and moratorium identity statuses, featuring active exploration.

In their meta-analytic study, Arseth et al. (2009) investigated identity statuses and attachment styles in intimate relationships. They discovered a significant positive relationship between secure attachment and achieved and foreclosure identity statuses; yet secure attachment had a negative significant association with moratorium and diffused identity status categories. Further, they found that insecure attachment styles were in opposite correlation with these ego identity status pairs (i.e., moratorium and diffused; achieved and foreclosure). In particular, an insecure attachment style was significantly negatively correlated with achieved and foreclosure identity status categories, and positively associated with moratorium and diffuse identity status categories. A secure attachment may be associated with identity commitments of the different ego statuses, either with exploration (achieved identity) or without exploration (foreclosure identity). The link between secure attachment and commitment appears to be stronger than the connection between secure attachment and exploration processes.

Attachment theory conceptualises exploration as a process of social, relational, and environmental exploration. In practice this includes a range of experiences, such as working towards personal goals, employment, interests and leisure activities (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Green & Campbell, 2000). In contrast, identity theory understands exploration as an active questioning process, through which individuals define their own values, beliefs, desires, wishes, and goals (Marcia et al., 1993; Marcia, 2006). These two theoretical approaches are interlinked in their view of exploration. However, the goals are different. In attachment theory, the goal of exploration is the process itself. In

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment contrast, identity theory implies that the goal of exploration is a resolution, namely commitment to a relationship. This distinction may explain some of the differences between empirical findings on the relationship between attachment styles and ego identity statuses. For example, foreclosed individuals tend to have personal goals and develop hobbies (showing a sufficiently secure attachment style) yet do not seem actively engaged in identity exploration. However, the reverse is true amongst individuals with moratorium ego identity status described as highly anxious and engaged in conflict with their parents or authority figures (e.g., Josselson, 1987). Such individuals may be exploring their identity in order to individuate themselves from their parents. The ability to explore and experience secure attachment of individuals with moratorium ego identity status deserves further investigation.

The empirical research discussed so far in this chapter was all conducted in Western social contexts. Findings from the Turkish counterparts were varied. Hofstede (1991) claimed that Turkish culture displayed collectivist features. More recent studies have demonstrated that Turkey includes both individualistic and collectivist trends. It has been argued that the cultural structure in Turkey is not adequately described as collectivist or individualistic (Yetim, 2003; Karakitapoglu-Aygun & Imamoglu, 2002). Significantly, Turkey has undergone rapid economic and social change, and experienced processes of liberalisation and globalisation, in the last four decades.

My study is concerned with young people in Turkey. We can note that, as a whole, their values, perceptions (of self, others and the world) have changed significantly during this period. Observed have noticed that ideas of freedom, self-respect and independence are increasingly widespread (Karakitapoglu-Aygun & Imamoglu, 2002; Karakitapoglu-Aygun, 2004). Simultaneously

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traditional values remain important, including respect for cultural traditions and social expectations, and showing obedience to elders, especially parents. The apparent conflict between these two trends has been theorised as complicating identity formation processes (Eryigit & Kerpelman, 2011). One study concluded that the majority of their sample of Turkish youth had moratorium identity status (Morsunbul and Atak; 2013). Relatedly Morsunbul et al. (2016) suggested that young adults in Turkey displayed predominantly moratorium ego status, followed by diffusion identity status. Both findings indicate that young people are actively searching (within their ego identity related domains) as they explore the conflict between their own desires and wishes and parental expectations.

Deveci-Sirin and Soyer (2018) studied attachment styles amongst young adults in Turkey and found anxious attachment to be prominent, with no significant difference between anxious and avoidant attachment patterns. Morsunbul (2005) found a significant relationship between young adult attachment styles and ego identity statuses. Morsunbul and Tumen (2008) studied the relationship between attachment styles and ego identity statuses in Turkish youth, discovering a significant positive relationship between preoccupied attachment and moratorium ego identity status. Those with foreclosure ego identity status tended to show a dismissive attachment style, and those with a diffused ego identity status displayed a fearful attachment style.

Overall, empirical findings show a significant relationship between secure attachment and achieved identity and foreclosure identity statuses. Anxious attachment had an association with identity exploration. Avoidant attachment negatively predicted identity commitment. Diffusion identity status was positively correlated with avoidant attachment.

Empirical research from the last three decades has not prioritised the differences between moratorium ego identity status and the other three ego identity statuses (achieved, foreclosed and diffused). Instead, as this chapter has shown, existing literature has zoomed in on the processes of exploration and commitment, and research findings were discussed by looking at exploration and commitment capacities. A key trend within these results was the positive significant differences between secure attachment and achieved identity, and the negative significant differences between secure attachment and diffused identity status. A secure attachment style appeared to be widely linked to foreclosed identity status, where individuals display a capacity to commit, despite lacking exploration ability. Within existing literature, the capacity to commit seems to have been prioritised over exploration processes. This is a clear gap within the empirical work and my study aims to close this gap, documenting how commitment and exploration are connected processes amongst young adults. My approach includes an awareness of different identity statuses within my sample (focusing on one in particular, moratorium) whilst examining their active exploration processes. My participants were actively searching their identity-related domains, and this emerged as connected to their processes of making commitments. Thus, the current research is a new contribution to the field, both empirically and theoretically.

Existing literature on attachment includes different ways of measuring attachment types. First, the categorical approach uses attachment types (such as secure, preoccupied, dismissive or fearful), or in a dyad (secure vs. insecure). In contrast, the second approach is a dimensional one. Recent studies tend to favour this way of measuring attachment (Kerpelman et al., 2012; Pittman et al., 2012; McElwain et al., 2015), a trend that I follow in my

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment study. In particular I focused on the dimension of anxious attachment within my sample.

Empirical studies from Western contexts did not find a significant relationship between moratorium ego identity status and the anxious dimension of attachment, however work from Turkey discovered a significant relationship between this particular ego identity status and preoccupied attachment. As discussed above, a preoccupied attachment style features high levels of anxiety and low levels of avoidance, which is relevant to our understanding of anxious attachment linking with a moratorium ego identity status. This theoretical overlap complements the empirical work. An anxious attachment style results in individuals spending considerable energy on close relationships (Bowlby, 1980; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), and individuals with moratorium ego identity status tend to explore their identity relevant domains, including interpersonal relationships (Marcia, 1966).

In order to better understand this connection, my study was designed to encompass both phenomena. In other words, my study investigated the relationship problems that young adults with this combination (concurrently having moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style) described in their romantic relationships. Further, my research participants were all engaged in active exploration processes, so findings add to existing knowledge of how exploration processes are experienced with this combination. In order to make sense of the relationship difficulties reported by my participants, I investigated existing empirical literature on the topic, discussed in the following section.

3.3 The Romantic Relationship Issues that Young Adults Experience in Their Romantic Relationships

Aggression in romantic relationships is widely reported as prevalent across the globe (e.g., Cadely, Kerpeleman, & Pittman, 2018; Adams et al., 2001; Collibee & Furman, 2016; Miga et al., 2010; Demirli-Yildiz, Cokamay, & Artar, 2017; Morsunbul, 2015). It has been shown that individuals who are anxiously attached are more willing to accept aggression in relationships, perhaps due to how dependent they often feel (Cadely, Kerpeleman, & Pittman, 2018). Likewise, Miga et al. (2010) showed that attachment anxiety significantly corresponded with a sense of victimisation against verbal and physical aggression. Relatedly, those with high scores of avoidance may view aggression within romantic relationships as a way to avoid proximity. Cadely, Kerpeleman, and Pittman (2018) suggested that both attachment dimensions are positively related to using and receiving psychological aggression. This argument echoes empirical findings in the Turkish context. A study of young females showed that anxious and avoidant attachment dimensions predicted perceived aggression in romantic relationships (Demirli-Yildiz, Cokamay, & Artar, 2017). These results suggest that young women with an avoidant attachment style may have difficulty in trusting others, and thus perceive aggression as an inevitable aspect of closeness. For the young women with anxious attachment, feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem could play an important role in accepting aggression (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). More specifically, those with anxious attachment tend to have positive expectations from romantic partners, leading aggressive behaviour to be seen as a natural part of their relationship (Kilincer, 2012). Cultural expectations of gendered behaviour further influence these findings. In Turkey, for example,

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment men are widely seen as holding the power and strength in a relationship, making women more likely to accept violent behaviour (Vefikulucay et al., 2007). It has been shown that different conceptualisations of gendered roles play a key part in how violence is understood within romantic relationships (Aslan et al., 2008).

In order to further investigate the association between ego identity and aggression, Morsunbul (2015) conducted a study in Turkey. He found that there was a significant relationship between identity exploration and aggression, and no significant relationship between commitment making and aggression. These results suggest that young adults who have moratorium ego identity status would be more aggressive than those with foreclosure or achieved identity statuses. A diffuse identity status with avoidant attachment was associated with behavioural problems predictive of psychological aggression (Adams et al., 2001).

Gibbons and Shurts (2010) emphasised that young adults in Western contexts often experience vocational and relational problems during university. Given the developmental and social significance placed on dating during these years, it is not surprising that relationship difficulties are among the primary presenting issues for these young adults (Collins, 2003). Gibbons and Shurts (2010) found that communication and jealousy were reported as the main relationship challenges for this group, followed by conflicting expectations of the amount of daily time spend engaging. In both studies the sample consisted of young adults in a committed relationship (of at least six months) where communication problems were reported. Since the priorities of the participants varied due to their developmental stage, some actively prioritised their

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment vocations over their romantic relationships (Gibbons & Shurts, 2010). A lack of free time was consequently found to be the third problem this study found.

The question of time spent on romantic relationships connects to boundaries. Rosenberger (2011) explained how, "In the case of relationships, boundaries divide the territory between the individual and those with whom the individual interacts" (p. 14). How individuals manage boundaries is central to romantic relationships. He goes on to define healthy boundaries as what each individual in the relationship needs from the other, as well as what each individual does not want or need from the other (Rosenberger, 2011). This is relevant to my study as attachment style influences how an individual manages their partners' needs. High levels of dependency and anxiety about the relationship may complicate the management of boundaries, causing further problems. In contrast, if a partner is highly avoidant, communication problems may arise. As Bowlby (1988) suggested, maintaining proximity to a partner keeps the attachment alive and attachment affect regulated. The experience of closeness leads to emotional security, achieved by verbal, behavioural and emotionally mediated communication (Pistole, 2010). Therefore, attachment styles may directly affect relationship issues in different ways.

Pistole (2010) found that communication was the main problem reported by young adults in romantic relationships. This sample was composed of individuals in committed relationships (suggesting that commitment was possible for these young adults) however they were also in an exploration process of their identity related domains, such as career, education and interpersonal relationships. Consequently, expectations about how much time, emotional and mental energy a relationship requires may differ between individuals, causing communication difficulties.

Technology may further complicate communication within relationships. According to the United States Census Bureau (2014), household internet usage has risen from 18% in 1997 to 74.8% in 2012. This rise is rapid and has directly affected how adolescents and young adults access and use the internet and social media. Similarly, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (2017), adolescents and young adults using the internet every day, or almost every day, has risen to 87.9% in Turkey. 83.7% of the total time young adults spent online consists of social media activity, including creating user profiles, posting messages or other contributions and responding to other online content.

Punamaki et al. (2009) reported that intensive use of information and communication technology for entertainment was associated with poor relations with adolescents' peers and their parents. In their study, Cyr, Berman, and Smith (2015) found that preference for using technology for interpersonal communication was associated with greater relationship anxiety. Individuals who reported a high level of attachment anxiety are those who spent the most time using communication technology. This finding suggests that communication technology is not interfering in development of relationships during adolescence, but it does seem to be related to a decrease in the quality of romantic and peer relationships. Moreover, difficulties in managing romantic and peer relationships may encourage communication technology usage as a means of distancing oneself from direct contact with others. Likewise, Stavropoulos et al. (2018) found that during the adolescent years, excessive internet use was associated with significantly higher avoidant romantic attachment. On the other hand, as individuals get older and enter the young adulthood period, the relationship between the Internet and attachment style differs. They found that during young adulthood excessive Internet use was

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment associated with significantly lower avoidant romantic attachment (Stavropoulos et al., 2018). When individuals get older, by excessively using the internet, they seem more likely to easily engage in sexual relationships, which seems to be one of the important reasons for declining their avoidant romantic attachment.

Punamaki et al. (2009) reported that intensive use of technology for entertainment worsened adolescent relationships with their peers and parents. In their study, Cyr, Berman, and Smith (2015) found that preferring technology for interpersonal communication was associated with greater relationship anxiety. Individuals with a high level of attachment anxiety spent the most time using communication technology. This finding suggests that technology is not interfering in the development of friendships and romantic relationships during adolescence but does lower the quality of both. Moreover, technology may provide a sense of distance for individuals who experience difficulties in managing relationships, making direct contact less necessary. Similarly, Stavropoulos et al. (2018) found that during adolescence, excessive internet use was associated with significantly higher avoidant romantic attachment. Interestingly, with age, the relationship between internet usage and attachment style changes. Particularly, during young adulthood excessive internet usage was found to be associated with significantly lower avoidant romantic attachment (Stavropoulos et al., 2018).

In the Turkish context, there is a significant link between the use of technology and an avoidant attachment style. Individuals with avoidant attachment are most likely to use technology to end relationships (Delevi, Bugay-Sokmez, & Avci, 2018). This finding seems to be more concerned with avoidant attachment than anxiety. Past studies have suggested that avoidant attachment is closely connected to withdrawing from partners in anxiety-

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment provoking situations (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992), seeking less support (Collins & Feeney, 2000), and showing less interest and attention to the romantic partner (Guerrero, 1996). Morril (2010) found that identity development was significantly related to the use of text messaging. Participants scoring high on identity exploration, and lacking in identity achievement (i.e., Moratorium ego identity status) most often used texting as a means to escape and meet others. Those who scored low in identity development (i.e., Diffusion and Foreclosure identity statuses) tended to use texting as a means to enhance appearance and to meet others.

Existing literature reveals that infidelity is another common problem for young adults (Allen & Baucam, 2006; McAnulty & Brineman, 2007; Norona, Olmstead, & Welsh, 2018), connected to distress and conflict (Allen & Baucam, 2006). This may cause a cycle of further distress, as young adults felt stressed by relationship conflict, engaged in infidelity and then experience further conflict. McAnulty and Brineman (2007) defined infidelity as "...almost any form of emotional or sexual intimacy with a person other than one's primary dating partner" (McAnulty & Brineman, 2007, p. 94). Extra-dyadic involvements generally include flirtation, passionate kissing, and/or sexual intercourse. They suggested that the key cause of infidelity was emotional dissatisfaction in a current relationship. More recently, for the first time in the literature, Norona, Olmstead and Welsh (2018) examined infidelity through a developmental lens, considering the psychosocial tasks encountered by young adults. They examined the explanations for infidelity given by their participants. Alcohol, sexual; attraction, excitement and novelty for the experience were the key findings. They further considered infidelity in relation to attachment styles. Young adults with avoidant attachment and attachment anxiety most widely

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment engaged in infidelity, in particular reporting that their interdependence and intimacy needs were unmet (Norona, Olmstead, & Welsh, 2018).

Psychosocial developmental theory argues that young adults strive to form their identities and develop intimacy within romantic relationships (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980). They try to explore identity-relevant domains, such as interpersonal relationships, and also commit to their choices. The exploration process requires a certain degree of independence to explore alternatives. In the process of committing, individuals may need more interdependence. Both processes make interpersonal relationships an important developmental area for young adults. Since emerging adults have both independence and interdependence needs (Bowlby, 1980; Erikson, 1968), a lack of intimacy within one relationship may cause them to try and fulfil that need in another. Those who are anxiously attached are preoccupied with maintaining closeness, and therefore less likely to engage in infidelity. If they do, however, they might re-establish intimacy in their relationship with such intensity that they then feel their independence is compromised. On the other hand, those with avoidant attachment have difficulty in committing to and feeling dependent on their partners, leading them to consider alternatives. This difficulty in committing might be perceived by individuals with avoidant attachment as a lower level of intimacy within the relationship.

Toplu-Demirtas and Fincham (2018) discovered that infidelity was a key issue amongst young adults in Turkey, defining infidelity as experiencing sexual and/or emotional attraction towards an extra-dyadic person. (This definition is similar to those found in Western contexts, such as that given by McNulty and Brineman (2007), cited above).

Amongst their sample of young men and women, Toplu-Demirtas and Fincham (2018) discovered very different gendered attitudes towards infidelity within romantic relationships. In particular, young men seemed more likely to commit infidelity than young women. We should note, however, that women may be less likely to report experiencing sexual attraction than their male counterparts. Further, the male participants may have exaggerated their sexual activity during the study. Both considerations caution against a simplistic reading of their research findings.

In the Turkish context, young women engaging in premarital sex is widely frowned upon (Sakalli-Ugurlu & Glick, 2003). The societal attitude towards is constant across class and education levels (Cok & Gray, 2007). Therefore, young women may be more cautious about sexual activity and infidelity, fearing societal disapproval. This is significant for my sample and study, as the process of ego identity formation depends upon approval from other people, those in their immediate environment and wider social context.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter overviewed the two bodies of empirical research central to my hypothesis and discussed the key findings. The first body of work was concerned with the relationship between ego identity statuses and different attachment styles. The second focused on the relational issues that young adults experience in their romantic relationships. Existing literature includes research from both Western and Turkish contexts. A significant relationship between ego identity statuses and attachment styles emerged in both contexts, and ego identity statuses were shown to differ according to the adult attachment styles that young adults developed. In contrast to the Western studies, the

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majority of the Turkish young people were in the moratorium ego identity status, and the Turkish adults were more likely to have anxious attachment. In my study I focused on young Turkish adults who were university-educated and showed both a moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style. The next chapter documents how I went about this, presenting and discussing my methodology and analysis.

Chapter 4. Methodology, Analysis and Reflexivity

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research questions (RQs) and primary hypotheses that guide this study. It discusses the research strategy and research design, overviews the ethical considerations and explains the methodology. It explains how this research design was composed of two different studies (quantitative and qualitative) and introduces the sample, assessment tools, and data analysis. In the final section I think more deeply about the importance of reflexivity during the research experience, giving two examples to illustrate this.

4.2. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This research explores the relationship between ego identity statuses and attachment styles amongst my sample, young Turkish adults in romantic relationships. Three major variables related to the sample: (i) their own ego identity status, (ii) attachment styles, and (iii) type of relationship problems they describe with their romantic partners. The four RQs and three related hypotheses bring together these three variables and focus on their interrelation:

RQ 1: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment?

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment.

RQ 2: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment?

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment.

RQ 3: Which of the ego identity statuses and adult attachment styles are significantly associated with each other?

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style.

RQ 4: What kinds of relational issues do young adults who concurrently have moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment describe as facing in their romantic relationship?

To explore these questions, I used a mixed-methods research design, consisting of two related studies. In the first, quantitative one (Study 1), I asked the first three RQs. This enabled me to better understand the possible connections between ego identity statuses and attachment styles within my sample. This enabled my focus in Study 2 (the qualitative study) to be more specific, as I had narrowed down participants displaying the combination of variables that I was more interested in. I hypothesised that there would be a significant association between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style. Individuals with moratorium ego identity status are in an active role in terms of exploring alternatives without making any commitments and are actively searching for options. On the other hand, individuals being anxiously attached actively engage in emotional and mental efforts in their relationship in a hyper vigilant manner, being preoccupied about their

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment attachment related issues (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Therefore, moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style share a common ground, referring to the fact that individuals are emotionally and mentally active in their attachment relationship. This is the reason I focused on individuals with a concurrent moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style for Study 2.

I conducted the qualitative study four months after the quantitative one and was now in a position to focus more specifically on the two variables that inform RQ 4, individuals with both moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style. This study offered a closer look at the difficulties and problems reported by such individuals in their romantic relationships. Although these young people were struggling with an inner conflict in terms of ego identity formation process, they were trying to maintain their romantic relationship. In Study 2, I tried to find answers to the fourth RQ, which referred to the relational issues that young adults who concurrently had moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style describe as facing in their romantic relationships. I interviewed a smaller group of participants (four women, two men) and tried to better understand their relational issues.

4.3 Research Strategy and Design

This research project utilised a mixed-methods design. As defined by Creswell et al. (2003), a mixed-methods approach facilitates analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Whilst the types of data are collected in different ways (Study 1 and 2), either concurrently or sequentially, they complement each other. The data is prioritised, and analysis includes the integration of both data sets at one or more stages during the research process.

Mixed-method designs vary; for instance, Hanson et al. (2005) outlined the following six types of mixed-methods designs for the three sub-methods for each data collection method that Creswell et al. (2003) had described.

Moreover, Hanson et al. (2005) argued that when viewing the data from an explicit theoretical perspective, priority should be given to both qualitative and quantitative data, the data collection sequence, and ways of integrating the data or analyses.

For the purposes of the current research, a sequential explanatory design seemed most appropriate. Hanson et al. (2005) described this design as collecting and analysing quantitative data before the qualitative material. The qualitative data is seen as enhancing the quantitative and analysis of both data sets is usually connected. The integration of these data sets is applied at the interpretation stage.

This is the approach that I used in this research, as I was keen to screen the participants in terms of variables and narrow down the research focus for the qualitative study. In other words, Study 1 enabled me to gather a broad picture of my sample, which led to the more specific focus of Study 2. In Study 1, I saw that the combination of moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment was prevalent in the larger sample. This combination was as I had expected. The quantitative data from Study 1 enabled me to narrow down the sample for Study 2. Study 2 took a more specific approach to the smaller sample, focusing on young people with moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment. As young adults with this combination were good at exploring but not committing, learning more about the relational issues of these people would provide unique information. The qualitative data augmented the quantitative data by providing results that I could discuss in the literature.

In this research I drew upon the various key theories, including developmental psychosocial theory of Erikson (1968; 1975; 1982), ego identity formation theory (Marcia, 1966; 1983) and adult attachment in romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). This study is cross-sectional, using scales and focused interviews. The quantitative study explored the association between both the ego identity status categories and attachment styles and enabled me to focus the qualitative study on a sample displaying the combination I was most interested, young people with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety. Using the qualitative approach to their reported experiences of relationship difficulties produced rich data, with the kind of detail only possible from in-depth interviews.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

All research participants were given information about the study before data collection began (this included details about their participation and how confidentiality would be managed, see Appendix B). They were also informed that participation was voluntary, that they could take a break during data collection or withdraw at any point. Further, ethical approval was obtained from the Research and Ethics Committee of Istanbul Medipol University and the Research and Ethics Committee of the University of Exeter (Appendix A). Although participation was voluntary, the young people of my sample did receive extra grade credits for participating, and their names were shared with the class teacher to facilitate this. The participants were informed that nobody apart from myself had access to the full data collected through the quantitative and qualitative studies. Limited access to the research material was necessarily

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment available to two other people, the transcriber and translator, who did not have access to the personal data collected. The measurement documents were stored on my personal laptop, only accessible to me.

I was initially concerned that young people may be reluctant to participate due to the personal nature of the research, and potential worries around confidentiality. However, this concern was unfounded. The research participants were keen, collaborative and eager to respond in detail to the questions posed during the study.

4.5 Procedure

As shown in Table 1, the following steps regarding the procedure were followed in this research.

Table 1. The procedure steps

Ethical approvals from the University of Exeter and Istanbul Medipol University Research and Ethics Committees were obtained and the ethical rules were applied.

Booklets containing a brief explanation of the research project, aims of the study, consent form for both quantitative (Study 1) and qualitative (Study 2) methods, and the quantitative scales were prepared.

For Study 1, convenience sampling was applied; therefore, I collaborated with academics of Istanbul Medipol University in advance and organised the credit reward system for the participants who volunteered to engage in the study.

Table 1. The procedure steps (cont.)

With permission from the academics, the students were approached in one of their departmental lectures.

I set a date and time for distributing the quantitative scales at an appropriate time within class hours.

Initial verbal information was given to the participants concerning the study.

The participants were informed that they might be asked to participate in Study 2 of the research related to an interview concerning romantic relationships.

The participants were informed that engaging in this additional interview would give them additional extra credits for their classes.

Each of the participants who agreed to participate in Study 1 and completed the informed consent form was given a booklet, containing the ethical permissions from the University of Exeter and Istanbul Medipol University, written information about the study and the scales.

The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire containing the scales during a lesson and return them to the researcher during the 30-minute break after the lesson.

For those participating in Study 1, there was a reward of extra credits for their classes.

Table 1. The procedure steps (cont.)

A code was allocated to each participant to keep their confidentiality and to use in presenting the findings from the quantitative scales.

For Study 2 of the current research, purposive sampling was applied.

For Study 2, the participants were telephoned and asked to participate in an approximate 45-minute face-to-face interview.

For each participant, a code was allocated and the data were confidential.

The interviews conducted by me were digitally audio recorded.

The digitally recorded data was kept in a private file on my personal laptop, and the file was secured with a password to prevent access by anyone other than me.

After the interviews were completed, a person recruited for the study transcribed all the information.

After the transcription was finished, a certified translator being bilingual was recruited to translate the transcriptions into English.

The focused interviews were analysed by content analysis.

The results of both Study 1 and Study 2 were written up.

During the data analysis, to acquire more valid and reliable results, a reflexive analysis was applied (see Section 4.8, for details).

Table 1. The procedure steps (cont.)

The results of the two studies were discussed with my reflexive analysis, as the researcher.

4.6 Study 1: Ego Identity Statuses and Attachment Styles Study

4.6.1 Sample

Convenience sampling was achieved by contacting academics employed in the School of Health Sciences, School of Pharmacy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Engineering and Natural Sciences of Istanbul Medipol University (where I work). This resulted in 187 young people willing to participate in the study. In order to assess the quantitative scales, I used two inclusion criteria: the first was to be in an intimate relationship at the time. The second was to have been in an intimate relationship that lasted six months or more. By applying these two criteria, the total number of eligible participants reduced to 60. The sample for the first study was thus composed of 60 young adults who stated that their current romantic relationship was at least six months old. They were all enrolled at Istanbul Medipol University (in different departments) and between 18 and 26 years of age.

4.6.2 Assessment tools

4.6.2.1 Demographic Information Form. Demographic Information Form. In order to collect personal data about the participants, I asked them to complete the demographic information form. This form used code for anonymity

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment and asked questions about age, gender, telephone number, email address, involvement in a current romantic relationship and its duration (see Appendix C).

4.6.2.2 The Extended Objective Measurement of Ego Identity Status-II (EOM-EIS-II). EOM-EIS, a self-report inventory, was developed to measure ego identity statuses during young adulthood by Grotevant and Adams (1984). Bennion and Adams (1986) revised the scale and renamed it EOM-EIS-II (see Appendix D), and this is the version used in my study. The scale aims to discern the ego identity status of young people, following Marcia (1966) (achieved, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion). In each of the 64 items, participants are asked about their identity exploration and commitment processes. The items employ a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 “strongly agree” to 6 “strongly disagree”.

In this study I used the Turkish standardised version of the scale (EOM-EIS-II). The standardisation was undertaken by Eryuksel and Varan (1999, see Appendix E). The internal consistency coefficients of Turkish version of the EOM-EIS-II were .86 for achieved identity status, .86 for moratorium identity status, .94 for foreclosure identity status, and .88 for diffused identity status. The result of the factor analysis of the subscales of EOM-EIS-II revealed that the scale was composed of four factors explaining 81% of the variance (Eryuksel & Varan, 1999). Thus, EOM-EIS-II was found to have good internal consistency and reliability to categorise the participants' ego identity statuses. The Turkish version of the scale (Eryuksel & Varan, 1999) reveals five categories, which are achieved, moratorium, foreclosure, diffusion, and transition.

4.6.2.3 The Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory-

Revised (ECRI-R). In this study the Turkish version of ECRI-R (Selcuk et al., 2005) was administered to the sample. ECRI-R is a self-report inventory, developed to measure adult attachment styles in intimate relationships (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). ECRI-R is a revised form of ECRI (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) based on the item-response theory (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000, see Appendix F). It consists of 36 questions, 18 explore attachment related avoidance, and the remaining 18 concern attachment related anxiety. ECRI-R uses a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), to give a dimensional perspective of where an individual stands along anxiety or avoidance axes. It thus differs from the four-category positioning of attachment types (secure, preoccupied, dismissive and fearful) used by other self-report attachment questionnaires (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991 referring to adult attachment). The test-retest reliability scores of the anxiety and avoidance subscales of the revised inventory are .94 and .95, respectively (Sibley, Fischer, & Liu, 2005).

ECRI-R was standardised for the Turkish context by Selcuk et al. (2005), with the reliability analysis conducted with 256 university students. Cronbach's alpha was found to be .90 for the avoidance and .86 for the anxiety subscales. The test-retest reliability of anxiety and avoidance subscales were .82 and .81, respectively. Thus, ECRI-R was found to have good internal consistency and reliability for use in the present study (see Appendix G).

4.6.3 Quantitative Analysis

To analyse the quantitative data, descriptive analyses and correlational analyses of the Kruskal-Wallis test were computed via the Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 24) (see Chapter 5, for details). As I used a sequential explanatory design for this mixed-methods study, Study 2 focuses on the problems in the intimate relationships that young adults describe in the interviews.

I assessed the young adults' ego identity status categories and attachment styles in Study 1, which revealed heterogeneous information regarding their distribution of ego identity statuses and attachment styles.

In Study 2 I explored the problems that the sample reported experiencing in their intimate relationships.

From Study 1 I selected participants with the ego identity status and attachment style combination that my hypothesis is concerned with (moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment). I thus adopted a deductive approach which enabled me to focus on individuals with this particular combination in Study 2.

Individuals with moratorium ego identity status are still exploring their identities and are usually vague in commitments. In Erikson's (1982) terms, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are in an identity crisis. Individuals who have passed through the fifth stage (identity versus role confusion) of Erikson's (1982) psychosocial development model, try to maintain the next stage's dialectic (intimacy versus isolation) within their intimate relationships. Hence, in their intimate relationships there are problems, disagreements, and quarrels, with inevitable relational 'crises'. Consequently, I

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment chose not to include individuals uncomfortable with intimacy and closeness, (i.e. avoidant attachment). Rather, I focused on those who are preoccupied with attachment related issues, such as the availability and/or responsiveness of romantic partners. This group tends to spend a lot of mental and emotional time thinking about their partners, and about closeness and intimacy. In other words, these individuals show attachment anxiety.

Study 2 aimed to achieve a deeper understanding of the kinds of relational problems experienced by these young adults, who are exploring without making strong commitments. They are also eager to maintain an intimate relationship despite their anxiety. As reported by Erikson (1982), these descriptions of the problems occurring in the intimate relationships of the young adults provide useful information regarding their resolution process of the psychosocial developmental stage that they are going through: intimacy versus isolation.

4.7 Study 2: Problems Encountered in Intimate Relationships

4.7.1 Sample

Young adults with moratorium ego identity status do not make concrete commitments to their interpersonal relationships and are notably anxious about disagreements. This group was the focus of the study.

The second call for participants led to focused interviews which produced detailed information regarding the problems encountered in their romantic relationships. Individuals with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety were included using purposive sampling, defined by Bryman (2012) as

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a strategic way of sampling participants who best match the research questions.
The outcome of the sample was in-depth interviews with six young adults.

4.7.2 Assessment tool

4.7.2.1 Focused Interview. Four months after Study 1 I conducted the (qualitative) Study 2, consisting of six focused interviews. This stage of the research was designed to create an in-depth picture of how the respondents experience their romantic relationships. To this aim, I asked questions about various aspects of their relationships, and how they felt about them. Questions included *“How would you describe your recent romantic relationship?”* and *“What kind of traits of your partner attracted you and eventually made you decide to date with him/her?”* Further questions examined what they saw as the positive, and more challenging, sides to their relationships.

The questions were ordered in such a way as to focus participants on their partner at the very beginning of the interview. As they all displayed both moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment, I assumed that their active exploration ability would enable the participants to ‘explore’ their relationships through the interviews. I further anticipated that they may be preoccupied with their relationship experiences, having an anxious attachment style. Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, (2000) noted that young adults with attachment anxiety were hyper-vigilant to perceived rejection and/or abandonment. I thus expected the participants (of Study 2) to have already spent considerable energy thinking about such themes. I also anticipated that their relationship experiences would likely include some difficulties around the availability and/or responsiveness of their partners, being further issues that preoccupy individuals with anxious attachment. The interview questions were

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment thus structured around these two themes: the kinds of problems they experienced, and the kind of difficulties discussed or seen as causing conflict between partners.

As Turkish was the first language of all the respondents and myself, it was the natural choice of language to interview in. The interview material was audio recorded, transcribed and then translated by a certified bilingual translator. This translator also translated the questionnaire and interview questions into English (see Appendix H). The Post-Graduate Researcher Funds (University of Exeter) provided funding for both the transcriber and translator.

4.7.3 Qualitative Analysis

To analyse the qualitative research material (the interview transcripts) I used Nvivo 11, a qualitative data analysis computer software package. For the qualitative data I relied upon content analysis (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017; Bryman, 2012). To ensure clarity in cultural and linguistic aspects, the codes and categories I developed in the content analysis were checked with my British supervisor from the University of Exeter. Then, a Turkish colleague (a senior clinical psychologist) co-rated the two transcripts.

4.7.3.1 Inter-coder Reliability. Firstly, I coded the categories, then my supervisor and I checked my coding. She helped me develop the categories to ensure the clarity of the categories linguistically and also culturally, so that they would make sense in both Turkish and English. I then sent two interview transcripts (approximately 33% of the qualitative sample) to my Turkish colleague for co-rating, along with a list of unordered categories of problems that the young people experienced in their romantic relationships. I had created

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the list from the research experience and my broader observations in clinical practice. I asked my colleague to code the interviews using the categories and we agreed upon almost all the categories. Cohen's Kappa value for the two coders (my colleague and I) was 0.96. I had coded four categories for the RQ for the two participants in total. She had coded four categories for the RQ for the two participants in total. Within the eight codes she and I coded, we agreed upon seven categories, which referred to 87.5% consistency.

4.7.4 Content Analysis

In this study I took a frequency-based approach to content analysis. Specifically, I described what the respondents actually said using their exact words. I thus explored the visible and explicit data in the text. In addition to this I used deductive reasoning, asking questions around my research question (RQ; RQ 4).

For the content analysis I combined the guidelines from Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) and Bryman (2012), consisting of five stages. First, I read and re-read the interview transcripts in order to reach a general understanding of the content. Second, I divided the text into smaller parts (termed meaning units), and then further condensed these meaning units. The condensation results in a briefer version of the small text, containing the same essential meaning of the whole unit. The third step allocates a coding schedule (see Table 2) to each participant. The coding schedule allows the researcher to focus on the meaning units and condensed meaning units to develop categories. Therefore, coding schedules enable a clear development of appropriate categories from the meaning units. Fourth, I developed categories relevant to the research question. Categories refer to the visible content and

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment need limited interpretation, and their names are usually short and factual. In the coding schedule, I wrote down how I reached the problem categories, by following meaning units and condensed meaning units.

| Table 2. Coding Schedule for RQ 4 | |
|--|--|
| ID Number- Problems | |
| Meaning unit | |
| Condensed meaning unit | |
| Category | |

The final step was to prepare a coding manual (see Table 3), which involves all the categories related to RQs and the other research variables. In the current study, the other variables included ego identity status category, attachment style, age, gender and relationship duration. The coding manual usefully provided an overview of the variables of the study, enabling a more accurate analysis and interpretation of the data (see Chapter 6, for details).

| Table 3. Coding manual for RQ 4 | | | | | | |
|--|--------|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Case number | Gender | Age | Duration of relationship | Identity status category | Attachment style | Problems in romantic relationship |
| | | | | | | |

The second study addressed the problems that the young adults with moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment encounter romantically, seeking to identify the types of problems experienced. Content analysis was the best approach to making sense of this data because it resulted in a detailed portrait of their relationships. Berelson (1952) emphasised that apparent

content is the explicit meanings of the item, and content analysis identifies what the meaning is 'clearly' about. Epistemologically I adopted a realist approach to the content analysis, thus the relationship between the stated meanings and experiences may be multi-directional (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Braun and Clarke (2006) argued by taking a realist approach, the researcher theorises meaning, experience and motivation in a straightforward way, assuming a unidirectional relationship between meaning, experience, and language. I applied a frequency-based content analysis in order to observe the variability of the problems reported. As the frequency-based approach to the visible content is presented as a percentage or raw numbers of the categories (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 2004), this method enabled me to gain an understanding of 'how many' categories there were by summarising the details (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2017).

As a method, content analysis is systematic and relatively objective (Bryman, 2012). In his view, objectivity refers to the fact that rules are clearly stated in advance for how to categorise the raw material. The transparency within the categorising process should minimise any personal bias. Content analysis is systematic in how consistently it applies the rules. Rather than interpreting the research material prematurely, I prioritised the participants' own statements, which minimised the role of interpretation.

Conducting the interviews and analysing the material were the most important parts of my research. Therefore, I endeavoured to be as transparent about my own emotional responses (conscious and unconscious) and reflexive during the process, as possible, and, my reflexivity as a researcher was crucial to the research process. The importance of this is presented in the next section.

4.8 Reflexivity and the Research Process

The importance of reflexivity within qualitative research is increasingly recognised (Haynes, 2012). It is described as reflecting upon one's research experience and research materials, considering how one's own emotional experience and role affected and impacted the process (Alvesson, 2008). Reflexivity consists of the awareness of the researcher and the research itself as the object of study, continuously influencing each other as the process unfolds. Haynes (2012) summarised researcher reflexivity as "...thinking about how our thinking came to be, how a pre-existing understanding is constantly revised in the light of new understandings and how this in turn affects our research" (p. 73).

Holmes (2013) argued that in the context of qualitative research, the concepts of reflexivity and countertransference are similar and reciprocally informative. I found my own countertransference a useful source of information during the research process and drew on the ideas of Holmes (2013) to better understand this. I focused on my reflections starting from the initial thesis proposal stage until the completion of writing up the thesis. Further, I intentionally used my responses to interviews in data analysis to help me understand the interviews and maximise transparency.

In what follows I offer two examples of how the research process was enhanced by my own reflexivity.

The PhD programme included taught elements, and during the first two years of the programme I travelled (from Istanbul to Exeter) to attend a block of several teaching weeks. I had long been curious about attachment theory and

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when I began my PhD studies, I was keen to somehow develop this interest through my research. That said, when I began my studies at Exeter I was unsure of exactly what direction my research interests would follow, knowing only that I would have to choose my thesis topic at the beginning of the second year. These issues were on my mind as I fell asleep the first night I stayed in Exeter. That night I had a dream that would forecast the whole direction of my research trajectory and eventual thesis topic.

I dreamt that I was now in the beginning of the second year. In that dream, I only remembered a large paperclip, holding together multiple sheets of paper, seemingly pages of a specific article (most probably, I thought in the dream, an attachment article). In Turkish, my native language, the word for paperclip is 'ataç' which has a similar pronunciation to 'attach'. Attachment is the topic that I had been studying for my assignments during the first and the second years, which I eventually built upon in my doctoral thesis.

Reflecting on this dream the next morning, the location and time struck me as significant. Remember, I was at the beginning of the second year of the doctoral programme, equivalent to being a one-year-old baby doctoral student. According to attachment theory, between six months and three years the baby starts to have a 'set-goal' attachment, through which s/he compares and contrasts the setting, which is maintained by the feedback control system (Bowlby, 1988). Notably, at the beginning of my second year, I was trying to locate myself as a researcher in the research arena by selecting the topic and setting my goal (i.e. research topic), which I would explore more.

Attachment theory argues that an initial close relationship with the mother during the first year provides the infant with a secure base to explore the environment from (Bowlby, 1988). When anxious, or under threat, the infant will

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then feel confident enough to seek proximity to their mother (Holmes, 1993). Beginning my second year as a one-year-old doctoral student at Exeter, my dream self seemed to have experienced the same pattern. After locating myself as a researcher in a specific topic and trying to explore it, I had a 'secure base'. This consisted of my peers in the Learning Set group, supervision meetings with my supervisor and colleagues in Exeter. My supervisors and learning set group had all provided valuable comments on my thesis, contributing to the intellectual and emotional environment of my studies. Although I was attending the learning sets and supervision meetings via Skype, not in person, a part of me had already grown attached to Exeter. Therefore, the physical place was less important than the emotional attachment that I felt. This kind of 'attachment' contained a 'professional' bond although I was over a thousand miles away, and it enabled me to explore more.

From this 'base' I was able to think about the doctoral journey by exploring both unconscious and conscious processes. My dream helped me to gain a deeper understanding of my implicit mental states regarding 'attachment'. To complement this, I kept a diary from the beginning of the doctoral proposal stage, which proved invaluable for tracking my emotional changes and explicit mental states of mind. During data collection and data analysis processes, I tried to reflect upon my own feelings, thoughts and emotions and link them with the narratives of the data. This helped me see how and where my counter-transferential responses emerged during the research process.

The second example of how reflexivity was important in the research process shows that it is a continuous process that unfolds alongside the actual research experience. During the research process I attended a couple and

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment family therapy training held by the Satir Institute of the Pacific in Canada. For the supervision sessions we needed to video-record the sessions. These recordings were helpful in seeing ourselves as clinicians from different perspectives. Again, this enabled me to reflect on what I had thought and to revisit my feelings during the session, and this process developed and enhanced my reflection capacities.

The experience in Canada made me think more deeply about the audio-recordings from Study 2 of my research. I again listened to what I had asked my respondents, and also considered how I asked the questions. In this process, I realised that I was a little intrusive when conducting the interviews, which prompted me to reflect more carefully on what I had been feeling at the time. Being intrusive is unusual and uncharacteristic for me, so it stood out from the interviews. I realised, in retrospect, that a part of me had been very anxious. I was very emotionally invested in the PhD, and keen to gather enough material for my thesis. A part of me was also nervous about whether the interviews would provide the data I sought. (Although I had conducted a pilot study and was able to see what the answers to my questions would likely be, knowing this on the conscious level did not seem to be helpful in decreasing my anxiety). Asking the interview questions, one part of me was wondering whether I would obtain the relevant responses for the analysis, and the other part was trying to listen to the responses. Since the interviews were semi-structured, I was also able to ask some other questions, with more details, related to what participants had said. This was helpful (in gaining more information regarding the interview questions) yet it might have distanced me from the interview questions themselves. Fortunately, I had the structured questions to hand, which allowed

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me to decrease my anxiety and stay focused on the interviewees' responses during the interviews.

The anxiety that I experienced during the interviews and the uncharacteristically intrusive attitude that I had adopted was interesting. I had chosen interviewees who had attachment anxiety and their anxiety might have been projected into me during this process. Alternatively, I might have touched upon my own anxiety while trying to contain the interviewees' unease. At the very least, we can note that there was a lot of anxiety around during the interview process. Considering these various plausible explanations for my anxiety during the interview process, the anxiety itself is more understandable.

Just as significantly, my intrusive stance resonates with the relational issues that many of the young adults described facing with partners and family members. It is possible that in a parallel process they were experiencing intrusion in their intimate relationships. I, as the researcher, seemed to be unconsciously intruding upon them during the interviews. As a moratorium ego identity status refers to detaching from infantile ties from parents (authority figures) and trying to establish individual capabilities, respondents might have perceived the researcher as another authority figure. These young adults may have felt they had to defend their ideas, under unconscious attack by an authority figure who threatens to crush their growth towards individuality. In this way we could understand it as a form of projective identification.

These points resonate with Taylor's (2010, p. 405) description of a "negative capability and psychoanalysis". He argued that as researchers we may unconsciously try to obtain the results we expect and ask research questions subtly intended to elicit particular responses (Taylor, 2010). Results that contradict our implicit assumptions may confuse us and evoke a resistance.

This negative capability parallels clinical work with patients, as clinicians tend to formulate their understanding of the patient early in the relationship. They will then expect to hear issues from the patient that corroborate the initial formulation, in effect diagnosing the patient retrospectively. If something strange happens, something that contradicts their formulation, a clinician may not always 'hear' it. The concept of negative capability is relevant to both therapists and researchers. In both roles, it is important to be able to see, think about and explore the unexpected, within the work and within one's own emotional responses.

Thinking about research in particular, having a capacity for negative capability enables the researcher to continuously examine their own experiences from different perspectives. To this aim, I regularly consulted with my research peers, professional colleagues and supervisors. This enabled me to stop and pause, to reflect upon the research process and how my own feelings were being evoked at various points. In other words, I sought to develop my own capacity for reflexivity and negative capability during the research process (Taylor, 2010). This was particularly productive after my experience of the Canadian training.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the methodology used in this research. I present the research questions (RQs), primary hypotheses, research strategy and design, and reflect upon the ethical considerations and procedure. In other words, I explain what I did, how and why. I then discuss the design of my two studies (quantitative and qualitative) and introduce the sample, assessment tools, and data analysis.

Specifically, I explained how I used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. In Study 1, quantitative scales were applied to gather information about my participants, focusing on their ego identity statuses and attachment styles. This enabled a purposive sampling approach to Study 2, in which I explored the relationship problems of the smaller sample, in more detail. Results from this study were examined using content analysis. The findings of both studies are presented in Chapters 5 and 6, respectively.

Chapter 5. Results I (Study 1 - Quantitative)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from Study 1, the quantitative component of my research. I begin with descriptive analyses of the demographics of the sample. Then, I provide the descriptive statistics for the quantitative scales of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity-II (EOM-EIS-II; Bennion & Adams, 1986; for the Turkish version Eryüksel & Varan, 1999) and Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory- Revised (ECRI-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; for the Turkish version Selçuk et al., 2005). Finally, I report the correlational analyses between these two scales. For these I answered three research questions (RQs) and tested the related hypotheses as follows.

RQ 1: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment?

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment.

RQ 2: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment?

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment.

RQ 3: Which of the ego identity statuses and adult attachment styles are significantly associated with each other?

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style.

5.2 Quantitative Analyses

The previous chapter gave an in-depth discussion of my methodology and explained why I used a mixed-methods approach to my research. This section contains the specific details of the quantitative method and descriptive analyses of the participants (the demographic information, ego identity status categories, and attachment styles). The research questions and hypotheses were tested through correlational analyses, all computed with SPSS v. 24.

5.2.1 Descriptive Analyses of Demographic Information

The distribution of the demographic information is presented in Tables 4 and 5 according to the frequency and percentage distributions and mean (M) and standard deviations (SD), respectively. As shown in Table 4, for my quantitative study the sample consisted of 60 individuals. There were 45 young women (75.0%) and 15 young men (25.0%). All the participants had been in a romantic relationship for at least six months at the time of completing questionnaires. The majority of the participants were studying pharmacy (n = 30, 50.0%). The remainder were spread across health sciences (n = 19, 31.7%), child development (n = 7, 11.7%), and others (n = 4, 6.6%).

Table 4. Demographic information of participants

| Characteristics | N | % |
|---------------------|----|------|
| Gender | | |
| Women | 45 | 75.0 |
| Men | 15 | 25.0 |
| Relationship status | | |
| In a relationship | 60 | 100 |
| Department | | |
| Pharmacy | 30 | 50.0 |
| Health Sciences | 19 | 31.7 |
| Child Development | 7 | 11.7 |
| Others | 4 | 6.6 |

Note: N = 60, for all analyses.

Ages ranged from 18 to 26 years, with the mean being 22.03 (SD = 2.24). The duration of their romantic relationships ranged from 10 to 42 months, with the mean of 26.96 months (SD = 8.55) (see Table 5).

Table 5. Descriptive information of age

| | N | M | SD |
|--------------------------------------|----|-------|------|
| Age | 60 | 22.03 | 2.24 |
| Duration of relationship (months) | 60 | 26.96 | 8.55 |

Note. N = 60, for all analyses.

5.2.2 Descriptive Statistics of Ego Identity Status Categories

Table 6 displays the distribution of identity status categories, in terms of frequency and percentages. The ego identity development of the young adults was measured by the Turkish version (Eryüksel & Varan, 1999) of EOM-EIS-II (Bennion & Adams, 1986).

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of ego identity status categories

| Identity statuses | N | % |
|---------------------|----|------|
| Achieved | 7 | 11.7 |
| Moratorium | 41 | 68.3 |
| Foreclosure | 1 | 1.7 |
| Diffusion | 3 | 5.0 |
| Transitional period | 8 | 13.3 |

Note: N = 60, for all analyses.

As shown in Table 6, the majority of the young adults ($n = 41$, 68.3%) were allocated to the 'moratorium' category. In other words, they were in active exploration processes yet either unable to make commitments, or experienced high uncertainty once they had made a commitment. The second most popular ego identity status category was the 'transitional period', featuring eight young adults (13.3%). This group fell into more than one category, demonstrating fluid exploration and commitment processes. There were also seven young adults (11.7%) allocated to the 'achieved' identity category, meaning that they were able to explore various possibilities and make commitments accordingly. There were two participants (5.0%) belonging to the 'diffusion' category. These two were unable to make commitments, and further, had no interest in them. Finally,

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there was one participant (1.7%) who belonged to the 'foreclosure' category, meaning they are able to commit but not actively. These findings show that overall, the first sample was still working on establishing identity statuses through ideological and interpersonal arenas (Bennion & Adams, 1986).

5.2.3 Descriptive Statistics of Ego Identity Status Categories and Gender

Gender differences within the distribution of ego identity status categories are presented in Table 7. The majority of the young women (n = 34, 75.6%) and young men (n = 7, 46.7%) in the sample belong to the 'moratorium' category. The remaining young adults were distributed as follows: four females (8.9%) and four (26.7%) males belonging to the 'transitional period' category, four females (8.9%) and three males (20.0%) being allocated to the 'achieved identity' category, and two females (4.4%) and only one young man (6.7%) in the 'diffused identity' category. None of the males displayed a foreclosure identity whilst one female did (2.2%). This shows that regardless of gender differences, the majority of the sample belonged to the moratorium category, followed by the transitional period.

Arseth et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of the research (spanning 1980-2010) on identity statuses and attachment categories. Their findings showed that the majority of the participants belonged to the achieved (28.17%) identity status type, followed by diffusion identity (26.76%), and lastly moratorium and foreclosure (22.53%, for each group) identity statuses.

In their research on ego identity status in Turkey, Morsunbul and Atak (2013) studied 230 participants. The majority of their sample belonged to the moratorium identity category (n= 90, 39.13%), 65 achieved identity (28.26%), 50 foreclosures (21.74%), and 25 met the diffusion (10.87%) identity category.

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of ego identity status categories and gender

| Women | | |
|---------------------|----|------|
| | N | % |
| Identity achieved | 4 | 8.9 |
| Moratorium | 34 | 75.6 |
| Foreclosure | 1 | 2.2 |
| Diffusion | 2 | 4.4 |
| Transitional period | 4 | 8.9 |
| Men | | |
| | N | % |
| Identity achieved | 3 | 20.0 |
| Moratorium | 7 | 46.7 |
| Diffusion | 1 | 6.7 |
| Transitional period | 4 | 26.7 |

Note. N= 60; n= 45 for women, n= 15 for men.

This echoes the findings of this study, as the majority of the sample belonged to the moratorium identity status category.

The percentages of the present research parallel the findings of Morsunbul and Atak's (2013) study, which suggests that cultural differences are important factors in this area. Most Turkish young adults remain in the exploration process before establishing their ego identities. Since Turkey has experienced much cultural, economic and social change over the last four decades, the society contains both individualistic and collectivist features

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment (Morsunbul et al., 2016). This appears to influence young adults in Turkey especially, causing them to explore their selves and identities deeply.

The very minimal occurrence of foreclosure ego identity status within my sample (only 1 person) may also reflect the particular historical and cultural context. In Turkey, parents tend to disapprove of relationships before marriage. As young people with foreclosure ego identity status were eager to meet parental expectations, they were less likely to challenge this disapproval by having relationships. This may show how the collectivist features of contemporary Turkey intersect with ego identity status development amongst young people.

5.2.4 Descriptive Statistics of the Adult Attachment Styles

The adult attachment styles were measured by ECRI-R (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) in the Turkish version (Selçuk et al., 2005). This scale highlights the two dimensions of attachment style: 'anxiety' and 'avoidance'.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of attachment dimensions

| Attachment dimensions | M | SD |
|-----------------------|------|------|
| Anxiety | 3.91 | 1.11 |
| Avoidance | 2.65 | .99 |

Note. N = 60

As shown in Table 8, the mean score of the anxiety dimension was 3.91 (SD = 1.11), with the mean score of the avoidance dimension being 2.65 (SD = .99). My sample thus displayed a higher tendency to have attachment-related anxiety in their romantic relationships, than avoidance. In other words, these young adults tended to be very vigilant about perceived rejection and

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment abandonment, leading to high anxiety levels. Further, they were often preoccupied with issues such as availability and responsiveness of a romantic partner (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000).

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of attachment dimensions and gender

| Attachment dimensions | Women | |
|-----------------------|-------|------|
| | M | SD |
| Anxiety | 3.92 | 1.08 |
| Avoidance | 2.67 | 1.04 |
| | Men | |
| | M | SD |
| Anxiety | 3.87 | 1.23 |
| Avoidance | 2.58 | .89 |

Note. N = 60; n = 45 for women, n = 15 for men.

Table 9 presents the distribution of the mean scores of attachment related anxiety and avoidance in romantic relationships according to gender. It shows that in the sample there was a tendency for both genders to experience more attachment-related anxiety than attachment-related avoidance. This may also show that regardless of gender, the sample seemed to be sensitive to perceived abandonment and rejection (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000).

5.2.5 Correlational Analyses of the Scales

In order to better understand the relationship between attachment dimensions (anxiety and avoidance) and types of identity status categories (achieved, moratorium, transitional period), I used a non-parametric method for

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment correlational analyses of the findings. The Kruskal-Wallis test was the most appropriate for Study 1, and I tested the three research questions and related hypotheses as follows.

I chose a non-parametric method to analyse these findings as the sample did not contain a normal distribution of the three identity status categories. I excluded the ego identity status categories of foreclosure ($n = 1$) and diffusion ($n = 3$), as these categories were too low to include in the statistical analyses. Of the remaining categories, the frequency of the achieved identity category was 7, the moratorium category was 41, and the transitional category was 8. This non-parametric test determined whether the two groups of participants (those with avoidance and anxiety-related attachment dimensions) significantly differed according to their identity status categories. The Kruskal-Wallis test was computed via SPSS v. 24, and the findings are shown in Table 10.

Table 10 shows that there was no significant difference between the avoidant attachment ($p = .287 > .050$) and ego identity status categories. Thus, hypothesis 2, there is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment, was refuted. This may refer to the fact that individuals with avoidant attachment seemed to have a continuous distribution, with no significant difference in their distribution according to the ego identity status categories. In contrast, there was a statistically significant difference between anxious attachment ($p = .045 < .050$) and ego identity status categories. The individuals with anxious attachment displayed a significantly different distribution among the three ego identity status categories. This finding thus confirmed hypothesis 1, there is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment.

Table 10. Kruskal-Wallis test results related to attachment dimension scores in ego identity status categories

| Attachment dimensions | Identity status categories | N | Mean rank | SD | X ² | P | Significant difference (Mann-Whitney U) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|----|-----------|------|----------------|-------|---|
| Avoidance | Achieved | 7 | 20.21 | .99 | 2.49 | .287 | |
| | Moratorium | 41 | 29.01 | | | | |
| | Transitional | 8 | 33.13 | | | | |
| Anxiety | Achieved | 7 | 19.21 | 1.11 | 6.19 | .045* | Moratorium> |
| | Moratorium | 41 | 27.88 | | | | Transitional |
| | Transitional | 8 | 39.81 | | | | |

Note. N = 56, for all analyses. *p < .05

To examine the relationship between different identity status groups and anxiety-related attachment, I applied the Mann-Whitney-U test to my sample. As shown in Table 10, of the individuals with anxious attachment, the moratorium group showed significantly higher attachment anxiety than the transitional group. This finding confirmed hypothesis 3. The participants in the transitional period seemed to display significantly less anxiety in their attachment relationships. This may be explained by the fact that individuals in the exploration process and unable to commit (moratorium ego identity status) have more anxiety in their romantic relationships. Therefore, for Study 2 (qualitative) of this research, I focused on participants exhibiting both moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to describe the quantitative features of the participants and the two scales (ECRI-R and EOM-EIS-II) that were used in this research.

In the quantitative part of the study (Study 1), I reported the descriptive statistics of the demographic information of the sample (including gender, department, mean of age and mean of duration of romantic relationship). I also noted the attachment dimensions of the whole sample and presented gender differences therein. The distribution of the ego identity status categories were reported and again I presented the gender differences. Lastly, I analysed the correlational analyses of both attachment dimensions and identity status categories. The results revealed a significant difference between ego identity status categories and anxious adult attachment. I thus explored which ego identity status category was most often associated with anxious adult attachment and found that moratorium ego identity status was significantly correlated. From my original sample, in Study 1, I was thus able to take a deductive approach to narrowing down the participants. I focused on those with moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment for the qualitative analyses in Study 2. In this second study I was able to investigate RQ 4 in more depth: What kinds of relational issues do young adults who concurrently have moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment describe as facing in their romantic relationship? Particularly, I explored the kinds of difficulties that these young adults (those with moratorium ego identity and anxious attachment) experienced in their romantic relationships. To report the qualitative findings, I applied a content analysis. These findings are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 6. Results II (Study 2 - Qualitative)

6.1 Introduction

Four months after completing Study 1, I conducted Study 2. The qualitative findings provided an in-depth picture of the relationship issues experienced by participants with both a moratorium ego identity status and an anxious attachment style.

Individuals with moratorium ego identity status tend not to make commitments and take active roles in exploring alternatives. Anxiously attached individuals are hyper vigilant and expend much emotional and mental effort on romantic relationships. The young people in this second sample were thus emotionally and mentally active in their attachment relationships. They were preoccupied with both their inner processes, such as ego identity formation, and their external relationship experiences, especially their interpersonal capabilities. I was curious about the kinds of challenges and difficulties that they encountered in their romantic relationships, as they were also undergoing significant internal conflict around their ego identity formation process. I interviewed this smaller group in order to understand their relational issues. Study 2 was designed specifically to investigate the fourth research question:

RQ 4: What kinds of relational issues do the young adults who concurrently have moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment describe as facing in their romantic relationship?

In this chapter, I begin by outlining the two forms of classification that I used in my research to describe i) individuals' sense of identity; 'ego identity status' (see Marcia, 1966), and ii) individuals' characteristic way of relating and attachments styles (see Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). I then present the demographics of the sample, including relationship duration. Including the duration enables us to contextualise the attachment process, as stages of adult attachment relationships seem to be important determinants of romantic relationships (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). Gender also emerged as an important difference within my sample, in terms of the kinds of issues that individuals struggle with.

Finally, I elaborate upon the frequency-based content analysis that I applied to RQ 4. The categories retrieved from content analysis were analysed according to the participants' ego identity status category (moratorium) and attachment style (anxious attachment), both already established using quantitative scales. These categories revealed the problems that most troubled my sample, although it is worth noting that they are just one side of the story as I did not interview both parties. The categories retrieved from content analysis are also presented and explained through ego identity formation theory (Marcia, 1966) and the attachment classification model (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000).

6.2 Classification models of Ego Identity Status Categories and Attachment Styles

This section reviews the reported problems within romantic relationships in light of the ego identity status categories and attachment styles of my sample.

6.2.1 Application of the Classification Model of Ego Identity Status

Categories in the Present Research

For the qualitative analysis I applied four ego-identity categories (achieved, foreclosure, diffusion, and moratorium) from the Turkish version of the Extended Objective Measurement of Ego Identity Status-II (EOM-EIS-II; Bennion & Adams, 1986, for the Turkish version Eryüksel & Varan, 1999).

During young adulthood, individuals begin to question who they are, and in this process start establishing their own ego identities. They may retain their childhood identifications relatively intact, or may reject them and seek alternatives, identifying more strongly with particular parts of their experiences or social processes (Erikson, 1982, see Chapter 2, for details). This emerged in my research quite clearly. In case 185, for example, the young woman worked hard to define her individual beliefs around female sexuality. In the traditional Turkish value system, female sexuality belongs within marriage, yet this woman appeared to identify strongly with a range of other social experiences and models of female sexuality.

Marcia (1966) made a key contribution to discussions of ego identity status by highlighting the importance of exploration and commitment during young adulthood. These constitute the identity statuses of Erikson's (1950) original theory. According to Marcia (1966, 1993), exploration involves considering alternative views on work, beliefs, worldview, friendship, and

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intimate relationships, leading to new perspectives. This was evident at many points during my research. One young woman (Case 150) had been separated from her previous friendship group and reported living a different lifestyle. However, she was actively exploring a range of ways of maintaining and strengthening these friendships, resulting in a new perspective on friendship.

Marcia (1966) claims that individuals with moratorium ego identity status can be understood as being in a form of identity crisis. They are in a process of actively searching, explore extensive alternatives and struggle with making definitive commitments. For individuals with moratorium ego identity status in the Turkish context this can be even more complicated as they navigate the tension between adapting to individualistic social trends (related to independence, self-respect, and freedom (Karakitapoglu-Aygun & Imamoglu, 2002)) and collectivist features (such as respect for cultural traditions, obedience, honour of parents and elders, and adherence to social expectations). Further, the tension between traditional and modern values may make the identity formation process more complex in Turkey (Eryigit & Kerpelman, 2011), (see Chapter 3 for further discussion of this point). Case 185 of this research illustrates this tension well. The young woman described holding a modern view of sexuality, seeing men and women as equally able to enjoy sexual experiences as they wish. She felt comfortable with one-night stands and confident in this perspective. In contrast, her partner and his family held more traditional views around sexuality, insisting that female sexuality should be experienced within a committed relationship and/or married. This (understandably) led to challenges within her romantic relationship.

6.2.2 Application of the Classification Model of Attachment Styles in the Present Research

I used the Turkish version of the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory-Revised (ECRI-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; for the Turkish version, Selçuk et al., 2005) to measure the attachment styles of the young adults in my sample. This model tracked the two dimensions of anxiety and avoidance within attachment styles along two axes. If an individual's attachment score is higher on the anxiety axis, s/he is measured as having an anxious attachment style. If an individual's attachment score is higher on the avoidance axis, s/he is measured as having an avoidant attachment style. In this model an individual cannot be slotted into a fixed taxonomy, so it provides a wider viewpoint of the various characteristics within attachment styles (see Chapter 2, section 2.6.4; and Chapter 4, for more detail).

Study 2 focused on participants with anxious attachment style. In other words, it zoomed in on individuals who tended to be very preoccupied by attachment-related issues, such as the availability and/or responsiveness of their significant other (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). For example, Case 44 of the present research had an anxious attachment style. She was preoccupied by her perception of her partner's responsiveness of her physical, emotional and social needs. In our interview she complained that her partner made little time for her and showed hyper vigilance around whether her partner was meeting her emotional and social needs. Since anxiously attached people spend much time and psychic energy on their relationship and partner, they need closeness. People with anxious attachment are willing to have a close, intimate and committed relationship with their romantic partners (Zeifman &

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment Hazan, 2016), and generally depend on them. They also seem to explore further when they are in a committed relationship.

Since these individuals are often questioning the availability and responsiveness of their romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), they tend to spend excessive time exploring their romantic relationship, mentally and physically (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In Case 177 I encounter a young man, who was quite consumed by this exploration. He was anxiously attached to his partner, preoccupied by the relationship and spent a great deal of mental energy on it. Consequently, he struggled to find a personal space within the closeness, or enjoy time separately, such as with his friends. The intense attachment anxiety caused him to either merge with his partner completely or flee from the relationship in favour of his friends, rather than being able to attend to both.

In Study 2 I looked at young people who were involved in an active exploration process in terms of their ego identity status and experiencing attachment-related issues in their relationships. They also reported inner conflicts and difficulties staying in these committed relationships. I tried to investigate the kinds of issues they were dealing with, both relational and ego identity- related.

6.3 Demographic Information of the Interviewed Participants

In this section I provide a more detailed picture of the sample group that I interviewed in Study 2. Demographic information and their different ego identity statuses and attachment styles are given in Table 11. Overall, this phase of my research included six young people, four women and two men. They were all in a committed romantic relationship at the time of Study 2, with a mean duration

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment being 30.16 months (SD = 9.60). For this age group this duration can be considered long-term. The participants had a mean age of 22.83 years (SD = 0.75), and all had moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style.

Table 11. Demographic information of the interviewed participants

| Variables | M | SD |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Age | 22.83 | 0.75 |
| Duration of relationship (months) | 30.16 | 9.60 |
| Gender | N | % |
| Women | 4 | 66.7 |
| Men | 2 | 33.3 |
| Ego identity status category | | |
| Moratorium | 6 | 100.0 |
| Attachment style | | |
| Anxiety | 6 | 100.0 |

Note. N = 6 for all variables.

6.4 Content Analysis of the Relational Issues of the Interviewed

Participants

In this section, I detail the categories used in my content analysis. As explained in Chapter 4, I combined the guidelines of Bryman (2012) and Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) and began by organised a coding schedule for RQ 4 (Bryman, 2012). The schedule consisted of meaning units, condensed meaning units and categories. These variables resulted in categories which informed the answer to my research question. The coding schedule for the RQ

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment is presented in Table 12 in the Appendices (see Appendix J). I analyse and explain these categories by referencing the samples' ego identity status (moratorium) and attachment style (anxious attachment) in Section 6.5.

The interview process led to data (Table 12) that showed that the whole sample reported problems in their romantic relationships. I coded three problems for one participant (case number 44), namely family intrusiveness, controlling behaviour and different affection styles. One problem was coded for each of the remaining interviewees (n = 5) as follows: intrusiveness, power struggles, perceived clinginess and cultural/religious differences. The total number of reported problems are shown in Table 13. Since one participant was coded with three problems, and the rest of the participants were coded with one each, the total number of the problems exceeded the number of the sample.

Table 13. Frequencies of the problems coded in romantic relationships

| Problems | N |
|---|----------|
| Different affection styles | 2 |
| Family intrusiveness | 1 |
| Dominance in terms of controlling behaviour | 1 |
| Intrusiveness | 1 |
| Power struggles | 1 |
| Perceived clinginess of partner | 1 |
| Cultural/religious differences | 1 |

Note. N = 6, for all variables. One participant was coded with three problems, and five participants were coded with one problem.

After completing the coding schedule of the RQ, I followed Bryman's recommendation (2012) of combining all the research variables into a coding

Relational Issues of Young Adults with Moratorium Ego Identity and Anxious Attachment manual. This contained the distribution of the categories of the RQ, the ego identity status category (moratorium) and the attachment style (anxious attachment) of the sample and is presented in Table 14.

Table 14. Coding manual

| Case number | Gender | Age | Duration of relationship (months) | Attachment dimension | Identity status category | Problems in romantic relationship |
|--------------------|---------------|------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 23 | Male | 22 | 33 | Anxious | Moratorium | Different affection styles |
| 44* | Female | 23 | 18 | Anxious | Moratorium | Family intrusiveness Dominance in terms of controlling behaviour Different affection styles |
| 150 | Female | 24 | 38 | Anxious | Moratorium | Intrusiveness |
| 168 | Female | 23 | 36 | Anxious | Moratorium | Power struggles |
| 177 | Male | 23 | 38 | Anxious | Moratorium | Perceived clinginess of partner |
| 185 | Female | 22 | 18 | Anxious | Moratorium | Cultural/religious differences |

Note. N = 6, for all variables.

* For case number 44, I coded three different problems.

6.5 Content Analysis of RQ According to Moratorium Ego Identity Status Category and Anxious Attachment Style of the Interviewed Participants

In this section, I analyse and explain the categories of the coded problems that emerged from the interview data. According to the classification model of Fraley, Waller and Brennan (2000) (see Section 6.2.1, for details), young adults with attachment-related anxiety experience a negative self-model alongside a positive image of their significant other. Attachment-related anxiety tends to result in high levels of fear of being rejected and abandoned in romantic relationships. Furthermore, these individuals are overly sensitive to the perceived availability and responsiveness of their romantic partner. For example, Case 44 seemed to experience this dyad of negative self-image and positive image of the other. In particular, this young woman held the idea that she needed attention from her partner, that she herself was lacking love and care and dependent on receiving nourishment from her partner. In contrast, she viewed her partner as already full of his own needs, that somehow, he was more complete emotionally than she was. Therefore, she reasoned, it was not necessary for her to nourish his emotional and/or social needs. These contrasting internal models (here, around what is needed) may be explained by her attachment-related anxiety. In other words, her negative self-image and positive image of the other resulted in this uneven assessment of what was needed within the relationship.

According to the classification model of Bennion and Adams (1986), young adults with moratorium ego identity status are in an active exploration process. This refers to how able these young adults are to consider alternatives within a situation. Whilst they have this capacity, committing to any one course

of action is challenging for them, as they are still very much exploring their options.

Whilst my sample size was relatively small (n= 6), it revealed the range of problems experienced by individuals with a moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment. This variety could connect to the processes of identity development. Since these individuals have been described as being in identity crisis (Bennion & Adams, 1986), a small argument in their relationship might cause a relationship crisis. These young people seemed able to acknowledge differences and/or problems in their relationships, yet their high level of attachment anxiety might have made them overly vigilant to problems. Bearing this in mind, I focused on the interview data and analysed the problems reported by my sample group. I discuss the particular themes that emerged in the following sub-sections.

6.5.1 Different affection styles

Two individuals in my sample cited different affection styles as the main problem in their relationships (Cases 23 and 44). This manifested in various ways, such as one interview description:

Because of the distance, we have an issue; because of the three years in college, we spent our time together. Because I didn't tell her I missed her, we argued about the same topic two-three times in a week. When I called her in the morning, she would tell me "you didn't say 'I love you', or you didn't say 'I miss you'".

The young man in this example (Case 23) emphasised that he had a different affection style to his girlfriend. He seemed to be confused about this difference and had trouble in meeting his partner's needs. Whilst they had been in a committed relationship for nearly three years, they remained uncomfortable

with each other's affection styles and it seemed difficult for the couple to productively work through this issue.

Erikson (1968) claimed that intimacy is the capacity to merge one's identity with a partner without the fear of losing anything of oneself. We could understand this young man's confusion as a fear of being 'too' intimate with his partner. This physical distance seemed to soothe his fear of losing himself yet at the same time it increased the anxiety within the relationship. Relatedly, those with a moratorium ego identity status may struggle with expressing affection and closeness in an appropriate way, instead expecting to be valued for his own way of showing love (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). This challenge recurred in another interview (Case 44), where a young woman described her frustration:

Because of his busy schedule, he wasn't able to pay me attention, and I would be upset. I would say, "why don't you spend time on me?"

Again, 'different affection styles' was coded as one of their relational issues in this interview. Here the young woman needed more reassurance and proof that she was loved. She felt frustrated and then made demands on her partner. As individuals with an anxious attachment style tend to be hyper vigilant around the availability and/or responsiveness of their partner (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), this example demonstrates anxiety attachment. They are eager to have a close relationship (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016), and when their expectations are not met, this difference in affection styles is felt to be a relational issue.

6.5.2 Dominance in terms of controlling behaviour

The other problem coded for this group was dominance in terms of controlling behaviour (n = 1). Case 44 described her sense of being controlled by her partner;

He used to interfere in the way I used makeup; he would make comments about the things I wore. He behaved the way he wanted when we were with his friends; he did not want to do the things that I wanted him to do, such as holding my hand or hugging me.

In this example the partner appeared to be making the rules, with the young woman demanding that her own wants and expectations be met. She seemed to be vigilant about any possible rejection, which is common amongst anxiously attached individuals (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) and seemed to accept his behaviour despite the discomfort. Zeifman and Hazan (2016) suggested that in an ideal adult attachment relationship, roles and responsibilities must be bilateral. This contrasts with the clearly hierarchical dynamic that characterises the child-parent relationship (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). Yet in the above example we hear that the young woman does not feel that power is balanced and is struggling with the lack of reciprocity within her relationship.

6.5.3 Perceived clinginess of the romantic partner

One of the most interesting categories that emerged from the interview data was (perceived) clinginess of the romantic partner. As already established, my sample had an anxious attachment style, linked to a negative self-model and a positive image of the other (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). In other words, this group showed a tendency to overvalue their partner (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016) instead of taking their own wishes, desires and priorities into

account. That said, the anxiously attached young man (Case 177) described how he struggled with his girlfriends' claim on his time, as shown in the following extract:

When I want to do things with my friends, it is usually a problem, because she doesn't have many friends here. When I want to do things with my male friends, she feels she is left alone, so she gets upset and we sometimes argue about that. She wants me to spend all my time with her instead of my own friends.

I coded his difficulty as perceived clinginess of his partner. As anxiously attached young adults fear rejection and abandonment (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), this young man seemed to find it hard to defend his own need for time and space within the relationship. Further, as he had a moratorium ego identity status, he may have been struggling with making a choice between his own friends and his partner and be projecting some of the desire for shared time and emotional closeness onto his girlfriend. The young man seemed to perceive his partner's attitude as being clingy towards him and describe this as a big problem in the relationship.

6.5.4 Intrusiveness

Although these young adults need to feel loved and cared for (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), the other key relationship problem reported by this group (moratorium-anxious) was intrusiveness. Case 150 is a good example of this:

He doesn't like my friends back in (Place name) because they have dated many guys and these kinds of things are talked about between the men and he hears about them of course. I spend a lot of time with these girls; if he says something about them, I get defensive. He thinks that they are giving me the wrong advice and pointing me in the wrong direction.

For this young woman, her boyfriend's perspective on her close friends felt intrusive. His disapproval and comments distressed this young woman; and being caught between him and her friends felt very difficult. This was an interesting finding as the young woman had a higher level of anxious attachment and typically worried about rejection (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). We could understand this as connected to the process of exploring her own identity. Since she had a moratorium ego identity status, she may want to have new and different experiences in her social life with her close friends, as well as romantically. Erikson (1968) proposed that a healthy character structure and a healthy attachment system enable an integrated sense of identity. In this example (Case 150) the participant was both preoccupied with her partner's intrusiveness and with maintaining her friendships. She seemed to integrate her ego identity by emphasising one of the ego identity relevant domains especially, interpersonal relationships.

The next three problems coded for this group (moratorium-anxious) were classified in three different categories: power struggles, family intrusiveness, and cultural/religious differences. The descriptions given during interviews are presented below.

6.5.5 Power struggles

If we see things differently and if he isn't able to see it from my perspective, I get upset, and we become argumentative. (Case 168; power struggles)

It is very common for couples to have different perspectives, yet the young people I interviewed reported this difference as a relationship problem. The young woman cited above (Case 168) seemed to be struggling with making

sense of this difference, and it caused her conflict, thus I coded it as a power struggle.

Since she was in an actively searching process in her own identity-relevant domains, including interpersonal relationships (Marcia, 1966), this young woman seemed to have difficulty in considering her own wishes and expectations as separate from her partners. Further, being hyper vigilant around possible rejection might intensify the experience of conflict. Being anxiously attachment, she was very concerned with the emotional responsiveness of her partner (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Simpson and Rholes (2017) proposed that intimate relationships include interdependence and mutual support in satisfying social and emotional needs. When her partner did not meet her expectation of satisfying her emotional needs, the young woman felt it to be a relational issue.

6.5.6 Family intrusiveness

Like I said, everyone is very involved in our family; we are a big family. They, both my family and my boyfriend's family, interfere in everything, from the things I wear to how I sit. (Case 44; family intrusiveness)

This young woman stressed that her parents' intrusiveness on her romantic relationship had an effect on both her and her boyfriend. This might be related to their respective searching processes in their ego identity-relevant domains. The young woman was trying to establish her own ego identity status while working to separate from her parents. She was concurrently trying to explore and commit to her own desires, wishes, and expectations. We could understand this case as one of experiencing the second separation individuation process that Blos (1967) described. He argued that during

emerging adulthood, young adults seek to grow apart from their parents and find their own ways (Blos, 1967). In this process, especially those with moratorium ego identity status, actively explore their own priorities and act accordingly. Describing family related issues seemed significant for this young woman and her anxiety around rejection and/or abandonment could have intensified the situation. She may have felt trapped between her own desires, wishes, and fears of being not loved, and the perceived intrusion of her parents as she tried to individuate.

6.5.7 Cultural/Religious differences

We have serious arguments about sexuality when we talk about one-night stands. While it is normal for a guy, it is not for a girl according to him. This drives me crazy. I hate it when someone has to act based on what other people think. His family is from (Place name) and they are very cultured, but they are closer to religion while I believe in God but religion as a whole is a big question mark for me. So, this is the point over which we have serious arguments. (Case 185; cultural/religious differences)

The final relational issue that emerged from my study was cultural/religious differences. In the above example the young woman I interviewed seemed to be struggling with this difference within her relationship. Her partner and her held different views on an important theme (gender and sexuality) which she understood to stem from their cultural and religious differences, leading to 'serious' arguments. Since she was actively exploring her own identity-related domains, she might have felt unsure about dealing with this difference. We could understand the description of arguments as containing a negative self-image and positive image of the other, due to her anxious attachment style (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Experiencing this conflict

within her internal and external experiences seemed challenging for the young woman. Furthermore, she was fearful of losing her love object and experiencing abandonment, so felt unable to really work through this 'difference' within her romantic relationship.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter elaborated on the categories of problems within romantic relationships that were reported by my sample within Study 2. I analysed these categories according to the moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style of the participants. I designed this part of my study to focus on this particular group in order to better explore the theoretical common ground that they shared. Individuals with anxious attachment tend to be questioning and searching for the availability and responsiveness of their romantic partner. They tend to spend excessive time exploring their romantic relationship mentally and physically. Relatedly, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are in the process of forming their identity by actively exploring. Therefore, individuals with moratorium ego identity status and an anxious attachment style overlap in the process of actively searching and exploring.

The relational issues that these six young adults reported included: different affection styles, family intrusiveness, dominance in terms of controlling behaviour, intrusiveness, power struggles, perceived clinginess of the partner, and cultural/religious differences. These issues provide insight into how this sample group experiences, and struggles, with their romantic relationships. Each issue is connected to the active searching process that characterises both moratorium ego identity status and an anxious attachment style. Future research with a larger sample may show a wider range of issues that this group

experiences, however, these research findings offer a portrait of how these young people relate.

In the next chapter, I discuss these findings alongside the key theories of ego identity (Marcia, 1966), psychosocial developmental theory (Erikson, 1968), and adult attachment theory (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). I also situate this study and the findings within existing literature and previous empirical studies.

Chapter 7. Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by presenting the research questions (RQs) and hypotheses that guide Study 1 and 2. I provide the findings of these two studies and then discuss them against existing literature. In particular I consider the key theories of psychosocial developmental theory (Erikson, 1968), ego identity formation process (Marcia, 1966) and adult attachment theory (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Zeifman & Hazan, 2016; Fraley, Waller & Brennon, 2000). Finally, I connect the findings to recent empirical research.

7.2 Research Questions and Related Hypotheses of Study 1

In Study 1 I examined the possible connections between ego identity statuses and attachment styles within my research sample. I hypothesised that ego identity statuses would have a significant relationship with an anxious attachment style and avoidant attachment style. Then, more specifically, I hypothesised that there would be a significant association between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style.

7.3 Research Question of Study 2

In Study 2 I narrowed down the sample and focused solely on the participants with moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment. These young people had all been in their current romantic relationships for at least six months. I was interested in investigating the kinds of problems that they experienced and posed the final RQ 4:

What kinds of relational issues do young adults who concurrently have moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment describe as facing in their romantic relationship?

7.4 The Findings of Study 1

In Study 1 I found that there was a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment in my first sample group (discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). I found that there was no significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant adult attachment within this group. These results partially support existing empirical research. Previous studies found a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and attachment styles (both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) of young people (e.g. Arseth et al., 2009; Kerpelman et al., 2012; McElwain, Kerpelman, & Pittman, 2015). However, in the current study I found that the different ego identity status was only correlated with attachment anxiety, not avoidant attachment.

These results suggest that my sample was vigilant about their intimate relationships while building their ego identities. During the ego identity formation process they are concerned with the availability and/or responsiveness of their romantic partner, rather than dismissive the attachment related issues and

being reluctant to explore closeness and intimacy (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). This may suggest that being in a long-term committed relationship proves these young people are eager to have a close emotional bond. During this period of young adulthood, individuals are navigating a way through various ego identity related domains, such as career, studies, vocational, ideological and also interpersonal relationships. Despite their anxiety and vigilance, we could say, this group shows a willingness to continue and sustain their romantic relationship.

My research findings both resonate with, and conflict, with existing empirical work in this area. On the one hand, empirical studies in Western (e.g., Kerpelman et al., 2012; Pittmann et al., 2012; Marcia, 2006) and Turkish contexts (e.g., Morsunbul & Tumen, 2008; Morsunbul et al., 2016) have found a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment style. On the other hand, I found a lack of significant relationship between ego identity statuses and avoidant attachment style in this research, which sets it apart from existing empirical work.

The other research question that I explored asked whether there was a significant relationship between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment. I found that there was a significant relationship between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment in the Turkish sample. Thinking theoretically, these findings add to existing literature by highlighting the common ground between moratorium ego identity status and anxious adult attachment style. Hazan and Shaver (1987) emphasised that individuals with anxious attachment become preoccupied with the relationship as they seek affirmation and approval from the romantic partner. Therefore, the findings of the current research seem to confirm a theoretical common ground

of preoccupation with the relationship and an active exploration process unfolding through it.

This finding is supported by some of the previous empirical research from Turkish (e.g., Morsunbul et al., 2016) and Western samples (e.g., Pitmann et al., 2012; McElwain et al., 2015). As Marcia (1966) described, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are in an active exploration process while building their ego identities. Their parents' (authority figures) wishes are still important. They thus attempt to achieve a compromise between them and the demands of society, whilst also trying to determine their own ego identities. Since this situation leads the young adults to explore more actively before making any commitments, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are good at exploring their own ego identity related domains but not yet capable of firm commitments.

The young adults with attachment anxiety were also hyper vigilant towards their romantic relationships (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). The anxiously attached young people of the current study were eager to sustain their romantic relationships for a long time (i.e., more than six months). This implies that although they undergo an active exploration process before making any commitment, these young people are able to establish and sustain their emotional bond and commit to their romantic partner, but in a state of high anxiety. This finding suggests that types of commitment are different from each other. Being committed to a partner whilst experiencing anxiety (i.e., attachment anxiety) can be achieved by the Turkish young adults with moratorium ego identity status whilst exploring their ego identity related domains. Therefore, being anxious and vigilant about their romantic relationships may help improve their commitment capabilities in the ego identity formation process.

In terms of exploration, commitment and attachment styles, previous studies found significant results. For example, Arseth et al., discovered a significant relationship between identity commitments and secure attachment (2009), and an indirect relationship between attachment anxiety and identity commitment (e.g., Kerpelman et al., 2012). However, it was reported that attachment anxiety was more closely related to identity exploration than to identity commitment (Pittman et al., 2012; McElwain et al., 2015; Morsunbul et al., 2016).

Further, these studies showed that the ego identity statuses that embrace identity exploration were achieved and moratorium. These results suggest that moratorium ego identity status (within which identity exploration was high) was associated with attachment anxiety during young adulthood. Similar results were reported in Turkish samples, as Morsunbul et al. (2016), Morsunbul and Atak (2013) and Deveci-Sirin and Soyer (2018) discovered a significant association between moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety. Relatedly, these researchers found that the majority of the Turkish young people researched had a tendency to have attachment anxiety, rather than having attachment avoidance. These findings support the results of the current research. The majority of the current sample was in moratorium ego identity status and had attachment anxiety, which implies that culture has an effect on attachment styles. Gulerce (1991) suggests that this is due to the semi-permeable familial relations within Turkish society, where young adults generally experience the dichotomy of being dependent on the parents vs. having autonomy.

Considering Turkish society along an individualistic-collectivistic spectrum, it has been described as loosely collectivist (Kagitcibasi, 1996)

despite the rapid social, political, and economic changes of the last few decades (Atak & Cok, 2010). A collectivist society is characterised by loyalty and commitment to intergenerational relations. Therefore, this dichotomy seems to help the young adults maintain and commit to their long-term relationships, as shown in this study (see Chapter 4, for details). The urban areas, and the Western part of the country, display obvious cultural diversity and the value of individualisation is widespread. In these areas young people tend to acknowledge their need for autonomy and relatedness, which is their autonomous-related self (Kagitcibasi, 2005). For young people who live in a generally “collectivist” society whilst engaging in more individualistic value systems and influences, how to position oneself in relationships is especially complex. Questions around how far to pursue their individuality, when to prioritise parental wishes and expectations and how to position themselves in their romantic relationships alongside their parental relationships are important. The young people in active exploration of their identity-related domains, with anxious attachment, are clearly influenced by these cultural components.

Simultaneously, these young people remained anxious about their relationships, due to their anxious attachment style. They were preoccupied with attachment-related issues, such as the availability and/or responsiveness of their romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Despite their attachment anxiety, involvement in romantic relationships may provide a context for the young adults to explore more and learn about themselves socially, through developing a close emotional bond.

7.5 The Findings of Study 2

In Study 2, I explored the kinds of relational problems reported by young adults with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety. Applying content analyses to the interview data, I coded seven relational issues: different affection styles, cultural/religious differences, intrusiveness, family intrusiveness, perceived clinginess of partner, power struggles, and dominance in terms of controlling behaviour.

In the first study of the current research, moratorium ego identity status was found to have a significant relationship with attachment anxiety. Theoretically, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are in crisis (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1966). While they are still under the influence of their parents (authority figures), they are also in a vital period of determining their own capabilities and fulfilling their own wishes and expectations. As Erikson (1963; 1968) emphasised in his psychosocial developmental theory, moratorium is an exploration itself as individuals are focused on defining their personal priorities in terms of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1968). Therefore, individuals with moratorium ego identity status are in an active search to fulfil their own wishes, expectations, goals and desires. According to Erikson's theory, they are neither rebellious nor submissive, but trying to determine who they are through their experiences.

Erikson (1963; 1968) further suggested that during adolescence, individuals pass through a stage of accomplishing *fidelity to identity* by resolving the dialectics of *identity vs. role confusion*. Whether successful or not, as they grow older, they undergo a consecutive stage of conflict between *intimacy* and *isolation*. This results in experiencing the virtue of *love*. Individuals who

successfully resolve this dilemma will have an increased capacity to offer and accept love, both physically and emotionally.

Young adulthood is a transition stage of leaving adolescence and encountering the responsibilities of adulthood (Erikson, 1963). In other words, individuals do not mature directly from adolescence to adulthood, as Arnett explained (2000). Instead, there is a preparation period between the two stages. Within this period, individuals postpone the developmental duties and social roles of adulthood, such as marriage, parenthood and separate living (Arnett, 2001; Cok & Atak, 2015). Although these roles are influenced by cultural, and subcultural contexts, most broadly we can understand this period as one of “emerging adulthood” as Arnett says (2000; 2004). Her further argued (2000; 2004) that in Western contexts, emerging adulthood is understood to be between the ages of 18 and 25. Not dissimilarly, empirical studies from the Turkish context reveal that emerging adulthood is experienced between 19-26 years (Atak, 2005; Atak & Cok, 2010; Cok & Atak, 2015). In both contexts, emerging adulthood is a time of gradual detachment from parental figures, developing independence and loosening infantile object ties. This period has been referred to as the second separation-individuation process (Blos, 1967). In Turkey, ‘taking responsibility for oneself’ and ‘making decisions independently’ have been cited as the most important criteria for reaching adulthood (Atak & Cok, 2007; Cok & Arak, 2015). Therefore, oscillating between taking such responsibility or not, and making independent decisions or not, seem to be common during emerging adulthood in Turkey. This is especially apparent in romantic relationships as now young adults become increasingly aware of their own desires, expectations and goals within emotional bonds.

Individuals with moratorium ego identity status in crisis are in an active exploration process regarding their ego identity related domains. Simultaneously, young people with attachment anxiety spend a great deal of emotional energy on their romantic relationships during young adulthood. Anxiously attached young people are hyper vigilant around attachment related issues and are concerned about the availability and/or responsiveness of their attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Attachment anxiety often leads to internal crises for this group. Therefore, the theoretical explanations for moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety during emerging adulthood are consistent with the findings of this study.

While having an inner conflict regarding ego identity formation process, the relational issues are experienced as crises for these young people. This could explain why these problems take on so much importance for the sample group and show us how they experience their most intimate relationships. Two of the relational issues that emerged in the current study were different affection styles and cultural/religious differences. It thus seems that “difference” can be experienced as problematic for these young adults. As distinguishing their own ‘difference’ from their parents is key for individuals with moratorium ego identity status and seeking affirmation from their partners is crucial for anxiously attached people, struggling with the experience of “difference” in their romantic relationship is not surprising.

The other three relational issues that this group described were intrusiveness of the partner, family intrusiveness, and perceived clinginess of the partner. These three issues suggest that these young people are concerned with their “personal boundaries”. Trying to establish their own capabilities and maintaining their personal space within a close relationship seem to be difficult.

Although these young adults are trying to loosen their infantile ties and detach from their parents (Blos, 1967), attachment anxiety may lead them to be very dependent on their partner instead in a hyper vigilant way. Therefore, these young adults seem to oscillate between increased independence while feeling the need for an emotional bond; and being anxious about the boundaries between self and other. This manifests in various concerns, such as if s/he sets boundaries and limits, would it negatively affect the responsiveness and/or availability of the other?

The final two relational issues reported during my interviews were power struggles and dominance in terms of controlling behaviour. These findings suggest that the young people engaged in an “internal struggle” with their parents, whilst trying to develop their own capabilities, seem to experience a similar struggle with their romantic partners. Experiencing a clash between ideas, expectations and/or behaviours in their romantic relationships seemed to relate to their ego identity formation processes. As the sample navigated their internal experience of parental control while trying to build their own ego identity, experiencing a controlling external other (in the romantic partner) may resonate with their internal struggle. Therefore, the external conflicts reported could actually tell us more about the internal conflicts and processes that these young adults experience.

Reflecting on the relational issues coded in this study, these findings suggest that difference, personal boundaries, and internal struggles seem to be influenced by culture. Recent empirical studies revealed that the structure of Turkish culture contains both individualistic and collectivist components (Yetim, 2003; Karakitapoglu-Aygun, & Imamoglu, 2002; Eryigit & Kerpelman, 2011). Thus, Turkish young adults are starting to gain a sense of freedom, self-respect

and independence whilst also maintaining traditional values, such as respect for cultural traditions, honour of parents and loyalty to social expectations. The themes of “difference”, “personal boundaries” and “internal struggles” could be understood as external signs of how this tension affects the internal experience of my sample.

In addition to the influence of the particular Turkish context, emerging adulthood is a key development period and the young people involved in this study seem to be relatively effective. They were all exploring the two most important criteria of this period, ‘taking responsibility for oneself’ and ‘making decisions independently’ (Atak & Cok, 2007), criteria that resonate with the individualistic components of the society. While the young adults in the Turkish context try to find more independence, responsibility and learn responsiveness to their own needs, the process affects their relationship problems. As discussed above, three of the reported relationship problems linked to difference, personal boundaries and internal struggles. We could say that the emerging adults studied here struggle with tolerating the themes of difference, boundaries and limits in their relationships because they are not yet aware enough of their own decisions, needs, and expectations.

The young adults in this study are in the process of achieving the criteria of young adulthood. They are also exploring their identity related domains and attachment relationships, despite experiencing high levels of anxiety around attachment. The period of emerging adulthood, containing both collectivist and individualistic components in the Turkish context, seems to be more challenging and anxiety-provoking for young people than in Western contexts.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the research findings of the current research. I discussed these findings in the light of psychosocial developmental theory (Erikson, 1963), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1980), adult attachment theory (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), and recent empirical studies. In the next chapter, I consider the research and clinical implications, as well as the limitations of the current research. Finally, I offer recommendations for future research.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the previous ones together and concludes my project. I summarise the main contributions to knowledge that the research findings provide and offer further reflections on the clinical implications of this study. Finally, I draw attention to the limitations of the current research and suggest recommendations for further work.

8.2 Research Implications and Original Contributions

In Study 1 I explored the relationship between the different ego identity statuses and attachment styles (anxiety and avoidance) within my sample. As expected, anxiety emerged as significantly related to ego identity status, and avoidance did not. One of the research questions in Study 1 was: Is there a significant relationship between ego identity statuses and anxious adult attachment? I found a significant association between these two factors amongst my sample.

This research offers an original contribution to existing knowledge in five main ways.

Firstly, existing literature (from Western contexts or Turkey) on the subject of ego identity statuses and attachment styles has not specifically

researched how moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety intersect during emerging adulthood. This study builds on existing empirical work on the relationship between ego identity status and attachment styles (such as Kerpelman et al., 2012) by focusing on this particular age group. It further offers a new and important contribution to existing knowledge by documenting the relationship difficulties that this group experiences and revealing some of the particularities of the Turkish context.

Individuals with a moratorium ego identity status do not make commitments in ego-identity related domains until they have experienced active exploration processes (Marcia, 1966). In the current study, young people with moratorium ego identity status were actively searching for, and exploring, their own expectations, values, goals and wishes. Relatedly, an anxious attachment leads individuals to become preoccupied with romantic relationships. Their sense of self-acceptance is commonly derived from the closeness and approval of their romantic partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) and attachment-related issues (such as the availability and responsiveness of their partner) predominate. These two aspects of anxious attachment parallel the processes of active searching and exploration within the moratorium ego identity status. I have thus suggested that an overlap, or common ground, exists between existing theoretical work on moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style. This study contributes to existing theoretical understandings by connecting the theoretical work to empirical findings.

The third contribution that this research makes is around relationship problems. Existing literature (both from Western contexts and Turkey) neglects the particular relationship problems that these individuals may experience. The current research contributes to this area specifically. It investigates the

relational issues that these young adults (with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety) suffer from in their intimate relationships, expanding our understanding of how they experience relationships.

Fourthly, this research is original in terms of method in two ways. As far as I know there is no qualitative research which focuses on young adults displaying moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety. Secondly, this research is the first that takes a qualitative approach to the relationship problems reported by this sample, which enables us to really understand the particular problems that they experience. Therefore, this study adds a new layer of understanding to existing literature and enhances empirical knowledge by combining a qualitative approach with a quantitative methodology.

Finally, the fifth original contribution of this study is expanding our understanding of ego identity status categories. This study builds on existing work by engaging with five groups of ego identity status. The fifth category, transitional, has been established by previous studies, its prevalence does not seem to have been fully explored. This research thus adds to our understanding of how transitional ego identity status is a useful category of thought, and documents its existence within my sample, a group of Turkish university students.

8.3 Clinical Implications

The research findings revealed that the sample predominantly displayed a moratorium ego identity status and primarily had attachment anxiety in their romantic relationships. Thus, these young adults were in an active exploration process while building their own inner worlds, through testing out different choices, expectations, goals, and targets. In addition, they were eager to

experience close and intimate relationships. They had all made the commitment to be in a long-term romantic relationship yet remained hesitant and over-vigilant regarding the availability and/or responsiveness of their partner. This seems to indicate that Turkish young people expend much emotional effort on relating to themselves, and to their partners.

Simultaneously, these young adults often experience crises in their relationships (internally, and externally) and relatedly, relationship difficulties. This original research documents the particular forms that these relationship problems tend to take and provides unique insight into how young people in Turkey make sense of these experiences. Whilst my research context was particular, these research findings could enhance and guide clinical work of clinicians and psychologists in contexts beyond Turkey.

Within this research, the sample demonstrated various levels of insight and capacity to process their inner experiences. It is important to remember that young adults, especially those who have experienced high levels of inner conflict whilst establishing their ego identity statuses, may not be consciously aware of the conflicts. They may also display varied capacities to name their experiences and reflect back upon them. What these conflicts are, or able to speak of them. Clinicians working with younger adults are thus advised to actively listen to the clinical material that is shared and remain curious about each client's capacity to name ego identity related conflicts.

Clinicians expect young adults in psychotherapy to undergo various processes of exploration. Ideally, they will use the space to explore their own inner worlds and develop a different perspective on their own emotional and lived experiences, including their needs, expectations, desires, and goals. Clinicians may benefit from keeping in mind the differences between clients with

different ego identity statuses and attachment styles. For example, the exploration process would be central for young people with both achieved and moratorium ego identity statuses. An understanding of how a client attaches, or the style of attachment, could further help clinicians to navigate the emotional bonding process. This study adds to existing empirical work by providing evidence-based research for the theoretical approaches used and could thus support clinicians understanding of both areas of knowledge.

This research showed that young adults with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety experienced a range of relational issues. These included different affection styles, intrusiveness (from partners and family members), perceived clinginess of the partner, power struggles, controlling behaviour, and cultural/religious differences. As documented in this research, many of these issues are likely to appear in the transference within a clinical setting. During the research the theme of family intrusiveness emerged significantly. To consider how this theme may affect clinical practice, let us recall case 44 from Study 2 (discussed earlier in chapter 6). This case really exemplifies how the experience of family intrusiveness can appear and 'repeat' within a clinical setting. The young woman (referred to as case 44) was in a committed long-distance relationship and they were planning to marry the following year. She was studying Pharmacy in Istanbul, and her partner was working as a doctor in another city, far from Istanbul. This city was fairly traditional, in the South East of the country, and both families lived there. The young woman and her partner both wanted romance and closeness in their relationship, yet both sets of parents were felt to be intrusive. During our interview this young woman explained how difficult this double intrusion was becoming and described really struggling with the experience. This parental

intrusion manifested in multiple ways. For example, the young woman now found the process of choosing clothes complicated. She felt she should consider the preferences of her own parents and further felt obliged to take the expectations of her future in-laws into consideration, resulting in the possible disapproval of four different parent figures. Understandably this young woman was struggling with the experience, whilst simultaneously trying to explore her own preferences, establish her ego-identity and maintain her romantic relationship.

Early on in the research I ascertained that she was in the moratorium group of my sample, and the process of exploration was central. At the time of our interview the process was felt to be a painful one. This young woman felt heavily burdened as she tried to negotiate the multiple pressures and expectations of the four parents alongside exploring her own identity. Meanwhile she had an anxious attachment style, causing her to feel preoccupied in her romantic relationship. How available and/or responsive her fiancé was perceived to be greatly affected her, and the emotional and mental effort that she put into the attachment was a strain on her energy. Having an anxious attachment style meant that she often worried about losing her partner, and at times this worry limited how far she would explore her own inner world and identity. The sense of parental intrusion complicated matters for her. Here we can clearly see how the importance of parental figures for young people exists in tension with their emergent efforts to determine their own place within various ego identity-related domains. This tension seemed to frame the relationship difficulties that this young woman reported during our interview and is typical of the young people in my sample who have a moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style.

This tension may also appear in the consulting room, as internal models of parental and authority figures are easily projected onto the clinician. Consequently, young adults may experience high levels of anxiety when exploring their inner worlds in the therapeutic space, anticipating certain “expectations” of the clinician as authority figure. At the same time, they may be anxious about the continuity of the therapeutic relationship if they do explore their inner worlds fully. The inability to clearly ascertain the therapist’s expectations (in most analytic settings, at least) may further complicate this experience and increase the anxiety young people feel. They may feel very anxious about the relationship and also experience enmeshment.

All these issues underscore how much anxiety young people may feel around the exploration process within psychotherapeutic work. This is something that the clinician needs to be aware of, and work towards bringing to consciousness with the client. Relatedly, clinicians should be cautious in terms of appearing intrusive during this process. (This is something that emerged during the research experience and is discussed more fully in Chapter 4. There I wondered if my sense of myself as behaving in an uncharacteristically intrusive manner was connected to the unconscious processes occurring between the respondents and myself). Maintaining clear boundaries and a consistent frame for the clinical work is always important, and this research has shown that it is especially vital for young adults who experience a moratorium ego identity status and anxious attachment style.

8.4 Limitations of the Research

This study found a significant association between ego identity statuses and attachment anxiety, a finding which is consistent with previous work. This

study contributes to existing knowledge in the area by focusing on a particular combination of ego identity status and attachment style. It is also original in terms of the methodology and research design, in particular my use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to produce a rich portrait of how young people with moratorium ego identity status and attachment anxiety, experience their romantic relationships. Just as significantly, this study is original in the detailed findings around the specific relationship difficulties that this group encounters. Overall, this study makes an important contribution to existing knowledge in various ways, yet also has some limitations. Before I conclude this project, I shall summarise the main limitations of this study.

The first limitation of this study is the sample size. In Study 1, I recruited 60 young people, enabling me to apply purposive sampling for Study 2. Of this first group, however, there was no normal distribution of the five ego identity statuses (achieved, foreclosure, diffusion, transitional and moratorium). If the sample size had been larger, the distribution of the different ego identity status categories would differ. This would have given me the opportunity to access more people with non-moratorium ego identity statuses.

Secondly, this study did not explore the theme of sexuality within the research. Although sexuality is one of the most important components of a romantic relationship, and a key domain for young adults in the exploration process, it was beyond the scope of this research to investigate it. In this present research, Zeifman and Hazan's (2016) attachment system was adopted. In their model, attachment styles, caregiving and sexuality are integrated within an attachment system (Zeifman & Hazan, 2016). However, other empirical studies showed that these three systems were different from each other in their psychological dynamics, neurobiological foundations and

behavioural indicators (Fischer et al., 2002). In the present research, I focused on the attachment types and caregiving of this model, but disregarded sexuality. My decision was based on the awareness that discussing sexuality in the Turkish social context accommodating collectivist features would have opened up wide and different viewpoints in this research (Toplu-Demirtas & Fincham, 2018), thus leading to a spiralling-out that would have taken me away from the particular concerns of my research questions. Therefore, I chose to focus solely on the emotional bond and caregiving systems. However, including this aspect would have enriched the research findings, and provided a fuller picture of how they experience romantic relationships.

Thirdly, there was no methodological analysis regarding gender difference. As gender differences and expectations around gender roles are important for romantic relationships, a thorough analysis of how gender affects relational issues could have further enhanced our understanding of the sample group.

The fourth and final limitation is context and language. One of the strengths and original contributions of this research is the research setting. By conducting this research in Turkey, with a Turkish sample, I was able to bring an important non-Western voice to existing debates, further adding to our understanding of how local context shapes attachment and ego identity statuses. That said, this focus could be seen as a limitation in terms of language. Myself and the participants were Turkish, thus the interviews were conducted in Turkish. As discussed in chapter X (methods) there were transcribed and then translated into English by a bilingual person. Although the translator was bilingual, the statements were obviously slightly different in each language, most notably in terms of cultural meaning and contextual frames of

reference. We could conclude that at least some of the intended meaning of the interview material may have been lost during the act of translation, which may be considered another limitation of the current research.

8.5 Recommendations for Further Research

In response to the limitations of this research outlined above, future research in this area could productively include couples. This would allow us to gather a fuller picture of each relationship and deepen our understanding of how couples co-create meaning and also have different perspectives on their relationship issues. In addition to including couples, a second recommendation for future studies is to take a longitudinal approach. This would result in research findings that demonstrate how relationship difficulties and themes develop and change over time, and how individuals learn different ways of dealing with relationship difficulties as they build their ego identity statuses. Thirdly, future research which include the sexuality component in a romantic relationship, would enrich the understanding of young people in their exploration process, and add significantly to the understanding of attachment relationships. Lastly, further research could usefully examine how young adults resolve their relationship issues, and productively explore whether there is a significant relationship between ego identity statuses, attachment styles and relationship endurance or breakdown. These are just four of the areas for future research that emerged most clearly from this study, and which would enhance our understanding of the research findings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ETHICAL APPROVAL OF ISTANBUL MEDIPOL UNIVERSTIY

İSTANBUL MEDİPOL ÜNİVERSİTESİ GİRİŞİMSEL OLMAYAN KLİNİK ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK KURULU KARAR FORMU

BAŞVURU BİLGİLERİ

ARAŞTIRMANIN AÇIK ADI

Genç Erişkinlerin Yakın İlişkilerinde Bağlanma Şekilleri: Karma Yöntemli Araştırma

KOORDİNATÖR/SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACI UNVANI/ADI/SOYADI

Sevilay SİTRAVA

KOORDİNATÖR/SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACININ UZMANLIK ALANI

Uzman Psikolog

KOORDİNATÖR/SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACININ BULUNDUĞU MERKEZ

İstanbul

DESTEKLEYİCİ

-

ARAŞTIRMAYA KATILAN MERKEZLER TEK MERKEZ

ÇOK MERKEZLİ

ULUSAL

ULUSLARARASI

| Değerlendirilen Belgeler | Belge Adı | Tarihi | Versiyon Numarası | Dili | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------|
| | ARAŞTIRMA PROTOKOLÜ/PLANI | 19.01. 2016 | | Türkçe | İngilizce | Diğer |
| | BİLGİLENDİRİLMİŞ GÖNÜLLÜ OLUR FORMU | 19.01.2016 | | Türkçe | İngilizce | Diğer |
| Karar Bilgileri | Karar No: 29 | Tarih: 20/01/2016 | | | | |
| | Yukarıda bilgileri verilen Girişimsel Olmayan Klinik Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu başvuru dosyası ile ilgili belgeler araştırmanın gerekçe, amaç, yaklaşım ve yöntemleri dikkate alınarak incelenmiş ve araştırma etik ve bilimsel yönden uygun olduğuna “ oybirliği ” ile karar verilmiştir. | | | | | |

İSTANBUL MEDİPOL ÜNİVERSİTESİ GİRİŞİMSEL OLMAYAN KLİNİK ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK KURULU

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| BAŞKANIN UNVANI / ADI / SOYADI | Doç. Dr. Hanefi ÖZBEK |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|

| Unvanı/Adı/Soyadı | Uzmanlık Alanı | Kurumu | Cinsiyet | | Araştırma ile ilişki | | Katılım * | | İn |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|---|----------------------|---|-----------|---|----|
| | | | E | K | E | H | E | H | |
| Prof. Dr. Şeref DEMİRAYAK | Eczacılık | İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi | E | K | E | H | E | H | |
| Doç. Dr. Hanefi ÖZBEK | Farmakoloji | İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi | E | K | E | H | E | H | |
| Yrd. Doç. Dr. Sibel DOĞAN | Psiko-onkoloji | İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi | E | K | E | H | E | H | |
| Yrd. Doç. Dr. Devrim TARAKCI | Ergoterapi | İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi | E | K | E | H | E | H | |
| Yrd. Doç. Dr. İlknur KESKİN | Histoloji ve Embriyoloji | İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi | E | K | E | H | E | H | |
| Öğr. Gör. Dr. Mehmet Hikmet ÜÇİŞİK | Biyotek | İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi | E | K | E | H | E | H | |

* :Toplantıda Bulunma

APPENDIX B

Information Sheet

This is the information sheet for potential participants of the study, which is related to romantic and parental relationships during emerging adulthood.

The researcher and the project

This research is a part of a doctoral thesis in the field of Clinical Practice. The researcher is a doctoral student in the University of Exeter, United Kingdom, and a clinical psychologist working in the Psychological Counselling Centre of Istanbul Medipol University. This research has been approved by the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter and the Ethics Committee at Istanbul Medipol University. If you have any enquiries related to the research, you can contact Sevilay Sitrava by email on ssitrava@medipol.edu.tr or ss708@exeter.ac.uk. If you have any concerns related to ethics, please contact the chair of the Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter by email Lisa Leaver on l.a.leaver@ex.ac.uk, and the chair of the Ethics Committee at Istanbul Medipol University by email Assoc. Prof. Hanefi Ozbek on hozbek@medipol.edu.tr.

This research aims to investigate the young adults', aged between 18 and 25, attachment patterns with their romantic partners and parental figures, and their selection process of their romantic partners. Participation in the research has two stages. On the first stage, the participants are expected to fill in two scales, which are Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory, and The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status. Afterwards, the participants will be asked to attend interviews with the researcher about their romantic relationships.

How are participants selected?

You have been selected to participate because of the fact that you are aged in between 18 and 25, and will be offered an extra credit for your current class. And you will be offered one more extra credit if you could attend the interviews, after filling in the scales.

Procedure of the interviews

Participants will be interviewed about their romantic partners' choices and their relationships with their past or current romantic partners. During the interviews, if the participants become distressed, the researcher will try to calm down the participants by using crisis intervention skills. For the ones who need psychotherapy to work through the raised issues during the interview will be referred to other clinical psychologists working in the Psychological Counselling Centre in Istanbul Medipol University and in Beykoz Public Hospital which is located nearby the university. The contact details of

the clinical psychologists working in Beykoz Public Hospital will be provided to the participants.

Arrangements for withdrawal of participants

Your participation in the project will offer you extra credits in your related class, but you are entitled to withdraw at any point during filling in the scales and/or interviews or up to eight weeks after the scales and/or interviews. Please do so by speaking to the researcher or contacting her by email on ssitrava@medipol.edu.tr. If you decide to withdraw the study, you will not lose any credits in your related class.

Arrangements to ensure confidentiality

The scales and the interviews will be kept confidential and restricted from access for the other people rather than the researcher. All the questionnaire materials, which are filled in by the participants, will be kept in the locked cupboard in the researcher’s room. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher. As the data analysis is finished, the recordings and transcriptions will be destroyed. Your names will be given codes, and your answers will not be attributed to you personally in the write up. And your names and answers will be kept confidential and will not influence your academic career and position in the university as a student. The transcripts will be kept on the researcher’s own laptop and will be password protected.

Arrangements for dissemination of results

The final project will be sent to professional journals for possible publication. Participants may request a copy of the final report by emailing the researcher if they would like to have one.

Name:
Email address:

APPENDIX C

Demographic Information Form

Code (for the researcher):

Age:

Gender:

Telephone number:

E-mail address:

Relationship status:

Single..... In a relationship.....

If in a relationship, duration of your relationship:

APPENDIX D

The Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status- II (EOM-EIS-II)

Please give the related scale number that fits you best in the all items below.

1 2 3 4 5 6

**Strongly
Agree**

**Strongly
Disagree**

Response Scale: 1 = strongly agree 4 = disagree 2 = moderately agree 5 = moderately disagree 3 = agree 6 = strongly disagree.

1. I haven't chosen the occupation I really want to get into, and I'm just working at what is available until something better comes along.
2. When it comes to religion I just haven't found anything that appeals and I don't really feel the need to look.
3. My ideas about men's and women's roles are identical to my parents'. What has worked for them will obviously work for me.
4. There's no single "life style" which appeals to me more than another.
5. There are a lot of different kinds of people. I'm still exploring the many possibilities to find the right kind of friends for me.
6. I sometimes join in recreational activities when asked, but I rarely try anything on my own.
7. I haven't really thought about a "dating style." I'm not too concerned whether I date or not.
8. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.
9. I'm still trying to decide how capable I am as a person and what work will be right for me.
10. I don't give religion much thought and it doesn't bother me one way or the other.

11. There's so many ways to divide responsibilities in marriage, I'm trying to decide what will work for me.
12. I'm looking for an acceptable perspective for my own "life style", but haven't really found it yet.
13. There are many reasons for friendship, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.
14. While I don't have one recreational activity I'm really committed to, I'm experiencing numerous leisure outlets to identify one I can truly enjoy.
15. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.
16. I haven't really considered politics. It just doesn't excite me much.
17. I might have thought about a lot of different jobs, but there's never really been any question since my parents said what they wanted.
18. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.
19. I've never really seriously considered men's and women's roles in marriage. It just doesn't seem to concern me.
20. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "life style" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.
21. My parents know what's best for me in terms of how to choose my friends.
22. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.
23. I don't think about dating much. I just kind of take it as it comes.
24. I guess I'm pretty much like my folks when it comes to politics. I follow what they do in terms of voting and such.
25. I'm not really interested in finding the right job, any job will do. I just seem to flow with what is available.
26. I'm not sure what religion means to me. I'd like to make up my mind but I'm not done looking yet.
27. My ideas about men's and women's roles have come right for my parents and family. I haven't seen any need to look further.
28. My own views on a desirable life style were taught to me by my parents and I don't see any need to question what they taught me.
29. I don't have any real close friends, and I don't think I'm looking for one right now.
30. Sometimes I join in leisure activities, but I really don't see a need to look for a particular activity to do regularly.
31. I'm trying out different types of dating relationships. I just haven't decided what is best for me.

32. There are so many different political parties and ideals. I can't decide which to follow until I figure it all out.
33. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.
34. Religion is confusing to me right now. I keep changing my views on what is right and wrong for me.
35. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.
36. In finding an acceptable viewpoint to life itself, I find myself engaging in a lot of discussions with others and some self-exploration.
37. I only pick friends my parent would approve of.
38. I've always liked doing the same recreational activities my parents do and haven't ever seriously considered anything else.
39. I only go out with the type of people my parents expect me to date.
40. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.
41. My parents decided a long time ago what I should go into for employment and I'm following through their plans.
42. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.
43. I've been thinking about the roles that husbands and wives play a lot these days, and I'm trying to make a final decision.
44. My parents' views on life are good enough for me, I don't need anything else.
45. I've had many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.
46. After trying a lot of different recreational activities I've found one or more I really enjoy doing by myself or with friends.
47. My preferences about dating are still in the process of developing. I haven't fully decided yet.
48. I'm not sure about my political beliefs, but I'm trying to figure out what I can truly believe in.
49. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.
50. I attend the same church as my family has always attended. I've never really questioned why.
51. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways, and not I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.
52. I guess I just kind of enjoy life in general, and I don't see myself living by any particular viewpoint to life.

53. I don't have any close friends. I just like to hang around with the crowd.
54. I've been experiencing a variety of recreational activities in hope of finding one or more I can really enjoy for some time to come.
55. I've dated different types of people and know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and who I will date.
56. I really have never been involved in politics enough to have made a firm stand one way or the other.
57. I just can't decide what to do for an occupation. There are so many possibilities.
58. I've never really questioned my religion. If it's right for my parents it must be right for me.
59. Opinions on men's and women's roles seem so varied that I don't think much about it.
60. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own life style will be.
61. I really don't know what kind of friend is best for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly what friendship means to me.
62. All of my recreational preferences I got from my parents and I haven't really tried anything else.
63. I date only people my parents would approve of.
64. My folks have always had their own political and moral beliefs about issues like abortion and mercy killing and I've always gone along accepting what they have.

APPENDIX E

KİMLİK STATÜLERİ ÖLÇEĞİ

Bu anket 64 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Lütfen her maddeyi dikkatlice okuyunuz ve okuduğunuz maddenin sizin için ne kadar doğru veya yanlış olduğunu aşağıdaki ölçek numaralarına göre numaralandırınız. Şayet bir maddenin birden fazla bölümü varsa, cevabınızı maddenin tümüne göre veriniz.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Kesinlikle

Doğru

Kesinlikle

Yanlış

- 1 Çok Doğru
- 2 Oldukça Doğru
- 3 Biraz Doğru
- 4 Yanlış
- 5 Oldukça Yanlış
- 6 Çok Yanlış

1. Gerçekten istediğim bir meslek seçmiş değilim. Karşıma daha iyisi çıkana kadar bulacağım herhangi bir işte çalışırım.

2. Din konusunda aklıma yatan şeyi bulmuş değilim ve bir araştırma gereği de hissetmiyorum.

3. Erkeklerin ve kadınların rolleri hakkındaki düşüncelerim anababaminkilerle aynıdır. Onlar için geçerli olan benim için de geçerlidir.

4. Bana hitap eden tek bir yaşam biçimi yok ve bu konu hakkında pek fazla düşünmüyorum.
5. Birbirinden çok farklı insanlar var. Ben hala bana en uygun arkadaşları bulabilmek için çeşitli şeyler deniyorum.
6. Bazen teklif edildiğinde boş zaman uğraşlarına katıldığım olur. Ancak kendi başıma bir şey denediğim enderdir.
7. Flört konusunda etraflıca düşünmüş değilim. Zaten flört edip etmemek beni pek fazla ilgilendirmiyor.
8. Politika çok fazla değişen bir şey. Fakat ben politik olarak neyi desteklediğime ve neye inandığıma çok önem veriyorum.
9. Bir birey olarak ne kadar yetenekli olduğuma ve benim için hangi işlerin uygun olacağına hala karar vermeye çalışıyorum.
10. Din konusunda pek düşünmüyorum ve bu beni herhangi bir şekilde rahatsız etmiyor.
11. Evlilikte sorumlulukları bölüşmenin birçok yolu var, benim için hangisinin uygun olacağına karar vermeye çalışıyorum.
12. Nasıl bir yaşam biçiminin bana uygun olacağını düşünüyorum, ancak henüz bir şey bulabilmiş değilim.
13. Arkadaşlık etmek için bir çok neden vardır. Ama ben yakın arkadaşlarımı kendi karar verdiğim belirli bazı değerleri ve benzerlikleri temel alarak seçiyorum.
14. Henüz gerçekten benimsediğim bir boş zaman uğraşım olmamasına rağmen değişik uğraşlar deneyerek, gerçekten ilgilenebileceğim bir uğraş bulmaya çalışıyorum.
15. Geçmiş deneyimlerime dayanarak, artık nasıl bir flört istediğime karar verdim.
16. Politika hakkında pek düşünmüş değilim. Bu konu beni fazla ilgilendirmiyor.

17. Çok çeşitli işler üzerinde düşünebilirdim ama annem-babam ne istediklerini söylediklerinden dolayı hiçbirini sorgulamadım.
18. Her kişinin dini inancı kendine özgüdür. Bu konuyu tekrar tekrar düşündüm ve neye inanabileceğimi biliyorum.
19. Erkek ve kadınların evlilikteki rollerini ciddi bir şekilde düşünmüş değilim. Bu konu beni pek ilgilendirmiyor.
20. Uzun bir süre düşündükten sonra, benim için neyin ideal bir yaşam biçimi olduğu hakkındaki kişisel görüşümü geliştirdim ve bu görüşü hiç kimsenin değiştirebileceğine inanmıyorum.
21. Arkadaşlarımı nasıl seçeceğim konusunda benim için en iyi olanı annem babam bilir.
22. Birçok boş zaman etkinliği arasından düzenli olarak yapabileceğim bir (veya birkaç) uğraşı seçtim ve bu seçimlerimden memnunum.
23. Flört etme konusunda fazla düşünmüyorum. Olayları akışına bırakıyorum.
24. Politikaya gelince sanırım bu konuda anne- babama oldukça benziyorum. Belirli bir partiyi benimsemiş ve benzeri konularda onlar ne yapıyorsa, ben de onu yapıyorum.
25. Benim için en uygun işi bulmak beni pek ilgilendirmiyor, herhangi bir iş olabilir. Yani karşıma ne iş çıkarsa çalışırım.
26. Benim için dinin ne anlam ifade ettiği konusunda pek emin değilim. Bu konuda bir karara varmayı istiyorum ama henüz arayışım bitmiş değil.
27. Erkeklerin ve kadınların rolleri hakkında düşüncelerim anne- babam ve ailemden geliyor. Konu hakkında daha fazla düşünmeye gerek duymadım.
28. Arzu ettiğim yaşam biçimini anne-babamdan öğrendim ve onların bana öğrettiklerini sorgulama ihtiyacı hissetmiyorum.
29. Gerçekten yakın bir arkadaşım yok ve şu anda böyle birini aradığımı da zannetmiyorum.

30. Bazen boş zaman uğraşlarına katıldığım olur ama düzenli olarak yapacağım belirli bir etkinlik bulmak için pek gereksinim hissetmiyorum.

31. Değişik flört ilişkilerini deniyorum. Benim için neyin en iyi olduğuna henüz karar vermiş değilim.

32. Çok değişik politik partiler ve görüşler var. Konu kafamda bir açıklığa kavuşana kadar bunlardan hangisini izleyeceğime karar veremiyorum.

33. Kafamda oluşması bir hayli zamanımı aldı ama şimdi bir meslek olarak neyi istediğimi gerçekten biliyorum.

34. Din konusu şu anda kafamı karıştırıyor. Benim için neyin doğru olduğu, neyin yanlış olduğu hakkındaki görüşlerimi değiştirip duruyorum.

35. Erkeklerin ve kadınların evlilik rolleri hakkında bir müddet düşündüm ve benim için neyin en uygun olacağına karar verdim.

36. Yaşam hakkında bana uygun bir bakış açısı kazanmak için başkalarıyla birçok fikir alış-verişine giriyor ve biraz da kendimi tanımaya çalışıyorum.

37. Ben sadece anne-babamın onaylayacağı arkadaşlar seçerim.

38. Her zaman anne-babamın yaptığı boş zaman uğraşlarının aynılarını yapmaktan hoşlanmış ve hiçbir zaman başka şeyler yapmayı ciddi olarak düşünmemişimdir.

39. Sadece anne-babamın flört etmemi beklediği tipte kişilerle çıkarım.

40. Politik inançlarımı baştan sona düşündüm ve görüyorum ki, anne babamın inandıklarının bazı yönlerine katılıyorum bazı yönlerine ise katılmıyorum.

41. Anne-babam bir süre önce meslek olarak neyi seçmem gerektiğine karar verdiler ve ben onların planları doğrultusunda hareket ediyorum.

42. Dini inançla ilgili kendime ciddi sorular sorduğum bir dönemim oldu ama şimdi bir birey olarak neye inandığımı biliyorum.

43. Bugünlerde eşlerin evlilikteki rolleri hakkında düşünüyorum ve bu konuda bir karara varmaya çalışıyorum.
44. Anne-babamın yaşam hakkındaki görüşleri benim için de geçerlidir. Başka bir şeye ihtiyaç duymuyorum.
45. Çok çeşitli arkadaşlıklar denedim; artık şimdi, bir arkadaşta neler aradığımı çok iyi biliyorum.
46. Birçok değişik uğraş denedikten sonra, kendi başıma veya arkadaşlarla birlikte yapmaktan gerçekten hoşlandığım bir veya birkaç uğraş buldum.
47. Flört hakkındaki düşüncelerim halen gelişme sürecinde, henüz tamamen karar vermiş değilim.
48. Politik inançlarımdan henüz pek emin değilim, neye inanabileceğimi belirlemeye çalışıyorum.
49. Karar vermem uzun bir süre aldı ama şimdi bir meslek için hangi yönde hareket edeceğimi kesinlikle biliyorum.
50. Anne-babam namaz kılma oruç tutma gibi dini konularda nasıl davranıyorlarsa, ben de aynı şekilde davranıyorum.
51. Evli çiftlerin aile sorumluluklarını paylaşabilecekleri pek çok yol vardır. Ben bunlar üzerinde epeyce düşündüm ve şimdi kendim için ne istediğimi kesinlikle biliyorum.
52. Genelde yaşamdan hoşlanıyorum ve tek bir yaşam biçimine bağlı kalabileceğimi sanmıyorum.
53. Hiç yakın arkadaşım yok. Çeşitli gruplara takılmak hoşuma gidiyor.
54. Uzun bir süre yapmaktan hoşlanacağım bir (veya birkaç) boş zaman uğraşısı bulabilme umuduyla çeşitli uğraşlar deniyorum.
55. Değişik tipte kişilerle flört ettim ve şimdi flört hakkında "kurallarımın" ne olduğunu ve nasıl birisiyle flört edeceğimi kesinlikle biliyorum.

56. Belirli bir politik görüşü benimseyecek kadar politika ile gerçekten ilgilenmiş değilim.
57. Öyle çeşitli seçenekler ve olanaklar var ki, meslek olarak ne yapabileceğime bir türlü karar veremiyorum.
58. Dinimi asla sorgulamadım. Şayet anne-babam için doğru olan o ise, benim için de doğru olan odur.
59. Erkeklerin ve kadınların rolleri hakkında öyle çeşitli görüşler var ki, bu konuyu pek düşünmüyorum.
60. Kendimi epeyce inceledikten sonra, yaşam biçimimin ne olacağı hakkında kesin bir görüşe vardım.
61. Benim için en iyi arkadaşın ne olduğunu gerçekten bilmiyorum. Arkadaşlığın bana tam olarak neyi ifade ettiğini anlamaya çalışıyorum.
62. Boş zaman uğraşları ile ilgili tüm tercihlerimi anne-babamdan edindim ve başka bir şey pek denemedim.
63. Ben sadece anne-babamın onaylayacağı kişilerle flört ederim.
64. Anne-babamın kürtaj, idam, yolsuzluk gibi çeşitli konularda kendi politik ve ahlaki inançları olmuştur ve ben her zaman onların inançlarını benimsemişimdir.

APPENDIX F

THE EXPERIENCES in CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS INVENTORY- REVISED (ECRI-R)

The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. I am interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Please respond to each statement by ticking the numbers from 1 to 7, which stand for Strongly Disagree, and Strongly Agree, respectively.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love. | | | | | | | |
| 2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me. | | | | | | | |
| 3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me. | | | | | | | |
| 4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them. | | | | | | | |
| 5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her. | | | | | | | |
| 6. I worry a lot about my relationships. | | | | | | | |
| 7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else. | | | | | | | |
| 8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me. | | | | | | | |
| 9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me. | | | | | | | |
| 10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself. | | | | | | | |
| 11. I do not often worry about being abandoned. | | | | | | | |
| 12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like. | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason. | | | | | | | |
| 14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away. | | | | | | | |
| 15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am. | | | | | | | |
| 16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner. | | | | | | | |
| 17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people. | | | | | | | |
| 18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry. | | | | | | | |
| 19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down. | | | | | | | |
| 20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner. | | | | | | | |
| 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners. | | | | | | | |
| 22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners. | | | | | | | |
| 23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners. | | | | | | | |
| 24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners. | | | | | | | |
| 25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close. | | | | | | | |
| 26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner. | | | | | | | |
| 27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner. | | | | | | | |
| 28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner. | | | | | | | |
| 29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need. | | | | | | | |
| 30. I tell my partner just about everything. | | | | | | | |
| 31. I talk things over with my partner. | | | | | | | |
| 32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me. | | | | | | | |
| 33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners. | | | | | | | |
| 34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners. | | | | | | | |
| 35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner. | | | | | | | |
| 36. My partner really understands my needs and me. | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX G

Yakın İlişkiler Yaşantılar Envanteri- II (YİYE- II)

Her bir maddenin ilişkilerinizdeki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi ne oranda yansıttığını karşılardaki 7 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde işaretleyiniz.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Hiç katılmıyorum Kesinlikle katılıyorum

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Gerçekte ne hissettiğimi birlikte olduğum kişiye göstermemeyi tercih ederim. | | | | | | | |
| 2. Terk edilmekten korkarım. | | | | | | | |
| 3. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişilere yakın olmak konusunda çok rahatım. | | | | | | | |
| 4. İlişkilerim konusunda çok kaygılıyım. | | | | | | | |
| 5. Birlikte olduğum kişi bana yakınlaşmaya başlar başlamaz kendimi çekiyorum. | | | | | | | |
| 6. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişilerin beni, benim onları umursadığım kadar umursamayacaklarından endişelenirim. | | | | | | | |
| 7. Romantik ilişkide olduğum kişi çok yakın olmak istediğinde rahatsızlık duyarım. | | | | | | | |
| 8. Birlikte olduğum kişiyi kaybedeceğim diye kaygılanırım. | | | | | | | |
| 9. Birlikte olduğum kişilere açılma konusunda kendimi rahat hissetmem. | | | | | | | |
| 10. Genellikle, birlikte olduğum kişinin benim için hissettiklerinin benim onun için hissettiklerim kadar güçlü olmasını arzu ederim. | | | | | | | |
| 11. Birlikte olduğum kişiye yakın olmayı isterim, ama sürekli kendimi geri çekerim. | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 12. Genellikle birlikte olduğum kişiyle tamamen bütünleşmek isterim ve bu bazen onları korkutup benden uzaklaştırır. | | | | | | | |
| 13. Birlikte olduğum kişilerin benimle çok yaklaşması beni gerginleştirir. | | | | | | | |
| 14. Yalnız kalmaktan endişelenirim. | | | | | | | |
| 15. Özel duygu ve düşüncelerimi birlikte olduğum kişiyle paylaşmak konusunda oldukça rahatımdır. | | | | | | | |
| 16. Çok yakın olma arzunu bazen insanları korkutup uzaklaştırır. | | | | | | | |
| 17. Birlikte olduğum kişiyle çok yakınlaşmaktan kaçınmaya çalışırım. | | | | | | | |
| 18. Birlikte olduğum kişi tarafından sevildiğimin sürekli ifade edilmesine gereksinim duyarım. | | | | | | | |
| 19. Birlikte olduğum kişiyle kolaylıkla yakınlaşıyorum. | | | | | | | |
| 20. Birlikte olduğum kişileri bazen daha fazla duygu ve bağlılık göstermeleri için zorladığımı hissedirim. | | | | | | | |
| 21. Birlikte olduğum kişilere güvenip dayanma konusunda kendimi rahat bırakmakta zorlanırım. | | | | | | | |
| 22. Terk edilmekten pek korkmam. | | | | | | | |
| 23. Birlikte olduğum kişilere fazla yakın olmamayı tercih ederim. | | | | | | | |
| 24. Birlikte olduğum kişinin bana ilgi göstermesini sağlayamazsam üzülür ya da kızarım. | | | | | | | |
| 25. Birlikte olduğum kişiye hemen hemen her şeyi anlatırım. | | | | | | | |
| 26. Birlikte olduğum kişinin bana istediğim kadar yakın olmadığını düşünürüm. | | | | | | | |
| 27. Sorunlarımı ve kaygılarımı genellikle birlikte olduğum kişiyle tartışırım. | | | | | | | |
| 28. Bir ilişkide olmadığım zaman kendimi biraz kaygılı ve güvensiz hissedirim. | | | | | | | |
| 29. Birlikte olduğum kişilere güvenip dayanmakta rahatımdır. | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 30. Birlikte olduğum kişi istediğim kadar yakınımda olmadığında kendimi engellenmiş hissedirim. | | | | | | | |
| 31. Birlikte olduğum kişilerden teselli, öğüt ya da yardım istemekten rahatsız olmam. | | | | | | | |
| 32. İhtiyaç duyduğumda birlikte olduğum kişiye ulaşamazsam kendimi engellenmiş hissedirim. | | | | | | | |
| 33. İhtiyaç duyduğumda birlikte olduğum kişiden yardım istemek işe yarar. | | | | | | | |
| 34. Birlikte olduğum kişiler beni onaylamadıkları zaman kendimi gerçekten kötü hissedirim. | | | | | | | |
| 35. Rahatlama ve güvencenin yanı sıra birçok şey için birlikte olduğum kişiyi ararım. | | | | | | | |
| 36. Birlikte olduğum kişi benden ayrı zaman geçirdiğinde üzülürüm. | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX H

Interview Questions

- 1) How would you describe your recent romantic relationship?
- 2) Can you describe your romantic partner in details? Could you please explain the characteristics of your partner that you like and dislike?
- 3) What kind of traits of your partner attracted you and eventually made you decide to date with him/her?
- 4) What kind of problems do you experience with your romantic partner?
- 5) What kind of discussions/arguments/quarrels do you have with your romantic partner?
- 6) After a disagreement or quarrel, how do you react and what do you expect from your romantic partner in terms of coping with problems?

APPENDIX J

Table 12. Coding schedule

| ID number | Category development | All participants' answers and categories being retrieved |
|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 23 | Meaning unit | We still have some minor arguments here and there, because we have been away from each other again since the beginning of the summer. For example, she says "you didn't tell me you miss me". Because I don't verbalize this, it was becoming an issue, so we would argue. |
| | Condensed meaning unit | She wanted me to say "I love you, I miss you" every time on phone. |
| | Category | Different affection styles |
| | Meaning unit | Because of the distance, we have an issue; because of the three years in college we spent our time together. Because I didn't tell her I missed her, we argued about the same topic two-three times in a week. When I called her in the morning, she would tell me "you didn't say 'I love you', or you didn't say 'I miss you'". |
| | Condensed meaning unit | She wanted me to say "I love you, I miss you" every time on phone. |
| | Category | Different affection styles |
| | Meaning unit | I think the jealousy thing began to happen since I came here (place name). I would be so tired by the time it was time for bed, so I started to go to bed early. When it was 5-6 p.m. in Turkey, I would go to bed and talk for only thirty minutes with her. She made this an issue and became jealous. |
| | Condensed meaning unit | She wanted more time and attention, but I need time for myself. |
| | Category | Different affection styles |
| | 44 | Meaning unit |
| Condensed meaning unit | | Both her family and her boyfriend's family interfere in their relationship. |
| Category | | Family Intrusiveness |

Meaning unit His parents influence my boyfriend; he tries to continue the traditions that his parents want him to follow. If he actually questioned things, he would behave logically but he doesn't when it comes to his family.

Condensed meaning unit His parents influence my boyfriend.

Category **Family Intrusiveness**

Meaning unit He used to interfere in the way I used makeup; he would make comments about the things I wore. He behaved the way he wanted when we were with his friends; he did not want to do the things that I wanted him to do, such as holding my hand or hugging me.

Condensed meaning unit Interfering in the things that I do, wear, and want to do.

Category **Dominance in terms of controlling behaviour**

Meaning unit Because of his busy schedule, he wasn't able to pay me attention, and I would be upset. I would say, "why don't you spend time on me?"

Condensed meaning unit Wanting attention

Category **Different affection styles**

150 Meaning unit Because I would be upset about my family and I would be distant, he would ask "what happened, what happened?" persistently instead of giving me space, and if it is something I don't want to talk about and if he says something about my father, I get upset.

Condensed meaning unit When I'm upset about my family, he insists on hearing from me about what happened, although I don't want to talk about it.

Category **Intrusiveness**

Meaning unit He doesn't like my friends back in (Place name) because they have dated many guys and these kinds of things are talked about between the men and he hears about them of course. I spend a lot of time with these girls; if he says something about them I get defensive. He thinks that they are giving me the wrong advice and pointing me in the wrong direction.

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| | Condensed meaning unit | Talking negatively about her girlfriends in her hometown. |
| | Category | Intrusiveness |
| 168 | Meaning unit | If we see things differently and if he isn't able to see it from my perspective, I get upset, and we become argumentative. |
| | Condensed meaning unit | Having different perspectives on topics. |
| | Category | Power struggless |
| 177 | Meaning unit | When I want to do things with my friends, it is usually a problem, because she doesn't have many friends here. When I want to do things with my male friends, she feels she is left alone, so she gets upset and we sometimes argue about that. She wants me to spend all my time with her instead of my own friends. I am really into my long-term friends. I get stuck between them and my girlfriend sometimes. |
| | Condensed meaning unit | His girlfriend wants him to spend his spare time with her instead of his male friends. |
| | Category | Perceived clinginess of romantic partner |
| 185 | Meaning unit | We have serious arguments about sexuality when we talk about one-night stands. While it is normal for a guy, it is not for a girl according to him. This drives me crazy. I hate it when someone has to act based on what other people think. His family is from (Place name) and they are very cultured but they are closer to religion while I believe in God but religion as a whole is a big question mark for me. So, this is the point over which we have serious arguments. |
| | Condensed meaning unit | Having different opinions about sexuality. |
| | Category | Cultural/ religious differences |