



AN EXAMINATION OF IRRATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS AND PERFECTIONISM AS THE PREDICTORS OF COPING WITH ROMANTIC JEALOUSY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine whether constructive and destructive coping as styles of coping with romantic jealousy are significantly predicted by irrational relationship beliefs, perfectionism toward self and partner as dimensions of perfectionism in romantic relationships, and gender. The study sample consists of 286 university students. The study data were obtained by using the “Irrational Beliefs Scale”, “Romantic Relationship Perfectionism Scale” (RRPS), and “Jealousy Coping Ways”, which is a subscale of the “Romantic Jealousy Questionnaire (RJQ)”. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was used for data analysis. As a result of the study, it was found that perfectionism towards oneself significantly predicted constructive and destructive coping styles with jealousy. Irrational beliefs and gender were found to significantly predict destructive coping with jealousy. It was found that perfectionism towards other (partner)-oriented did not significantly predict constructive and destructive coping style with jealousy. In addition, it was found that irrational beliefs and gender did not significantly predict constructive coping with jealousy.

Keywords: Romantic relationship, jealousy, irrational beliefs, perfectionism, coping.

INTRODUCTION

People have two basic kinds of emotional needs. The first one is to love and to be loved, and the second one is to be valued by oneself and others. Particularly during the university period when individuals progress from puberty to adulthood, they have a need for developing intimacy, loving others, and being loved in return, which is also substantiated in the literature (Burger, 2016). Erikson (1986; cited in Boeree, 2006; Schultz & Schultz, 2017) argues that during this period, individuals seek to develop a certain degree of intimacy rather than being alone and therefore, young women and men start looking for a special relationship, through which they can build intimacy and become mature emotionally. Like Erikson, Sullivan stated that building deep and meaningful relationships was one of the important developmental tasks during this period. Sullivan stated that the relationships established during this period are very important for establishing satisfactory relationships in adulthood (Burger, 2016). However, in such relationships, not everything always progresses smoothly, and partners are likely to experience problems, one of which is jealousy between partners.

Romantic jealousy is defined as a complex emotion which is at play in intimate relations and is also indispensable to social order (Clanton, 1996). White (1981) defined romantic jealousy as a complex of feelings, thoughts, and actions that follow a threat to self-esteem in the relationship and/or a threat



to the quality of the relationship. A review of the literature shows that most definitions of jealousy commonly refer to the fact that it is more of an emotional response to the real or imaginary threat of losing something of personal value in a romantic relationship (Salovey & Rodin, 1985; White & Mullen, 1989). A great deal of the approaches to jealousy often highlight its negative aspects. Buunk and Bringle (1987) argue that jealousy is a potentially destructive emotion in intimate relationships. White and Mullen (1989) maintain that jealousy more often has to do with uncertainty about the partner's love and an obsessive relationship pattern. Despite the marked emphasis on the negative aspects of jealousy in the literature, certain researchers argue that romantic jealousy may have a positive function for maintaining a relationship (Attridge, 2013; Salovey & Rodin, 1985). Harris and Darby (2010) hold that despite its destructive dimension, jealousy may warn an individual against potential threats to the relationship, thereby motivating behaviors that may serve to protect the relationship.

Jealousy as a behavior is not only analyzed in its positive and negative aspects, but also as being normal and pathological with regard to the intensity of the response and coping styles (Guerrero, 1998). Pathological jealousy has been defined as an overwhelming struggle of individuals regarding their partner's infidelity without any valid evidence or factual basis (Kingham & Gordon, 2004). In pathological jealousy, people have unrealistic beliefs about the infidelity of their partners, and these beliefs are persistent even if there is evidence to the contrary (Easton & Shackelford, 2009).

Researchers note that a certain degree of jealousy is normal and common for a romantic relationship (Batinic, Duisin, & Barisic, 2013; Buunk & Dijkstra, 2006). Yet, as jealousy becomes more intense and people try to cope with such destructive emotions, the "normal" feeling of jealousy changes into an "athological jealousy" one. In the light of the current literature, what matters is how partners cope with jealousy, rather than whether jealousy exists. The destructive nature of jealousy has recently sparked new research on how to cope with jealousy (Bevan, 2006; Demirtaş, 2004; Demirtaş & Dönmez, 2006; Dodge, 1991; Hoşoğlu & Sevim, 2019). Lazarus (2006) notes that the preferred coping style is indicative of whether jealousy will have a positive or negative impact on a relationship. When partners choose to cope with jealousy in a constructive manner, stability of the relationship is maintained, strengthening the bond between the partners (Demirtaş, 2011). Bryson (1991) remarks that individuals who tend to protect their relationships and themselves when coping with jealousy display a positive style of coping with jealousy. Such tendencies involve behaviors intended toward discussion, communication and improving a relationship. On the other hand, when partners display destructive behaviors toward coping with jealousy such as emotional withdrawal, verbal or physical aggression, self-incrimination, and self-defense, they might end up harming or even ending their relationships (Demirtaş, 2011). The feeling of guilt, destructive behaviors aiming to protect oneself rather than the relationship; projection, denial and excessive control are particularly observed in individuals who display pathological jealousy (Adams, 2012). In the literature, the existence of irrational beliefs in pathological jealousy has been emphasized by researchers. (Easton & Shackelford, 2009; Ellis, 1972; cited in Adams, 2012).

Beliefs in romantic relationships involve beliefs on how the partners and the relationship itself should be (Guerrero, 1994). Kalkan and Yalçın (2012) defined healthy and functional romantic relationships with characteristics such as "love, attachment, emotional support, and belonging". In romantic relationships, irrational beliefs are an individual's exaggerated, rigid, irrational, and resistant beliefs about the nature of the romantic relationship, himself/herself, and his/her partner. The cognitive behaviorist approach holds that individual emotional disorders do not simply stem from experiences, but the meanings and personal interpretations they attribute to those experiences also determine their emotional and behavioral reactions (Bernard, 1995). The Rational Emotional Behaviorist Approach, on the other hand, suggests that individuals with an unhealthy degree of romantic jealousy transform their affectional needs from their partners into absolutist musts. According to Lazarus, a person who holds the irrational belief that they absolutely must have their partner's love would tend to be overly sensitive and experience a greater degree of romantic jealousy in their relationships (Deutsch, 2006).



Buunk (1997) defines anxious jealousy as a person's feeling of doubt and insecurity due to irrational thoughts about his/her partner, while possessive or preventative jealousy is defined as one's negative attitudes aiming to prevent partner contact with others outside the romantic relationship due to the person's certain obsessive thoughts and beliefs. What anxious and possessive jealousy have in common is that they both involve certain irrational beliefs.

Beck, Emery and Greenberg (1985) report that jealousy develops as a result of hyperawareness of threat. Jealous individuals with irrational beliefs are likely to perceive any event as a threat to their relationship. Mind-reading as a dimension of irrational beliefs might be personalized into fortune-telling or overgeneralizing. For instance, one might develop prejudices or misinterpretations about their partner who is reading a newspaper such as "She is interested in him", "She no longer finds me attractive" and "She is going to leave me" (Leahy & Tirsch, 2008). People with such irrational beliefs may begin to experience jealousy, actually a natural feeling, at pathological levels. For it is reported in the literature that jealousy may be taken to pathological heights once people lose control and are overwhelmed by irrational or obsessive thoughts about their partners (Costa, Sophia, Sanches, Tavares, & Zilberman, 2015). These individuals often cope with their feelings of jealousy in a destructive and unhealthy manner (Fischer & Manstead, 2008).

Perfectionism in romantic relationships has been explained in the literature in the context of perfectionism towards one self and towards other (partner)-oriented. Perfectionism in romantic relationships was defined by Matte and Lafontaine (2012) in terms of both the expectations of the person from himself and his partner. Perfectionism towards oneself is the behavioral patterns that an individual determines about himself in his romantic relationship. Perfectionism towards other (partner)-oriented refers to the exaggerated expectations and high standards of the individual in their romantic relationship (Matte & Lafontaine, 2012). Larson (1992) has identified the perfect partner, the perfect self, and the perfect relationship beliefs as common irrational beliefs among young adults. Researchers report that relational conflicts and anger may arise when individuals' high standards for their partners are not fulfilled (Lopez, Fons-Scheyd, Morua, & Chaliman, 2006). People with high perfectionism in romantic relationships usually believe that building intimacy requires being perfect. Yet, when such expectations are not met by their partners, they lose their love and trust for them (Mackinnon, Sherry, Antony, Stewart, Sherry, & Hartling, 2012). Loss of love and trust between partners is likely to result in conflicts and jealousy in relationships.

In the literature, irrational beliefs are defined as unrealistic, unreasonable and illogical beliefs that have a destructive impact on relationships and often involve high expectations and perfectionist behaviors (Cam, Seydooğulları, & Artar, 2014; Çivitçi, 2009; Schulman, 1999). Beck (1993) analyzes irrational beliefs under certain categories including the "all-or-nothing" approach, overgeneralizing and statements involving "must". Of all such attitudes, the "all-or-nothing" idea is based on perfectionism (Antony & Swinson, 2000). As a result, it is thought that perfectionism in romantic relationships is also affected by the irrational beliefs of individuals.

When studies on coping with jealousy are examined, findings on the relationship with gender are encountered. Most of the research results show that women have a more constructive coping style than men (Carson & Cupach 2000; Demirtaş & Dönmez, 2006; Rusbult, 1987). When the literature is examined, Bryson (1991) and Rusbult (1987) show that women are more relationship oriented and they aim to protect their relationships; they explained that men are success oriented and they resort to destructive style in order to protect their self-esteem.

Jealousy is a universal feeling that is present in almost all relationships. Therefore, everyone copes with jealousy differently. What matters is that one should not turn this feeling into a pathology. It is important to examine romantic jealousy, coping styles and related variables in romantic relationships established in this period, which corresponds to "isolation against intimacy" as one of Erikson's developmental stages.

Destructive coping with jealousy arguably damages both individuals and the relationships they attempt to build. It is important to conduct research on the subject by considering the variables that influence jealousy coping styles, so that individuals can recognize this feeling and establish healthy relationships to avoid potential flirting violence. In Turkey there is limited research on jealousy coping styles in romantic relationships. The present study examines whether irrational beliefs and levels of perfectionism among university students are predicted by the ways they cope with jealousy in their romantic relationships.

In this context, answers to the following research questions were sought;

1. Do irrational relationship beliefs, perfectionism levels and gender significantly predict constructive coping with jealousy in the romantic relationships of university students?
2. Do irrational relationship beliefs, perfectionism levels and gender significantly predict destructive coping with jealousy in the romantic relationships of university students?

METHOD

Research Model

This is a study based on the relational screening model, which examines whether constructive and destructive coping styles of university students with jealousy in their romantic relationships are predicted by their irrational beliefs, self- and partner-oriented perfectionism levels, and gender.

Participants

The study group consists of 286 university students attending a public university, who were selected using the random sampling method and volunteered to participate in the research. 51.7% (n=148) of the study group consists of females, and 48.3% (n=138) consist of males. The participants are university students between the age range of 18-23 ($M = 19.83$, $SD = .93$).

Measures

Irrational Romantic Relationship Beliefs Inventory

Irrational Beliefs in Romantic Relationships Scale was developed by Sarı and Korkut (2015) to determine the irrational beliefs of university students about romantic relationships. The scale consists of 30 items and 6 factors. It is a Likert type scale scored between 1 (totally disagree) and 5 (totally agree). Items 1 and 22 are inversely rated. The factors of the scale included over expectations, use of social time, mind reading, different thinking, physical intimacy, and gender differences. The Cronbach's Alpha is .85 for the entire scale, and the coefficients computed for the subscales range between .53 and .81. Two similar scales were used to compute the scale's validity and it was found that the correlation with the Irrational Beliefs Scale (AOİÖ) developed by Türküm (2003) is .34; and the correlation with the Interpersonal Cognitive Distortions Scale (İBÇÖ) developed by Hamamcı and Büyüköztürk (2003) is .45.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient computed for the present study is .82. First-Order Single-Factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to assess the scale's construct validity. The results of the analysis revealed $X^2/sd=1.57$; $CFI=.90$; $GFI=.88$; $RMSEA=.04$. The values obtained for the scale are within the range of acceptable values, which attest to the validity of the variable under study.

The Romantic Relationship Perfectionism Scale

Romantic Relationship Perfectionism Scale developed by Matte and Lafontaine (2012) was adapted into Turkish by Akin, Erguvan, Akça, Göymen and Akdeniz (2013) in order to measure the perfectionism levels of individuals. The 14-item and 7-point Likert-type scale consists of 2 factors, which are self-oriented perfectionism and others-oriented perfectionism. Items 5, 8, 11 and 13 are inversely rated and the scale score is calculated based on the sub-factor scores. Internal consistency and corrected item-total correlations were examined to assess the validity of the scale. The analyses



were carried out using LISREL 8.54 and SPSS 13.0. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed for construct validity and the results showed that the two-factor (self-oriented and others-oriented perfectionism) and 14-item model in the original version of the scale yields good fit to the data ($\chi^2=159.75$, $sd=68$, $RMSEA=.077$, $AGFI=.86$, $GFI=.91$, $SRMR=.089$). Internal consistency reliability coefficients for the scale were computed as .52 and .59. Corrected item-total correlations range between .28 and .48.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients computed for the scale as part of the present study are .57 for self-oriented perfectionism and .55 for others-oriented perfectionism. The scale's construct validity was tested using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The results revealed the following values: $X^2/sd=2.52$; $CFI=.81$; $GFI=.93$; $RMSEA=.07$. The values obtained for the scale are within the acceptable range, which attests to the validity of the variable under study.

Romantic Jealousy Questionnaire (RJQ)

The Romantic Jealousy Questionnaire (RJQ) was developed by Pines and Aronson (1983) and adapted to Turkish by Demirtaş (2004). It was developed to assess different aspects of jealousy and is a comprehensive scale consisting of a total of 5 subscales (129 items), which are "Level of Jealousy (22 items)", "Reactions to Jealousy (59 items)", "Jealousy Coping Ways (17 items)", "Effects of Jealousy (15 items)", and "Causes of Jealousy (16 items)". It is a 7-item Likert-type scale. The "Jealousy Coping Ways" subfactor was used for this study. The Jealousy Coping Ways subscale has a four-factor construct. The first factor accounts for 17.90%, the second one for 11.65%, the third one for 10.26%, and the fourth one for 9.57% of the variance. These four factors together account for 49.40% of total variance. Following Rusbult's (1987) approach, the factors can be renamed as exit, loyalty, neglect, and voice, respectively, based on the items they contain. They can also be categorized under constructive coping styles (voice and loyalty) and destructive coping styles (exit and neglect). The internal consistency coefficient and split-half reliability coefficients were calculated to assess the reliability level of the scale. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) is .92 and split-half reliability is .72.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients calculated for the scale as part of the present study are .42 for constructive coping style and .65 for destructive coping style. The scale's construct validity was assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for the. The analysis results revealed the following values: $X^2/sd=3.12$; $CFI=.77$; $GFI=.89$; $RMSEA=.09$.

Data Analysis

SPSS 25 Software Pack was used for data analysis. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was performed to determine the extent to which the independent variables in the study predict the university students' ways of coping with jealousy in their romantic relationships. The dependent variables of the study are "constructive coping" and "destructive coping", which are the sub-dimensions of romantic jealousy coping styles, while "irrational beliefs in romantic relationships" and the subfactors of perfectionism level ("self-oriented perfectionism" and "others-oriented perfectionism" and gender were studied as the independent variables. The significance level for the study is .05.

Before adding the gender variable found in the personal information form into the regression analysis, it was recoded as the dummy variable. The dummy codings made for the categorical variable in the study were 1 for female student and 0 for male student.

Prior to conducting the analyses, the data set was examined to ascertain whether it satisfies the assumptions required for multiple linear regression analysis. The fundamental assumptions in regression analysis are normal distribution and no interaction between the independent variables (Kalaycı, 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2015). Thus, kurtosis and skewness coefficients were analyzed to see whether the scores obtained from the scales have a normal distribution. Further, Durbin-Watson



Test was also performed to check for autocorrelation which causes systematic errors. Also, Pearson’s Moment-Product Correlation Coefficients, Tolerance Values, and Variance Inflation Factor Values (VIF) were examined to check for multicollinearity between the independent variables. The significance level for the study is .05.

RESULTS

To solve the problem, the kurtosis and skewness coefficients were first examined to see whether the scores obtained on the Romantic Jealousy Questionnaire (RJQ) have a normal distribution. For the subscale of “constructive coping” with romantic jealousy, the skewness coefficient is .27 and the kurtosis coefficient is .23. For the subscale of “destructive coping” with romantic jealousy, the skewness coefficient is .71 and the kurtosis coefficient is .29. In any dataset, a value range between +1.5 and -1.5 is acceptable for skewness and kurtosis values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2015). Therefore, the skewness and kurtosis values obtained for the Romantic Jealousy Questionnaire were found to be within the acceptable value range. Also, it was found that DW= 1.73 for the subscale of “destructive coping” with romantic jealousy and DW= 1.89 for the subscale of “constructive coping” with romantic jealousy. The Durbin-Watson Test confirmed the lack of autocorrelation. A Durbin-Watson Test value within the range of 1.5 – 2.5 shows that there is no autocorrelation (Kalaycı, 2010). As a result of the analysis performed to determine whether there is multicollinearity between the independent variables, we checked the Tolerance Values and VIF-Variance Inflation Values. It is statistically significant to have tolerance values greater than .10 and VIF- Variance Inflation Values that are smaller than 10 (Çokluk, Şekercioglu, & Büyüköztürk, 2016). This latter value should be 5 for some researchers (Craney & Surlles, 2002) and 2.5 for others (Allison, 1999). Table 1 shows the VIF and tolerance values for the study variables.

Table 1. The results on multicollinearity between the independent variables

	Tolerance	VIF
Irrational Beliefs	.75	1.32
Self-Oriented Perfectionism	.93	1.08
Others-Oriented Perfectionism	.73	1.29
Gender	.99	1.01

VIF and tolerance values show that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables. Further, Pearson’s Moment-Product Correlation Coefficients were computed to determine whether there is multicollinearity between the independent variables. The mean correlation and standard deviation values for the study variables are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson’s moment-product correlation coefficients, mean and standard deviation values for the variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Irrational Beliefs	1					
Self-Oriented Perfectionism	.18**	1				
Others-Oriented Perfectionism	.43**	-.11	1			
Constructive Coping with Jealousy	.05	.17**	-.06	1		
Destructive Coping with Jealousy	.21**	-.17**	.21**	.12*	1	
Gender Female (Dummy-1)	.06	-.02	-.03	.01	-.10	1
Mean	100.34	33.66	25.65	17.20	28.90	
Standard Deviation	14.10	6.21	6.35	4.96	10.10	

*p<.05, **p<.001

As seen in Table 2, the Pearson’s Moment-Product Correlation Coefficient for the variables ranges between .01 and .43. An intervariable correlation of .90 and above indicates multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2015). No intervariable multicollinearity was found in this study.



Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to identify the study variables that predict the method for constructive coping with romantic jealousy. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The results of the multiple regression analysis to predict the method of constructive coping with jealousy

Predictor Variable	B	Standard Error B	β	T	P	Double r	Partial r
Constant	12.54	2.51		5.00	.00		
Irrational Beliefs	.02	.02	.04	.67	.51	.05	.04
Self-Oriented Perfectionism	.13	.05	.16	2.62	.01	.17	.15
Others-Oriented Perfectionism	-.05	.05	-.06	-.94	.35	-.06	-.06
Gender Female (Dummy-1)	.06	.58	.01	.10	.92	.01	.01

R=0.18; R²=0.03; F=2.45; p= .04*

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 3 shows that the multiple regression model for the prediction of constructive jealousy coping by irrational beliefs, self- and others-oriented perfectionism, and gender is significant (F=2.45; p<.05).

Constructive jealousy coping is positively and significantly predicted by self-oriented perfectionism (t=2.62; p<.05). This variable accounts for about 3% of total variance (R=.18; R²=.03; p<.05). Table 3 shows that irrational beliefs (t=.67; p>.05), others-oriented perfectionism (t=-.94; p>.05), and gender (t=.10; p>.05) do not significantly predict constructive coping with jealousy.

For the study, a multiple linear regression analysis was also performed to identify the variables that predict the method of destructive coping with romantic jealousy. The analysis results are given in Table 4.

Table 4. The results of the multiple regression analysis to predict the method of destructive coping with jealousy

Predictor Variable	B	Standard Error B	β	T	P	Double r	Partial r
Constant	22.34	4.90		4.56	.00		
Irrational Beliefs	.15	.05	.21	3.20	.00	.21	.19
Self-Oriented Perfectionism	-.33	.09	-.20	-3.45	.00	-.17	-.20
Others-Oriented Perfectionism	.15	.10	.09	1.48	.14	.21	.09
Gender Female (Dummy-1)	-2.62	1.14	-.11	-1.98	.04	-.10	-.12

R=.33; R²=.10; F=8.56; p= .00**

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 4 demonstrates the significance of the multiple regression model on the prediction of destructive coping with jealousy by irrational beliefs, self- and others-oriented perfectionism, and gender (F=8.56; p<.01).

As seen in Table 4, irrational beliefs (t=3.20; p<.01) positively and significantly predicts destructive coping with jealousy. On the other hand, self-oriented perfectionism (t=-3.45; p<.01) was found to predict destructive coping with jealousy negatively and significantly. Moreover, gender (t=-1.89; p<.05) is a significant predictor of destructive coping with jealousy. Men were found to use such destructive jealousy coping styles at a significantly higher level than women. These variables account for about 10% of total variance (R=.33; R²=.10; F=8.56; p<.01).

As shown in Table 4, others-oriented perfectionism (t=1.48; p>.05) does not significantly predict destructive coping with jealousy.



DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

This study aims to determine whether constructive and destructive coping styles of university students with jealousy in romantic relationships are predicted by their irrational beliefs in their romantic relationships, perfectionism levels, and gender.

The study results revealed that self-oriented perfectionism of university students in their romantic relationships positively and significantly predicts constructive coping with jealousy. On the other hand, it was seen that, other (partner) oriented perfectionism of university students in their romantic relationships negatively and significantly predicts destructive coping with jealousy. Self-oriented perfectionism in romantic relationships is the high expectations and standards individuals set for themselves in their romantic relationships (Matte & Lafontaine, 2012). Individuals with a high level of self-oriented perfectionism are usually afraid to make mistakes and to lose their existing relationships (Dunkley, Berg, & Zuroff, 2012). Therefore, they are expected to be highly motivated toward saving their relationships. Burns (1980) suggested that many perfectionists are afraid of being lonely and set high standards for themselves in their interpersonal relationships to avoid any relationship breakdown. Guerro and Afifi (1998) stated that individuals who experience jealousy in their romantic relationships tend to use constructive coping methods in order to protect their relationship and / or self-esteem. Rusbult (1987) identified “voice” and “loyalty” as the constructive ways of coping in which the individual has esteem for herself/himself and/or his/her relationship. Individuals who prefer to voice their feelings have high esteem both for themselves and their relationship and this is a coping style in which they choose to speak openly to save the relationship. “Loyalty”, on the other hand, is defined as waiting for improvement in the conditions with the hope of protecting the relationship. Given the fact that individuals with high self-oriented perfectionism are afraid of making mistakes and thus have higher motivation to protect the relationship, they are expected to cope with jealousy in a constructive manner to avoid losing their relationship and self-esteem. On the other hand, individuals who prefer using the destructive style of coping with jealousy often do not display such behaviors to save the relationship. On the contrary, they try to end or ignore the relationship. Research has shown that self-oriented perfectionism positively influences relationship satisfaction (Petersen, 2017; Şensoy, Asıcı, & İkiz, 2019). Constructive communication styles and problem-solving skills are expected between partners in order to achieve high satisfaction in a relationship. In this case, it is thought that individuals with high levels of perfectionism towards themselves will exhibit constructive behaviors with the motivation to be perfect and maintain their relationship, and avoid destructive behaviors aimed at ending the relationship.

Our review of the literature produced no research on the correlation between jealousy coping and perfectionism. The available research on jealousy coping associate it with the conditions that trigger jealousy (Buunk, 1987); relationship satisfaction (Bryson, 1992); the type of relationship (Guerrero, Eloy, Jorgensen and Andersen, 1993); individual, relational, and situational variables (Demirtaş, 2004; Demirtaş & Dönmez, 2006); relational satisfaction (Warber, 2007); gender, being cheated on, the number and duration of relationships (Hoşoğlu & Sevim, 2019); psychopathological symptoms (Arslan, 2015), and emotional intelligence (Akdur & Arslan, 2017). However, there are studies that report a correlation between self-oriented perfectionism and positive and adaptive coping styles (Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000; Flett, Russo, & Hewitt, 1994).

Another result of the present study is that irrational beliefs in romantic relationships positively and significantly predict the destructive coping style with jealousy. Ellis argues that individuals who display unhealthy jealousy behaviors harbor irrational beliefs (Adams, 2012). Irrational beliefs in a romantic relationship refer to an individual’s irrational beliefs about the nature of the romantic relationship, his/her partner, or himself/herself which are resistant to change and involve over expectation, mind-reading, and generalizing (Ellis, 1986). Irrational jealousy behavior stems from unrealistic and illogical thoughts. Also, in irrational jealousy, there is no real threat for the person to feel jealous. It is a person’s own beliefs that lead to the feeling of jealousy. These beliefs also



adversely affect individuals' coping mechanisms, causing them to develop negative perceptions about problem solving (Bilge & Arslan, 2001). To cope with jealousy in a constructive and effective manner, individuals need to become aware whether their irrational expectations and projections underlie their jealousy (Hoşoğlu, 2017). Otherwise, the jealousy experienced may transform from a normal feeling into a pathological jealousy. Available research reports that individuals with irrational beliefs have weak communication skills and tend to deny their jealousy toward their partners (Deutsch, 2006; Green, Campell, & Davis, 2007; Metis & Cupach, 1990). It is believed that displaying weak communication skills toward the partners in their relationships may prevent individuals from coping with their problems in an effective manner. As Rusbult (1987) suggests, such people are likely to use destructive ways of coping with jealousy, which include ending the relationship, threatening, or letting the relationship turn sour by neglecting the problems. The relevant literature also presents results that are compatible with the results of the present study (Hoşoğlu, 2017; Stackert & Bursik, 2003).

The research in the literature suggests that irrational beliefs do not significantly predict constructive coping with jealousy. Larson (1992) cited “try harder”, “love is enough,” and “opposites complement” as examples to the most common unrealistic beliefs. People who hold such beliefs also believe that only one person can save the relationship that it is enough to commit to and fall in love with a person is enough for a relationship, and that there may be differences but there is no need to try to change oneself, respectively. Then, to cope with jealousy, such people may be expected to either wait for the conditions to improve (loyalty) or try to solve the problems to single-handedly save the relationship (voice). The results on the correlation between these two variables vary in the literature. Utkan (2016) found that the use of constructive jealousy coping styles increases among university students as their irrational relationship beliefs increase. In their study, Metis and Cupach (1990) found a negative correlation between romantic relationship beliefs and “voice” as a constructive jealousy coping style but no correlation with “loyalty”, which is another constructive style of coping with jealousy. Consequently, the authors believe that there is a need for further research to study the correlation between these two variables using different sample groups and variables.

Another result of this study is that gender significantly predicts destructive coping ways with jealousy. Men were found to use such destructive jealousy coping styles at a higher level than women. This study result is compatible with the literature (Bryson, 1991; Guerrero, Spitzberg, & Yoshimura, 2004; Demirtaş, 2004; Demirtaş & Dönmez, 2006; Dodge, 1991; Warber, 2007; Sagarin, Martin, Courinho, Edlund, Patel, Skowronski, & Zengel, 2012). On the other hand, there are study findings that women adopt more destructive jealousy coping styles when compared to men (Hoşoğlu, 2017; Hoşoğlu & Sevim, 2019) and that women tend to use more negative and passive ways of coping than men when relationship problems arise (DeWeerth & Kalma, 1993; Paul, Foss, & Galloway, 1993).

Bryson (1991) argues that women are assigned a social role that requires them to protect and save the relationship. And by following the requirements of this role, women are believed to use constructive jealousy coping ways when they feel jealous with the hope of saving their relationship. Such constructive jealousy coping style preferred by women usually aims at protecting the relationship, rather than their self-esteem. Men, on the contrary, tend to adopt the destructive jealousy coping style and are more prone to ending or ignoring the relationship in the hope of maintaining their social standing and self-esteem. On jealousy coping model, Rusbult (1987) notes that women prefer loyalty and voice (constructive coping) to protect the relationship, while men opt for destructive coping styles (exit and neglect) to protect their self-esteem. The author attributes this finding to the fact that women are more relationship-oriented and men are more achievement-oriented.

In this study, we also found that gender is not a significant predictor of constructive coping with jealousy. This is an unexpected result given the other study result that gender significantly predicts destructive coping with jealousy. There are discordant study results in the literature on the relationship between gender and jealousy coping styles. We believe that this can be due to the influence of



different variables such as the marital status of the subjects, their ages, the nature of their relationships, and the cultural characteristics of their environment.

In the study, we also found that others- or partner-oriented perfectionism does not significantly predict constructive and destructive ways of coping with jealousy and that irrational beliefs and gender do not significantly predict constructive jealousy coping style. Our review of literature revealed no research on the relationship between coping with romantic jealousy and partner-oriented perfectionism. Others-oriented perfectionism refers to high expectations about the partner's behaviors. Such individuals with a high level of others-oriented perfectionism are characterized as authoritarian and dominant in interpersonal relationships (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). When their high expectations are not met by their partners, such people are likely to show accusation, control, and dominant behaviors, as well as relationship problems as a result. In this regard, it might seem natural for them to cope with jealousy in a destructive manner. Yet, given the fact that jealousy coping ways are also influenced by different variables such as the type and duration of the relationship and self-esteem, the need for more research on the correlation between these two variables is obvious.

Based on these study results and the fact that destructive styles of jealousy coping in a romantic relationship or marriage may lead to harm the relationship or marriage, we believe that it will be useful to develop relationship or pre-marital intervention programs for practitioners. In the pre-marital period when close relationships are built, young people can gain awareness and insight about their romantic jealousy and learn how to cope with this feeling in a constructive manner, which may help them establish more healthy relationships and marriages in the future. In addition, cognitive restructuring techniques can be used on clients to prevent their unrealistic relationship beliefs from developing into pathological jealousy.

Limitations

This study has certain limitations. First, we did not separately study the participants who are currently in a relationship and those who are not. Secondly, since the participants consist of university students, we did not analyze whether coping with romantic jealousy differs with the type of relationship and the investments in the relationship. Married individuals invest more in their relationships both tangibly and emotionally, which may be the reason why they usually opt for constructive ways of coping with jealousy. Finally, this study did not analyze whether the feeling of jealousy is normal or has a pathological aspect. We believe it will be useful for further research to separately study the individuals who experience pathological levels of jealousy.

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