

THE ROLE OF DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF AND ATTACHMENT ANXIETY
IN THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN
FAMILY OF ORIGIN FUNCTIONING AND COUPLE RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

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To my dearest parents and my sisters

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the association between family of origin (FOO) functioning and couple relationship quality based on the concepts of Bowen's family systems theory. The indirect effects of differentiation of self and attachment anxiety on this link were examined. In order to do so, one hundred seventy-three individuals (100 females and 73 males, ages 22-52) who were married for a minimum of 6 months to maximum of 15 years were recruited for the study. Participants completed the demographic form, Family of Origin Scale, Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised, Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the anxiety subscale of Experiences in Close Relationships Scale. Indirect effects were assessed via bootstrapping sampling method in order to test the underlying mechanisms for the link between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality. Results provided considerable support for the relationships among the study variables and hypotheses. FOO functioning was found to be positively associated with couple relationship quality and differentiation of self, and negatively with attachment anxiety. In addition, couple relationship quality was positively associated with differentiation of self and negatively with attachment anxiety. Differentiation of self and attachment anxiety were found to have significant indirect effects on the link between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality. The findings are discussed in line with relevant literature as well as implications for clinical practices and future research.

Keywords: family of origin functioning, couple relationship quality, differentiation of self, attachment anxiety

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı Bowen'ın aile sistemi kuramına dayanarak kök aile fonksiyonelliği ve çift ilişki kalitesi arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Bağlanma kaygısı ve benliğin ayrımlaşmasının bu ilişkideki dolaylı etkisi incelenmiştir. Çalışmaya en az 6 ay-en fazla 15 yıldır evli olan 173 katılımcı (22-52 yaşları arasında 100 kadın ve 73 erkek) dahil edilmiştir. Katılımcılar demografik bilgi formu, Kök Aile Ölçeği, Çift Uyum Ölçeği, Yakın İlişkilerde Yaşantılar Envanteri-II (kaygı alt ölçeği) ve Benliğin Ayrımlaşması Ölçeğini doldurmuşlardır. Kök aile fonksiyonelliği ve çift ilişki kalitesi arasındaki ilişkinin altında yatan olası mekanizmaları incelemek için bağlanma kaygısı ve benliğin ayrımlaşmasının dolaylı etkileri önyükleme örneklem yöntemi kullanılarak değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkiyi ve çalışma hipotezlerini desteklemiştir. Kök aile fonksiyonelliği, çift ilişki kalitesi ve benliğin ayrımlaşması ile pozitif olarak ilişkili, bağlanma kaygısı ile negatif olarak ilişkili bulunmuştur. Ek olarak, çift ilişki kalitesi benliğin ayrımlaşması ile pozitif olarak ilişkili ve bağlanma kaygısı ile negatif olarak ilişkilidir. Benliğin ayrımlaşması ve bağlanma kaygısının kök aile fonksiyonelliği ve çift uyumu arasındaki ilişkideki dolaylı etkisi istatistiksel olarak anlamlı çıkmıştır. Bulgular alan yazın ışığında, klinik uygulamalar ve gelecekte yürütülebilecek araştırmalar açısından tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kök aile fonksiyonelliği, çift ilişki kalitesi, bağlanma kaygısı, benliğin ayrımlaşması

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A large body of research has been devoted to studying the effects of family of origin (FOO) relationships on individual functioning [e.g., self-esteem, self-monitoring, (Huang, 1999), anxiety (Benson, Larson, Wilson, & Demo, 1993), and depressive mood (Greenberg & Chen, 1996)]. Recently, greater number of studies have moved beyond the impact on individual functioning to focus on the influences on adult children's romantic relationship functioning. For example, studies addressed the link between FOO experiences and adult children's relationship satisfaction (Andrews, Capaldi, Foster, & Hops, 2000; Martinson, Holman, Larson, & Jackson, 2010), relationship quality (Crockett & Randall, 2006) and couple communication (Dennison, Koerner, & Segrin, 2014; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Whitton et al., 2008). While the studies offered a link between the FOO experiences and romantic relationship outcomes, the mechanisms underlying this association has not been studied sufficiently. Limited number of research examined the role of mediating variables such as attachment behaviors (Knapp, Sandberg, Novak, & Larson, 2015), emotional health (depression and anxiety; Brown, Larson, Harper, & Holman, 2016), partner antisocial behavior (Andrews et al., 2000), and conflict behaviors (Crockett & Randall, 2006; Dennison et al., 2014) that may play a role. In line with Bowen's family systems theory, the current study aims to explore the roles of differentiation of self and attachment anxiety in the association between FOO relationship functioning and couple relationship quality. According to Bowen, FOO relationships form a basis for future romantic relationships and individuals' functioning is governed by differentiation of self and anxiety (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Based on Bowen's theory, the link between FOO experiences and current

romantic relationship quality is considered to be explained by differentiation of self and attachment anxiety.

In the following sections, first, the theoretical background of the current study and existing literature on study variables will be presented. Then, hypotheses and the proposed model of this study will be presented.

1.1. Couple Relationship Quality

The term “relationship quality” have been called relationship satisfaction, adjustment and happiness in the past (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). While relationship satisfaction and happiness are described as subjective evaluations of the positive affect in romantic relationships, relationship adjustment focuses on both the evaluative and behavioral aspects of romantic relationships (Spanier, 1976). Relationship adjustment and relationship quality are also interchangeably used terms. In the current study, to measure couple relationship quality, Spanier’s (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale was used and Spanier’s description of relationship quality was taken as a basis. Accordingly, well-functioning romantic relationships include low levels of disagreement, high interaction and quality, good communication and problem-solving skills, and high levels of commitment to the relationship (Spanier & Lewis, 1980).

Couple relationship quality is multi-directional and has a great number of effects on the lives of individuals. Many studies have examined these effects. For example, couple relationship quality has been studied in line with physical health (Robles, Slatcher, Trombello, & McGinn, 2014), life satisfaction (Gustavson, Roysamb, Borren, Torvik, & Karevold, 2016), as well as personal well-being (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007). There are also meta-analyses that were conducted on these associations. A meta-analysis with 93 cross-sectional and longitudinal studies concluded that marital quality and personal well-being were positively and significantly

associated with each other (Proulx et al., 2007). The personal well-being variables that were associated with marital quality included self-esteem, global happiness, physical health and life satisfaction. The link between marital satisfaction and personal well-being was explained by positive influences of supportive marriages on partners' well-being, including self-esteem and physical health. On the contrary, marriages with low levels of cohesion and conflict-ridden marriages were associated with negative aspects of well-being such as self-esteem. A more recent meta-analysis with 126 studies over the past 50 years concluded that greater marital quality was associated with better physical health such as lower risk of mortality. On the other hand, poor marital quality was found as a risk factor for poor health outcomes such as disease severity, mortality, and blood pressure (Robles et al., 2014). Similar to previous research, the link between marital quality and health outcomes was explained by marital conflicts and marital support. While marital support was related to better health, marital conflict was related to poor health. In addition, marriage was seen as a key context to initiate and maintain health-enhancing behaviors such as diet and physical activity. Lastly, a longitudinal study with 239 heterosexual couples investigated the degree to which relationship quality predicts change in life satisfaction over a three-year period. Results suggested that relationship quality predicted change in life satisfaction (Gustavson et al., 2016). There was a bidirectional link between relationship quality and life satisfaction. Individuals' intimate relationships was an important aspect of their lives and in turn also was an important domain for life satisfaction. Concurrently, life satisfaction would influence individuals' evaluation of their relationships. For instance, positive view of life may positively influence the way an individual views his or her intimate partner. Moreover, high levels of life satisfaction would be related to behaviors (e.g. increased trust in others) that may enhance relationship quality.

Couple relationship quality not only has influences on individuals' lives but also on their children and families at large. For example, in their study with 297 parents and their married offspring, Amato and Booth (2001) investigated the longitudinal link between parents' marital quality and offspring's marital quality. In order to do so, parents' marital quality, offspring's marital quality, parent-child relationship quality, and offspring's recollections of parental discord were measured. According to the results, parents' reports of marital quality in 1980 predicted the offspring's reports of marital quality in 1997. Children who were exposed to parental discord and perceived their parents' relationships negatively might have replicated these relationship patterns in their own marriages. Thus, the study suggested a framework for intergenerational transmission of marital quality. Marital quality has also been studied in relation to adolescent children's internalizing problems. A longitudinal study with 428 Dutch families found that low marital quality was directly associated with adolescent internalizing problems (Ha, Overbeek, Vermulst, & Engels, 2009). High marital quality was associated with the more behavioral control, less psychological control and more supportive behavior in parents over time. Behavioral control was adolescents' perceptions of their parents' controlling their activities while psychological control was the adolescents' perceptions of parents' use of manipulative strategies to control adolescents' behaviors. Thus, the association between parents' marital quality and adolescent internalizing problems could be explained by parenting behaviors. Moreover, parents' marital quality plays a role not only on adolescents' behaviors but also on children's behavior. For instance, a study with 78 mothers concluded that marital quality was related to children's problematic behaviors such as hyperactivity, conduct problems and peer problems (Mark & Pike, 2017). Children's exposure to conflict and hostility in the family may be upsetting for children and encouraging them to imitate antisocial and aggressive behaviors in everyday situations. Also,

parents with higher marital quality may have the tendency to raise children who displayed higher levels of prosocial behaviors. Consequently, understanding key contributors of the development of good relationship quality are important for many aspects of individuals' and families' functioning.

In this study, Bowen's family system's theory has been adopted in order to examine the couple relationship quality. Bowen developed a family systems theory that has an important role in the development of the field of couple and family therapy (CFT). Although Bowen has influences on the clinical perspectives of many CFTs, there is scarce research investigating his theory. The current study uses Bowen's family systems theory as a basis to understand the links between individual, family and couple relationship functioning. Bowen proposed that chronic anxiety and low levels of differentiation are sources of family dysfunction and marital conflicts (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Thus, both differentiation and anxiety were considered to be associated with couple relationship quality in this study. In the next section, Bowen's concepts of differentiation of self and anxiety are explained to understand how individual functioning is related to romantic relationship quality.

1.2. Individual Functioning

1.2.1. Differentiation of Self

According to Bowen's family systems theory, two constructs define individuals' level of functioning: differentiation of self and anxiety. Differentiation of self is described as one's ability to balance their own emotional and intellectual (feelings-and-thoughts) functioning (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Individuals who distinguish between their feeling processes and intellectual processes are "differentiated" and the extent to which they are able to separate these two processes determine their level of differentiation (Bowen, 1976). In other words, having the

“capacity to distinguish between feelings and thoughts is the ability to choose between having one’s functioning guided by feelings or thoughts” (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 96). The emotional atmosphere in which an individual grows up determines his/her ability to differentiate thinking from feeling. A family environment with a low intensity of emotionality or low pressure for togetherness allows the child to grow to feel, think and act for himself/herself. Thus, the child can see his/her siblings, parents, and others as separate and distinct individuals. So, the child does not function in reaction to the emotional neediness and anxieties of others. Achieving such emotional separation from his/her family also allows the child to achieve sufficient emotional separation in other relationships (Kerr, 1988). Specifically, individuals who cannot accomplish the necessary emotional separation from their families have the least ability to distinguish feeling from thinking. When individuals increase their capacity to differentiate thinking and feeling, and differentiation from others, they can learn to use that capacity to manage their lives and solve problems (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Ability to differentiate between thinking and feeling helps individuals to be flexible and adaptable in coping with life stresses (Bowen, 1976).

Bowen suggested four indicators to define the levels of differentiation of self: emotional reactivity, emotional cutoff, fusion with others, and the ability to take an “I” position (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Fusion and emotional cut off are categorized as interpersonal dimensions of differentiation problems while emotional reactivity and taking an “I” position is categorized as intrapsychic dimensions of differentiation problems (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). In this study, these four indicators were used as measures of differentiation.

The first indicator, emotional reactivity, includes one’s tendency to respond to the environment with autonomic emotional responses and emotional flooding (Skowron & Schmidt, 2003). If the family’s emotional environment has an intense “inherit” anxiety, individuals have a

tendency to manage themselves and their relationships by automatic emotional reactivity. Thus, due to this automatic emotional reactivity, individuals remain in an anxious and highly reactive environment while being impaired by it (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

The second indicator, emotional cutoff, is about fears of intimacy in relationships and adopting behavioral defenses against those fears (Skowron & Schmidt, 2003). For example, individuals cut off from their FOO because they want to reduce the distress created by being in emotional contact with them. As a result, the emotional cutoff decreases the anxiety described above (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

The third indicator, fusion with others, involves emotional over-involvement and over-identification with significant others, namely adopting one's parents' beliefs, values and expectations without questioning (Skowron & Schmidt, 2003). In order to have higher levels of differentiation, individuals are expected to have less emotional fusion. When there is less emotional fusion, individuals' relationships are strengthened with integrity, mutual respect, and trust (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Lastly, the fourth indicator, "I" position, is about one's clearly defined sense of self and ability to stay connected to one's beliefs even when pressured to do otherwise (Skowron & Schmidt, 2003). Greater ability to take an "I" position in relationships is suggested to be associated with high levels of differentiation (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

1.2.2. Attachment Anxiety

In Bowen's theory, the other construct that defines individuals' level of functioning is chronic anxiety. Bowen defined anxiety as a response of the organism to threat, real or imagined. Bowen suggested that such chronic anxiety strains individuals' ability to adapt (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Chronic anxiety occurs when there is a disturbance in the relationship system. Both real

and anticipated events, for instance, an adult child's leaving home, may cause disruption of family systems' balance. The important basis of anxiety is individuals' responses to disturbances. Individuals have tendency to successfully adjust to potentially stressful events when they can sustain comfortable connections with emotionally significant others (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Increasing anxiety damages individuals' adaptive capabilities to stress. Anxious stress reaction impairs both individuals' own functioning and functioning of others with whom they are emotionally connected (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The level of chronic anxiety individuals experience is related with their learned responses formed during developmental years. This level of chronic anxiety is passed over time across generations.

Bowen stated that individuals' level of chronic anxiety varies and this variation could be explained by the multigenerational family history (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Through generations, families' level of chronic anxiety gradually increases and families become ruled by automatic emotional reactivity and subjectivity. Processes of this generational transition occurs in the following order: children in the same family have different degrees of emotional separation from their parents, individuals marry with spouses who have same level of emotional separation from their families, children of these marriages have unequal level of emotional separation and marry individuals like themselves. Thus, this process repeats across generations and may create families in which individuals have little emotional separation and differentiation from one another. When undifferentiation increases, functioning of family members becomes more relationship-dependent meaning becoming emotionally fused which in turn, creates chronic anxiety (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

One of the facets of differentiation, fusion with others, is related to reduction of anxiety. Individuals who are "undifferentiated" from their FOO have a tendency to fuse with others to

reduce their anxiety. According to Bowen, individuals are in search of partners who function at the same developmental level with themselves and repeat the same style of relationships they had with their FOO. Thus, individuals choose spouses who have equal level of differentiation of self (Bowen, 1976; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Spouses' level of differentiation gives an idea about the potential amount of undifferentiation there might be as future trouble in the family. When there is great undifferentiation in spouses, the amount of potential problems is great too.

Undifferentiation in the marital relationship may be seen as marital conflict, and it may also be seen in the undifferentiation of parents from one or more children or in one spouse's significant amount of undifferentiation in general (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

The link between differentiation and anxiety is well-defined in Bowen's theory and the underlying mechanisms of this link are explained by FOO relationships. As the individuals have grown more emotionally connected to their family, the more they feel anxiety about assuming responsibility for themselves and being on their own (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). According to Bowen, well-differentiated individuals neither avoid nor become highly anxious in establishing relationships because they feel confident in their skills to overcome emotionally intense relationships. Also, they are more likely to respect the viewpoints of others even when these viewpoints are divergent from their own. Thus, they do not depend on confirmation from others to improve their own well-being. This is explained by their consistency between the way of being and the way of thinking. In addition, the level of differentiation is considered to be linked with individuals' ability to sustain emotionally significant relationship networks. Individuals with a lower level of differentiation need more emotionally supportive relationships. Less differentiated individuals come from less differentiated families and their families are generally fragmented. For this reason, undifferentiated individuals generally do not have supportive

relationships as a result of fragmented family members' emotional isolation with each other. Consequently, these individuals become overly dependent on their supportive relationships (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Another theory where interpersonal and family relationships are central to functional development is attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988). Bowlby, founder of attachment theory, stated that the relationship between caregiver and the child forms the internal working model (IWM) that have influences on the way we relate to significant others through our life (Bowlby, 1988). This mental picture of attachment relationships shapes our behaviors and evokes us to feel happy, anxious, confused or sad. The attachment system is activated when there is a perceived or real threat such as the possibility of losing the significant other (Bowlby, 1988). Thus, the attachment system gets activated when there is a threat of separation, loss, or rejection. If individuals can manage the anxiety created by the activated attachment system, this state would be called "secure". According to the attachment theory, individuals with secure attachment keep the balance between push towards separation and pull towards togetherness. Consequently, both Bowen and Bowlby stressed the importance of balance of togetherness and separation forces (Bowlby, 1988; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). When there is an imbalance between these two, anxiety is generated. Thus, in this study, hypotheses were based on these two perspectives and the commonality between them that focuses on the imbalances between autonomy and intimacy in FOO relationships as considered to be related to anxiety in adult romantic relationships.

All in all, the level of differentiation is related to the level of chronic anxiety people have in their close relationships. Since people with low differentiation and high anxiety can depend overly on supportive relationships they have, they would have anxieties about being separated from individuals whom they are emotionally attached to. Thus, in the current study, individuals'

level of attachment anxiety in their marital relationship and their level of differentiation of self were considered to be related to FOO relationship functioning.

1.2.3. Individual Functioning (Differentiation of Self and Attachment Anxiety) and Couple Relationship Outcomes

Bowen (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) theorized that marital satisfaction is related to individuals' level of differentiation of self. Several studies investigated the link between the differentiation of self and romantic relationship outcomes. Particularly, high levels of differentiation of self was found to be correlated with high levels of marital satisfaction (Kaleta, 2014; Lal & Bartle-Haring, 2011; Peleg, 2008; Skowron, 2000; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Yousefi et al., 2009). Among these studies, few of them investigated the link between dimensions of differentiation of self and marital relationship outcomes. For example, in a study with 39 heterosexual married couples, Skowron (2000) found that couples with less emotional cutoff, emotional reactivity, fusion with others and couples who are better at taking "I" positions in their relationships had higher levels of marital satisfaction. Thus, more differentiated couples indicated greater marital satisfaction while less differentiated couples had greater marital distress. Also, those who had low levels of differentiation reported greater marital distress. Another study with 121 Israeli individuals investigated the links between differentiation and marital satisfaction (Peleg, 2008). Only for men, higher level of marital satisfaction was found to be related to lower levels of emotional cutoff, lower emotional reactivity, and higher levels of "I" position. On the other hand, the low levels of emotional cutoff were associated with higher marital satisfaction only for women. Thus, the study revealed that there is a sex difference with regard to levels of differentiation. A possible explanation proposed by the researchers was regarding the differences between women and men in terms of their perceptions of marriage and expectations from the

relationship. Women and men were proposed to have different needs in marriage. Men would expect their partners to meet their needs since they perceive their wives as their primary caregivers. Thus, men's level of marital satisfaction was positively associated with most of the dimensions of differentiation. In a more recent study with a bigger sample of couples (1,839) Holman and Busby (2011) studied the link between the differentiation from negative FOO processes and relationship quality. Negative FOO processes included individuals' autonomy from chronic anxiety in their FOO and their perceptions of their FOO (such as confusing, anxiety-provoking, unfair, safe, and rewarding). The researchers concluded that as individual's level of differentiation of self from negative FOO experiences increases, their relationship quality also increases. Differentiation of self is positively associated with couple relationship outcomes because differentiated individuals experience a wider range of emotional intimacy in their relationships without sacrificing their basic self (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). For this reason, the more differentiated individuals had more positive attitudes about their relationships (Peleg, 2008). Another explanation was that differentiated individuals are more skillful at building affective relationships and approach their partners more empathically (Lampis, Cataudella, Agus, Busonera, & Skowron, 2018). Thus, studies have shown an association between differentiation of self and couples' romantic relationship outcomes in line with Bowen's theory. Differentiation of self was used as an indicator of individuals' romantic relationship quality in this study.

There are not as many studies on the link between Bowen's concept of chronic anxiety and couple relationship outcomes. According to Bowen, individuals with high levels of anxiety would have intentions on getting others to do things they want. For example, they would be more likely to think their rights are the best (Kerr, 1988). They would be more likely to be emotionally reactive. All of these factors would be expected to contribute to marital conflicts and thus, lower

couple relationship quality. As a consequence, Bowen's theory suggested that low levels of anxiety would be related to high marital satisfaction. However, there is a great number of studies focusing on the link between attachment anxiety and romantic relationship quality. For example, a meta-analysis based on 73 studies with samples of 21,602 individuals examined the link between attachment anxiety and cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of relationship quality (Li & Chan, 2012). Results suggested that attachment anxiety was positively associated with couples' conflict and negatively with support and constructive interaction between the partners. Consistent with this, a recent article reviewed the studies on the link between attachment anxiety and outcomes of couple conflict (Feeney & Fitzgerald, 2019). Attachment anxiety was related to decreases in love and commitment, dissatisfaction with couple communication and relationship satisfaction. Thus, all of these factors contribute the relationship quality negatively.

Another line of research focused on the association between attachment anxiety and individuals' perceptions of their relationships. In a study with 103 dating couples, researchers investigated the couples' daily interactions with their romantic partners and their perceptions of conflict in romantic relationships in the laboratory setting (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005). They concluded that individuals with anxious attachment perceived greater conflict in their relationships compared to their partners. They also perceived these conflicts as detrimental for the current and future relationship quality. Additionally, anxiously attached individuals were more distressed when they discussed their conflicts in their relationships. Wood, Werner-Wilson, Parker and Perry (2012) investigated the link between attachment anxiety and individuals' perceptions of threat and negativity. Participants were asked to observe videos and images of couples who were in conflict. Individuals who were high in anxiety

attachment had perceptions of more negative emotions and interactions in couples they observed. This finding consistent with other research that attachment anxiety is related to exaggerated perceptions of negativity which in turn go beyond individuals' own relationships (Feeney & Karantzas, 2017). Consequently, studies with adult attachment anxiety concluded that high attachment anxiety was related to negative relationship outcomes. However, no research addressed Bowen's theoretical notion that the level of anxiety is connected with romantic relationship outcomes.

1.3. Family of Origin Functioning

The FOO is the family that includes an individual's physiological, psychological, and emotional beginnings. Humans' most important and the first social context is the family. For this reason, the family has unique and massive effects on peoples' lives. Families not only influence individuals' past personality formation but also current life (Framo, 1981). Bowen conceptualized the family as an "emotional unit" and viewed the individual as part of that unit (Kerr, 1988). Bowen conceptualized the family as an emotional unit because the family operates as a system in which individuals are in reciprocal relationships (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). For this reason, family relationships are viewed as interchangeably influencing family members' functioning. According to Bowen (1978), the well-functioning of FOO relationships is dependent on the balance between autonomy and intimacy in these relationships. Thus, these dimensions of autonomy and intimacy of FOO relationships, which will be detailed in the next section, constitute the functioning of FOO relationships in the current study.

Bowen also suggested that the stability in the functioning of one family member is viewed as related to the stability in the functioning of the preceding and existing generations (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). This repetition of family patterns and functioning across generations is

called “multigenerational emotional process” or “multigenerational transmission process” by Bowen (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The multigenerational emotional process consists of emotions, feelings, subjective attitudes, beliefs and values that are passed from one generation to the next (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). This transmission occurs through relationships. Also, the patterns of emotional functioning in nuclear families determine the transmission of the multigenerational emotional process. The level of differentiation and chronic anxiety produce a certain amount of “emotional problem” in the family. This emotional problem will appear as the following patterns of emotional functioning: the focus of parental anxiety on a child, inordinate adaptation by one spouse to maintain harmony, and the conflict between spouses. The intensity and characteristics of emotional patterns in the previous generation affect the intensity and characteristics of emotional patterns in the current generation. In other words, how family problems are experienced in one generation creates predictable consequences for the next generation (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The aim of the present study is to understand how individuals’ FOO functioning is linked to their current marital relationship experiences.

1.3.1. Autonomy and Intimacy

As stated above, autonomy and intimacy are conceptualized as FOO functioning in the study. The balance of these two features in the FOO determine the FOO functioning. In this section, autonomy and intimacy are explained and previous findings on these two subjects are presented.

Kerr and Bowen (1988) defined autonomy as “the ability to be self-determined”. Individuals with a high capacity for autonomous functioning respond to others’ thoughts and emotions and at the same time they have the capacity to process these responses objectively. This process prevents individuals from responding in an automatic manner and thus, they have

choices (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). According to Bowen's family systems theory, individuals develop their own identity or autonomy in the FOO relationships (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Well-functioning families help members to develop autonomy by putting emphasis on personal responsibility, clarity of expression, openness to others in the family, respect for other family members and by dealing openly with loss and separation (Hovestadt, Anderson, Piercy, Cochran, & Fine, 1985).

Individual's functioning is improved when members of the family system connect with each other but at the same time stay emotionally autonomous. If an individual achieves emotional separation from his/her parents, differentiation of self is achieved. Then, individuals become free of enmeshment or fusion with their parents and its influences. Bowen explained autonomy in relation to differentiation of self. Higher levels of differentiation offer capacity for autonomous functioning (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Since autonomous functioning is associated with differentiation of self, autonomous individuals become self-determinant and less dependent and less governed by relationship processes (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Well-functioning families develop intimacy by promoting the expression of a wide range of feelings, creating a warm environment in the home, overcoming conflicts without extreme stress, trusting in goodness of human nature, and supporting sensitivity in family members (Hovestadt et al., 1985). According to Bowen's family systems theory, every human being has instinctually rooted life force which are individuality and togetherness. While individuality life force pushes the child to mature to be an emotionally separate person, togetherness life force pushes the child and family to stay emotionally connected and function in reaction to one another. This degree of emotional separation between the child and his/her family affects the child's capacity to differentiate self from the family (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). For this reason,

autonomous and intimate functioning in the FOO is essential in developing an ability to manage individuals' lives effectively and achieving a sense of emotional well-being (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

In a study with 213 adults, researchers examined the influences of intergenerational relationships (in particular, intimacy and individuation) across three generations (parents, adult children and spouses, and children) (Lawson & Brossart, 2001). To do this, participants' intergenerational family relationships in their current three-generational system was measured. Measurements included intergenerational intimacy, intergenerational fusion/individuation, intergenerational intimidation, intergenerational triangulation, personal authority, spousal intimacy, spousal fusion/intimidation and nuclear family triangulation. Results suggested that individuation in adults' relationship with their parents was the strongest predictor of adults' spouse relationship which was spousal fusion/individuation.

There are also studies supporting Bowen's idea that autonomy and intimacy in the FOO have influences on individual functioning. For example, in a study with 279 adolescents, researchers examined the link between psychological reactance and FOO functioning (Johnson & Buboltz, 2000). According to Johnson and Buboltz (2000), psychological reactance is that when individuals' behavioral freedoms are threatened, they tend to engage in similar behavior and engage in aggression against prohibitor. Psychological reactance is shown through resistance in therapy. Specifically, low levels of individuation from an adolescent's FOO were found to be related to high levels of psychological reactance. Namely, adolescents who are not able to function autonomously and in a self-directed way, had tendency to be highly reactant. Another study aimed to find a link between individuation/fusion experienced in the FOO and anxiety (Albuquerque & Schneider, 2012). Study included 32 mothers with a current anxiety disorder

and 56 controls and their anxious and nonanxious teenage children. According to the results, anxious adolescents reported lower levels of perceived autonomy compared to nonanxious adolescents. Lack of autonomy in adolescents was considered to be related to excessive parental control that was linked with lack of perceived self-efficacy and control over the environment. Then, this was associated with psychological vulnerability for anxiety. Thus, the study highlighted the role that individual autonomy in family relationships played in adolescents' anxiety. In addition, in a study with 183 Australian adolescents investigating links between FOO functioning, personality dimensions, self-concept and life satisfaction (Heaven, Searight, Chastain, & Skitka, 1996) results demonstrated that self-esteem and life satisfaction were more strongly related to the FOO functioning compared to the personality dimensions. Namely, family processes seemed to have stronger associations with these subjective experiences of well-being compared to personality dimensions. Consequently, studies demonstrated that patterns of family interaction are related to factors that contribute to individual functioning. Functional balance of autonomy and intimacy in the FOO is related to individual development. While studies offer a link between FOO functioning and individual variables (e.g. life satisfaction, anxiety and identity achievement), the links between FOO functioning and differentiation of self and attachment anxiety were open to explore.

The literature on the autonomy and intimacy in the FOO mostly relies on the Western culture. To the researcher's best knowledge, there are no studies examining the relations between FOO functioning (autonomy and intimacy) and relationship quality of married individuals in Turkey. The existing literature on FOO functioning in Turkey was conducted with non-married adults and were mostly conducted to investigate the relations of FOO functioning to variables other than relationship quality. For example, family support for autonomy was found to be linked

to adolescents' subjective well-being (Çankaya, 2009) and psychological well-being and mindfulness level (Kocaefe, 2013). Another study found a positive relationship between self-regulation and autonomous self in the family (Kara, 2014). There is also a study examining the link between intimacy in the FOO and adult's risk taking behavior (Kurşuncu, 2016). Apart from these, there is a cross-cultural study with Turkish, Pakistani and American dating individuals investigating the association between autonomy in the FOO and romantic relationship satisfaction (Safi, 2018). Results suggested that autonomy was positively associated with relationship satisfaction in all of these countries. However, there has been little discussion on the contributions of autonomy and intimacy in the FOO on the married individuals' romantic relationship quality. Consequently, the current study aims to contribute to the literature by examining the FOO functioning in a married Turkish sample.

1.3.2. Family of Origin Functioning and Couple Relationship Outcomes

Bowen's family systems theory suggests that individuals' FOO forms a basis for interpersonal relationships. FOO dynamics create patterns that affect the course of individual and family functioning (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Accordingly, the impacts of FOO variables on romantic relationship behaviors attracted considerable interest in relationship researchers. Several studies have been conducted to examine the association of the FOO conflict interactions with individuals' conflict interactions in their romantic relationships. For example, longitudinal studies have been conducted to examine the effects of FOO functioning starting from adolescence. In their longitudinal study, Whitton et al. (2008) studied 126 adolescents' FOO conflict interaction patterns during adolescence and their marital conflict interaction patterns during adulthood. In time 1, adolescents and their parents completed a family interaction task and in time 2, forty-seven participants and their partners completed the couple interaction task.

Findings showed that hostility in FOO conflict interactions during adolescence predicted hostility and less positive engagement in marital interactions during adulthood. Also, high hostility and low positive engagement in the FOO interactions were related to poor marital adjustment. Another longitudinal study with 254 adolescents investigated the link between family conflict in adolescence and couple functioning in adulthood (Andrews et al., 2000). The findings demonstrated that family aversive communication in adolescence positively predicted couple aversive communication in adulthood. FOO aversive communication in adolescence inversely predicted relationship satisfaction in adulthood. Aversive communication which involves verbal and nonverbal communication including sarcasm, criticism, and insults in the FOO were also found to predict physical aggression in couples. In another study, Crockett and Randall (2006) designed a longitudinal study with 531 adolescents. In time 1, adolescents were surveyed about the family relationship and peer relationship quality. In time 2, measures about conflict behaviors and romantic relationship quality were added to the survey. Results demonstrated that the quality of adolescents' family relationships predicted both general relationship quality (connectedness and discord in the romantic relationship) and conflict behaviors (discussion, verbal conflict, and physical conflict/threat) in adulthood. In their cross-sectional study conducted with 260 adolescents, researchers examined the conflict styles of FOO and conflict styles of adolescents in their romantic relationships (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). The findings showed that adolescents' approaches to conflict in their romantic relationships was similar to their FOO approaches to conflicts. Specifically, adolescents who reported high conformity in their FOO, reported aggressive and negative conflict resolution styles in their romantic relationships. As adults, they considered the conflicts as different from their

relationship norms and therefore conflicts elicited them to make coercive and forceful attempts to re-form order in their relationships.

Another area of research focused on the FOO relationship quality and couple relationship outcomes. For example, a study conducted with 190 couples by Dennison et al. (2014) investigated the link between partners' FOO characteristics (conflict in the FOO, inter parental conflict and parents' marital status) and marital satisfaction. While wives' FOO characteristics, in particular conflict levels in their FOO, were negatively associated with their marital satisfaction, this association was not significant for men. Another study with 261 couples examined the link between FOO experiences and marital communication quality (Knapp et al., 2015). The results claimed that negative FOO experiences (e.g., family relationship quality, family influences, and perceived parents' marital quality) has been found to predict poor couple communication quality. Similarly, Holman and Busby (2011) conducted a study with 1,839 couples selected from RELATIONSHIP Evaluation (RELATE) which is a relationship quality survey done in the U.S. They measured the couples' relationship quality (e.g. relationship satisfaction), family structure (e.g. living with both biological parents), parents' marital quality, parent-child relationship quality, and differentiation from FOO negative processes. Results suggested that overall family variables predicted couples' romantic relationship quality. Namely, studies supported the idea that FOO processes transmitted to the next generation.

Martinson et al., (2010), designed a study with 6,423 couples, investigated whether the resolution of difficult FOO experiences improves the ability to form satisfying romantic relationships. Participants completed scales about their couple relationship satisfaction, the frequency of problems in the FOO, quality of their relationships with their mothers and fathers during childhood, quality of their parents' marriage and their autonomy from their FOO.

According to the results, individuals with “healthy” FOO experiences stated higher relationship quality and lower frequency of problems in their romantic relationships. Individuals with “healthy” FOO experiences and resolution with difficult FOO experiences also had high relationship satisfaction. Another study aimed to find the link between FOO dynamics and marital adjustment in a sample of 125 married couples (Sabatelli & Bartle-Haring, 2003). FOO dynamics were characterized as individuals’ level of differentiation in their FOO, namely, families’ patterns of respect, a tolerance for individuality, empathy, and acceptance in their relationships. Consistent with previous findings, FOO experiences were the significant indicator of marital adjustment. The important contributor of this study was that this link was found in middle-aged participants and used couples that allow understanding of dyadic nature in the relationship.

It is claimed that there is a link between FOO experiences and couple relationship functioning. Consistent with this, another line of research focused on the underlying mechanisms of this link. A study with 467 Portuguese married adults examined the role of dyadic coping in the link between participants’ retrospective perceptions of family relationship quality and dyadic adjustment. Cohesion, conflict and expressivity dimensions were assessed as FOO relationship quality. According to results, retrospective perceptions of FOO relationship quality impacts the dyadic consensus and satisfaction via the dyadic coping only for women (Costa-Ramalho, Marques-Pinto, & Ribeiro, 2017). Based on studies, it can be said that link between FOO experiences and romantic relationship outcomes is not straightforward but follow through the mediation variables such as differentiation from negative FOO processes (Holman & Busby, 2011), dyadic coping (Costa-Ramalho et al., 2017), and attachment behaviors (Knapp et al., 2015).

The study designed with multi-informant approach compared to the clinical sample of mothers with anxiety disorders and control group (Albuquerque & Schneider, 2012). Their partners and children were included in a study and measured the perception of autonomy and emotional connectedness in families. Researchers conducted structured interviews to assess anxiety status and family members' perceptions of family relationships were measured with the questionnaire. According to the results, children of anxious mothers reported less 'individual autonomy' compared to children of nonanxious mothers. This is explained by children who experience excessive parental control is lack of control over the environment and this makes them vulnerable for anxiety. Hence, low 'individual autonomy' in anxious children occur due to parents' overprotective and over controlling behaviors.

As described above, most of the empirical literature has focused on the effects of FOO conflict interactions (e.g. Andrews et al., 2000; Dennison et al., 2014; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Whitton et al., 2008) and FOO relationship quality (e.g. Crockett & Randall, 2006; Knapp et al., 2015; Martinson et al., 2010) on romantic relationship outcomes, with less attention to the effects of individuals' perceived autonomy and intimacy in FOO on their romantic relationship quality. The current study aimed to fill the gap in the literature by examining the link between the individual's autonomy and intimacy in the FOO and their romantic relationship quality, namely, their dyadic adjustment.

1.4. Current Study

Previous studies focused on the effects of FOO relationships on romantic relationship outcomes while underlying mechanisms of this link has still been open to explore. The purpose of the current study was to examine the link between perceived retrospective FOO functioning and couple relationship quality through differentiation of self and attachment anxiety. The

hypothesized model of research interest was presented in Figure 1 and 2. Research questions and hypotheses were as noted below:

Research Question 1: How is individuals' perceived FOO relationship functioning associated with their couple relationship quality?

Hypothesis 1: Higher FOO perceived autonomy and intimacy would be associated with higher dyadic adjustment.

Research Question 2: How is individuals' perceived FOO relationship functioning linked to their level of differentiation of self?

Hypothesis 2: Higher perceived FOO autonomy and intimacy would be associated with higher levels of differentiation of self.

Research Question 3: How is individuals' level of differentiation of self linked to their couple relationship quality?

Hypothesis 3: Higher level of differentiation of self would be associated with higher levels of dyadic adjustment.

Research Question 4: How is individuals' perceived FOO relationship functioning linked to their level of attachment anxiety?

Hypothesis 4: Higher perceived FOO autonomy and intimacy would be associated with lower levels of attachment anxiety.

Research Question 5: How is individuals' level of attachment anxiety linked to their couple relationship quality?

Hypothesis 5: Lower level of anxiety would be associated with higher levels of dyadic adjustment.

Research Question 6: Do couples' level of attachment anxiety mediate the relationship between perceived FOO functioning and couple relationship quality?

Hypothesis 6: Individuals' level of attachment anxiety would act as a mediator between the FOO functioning and couple relationship quality.

Research Question 7: Do individuals' level of differentiation of self mediate the relationship between perceived FOO functioning and couple relationship quality?

Hypothesis 7: Individuals' level of differentiation of self would act as a mediator between the FOO functioning and couple relationship quality.

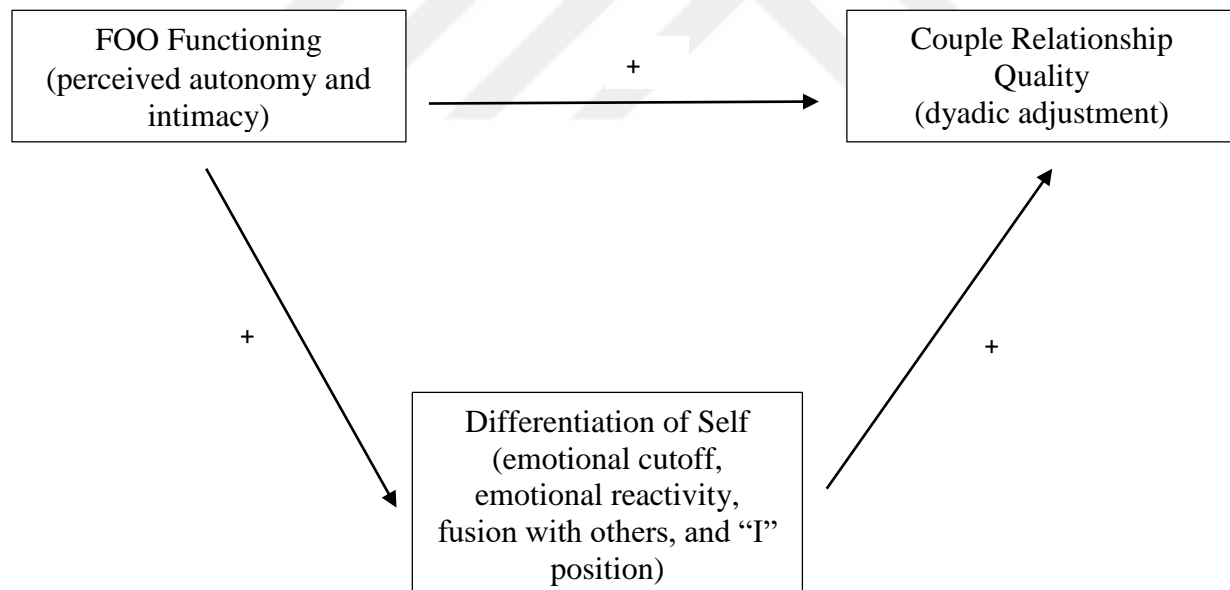


Figure 1. The Hypothesized Mediational Model of FOO Functioning, Differentiation of Self and Couple Relationship Quality

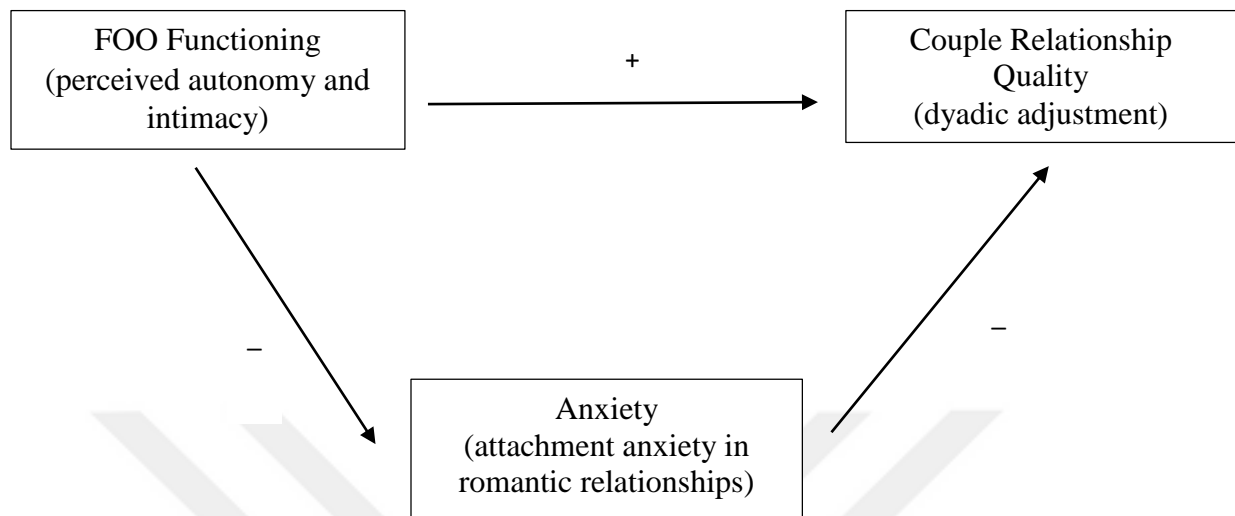


Figure 2. The Hypothesized Mediational Model of FOO Functioning, Attachment Anxiety and Couple Relationship Quality

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1. Participants

Individuals who met the following criteria of 1) being married for at least 6 months to maximum of 15 years, 2) currently not being in a psychotherapy process, 3) currently not using psychiatric medication, and 4) completing the whole questionnaires were included in the study. Marriage duration was limited to 6 months to 15 years in order to include individuals who were neither newly married nor married for a very long term. Of the total 253 married individuals who were reached out to participate, eighty were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria. Thus, the final sample included 173 married individuals; 100 (57.8%) females and 73 (42.2%) males. Participants' ages ranged from 22 to 52 with a mean of 32.47 (SD= 5.68). Participants' marriage duration ranged from 6 months to 15 years with a mean of 67 months (5 years and 7 months).

Table 1 demonstrates the sample characteristics. As can be seen in the table, majority of the participants had a bachelor's degree and had middle-to-high socioeconomic status. Majority of the participants also had children and were currently living with their nuclear family. Lastly, majority of participants' relationships with their partners were couple initiated (i.e., met via friends and school/workplace).

Table 1.

Characteristics of the sample (N=173)

Variables	N	%
Gender		
Female	100	57.8
Male	73	42.2
Education Level		
Elementary	3	1.7
High-school	27	15.6
Two-year college	17	9.8
Bachelor's	87	50.3
Master's	15	8.6
Ph.D.	3	1.7
Income		
851-1500 TL	2	1.2
1501-3000 TL	28	16.2
3001-5000 TL	59	34.1
5001-7500 TL	43	24.9
7500 TL and above	40	23.1
Employment Status		
Yes	132	76.3
No	37	21.4
Other	4	2.3
Having Children		
Yes	112	64.7
No	60	34.7
In childhood, living with		
Nuclear family	134	77.5
Extended family	35	20.2

Table 1. (continued)

Characteristics of the sample (N=173)

Variables	N	%
Currently living with		
Spouse	63	36.4
Spouse and children	98	56.6
Parents, spouse and children	1	0.6
Family in-law, spouse and children	3	1.7
Other	6	3.5
Met via		
Family	14	8.1
Arranged	11	6.4
Friend	59	34.1
School/Workplace	59	34.1
Entertainment venue	3	1.7
Internet	6	3.5
Other	19	11

2.2. Procedure

After the approval of the Ethics Committee of Özyeğin University, married individuals were reached out by snowball sampling procedure. The data were collected between June and November 2018. Fliers about the study were prepared. The study was announced via the Özyeğin University Couple and Family Center's social media accounts, and personal social media accounts. Fliers were hanged in Özyeğin University's boards and variety of private business that were reached out by personal contacts. Participants were informed of the main objectives of the study through the consent form that they signed before filling out the questionnaires. Paper-pencil and online versions of the questionnaires were used. Seventy-six percent of participants were filled out online versions of the questionnaires and 24% of them were filled out paper-pencil versions of the questionnaires. Online version of the questionnaires was created by using the Qualtrics website.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. *The Demographic Form*. This form included information about sex, age, monthly family income, employment status, education level, duration of marriage, information on how the couple met, who lives in the household, if they had psychiatric/psychological support and information about participants' children (do they have children, and if yes, how many and how old).

2.3.2. *Family of Origin Scale (FOS, Hovestadt et al., 1985)*. FOS was used in order to measure individual's perceived autonomy and intimacy in their FOO. The scale is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree; to 5, strongly agree. FOS asks adults to rate items on their FOO as they remember. The scale has two subscales which are autonomy (assessing the clarity of expression, responsibility, respect for others, openness to others, acceptance of separation and loss) and intimacy (assessing the range of feelings, mood, and tone, conflict resolution, empathy, trust). The sample items of autonomy subscale are "My parents openly admitted it when they were wrong" and "My parents encouraged me to express my views openly". The sample items of intimacy subscale are "I remember my family as being warm and supportive" and "In my family, it was normal to show both positive and negative feelings". Scores range between 40 to 200. Test-retest reliability coefficient was reported as .97 and Cronbach's level was .75 (Hovestadt et al., 1985). The scale was adapted to Turkish by Şahin and Güvenç (1996). In the Turkish adaptation of the scale, the Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was .86. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was .95.

2.3.3. *Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R; Skowron & Schmit, 2003)*. DSI-R was used in order to assess adults' emotional functioning, autonomy and intimacy in interpersonal relationships. The ratings are made on a six-point scale from 1=not at all true of me

to 6=very true of me. The scale includes four subscales: Emotional Reactivity (ER), Emotional Cutoff (EC), "I" Position (IP), and Fusion with Others (FO). Emotional Reactivity (ER) subscale includes 11-items and measures the person's response to environmental stimuli depending on emotional flooding, emotional lability, or hypersensitivity. A sample item is "People have remarked that I am overly emotional". Emotional Cutoff (EC) subscale includes 12 items that reflect the fear of intimacy in relationships and behavioral defenses such as distancing or denial. A sample item is "I have difficulty expressing my feelings to people I care for". "I" Position (IP) subscale consist of 11 items and measures the person's clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully stay connected to one's opinions even when pressured to do the opposite. The sample item is "I usually do what I believe is right regardless of what others say". Fusion with others (FO) subscale measures relying on others when making decisions, emotional over-involvement with others, and over-identification with parents that is depending on parental beliefs and expectations without question. A sample item is "I want to live up to my parents". Higher scores represent the greater differentiation of self for the total DSI-R that is less ER, FO, EC and greater ability take an "I" position. Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was .92. Işık and Bulduk (2015) adapted the scale to Turkish and scale is shortened 20 items. Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was reported as .81. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale was .71.

2.3.4. Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR-II, Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). ECR-II was used to measure individuals' attachment anxiety in their current marital relationship. The scale has two subscales: anxiety and avoidance. For the purpose of the current study, only anxiety subscale was used. 18-item anxiety subscale is a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree) asking participants to rate their emotions and thoughts

on their romantic relationships. The sample items on anxiety subscale are “I’m afraid that I will lose my partner’s love” and “When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she won’t like who I really am”. The score for anxiety subscale is calculated by summing of all items. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Selçuk, Günaydın, Sümer, and Uysal (2005). In the Turkish adaptation of the scale, the Cronbach’s alpha for the anxiety subscale was .86. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha for the anxiety subscale was .85.

2.3.5. *Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS, Spainer, 1976)*. DAS was used to assess individuals’ relationship quality. 32-item DAS measures four aspects of relationships; dyadic consensus, dyadic cohesion, dyadic satisfaction, and affectional expression. Examples of dyadic consensus are rating on “making major decisions” and “handling family finances”. An example item of dyadic cohesion is “Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?”. An example item of dyadic satisfaction is “How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?”. Examples of affectional expression is rating on “demonstrations of affection” and “sex relations”. The DAS includes 5-to 7-point response formats, items answered either yes or no, and 6-point response format with options scored 0 to 5 (ranging from either all the time to never or always agree to always disagree). The total score is calculated by summing of all items and ranges from 0 to 151. Higher scores indicate higher perceived quality of relationship. Cronbach’s alpha level for total the whole scale was .96. Turkish version of the scale was adapted by Fıfılođlu and Demir (2000) and Cronbach’s alpha level was reported as .92. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha for the whole scale was .94.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Data were entered, scored and analyzed using SPSS Statistics 20. Firstly, all variables in the data were analyzed for outliers and missing data. In order to detect missing data and coding errors; the frequencies and the minimum and maximum values of the variables were checked. Values of the scales were checked. Missing values were determined and 80 cases were excluded due to missing values in whole questionnaires. In order to determine normality, kurtosis and skewness levels were analyzed. The skewness (ranged between -1.51 and 1.04) and kurtosis (ranged between -2.08 and 3.57) values were checked (see Table 2) and all variables were in acceptable ranges ($|\text{Skewness}| < 2.0$, $|\text{Kurtosis}| < 7.0$) as suggested by Bryne (2016), indicating the normality of distributions.

3.1. Univariate Analyses

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics of demographics and the study variables. The average age of participants was 32.47 years ($SD=5.68$). Marriage duration of participants ranged from 6 months to 15 years ($M=6$ years, $SD=4$ years).

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics of demographics and study variables

	Min	Max	M	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Age	22	52	32.47	5.68	.56	-.025
Marriage Duration	6	180	67.31	46.47	.55	-.69
FOO Functioning	53	196	143.71	28.08	-0.75	.44
Relationship Quality	9	150	111.97	21.89	-1.51	3.57
Differentiation of Self	40	113	83.12	12.04	-.56	1.01
Attachment Anxiety	15	106	42.15	17.63	1.04	.95

3.2. Bivariate Analyses

Bivariate correlations were carried out to examine relationships among demographics (e.g. age, gender, income and marriage duration) and the study variables (see Table 3).

Individuals' incomes were positively correlated with their age and negatively correlated with their attachment anxiety. Individuals' marriage duration was positively correlated with individuals' age and attachment anxiety, and negatively correlated with FOO functioning and couple relationship quality. In addition, all study variables were found to be significantly correlated with each other. FOO functioning was positively correlated with couple relationship quality and differentiation of self and negatively correlated with individuals' attachment anxiety. Additionally, the couple relationship quality was positively correlated with the differentiation of self and negatively correlated with the attachment anxiety.

Table 3.

Bivariate Correlations Between Demographics and Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	-							
2.	.313**	-						
3.	.166*	.015	-					
4.	.534**	.145	-.090	-				
5.	-.082	-.082	-.015	-.198**	-			
6.	-.152	-.152	.108	-.266**	.391**	-		
7.	-.051	.124	.075	-.142	.280**	.293**	-	
8.	.082	-.156*	-.165*	.155*	-.277**	-.525**	-.390**	-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note. 1=Age, 2=Gender, 3=Income, 4=Marriage duration, 5=Family of origin functioning, 6=Couple relationship quality, 7=Differentiation of self, 8=Attachment anxiety

Independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare the study variables in terms of participants' gender. There was a significant difference in the attachment anxiety levels for the participants, women reported higher scores than men (see Table 4).

Table 4.

T-test Results of Main Study Variables of Participants in terms of Their Gender

	Women		Men		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
FOO Functioning	145.42	28.76	141.37	27.14	.934	171	.351
Couple Relationship Quality	109.97	24.83	114.71	16.85	-1.41	171	.160
Differentiation of Self	81.85	12.78	84.86	10.79	-1.63	171	.104
Attachment Anxiety	44.50	19.10	38.93	14.94	2.07	171	.040

Next, t-tests were conducted to compare the study variables in terms of participants' having children or not having children. There was significant difference in the FOO functioning levels for the participants, participants who have children reported lower levels of FOO functioning (see Table 5).

Table 5.

T-test Results of Main Study Variables of Participants' Having Children

	Having Children		Not Having Children		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
FOO Functioning	140.74	30.15	149.43	23.15	-1.95	170	.053
Couple Relationship Quality	110.93	21.65	113.67	22.51	-.78	170	.437
Differentiation of Self	81.89	12.02	85.23	11.89	-1.74	170	.083
Attachment Anxiety	42.68	17.72	41.25	17.72	.504	170	.615

On the other hand, there were no significant differences in FOO functioning, differentiation of self, attachment anxiety and couple relationship quality levels in terms of participants' and living with extended or nuclear family (see Table 6).

Table 6.

T-test Results of Main Study Variables of Participants' Living with Nuclear or Extended Family

	Nuclear Family		Extended Family		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
FOO Functioning	143.09	29.50	146.86	23.55	-.699	167	.485
Couple Relationship Quality	111.99	22.70	112.34	18.49	-.084	167	.933
Differentiation of Self	83.22	11.82	81.88	13.33	.577	167	.564
Attachment Anxiety	41.25	16.82	46.40	20.73	-1.533	167	.127

3.3. Mediation Analyses

Mediation analyses with the bootstrapping method was conducted. PROCESS macro for SPSS provided by Hayes (2018) was used. PROCESS is a “computational tool for observed variable path analysis-based moderation and mediation analysis” (Hayes, 2018, p.551). Hayes (2018) developed a method that provides statistical significance of indirect (mediated) effects. To do this, bootstrapping is used. Bootstrapping is a resampling process that generates a thousand of random samples from the original sample and creates a range of confidence intervals. Confidence Intervals (CIs) determine statistical significance of indirect effects. In the current study, significance of mediation was tested through bootstrapped (samples=1000) standard errors regarding 95% CIs. Mediation was accepted as significant if differences between two CIs did not include the value of zero (Hayes, 2018).

3.3.1. The Indirect Effect of the Differentiation of Self in the Relationship between FOO Functioning and Couple Relationship Quality

In order to examine the hypothesized FOO functioning-couple relationship quality relation through differentiation of self, a mediation model was tested. The simple mediation model was represented in a diagram as shown in Figure 3. FOO functioning significantly associated with couple relationship quality ($B = .30, SE = .05, p < .001, 95\% CI [.1963, .4130]$). Second, FOO functioning was significantly associated with differentiation of self ($B = .12, SE = .03, p < .001, 95\% CI [.0579, .1822]$). Third, differentiation of self was significantly associated with couple relationship quality ($B = .36, SE = .13, p < .01, 95\% CI [.1037, .6201]$). Thus, the direct effect of FOO functioning on couple relationship quality was found to be significant ($B = .26, SE = .05, 95\% CI [.1505, .3720]$) since zero did not fall within the range of confidence intervals. In terms of indirect (mediated) effect of FOO functioning on couple relationship quality through differentiation ($B = .04, SE = .02, 95\% CI [.0115, .0901]$) was significant. Hence, bootstrap analysis confirmed the mediator role of differentiation of self on the association between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality.

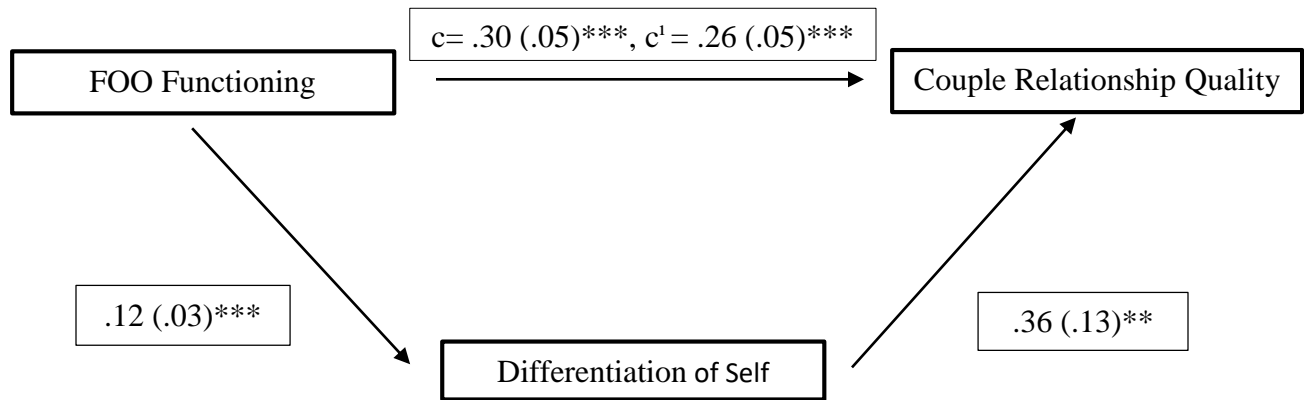


Figure 3. The indirect association between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality through differentiation of self was significant. The values are the unstandardized regression coefficients and their standard errors in the parentheses.

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

3.3.2. The Indirect Effect of Attachment Anxiety in the Relationship between FOO Functioning and Couple Relationship Quality

In order to examine the hypothesized FOO functioning-couple relationship quality relation through attachment anxiety, a mediation model was tested. The simple mediation model was represented in a diagram as shown in Figure 4. FOO functioning significantly associated with couple relationship quality ($B = .30$, $SE = .05$, $p < .001$, 95% $CI [.1963, .4130]$). Second, FOO functioning was significantly associated with attachment anxiety ($B = -.17$, $SE = .04$, $p < .001$, 95% $CI [-.2651, -.0829]$). Third, attachment anxiety was significantly associated with couple relationship quality ($B = -.56$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$, 95% $CI [-.7188, -.4011]$). Thus, the direct effect of FOO functioning on couple relationship quality was found to be significant ($B = .21$, $SE = .05$, 95% $CI [.1075, .3070]$) since zero did not fall within the range of confidence intervals. In terms of indirect (mediated) effect of FOO functioning on couple relationship quality through attachment anxiety ($B = .10$, $SE = .03$, 95% $CI [.0462, .1695]$) was significant.

Hence, bootstrap analysis confirmed the mediator role of attachment anxiety on the association between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality.

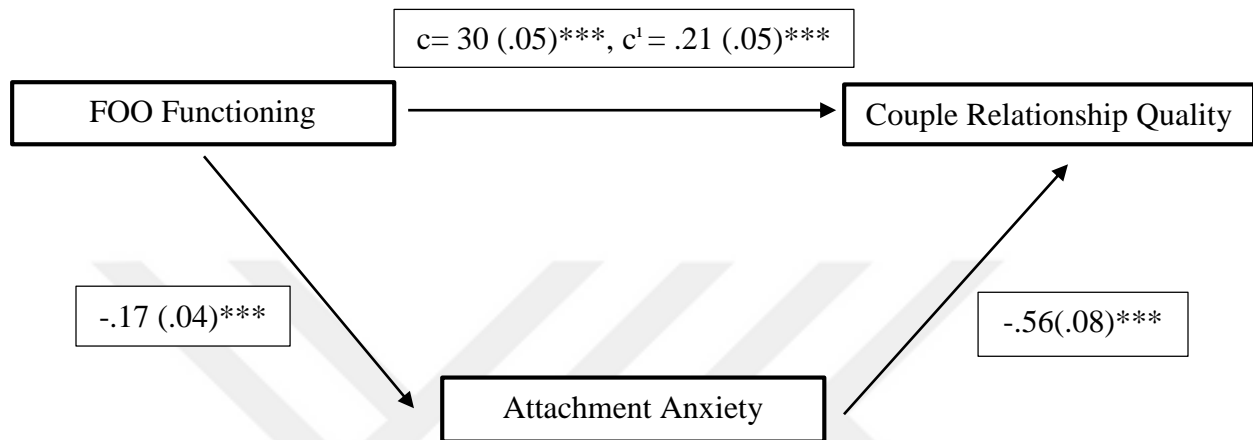


Figure 4. The indirect association between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality through attachment anxiety was significant. The values are the unstandardized regression coefficients and their standard errors in the parentheses.

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to examine the associations among differentiation of self, attachment anxiety, FOO functioning and couple relationship quality based on Bowen's family systems theory.

One of the results of bivariate analysis showed that income was negatively associated with attachment anxiety. In a previous study, researchers also found that individuals with low income had high adult attachment anxiety (Petrowski, Schurig, Schmutzer, Brähler, & Stöbel-Richter, 2015). Sherman (2017) also explained that lack of resources of money was related to tension within relationships. However, all we can conclude in our study is that the individuals with lower income also happened to have higher levels of attachment anxiety in our sample.

Correlational analyses also revealed that marital duration was negatively associated with couple relationship quality. This result is consistent with the existing literature on relationship quality over time. Various studies have shown a decline in relationship satisfaction (Kurdek, 2008; Mitnick, Heyman, & Slep, 2009), sexual interest (Huston & Vangelisti, 1991), love and affection (Huston, Caughlin, Houts, Smith, & George, 2001) and commitment (Feeney & Fitzgerald, 2019) over time while an increase in relationship conflict (Li & Chan, 2012; Stafford, Kline, & Rankin, 2004). However, in our study we did not follow married individuals over time. So, we can conclude that individuals who were married for a longer period of time also had lower levels of couple relationship quality.

The finding of the current study that showed a positive correlation between marital duration and attachment anxiety was also consistent with the existing literature. For example, in a recent study researchers have shown that the link between relationship satisfaction and

attachment anxiety became more negative when relationship duration increased (Hadden et al., 2014). Anxious attachment was also negatively correlated with relationship commitment and relationship satisfaction in the same study.

Additionally, bivariate results demonstrated a negative correlation between FOO functioning and marital duration. As predicted and consistent with prior research, as individuals age, their independence from parents increases due to long-term involvement in other significant relationships outside of the FOO (Lawson & Brossart, 2004). Moreover, individuals not only have decreased dependence over time but also their level of intimacy decreases (Lawson & Brossart, 2001; Lawson & Brossart, 2004). Since individuals who have been married for longer period of time were separated from their family for longer periods of time ago, they would be more likely to report lower levels of FOO functioning.

Results of the current study demonstrated that there was a sex differences in terms of individuals' attachment anxiety levels. Specifically, women reported higher attachment anxiety compared to men. A meta-analysis with a large sample of 66,132 participants investigating the sex differences in attachment style concluded that females had higher attachment anxiety compared to males (Giudice, 2011). However, another study with college students conducted in Turkey revealed that there were no sex differences in terms of individuals' attachment anxiety (Keklik, 2011). Consequently, studies on sex differences regarding attachment anxiety is inconsistent in the literature.

One of the hypothesis of the current study was that FOO functioning would be significantly associated with couple relationship quality. Specifically, individuals who reported higher autonomy and intimacy in their FOO would report higher romantic relationship quality from a Bowenian perspective. Also, the underlying mechanisms of this link was open to

exploration. The differentiation of self and attachment anxiety were hypothesized to have indirect effects on the link between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality. These hypotheses were supported by the findings of the study. Firstly, results revealed that individuals with higher levels of autonomy and intimacy in their FOO reported higher levels of couple relationship quality. This is consistent with previous findings demonstrating a positive correlation between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality (e.g. Holman & Busby, 2011; Knapp et al., 2015; Martinson et al., 2010). Current study is important to understand the link between perceived autonomy and intimacy in the FOO relationships and the current romantic relationship quality. Possible explanations for this link would be related to similarities between FOO relationship dynamics and romantic relationship dynamics. For example, clarity of expression and expression of a wide range of feelings in the FOO would promote individuals' ability to share and to express their feelings in other significant relationships which in turn increase their level of emotional expression in romantic relationships. Similarly, in FOO, overcoming conflicts without extreme stress may have influences on individuals' way of dealing with conflicts in their romantic relationships, namely, their dyadic consensus. Studies also found a link between adolescents' approaches to conflicts in their family and romantic relationship approaches to conflict (Andrews et al., 2000; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Whitton et al., 2008). Additionally, Bowen's family systems theory suggested that well-functioning families balance between autonomy and intimacy. Intensity and characteristics of emotional patterns in the previous generation affect the current generation by the process called "multigenerational transmission" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Thus, as theorized and consistent with prior research, individuals' past FOO relationship functioning is related to their current romantic relationship quality.

Results of mediation analyses with bootstrapping samples showed an indirect effect for differentiation of self on the association between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality among married individuals. An increase in perceived autonomy and intimacy in FOO was associated with an increase in differentiation of self, which in turn, was associated with an increase in the romantic relationship quality. As Bowen (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) stated, autonomous functioning in the FOO relationships assists individuals to become more self-determined and less dependent and less governed by relationship processes. Differentiation of self is achieved when individuals emotionally separate from their parents. Emotional separation occurs when individuals see themselves as separate and distinct from their families and think and act for themselves. When individuals achieve differentiation of self from their FOO, they continue these patterns in other significant relationships (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Namely, individuals' autonomy level in the FOO experiences would shape individuals' differentiation of self and then individuals' differentiation level would continue to influence other significant relationships which in turn influence their romantic relationships. According to the results, differentiation of self was associated with couple relationship quality. In other words, those individuals who reported higher levels of differentiation of self also reported higher levels of couple relationship quality. Individuals who were less reactive, cut-off, fused with others and better able to take I-positions in their relationships also reported higher levels of relationship quality. There is a great number of research that revealed well-differentiated individuals have higher marital satisfaction (e.g. Aryamanesh, Fallahchai, Zarei, & Haghghi, 2011; Kaleta, 2014; Lal & Bartle-Haring, 2011; Peleg, 2008; Skowron, 2000). However, there is a limited number of research focusing on differentiation of self and romantic relationship quality (e.g., dyadic adjustment). Similar to Lampis et al. (2018) findings, the present study revealed that

differentiation of self and couple relationship quality was linked to each other. A possible explanation Bowen suggested is that when individuals are well-differentiated, they can enjoy a full range of emotional intimacy in their romantic relationships without sacrificing their basic self (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Thus, well-differentiated individuals are considered to have positive attitudes about their relationships (Peleg, 2008). Another possible explanation is that well-differentiated individuals have better skills at building affective relationships and approaching their partners more empathically (Lampis et al., 2018).

The results of the second mediation analysis with bootstrapping samples provided evidence for the indirect effect for attachment anxiety on the association between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality among married individuals. A decrease in perceived autonomy and intimacy in FOO was associated with an increase in attachment anxiety, which in turn, decreased romantic relationship quality. Both Bowen and Bowlby stated the importance of balancing togetherness and separation forces in the family (Ecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2006). When individuals cannot balance these, anxiety is generated. In the study, autonomy level in FOO was measured as “separation” while the intimacy level in the FOO was measured as “togetherness”. Since the well-functioning family was described as balancing these two, low levels of FOO functioning was the result of the imbalance between these two. This may, in turn, increase individuals’ anxiety. Additionally, Bowen stated that when individuals cannot accomplish differentiation from their FOO, they would have a tendency to fuse with others to reduce their anxiety (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Thus, individuals who have emotional over-involvement and over-identification with FOO might continue the same relationship style with their significant other and they might show anxious reactions in the case of threat of separation,

loss, or rejection. Then, anxious stress reaction impairs both individuals' own functioning and functioning of others with whom they are emotionally connected (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Additionally, when individuals cannot achieve differentiation from their FOO, they would have higher emotional reactivity which results in managing themselves and their relationships by these automatic emotional responses. However, well-differentiated individuals have lower emotional reactivity which in turn would be related to better emotion regulation skills (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Thus, they can be better at managing their anxieties. Results of this study demonstrated that attachment anxiety is associated with couple relationship quality. Namely, those individuals who reported higher levels of attachment anxiety also reported lower levels of couple relationship quality. There is a large number of studies that revealed a link between attachment anxiety and relationship satisfaction (Molero, Shaver, Fernandez, Alonso-Arbiol, & Recio, 2016). Since relationship quality includes dimensions of satisfaction, consensus, and cohesion, attachment anxiety may negatively related to relationship quality. Thus, individuals' romantic relationships would be influenced negatively due to their high levels of attachment anxiety. Previous studies concluded that attachment anxiety was related to negative relationship outcomes such as low relationship quality (Li & Chan, 2012), couple conflict (Feeney & Fitzgerald, 2019) and individuals' perceptions of threat and negativity in their relationships (Wood et al., 2012).

All in all, the results of the study support Bowen's theory that previous FOO experiences have a role in our current functioning. Namely, FOO functioning is related to individual functioning which in turn is related to participants' current romantic relationship functioning.

4.1. Strengths and Limitations

To the researcher's best knowledge, there has been no study in Turkey examining the link between individuals' perceived autonomy and intimacy in the FOO and romantic relationship quality. Additionally, although there is a large number of studies focusing on FOO experiences and romantic relationship outcomes, the underlying mechanisms of this link have not been studied sufficiently. The present study contributes to the literature by examining the indirect effect of differentiation of self and attachment anxiety on the link between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality. To do this, Bowen's family systems theory was taken as a theoretical basis for the study. Thus, the current study also offers literature with an opportunity to understand Bowen's theory in research practice. Additionally, the current study investigated the mediating role of differentiation of self and attachment anxiety on the link between FOO and couple functioning. Future studies could focus on the indirect effects of other variables such as jealousy because there is a link between attachment styles and jealousy (Dandurand, 2014; Knobloch, Solomon, & Cruz, 2001). For this reason, including jealousy in romantic relationship might help to understand the link between FOO experiences and couple functioning.

The study has some limitations that should be taken into consideration while evaluating the results of the study. Firstly, self-report instruments were used to measure variables of interest. Individuals' responses to questions can be affected by biases like social desirability bias and denial since questions were about sensitive issues such as quality of romantic relationships. In future research, this could be addressed by using qualitative methods (in-depth interviews) and collecting dyadic data (from both partners). Secondly, retrospective reports were used to measure individuals' FOO experiences. There are some issues about the validity of retrospective reports and biases. For instance, individuals' retrospective reports may be influenced by some degree of

forgetting. Also, individuals' reports might be affected by their current mood state and relationship experiences. Apart from this, validity of FOO experiences may be affected due to data collection method. To measure individuals' FOO functioning, only data from one family member were collected. This may limit the validity of the measurement of FOO functioning. Lastly, data were collected from only one partner. Using dyadic measurement is important to understand relational processes and interpersonal dynamics of couple relationship. Thus, the current study is lack of providing evidence for aspects of both partners and couple relationship dynamics.

4.2. Implications

The study results provided evidence about the importance of FOO relationship functioning and the roles that differentiation of self and attachment anxiety play in couple relationships. First of all, results demonstrated that increasing FOO functioning may be one way to improve couple relationship quality. When working with families, developing interventions to balance autonomy and intimacy between family members would be beneficial to strengthen family relationships. As mentioned earlier, balancing these two life forces is important for individuals' differentiation from family. Bowen stated that differentiating self in one's FOO is important in the therapy process (Bowen, 1978). Since emotional attachment that each partner had in his/her FOO is similar to emotional attachment between the partners, encouraging each partner to process differentiation of self in the FOO becomes routine in the therapy (Bowen, 1978). An intervention strategy about this would be helping clients to maintain "I" positions. Therapist would encourage clients to focus on their individual opinions and emotions while in relationship with others. Thus, the clients' differentiation can be promoted by decreasing influences from others. In addition, identifying influences of FOO relationship functioning on

couple relationship quality would be beneficial for therapists to focus on issues related to FOO experiences. As previous studies (e.g. Holman and Busby, 2011; Knapp et al., 2015) and theories (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) demonstrated, working through FOO relationship difficulties might be helpful in overcoming current romantic relationship difficulties. When couples are aware of the influences of FOO experiences on their romantic relationships, they would better distinguish the factors that contribute to their marital conflicts and change their ways of thinking about their partners and themselves. Recognizing the influences of FOO relationship quality might help couples to strengthen their relationship quality. To do this, the therapy should focus on increasing clients' awareness about the relationship between their current behaviors and multigenerational process. Then, clients might gain insights about how their past experiences have an influence on their current presenting symptoms and namely, family dynamics.

Secondly, the study provided information about the role of differentiation of self on the link between FOO functioning and couple relationship quality. Understanding individuals' level of differentiation of self would be beneficial in couple therapy when working with relationship problems. Specifically, identifying individuals' level of differentiation would help therapists to focus on issues related to differentiation. Increasing couples' levels of differentiation would be a therapy goal which in turn might increase the couples' relationship quality. Also, therapists determine the type of intervention according to the clients' differentiation level. Since differentiation of self was found to be associated with attachment anxiety, increasing levels of differentiation would assist couples to decrease their anxiety which in turn would increase their relationship quality. Bowen (1978) pointed out that there are two basic therapy goals: increasing individuals' level of differentiation and decreasing emotional reactivity to anxiety in the system. Therapist helps client to increase his/her differentiation by "coaching" the client. Bowen stated

that client should become an objective observer of his/her FOO. When the client learns more about the family through observation, this reduces his/her emotional reactivity to his/her family because the client can gain understanding about his/her role in the family reaction patterns. Then, the client can gain control over his/her reactivity. Therapist's role is to coach the client in these efforts.

Another way to intervene with differentiation in therapy would be working on the couple's relationships with their own FOO as well as in-laws. Especially in Turkish culture, relationships with FOO and in-laws after marriage might be enmeshed (Hortaçsu, 1999). Families might be likely to overly involved in their children's newly formed marriage. Thus, the spouses might have difficulties in differentiating from their own FOO or family in-law. This would affect their differentiation process negatively. For this reason, it would be beneficial to focus on issues related to extended family and family in-law. Therapists could assist clients to draw boundaries with their FOO or in-laws. Therapists could encourage clients to focus on their desires and thoughts about their newly formed nuclear family and decrease the influences of the FOO or in-laws. Moreover, the current study demonstrated that individuals with lower attachment anxiety also reported higher couple relationship quality. As consistent with Bowen's therapy approach, decreasing anxiety in the relationship system would be another therapy goal. Bowen (1978) suggested that individuals should have "open" relationship system with extended family to reduce anxiety. Open relationship system was described as the opposite of an emotional-cutoff which means individuals should have fair level of emotional contact with extended family members. Thus, improving quality and frequency of emotional connection with extended family also improve family's functioning and reduce the anxiety-related symptoms.

Thirdly, assessment of levels of differentiation of self could be included in the screening procedures in premarital counseling. Understanding partners' levels of differentiation and the effects on dyadic adjustment can be used in treatment planning for couples coming for premarital counseling. Consequently, the results of the study assist therapists to develop assessment and intervention strategies in working with relationship difficulties in individual, couple and family level.



APPENDIX A

(Demographic Form)

Demografik Bilgi Formu

ID:

Tarih:

1. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın Erkek
2. Yaşınız: _____
3. En son bitirdiğiniz okul aşağıdakilerden hangisidir?
 - İlkokul
 - Ortaokul
 - Lise
 - Yüksek Okul (2 yıllık)
 - Üniversite (4 yıllık)
 - Yüksek Lisans
 - Doktora
4. Toplam kaç yıl okula gittiniz? _____
5. Mesleğiniz: _____
6. Çalışma Durumunuz:
 - Çalışıyorum
 - Çalışmıyorum
 - Diğer (lütfen açıklayınız): _____
7. Ne zaman evlendiniz? _____ ay _____ yıl
8. Eşinizle nasıl tanıştınız?
 - Aile aracılığıyla
 - Görücü usulüyle
 - Arkadaş aracılığıyla
 - Okul/iş yerinde
 - Eğlence mekanlarında
 - İnternette
 - Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz): _____

9. Ailenizin ortalama toplam aylık geliri ařađıdakilerden hangisine en yakındır?

- 850 TL ve altı
 851 TL – 1500 TL
 1501 TL – 3000TL
 3001 TL – 5000 TL
 5001 TL – 7500 TL
 7501 TL ve üstü

10. Çocuđunuz var mı?

- Evet
 Hayır
a. Varsa kaç tane? _____
b. Yařları nedir? _____

11. Kiminle yaşıyorsunuz?

- Eřimle
 Eřimle ve çocuklarımla
 Annem, babam, eřim ve çocuklarımla
 Eřimin ailesi, eřim ve çocuklarımla
 Diđer (lütfeñ belirtiniz): _____

12. Yetiřtiđiniz (içinde büyüdüđünüz) ailede kimler vardı? (örn. anne, baba, kardeř, anneanne vb). Lütfen tek tek belirtiniz.

13. Daha önce ařađıdaki hizmetlerden herhangi birini aldınız mı?

- Psikoterapi hizmeti aldım.
 Psikiyatrik hizmet aldım.

14. Psikiyatrik ilaç kullanıyor musunuz?

- Evet
 Hayır

APPENDIX B

(Family of Origin Scale)

KAÖ

Yetiştirdiğiniz aile sizin çocukluk yıllarınızdaki zamanın çoğunu veya hepsini harcadığınız ailedir. Yetiştirdiğiniz ailede ilişkilerin nasıl olduğunu anlatmanıza yardımcı olmak amacıyla, çeşitli tanımlayıcı ifadeleri içeren elinizdeki ölçek hazırlanmıştır.

Bu ölçekte yer alan ve ailedeki ilişkileri yansıtan ifadelerin doğru ya da yanlışlığından söz edilemez; çünkü her aile benzersizdir ve birçok şeyi kendine özgü biçimde gerçekleştirir. Önemli olan mümkün olduğunca sizin sorulara samimi cevaplar vermenizdir.

Aşağıdaki ifadeleri okurken, onları hatırlayabildiğiniz kadarıyla içinde yetiştirdiğiniz aileye uygulamaya çalışın. Her bir ifadenin yetiştirdiğiniz aileye ne derece uyduğunu yanında yer alan seçeneklerden uygun olanın altındaki boşluğu işaretleyerek belirtiniz.

	Aileme tümüyle uymakta	Aileme oldukça uymakta	Kararsızım	Aileme pek uymamakta	Aileme hiç uymamakta
1. Ailemde hem olumlu hem olumsuz duyguları göstermek normal karşılanırdı.					
2. Ailemde genellikle tatsız bir hava vardı.					
3. Ailemde yeni arkadaşlıklar kurma yönünde birbirimizi teşvik ederdik.					
4. Ailemde görüş ayrılıkları hoş karşılanmazdı.					
5. Ailemde herkes hatalarına çoğu zaman bahane bulurdu.					

6. Annem ve babam, aile üyelerinin birbirlerini dinlemesini teşvik ederdi.					
7. Ailemde çatışmalar hiçbir zaman çözümlenmezdi.					
8. Ailem bana insanların özünde iyi olduklarını öğretti.					
9. Ailemdeki bireylerin ne demek istediklerini ve neler hissettiklerini anlamakta güçlük çekerdim.					
10. Bir aile yakınımız öldüğünde acımızı konuşur paylaşırdık.					
11. Annem ve babam hatalı olduklarında bunu açıkça kabul ederlerdi.					
12. Aileme her duygumu rahatlıkla açabilirdim.					
13. Ailemde çatışmaları çözümlenmek çok yıpratıcı olurdu.					
14. Ailemdeki bireyler birbirlerinin yaşam hakkındaki görüşlerine açıktı.					
15. Annem ve babam görüşlerimi ifade etmem için beni teşvik ederlerdi.					
16. Ailemin diğer üyelerinin ne düşündüklerini ya da neler hissettiklerini çoğu zaman					

tahmin etmek zorunda kalırdım.					
17. Ailemde duygu ve görüşlerim çoğu zaman dikkate alınmaz veya eleştirildi.					
18. Ailemin üyeleri davranışlarından sorumlu olduklarını nadiren ifade ederlerdi.					
19. Ailemde görüşlerimi açıkça ve rahatlıkla ifade edebilirdim.					
20. Bir akrabamız ya da aile yakınımız öldüğünde kederimiz hakkında hiç konuşmazdık.					
21. Ailemde, bazen, hiçbir şey söylemem gerekmeden anlaşıldığımı hissedirdim.					
22. Ailemde soğuk ve olumsuz bir hava hakimdi.					
23. Ailemin üyeleri birbirlerinin görüşlerini pek dikkate almazlardı.					
24. Ailemin diğer üyelerinin ne demek istediklerini ve neler hissettiklerini kolayca anlardım.					
25. Aile üyelerinden biri uzağa taşındığında,					

gidişinden duyduğumuz üzüntüden hiç bahsetmezdik.					
26. Ailemden, başkalarına güvenmemeyi öğrendim.					
27. Ailemde sorunları açıkça konuşarak çatışmaları çözümleyebileceğime inanırdım.					
28. Aileme kendi görüşlerimi açıklamakta zorluk çekerdim.					
29. Evimizde yemek saatleri genellikle dostça ve keyifli geçirdi.					
30. Ailemde hiç kimse birbirlerinin duygularını umursamazdı.					
31. Aile içi çatışmaları genellikle kendi aramızda çözümleyebilirdik.					
32. Ailemde bazı duyguların açıklanmasına izin verilmezdi.					
33. Ailem, insanların genellikle birbirlerini kullandıklarına inanırdı.					
34. Ailemde ne düşündüğümü ve ne hissettiğimi rahatça, çekinmeden ifade ederdim.					
35. Ailemin üyeleri genellikle birbirlerinin duygularına karşı duyarlıydı.					

	Aileme tümüyle uymakta	Aileme oldukça uymakta	Kararsızım	Aileme pek uymamakta	Aileme hiç uymamakta
36. Bizim için önemli biri uzağa taşındığında ailece o kişiyi kaybetmekten dolayı hissettiklerimizi konuşabilirdik.					
37. Annem ve babam, onlarınkinden farklı olan görüşlerimizi belirtmemizi desteklemezdi.					
38. Ailemde herkes davranışının sorumluluğunu taşırdı.					
39. Ailemde yazılı olmayan bir kural vardı: “Duygularını açığa vurma.”					
40. Ailemi sıcak ve destekleyici olarak görürdüm.					

APPENDIX C

(Experiences in Close Relationships Scale-Anxiety Subscale)

YİYE-II

Aşağıdaki maddeler eşiniz ile ilişkinizde hissettiğiniz duygularla ilgilidir. Bu araştırmada sizin ilişkinizde neler yaşadığınızla ilgilenmekteyiz. Her bir maddenin ilişkinizdeki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi ne oranda yansıttığını karşılardaki 7 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde, ilgili rakam üzerine çarpı (X) koyarak gösteriniz.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
Hiç Kararsızım/ Tamamen
katılmıyorum fikrim yok katılıyorum

1. Eşimin sevgisini kaybetmekten korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Sıklıkla, eşimin artık benimle olmak istemeyeceği korkusuna kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Sıklıkla, eşimin beni gerçekten sevmediği kaygısına kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Eşimin beni, benim onu önemseydiğim kadar önemsemeyeceğinden endişe duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Sıklıkla, eşimin bana duyduğu hislerin benim ona duyduğum hisler kadar güçlü olmasını isterim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. İlişkimi kafama çok takarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Benden uzakta olduğunda, eşimin başka birine ilgi duyabileceği korkusuna kapılırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Eşıme duygularımı gösterdiğimde, onun benim için aynı şeyleri hissetmeyeceğinden korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Eşimin beni terk edeceğinden pek endişe duymam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10.Eşim, kendimden şüphe etmeme neden olur.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.Terk edilmekten pek korkmam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.Eşimin, bana benim istediğim kadar yaklaşmak istemediğini düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.Eşim bazen bana olan duygularını sebepsiz yere değiştirir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.Çok yakın olma arzum bazen insanları korkutup uzaklaştırır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.Eşim beni yakından tanıdıkça, “gerçek ben”den hoşlanmayacağından korkarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.Eşimden ihtiyaç duyduğum şefkat ve desteği görememek beni öfkelenendirir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.Başka insanlara denk olamamaktan endişe duyarım	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.Eşim beni sadece kızgın olduğumda önemser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX D

(Dyadic Adjustment Scale)

ÇUÖ

Birçok insanın ilişkilerinde anlaşmazlıkları vardır. Lütfen aşağıda verilen maddelerin her biri için siz ve eşiniz arasındaki anlaşma ve anlaşmama ölçüsünü aşağıda verilen altı düzeyden birini seçerek belirtiniz.

	Her zaman anlaşırız	Hemen hemen her zaman anlaşırız	Nadiren anlaşamayız	Sıkça anlaşamayız	Hemen hemen her zaman anlaşamayız	Her zaman Anlaşamayız
1- Aileyle ilgili parasal işlerin idaresi						
2- Eğlenceyle ilgili konular						
3- Dini konular						
4- Muhabbet-sevgi gösterme						
5- Arkadaşlar						
6- Cinsel yaşam						
7- Geleneksellik (doğru ve uygun davranış)						
8- Yaşam felsefesi						

9- Anne, baba ya da yakın akrabalarla ilişkiler						
10- Önemli olduğuna inanılan amaçlar, hedefler ve konular						
11- Birlikte geçirilen zaman miktarı						
12- Temel kararların alınması						
13- Ev ile ilgili görevler						
14- Boş zaman ilgi ve uğraşları						
15- Mesleki kararlar						

Aşağıdaki maddeleri lütfen üzerlerinde bulunan ifadelere göre (her zaman, hemen hemen her zaman, zaman zaman, ara sıra, nadiren, hiçbir zaman) işaretleyin.

	Her zaman	Hemen hemen her zaman	Zaman zaman	Ara sıra	Nadiren	Hiçbir zaman
16- Ne sıklıkla boşanmayı, ayrılmayı ya da ilişkinizi bitirmeyi düşünür ya da tartışırsınız?						
17- Ne sıklıkta siz veya eşiniz kavgadan sonra evinizi terk edersiniz?						
18- Ne sıklıkla eşinizle olan ilişkinizin genelde iyi gittiğini düşünürsünüz?						
19- Eşinize güvenir misiniz?						
20- Evlendiğiniz için hiç pişmanlık duyar mısınız?						
21- Ne sıklıkla eşinizle münakaşa edersiniz?						
22- Ne sıklıkla birbirinizin sinirlenmesine neden olursunuz?						

	Her gün	Hemen hemen her gün	Ara sıra	Nadiren	Hiçbir zaman
23- Eşinizi öper misiniz?					

	Hepsine	Çoğuna	Bazılarına	Çok azına	Hiçbirine
24- Siz veya eşiniz ev dışı etkinliklerinizin ne kadarına birlikte katılırsınız?					

Aşağıdaki olaylar siz ve eşiniz arasında ne sıklıkta geçer?

	Hiçbir zaman	Ayda birden az	Ayda bir veya iki defa	Haftada bir veya iki kere	Günde bir defa	Günde birden fazla
25- Teşvik edici fikir alışverişlerinde bulunmak						
26- Birlikte gülmek						
27- Bir şeyi sakince tartışmak						
28- Bir iş üzerinde birlikte çalışmak						

Eşlerin bazı zamanlar anlaştikları, bazen anlaşamadıkları konular vardır. Eğer aşağıdaki maddeler son birkaç hafta içinde siz ve eşiniz arasında görüş farklılığı veya problem yaratıyorsa belirtiniz (Evet veya Hayır'ı işaretleyiniz)

	Evet	Hayır
29- Seks için yorgun olmak		
30- Sevgi göstermemek		

31- Aşağıda ilişkinizdeki farklı mutluluk düzeyleri gösterilmektedir. Orta noktadaki “mutlu” birçok ilişkide yaşanan mutluluk düzeyini gösterir. İlişkinizi genelde değerlendirdiğinizde mutluluk düzeyinizi en iyi şekilde belirtecek olan seçeneği lütfen işaretleyiniz.

<input type="checkbox"/> Aşırı mutsuz	<input type="checkbox"/> Oldukça mutsuz	<input type="checkbox"/> Az mutsuz	<input type="checkbox"/> Mutlu	<input type="checkbox"/> Oldukça mutlu	<input type="checkbox"/> Aşırı mutlu	<input type="checkbox"/> Tam anlamıyla mutlu
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32- Aşağıda belirtilen cümlelerden ilişkinizin geleceği hakkında ne hissettiğinizi en iyi şekilde tanımlayan ifadeyi lütfen işaretleyiniz.

- İlişkimin başarılı olmasını çok fazla istiyorum ve bunun için yapamayacağım hiçbir şey yoktur.
- İlişkimin başarılı olmasını çok istiyorum ve bunun için yapabileceğim hepsini yapacağım.
- İlişkimin başarılı olmasını çok istiyorum ve bunun için payıma düşeni yapacağım.
- İlişkimin başarılı olması güzel olurdu, fakat bunun için şu anda yaptıklarımın daha fazlasını yapamam.
- İlişkimin başarılı olması güzel olurdu, fakat bunun için şu anda yaptıklarımın daha fazlasını yapmayı reddederim.
- İlişkim asla başarılı olmayacak ve ilişkinin yürümesi için benim daha fazla yapabileceğim bir şey yok.

APPENDIX E

(Differentiation of Self Inventory)

DSI-T

Aşağıda kendinizle ve başkalarıyla olan ilişkilerinize yönelik düşünce ve duygularınızı içeren ifadeler yer almaktadır. Sizden istenen her bir ifadeyi dikkatlice okuyarak 1'den 6'ya kadar olan seçeneklerden sizi en iyi ifade eden seçeneği işaretlemenizdir. Eğer herhangi bir madde sizinle direkt ilgili gözüküyorsa, nasıl düşünüp nasıl davranabileceğinizle ilgili en iyi tahmininizi belirtiniz. İhten yanıtlarınız için teşekkürler.

	Hiç Uygu n Değil					Çok Uygu n
1. Ailemin yanıdayken genellikle kendimi kısıtlanmış hissedirim	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Önemli bir işe ya da göreve başlarken genellikle başkalarının cesaretlendirmesine ihtiyaç duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. İnsanlar benimle yakınlık kurmaya çalıştıklarında, kendimi onlardan uzak tutarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. İnsanlar benimle yakınlık kurmaya çalıştıklarında, bundan genellikle rahatsızlık duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Hemen hemen hayatımdaki herkesten onay alma ihtiyacı hissedirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Değiştiremeyeceğim şeyler için üzülmenin bir anlamı yok.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Yakın ilişkilerimde kısıtlanma kaygısı yaşarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Eleştirilmek beni oldukça rahatsız eder.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Anne/babamın beklentilerine göre yaşamaya çalışırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Kendimi olduğum gibi kabul ederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6

11. Eşimle/partnerimle bir tartışma yaşarsam, tüm gün bu tartışma üzerine düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Başkaları tarafından baskı altında olduğumu hissettiğim zamanlarda bile onlara “hayır” diyebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Yaptığım şeyin doğru olduğunu düşünüyorsam başkalarının ne dediğini pek de umursamam.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Bir karar alırken danışacağım birileri yoksa kolay kolay karar veremem.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Başkaları tarafından incitilmek beni aşırı derecede rahatsız eder.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Eşimin/partnerimin yoğun ilgisi beni bunaltır.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. İnsanlar üzerindeki izlenimimi merak ederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Duygularımı genellikle çevremdekilerden daha yoğun yaşarım.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Hayatımda ne olursa olsun, kendimle ilgili düşüncelerimden asla taviz vermem.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Anne/babamın fikrini almadan karar veremem.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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