

## **The Mediating Role of Attachment Styles in the Relationship Between Rejection Sensitivity and Marriage Expectation in University Students**

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### **Abstract**

University years are the years of intense anxiety about the future for university students. A young person is worried about what kind of life (s)he will have in the future and who (s)he will marry. Because one of the most important events in human life is marriage and having a happy marriage is an important life goal of individuals. Spouses have many expectations from each other, such as friendship, intimacy, compatibility, and equality. However, failure to meet expectations in marriage has been identified as an important factor in the termination of a marriage. These expectations became clear in the years coinciding with the university period. The present study aims to investigate the mediating role of attachment styles in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and marriage expectation. The sample group for this study included 365 university students, 265 females and 100 males. A questionnaire form, the Marriage Expectancy Scale, the Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale, and the Rejection Sensitivity Scale were used to collect data. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and mediator analysis methods. The analyses revealed that secure attachment has a partial mediating role in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and marriage expectation. However, avoidant attachment and fearful attachment were found to have no mediating role. In line with the findings from this study, it is recommended that seminars be delivered on this issue and that similar studies be conducted with different groups.

**Keywords:** University Students, Marriage Expectation, Rejection Sensitivity, Attachment Styles

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## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most important life events of individuals. Having a happy marriage is an important life goal of individuals (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). It is an accepted fact that these expectations formed during university years affect happiness in marriage. Failure to meet expectations in marriage is considered an important factor in the termination of marriage. Whether the expectations of individuals from marriage are met or not is one of the most important factors that predict happiness in marriage (McNulty & Karney, 2002). Therefore, expectation of marriage is an important concept in terms of the well-being of individuals and worth investigating. It is thought that individuals' attachment styles and rejection sensitivities affect their marriage expectations. The majority of university students consist of individuals in the youth period. In this study, it was aimed to examine the mediating role of attachment styles in the relationship between expectations from marriage and rejection sensitivity during university years.

Statistics show that divorces are more likely to occur in the first years of marriage, as the divorce rate is significantly higher during this period. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), the number of divorces was 13,555 in July 2019 but increased by 69% to 23,025 in July 2020, and it is reported by the same institution that 35,3% of divorces occur in the first five years of marriage. Looking globally, the divorce rate has increased by 251,8% since 1960 (Nguyen, 2017). This high divorce rate is thought to stem from unrealistic expectations from marriage. In the first years of marriage, individuals face the realization that their expectations are not met, and the gap between the actual and expected situation can lead to conflicts and deterioration of the relationship (Çizmecioğlu, 2020). Every individual has expectations from marriage, as stated by Çaplı (1992). These expectations, of course, vary from person to person. Outside of the fact that the vast majority of society is married, which prompts people to want to get married. There are numerous other reasons individuals choose to marry, such as not to be alone, to share responsibilities, to have children, to be happy, to gain higher social status, and to have sexual satisfaction (Çizmecioğlu, 2020). According to Jones and Nelson (1996), individuals' main expectations from marriage are parenthood, sexual partnership, and friendship.

Parents' marital relationships can affect their children's marriage expectations (Çizmecioğlu, 2020). Since children's first impressions of marriage (directly or indirectly) come from their parents, it is likely that the images taken from this relationship strongly influence the personal emotions and attitudes they have of marriage when they are adults (Greenberg & Nay, 1982). According to Jones and Nelson (1996), one of the most critical factors affecting young adults' attitudes towards love and marriage is whether their parents are still together or divorced. A study found that individuals negatively affected by their parents' marriage can have lower marriage expectations (Curran et al., 2009). Another study determined that marriage expectations do not vary by nationality or socioeconomic status and, therefore, can be universal (Ajzen, 2011). Most of the studies on marriage largely aim to determine how marriage expectations vary by variables. Boyer-Pennington et al. (2001), in their study, compared the marriage expectations of children whose parents are together and divorced and found that children with divorced parents have more negative marriage expectations than those whose parents are together. In contrast to this finding, Jones and Nelson (1996) observed in their study that individuals' marriage expectations do not vary according to whether their parents are together or divorced. If we take into account the impact of interpersonal differences, it is not surprising that every individual is affected differently by their parents' divorce. Some individuals model the partnership relationship they see in their parents and conclude that their own relationship will look like this. Others may have the belief that they will form a completely different relationship from their parents. In this case, the findings related to the subject gain different meanings and require further studies on this subject. In addition to the role of parents, it is known that marriage expectations are also influenced by the relationship styles portrayed in the popular media.

Researchers have investigated the possible effect of the relationship styles individuals' encounter in popular media on their marriage expectations. With the impact of popular media, individuals can create unrealistic marriage expectations (Baucom & Epstein, 1990). Having unrealistic

expectations undoubtedly creates some problems in marital relationships. Demo and Fine (2010), in fact, reported that unrealistic marriage expectations are a leading factor in divorce. Yıldız (2017) found that when the expectations of partners are in harmony in marriage, there tends to be greater harmony in that marriage, whereas having different marriage expectations can lead to problems between partners. Moreover, Akşemsettinoglu (2020) argued that marriage expectations can affect relationship satisfaction. In addition to the relationship style of family or parents and popular media and their impact on marriage expectations, the concept of rejection sensitivity is also believed to affect marriage expectations.

Rejection can cause a feeling of worthlessness on account of not being accepted by other people in interpersonal relationships (Sarıçam, 2011). Anxious expectation of rejection refers to having a high level of expectation of being rejected in the future before any rejection occurs (Normansell & Wisco, 2017; Ayduk, et al., 2003). From this understanding of rejection, the concept of rejection sensitivity emerges.

The concept of rejection sensitivity is defined as a highly anxious expectation of being rejected (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Ayduk, et al., 2003). Rejection sensitivity as an individual difference has been widely studied in recent years (Bener, & Günay, 2013; Dillon, 2005; Downey, et al., 1999; Kotan, 2016; Köse, et al., 2017). Sensitivity experienced in interpersonal relationships can be replaced with rejection sensitivity over time and, in turn, lead to the breakdown of close relationships (Elibol & Tok, 2019). People who are susceptible to being rejected display excessive sensitivity to rejection and can overreact when they are rejected or encounter ambiguous behaviors or attitudes that are suggestive of rejection (Özen & Güneri, 2018). Rejection sensitivity stems from a combination of various factors, including fear of rejection, misunderstanding of others' behaviors, inferiority complex, insecurity, and avoidance of interpersonal situations (Erözkan, 2004). Once the dynamic of rejection sensitivity fully forms in individuals who are sensitive to rejection, it becomes a lifelong dynamic for them (Pietrzak et al. 2005; Romero-Canyas & Downey, 2005). In this respect, it is believed that rejection sensitivity is similar to attachment style, insofar as it too tends to be permanent once it is formed.

The internalization of rejection experiences in the first years of life will affect future relationships (Bintaş, 2015) and can notably cause problems in interpersonal relationships. Studies in the literature report that rejection sensitivity negatively affects interpersonal relationships (e.g., Downey et al., 1999; Downey & Feldman, 1996) and harms mental health, causing depression symptoms, social anxiety, and general anxiety disorders (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Feinstein et al., 2012; Normansell & Wisco, 2017). Therefore, considering its effects on mental health, it is important to understand how rejection sensitivity develops in people.

Rejection sensitivity develops from the accumulation of all rejection experiences people have throughout their lives (Feldman & Downey, 1994). Studies on the relationship between exposure to rejection in childhood by parents and rejection sensitivity show that rejection sensitivity is linked to exposure to rejection during the period of childhood (Erözkan, 2004). According to the attachment theory, individuals who have suffered rejection or violence by a caregiver develop anxiety about rejection (Harper, Dickson, & Welsh, 2006). Gerdan and Kurt (2020), in their study, found that individuals who had an anxious attachment to their caregiver in their childhood had higher rejection sensitivity. Individuals with rejection sensitivity have been shown to have difficulties creating stable, strong interpersonal bonds in adulthood (Downey & Feldman, 1996). These individuals need the approval of others when establishing close relationships with people (Romero-Canyas et al., 2010). In light of all this information from the literature, it is thought that there may be a strong connection between rejection sensitivity and attachment. In fact, according to a study by Ainsworth et al. (1978), if a mother consistently rejects her baby's attempts to establish physical contact, the baby will learn to avoid it; this avoidance of rejection will likely continue in the relationships with others in the later years of life. Hence, here it is important to move on to an explanation of attachment, as it is believed to be linked to the concepts of marriage expectation and rejection sensitivity.

Attachment theory was first introduced in a study by Bowlby published in 1944, titled *Forty-Four Juvenile Thieves: Their Characters and Home-Life*. In this study, a strong positive relationship between children's early maternal deprivation and their crime rates was found. Bowlby observed children in a nursery and children who had been separated from their attending caregivers either for a long time or completely and discovered remarkable uniformity in the children's reaction to separation. Bowlby's main focus was to understand and explain how infants attach to their primary caregiver and are emotionally affected when separated (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The resulting attachment theory proposed by Bowlby (1973) asserts that individuals have a tendency to build strong emotional bonds with others who are significant to them, and that this is a universal need (Bowlby, 1973; Bowlby et al., 1989). Bowlby's (1973) first proposition rests on the idea that an individual who is confident that the figure to whom they have attachment will be available whenever needed, as compared to those who do not have such confidence, is much less prone to a state of intense anxiety. Bowlby's (1973) second proposition asserts that confidence regarding the existence of the attachment figure is developed in the first years of life and is relatively permanent. Indeed, Kesebir et al. (2011), in their study clearly showed that attachment is formed in the first years of life and affects one's later years of life. The quality of the relationships individuals create in the first years of their lives will determine whether their perceptions towards the self and others are secure or insecure (Atik, 2013). In other words, the first relationships individuals form with their attachment figures will influence their future relationships.

From the relationships established with both parents, children create mental representations about how their attachment figures behave in different situations, and all expectations from these relationships are generated according to these representations (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby designated these models, which contain traces of the first experiences in the baby-parent relationship, as internal working models. These models play a decisive role in the relationships formed over the lifetime of the individual. As the cognitive schemes formed during the childhood period shape the individual's future experiences in terms of the perceptions they will have towards self and others and their beliefs, interpersonal relationships, expectations, and attitudes. According to Bowlby, the most important function of internal working models is that they provide an individual who encounters a novel situation the ability to decide using previous mental representations, instead of evaluating the situation anew each time. Internal working models consist of two dimensions, the self-model, which forms one's perceptions regarding self, and the other model, which involves one's perceptions and trust of significant others in their life (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). These models complement and mutually interact with one another (Bowlby, 1973). Depending on the perception a person has of themselves and others, a person can either see themselves as valuable and the other as trustworthy or see themselves as worthless and the others as untrustworthy according to internal working models.

According to Ainsworth et al. (1978), the attachment styles in children can be categorized into three groups: secure attachment, anxious-ambivalent attachment, and avoidant attachment. Hazan and Shaver (1987) expanded the study by Ainsworth et al. (1978) to different age groups and categorized the attachment in adolescents and adults using the same groups. The first of the attachment styles is the secure attachment style. In the secure attachment style, the individual perceives the self as valuable and the other as reliable and does not experience intense anxiety over the possibility of separation. The second attachment style is the avoidant attachment style. In the avoidant attachment style, the individual consistently rejects others' attempts to establish relationships in order to protect themselves against a possible separation. Finally, there is the third attachment style; the anxious-ambivalent attachment style. In this attachment style, the individual develops inconsistent reactions and is in a state of intense anxiety over the possibility of separation. In a study by Harvey and Byrd (2000), individuals with secure attachment are more willing to get support from their family when they encounter a problem, while individuals with ambivalent attachment tend not to get support from their families in such situations.

Taking into account all this information from the literature, it is thought that there exists a strong relationship between marriage expectation, rejection sensitivity, and attachment styles. Understanding the relationship between these concepts can help individuals have happier marital

relationships and make their marriages lasting. The first hypothesis of the study is that rejection sensitivity has an effect on marriage expectancy. However, it is thought that this effect is not due to rejection sensitivity alone, and attachment styles play a mediating role in this relationship. Therefore, attachment styles were chosen as the mediator variable. The central hypothesis of the present study is that attachment styles have a mediating role in the relationship between marriage expectation and rejection sensitivity. Accordingly, the study aims to investigate the mediating role of attachment styles in the relationship between marriage expectation and rejection sensitivity.

## METHOD

The present study used the cross-sectional survey method to investigate the relationship between the variables. The PROCESS analysis developed by Hayes (2017) was applied to analyze the built model. In this model, ‘marriage expectation’ was assigned as the dependent variable, ‘rejection sensitivity as the independent variable, and ‘attachment styles’ as the mediator variable. Questionnaires and scales were applied online via the internet. The participants were informed about the study in advance, and participation was voluntary-based.

### Participants

This study included 365 university students. 265 (72.6%) females and 100 (27.4%) males, from Istanbul Sebahattin Zaim University (IZU) and Marmara University (MU) in Turkey constituted the sample group. The population of the research consists of 1 million 834 thousand students studying in Istanbul (2022,7,27). While determining the sample size, the "estimated sample size" table was used (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012). Participants were determined by convenience sampling method. Convenience sampling is a type of non-random sampling in which participants who meet criteria such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, and willingness to participate are included in the study (Dörnyei, 2007). The mean age of the participants was 21.69 and ranged from 18 to 45. Of the participants, 348 (95.3%) were single, 17 (4.7%) were married, and 46 (12.6%) were at a low-socioeconomic level, 305 (83.6%) at a mid-socioeconomic level, and 14 (3.8%) at a high-socioeconomic level. Socioeconomic level was determined according to the participants' own statements.

**Table 1. Frequency distribution of the participants by demographic variables**

Variables		n	%
Gender	Female	265	72.6
	Male	100	27.4
Marital Status	Single	348	95.3
	Married	17	4.7
Socioeconomic Level	Low	46	12.6
	Mid	305	83.6
	High	14	3.8
University	IZU	76	20.8
	MU	289	79.2

### Measures

The study used four different forms, a questionnaire and three scales. There was a total of 85 items on these forms.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by the researchers of the present study. Depending on the previous research in the literature (e.g. Akşemsettinoglu, 2020; Ger, 2021), the questions on the form were prepared to unearth new variables that might have a strong relation with other variables in the study. It includes a total of nine multiple-choice and open-ended questions to determine the independent variables of the participants. Face validity and content validity can be used for the

validation of questionnaires (Singh, 2017). For the face validity; questionnaire were administered to laypersons, in order to assess whether the questions appropriate for measuring objectives or not. On the other hand for the content validity subject-matter experts' points of views were assessed. The questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the scale forms together with the "Consent Form".

### ***Marriage Expectation Scale (MES)***

The MES, developed by Jones and Nelson (1996), is a five-point Likert-type one-dimensional scale with 40 items. The scale measures expectations regarding intimacy, equality, and compatibility in marriage. The lowest possible score on the scale is 40 and the highest is 120. Low scores obtained on the scale (0–85) indicate pessimistic expectations about marriage, high scores (97–120) indicate idealistic expectations about marriage, and medium scores (86–96) indicate realistic expectations about marriage. Soysal et al. (2016) adapted the scale to Turkish. The reported internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .93, its test-retest reliability was .97, and its linguistic validity coefficient was approximately .98. In the present study, the alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .88.

### ***Rejection Sensitivity Scale (RSS)***

The RSS was developed by Downey and Feldman (1996) to measure rejection sensitivity, which refers to anxious anticipation of rejection, rapid perception of rejection, and tendency to overreact to rejection. The present study used the University Students Form of the Rejection Sensitivity Scale. The scale is a six-point Likert type, consisting of 18 items and a single factor. The lowest and highest possible scores on the scale are one and 36, respectively. Köse et al. (2017) adapted the scale into Turkish. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .85 and .82 in two different studies. The present study determined the alpha reliability coefficient to be .84.

### ***Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale (TDASS)***

The TDASS was developed by Erzen (2016) to measure attachment styles. The scale has 18 items and three sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions, which correspond to the categorization based on adult attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1978), are secure attachment, avoidant attachment, and anxious-ambivalent attachment. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the sub-dimensions were calculated as .69, .80, and .71, respectively. The scale is a five-point Likert-type and includes no reverse items. The present study calculated the alpha reliability coefficient to be .80.

## **FINDINGS**

Before conducting a mediation analysis, some assumptions required for regression analysis first need to be checked. These assumptions are the absence of multicollinearity between variables, the absence of autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity, and the normal distribution of the variables. An investigation of these said assumptions was made in this study prior to performing the mediating analysis.

The presence of a high and linear relationship between the independent variables is defined as multicollinearity. In such a case, it becomes difficult to distinguish the unique contribution and effect of each variable (Büyüköztürk, 2016; p. 35). To check multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Condition Index (CI), and Tolerance (T) values were examined. The VIF value was calculated as 1.1, the CI as 1, 5.8, and 18.1, and the T value as .9. A VIF value lower than 10, a CI value lower than 30, and a T value greater than 10 indicate no multicollinearity between variables. Therefore, the assumption of multicollinearity was met in the present study.

Another assumption was the absence of autocorrelation between the variables. The presence of autocorrelation indicates that there is a relationship between the error items of the independent variables. In other words, it causes the standard errors of statistics to be large (Ünver, Gamgam, & Altunkaynak, 2016; p. 426). This assumption was tested using Durbin-Watson analyses, with the

results showing a value of 1.96, which is within the 1.5–2.5 reference interval. Therefore, the assumption regarding the lack of autocorrelation was met.

The online form has been created in such a way that it does not allow to switch from one question to another without marking it. So that, there is no missing value in the data set. The normality assumption was checked by calculating the skewness and kurtosis coefficients. The skewness and kurtosis values were found to be between -1 and +1, which indicated that the normality assumption was met (George & Mallery, 2001). Missing or incomplete data creates problems in studies. There are many techniques in the literature that offer different approaches for the analysis of missing values. These techniques are listwise data deletion, casewise data deletion, pairwise data deletion, mean substitution, regression imputation and maximum likelihood estimation techniques (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2012; Oğuzlar, 2001). A case may be omitted from an analysis because it contains one or more missing values in the variables being analyzed. In this study missing cases were eliminated from the data set. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables and the relationships between the variables. The Pearson correlation test was applied to investigate the relationships.

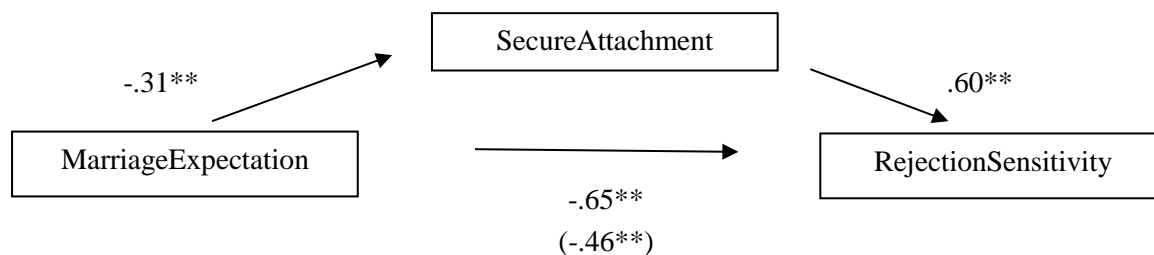
**Table 2. Relationships between the variables and descriptivestatistics**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Marriage expectation	1				
2. Rejection sensitivity	-.21**	1			
3. Secure attachment	.25**	-.31**	1		
4. Avoidant/Anxious attach.	-.05	.01	-.29**	1	
5. Fearful/Anxious attach.	-.10*	.22**	-.22**	.27**	1
Mean	93.59	8.75	18.77	14.62	16.81
Mode	95	8	19	12	14
Median	94	8.5	19	14	16
Kurtosis	-.488	-.216	.008	-.001	-.451
Skewness	-.167	.321	-.369	.542	.267

*N* = 365, \*\**p* < .01, \**p* < .05

As Table 2 shows, there was a .21-level positive relationship between marriage expectation and rejection sensitivity ( $p = .000 < .01$ ); a .25-level positive relationship between marriage expectation and secure attachment ( $p = .000 < .01$ ), and a .10-level negative relationship between marriage expectation and fearful attachment ( $p = .01 < .05$ ). Furthermore, there was a .31-level significant negative relationship between rejection sensitivity and secure attachment ( $p < .01$ ) and a significant positive relationship between rejection sensitivity and fearful attachment ( $p < .01$ ). No significant relationship was found between rejection sensitivity and avoidant attachment ( $r = .01, p > .05$ ). A .29-level significant negative relationship between secure attachment and avoidant attachment ( $p < .01$ ) and a .22-level significant negative relationship between secure attachment and anxious attachment ( $p < .01$ ) were found. Lastly, a .27-level significant positive relationship was found between avoidant attachment and anxious attachment ( $p < .01$ ).

The mediating role of attachment styles in the effect of rejection sensitivity on marriage expectation was investigated using the PROCESS macro plug-in. Here, the attachment styles were included in the analysis separately and addressed in three dimensions (secure, avoidant, and fearful).



**Figure 1. Mediating role of secure attachment in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and marriage expectation**

As seen in Figure 1, there was a .65-level significant negative relationship between rejection sensitivity and marriage expectation. However, when the mediating effect is removed, this relationship maintains its negative significance and decreases to the .46-level. The continuation of the relationship after the mediation effect disappears shows that attachment styles have a partial mediation effect (Yilmaz & Dalbudak, 2018).

**Table 3. Direct and indirect effect of rejection sensitivity and secure attachment on marriage expectation**

Variables	$\beta$	SE	Bootstrap 95% CI Low	Bootstrap 95% CI High
<b>TOTAL EFFECT</b>				
Rejection sensitivity → Marriage expectation	-.65**	.15	-.9543	-.3393
<b>DIRECT EFFECT</b>				
Rejection sensitivity → Secure attachment	-.31**	.05	-.4106	-.2102
Secure attachment → Marriage expectation	.60**	.15	.2891	.9111
Rejection sensitivity → Marriage expectation	-.46**	.16	-.7776	-.1435
<b>INDIRECT EFFECT</b>				
Rejection sensitivity → Secure attachment → Marriage expectation	-.19**	.06	-.3312	-.0712

*N=365, SE= Standard Error, GA= Confidence Interval, \*\* $p < .01$*

Table 3 presents the results of the PROCESS analysis. The overall effect of rejection sensitivity on the dependent variable of marriage expectation was negative and significant ( $\beta = -.65$ ,  $SE = .15$ , 95% CI = [-.9543, -.3393],  $p < .01$ ); the direct effect of rejection sensitivity on the mediating variable of secure attachment was negative and significant ( $\beta = -.31$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI = [-.4106, -.2102],  $p < .01$ ); the direct effect of secure attachment on marriage expectation was positive and significant ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $SE = .15$ , 95% CI = [.2891, .9111],  $p < .01$ ); the direct effect of rejection sensitivity on marriage expectation was negative and significant ( $\beta = -.46$ ,  $SE = .16$ , 95% CI = [-.7776, -.1435],  $p < .01$ ); and finally, the indirect effect of rejection sensitivity on marriage expectation through secure attachment was negative and significant ( $\beta = -.19$ ,  $SE = 0.6$ , 95% CI = [-.3312, -.0712],  $p < .01$ ). There were no significant results obtained regarding the analyses performed on avoidant and fearful attachment.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Marriage has been the subject of much research, as it is one of the major milestones of people's lives. One of the more prominent concepts examined in recent studies on marriage is marriage expectation. This concept of expectation serves as one of the most important factors determining satisfaction in relations. To better understand the expectations of marriage, it is necessary to identify the variables responsible for creating these expectations. Therefore, the present study investigated the role of rejection sensitivity and attachment styles in predicting marriage expectations.

The study findings showed that as individuals' rejection sensitivity increases, their expectations from marriage decrease. It was further observed that individuals who are afraid of being rejected in their relationships and who think that their efforts to build a close relationship will have



negative results have pessimistic expectations from marriage. However, rejection sensitivity is not the only variable that predicts marriage expectation. The mediating analysis results revealed that having a secure attachment style contributes to the prediction of marriage expectations. In fact, people with low sensitivity to rejection tend to have more optimistic expectations from marriage because they have a more secure attachment style. This finding establishes the key role attachment styles play in close relationships. A study examining the change in closeness and satisfaction in relationships according to attachment styles provided parallel findings with this research, as it reported that adults with a secure attachment style scored higher on these variables than that of those with an avoidant attachment style (Lopez et al., 2000). In the same study, individuals with a secure attachment style exhibited more positive and stable emotions than those with an ambivalent attachment style. A study by Dillon (2005) examined the effect of domestic violence, divorce, and gender on marriage expectation (pessimistic, realistic, and idealistic). She found that while domestic violence and divorce had no significant impact on marriage expectation, gender did. In contrast to this findings, Boyer-Pennigton et al, (2001), in their study, found that having divorced parents negatively affected marriage expectations. More studies on this issue are needed to work out this conflict in results. In summary, the present study found that secure attachment has a partial mediating role in the relationship between rejection sensitivity and marriage expectation, but that avoidant and ambivalent attachment have no mediating roles.

Regarding the strengths and limitations of this study, the applied methods and scales and the sample size can be considered to be the strengths of the study. The scales used are capable of evaluating an individuals' current situation objectively. A sample of 365 people reached in this study is close to the sample size of many similar studies. On the other hand, the study's limitations are similar to those seen in other studies. The participants, for example, was limited to only university students, meaning that the present findings only pertain to this sample and cannot be generalized to different age groups. The way of the defining the socioeconomic levels of participants is another limitation of the study. It is therefore suggested that more studies involving other age groups be conducted on this topic to contribute additional valuable information to the related literature. Moreover, it is recommended that new studies involving qualitative interviews and the use of scales be conducted to measure individuals' attitudes regarding the existing variables to further enrich the literature. Lastly, it is suggested that educational opportunities and seminars on the importance of having realistic and sound marriage expectations before deciding on marriage be developed for young people.

#### **Conflicts of Interest:**

No potential conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

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#### **CRedit Author Statement:**

Author 1: Conceptualization, Methodology, Project Administration, Supervision, Validation, Reviewing and Editing.

Author 2: Investigation, Formal Analysis, Visualization, Writing- Original draft preparation, Resources.

#### **Ethical Statement:**

Participation was arranged in a voluntary manner with informed consent. Necessary permissions were obtained for the scales used in the study. Ethics Committee Approval was received for this study from Marmara University, Institute of Educational Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee with the approval date of 10.12.2021 and the approval number of 10-2.

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