SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION AND MENTAL HEALTH:

THE ROLES OF RUMINATION AND DISTRACTION

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HATİCE HAZAL AKOĞLU

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate School

Prof. Dr. Kezban Çelik

Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ilgın Gökler-Danışman

Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.
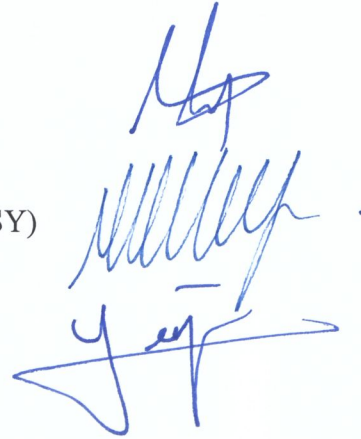
Asst. Prof. Dr. Nevin Solak

Advisor

Examining Committee Members

Asst. Prof. Dr. Nevin Solak (TEDU, PSY)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Müjgan İnözü (Hacettepe University, PSY)

Asst. Prof. Dr. Yağmur Ar (TEDU, PSY)

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Name, Last Name: Hatice Hazal Akoğlu

Signature :

ABSTRACT

SYSTEM JUSTIFICATION AND MENTAL HEALTH:

THE ROLES OF RUMINATION AND DISTRACTION

Hatice Hazal Akoğlu

M. A., Department of Psychology

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Nevin Solak

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Previous research indicated that justifying the societal status quo influences mental health and serves as a coping mechanism which leads individuals to feel better in difficult times. However, the underlying process of the relationship between system justification and mental health indicators remains unclear. The goal of the present study was to examine the mediating role of emotion regulation in this association. In particular, the current study focused on the mediating roles of two certain emotion regulation strategies namely, distraction and rumination. By combining knowledge from the domains of system justification, emotion regulation, psychological well-being, anxiety, and perceived stress; it was argued that system justification would negatively predict rumination and positively predict distraction. Additionally, it was expected that rumination would be related to adverse mental health outcomes whereas distraction would be related to better mental health outcomes. Moreover, it was hypothesized that emotion regulation strategies together would mediate the relationship between system justification and mental health. The hypotheses were predicted in the context of the judicial system of Turkey. To test these, in one

correlational study, data were collected from 432 university students. Results demonstrated that, as expected, system justification was negatively related to rumination, anxiety and perceived stress, and positively related to psychological well-being. Moreover, rumination mediated the relationship between system justification on one hand and anxiety and perceived stress on the other. The findings expand our understanding of the underlying link between system justification and mental health by elucidating the roles on emotion regulation strategies.

Keywords: System Justification, Emotion Regulation, Psychological Well-Being, Anxiety, Perceived Stress.

ÖZ

SİSTEMİ MEŞRULAŞTIRMA VE RUH SAĞLIĞI:

RUMİNASYON VE DİKKAT DAĞITMANIN ROLÜ

Hatice Hazal Akoğlu

Yüksek Lisans, Psikoloji Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Nevin Solak

Ocak 2019, 112 sayfa

Literatür sistemi meşrulaştırmanın ruh sağlığını etkilediğini ve bireylerin daha iyi hissetmelerini sağlayan bir başa çıkma mekanizması olarak hizmet ettiğini göstermiştir. Ancak, sistemi meşrulaştırma ve ruh sağlığı arasındaki ilişkinin altında yatan süreç henüz bilinmemektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, sistemi meşrulaştırma ve ruh sağlığı arasındaki ilişkide duygu düzenlemenin aracı rolünü incelemektir. Bu çalışma özellikle, dikkat dağıtma ve ruminasyon olmak üzere iki duygu düzenleme stratejisinin aracı rollerine odaklanmıştır. Sistemi meşrulaştırma, duygu düzenleme, psikolojik iyi oluş, anksiyete ve algılanan stres alanlarından elde edilen bilgileri birleştirerek; sistemi meşrulaştırmanın ruminasyon ile olumsuz yönde; dikkat dağıtma ile pozitif yönde ilişkili olacağı beklenmektedir. Ayrıca, ruminasyonun ruh sağlığı değişkenleriyle negatif yönde, dikkat dağıtmanın ise ruh sağlığı değişkenleriyle pozitif yönde ilişkili olacağı beklenmektedir. Ek olarak, duygu düzenleme stratejilerinin sistemi meşrulaştırma ile ruh sağlığı arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık edeceği varsayılmaktadır. Çalışmanın hipotezleri, Türkiye'nin adli sistemi bağlamında test edilmiştir. Hipotezleri test etmek için bir korelasyon çalışması kapsamında 432

üniversite öğrencisinden veri toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları, sistemi meşrulaştırmanın ruminasyon, anksiyete ve algılanan stres ile negatif ilişkili ve psikolojik iyi oluş ile pozitif olarak ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, ruminasyon, sistemi meşrulaştırma ile kaygı, algılanan stres arasındaki ilişkiye aracılık etmiştir. Bu bulgular, duygu düzenleme stratejilerinin sistemi meşrulaştırma ve ruh sağlığı arasındaki bağlantıyla ilişkisini açıklayarak ilgili literature ilişkin anlayışımızı genişletmektedir.

Keywords: Sistemi Meşrulaştırma, Duygu Düzenleme, Psikolojik İyi Oluş, Anksiyete, Algılanan Stres.

To my dear parents Şenay Akoğlu & Yaşar Akoğlu,

&

To my beloved little sister Öykü Akoğlu

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Justice is one of the important factors in shaping our mental health. Prilleltensky (1997) has claimed that while conceptualizing what the "good life" or psychological well-being is, one of the core values that psychologists should focus on is justice. Justice, for example, influences individuals' stress levels, the way of coping with stress, and personal resources that maintain well-being (Deneulin, 2014; Kornienko & Syryamkina, 2015; Tomaka & Blascovich, 1994). Understanding how people cope with injustice yield important clinical implications. The focus of the current study, therefore, was on the relationship between perceptions of injustice and mental health.

System Justification Theory (SJT) (Jost & Banaji, 1994) is one of the theories which examine how people perceive and cope with injustice and its consequences. SJT (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004) proposes that there is a general human motivation to justify, defend and maintain the social, political, and economic systems which individuals live in. Justifying the system has a palliative function (Jost & Hunyady, 2003). Specifically, system justification influences mental health and serves as a coping mechanism, which leads individuals to feel better in difficult times (Harding & Sibley, 2013; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Major & O'Brien, 2005; Napier & Jost, 2008).

Although system justification influences mental health, the process underlying this effect has remained unclear. The present research was aimed at filling this gap. The current investigation attempted to explore the mechanisms underlying the link between system justification and mental health characterized by anxiety, perceived stress, and psychological well-being. One way through which mental health can be influenced is by a process of emotion regulation (e.g., Gross, 1998; Gross & Muñoz, 1995; John & Gross, 2004). Emotion regulation is a process through people change their or others emotions in line with their motivations (Gross, 2008; Tamir, 2016). In the current thesis, it was proposed that emotion regulation strategies might underlie the link between system justification and mental health. In particular, the mediating roles of two certain emotion regulation strategies which have different regulation directions and different outcomes for mental health, namely, distraction and rumination were examined. In the current study, it was explored whether participants who have relatively higher system justification tendency would be more likely to have better mental health to the extent that they engage in certain emotion regulation strategies such as distraction and rumination when they think of the negative aspects of the status quo.

Since system justifiers seek to preserve the status quo, it makes sense to assume that individuals high in system justification would use rumination less frequently and use distraction more frequently, when they think of the negative aspects of the status quo. It was then proposed that rumination would negatively predict better mental health outcomes and distraction would positively predict better mental health outcomes. The predictions were tested in the context of the legal system of Turkey

while combining the knowledge from domains of system justification, mental health, and emotion regulation.

Below first, the system justification theory was briefly summarized then, the link between system justification and mental health indicators were presented. Next, the relationship between emotion regulation and mental health indicators were described. Furthermore, the interplay between system justification, emotion regulation, and mental health indicators was summarized.

1. 1.   System Justification Theory: A Brief Overview

System Justification Theory (SJT) was developed by Jost and Banaji in 1994. SJT provides a social cognitive analysis of why and how people justify and rationalize social systems (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). The theory suggests that humans are motivated to preserve, maintain and defend the existing status quo (Jost & Andrews, 2011; Jost & Banaji, 1994). The concept of "system" in the theory includes both large and small scale social systems such as at macro levels economic, religion, legal, and political systems and at micro levels family, school, and work systems (Wakslak, Jost & Bauer, 2011).

SJT distinguishes three different justification motives. These are "ego justification", "group justification", and "system justification" motives (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Ego justification motive focuses on individuals' needs to feel justified and develop a positive self-image while group justification motive focuses on individuals' needs to develop a positive group-image of the group to which an individual belongs. However, the system justification motive serves for justifying the existing social order at any cost even if it does not serve for the benefit of one's self and ingroup (Jost,

Banaji & Nosek, 2004). System justification tendency results in perceiving the existing social arrangements as good, just, and desirable (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004). These three motives are congruent with each other among advantaged group members but incongruent with each other among disadvantaged group members (Jost, Banaji & Nosek, 2004).

Justifying the status quo has some consequences. For instance, internalization of the inequalities contributes to the continuity of the existing arrangements (Jost, Pelham & Carvallo, 2002). Specifically, justifying the existing system decreases individuals' attempt to change the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). Research on system justification theory has shown that individuals who have high system justification tendency are more satisfied with the authority and its decision even they are unjust (Jost, Kay & Thorisdottir, 2009). Since social change includes the acceptance that the current system has failures, individuals with high system justification motive are less likely to engage in social change against the interests of the status quo (Kay & Friesen, 2011). By engaging in social change less, people with high system justification tendency contribute to the maintenance of the system more (Feygina, Jost & Goldsmith, 2010).

System justification motive is affected by both situational factors and individual differences (Blanchar & Eidalman, 2013; Jost, Burgess & Mosso, 2001; Jost, Liviatan, van der Toorn, Ledgerwood, Mandisodza & Nosek, 2010). Blanchar and Eidelman (2013) claimed that when the system is perceived as stable and old, individuals tend to engage in system justification more. Kay and Friesen (2011) indicated that perceived threat to the system such as terrorism, feeling dependent to the system, and believing that leaving the system is difficult also contribute to the

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maintenance system justification beliefs. These are some of the situational factors which affect system justification tendency. On the other hand, tolerance for uncertainty, having a sense of low control, closeness to new experiences, perceiving the world is a dangerous place, feeling anxious toward death, having a higher need for order are considered as dispositional factors which lead individuals to support the existing social systems too (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost, Liviatan, van der Toorn, Ledgerwood, Mandisodza & Nosek, 2010).

Jost and Banaji (1994) proposed that both members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups engage in system justification. Justifying the system leads to heightened satisfaction, positive mood; but lessened anger, guilt, shame, negative mood, perceiving the system more legitimate and decreased will to social change in both groups, however, advantaged and disadvantaged groups differ on their well-being levels (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). Jost and Hunyady (2002) examined why system justification is associated with higher satisfaction and positive mood and they claimed that SJ is not an adaptive coping strategy. They argued that SJ prevents stress and negative mood by leading individuals to perceive the world is stable, legitimate and predictable and in this case, SJ might be serving as a coping strategy for unjust, unwanted realities. Jost and Hunyady (2002) argued that SJ can be both a stress source and a coping way too. In order to prevent bigger stress sources, such as seeing that the system one lives in has many failures and injustices one can turn to minimize stress by blaming themselves.

1. 2. System Justification and Mental Health Indicators

System Justification Theory suggests that justifying the system has a palliative function. Specifically, justifying the system creates a perception that the social context is stable, and just (van der Toorn, Tyler & Jost, 2011). System justification serves as a psychological coping strategy and makes the world more predictable (Jost & Hunyady, 2003; Kay, Gaucher, Napier, Callan & Laurin, 2008). Therefore, system justification leads to increased satisfaction with the status quo, psychological well-being, positive mood, happiness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem (Jost & Hunyady, 2003; Jost, Liviatan, van der Toorn, Ledgerwood, Mandisodza & Nosek, 2010; Napier & Jost, 2008; O'Brien & Major, 2005; Rankin, Jost & Wakslak, 2009).

The current study examined the relationship between system justification and mental health indicators through two certain emotion regulation strategies. As written above, system justification is positively related to better mental health (Jost & Hunyady, 2003; Jost & Hunyady, 2005; O'Brien & Major, 2005). On the other hand, mental health indicators such as psychological well-being, anxiety and perceived stress are also affected by the way how people regulate their emotions (Borkevec & Roemer, 1995; Corah, Gale & Illig, 1979; Gross & John, 2003; Gross & Munoz, 1995; Hampel & Petermann, 2005; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). In the current study, psychological well-being, anxiety, and perceived stress are considered as three indicators of mental health because of their relations with both system justification and emotion regulation (Bovier, Chamot & Pergener, 2004; Heidrich & Ryff, 1993; Pico-Alfonso, Garcia-Linares, Celda-Navarro, Blasco-Ros, Echeburua & Martinez, 2006).

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The first outcome of the current study is psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is defined as both a cognitive and affective self-evaluation of one's own life (Diener & Diener, 1996). Psychological well-being is also defined as happiness, one's potential for self-realization or satisfaction with life (Bradburn, 1969; Neugarten, Havighurst & Tobin, 1961). Keyes, Shmotkin, and Ryff (2002) defined psychological well-being as personal growth, having close relationships with others and maintaining meaningful purposes in life. According to Ryff's psychological well-being model (1989), there are six components: "self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth". As written above, both research and definitions of psychological well-being have taken different directions (Ryff, 1989).

The second outcome of the current study is anxiety. According to the Tripartite Model of Anxiety which was proposed by Watson and Clark in 1991, anxiety can be characterized by heightened arousal and is linked to non-specific kinds of stress factors. Anxiety also includes withdrawal from daily activities (Kemp & Felmingham, 2008). According to the Information Processing Model of Anxiety, Beck and Clark (1997) described anxiety in three stages: facing the threat, activating the primal threat mode, activating more detailed modes of thinking. According to Beck, Emery, and Greenberg (1985), anxiety cannot be conceptualized apart from perceived stress since anxiety includes the processing of the situations which are perceived as dangerous and lead to feeling stressed.

Clinicians have been concerned with anxiety and have devoted their attention to the definitions of anxiety for a long time in the field of psychology because of its relations with psychological well-being (Beck & Clark, 1997; Kemp & Felmingham,

2008; Liu, Shono & Kitamura, 2009; Sola-Carmona, Lopez-Liria, Padilla-Gongora, Daza & Sanchez-Alcoba, 2013; Ramkisson, Pillay & Sartorius, 2016; Watson & Clark, 1991). Research on anxiety has shown that there is a negative relationship between anxiety and psychological well-being (Liu, Shono & Kitamura, 2009; Sola-Carmona, Lopez-Liria, Padilla-Gongora, Daza & Sanchez-Alcoba, 2013; Ramkisson, Pillay & Sartorius, 2016). Anxiety is also found to be associated with low tolerance to stress and its effects (Van Praag, 1996).

Finally, the third outcome of the present study is perceived stress. Perceived stress is defined as a variable which contributes to the responses which are given to stress factors (Anand & Nagle, 2016). Perceived stress has important effects on functioning, psychological well-being, life satisfaction and in the development of psychopathology (Connor, Vaishnavi, Davidson, Sheehan & Sheehan, 2007; Ryff & Singer, 1998). A study conducted by Racic, Todorovic, Ivkovic, Masic, Joksimovic, and Kulic (2017) has revealed that perceived stress is linked to anxiety.

System justification, as mentioned above, has a palliative function (Jost & Hunyady, 2003). The palliative function of the system justification means relieving or soothing effect on the symptoms which comes from the unequal social systems in which individuals live (Jost & Hunyady, 2003). As mentioned above, according to Jost and Hunyady (2003), justifying the system serves as a coping mechanism and helps to reduce anxiety, cognitive dissonance and, also helps to internalize the inequality in the society and justify the status quo. In the current study, therefore, it is expected that system justification would positively predict psychological well-being whereas negatively predict anxiety and perceived stress.

1. 3.   Emotion Regulation and Mental Health Indicators

According to Gross (1998; 2015), emotion regulation is defined as a process that influences which emotions individuals have, when they have, how they experience and express them. Thompson (1994), suggests that emotion regulation is a process which includes one's monitoring their own emotional responses, evaluation, and modification of emotional responses. Emotion regulation involves maintaining, increasing or decreasing the experiential and behavioral aspects of emotions (Gross, Richards & John, 2006).

Individuals can increase or decrease their emotions (Gyurak, Goodkind, Kramer, Miller & Levenson, 2012; Ochsner, Ray, Cooper, Robertson, Chopra, Gabrieli & Gross, 2004). Up-regulation of emotions increase the intensity and the duration of emotion, on the other hand, down-regulation of emotions decrease the intensity and the duration of the emotions (Gyurak, Goodkind, Kramer, Miller & Levenson, 2012). Individuals use different emotion regulation strategies to regulate their emotions. (John & Gross, 2007). Distraction and rumination are two examples of emotion regulation strategies. Distraction involves deploying attention away from an emotion-eliciting stimulus and it is a down-regulation strategy (Sheppes & Meiran, 2008; Thiruchselvam, Blechert, Sheppes, Rydstrom & Gross, 2011). Rumination involves thinking about feelings and thoughts towards an emotion-eliciting stimulus and it is an up-regulation strategy (Garnefski, van den Kommer, Kraaji, Teerds, Legerstee & Onstein, 2002). Rumination and distraction are different from each other because of their effects on the intensity of emotions. Research shows that rumination increases the intensity of emotions and this, in turn, influences one's psychological well-being (Brans & Verduyn, 2014; Resibois, Kalokerinosa, Verleysena, Kuppens,

Van Mechelena, Fossati & Verduyna, 2018). On the other hand, distraction decreases the high-intensity of emotion responses (Li, Wang, Fan, Zhu, Li, Zhang, Qi & Luo, 2017).

Like all human behavior, emotion regulation processes are also influenced by a number of motivations (Deci & Ryan, 1985). People regulate their emotions in order to reach their goals (Tamir, 2016). According to the literature on emotion regulation, there are two main types of motivation: one is hedonic and the other is instrumental (Tamir, 2016). Instrumental motives include behavioral, epistemic, social and eudaimonic domains according to Tamir's taxonomy (2016). As summarized, people do not only regulate their emotions to increase pleasure and hide from pain, they also engage in emotion regulation in order to achieve their instrumental motives too. Since system justification motive satisfies epistemic needs of individuals (Salfate, Paez, Khan, Liu & Zuniga, 2018), the focus of the current study will be on instrumental emotion regulation process, in particular, epistemic emotion regulation motives. People regulate their emotions to make sense of themselves and the world that they live in such as if the world is safe (Tamir, 2016). Individuals can also engage in emotion regulation to verify information about themselves and the world regardless of whether this information is positive or negative (Tamir, 2016).

The modal model of emotion which is suggested by Gross (1998), suggests five different points in regulation. These are situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, response modulation. Gross (1998) also identified two types of emotion regulation processes, one is antecedent-focused and the other is response-focused. Antecedent-focused regulation will be also the focus of the current study. Gross and John (2003) indicated that antecedent-focused emotion

regulation happens while emotion is eliciting and includes the steps of selection of the situation, modification of the situation, attention deployment, and cognitive change. They also suggested that antecedent-focused regulation is more related to better mental health outcomes than response-focused regulation (Gross & John, 2003). Attentional Deployment is an antecedent-focused regulatory process which occurs when one situation is selected and the situation has many aspects to be given attention. Rumination and distraction are classified as emotion regulation strategies which occur in attentional deployment. Distraction and rumination are one of the most used forms of attentional deployment.

Attentional deployment type of emotion regulation strategies was chosen as the focus of the current research because of the following reasons. First, according to the emotion regulation literature, antecedent-focused regulatory processes such as rumination and distraction may be used more commonly because they are more time and energy-efficient, occur more automatically and require minimal cognitive effort (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2010). Research suggests that attentional deployment may be used by its own or within other regulatory processes (Oschner and Gross, 2008; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2010). For example, Oschner and Gross (2008) claimed that during reappraisal the areas of the brain responsible for selective attention were active. From this perspective, individuals initially should use attention deployment strategies successfully as a gateway to use other strategies more efficiently such as cognitive reappraisal, for example when reappraising an emotion-eliciting situation, one should canalize their attention to the aspects that help them reappraise (Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2010).

Second, attentional deployment regulatory processes have less cognitive costs compared to other strategies (Sheppes & Meiran, 2008; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2010). Reappraisal was found to have some cognitive costs such as lack of self-control mechanism which indicates greater energy compared to distraction (Sheppes & Meiran, 2008). Sheppes and Meiran (2008) indicated that cognitive reappraisal was not as effective as distraction for reducing negative mood at the late time after emotion firstly occurred. Gessner (2015) examined distraction and reappraisal in a study that compared the effectiveness of these two emotion regulation strategies when individuals faced with high-intensity negative emotions and proved that distraction is more effective than reappraisal in such cases.

Third, the directions of distraction and rumination are different from each other. While distraction is a down-regulation strategy and decreases the intensity of emotions rumination is an up-regulation strategy and increases the intensity of emotional responses. Also, distraction and rumination have different effects on mental health indicators. For example, rumination has a negative effect on mental health while distraction influences mental health in a positive way (Hampel & Petermann, 2005; Olatunji, Naragon-Gainey & Wollitzky-Taylor, 2013).

Research on emotion regulation has shown that emotion dysregulation is closely related to psychopathology and cognitive strategies may have benefits for regulating emotions (Amstadter, 2008; Barlow, 1991; Gross, 1998). Particularly, individual differences in regulating emotions are related to vulnerabilities and resilience to anxiety and also, anxiety is found to be related to the regulation of "unwanted" emotions (Campbell-Sills & Barlow, 2007). Anxiety treatments focus on the misinterpretation of emotions and regulation of them, such as helping clients to be

more comfortable with emotional arousals (Amstadter, 2008; Mennin, Heimberg, Turk & Fresco, 2006). Research on emotion regulation has shown that emotion regulation strategies are also related to stress perceptions and psychological well-being (Gross & John, 2003; Hampel & Petermann, 2005).

Particularly, research on emotion regulation has shown that distraction is related to higher psychological well-being, lower anxiety and perceived stress levels of individuals, while rumination is related to lower psychological well-being, higher anxiety and perceived stress levels (Hampel & Petermann, 2005; Olatunji, Naragon-Gainey & Wollitzky-Taylor, 2013). A study which examined the link between perceived stress, coping styles and their effects on adjustments showed that maladaptive coping styles such as rumination are found to be linked to higher levels of perceived stress in adolescents (Hampel & Petermann, 2005). On the other hand, distraction was found to be effective in decreasing negative mood even in depressed individuals (Joormann, Siemer & Gotlib, 2007; Wong and Molds, 2011). Specifically, Erber and Tesser (1992) suggested that distraction decreases negative mood by preventing individuals from thinking related to their negative mood. Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, and Epel (2002) have demonstrated that using distraction more frequently are linked to more mood repair and fewer cortisol levels, which is a hormone release in case of stress, while using rumination less frequently are linked to more mood repair and fewer cortisol levels.

Based on the literature above, in the current study it is expected that while rumination would negatively predict mental health indicators, the distraction would positively predict these indicators.

1. 4.   System Justification, Emotion Regulation, and Mental Health Indicators

The current study tried to address the link between system justification and mental health indicators through the mediating role of emotion regulation strategies. As individuals engage in certain behaviors with benefits, they also engage in certain emotion regulation strategies to gain benefits too (Tamir, 2016). The benefit of regulating emotions might not always include hedonistic motives such as heightened positive emotions, emotion regulation is also related to one's instrumental motives (Tamir, Mitchell & Gross, 2008). People are motivated to experience emotions that are consistent with their core values and their political worldviews (Tamir, 2015). Motives shape the subsequent strategy that people use to regulate their emotions (Phillippot & Feldman, 2004; Tamir, Mitchell & Gross, 2008). For example, Tamir, Mitchell, and Gross (2008) demonstrated how instrumental motives such as winning a game affect one's emotion regulation choice even though its consequences are unpleasant. Also according to Tamir's (2016) taxonomy of motives which affects emotion regulation processes, individuals often seek to engage in emotion regulation in order to verify familiar information about themselves and their beliefs about the world they live in. A study by Wood, Heimpel, Manwell, and Whitting (2009) explains individual differences in regulating negative mood by individual belief, such as individuals with low self-esteem are less motivated to decrease negative mood since they do not believe that they deserve positive mood. Such research and Tamir's taxonomy actually claims that people can regulate their emotions for epistemic reasons too.

In the current study, the roles of two certain emotion regulation strategies such as rumination and distraction are explored in the link between system justification and

mental health, since system justification is a motivation and emotion regulation can be affected by motivations too. System justification can be considered as one of the central motives when people perceive and interpret social problems. It is claimed that emotion regulation strategies that people apply should depend on their system justification motive when people encounter with negative aspects of the status quo. Since system justifiers seek to preserve the status quo, individuals low in system justification tendency would ruminate more frequently on negative aspects of status quo that question its legitimacy, then their belief and emotions would be consistent. However, individuals high in system justification would use distraction more frequently that deploys attention from negative event related to the status quo. Both distraction and rumination then would mediate the association between system justification and mental health indicators.

1.5. Overview

The dissertation aimed at filling the gap of the underlying mechanism of palliative function of system justification. The current study focuses on the mediating effects of two certain emotion regulation strategies -distraction and rumination- on the link between system justification and mental health indicators. As written above, since justice is an important topic that affects everyday life and mental health (Currie, 2009; Deneulin, 2014; Felson & Boba, 2010; Friedman, 1975; Prilleltensky, 1997), the current study was conducted in the context of the legal system. Specifically, it was hypothesized that:

1) a) Individuals high in system justification would use distraction more frequently when they think of the negative aspects of Turkey's legal system.

b) Individuals low in system justification would use rumination more frequently when they think of the negative aspects of Turkey's legal system.

2) a) Also, rumination would be positively correlated with anxiety, perceived stress whereas distraction would be negatively correlated with anxiety, perceived stress.

b) Also, rumination would be negatively correlated with psychological well-being whereas distraction would be positively correlated with psychological well-being.

3) Rumination and distraction would mediate the relationship between system justification and mental health indicators.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

1.   Participants

Initially, six-hundred-ninety-three participants visited the webpage but 201 participants who did not complete the majority of the scales were excluded from the analyses. In addition, 34 participants who are not in the study's age range and 1 participant who lives in abroad were also removed from the data, thus the remaining sample was 457 participants. Also, after controlling the accuracy of the data and the assumptions (outliers, normality, homogeneity of variance and multicollinearity), 11 cases were identified as univariate outliers having z-scores higher than ±3.29 and 14 cases were identified as multivariate outliers based on their Mahalanobis distances and excluded from the analyses. Therefore, the remaining sample was 432.

Participants were 371 female (85.9 %) and 61 male (14.1 %). The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 22 ($M = 20.45$, $SD = 1.23$). Participants were university students from 18 cities in Turkey (See in Table 2). Two-hundred-sixty-six participants were from a public university (61.6%), 156 participants were from a private university (36.1 %) and 10 participants did not report their university (2.3 %) (See in Table 3).

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables*

Demographic Variable	Mean/ Frequency	SD/Percentage
Age	20.45	1.23
Gender		
Female	371	85.9 %
Male	61	14.1 %
University		
Public University	266	61.6 %
Private University	156	36.1 %
Missing	10	2.3 %
Income		
Under 1401 TL	70	16.2 %
1401-2500 TL	83	19.2 %
2501-5000 TL	150	34.6 %
5001-7500 TL	80	18.5 %
Higher than 7501 TL	50	11.5 %
Socio-Economic Status		
Low	16	3.7 %
Low-Middle	69	16 %
Middle	240	55.6 %
Middle-High	100	23.1 %
High	7	1.6 %
Political Orientation	3.39	1.31
Religiosity	3.66	1.59

Table 2 *Participants' Cities*

City	Frequency	Percentage
Ankara	355	82.01 %
Bilecik	1	0.2 %
Bolu	2	0.5 %
Bursa	6	1.4 %
Cankiri	1	0.2 %
Edirne	1	0.2 %
Eskisehir	3	0.7 %
Gaziantep	1	0.2 %
Hatay	1	0.2 %
Istanbul	28	6.9 %
Izmir	11	2.6%
Kocaeli	4	0.9 %
Kirikkale	1	0.2 %
Manisa	4	0.9 %
Mugla	1	0.2 %
Sakarya	6	1.4 %
Tekirdag	2	0.5 %
Usak	1	0.2 %
Zonguldak	1	0.1 %

Table 3 *Universities of Participants*

University	Frequency	Percentage
Anadolu University	3	0.7 %
Ankara University	190	43.2 %
Baskent University	1	0.2 %
Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University	4	0.9 %
Cankaya University	98	22.6 %
Ege University	7	1.5 %
Gumushane University	1	0.2 %
Hacettepe University	5	1.1 %
Istanbul University	9	2 %
Izmir Yuksek Teknoloji Enstitusu	1	0.2 %
Kirikkkale University	1	0.2 %
Kocaeli University	5	1.2 %
Maltepe University	3	0.7 %
Manisa Celal Bayar University	9	2 %
Marmara University	4	1 %
Mugla Sitki Kocman University	1	0.2 %
Namık Kemal University	3	0.7 %
Nisantasi University	1	0.2 %
Orta Dogu Teknik University	7	1.6 %
Sakarya University	6	1.3 %
TED University	50	11.5 %
Uludag University	5	1.3 %
Usak University	1	0.2 %
Yeditepe University	5	1.3 %
Yildiz Teknik University	4	0.9 %
Zonguldak Bulent Ecevit University	1	0.2 %

2. Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaire set which includes the measures of system justification tendency, emotion regulation, mental health, and demographics. System justification and emotion regulation scales were adapted to the legal system context, before filling out the scales participants were instructed to think about the negative aspects of Turkey's legal system.

Data were collected on a voluntary basis, and informed consent was obtained from each participant. Participants were debriefed at the end of the study. The questionnaires used in the current study were submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee of TED University. After receiving ethical approval, data were collected using an online survey (*Qualtrics*). Completion of the measures took approximately 30 minutes.

3. Measures

3. 1. Demographic Information Form

In the demographic information form, participants reported their age, gender, the city which they live in, university, total monthly income, and socio-economic status. Participants also indicated their political ideologies and religiosity levels. Participants indicated their political ideology by placing themselves on a 1 (*Left*) to 7 (*Right*) scale. Participants also reported their religiosity level by placing themselves on a 1 (*Not religious*) to 7 (*Very religious*) scale.

3. 2.   System Justification Scale

To assess individuals' tendency to legitimize the legal system, the modified version of the General System Justification Scale (GSJS) was used (Kay & Jost, 2003). General System Justification Scale was developed to assess individuals' tendency to legitimize and defend the general system which they live in. This scale has 8 items which are rated on a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 9 = *Strongly agree*). The original scale consists of items, such as "*In general, I find society to be fair.*", "*Most policies serve the greater good.*", "*Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness.*". The internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficient was .88 of the original scale (Kay & Jost, 2003). The adaptation of the General System Justification scale into Turkish was conducted by Yildirim with an internal consistency Cronbach alpha of .67 (2010).

In the current study, the wording of the items of General System Justification Scale was changed in line with the legal system context (e.g. "*In general, I find the legal system fair in Turkey.*", "*Most policies which are applied on the legal system in Turkey serve for the greater good of the majority.*", "*In our society, all laws are implemented equally and fairly.*") (See Appendix D). The instruction was "*Now I would like you to focus on the poorly functioning aspects of the legal system in Turkey. Carefully read each of the following phrases while maintaining this thought and sincerely state...*". The adapted version of the original scale has also 8 items. The answers were provided on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). Cronbach alpha of the scale was .90 in the current study.

Exploratory factor analyses on 8 items of Legal System Justification with varimax rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the scale. Results revealed that the scale had one factor with the eigenvalue of 1 explaining 64.00 % of the total variance. According to the results, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy coefficient was found .93 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was χ^2 = 3027.880 (df = 28, p= .000). The factor loadings were between .74 and .89 (See Table 4).

Table 4 Factor Analysis of Legal System Justification Scale

	% Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading
	64.00 %	.90	
1. In general, I find the legal system fair in Turkey.			.86
2. In general, I think that policies and arrangements in Turkey's Legal system are carried out as they should be.			.89
3. In Turkey, policies and arrangements of Turkey's Legal system should be restructured from start to finish.			.69
4. Turkey has one of the best legal system in the world.			.77.
5. Most policies which are applied on the legal system in Turkey serve for the greater good of the majority.			.82
6. In our legal system, all laws are implemented equally and fairly.			.84
7. The legal system in our society is getting worse every year.			.74
8. The legal system in Turkey was established in a way that everyone will get what they deserve sooner or later.			.75

3. 3.   Distraction Scale

The frequency of engaging in distraction was assessed using the adapted version of the 6-item distraction subscale of the Thought Control Questionnaire (Wells & Davies, 1994). The original scale is 30-item with 5 subscales which assess distraction, social control, worry, punishment, and reappraisal. Thought Control

Questionnaire is 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 4 (*Almost always*). The original subscale of distraction has 6 items, such as "*I call to mind positive images instead.*", "*I occupy myself with work instead.*", "*I think pleasant thoughts instead.*". The instruction was "*Now I would like you to focus on the poorly functioning aspects of the legal system in Turkey. Carefully read each of the following phrases while maintaining this thought and sincerely state...*". Distraction subscale of the Thought Control Questionnaire's Cronbach alpha coefficient is .72 and the test-retest coefficient is .68. 30-item Thought Control Scale was adapted by Yorulmaz and Gençöz (2008). Internal consistency Cronbach alpha of distraction subscale in Yorulmaz and Gençöz's study (2008) is .79

In this study, distraction subscale was adapted to Turkey's Legal System (e.g. "*When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I call to mind positive images instead.*", "*When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I occupy myself with work instead.*", "*When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I think pleasant thoughts instead.*") (See Appendix E). The adapted version of distraction subscale consists of 6-item ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*). Cronbach alpha of the scale was .89 in the current study.

Exploratory factor analyses on 6 items of the adapted version of Distraction Scale with varimax rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the scale. Examination of the analysis revealed that the scale had 1 factor with the eigenvalue of 1 explaining 65.34% of the total variance. According to the results, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy coefficient was found .87 and Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity was found as $\chi^2 = 1481.637$ ($df = 15$, $p = .000$). Examination of the analysis

has demonstrated that items' factor loadings were between .65 and .85 (See Table 5).

Table 5 Factor Analysis of Distraction Scale

	% Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading
	65.34 %	.89	
1. When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I try to think of positive things instead.			.65
2. When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I would rather occupy myself with work.			.79
3. When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to mind, I think of something else.			.83
4. When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I do something that pleases me.			.84
5. When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I think of nice things instead.			.85
6. When poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system came to my mind, I keep myself busy.			.85

3. 4. Rumination Scale

The frequency of engaging in rumination was assessed using the 6-item short

form of the rumination subscale of the Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire (RRQ)

(Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). The original scale is a 6-item with 5 Likert-type ranging

from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*) with an internal consistency

Cronbach alpha coefficient of .90. The original rumination subscale consists of items,

such as "*Sometimes it is hard for me to shut off thoughts about myself.*", "*My attention

is often focused on aspects of myself I wish I'd stop thinking about.*", "*It is easy for me

to put unwanted thought out of my mind.*". The instruction was "*Now I would like you

to focus on the poorly functioning aspects of the legal system in Turkey. Carefully read

each of the following phrases while maintaining this thought and sincerely state...".
The adaptation work of Rumination-Reflection Questionnaire was done in a cross-cultural study assessing religiosity and emotion regulation by Vishkin, Schwartz, Bloom, Solak, and Tamir in 2017.

The rumination subscale was adapted to the Turkish legal system (e.g. "*Sometimes it is hard for me to shut off thoughts about the legal system in Turkey.*", "*My attention is often focused on aspects of the legal system in Turkey I wish I'd stop thinking about.*", "*It is easy for me to put unwanted thoughts about the legal system in Turkey out of my mind.*") (See Appendix E). In the current study, the tendency to engage in rumination in the context of the Turkish legal system was measured with the adapted version of the scale. The modified version of the scale also consists of a 6-item and 5-point Likert-type ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Cronbach alpha of the scale was found .80 in the current study.

Exploratory factor analyses on 6 items of the adapted version of Rumination Scale with varimax rotation was conducted to examine the factor structure of the scale. Although the initial analysis revealed that the scale had two factors explaining 69.78 % of the total variance, after examination of the scree plot, original scale and theoretical explanations factor analysis was forced to a single factor. According to the results, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy coefficient was found .80 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found as $\chi2 = 250.556$ (*df* = 15, *p*= .000). Examination of the analysis has demonstrated that the adapted version of the scale has one dimension explaining 50. 24 % of the variance and items' factor loadings were between .62 and .77 (See Table 6).

Table 6 Factor Analysis of Rumination Scale

	% Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading
	50.24 %	.80	
1. My attention is often focused on poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system I wish I'd stop thinking about.			.64
2. I always seem to be "re-hashing" in my mind about the legal system and order in Turkey.			.76
3. Sometimes it is hard for me to shut off thoughts about Turkey's legal system.			.69
4. Long after an event about poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system, my thoughts keep going back to what happened.			.62
5. I don't waste time re-thinking about the poorly functioning aspects of Turkey's legal system that are over.			.76
6. It is easy for me to put unwanted thoughts about Turkey's legal system out of my mind.			.77

3. 5.   Psychological Well-Being Scale

Individuals' psychological well-being was measured by an 8-item Psychological Well-Being Scale (Diener et al., 2010). Psychological Well-Being Scale is 7-point Likert-type ranging from 1(*Strongly disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly agree*). The high score indicates high psychological well-being. The scale consists of items, such as "*I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.*", "*My social relationships are supportive and rewarding.*", "*I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.*" (See Appendix F). The instruction was "*Please indicate to the degree that you agree with the following statements.*". The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the original scale was .86.

The adaptation work of the scale into Turkish was conducted by Telef (2011). The reliability of the adapted scale was .80 (Telef, 2011). The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the current study was .86.

3. 6.   Anxiety Scale

Individuals' anxiety was measured by the anxiety subscale of Symptom Check List-90-Revised (SCL-90 R), which was developed by Deragotis (1992). The SCL-90 R is a 90-item, ranging from 0 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*). The scale has 9 subscales which assess somatization, obsessive-compulsive disorder, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. Internal consistency Cronbach alpha coefficient of anxiety subscale in Deragotis work is .85.

The adaptation work of the SCL-90 R was conducted by Dağ (1991). In Dağ's (1991) work, the reliability of the scale was reported as .73. In the current study, only 10 item anxiety subscale of the SCL-90 R was used (e.g., "*nervousness or dizziness*", "*shake*", "*suddenly getting scared without a reason*") (See Appendix F).   The instruction was "*Below is a list of grievances and problems that may occur from time to time. Please read each of them carefully. Then state how uncomfortable and uneasy you are in the last month, including today.*". The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale in the current study was .88.

3. 7.   Perceived Stress Scale

Individuals' perceived stress level was measured by the Perceived Stress Scale's (PSS-14) (Cohen, Kamarck, Mermelstein, 1983). The PSS-14 has 14-items ranging from 0 (*Never*) to 5 (*Always*). The high score indicates the excess of the stress perception of the person. The reliability of the original scale ranged from .84 to .86 in 3 different samples.

The adaptation work of the PSS-14 was done by Eskin, Harlak, Demirkıran, and Dereboy in 2013. The reliability coefficient of the adapted scale was found to be .84. In this study, stress/discomfort perception subscale was applied to the participants. The perceived stress subscale consisted of 7-item, (e.g. "*not feeling that you can control the important things in your life*", "*feeling frustrated and stressed*", "*outrage over the events out of control*") (See Appendix F). The instruction was "*The following questions are about your thoughts and feelings in the last month. How often did you feel the following in the last month?*". In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .89.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

In this section, first descriptive statistics for the variables, then the correlation analyses and followed by the mediation analyses were reported.

1.   Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and ranges) for the study variables were presented in Table 7. The mean and standart deviation statisctics of the study variables were as follow: psychological well-being ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.01$), perceived stress ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.85$), rumination ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.77$), distraction ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.86$), anxiety ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 0.84$) and system justification ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.98$).

Table 7 *Means and Standard Deviations of Study Measures*

Measure	N	M	SD	Range Lower	Upper
System Justification	432	2.33	0.98	1	7
Rumination	431	3.31	0.77	1	5
Distraction	431	2.79	0.86	1	5
Anxiety	432	2.48	0.84	1	5
Perceived Stress	432	3.49	0.85	1	5
Psychological Well-Being	431	4.94	1.01	1	7

2.   Correlations of the Study Variables

As shown in Table 8, system justification was significantly correlated with rumination ($r = -.40$, $p = .000$), anxiety ($r = -.14$, $p = .004$), perceived stress ($r = -.20$, $p = .000$) and psychological well-being ($r = .15$, $p = .002$). Likewise, the relationship

between rumination and distraction was significant ($r = -.15$, $p = .001$). Also, higher rumination was positively associated with higher anxiety ($r = .28$, $p = .000$), higher perceived stress ($r = .30$, $p = .000$), and lower psychological well-being ($r = -.11$, $p = .022$). Examination of correlations demonstrated that distraction was positively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = .12$, $p = .009$). Anxiety was positively correlated with perceived stress ($r = .69$, $p = .000$), and negatively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = -.34$, $p = .000$). Also, perceived stress was negatively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = -.38$, $p = .000$).

Examination of the correlation analyses' results has revealed that gender was associated with two outcome variables, namely anxiety and perceived stress. Religion also was related to perceived stress and psychological well-being. Socio-economic status was associated with psychological well-being too. For this reason, these three study variables will be controlled for further analyses such as mediation.

Table 8 *Correlations Matrix for Study Measures Below*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	-	0.03	-0.14**	-0.06	0.08	-0.14**	0.08	-0.10*	-0.10*	-0.04
2. Political Ideology		-	0.59**	0.08	0.35**	-0.20**	0.01	-0.04	-0.08	0.05
3. Religion			-	0.11*	0.31**	-0.16**	-0.06	-0.02	-0.10*	0.12*
4. Socio-Economic Status				-	0.11**	-0.06	-0.01	-0.07	-0.09	0.18**
5. System Justification					-	-0.40**	0.00	-0.14**	-0.20**	0.15**
6. Rumination						-	-0.15**	0.28**	0.30**	-0.11*
7. Distraction							-	0.01	-0.01	0.12**
8. Anxiety								-	0.69**	-0.34**
9. Perceived Stress									-	-0.38**
10. Psychological Well-Being										-

* $p < .05$ (two-tailed). ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

4.   Mediation Analyses

A series of mediation analyses were conducted to examine the mediating effect of rumination on the link between system justification and psychological health indicators (anxiety, perceived stress, psychological well-being). In order to test whether the relationship between system justification and psychological health indicators was mediated by rumination, Hayes's PROCESS [2013] (model 4) was used. While running these analyses, demographic variables such as gender, religiosity, and socioeconomic status were taken as covariance variables due to their relations with outcome variables.

Three mediation analyses, in which anxiety, perceived stress, and psychological well-being were separately taken as outcome variables, have been conducted. Because the relationship between system justification and distraction was not significant ($p = .987$) in the correlation analysis, mediation models for using distraction as a mediator were not tested.

4. 1. Mediation Analysis of Rumination Between System Justification and Anxiety

First, after controlling for gender a mediator analysis was performed to examine whether rumination mediated the link between system justification and anxiety. The results of the mediation analysis were demonstrated in Table 9.

The overall model accounted for 8 % of the variance in anxiety and was significant ($F(3, 428)= 12.78$, $p = .000$). The total effect of system justification on anxiety ($b = -.11$, $SE = .04$, $t = -2.72$, $p = .007$; 95 % [-.1914 , -.0309]) was not significant when rumination was entered in the model ($b = -.02$, $SE = .04$, $t = -.546$, $p = .585$; 95 % [-.1087, .0614]), indicating that rumination mediated the relationship

between system justification and anxiety. The indirect effect was statistically different

from zero (indirect effect = -.09 , SE = .02 , 95 % [-.1353 , -.0537]. Rumination

mediated the association between system justification and anxiety.

Table 9 *Mediation Effect of Rumination (R) on the Relationship between System Justification (SJ) and Anxiety (A)*

Regression paths	*B*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	*LLCI*	*ULCI*
Mediation *a* path (SJ on R)	-.31	.03	-9.16	.000	-.3818	-.2469
Mediation *b* path (R on A)	.28	.06	5.08	.000	.1745	.3947
Total effect, *c* path (SJ on A: No mediator)	-.11	.04	-2.72	.007	-.1914	-.0309
Direct effect *c'* (SJ on A including R as mediator)	-.02	.04	-.054	.585	-.1087	.0614
Indirect effect bootstrapped (*c – c'*) with bootstrapped 95% CI [b]				-.0895 [-.1353 , -.0537]		

Fit for the model R^2=.08, $F(3, 428)$ = 12.78, p = .000.
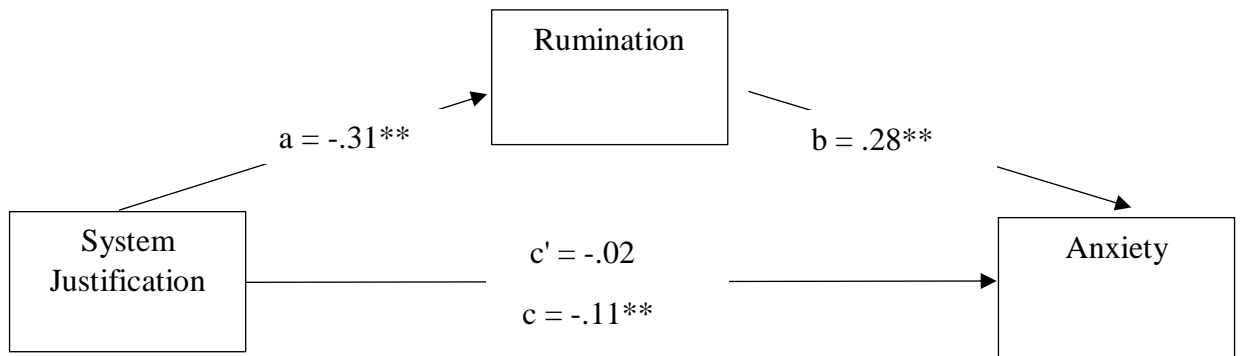
*Notes: *p<.05, **p<.01.*

Figure 1. Mediation Model Using Anxiety as an Outcome Variable

4. 2. Mediation Analysis of Rumination Between System Justification and Perceived Stress

Second, after controlling for gender and religion a mediator analysis was performed to examine whether rumination mediated the link between system justification and perceived stress. The results of the mediation analysis were demonstrated in Table 10.

The overall model accounted for 11 % of the variance in perceived stress and was significant ($F(4, 419)= 12.45, p = .000$). The total effect of system justification on perceived stress ($b = -.15$, $SE = .04$, $t = -3.55$, $p = .000$; 95 % [-.2414 , -.0693]) was not significant when rumination was entered in the model ($b = -.07$, $SE = .04$, $t = -1.56$, $p = .119$; 95 % [-.1610 , .0183]), indicating that rumination mediated the relationship between system justification and perceived stress. The indirect effect was statistically different from zero (indirect effect = -.09 , $SE = .02$, 95 % [-.1330 , -.0525)]. Rumination mediated the association between system justification and perceived stress.

Table 10 *Mediation Effect of Rumination (R) on the Relationship between System Justification (SJ) and Perceived Stress (PS)*

Regression paths	B	SE	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
Mediation *a* path (SJ on R)	-.31	.03	-8.99	.000	-.3801	-.2438
Mediation *b* path (R on PS)	.29	.06	5.10	.000	.1783	.4018
Total effect, *c* path (SJ on PS: No mediator)	-.15	.04	-3.55	.000	-.2414	-.0693
Direct effect *c'* (SJ on PS including R as mediator)	-.07	.04	-1.56	.119	-.1610	.0183
Indirect effect bootstrapped (*c – c'*) with bootstrapped 95% CI [b]	-.0931 [-.1330 , -.0525]					

Fit for the model R^2=.11, $F(4, 419) = 12.45$, $p = .000$.
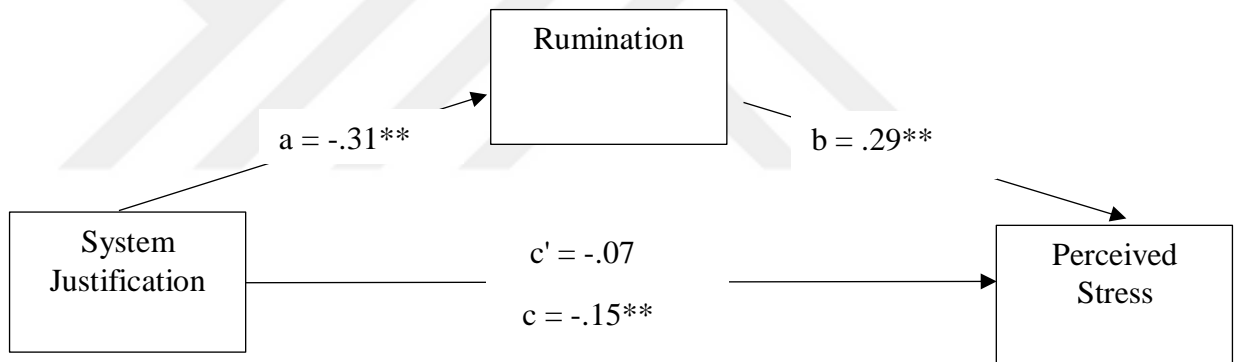
*Notes: *p<.05, **p<.01.*

Figure 2. Mediation Model Using Perceived Stress as an Outcome Variable

4. 3. Mediation Analysis of Rumination Between System Justification and Psychological Well-Being

Third, after controlling for religion and socio-economic status a mediator analysis was performed to examine whether rumination mediated the link between system justification and psychological well-being. The results of the mediation analysis were demonstrated in Table 11.

The overall model accounted for 5 % of the variance in psychological well-being and was significant ($F(4, 419)= 6.01$, $p = .000$). The total effect of system justification on psychological well-being ($b = -.11$, $SE = .05$, $t = 2.26$, $p = .024$; 95 % [.0154 , .2192]) was not significant when rumination was entered in the model ($b = .09$, $SE = .05$, $t = 1.77$, $p = .077$; 95 % [-.0109 , .2087]). However, the effect of rumination on psychological well-being was not significant ($b = -.06$, $SE = .07$, $t = -0.88$, $p = .377$; 95 % [-.1968 , .0746]), indicating that rumination did not mediate the link between system justification and psychological well-being. The indirect effect was not statistically different from zero (indirect effect = -.02 , SE = .02 , 95 % [-.0214 , .0610)]. Rumination did not mediate the association between system justification and psychological well-being.

Table 11 *Mediation Effect of Rumination (R) on the Relationship between System Justification (SJ) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB)*

Regression paths	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Mediation *a* path (SJ on R)	-.31	.03	-8.99	.000	-.3801	-.2438
Mediation *b* path (R on PWB)	-.06	.07	-0.88	.377	-.1968	.0746
Total effect, *c* path (SJ on PWB: No mediator)	-.11	.05	2.26	.024	.0154	.2192
Direct effect *c'* (SJ on PWB including R as mediator)	.09	.05	1.77	.077	-.0109	.2087
Indirect effect bootstrapped (*c – c'*) with bootstrapped 95% CI [b]			.0191 [-.0214 , .0610]			

Fit for the model R^2=.05, $F(4, 419) = 6.01$, $p = .000$.
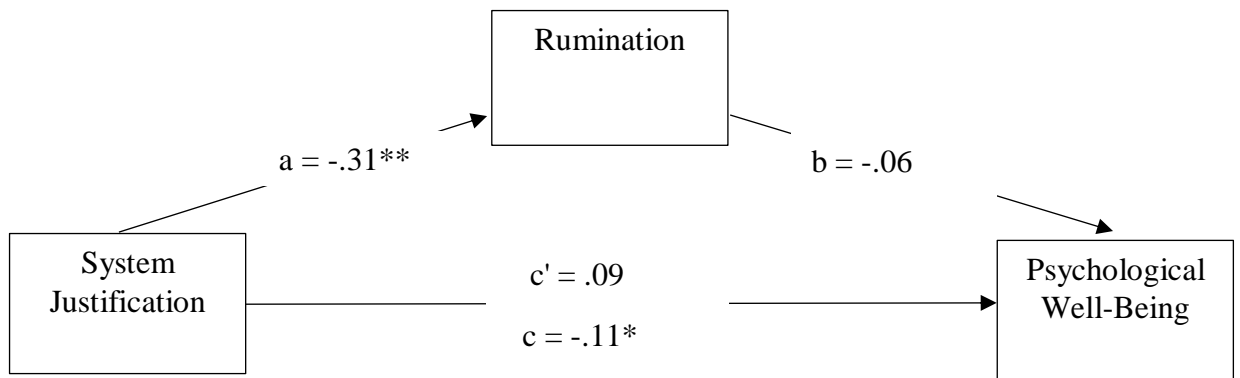
Notes: *p<.05, **p<.01.

Figure 3. Mediation Model Using Psychological Well-Being as an Outcome Variable

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Justice has important effects on mental health and on coping strategies, the focus of the current study was on the legal system (Carifioa & Nasser, 2012; Johnston, Kringsb, Maggioria, Meierd & Fiorib, 2016; Schmitt & Maes, 1998; Tomaka & Blascovich, 1994). One of the important factors which determine the effects of injustice on mental health is system justification (Kay & Jost, 2003). System justification has a palliative function. Specifically, justifying the system decreases anxiety and increases well-being (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). However, the underlying mechanism of linking system justification to mental health has remained unclear. In the current study, it was proposed that one such mechanism might be emotion regulation, and more specifically the association between system justification and mental health is mediated by emotion regulation strategies, namely rumination, and distraction.

In the current study, it was proposed that whereas there would be a positive relationship between system justification and distraction, there would be a negative relationship between system justification and rumination. Distraction, then, would be related to higher psychological well-being and lower anxiety and perceived stress, while rumination would be related to lower psychological well-being and higher anxiety and perceived stress. It was also proposed that rumination and distraction

would mediate the link between system justification and mental health indicators. These propositions were examined in the context of the legal system in Turkey.

Results demonstrated that, as expected, system justification was negatively related to rumination. However, there was no significant relationship between system justification and distraction. Also, rumination was associated with adverse mental health outcomes and distraction was only related to one mental health indicator, namely psychological well-being. Moreover, rumination mediated the link between legal system justification and anxiety and perceived stress. Also, the results of the mediation analyses have shown that rumination did not mediate the relationship between system justification and psychological well-being. In the present chapter, the implications of the current findings for the study variables were discussed following by limitations and future directions.

1. Implications for System Justification

In line with the previous research, in the current study, mental health indicators such as anxiety, perceived stress, and psychological well-being were related to system justification motive. In clinical settings, this might be important from the fact that mental health should be examined with a holistic perspective. The holistic perspective should include not only individual difference variables but also the perceptions of individuals about the social institutions in which they live. Perceptions and motivations which are related to these social institutions are also effective on emotion regulation strategies and mental health. Thus, it might be essential to develop effective coping strategies for communal problems such as living in a society with social institutes which have negative aspects as well as coping with individualistic problems.

Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway (2003) claimed that individuals who avoid the uncertainty and ambiguity more, have the need for order, familiarity and closure the most, perceive the world as dangerous engage in system-justifying beliefs more often. System justification, in this case, works as a coping strategy to avoid unpleasant and unfair facts which evoke stress, anxiety, guilt, dissonance, depression and are hard to avoid (Dalbert, 1997). Justifying the system creates an illusion that the social context is consistent, coherent, stable and just and SJ can be counted as avoidance from the realities (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski & Sulloway, 2003; Kluegel & Smith, 1986; Lane, 1962; Lerner, 1980). In order to prevent current stress, individuals often engage in system justification though it has some psychological "side-effects" in long-term such as reduced subjective well-being (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Roth and Cohen (1986) have conceptualized that there are two types of coping strategies, namely approach, and avoidance. System justification can be categorized as an avoidance type of coping strategy since it minimizes the emotional impacts of the events and creates a sense of control (Roth & Cohen, 1986).

Although system justification serves as a coping strategy, it may not be an adaptive strategy because of its long-term effects. Lazarus (1974) emphasized that if a coping strategy is not enough to cope with a threat/situation, individuals often seek to underestimate the threat/situation or seek another coping strategy. In this case, since system justification is not an adaptive strategy, one should seek for another coping strategy or try to appraise the threat in a minimized way which cannot be always an available option since people are closely attached to the social system in which they live, such as legal system. To cope with instability, uncertainty and unjust realities, individuals should adopt long-term effective strategies such as emotion and problem-

focused coping styles which are conceptualized under the conception of adaptive coping strategies instead of system justification (Hampel & Petermann, 2006).

Although perceiving the social institutes as fair and just are related to better mental health, it is worth mentioning that palliative function of system justification may not be beneficial for long-term as it is in short-term. In short term, it is known that both advantaged and disadvantaged group members feel better by justifying the system. However, in long-term, the consequences of system justification beliefs may differ for advantaged and disadvantaged group members (Jost & Hunyady, 2005; Jost, Pelham & Carvallo, 2002; Jost, Pelham, Sheldon & Sullivan, 2003). In long term, justifying the system decreases self-esteem, subjective well-being and in-group favoritism among disadvantaged groups (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). Therefore, the palliative function of system justification can be conceptualized as a short-term adaptive mechanism to buffer the "pains" which arise from the negative aspects of the status quo.

Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway (2003) also showed that openness to new experiences is negatively related to system justification. Also, individual characteristics such as cognitive flexibility and having a sense of internal control have been found to be related effective ways of coping (Denney & Frisch, 1981; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Wheaton, 1983). It is known that coping can be both influenced by the events, individual and environmental characteristics (Billings & Moos, 1984; Rosenbaum, 1983; Roskies & Lazarus, 1980), since in this case since it is much available to work and change the individualistic features other than to change the legal system, in the clinical settings mental health professionals may work on developing and contributing these characteristic features with their clients. To help their clients

with developing long-term adaptive coping strategies, clinicians should focus on cognitive flexibility and creating a sense of internal control due to their relations with effective coping (Denney & Frisch, 1981; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Wheaton, 1983).

Even though the system is indeed unjust, individuals are motivated to believe that social arrangements context is just and fair (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Consistently with that, in the current study it is discussed that individuals who were encountered with the negative sides of the system would not be motivated to use emotion regulation strategies these aspects, instead, they ignore them. A possible cause of this situation can be explained by individuals' tendency to avoid situations that are not consistent with what they believe (Festinger, 1957). Thus, in the current study, it was hypothesized that as individuals' system justification levels increase they would be more likely to engage in distraction which deploys attention away from the inconsistent information with what they believe, which in this case lacking aspects of the legal system. Therefore, to make belief and reality consistent individuals would prefer to use an emotion regulation which alleviates the emotions which were evoked by the negative aspects of the legal system, such as using more distraction or less rumination.

Another explanation might be related to system justification motive, by system justification individuals believe that the social institutes have no imperfections in the society they live in, as a result of this belief people often avoid to gain knowledge that is dissonant with their motivation (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). In this case, it can be said that system justification leads to motivated avoidance (Shepherd & Kay, 2012). At this point, individuals would engage in emotion regulation strategies which are consistent with their motives, such as higher levels of system justification would be related to

more distraction and less rumination. Also, a possible explanation for this might be about that lower levels of rumination elicit fewer emotions towards the negative aspects of the status quo, which is consistent with their levels of system justification tendency.

In the current study, the mediating role of the emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between system justification and mental health is discussed. To my knowledge, the number of studies dealing with the relation between emotion regulation and system justification in the literature is very limited (e.g., Solak, Tamir, Sumer, Jost, & Halperin, under review). For the first time, the relationship between system justification and, rumination and distraction have been examined in this study. From the light of the current work, it can be said that system justification is not only related to mental health, but also to the emotional regulation strategies which are an important contribution to the SJT literature. The current study, from the aspect, that being aimed at understanding the underlying mechanism of palliative function made a unique contribution to the literature of SJT.

The results of the current investigation demonstrated the importance of considering emotion regulation strategies when examining the link between system justification and mental health. Although past research has investigated the affective consequences of system justification (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2002), how such effects might be mediated by emotion regulation strategies has not been previously studied. The findings of the current study add this to literature, by demonstrating that greater system justification is linked to better mental health, in part, through emotion regulation strategies. Hence, the current thesis represents an initial first step in integrating research lines on system justification and emotion regulation.

2. Implications for Emotion Regulation

The current study also has some implications for emotion regulation. Research on emotion regulation and its effects on mental health are generally studied at the individual level of analysis (Gross, 2007), and research has devoted narrow attention to how social context shape the use of emotion regulation strategies. The current investigation examines emotion regulation strategies in particular social context-legal system. McRae, Heller, John, and Gross (2011) claimed that the use of emotion regulation strategies are not unidirectional or stationary but may vary from context to context. According to the social context shapes the use of emotion regulation strategies, and therefore they claimed that there is a "context-dependent emotion regulation" concept. From the current study's results, it can be said that people do not only regulate emotions for events that cause negative emotions in their individual lives, but they also do it for the system-based contexts, too.

The current study is consistent with previous literature which demonstrated that emotion regulation is not only affected by individual motivations such as hedonic or instrumental motivations such as increasing happiness and decreasing sadness but is also influenced by social motivations such as winning a group game (Kucharski, Strating, Cameron & Pascual-Leone, 2018; Tamir, 2016). In this study, it has been shown that one of the social motivations affecting the emotional regulation processes is through system justification motive. Particularly as expected, the study results demonstrated that system justification is negatively correlated with rumination. One explanation through this might be that individuals who do not justify the legal system might get exposed to the negative aspects of the system more, compared to those who

justify since system justification serves as a protection shield to negative aspects about the world individuals live in (Jost & Hunyady, 2002).

Previous research on emotion regulation has revealed that rumination is positively linked to anxiety, perceived stress and negatively related to psychological well-being (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000; Olatunji, Naragon-Gainey & Wolitzky-Taylor, 2013). In the current study, the finding of the relationship between rumination and mental health is consistent with the previous literature. Previous literature has shown that rumination is a maladaptive type of coping with stress and is positively linked to perceived stress (Hampel & Petermann, 2006; Hu, Koucky, Brown, Bruce & Sheline, 2014). It can be summed up as, individuals who ruminate relatively less about the negative sides of the system, tend to exhibit fewer anxiety symptoms and experience less stress and this, in turn, is related to the better mental health. This might be important for clinicians when they work on anxiety and perceived stress. Anxiety and stress are not only related to individuals' daily lives but also how individuals perceive the system which they live in.

Findings of the current study have also demonstrated that distraction is negatively related to rumination. This finding is consistent with the previous literature. For example, Huffziger and Kuehner (2009) examined the effects of rumination and distraction on depression and their findings indicated that distraction and rumination are positively related to each other. Distraction is considered a cognitive process in the literature (Harbluk, Noy, Trbovich & Eizenman, 2007; Kalisch, Wiech, Herrman & Dolan, 2006). Likewise, rumination is likewise conceived as a cognitive process that plays an important role in the development of various psychopathologies (Mellings &

Alden, 2000; Watkins et al., 2007). Since these two strategies involve cognitive processes, they are related to each other.

On the other hand, the current study focused on two different emotion regulation strategies: rumination and distraction. One of the hypotheses was that distraction and system justification would have a positive relationship and in addition, distraction would be related to better mental health. In the current study, distraction was found to be related to only rumination and psychological well-being, but not with system justification, anxiety, and perceived stress. The literature shows that distraction is negatively related to both anxiety and perceived stress (Johnstone & Page, 2004; Wong & Moulds, 2009). Some other studies, however, demonstrated, no relationship between distraction and anxiety (Kalisch, Wiech, Herrmann & Dolan, 2006; Kobus & Reyes, 2000).

Although distraction leads to desirable results in some cases in the short term such as low levels of exposure to violence and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, whereas long-term use is thought to be related to denial and severity of trauma (Dempsey, Overstreet & Moely, 2000). Some type of research indicates that distraction is related to lower levels of anxiety and perceived stress, but some type of research also demonstrates that increase in the use of distraction may pose a risk for the development of psychopathology (Dempsey, Overstreet & Moely, 2000; Hampel & Petermann, 2005; Olatunji, Naragon-Gainey & Wollitzky-Taylor, 2013). Since the literature does not demonstrate any consistent results about relations of distraction with other variables while discussing why distraction was not correlated with some study variables it might be essential to refer to the complex nature of distraction strategy as summed up above.

Another explanation why there is no significant relationship between distraction on one hand and system justification, anxiety and perceived stress on the other might be related to the method of the current study's measuring distraction. In the literature, there is not one certain method for measuring distraction due to the variability of distracting behaviors (Odou & Brinker, 2015). For example, Odou and Brinker (2015) measured distraction with a computer-based activity. Whereas, Nolen-Hoeksema and Morrow (1993) manipulated distraction as prompting individuals about thinking of something unrelated, suchlike a sandwich or a table. Also, Johnstone and Page (2004) compared the effects of rumination and distraction in the reduction of spider anxiety, distraction condition included a stimulus-irrelevant conversation with the researcher. As written, the studies which deal with distraction often measure it with manipulating individuals' thoughts or emotions in experimental designs. Therefore, at this point, the reason why the hypotheses of the current study's about have not been confirmed are thought to be related to the measurement method of distraction. English, Lee, John, and Gross (2017) suggested that while assessing the use of attention deployment emotion regulation strategies, eye tracking or dot probe methods might be more helpful than self-report measures.

Another possible explanation why distraction is not related to study variables might be explained in terms of general human tendency "negativity bias" that suggests remembering negativity happens easily when compared to positivity (Cacioppo & Bernston, 1994). According to negativity bias, negative thoughts, emotions, interactions often have a stronger impact on one's mental health than the positive ones (Ito, Larsen, Smith & Cacioppo, 1998). Also, negativity bias affects one's attention, learning, and memory. For example, individuals report negative things more often than

positive things (Rozin & Boyzman, 2001; Carretie, Mercado, Tapia & Hinojosa, 2001). Although both rumination and distraction are classified as cognitive processes, research indicates that ruminating over negative events is closely related to psychological discomfort while distracting from negative events is not (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2010). From this perspective, in the current study, it can be argued that individuals might tend to report rumination more than distraction since rumination contributes to the maintenance of negative emotions and thoughts.

3. Implications for Mental Health

Several pieces of research have shown that negative emotions such as anger, sadness, disgust, and shame are the most common emotions found to be evoked by and related to injustice (Athenstaedt, Mikula & Scherer, 1998; Scherer & Wallbott, 1986). However, Johnsone (1990) indicated that the frequent experience of these emotions will lead to a decrease in one's emotional wellness. Given the relationship between the perceptions of injustice and negative emotions, and the effects of frequently experienced negative emotions on mental health, the importance of justice and the legal system as a part of our daily lives should be taken into consideration. In the current study, it was demonstrated that perceptions of the legal system have some consequences for mental health.

Several kinds of research, as mentioned above, have shown that justice have important effects on mental health such as it affects emotions, stress perceptions, coping strategies, anxiety and depression levels (Athenstaedt , Mikula & Scherer, 1998; Carifioa & Nasser, 2012; Matsumato, 2001; Scherer & Wallbott, 1986; Tomaka

& Blascovich, 1994). On the other hand, it is known that system justification also affects mental health with its effect that relieves pain which comes from social inequalities and injustices, so it can be argued that system justification is one of the core motivation which is related to justice perceptions (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). This study in consistent with the previous researches summarized above suggested that mental health should not be considered independently from the social context, which individuals live in and motivations such as system justification motive. Results of the current study indicated that it is important to refer to social context and social processes when studying mental health.

Many researchers in the field have demonstrated the relationship between perceived stress, anxiety and psychological well-being (Bastani, Hidarnia, Kazemnejad, Vafei & Kashanian, 2005; Bergdahl & Bergdahl, 2002; Glynn, Schetter, Hobel & Sandman, 2008). Stress perceptions induce vulnerabilities for anxiety disorders (Connor, Vaishnavi, Davidson, Sheehan & Sheehan, 2007; Zvolensky, Goodie, Ruggier, Black, Larkin & Taylor, 2002). As written above, the results of the current study which were about the relationship between perceived stress, anxiety and psychological well-being are in line with the literature.

It has been clearly demonstrated in the literature that anxiety has an adverse effect on mental health (Headey, Kelley & Wearing, 1993; Shek, 1993). In this study, anxiety was found to have a negative relationship with psychological well-being, which is the sub-dimension of mental health. This finding in this research is supported by the literature. In case of increasing mental health, when working in clinical settings individuals should be encouraged to develop adaptive strategies to cope with anxiety which is evoked by the negative aspects of the social institutes.

The current study had two hypotheses about the emotion regulation strategies. One of them was that individuals who tend to engage in distraction would have better mental health, on the other hand, the other hypothesis was that individuals who tend to engage in rumination would have worse mental health. Although there was no significant relationship between distraction and mental health indicators, the results indicated that individuals who tend to engage in rumination had higher anxiety, higher perceived stress levels, and lower psychological well-being. Literature shows that emotion regulation strategies are conceptualized as coping strategies and these strategies are categorized as being adaptive and maladaptive based on their impact on mental health (Compas, Orosan & Grant, 1993; Kross, Davidson, Weber & Ochsner, 2009; McCaul & Malott, 1984). As suggested by this study and previous research, rumination can be considered as a maladaptive coping strategy in view of its impact on mental health. At this point, it may be more useful for clinicians to deal with the rumination levels of their clients and to replace the rumination with an adaptive strategy such as cognitive reappraisal.

The results of the current study from a holistic perspective suggest that not only individual difference variables but also the perceptions of social systems are important factors contributing to mental health.

4. Clinical Implications

Living in a society which is filled with justice leads individuals to have lower levels of anxiety and perceived stress (Carifioa & Nasser, 2012). In this way, the current study has implications for both in terms of literature and clinical settings. The present study demonstrated the relationship of system justification and emotion

regulation strategies on mental health in the context of the legal system. Encountering negative aspects of the legal system have some consequences for mental health. In the current study, two psychological processes emerged as important factors for mental health: One of them is system justification and the other is rumination. Specifically, anxiety, perceived stress, and psychological well-being might depend on two psychological factors.

The results of the current study demonstrated that system justification is negatively related to anxiety, perceived stress and positively related to psychological well-being. As stated before, system justification poses as a coping strategy for unjust realities for those who justify the system. However, for those who do not justify it may not be easy to cope with these realities and this, in turn, may affect their psychological health, such as increased anxiety and stress perceptions. While discussing clinical implications it would be more appropriate to focus on those who do not justify the system, since it is more likely to encounter clients with increased anxiety and perceived stress levels in clinical settings. At this point, when encountered with a client lower system justification motive, they should focus on effective coping strategies or features which are related to effective coping strategies which can be replaced with system justification in order to cope with these realities that affect psychological health such as cognitive flexibility, creating a sense of internal control.

Henry and Saul (2006) indicated that learned helplessness may be a mechanism that contributes to the development of system justification motives such as "if you can't beat them, be one of them". It is known that learned helplessness is closely related to depressive responses and low self-esteem (Brewin & Furnham, 1986; Seligman,

1974). At this point, interventions which are related to reduce depressive symptoms and increase self-esteem can be used such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy.

Additionally, we also might get encountered with a client who lives in an unjust society with negative aspects and one of the things that they should pay attention to is to consider what emotion regulation strategy that client use. After that, it can be argued that it would be useful to work on reducing the use of rumination and replace it with any other long-term adaptive strategy such as cognitive reappraisal. It can be claimed that stress perceptions are closely related to anxiety and psychological well-being. This should be kept in mind when working in the clinical setting in cases when increased injustices in a society or when working with a client who is exposed to injustice in the first degree since getting exposed to injustice in the first degree may affect individuals more.

In the current research, as stated before, rumination is related to higher levels of anxiety, perceived stress and lower levels of psychological well-being as well as individual-based rumination. Previous research has shown that in the treatment of anxiety disorders, rumination should be targeted as a priority (McLaughlin & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2011; Wong & Moulds, 2009). From this point of view, it is very important to choose the appropriate emotion regulation strategy for better mental health. Since rumination is a cognitive process, metacognitive therapists work with evidence to persuade their clients that rumination is a process that can be controlled (Watkins et al., 2007; Wells, 2011). At this stage, interventions which prevent rumination can be developed. Such as, Rumination-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy benefits from the functional analysis which leads patients to gain an understanding about their

rumination and to develop alternative strategies such as relaxation techniques which can replace rumination (Watkins et al., 2007).

As mentioned above, even though system justification is related to better mental health in the short run, in long run it is known that justifying the system results in the lower mental health of the disadvantaged group. Therefore, in addition to all these working on the cognitive processes which cause system justification can help people to have better mental health in long term. System justification theory claims that individuals engage in system justification to reduce cognitive dissonance (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon & Sullivan, 2002). In another research line, it was found that having cognitive dissonance for a long time increases anxiety, psychological discomfort and negative mood (Elliot & Devine, 1994; Harmon-Jones, 2000; Menasco & Del, 1978). Thus, it makes sense to propose that in clinical settings when working with a client who has higher cognitive dissonance related to the legal system, professionals try to help their clients understand their cognitive conflicts which induce stress, anxiety, psychological discomfort and try to reframe their cognitive structures in case of reducing these symptoms.

Since cultural differences and socio-cultural systems have important influences on one's functioning and the definition of what behavior is normal or pathology (Zayas, Torres, Malcolm & DesRosiers, 1996), one of the clinical implications of this study that should be emphasized is that it serves as a step for the development of culture-sensitive therapy techniques available for Turkey. The current study sheds some light on the requirements in this area taking into account the fact that justice is an important factor especially in Turkey affecting individuals' psychological health. Research on justice in Turkey shows that the concept of economic and social justice

needs to be emphasized and restructured more such as the accessibility of social services, unfair trials, tax amnesty and disproportionate economic distribution (Adaman & Keyder, 2006; Tufan, Sayar & Koçyıldırım, 2009; Yılmaz, 2006). At this point, it may be essential to develop appropriate culture sensitive interventions to disadvantaged groups who are exposed to these injustices such as the poor, those who do not have easy access to social services, those who have been punished themselves or have one acquaintance as a result of unfair justice practices.

5. Limitations and Future Directions

In the current study, the results demonstrating the underlying process of the palliative function of system justification have important clinical and theoretical contributions. However, these results should be argued within some limitations. First of all, the statistical analyses of the present study were performed with a large sample size ($N = 432$) in order to provide representativeness of the data. Nevertheless, there was an unbalanced gender ratio such as women participants being almost six times more than men. Although gender was not one of the main hypotheses in the current study, results indicated that it affected some of the outcome variables. Future research with a balanced gender ratio may supply more clear knowledge.

In addition to this limitation, there is another limitation related to sampling features. Although the education level was not one of the main hypotheses such as gender, present work investigated the mediating roles of rumination and distraction in the link between system justification and mental health among university students. In order to investigate whether the results can be generalized, future research should study this link among participants across all educational levels.

Secondly, the study was conducted as a correlational study which indicates that the results did not indicate the causation. Future studies could experimentally manipulate system justification to investigate its effect on emotion regulation and mental health.

Additionally, one of the limitations of the present study is about rumination. As summed up above, previous research indicated that rumination is more related to depression compared to anxiety, psychological well-being, and perceived stress (Raes, 2010). Therefore, in order to achieve better relations future work may consider depression as one of the study variables while addressing emotion regulation in the link between system justification and psychological health.

Another limitation of the current study is about one of the emotion regulation strategies, namely distraction. As the current study did not find a relationship between distraction and any study variables other than rumination and psychological well-being. One reason behind this, as discussed above, can be the way of assessing distraction. Also, it can be said there is variety for measuring distraction, some studies assessed distraction on a computer-based activity others measured with instructing participants to think of something other than the relevant topic of the study's which indicates manipulation in distracting behaviors. However, the current study distraction was measured on a paper pencil scale. This might be one of the limitations related to measuring distraction. Possibly, by using other measuring techniques the present work's tested models and implications would be different. Future studies might compare distraction and rumination with using other techniques for more clear relationships.

The last limitation of the present work is related to emotion regulation strategies which the current study dealt. The current study focused on rumination and distraction and their relations to system justification motive. Future work should focus on comparing other emotion regulation strategies and their relationships with system justification, such as cognitive reappraisal and distraction to see their mediating roles in the palliative function of SJT. Although it is clear that distraction is time and energy-efficient and automatic process, it also is clear that distraction is a short-term effective strategy (Mauss, Bunge& Gross, 2007; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz, 2010). Research shows that there are some side effects of distraction, for example, its disruptive effects on memory and cognition (Craik, 2014). In the current study, one of the main purposes was to examine the mediating roles of these two different emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between system justification and mental health. From this perspective, it can be argued that a different and long-term effective strategy such as cognitive reappraisal can be examined to compare with a long-term maladaptive strategy such as rumination (Eftekhari, Zoellner & Vigil, 2009; Sheppes, Suri & Gross, 2015).

6. Conclusion

The results in the current study demonstrated that the mental health cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the role of perceptions of the status quo such as legal system and the role of context-dependent emotion regulation strategies. Rather the current study suggests that system justification, emotion regulation strategies and legal system have some consequences for mental health. Such factors display theoretical and applied implications for mental health. This study demonstrated that individuals regulate theirs in line with system-based motives. One

of the system-based motives which are examined in the current study is the system justification tendency. Moreover, the current study showed how system justification is negatively related to rumination. Also, the present research demonstrated that the mediating role of rumination in the link between system justification and mental health. In addition to these, the current investigation demonstrated the underlying mechanism of the palliative function of SJ through emotion regulation strategies. Taken together, all of these findings reveal that in a legal system with negative aspects when individuals system justification motive increases they are more likely to use lower levels of rumination and this, in turn, are positively related to their mental health. Clinicians should consider helping their clients with reducing rumination or replacing it with other techniques. Including the mediating role of rumination, the present research might have contributed to the current literature by explaining one underlying mechanism on the link between system justification and mental health.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Çalışmaya Online Katılım İçin Duyuru Metni

Merhabalar,

Ben Psikolog Hazal Akoğlu. Aşağıda TED Üniversitesi, Psikoloji Bölümü Gelişim Odaklı Klinik Çocuk ve Ergen Psikolojisi Yüksek Lisans programı kapsamında yapmakta olduğum yüksek lisans tez araştırmamın linki bulunmaktadır.

Araştırmanın amacı, adalet sistemine ilişkin algılar ve duygu süreçleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir.

Çalışmaya katılmak için gerekli koşul 18-21 yaş aralığında olmaktır ve çalışmada sizden kimlik belirtleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Çalışma yaklaşık olarak 30 dakika sürmektedir.

Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır, çalışmaya katılmak isterseniz ve 18-21 yaş aralığındaysanız araştırmaya aşağıdaki link üzerinden ulaşabilirsiniz.

    Şimdiden teşekkür ederim!

Hatice Hazal Akoğlu

Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

TED Üniversitesi

APPENDIX B

Gönüllü Katılım Formu

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, TED Üniversitesi Psikoloji Bölümü Gelişim Odaklı Klinik Çocuk ve Ergen Psikolojisi Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencilerinden H. Hazal Akoğlu tarafından Yrd. Doç. Nevin Solak danışmanlığında yürütülmekte olan yüksek lisans tez çalışmasıdır. Çalışmanın amacı, adalet sistemine ilişkin algılar ve duygu süreçleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir.

Çalışmada sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Bu araştırma yaklaşık 30 dakika sürmektedir. Cevaplarınız gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Bireysel hiçbir değerlendirme yapılmayacaktır. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış yanıtı yoktur. Önemli olan sizin ne düşündüğünüz, ne algıladığınız ve ne hissettiğinizdir. Bu nedenle samimi yanıtlar vermeniz araştırmanın sonuçlarının güvenirliği için çok büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Anket, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Katılım sırasında, sorulardan ya da başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakmakta serbestsiniz. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için H. Hazal Akoğlu (e-mail: (hazalakoglu@gmail.com) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Teşekkür ederim!

Psikolog Hazal Akoğlu Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

TED Üniversitesi

Bu çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorsanız lütfen aşağıdaki kutucuğu işaretleyiniz.

☐ Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda bırakabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Demografik Bilgi Formu

1. Yaşınız:

2. Cinsiyetiniz: Kadın ☐   Erkek ☐

3. Çalışmaya hangi şehirden katılıyorsunuz?

4. Bölümünüz:

5. Lütfen bölümünüzün bağlı olduğu fakülteyi belirtiniz.

Tıp Fakültesi	☐
Hukuk Fakültesi	☐
Edebiyat Fakültesi	☐
Fen Fakültesi	☐
İktisat Fakültesi	☐
Eczacılık Fakültesi	☐
Diş Hekimliği Fakültesi	☐
İşletme Fakültesi	☐
Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi	☐
İletişim Fakültesi	☐
Su Bilimleri Fakültesi	☐
İlahiyat Fakültesi	☐
Ulaştırma ve Lojistik Fakültesi	☐
Mimarlık Fakültesi	☐

6. Sınıfınız:

7. Politik görüşünüz açısından kendinizi aşağıdaki ölçeğin neresine yerleştirirsiniz?

Sol ——————————————————— Sağ

1   4   7

8. Dindarlık düzeyinizi düşündüğünüzde kendinizi aşağıdaki ölçeğin neresine yerleştirirsiniz?

Hiç Dindar Değilim ——————————————— Çok Dindarım

1   4   7

9. Annenizin Eğitim Düzeyi:

Okur-yazar değil ☐

Okur-yazar ☐

İlkokul ☐

Ortaokul ☐

Lise ☐

Yüksekokul ☐

Üniversite mezunu ☐

Yüksek lisans mezunu ☐

Doktora mezunu ☐

10. Babanızın Eğitim Düzeyi:

Okur-yazar değil ☐

Okur-yazar ☐

İlkokul ☐

Ortaokul ☐

Lise ☐

Yüksekokul

☐ 85

Üniversite mezunu

Yüksek lisans mezunu ☐

Doktora mezunu ☐

11. Toplam aylık geliriniz ne kadardır?

Asgari ücret ve altında ☐

1401-2500 TL arasında ☐

2501-5000 TL arasında ☐

5001-7500 TL arasında ☐

7500 TL'nin üstünde ☐

12. Sosyoekonomik düzeyinizi tanımlayan en iyi seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

Alt ☐

Ortanın Altı ☐

Orta ☐

Ortanın Üstü ☐

Üst ☐

APPENDIX D

Legal Sistemi Meşrulaştırma Ölçeği

Aşağıda <u>Türkiye'deki adalet sistemi, düzeni ve işleyişi</u> ile ilgili bir dizi ifade sunulmuştur. Şimdi sizden bu ifadeleri değerlendirmeniz istenmektedir. Lütfen ifadeleri dikkatlice okuyup, her birine katılıp katılmama düzeyinizi belirtiniz. Soruların doğru ya da yanlış yanıtı yoktur, önemli olan sizin algı ve düşüncelerinizdir. Sorular birbirine benzer gibi görünse de aslında biribirinden farklıdır. Bu nedenle, hiçbir ifadeyi atlamamanız ve ifadeleri samimiyetle değerlendirmeniz son derece önemlidir.

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Pek Katılmıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne katılmıyorum	Biraz Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
1. Genel olarak, Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin işleyişinin adil olduğunu düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Genel olarak, Türkiye'deki hukuk kuralları ve adalet sistemi doğru biçimde, olması gerektiği gibi işlemektedir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Türkiye'deki adalet sistemi baştan sona yeniden yapılandırılmalıdır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Türkiye hukuk ve adalet açısından dünyada yaşanılacak en iyi ülkelerden biridir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Türkiye'deki adalet sistemine ilişkin uygulanan çoğu politika toplumun çoğunluğunun yararınadır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. Toplumumuzda yasalar herkese eşit ve adil şekilde uygulanmaktadır.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
7. Toplumumuzda adalet sistemi her yıl daha kötüye gitmektedir.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
8. Türkiye'de adalet sistemi suçluların er ya da geç hak ettiklerini elde edecekleri biçimde kurulmuştur.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

Ruminasyon Ölçeği

Şimdi sizden bir an Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin <u>KÖTÜ İŞLEYEN, OLUMSUZ VE ZAYIF</u> yanlarını (örneğin, davaların çok uzun sürmesi, adaletin uzun süre yerine gelmemesi, bürokrasinin zorluğu, mahkemelerin kalabalıklığı, hakim ve savcıların atanma koşullarının liyakata bağlı olmaması vb.) düşünmeniz istenmektedir. Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin <u>KÖTÜ İŞLEYEN, OLUMSUZ VE ZAYIF</u> yanlarını düşündükten sonra lütfen her durumu dikkatlice okuyunuz ve her birinin günlük yaşamınızda sizin için ne kadar geçerli olduğunu içtenlikle yanıtlayınız.

	Hiçbir Zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Hiçbir Zaman
1. İstemediğim halde dikkatim Türkiye'nin adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanlarına odaklanmaktadır.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Bazen Türkiye'nin adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve güçsüz yönleriyle ilgili düşüncelerimi susturmak benim için zordur.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Türkiye'nin adalet sisteminin kötü işleyişi sonucu uzun zaman önce başıma gelen şeyler üzerinde uzun uzun düşünme eğilimindeyim.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Türkiye'nin adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanlarıyla ilgili daha önceden olmuş bitmiş şeyleri tekrar tekrar düşünerek vakit harcamam.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Türkiye'nin adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanlarıyla ilgili hiçbir zaman uzun uzun düşünmem.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Türkiye'nin adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanlarıyla ilgili düşünceleri zihnimden çıkartmak benim için kolaydır.

1   2   3   4   5

Dikkat Dağıtma Ölçeği

Şimdi sizden yine bir an Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin <u>KÖTÜ İŞLEYEN, OLUMSUZ VE ZAYIF</u> yanlarını (örneğin, davaların çok uzun sürmesi, adaletin uzun süre yerine gelmemesi, bürokrasinin zorluğu, mahkemelerin kalabalıklığı, hakim ve savcıların atanma koşullarının liyakata bağlı olmaması vb.) düşünmenizi istiyoruz. Bu düşüncenizi koruyarak aşağıdaki her bir ifadeyi dikkatlice okuyunuz ve her bir tekniği günlük yaşamınızda ne sıklıkla kullandığınızı içtenlikle belirtiniz.

	Hiçbir Zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Hiçbir Zaman
1. Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanları aklıma geldiğinde, onun yerine aklıma olumlu şeyler getirmeye çalışırım..	1	2	3	4	5
2. Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanları aklıma geldiğinde, onun yerine kendimi işle meşgul ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanları aklıma geldiğinde onun yerine, başka bir şey düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanları aklıma geldiğinde onun yerine, hoşuma giden bir şey yaparım.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanları aklıma geldiğinde, onun yerine hoş şeyler düşünürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Türkiye'deki adalet sisteminin kötü işleyen, olumsuz ve zayıf yanları aklıma geldiğinde onun yerine, kendimi meşgul ederim.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F

Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği

Lütfen aşağıdaki ifadeleri okuyup katılıp katılmadığınızı belirtiniz.

	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Pek Katılmıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne katılmıyorum	Biraz Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
1. Amaçlı ve anlamlı bir yaşam sürdürüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Sosyal ilişkilerim destekleyici ve tatmin edicidir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Günlük aktivitelerime bağlı ve ilgiliyim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Başkalarının mutlu ve iyi olmasına aktif olarak katkıda bulunurum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Benim için önemli olan etkinliklerde yetenekli ve yeterliyim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Ben iyi bir insanım ve iyi bir hayat yaşıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Geleceğim hakkında iyimserim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. İnsanlar bana saygı duyar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Anksiyete Ölçeği

Aşağıda zaman zaman herkeste olabilecek yakınmaların ve sorunların bir listesi vardır.

Lütfen her birini dikkatle okuyunuz. Sonra bu durumun bugün de dahil olmak üzere son üç ay içerisinde sizi ne ölçüde huzursuz ve tedirgin ettiğini işaretleyiniz.

Son üç ay içinde aşağıdakileri ne kadar hissettiniz?

	Hiç	Çok Az	Orta Derecede	Oldukça Fazla	İleri Derecede
1. Sinirlilik ya da içinin titremesi	1	2	3	4	5
2. Titreme	1	2	3	4	5
3. Bir neden olmaksızın aniden korkuya kapılma	1	2	3	4	5
4. Korku hissi	1	2	3	4	5
5. Kalbin çok hızlı çarpması	1	2	3	4	5
6. Gerginlik veya coşku hissi	1	2	3	4	5
7. Dehşet ve panik nöbetleri	1	2	3	4	5
8. Yerinizde duramayacak ölçüde rahatsızlık hissetme	1	2	3	4	5
9. Size kötü bir şey olacakmış hissi	1	2	3	4	5
10. Korkutucu türden düşünce ve hayaller	1	2	3	4	5

Algılanan Stres Ölçeği

Aşağıdaki sorular son bir ay içindeki düşünceleriniz ve duygularınızla ilgilidir. Her bir soruda sizden bu düşünceyi ya da duyguyu <u>ne sıklıkta</u> yaşadığınızı belirtmeniz istenmektedir. Bazı sorular birbirine benzer gibi görünse de aralarında farklılıklar vardır ve her soruyu ayrı bir soru olarak değerlendirmeniz gerekmektedir. Soruları yanıtlarken <u>son bir ay içinde</u> ne sıklıkta bu şekilde düşündüğünüzü ya da hissettiğinizi hesaplamaya çalışmak yerine soruyu okuduktan sonra seçenekler arasında en uygun gördüğünüz tahmini işaretlemeniz daha uygun olacaktır.

Son <u>bir ay</u> içinde aşağıdakileri ne sıklıkta hissettiniz?

	Hiçbir Zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıklıkla	Çoğu Zaman
1. Hayatındaki önemli şeyleri kontrol edemediğini hissetme	1	2	3	4	5
2. Kendini sinirli ve stresli hissetme	1	2	3	4	5
3. Kontrolü dışında gelişen olaylar yüzünden öfkelenme	1	2	3	4	5
4. Beklenmedik bir şeylerin olması nedeniyle rahatsızlık duyma	1	2	3	4	5
5. Problemlerin üstesinden gelinemeyecek kadar biriktiğini hissetme	1	2	3	4	5
6. Her şeyin yolunda gitmediğini hissetme	1	2	3	4	5
7. Kendini başarmak zorunda olduğu şeyleri düşünürken bulma	1	2	3	4	5

29.12.2017

Sayı:72

Konu: Etik Kurul Kararı

Sayın

Hatice Hazal Akoğlu
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü,
Gelişim Odaklı Klinik Çocuk ve Ergen Psikolojisi Yüksek Lisans Programı
Öğrencisi

TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulunun **29.12.2017** tarih ve **2017/104** sayılı kararı ekte sunulmuştur.

Prof. Dr. Melike SAYIL
TED Üniversitesi
İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul Başkanı

TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU

ETİK KURUL KARARLARI
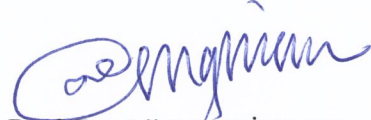
Toplantı Tarihi: **29.12.2017**   Toplantı Sayısı: **2017/72**

TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu **29.12.2017** Cuma günü saat 10:00'da toplanarak aşağıdaki kararları almıştır.

Karar:(104) TED Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Gelişim Odaklı Klinik Çocuk ve Ergen Psikolojisi Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Hatice Hazal Akoğlu'nun sahibi olduğu "Ergenlerin Psikolojik İyi Oluşlarında Sistemi Meşrulaştırma ve Duygu Düzenlemenin Rolü" başlıklı yüksek lisans tezine ilişkin 18.12.2017-3036 tarih ve sayılı etik kurul onay talebi görüşülmüş ve etik kurul tarafından talep edilen düzeltmelerin 29.12.2017-3143 tarih ve sayılı revize başvuruda gerçekleştirilmiş olduğu görülerek proje önerisinde, araştırma kapsamında uygulanacağı beyan edilen veri toplama yöntemlerinin araştırma etiğine uygun olduğuna OYBİRLİĞİ ile karar verilmiştir.
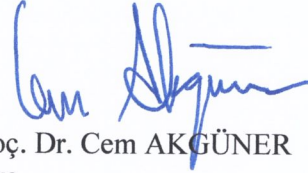

Prof. Dr. Melike SAYIL
Başkan

Prof. Dr. Ali CENGİZKAN
Üye

Prof. Dr. Berin GÜR
Üye

Doç. Dr. Cem AKGÜNER
Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Mana Ece Tuna ÖZCİVANOĞLU
Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Tekin KÖSE
Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Elif KARSLI
Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Aylin Çakıroğlu ÇEVİK
Üye

APPENDIX G

Tez Fotokopisi İzin Formu

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☒ X

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Akoğlu

Adı : Hatice Hazal

Bölümü : Gelişim Odaklı Klinik Çocuk ve Ergen Psikolojisi

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : System Justification and Mental Health: The Roles of Rumination and Distraction

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☒ X   Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☒ X

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ :