

CHAPTER V

THE EFFECT OF PARENTING BEHAVIORS AND COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS ON THE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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1. Introduction

For the overall development, the early stages of life constitute a critical importance. In the early childhood period, the main system of the child is the "family" (Aydođdu & Dilekmen, 2016). Parents' attitudes shape the children's personalities, self-perceptions, and relationships with others. These parental attitudes can be classified as; the parents' acceptance of the child, overprotection, authoritarianism, warmth, care, sensitivity, control and punishment towards the child (Baumrind, 1995; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Sheikh & Janoff-Bulman, 2010).

Differential parenting attitudes may result in children who are sensitive, affectionate, responsible, anxious, avoidant, happy or unhappy, exaggerated, and reckless individuals (Yaprak, 2007). The consistent and regular attitudes of the primary caregiver towards the child have a decisive role in their psychological adjustment. The positive, consistent and supportive attitudes of the caregiver support the children's personality development, whereas the negative, inconsistent and restrictive attitudes may cause some mental problems, incorrect beliefs and perception patterns and cause some deterioration in perception (Seven, 2008).

The care dimension of parents is about providing care and support. With this attitude, the parent tries to reduce the child's distress and support the child to cope with any threats and difficulties. Care may involve both emotional support (compassion, sympathy, care, encouragement) and instrumental support (information, advice) (Collins, Guichard, Ford & Feeney, 2006). The effective care dimension increases the parent-child relationship quality (Collins & Feeney, 2000). Children of parents who

display these attitudes become self-confident, entrepreneurial, responsible individuals (Yavuzer, 2010). In the controlling parental attitude, the parent monitors and observes the child's behavior and gains information about the child and then sets regulatory rules for the child in behavioral control. This attitude can also be defined as an attempt to inspect and control (Öztürk, Kındap, & Sayıl, 2006). In psychological control, the parent tries to control the feeling and thoughts of the child. Attitudes such as excessive intervention, detachment and withdrawal of love are can be given as example behaviors in this attitude. For the developmental outcomes, while the optimal levels of behavioral control is associated with positive ones, psychological control causes negative consequences such as depression and anxiety (Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994). In the overprotective parental attitude, the parents devote their life to the child and adopt an overly altruistic role. This situation causes the child to be an irresponsible and not self-sufficient individual. Dependent on their parents, unable to act independently and with low self-esteem, these children fail to produce their own ideas (Yavuzer, 1990).

Studies which are examining parents' attitudes towards their children and children's attachment styles have revealed a significant relationship between these two variables (Neal & Horbury, 2001; Perris & Anderson, 2000). People develop intense emotional bonds with those whom they consider valuable to them throughout their lives. These intense emotional bonds are described as "attachment" (Bowlby, 1973). Especially in infancy, the age of 0-2 is a sensitive period in which the individual develops himself most rapidly in terms of physical, mental and emotional aspects. The baby is dependent on the caregiver, as the skills that will enable him to survive are not yet developed. The relationship he establishes with the caregiver in this period is essential for his mental and emotional development (Morsünbül, Çok, 2011; Tüzün, Sayar 2006).

First of all, the psychoanalytic theory explained this parent-child attachment as "the reason why the child is attached to his mother is that she meets the nutritional needs of him". Subsequent researches have revealed that this explanation of psychoanalytic theory is incomplete and inadequate. Bowlby developed "Attachment Theory" accordingly (Soysal, Bodur, İşeri & Şenol, 2005). Bowlby explains attachment theory with three basic concepts; seek close proximity, safe haven and safe base. When the baby perceives a danger or threat, he wants to have close physical contact with the primary caregiver. If closeness is provided, the baby feels safe and strong, which enables the baby to wonder and examine the environment because he knows that it is a safe base where he can take shelter for comfort and safety whenever he needs or wants. The results of Harlow's experiment indicated that, meeting the nutritional needs alone is not enough for the establishment of the bond between mother and baby, and that the general

attitudes of the parents have important effects on the life of the individual, and the lifelong effect of the mother-infant relationship has been revealed (Bowlby, 1969).

In this direction, Ainsworth et al. developed assessment of "The Strange Situation" to measure the level of attachment of babies to their families (Holmes, 1993). In this assessment, the possible responses of the baby when encountering a stranger were examined and as a result of the evaluations, three major attachment styles were found. (Ainsworth, 1989, Holmes 1993). The securely attached babies can easily get close to other people and use their caregiver as a safe base while exploring the environment, because their needs of care and affection were met (Ainsworth, 1989; Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004). Securely attached individuals have found to be better in the ability of understanding emotions and problem solving where they can easily establish social relationships with other people (Thompson, 2006).

If the baby develops an anxious-avoidant attachment (insecure avoidant), he does not share his feeling with the primary caregiver, avoids and ignores the intimate relationship. There is no expectation of suggestion, contact or closeness from the caregiver. These children were often abused (emotional, physical, sexual) or their needs (basic, physical, emotional, social) were ignored by their primary caregivers (Arslan, 2008). Because the child thinks that the caregiver is resistant to his reactions and punishes him, he avoids asking for help-support in adulthood, does not express his feelings and thoughts openly, does not invest in social and emotional relationships, and remains hesitant about being close with others (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

If the baby develops an anxious-resistance attachment (insecure ambivalent/anxious), he approaches with suspicion to strangers. When the primary caregiver moves away from the setting and comes back, he overreacts, does not calm down easily, he wants to get closer to his caregiver and also exhibits an angry, restless attitude. In adulthood years, the main problem of these children's relationship is describing their partners as distant and cold and to think that their love is unrequited (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). In this attachment style, the primary attachment object has not met the child's needs in a timely and consistent manner (Ainsworth, 1989; Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004).

There are plenty of studies displaying that the parental attitudes and the early years attachment styles play a critical role for the development of trust which impact the overall development of the individuals throughout their lives (eg., Schuengel, Verhage, Madigan, Fearson, Oosterman & Cassibba, 2015). The results of a longitudinal study examining the change in attachment styles indicated that, 72% of the participants maintained the

attachment styles that they developed during their infancy. This statistic was obtained when babies who participated in the Ainsworth's Strange Situation at the age of one attended Berkeley's Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) 20 years later. (Waters et al., 2000).

The link between the attachment styles and the romantic relationship was also examined (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1994, Pistole, 1995). Attachment theory assumes that romantic relationships have a fundamental role in human development, and states that attachment patterns which begin to take shape during childhood, affect expectations, beliefs, social behavior patterns, and emotion regulation model (Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Attachment begins to take shape with the formation of the baby and forms the building block of the sense of "security" in life. This building block affects the emotional sharings of the individual, such as a romantic relationship in his later life (e.g., Simpson, 1992). During infancy and childhood, parents are the individual's initial attachment figure, but with adulthood, the attachment figure begins to be peers or partners in romantic relationships (Ainsworth, 1989).

Adulthood is a period where the individuals search for their identity continues. In this current stage unlike adolescence, the certain questions of the individual about who they are and what they desire from life and romantic partners has begun to be answered more precisely (Arnett, 2007). A romantic relationship is where two individuals feel sexual, emotional and spiritual passion for each other and hence the partners reward each other for these feelings (Branden, 1988). According to Moss and Schwebell (1993), romantic relationships are based on five essential factors. These are commitment, affective intimacy, cognitive intimacy, physical intimacy and mutuality. Researchers have emphasized that attachment styles which individuals establish in their romantic relationships in the adulthood are very alike to the attachment styles they developed towards their primary caregiver in their childhood. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall classified the attachment styles in romantic relationships as "secure attachment, insecure-resistant (anxious) attachment, and insecure-avoidant attachment" (Selçuk et al., 2005). Anxiously attached individuals have difficulty separating from their partners, want to minimize their emotional distance with them, and they always want to be noticed by their partner and to be the centre of attention. In addition, issues of concern are often closely related to separation, disapproval, and anxiety to satisfy others. Those who are avoidantly attached are generally like to loneliness and think they are self-sufficient (Shaver, Hazan & Bradshaw, 1998).

There is a significant and positive relationship between secure attachment and the perception of a happy, friendly, reliable and intimate relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Besides, a significant and positive

relationship was found between the avoidant attachment style and the obsessive, inconsistent, emotionally unstable, sexually over-eager and overly jealous attitudes. It was found that individuals with anxious attachment attach more importance to their relationships and perceive more frequent problems in relationships. At the same time, it was understood that individuals with anxious attachment style needed more closeness and trust in the relationship (Uyar, 2019). It was found that people with a secure attachment had higher relationship satisfaction compared to people with other attachment styles. In addition, securely attached individuals focus on their own and their partner's emotions when a conflict arises and become more accommodating, while anxiously attached individuals compromise themselves and try to adapt to their partner's wishes. Individuals with avoided attachment style stay away from compromise and focus on the most problematic points of the conflict (Pistole, 1995).

It has been emphasized that the perceived parental attitudes in the first years of life also affect the individuals' worlds of emotions and thoughts and shapes their perception and interpretations. These shaped perception and interpretation styles determine the reactions individuals will give to the events they experience. According to cognitive theory; events are shaped according to the people's view of the world, beliefs, expectations, perception and interpretation rather than their own qualities (Beck et al., 1979). If dysfunctional thoughts are distorted in the cognitive structure of the individual, the point of view to events and situations can be different as against the reality. This situation can also negatively affect the emotional state and cause some psychopathologies (Ardanç, 2017; Tükçapar, 2011). Individuals encounter many stimuli throughout their lives, process, evaluate and interpret these stimuli within the framework of perceptions that began to take shape in childhood (Uyar, 2019). According to Beck, early experiences provide an environment for the individual to develop some basic dysfunctional and biased schemas about himself and the world. The attitudes that individuals are exposed by their caregivers at an early age; it causes them to organize their perceptions in this direction, and their feelings and behaviors show negative tendencies. These schemas are extremely rigid, extreme, one-dimensional, absolute, resistant to change, and cause negative automatic thoughts. Even though these thoughts occur out of individual control, they affect the life of the individual negatively (Beck, 2001). How individuals react to the situations they encounter, what they feel are related to schemas, automatic thoughts and personality traits, started to develop during the childhood years (Garnefski, Kraaij & Spinhoven, 2002). Therefore, individuals' cognitive distortions are thought to be closely related to parental behaviors and attachment styles (Uyar, 2019).

Cognitive distortions can be considered as negative biases or tendencies for the information processing (Türkçapar, 2011). Cognitive distortions trigger each other and by time they become a general way of thinking of the individual which results in systematic logic errors in perception (Ardanç, 2017). Beck, Rush, Show, & Emery (1979) found that there are seven types of cognitive distortions specifically in individuals. This list was expanded by Burns (1980) and identified as ten cognitive distortions in total. Thinking styles about cognitive distortions are explained as follows (Beck, 2001); dichotomous thinking as a style that also known as "black or white", "bipolar" or "two-way thinking". In this distortion, events and persons are perceived very rigidly. The ability of the individual to perceive events more flexibly is not active (Blackburn, 1996). Selective abstraction thinking style as called "mental filtering" and "selective blindness" is the second one. In this distortion, although there are many different evidences about the event experienced by the individual, the individual focuses on the negative detail and makes evaluations in this direction (Beck, 2001). The individual refuses to evaluate the events from a general perspective and comments. This is a kind of finding out the negative with "tweezers" from the whole and ignoring everything else (Özer, 2000).

Arbitrary inference thinking style is called as "reasoning according to feelings". In this cognitive distortion, it is possible for the individual to make a determination according to him own feelings and thoughts by evaluating internal and external materials without any clue and evidence about an event or situation (Beck, 2001). The individual who has this way of thinking assumes that reality is also negative because everything seems negative to him. The forth one is the mind reading in which the individual claims that he knows what other people think of him and prefers to believe his own opinion without the need to investigate other possible causes (Türkçapar, 2011). Catastrophizing thinking style include negative assumptions about the future that made without much considering the realistic results, where the individual feels anxious as a result of the disaster scenarios. In overgeneralization thinking style, the individual makes a judgment about himself and others based on a single event. The person draws general rules from a single event by carrying the experienced situation far beyond than the event itself (Klar, Gabai & Baron, 1997). An overgeneralization person frequently uses words such as "always, nobody, never, everyone, absolutely" (Özer, 2000). In labelling and mislabelling style, although there are other evidences available, these are completely ignored, and the individual creates "judgmental, rigid, negative "adjectives" about himself and others. In addition, once the labelling occurs, the individual begins to display attitudes that support this adjective (Ardanç, 2017).

Ignoring the positive is also another way of cognitive distortion, in which the individual devaluates positive things by naming them as unimportant, ordinary, worthless or by chance (Türkçapar, 2011). On the other hand, for the personalization thinking style, the individual perceives events and situations that are unrelated to himself. He does not think that there may be different causes, and thus attributes the cause of negative behaviors or situations to himself even when there is no connection (Beck, 2001). For the other cognitive distortion, the should statements, the individual has absolute judgments about himself and how other people should behave, and he exaggerates the thoughts that everything will go awful if these requirements are not followed. In this way of thinking, the individual can impose heavy responsibilities on himself and other people.

It has been found that individuals with anxious and avoidant types of attachment, have more distorted thoughts. Insecurely attached individuals tend to suffer from more damage of their relationships, which can be caused by cognitive distortions (Stackert & Bursik, 2003). It has also been found that there is a significant positive relationship between cognitive distortions and fear of rejection, unrealistic relationship expectation, misperception of others, shyness and fear (Koydemir & Demir 2008). Children who received love, affection and attention from their parents define themselves as loveable and competent individuals in adulthood. Individuals whose emotional needs were not met or were met inconsistently develop negatively distorted beliefs such as inadequacy and disapproval, and the effect of these beliefs is clearly observed on romantic relationships (Sharf, 2000).

To summarize, attachment constitute a necessity for the survival and functional development of the newborns (Morsünbül & Çok, 2011). It is known that the link between the mother and child creates mental representations of the self and the environment, and these mental representations determine attitudes in future close relationships (Ditommasso et al., 2003). Parental attitudes determine the child's perception of the world. Likewise, parental attitudes play an active role in the development of cognitive schemas that enable individuals to make sense of themselves, other people and the world (Beck, 2001). Perceived negative parenting attitudes (such as critical, rejecting, overprotective, negligent) and the inability to meet the baby's needs in a healthy and consistent way in the first years of life lead to the formation of many negative basic beliefs (e.g.: failure, inadequacy). Many studies have shown that childhood experiences, parental attitudes and internal working models are effective on the perception of romantic relationships in adulthood (Bozkurt, 2006; Fraley & Shaver, 2000). In accordance to the above review, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of perceived

parental attitudes that measured retrospectively and cognitive distortions on their attitudes in romantic relationships.

2. Method

This is a descriptive study conducted to determine the predictive effects of parental attitudes and cognitive distortions of individuals on the perception of romantic relationships.

2.1. Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 245 adults who were aged between 18-35. 38.4% of the participants are female, and the average age is 25.12. The snowball sampling technique was used to reach the participants. Data were collected through online surveys and lasted approximately 1/2 hour.

2.2. Measures

Demographic information about age, gender, primary caregiver, marital status, economic status, and educational level was collected. Self-reports of questionnaires were used to measure two dimensions of parenting behaviors (overprotection and care/control), experiences in close relationships (avoidance and anxiety), and cognitive distortions (interpersonal/social and work/success).

2.2.1. The Parental Bonding Instrument

The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), was developed by Parker et al in 1979. Participants were asked to retrospectively indicate how much each statement on the scale reflects the behavior of their primary caregiver, considering their first 16 years of life. PBI was adapted to Turkish by Kapçı & Küçükler (2006). It is a four-point Likert type scale which includes 25 items. While there were two separate factors in the original scale as care and overprotection/control, control items were included in the care dimension in Turkish version of the scale. Controlling behaviors were found to be coincide with overprotective parental attitudes in the Western culture, they are considered as a part of the caring parental attitude in our society (Kapçı & Küçükler, 2006). In terms of subscales, the Cronbach alpha value for the mother form in the care/control dimension was .91, and .90 for the father; in overprotection dimension .64 for mother and .78 for father. For this study, the internal reliability was .89 and .79 for the care/control and overprotection dimensions consecutively.

2.2.2. Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R)

Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) scale was developed by Farley et al. (2000). It was adapted into Turkish culture by Sümer (2006; YİYE-II). It consists of 36 items (18 avoidance and 18 anxiety) and two subscales: avoidance and anxiety. Each item measures

the emotions and thoughts in romantic relationships and is evaluated with a 7-point Likert scale. If the participants are not in a romantic relationship, it is asked them to imagine and fill in the responses as follows. The avoidant attachment dimension is calculated by taking the average of the even-numbered items, and the anxious attachment dimension by taking the average of the odd-numbered items. The increase in scores is an indicator of anxious and avoidant attachment. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the avoidance dimension has a high level of internal consistency with .90 and anxiety dimension with .86 (Sümer, 2006). For the current study, the internal reliability was .85 and .88 for the avoidance and anxiety dimensions consecutively.

2.2.3. The Cognitive Distortions Scale (CDS)

The Cognitive Distortions Scale (CDS), was developed by Covin, Dozois, Ogniewicz, & Seeds (2011). The scale was adapted to Turkish culture by Ardaniç (2017). The scale includes two short stories each describing ten cognitive distortions, and a scale prepared in 7-point Likert type (1 "Never" and 7 "Always"). One of the short stories was prepared to evaluate the interpersonal (social) area and the other to evaluate the work/success area. The Cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be .96 and .93 consecutively for the interpersonal/social and work/success dimensions (Ardaniç, 2017). In this study, the internal reliability was calculated as .83 and .87 for the interpersonal/social and work/success dimensions consecutively.

2.3. Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics of variables for data analysis, bivariate Pearson correlations to examine the relationships between scales, and reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were calculated. Skewness-Kurtosis values were examined to examine the normal distribution of the variables. SPSS program was used for the hypotheses testing.

3. Results

The demographic characteristics of the sample (Table 1) and the results of correlation analysis (Table 2) of the variables were summarized. As it can be seen, most of the sample consisted of males (61.6%). In addition, the education level of the majority of the participants (75.5%) is at the associate/bachelor's degree level. Considering the income level of the sample, the income level of 41.2% of the participants varies between 2500-5000 TL. 59.2% of the participants were not currently in any romantic relationship.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of individuals

Sociodemographic Information	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Female	94	38.4
Male	151	61.6
Educational Status		
Pre-primary / primary school	4	1.6
Secondary school	9	3.7
High school	20	8.2
Associate / bachelor's degree	185	75.5
Master's	25	10.2
Doctorate	2	.8
Income Level		
Low (0 – 2500 TL)	48	19.6
Medium (2500 – 5000 TL)	101	41.2
High (5000 – 10.000 TL)	56	22.9
Very high (10.000+ TL)	40	16.3
Relationship Status		
Not in relationship	145	59.2
Platonic	7	2.9
Flirting	18	7.3
In a relationship/engaged	69	28.2
/married	6	2.4
Separated /divorced / widow		
Primary Caregiver		
Mother	213	86.9
Father	10	4.1
Grandmother / grandfather	18	7.3
Aunt / uncle	2	.8
Paid caregiver	2	.8

Table 2 shows the correlations and descriptive analyses (mean and standard deviation) of all variables. According to this table, there was no statistically significant relationship between age and any other variables. On the other hand, there was a significant positive relationship between parents' overprotective attitudes and parents' care/control attitudes ($r=.295$, $p<.05$). Contrary to this, there was a significant negative relationship between parents' overprotective attitudes and anxious attachment style in romantic relationship ($r=-.214$, $p<.05$). This means that as the parents' overprotective attitudes decrease, the anxious attachment levels of individuals increase in their romantic relationships. There was a significant negative relationship between parents' overprotective attitudes and the cognitive distortions in the fields of achievement ($r=-.258$, $p<.05$) and

social/interpersonal ($r=-.288$, $p<.05$). This means that as the parents' overprotective attitudes decrease, the cognitive distortions levels in the fields of achievement and social/interpersonal of the individuals increase. Likewise, there was a significant negative relationship between parents' care/control attitudes and both avoidant ($r=-.106$, $p<.05$) and anxious attachment style ($r=-.315$, $p<.05$). Similarly, there was a significant negative relationship between parents' care/control attitudes and the cognitive distortions in the fields of achievement ($r=-.278$, $p<.05$) and social/interpersonal ($r=-.293$, $p<.05$). In other words, individuals who perceive their parents' attitudes as highly caring and controlling develop less avoidant and anxious attachment style in their romantic relationships, as well as have less cognitive distortions in the fields of interpersonal/social and achievement.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlational Analyses of the Variables

	Mean (SD)	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1.Age	25.14 (3.98)	-.07	-.01	.00	-.06	.04	.03
2.Over-protection	11.40 (4.58)		.29**	.07	-.21**	-.25**	-.28**
3.Care/Control	41.22 (8.81)			-.10*	-.31**	-.27**	-.29**
4.Avoidant attachment	57.76 (19.15)				-.00	.29**	.20**
5.Anxious attachment	64.47 (21.03)					.37**	.53**
6.Achievement CDS	35.31 (12.45)						.74**
7.Interpersonal CDS	40.33 (11.58)						

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Finally, there was a significant positive relationship between the achievement sub-dimension and the interpersonal/social sub-dimension in the cognitive distortions ($r = .744$, $p<.05$). In other words, if individuals have a high level of cognitive distortion in any cognitive distortion sub-dimension, they also have a high level of cognitive distortion in the other cognitive distortion sub-dimension. Given the magnitude of the correlation values, there was a strong linear relationship only between the two sub-dimensions of cognitive distortions.

Then, independent sample t-tests were used to examine the difference in the parents' care/control and overprotective attitudes, their cognitive

distortions in the interpersonal/social and achievement domains, and avoidant and anxious attachment styles in romantic relationships with respect to the gender. According to the findings, there was a significant difference in perceived overprotective parental attitudes [$t(243)=3.30, p < .05$] between female and male. Females ($M=12.6; SD=4.9$) perceived their parents' attitudes as more protective in childhood than males ($M=10.65; SD=4.22$). In other words, parents exhibited more protective attitudes towards their girls than their boys. On the other hand, there is not found a significant difference between female and male participants for other variables.

In order to examine whether parents' care/control or overprotective attitudes, avoidance or anxiety attachment styles in a romantic relationship and cognitive distortions in the interpersonal/social or achievement domains change across educational status, income level, relationship status and primary caregiver a one-way ANOVAs were conducted. Findings showed that educational status had a significant effect on parents' overprotection attitudes, $F(5,239)=3.26, p < .05$. The mean for the pre-primary/primary school group was 9.75 ($SD = 3.50$), the mean for the secondary school group was 6.78 ($SD=4.09$), and the mean for the high school group was 9.55 ($SD=4.45$), the mean for the associate/bachelor's degree group was 11.91 ($SD=4.41$), the mean for the master's group was 10.92 ($SD=5.26$), and the mean for the doctorate group was 12.00 ($SD=2.83$). As can be seen, while individuals who did doctorate, were the group that perceive their parents' attitudes as the highest protective in their childhood, secondary school graduates were the group that perceive their parents as the least protective. In addition, educational status had a significant effect on cognitive distortions in the achievement area, $F(5,239)=2.54, p < .05$. The mean for the pre-primary/primary school group was 45.25 ($SD=5.50$), the mean for the secondary school group was 36.00 ($SD=10.50$), and the mean for the high school group was 40.30 ($SD=7.72$), the mean for the associate/ bachelor's degree group was 34.21 ($SD=12.43$), the mean for the master's group was 38.89 ($SD=14.92$), and the mean for the doctorate group was 20.00 ($SD=5.66$). As it is seen that pre-primary/primary school graduates had the highest level of cognitive distortion in the field of achievement, while individuals with a doctorate were the group with the least cognitive distortion in the field of achievement. On the contrary, educational status did not have a significant effect on parents' care/control attitudes, $F(5,239)=1.24, p > .05$; avoidant attachment style, $F(5,238)=.96, p > .05$; anxiety attachment style, $F(5,239)=2.02, p > .05$ and cognitive distortions in the field of social, $F(5,239)=1.79, p > .05$.

Income level did not have a significant effect on parents' overprotective attitudes, $F(3, 241)=.35, p > .05$; parents' care/control

attitudes, $F(3, 241)=.91$ $p>.05$; avoidant attachment style, $F(3, 240)= 1.83$, $p>.05$; anxiety attachment style, $F(3, 241)=1.22$, $p>.05$; cognitive distortions in the field of achievement, $F(3, 241)=1.24$, $p>.05$; cognitive distortions in the field of social, $F(3, 241)=.38$, $p>.05$. Moreover, relationship status did not have a significant effect on parents' overprotective attitudes, $F(4, 240)=.201$, $p>.05$; parents' care/control attitudes, $F(4, 240)=.92$, $p>.05$; avoidant attachment style, $F(4, 239)=.54$, $p>.05$; anxiety attachment style, $F(4, 240)=.61$, $p>.05$; cognitive distortions in the field of achievement, $F(4, 240)=1.40$, $p>.05$; cognitive distortions in the field of social, $F(4, 240)=1.15$, $p>.05$. Finally, primary caregivers did not have a significant effect on parents' overprotective attitudes, $F(4, 240)=.82$, $p>.05$; parents' care/control attitudes, $F(4, 240)=.52$, $p>.05$; avoidant attachment style, $F(4, 239)=.81$, $p>.05$; anxiety attachment style, $F(4, 240)=.26$, $p>.05$; cognitive distortions in the field of achievement, $F(4, 240)=.18$, $p>.05$; cognitive distortions in the field of social, $F(4, 240)=.22$, $p>.05$.

Table 3. The Predictors of Avoidant and Anxious Attachment Styles

	Avoidant Attachment		Anxious Attachment	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	59.204	39.216	57.141	44.544
Gender	-.042	-.014	.054	.039
Relationship status	.044	.000	.112	.087
Overprotection		.173*		-.038
Care/control		-.068		-.174**
Achievement CDS		.313**		-.085
Interpersonal CDS		.005		.528**
R ²	.01	.11	.01	.32

Notes: Standardized regression coefficients; N = 244. * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$.

Next, regression analyses were conducted to predict the avoidant and anxious attachment styles with the parenting and cognitive distortions variables (Table 3). After controlling for the predictive effect of gender and relationship status, overprotective parenting style and achievement oriented cognitive distortions positively predicted the avoidant type of attachment (effect sizes are %17 and %31 respectively). When the individuals experienced higher levels of overprotective parenting and

adopted achievement oriented cognitive distortions, these individuals tend to display avoidance in their romantic relationships. In contrast, after controlling for the predictive effect of gender and relationship status, care/control type parenting style negatively and interpersonal oriented cognitive distortions positively predicted the anxious type of attachment (effect sizes are %17 and %53 respectively). So, when the individuals experienced lower levels of care/control type of parenting and adopted interpersonal oriented cognitive distortions, these individuals tend to display anxiety in their romantic relationships.

4. Discussion

In this study, the effects of perceived parental attitudes and cognitive distortions on the attachment styles in romantic relationships were examined. It is known that perceived parental attitudes in childhood play an active role in shaping individuals' interpersonal relationships (Bowlby 1969). Furthermore, cognitive distortions that emerge in the light of parental attitudes and self-belief systems prevent individuals from establishing secure relationships (Akın, 2010). The results obtained from this study also demonstrate that parental attitudes are related to unrealistic thought patterns in individuals' perceptions.

In this study, a significant positive relationship was found between parents' overprotective attitudes and parents' care/control attitudes. Although perceived care and affection are associated with positive effects (Sümer, Aktürk & Helvacı, 2010), there are many studies showing that control and overprotective attitudes have also negative effects (Barber, Olsen & Shagle, 1994; Yavuzer, 1990). Some studies suggest that perceived control and protective attitudes have not always negative consequences, when these attitudes are integrated with care, they can support the social development of the child (Sümer, Aktürk & Helvacı, 2010). The reason for this contradiction can be explained by the fact that the attitudes and behaviors interiorized by the society vary from culture to culture (Chao, 1994; Darling & Steinberg, 1993). As Kağıtçıbaşı (2017) suggests, in collectivist cultures such as Turkish culture, parental discipline and warmth are not opposite poles but complementary components.

The results of this study also indicated that as individuals' perceived level of care/control or overprotective parental attitude decreased, they tended to be more anxious and avoidant attachment in their romantic relationships. Attachment is a strong emotional system that a person develops against people who are significant for him (Ainsworth, 1989) and is a multidimensional concept that is shaped by the environment and the inner changes of the person. The sensitive and supporting attitudes of the caregiver causes a secure bond with the baby and thus the baby creates a positive self-model towards himself and others (Ainsworth, 1989).

Research has shown that children of parents who display a caring, protective attitude and exercise optimum levels of behavioral control are securely attached, whereas children of families who display a reckless and unprotected attitude and who conduct less behavioral control develop an avoidant or anxious attachment style (Koehn & Kerns, 2018). This relationship can again be culturally related to the collectivist structure of Turkish culture. As a society, Turkish collectivistic culture tends to perceive possessive, protective and control attitudes positively, and although suchlike attitudes may be perceived negatively in other societies, these attitudes can reinforce secure attachment in collectivistic cultures (Sümer, Aktürk & Helvacı, 2010).

In Turkish culture, where the concepts of warmth and closeness have an important role (Akçınar & Baydar, 2014), parents' high-level care/control and overprotective attitudes prevent individuals from creating cognitive distortions in the field of achievement and interpersonal. There are many research findings that reveal the relationship between the attachment pattern that develops between the infant and the primary caregiver since the first months of life, and the individual's mental health and perception of events in both childhood and adulthood (Rohner & Britner 2002). Individuals' beliefs and assumptions about themselves and their environment form cognitive schemas. Later, a pattern is formed from these schemas and automatic thoughts, and in similar situations, the individuals remember these schemas and perceive the situations in the same way, reacts to them automatically and feel the same emotions (Beck, 2001). Although the literature generally supports that increasing the perception of family cohesiveness reduces cognitive distortions, there are also studies that control and overprotective attitudes have no significant effects (Bozkurt, 2006). On the other hand, since authoritarian attitudes of parents such as control and protective in Turkish culture can be perceived as care and involvement (Akçınar & Özbek, 2017), the lack of these attitudes can be perceived as withdrawal of love and can be interpreted as negative and threatening in the individual's cognitive system.

It was observed that as individuals' levels of cognitive distortions increased, their anxious and avoidant attachment levels in their romantic relationships increased accordingly. These findings are supported by data in the literature in which cognitive distortions are positively associated with variables such as fear of rejection, unrealistic relationship expectation, and fear of loss (Koydemir & Demir 2008). The importance of deteriorations in romantic relationships for the life of the individual has been emphasized by many studies (Umemura, Lacinová, Kotřčová, & Fraley, 2018). Unrealistic evaluations of the person can trigger emotional, mental and behavioral problems in romantic relationships. People who have not developed a secure bond in relationships tend to experience

damage from the relationship and develop more cognitive distortions. In addition, individuals' withdrawal of such relationships may be based on ongoing distorted thoughts from their past experiences. In other words, it is possible to talk about a bipolar interaction in this case (Stackert & Bursik, 2003).

Research findings showed that individuals who have high cognitive distortions in any field also have a high level of cognitive distortion in the other field. It is supported by the literature that cognitive distortions trigger each other (Ardaniç, 2017). Fundamental beliefs, consisting of the deepest beliefs, constitute the content of the cognitive schemas that enable us to perceive the world. In this context, while a new information received is cognitively processed, it triggers and distorts other existing schemas, and distorted evaluations affect each other and enable more automatic thoughts to reach the level of consciousness (Beck, 2001). Considering the parental attitudes by gender, women define their parents as more protective than men. This situation can be explained by the society's definition of boys as stronger and more resilient whereas girls are more sensitive and vulnerable (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 2000; Mızrakçı 1994; Yavuzer, 2010). Despite this, there are also findings that perceived foster parent attitudes do not differ according to gender (Özyürek & Şahin, 2005).

As a result of the findings, it was determined that the perceived overprotective parental attitudes also differed according to the education levels of the individuals. According to the results, while the ones who had doctorate degrees defined their parents' attitudes as protective at the highest level, secondary school graduates were the group that perceived protective attitudes the least. Although it is estimated that this result is due to the limited sample size of the aforementioned groups, there are many studies parallel to these findings. In this context, it can be interpreted that foster parenting attitudes in Turkish culture can be perceived as encouraging and supportive by individuals and integrated into life Hess & McDewitt (1984). On the other hand, it was also found that educational status also had an impact on the level of cognitive distortions in the field of achievement. In this context, pre-primary or primary school graduates were the group with the highest level of cognitive distortion in the field of achievement, whereas individuals who had a doctorate education are defined as the group with the least cognitive distortion in the field of achievement. This finding can also be associated with the limited sample size, apart from this, similar findings have been found in the literature (Duman, 2018). However, it is ambiguous whether having a higher educational level causes a decrease in cognitive distortions or whether individuals are progressing academically because they have a low level of cognitive distortion. More detailed studies are needed in the literature based on this topic.

In this study, the parental attitudes studied retrospectively with adults and the parental attitudes towards children have important effects on the individual's introverted and extroverted attitudes has been proven and the lifelong effect of the mother-infant relationship has been revealed. In this context, the contribution and importance of this research to the literature is as follows; this research drew attention to the effects of parental attitudes and cognitive distortions on each other and the perception of romantic relationships. Romantic relationships constitute an important part of most individuals' lives. Moreover, the cognitive distortions developed by individuals can create problems in many areas and prevent them to function well.

There are some limitations of the present study. First of all, cause-effect relationship was not included in the study since the results were limited to explaining the relationship between variables. Secondly, the sample size in the study is limited and the demographic distribution of the sample is not representative. Thirdly, although the attachment styles in romantic relationships were measured in the study, no measurement tool was used regarding the parent attachment style. If the attachment styles of the individuals to their parents were examined in addition to the parental attitudes, different questions could be answered. Fourth, data based on self-report was collected with a cross-sectional design. This situation may have created a memory-based problem when answering past questions about parental attitudes or biased information may have been obtained.

In this context, the research can be repeated for a representative sample. In order to examine the lifelong continuity of attachment styles with further research, a new measurement tool can be added to the study that measures the parent attachment style. More empirical knowledge and studies are needed to better analyse the changes in parental attitudes from culture to culture. In order to examine the possible effects of parental attitudes on individuals in more detail, observation-interview technique can be used, focus-group studies can be conducted, and these data can be collected with longitudinal methods. Furthermore, more attention can be given to the guidance and counselling services in schools in order to support the psychosocial development of the child, and seminars can be given to parents, thus preventing possible deterioration in the child's perception system.

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