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EXAMINATION OF EMPATHIC TENDENCY LEVELS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION STYLES OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE DIVORCE PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to examine the empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process. The population of the study consisted of 114 participants whose divorce cases were ongoing. After the questions in the 'Personal Information Form' were asked to the participants, the 'Empathic Tendency Scale' and the 'Conflict Resolution Styles Scale' were applied. In the study, the correlation between empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles and demographic variables in the personal information form were examined. SPSS 25.0 program was used in the analysis of the data obtained. Correlation analysis model was used in the research. As a result of the research, it was revealed that there was a significant correlation between the empathic tendency levels and their conflict resolution styles of the participants. While the scores of the participants from the empathic tendency scale did not differ according to age, education level, type of marriage, duration of marriage, number of children and age difference between spouses, it was determined that there were significant differences based on gender and desire to divorce. It was found that the scores obtained from the conflict resolution styles scale did not differ according to the gender, education level and willingness to divorce of the participants. The research findings were discussed within the framework of the relevant literature and suggestions were made to researchers and practitioners for future studies.

Keywords: Divorce, empathy, conflict resolution styles

INTRODUCTION

The family, which is the common culture of all societies today and past, is the first institution established as a result of people living together and its history goes back to ancient times (Erkan, 2010). The family, which is a universal institution that can survive without losing its value and meaning from the first ages to the present, is established by the bond of marriage. Although marriages are realized with the intention of lasting a lifetime and a happy life, it is natural to experience some problems (personal, social, economic, sexual, etc.) and disagreements from time to time within the marriage union, and it is a part of marriage. It is experienced when these problems increase over time and couples cannot find solutions to problems.

It is seen that majority of married couples who cannot maintain a healthy and peaceful marriage prefer divorce. Divorce is a phenomenon that occurs when married couples build their relationships on the expectations of love, respect, peace, trust and lifelong happiness, but these expectations are not met for different reasons, and the marriage union is legally terminated (Sucu, 2007). The concept of divorce can also be defined as ending the marriage union with the decision of the judge, as a result of one of the couples starting the legal process, based on one or more of the reasons specified in the law, while the spouses are alive (Akıntürk, 2002). Divorced individuals face the reality of divorce and realize that there are emotions and changes to deal with, thus focusing on the transition towards a new lifestyle (Öksüzler Cabılar & Yılmaz, 2022) The divorce process is a challenging period when the couples are psychologically worn out and their life energy decreases. The fact that they are in the process of litigation that continues as a result of disagreements about child custody, property division, alimony, compensation, etc. and this process takes a long time can negatively affect the psychological and social life of individuals (Mert, 2017). The role of empathic tendency and conflict resolution skills, which are important ways to get rid of this negative effect, can be important in the divorce process.

The concept of empathy is the process of understanding the thoughts of the other person by putting himself in the place of the other person, feeling his feelings and transferring them to the other person (Rogers & Akkoyun, 1983). Empathic tendency creates the emotional dimension of empathy and also shows the potential of empathizing in one's daily life. The level of empathic response that individuals give in their daily relationships and lives reflects their empathic tendencies (Dökmen, 2013). Empathic understanding takes place in the interpersonal area. Interpersonal interaction involves the mutual flow of information and emotions. This situation strengthens the mutual feedback processes and increases the understanding of individuals towards each other (Tutarel-Kışlak & Çabukça, 2002). Considering the obstacles or conflicts that occur during communication, it is seen that empathy has a significant effect on the divorce process. Ability to be empathetic in interpersonal communication may contribute to the problem of producing solutions to the problems experienced during the marriage, as well as having a similar effect in the divorce process (Dökmen, 2013).

Conflict resolution skill is one of the important factors affecting the divorce process, as is the ability to act empathically. The conflict situation experienced by more than one person whose goals, wishes or interests do not match can be explained as conflict (Arslan, 2005). As in all human relations, couples may experience conflicts

in some periods in marriages (Houser, 2004). The important thing in human relations is not to experience conflict, but to be able to resolve the conflicts in a healthy way. In the conflict resolution process, which we can define as ending the conflict or conflict situations between people, the reaction patterns that individuals put forward and give to the conflict situation can be called conflict resolution style (Bahadır, 2006).

Conflicts in marriages do not always lead to negative results. If constructive conflict resolution styles are used, conflict can contribute positively to relationships. In this case, conflict can be a source of many innovations and creativity in order to bring about a positive change (Basım, Çetin, & Meydan, 2009). If the conflicts caused by many factors in the marriage union are not resolved, an unhappy marriage will emerge (Gürüz & Eğinli, 2005). The fact that couples use negative conflict resolution styles in conflict situations in marriages negatively affects women's marital adjustment (Özen, 2006).

In the study, the empathic tendency levels and conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process were examined. When the literature is examined, although there have been studies (Güney, 2021) in which the concepts of empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles were examined together, the number of studies was low and it was determined that the concepts of empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles were not examined together in studies conducted with individuals in the divorce process. As with other studies in the divorce process, it is anticipated that the results of this research and the resulting data will guide and support preventive and remedial studies on family, marriage and divorce.

METHOD

Research Model

Correlational research model was used in the research. Correlational research includes studies that examine the relationships and connections between the variables to be measured, and give an idea about the cause-effect relationship between the variables (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014). In correlational studies, the relationship between variables is handled without intervention (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Study Population

The population of the study consisted of people whose contested divorce cases were still ongoing. The study group consists of 114 people, 61 of whom are women and 53 are men, and it was carried out by sampling method for research purposes. In this sampling method, the researcher conducts research on groups with a certain qualification in order to obtain in-depth and versatile information in line with the purpose of the study (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014).

Data Collection Tools

"Personal Information Form", "Empathic Tendency Scale" and "Conflict Resolution Styles Scale" were used in the study.

Personal Information Form

The form developed by the researcher was prepared with the aim of obtaining variables (gender, age, education level, type of marriage, duration of marriage, number of children, number of marriages, age difference with spouse, primary reason for filing a divorce case, state of getting professional support and state of wanting a divorce or not) of individuals whose divorce cases are continuing in Turkey.

Empathic Tendency Scale

The scale developed by Dökmen in 1988 was developed in order to determine the empathy potential of individuals in their daily lives. Participants are asked to indicate to what extent they agree with that question by marking one of the numbers from 1 to 5 next to the items on the Likert-type scale, which consists of 20 items in total.

Conflict Resolution Styles Scale

Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS) was developed by Özen (2006) in order to determine the conflict resolution styles used by couples with their spouses or partners. Conflict Resolution Styles Scale, which is a Likert-type measurement tool, consists of a total of 25 items with a 5-point rating system.

Data Analysis

Before starting the analysis processes, the data obtained during the research process were entered into the SPSS 25.0 statistical program. Levene test results were examined in order to determine the suitability of variances to homogeneous distribution in the analyses. According to the Levene test results, parametric tests were applied to the variables that met the $p > .05$ condition, and non-parametric tests were applied to those that did not. The t-test, Anova test, Mann Whitney-U and Kruskal Wallis tests were used to examine whether the scores differed significantly according to socio-demographic variables. Independent samples t-test and Mann Whitney-U test were used in the analysis of demographic variables with 2 groups, while Anova and Kruskal Wallis tests were used in the analysis of variables with more than 2 ($k > 2$) groups. In addition, Spearman correlation test was used to examine the relationship between the scores obtained from the empathic tendency scale and the sub-dimensions of the conflict resolution styles scale.

FINDINGS

In this part of the study, the findings obtained as a result of statistical analyzes are included.

Empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles according to the gender of individuals in the divorce process

According to the Mann Whitney-U test results, it was observed that avoiding conflict resolution style differed significantly according to gender (U= 1124, p=.005). The fact that the average of the scores of the women in the avoiding subscale is higher than the average of the men can be shown as the source of the obtained difference.

According to the results of the analysis shown in Table 1, negative (U=1396.50, p=.21) and accommodating (U=1563, p=.76) conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process do not show a significant gender-based difference.

Table 1. Negative, Accommodating, and Avoiding Conflict Resolution Styles by Gender

	Gender	n	Sd	R	U	p
Negative C.R.S.	Female	61	.83	53.89	1396.50	.21
	Male	53		61.65		
Accommodating C.R.S.	Female	61	.86	58.38	1563.00	.76
	Male	53		56.49		
Avoiding C.R.S.	Female	61	.83	65.57	1124.00	.00*
	Male	53		48.21		

According to the independent groups t-test results (Table 2), it is seen that the empathic tendency scores of the individuals in the divorce process differ significantly at the p<.05 level based on gender, and this difference is due to the fact that the mean score of women is higher than that of men (t=2.03, p=.04; %95 CI [.00, .42]). It can be stated that the mean scores of positive conflict resolution styles do not differ significantly with respect to gender (t=.75, p=.44; %95 CI [-.16, .37]).

Table 2. Empathic Tendency and Positive Conflict Resolution Styles by Gender

	Gender	n	\bar{X}	Sd	t	p
Empathic T.	Female	61	3.50	.47	2.03	.04*
	Male	53	3.29	.67		
Positive C.R.S.	Female	61	3.60	.74	.75	.44
	Male	53	3.49	.73		

*p<.05

Empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles according to the age of the individuals in the divorce process

Table 3. Empathic Tendency and Conflict Resolution Styles by Age

	Age	n	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p
Empathic T.	20-29	24	3.32	.73	2.14	.09
	30-39	51	3.34	.56		
	40-49	30	3.43	.50		
	50 years and older	9	3.84	.33		
Positive C.R.S.	20-29	24	3.58	.83	.31	.81
	30-39	51	3.49	.66		
	40-49	30	3.55	.73		
	50 years and older	9	3.74	.96		
Negative C.R.S.	20-29	24	2.20	.89	.62	.60
	30-39	51	2.47	.85		
	40-49	30	2.31	.79		

	50 years and older	9	2.44	.85		
Accommodating C.R.S.	20-29	24	3.45	.91	.10	.95
	30-39	51	3.54	.77		
	40-49	30	3.57	.90		
	50 years and older	9	3.59	1.21		
Avoiding C.R.S.	20-29	24	3.60	.88	1.89	.13
	30-39	51	3.59	.86		
	40-49	30	3.33	.71		
	50 years and older	9	2.98	.84		

* $p < .05$

According to the results of the Anova test (Table 3), the empathic tendencies ($F=2.14$, $p=.09$), and positive ($F=.31$, $p=.81$), negative ($F=.62$, $p=.60$), accommodating ($F=.95$, $p=.95$) and avoiding ($F=1.89$, $p=.13$) conflict resolution styles of the individuals whose divorce cases are ongoing do not differ significantly depending on the age of the individuals.

Empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles according to the educational status of individuals in the divorce process

According to the results of one-way analysis of variance shown in Table 4, empathic tendencies ($F=2.06$, $p=.09$), and positive ($F=1.01$, $p=.40$), negative ($F=.63$, $p=.63$), accommodating ($F=1.99$, $p=.10$) conflict resolution styles do not differ significantly depending on the age of the individuals whose divorce cases are still ongoing. Avoiding conflict resolution style differs significantly according to the education level of the participants ($F=2.78$, $p=.03$).

Table 4. Empathic Tendency and Conflict Resolution Styles by Educational Status

	Educational Status	n	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p
Empathic T.	Primary school	28	3.41	.45	2.06	.09
	Middle school	17	3.29	.51		
	High school	43	3.52	.54		
	Associate - Bachelor	23	3.35	.74		
	Master	3	2.63	.71		
Positive C.R.S.	Primary school	28	3.64	.77	1.01	.40
	Middle school	17	3.52	.78		
	High school	43	3.64	.72		
	Associate - Bachelor	23	3.33	.64		
	Master	3	3.17	1.01		
Negative C.R.S.	Primary school	28	2.43	1.01	.63	.63
	Middle school	17	2.42	.75		
	High school	43	2.24	.77		
	Associate - Bachelor	23	2.55	.86		
	Master	3	2.10	.22		
Accommodating C.R.S.	Primary school	28	3.73	.89	1.99	.10
	Middle school	17	3.61	.73		
	High school	43	3.62	.90		
	Associate - Bachelor	23	3.10	.73		
	Master	3	3.50	1.17		
Avoiding C.R.S.	Primary school	28	3.78	.92	2.78	.03*
	Middle school	17	3.53	.83		
	High school	43	3.50	.74		
	Associate - Bachelor	23	3.03	.83		
	Master	3	3.33	.00		

* $p < .05$

As can be seen from Table 5, it was decided to conduct a post hoc analysis to investigate the source of the obtained difference. According to the results of the post hoc analysis, it was determined that the avoiding subscale mean score of the primary school graduates in the divorce process ($\bar{x}=3.78$) was higher than the average of the associate -bachelor’s degree ($\bar{x}=3.03$). When the educational status is analyzed, it can be said that the frequency of using the avoiding conflict resolution style is higher for primary school graduates than for associate -bachelor’s degree, as the source of the obtained difference.

Table 5. Avoiding Conflict Resolution Style by Educational Status

Education Level	(J) Education Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Deviation	p
Primary school graduate	Middle school	.25	.25	.85
	High school	.28	.20	.63
	Associate - Bachelor	.75*	.23	.01*
	Master	.45	.49	.89
Middle school graduate	Primary school	-.25	.25	.85
	High school	.03	.23	1.00
	Associate - Bachelor	.50	.26	.31
	Master	.20	.51	1.00
High school graduate	Primary school	-.28	.20	.63
	Middle school	-.03	.23	1.00
	Associate - Bachelor	.47	.21	.16
	Master	.17	.48	1.00
Associate - Bachelor’s degree	Primary school	-.75*	.23	.01*
	Middle school	-.50	.26	.31
	High school	-.47	.21	.16
	Master	-.30	.50	.97
Master’s degree	Primary school	-.45	.49	.89
	Middle school	-.20	.51	1.00
	High school	-.17	.48	1.00
	Associate - Bachelor	.30	.50	.97

* $p < .05$

Empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles according to the way of marriage of individuals in the divorce process

Table 6. Empathic Tendency and Conflict Resolution Styles by Marriage Type

	Marriage Type	n	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p
Empathic T.	Traditional arranged marriage	29	3.51	.51	.35	.83
	Forced arranged marriage	4	3.36	.30		
	Love marriage	60	3.38	.66		
	Marriage by elopement	19	3.36	.46		
	Marriage by abduction	2	3.20	.57		
Positive C.R.S.	Traditional arranged marriage	29	3.55	.66	.87	.48
	Forced arranged marriage	4	3.96	1.19		
	Love marriage	60	3.46	.71		
	Marriage by elopement	19	3.66	.85		
	Marriage by abduction	2	4.08	.59		
Negative C.R.S.	Traditional arranged marriage	29	2.39	.81	.40	.80
	Forced arranged marriage	4	2.14	.71		
	Love marriage	60	2.41	.85		
	Marriage by elopement	19	2.35	.95		
	Marriage by abduction	2	1.71	.20		

Accommodating C.R.S.	Traditional arranged marriage	29	3.39	.90	2.04	.09
	Forced arranged marriage	4	3.96	.48		
	Love marriage	60	3.44	.84		
	Marriage by elopement	19	3.87	.83		
	Marriage by abduction	2	4.50	.24		
Avoiding C.R.S.	Traditional arranged marriage	29	3.36	.83	1.54	.19
	Forced arranged marriage	4	3.92	.50		
	Love marriage	60	3.41	.82		
	Marriage by elopement	19	3.82	.91		
	Marriage by abduction	2	2.92	.59		

* $p < .05$

According to the results of one-way analysis of variance shown in Table 6, empathic tendencies ($F=.38, p=.83$), and positive ($F=.87, p=.48$), negative ($F=.40, p=.80$), accommodating ($F=2.04, p=.09$) and avoiding ($F=1.54, p=.19$) conflict resolution styles do not differ significantly according to marriage types of the individuals whose divorce cases are still ongoing.

Empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles according to durations of marriage of individuals in the devirce process

Table 7. Empathic Tendency and Negative Conflict Resolution Styles by Duration of Marriage

	Duration of Marriage (Years)	n	Average Rank	Median	H	p
Empathic T.	1-5	33	58.12	3.50	1.58	.66
	6-10	24	50.44			
	11-15	28	58.57			
	16 years and longer	29	61.60			
Negative C.R.S.	1-5	33	61.06	2.21	1.57	.66
	6-10	24	51.31			
	11-15	28	60.61			
	16 years and longer	29	55.57			

* $p < .05$

According to the results of Kruskal-Wallis analysis shown in Table 7, empathic tendencies ($H=1.58, p=.66$) and negative ($H=3.13, p=.66$) conflict resolution styles of the individuals whose divorce cases are still ongoing do not differ significantly according to duration of marriage.

Table 8. Positive, Accommodating and Avoiding Conflict Resolution Styles According to Duration of Marriage

	Duration of Marriage (Years)	n	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p
Positive C.R.S.	1-5	33	3.34	.80	2.33	.07
	6-10	24	3.51	.66		
	11-15	28	3.83	.57		
	16 years and longer	29	3.54	.81		
Accommodating C.R.S.	1-5	33	3.26	.90	1.82	.14
	6-10	24	3.56	.72		
	11-15	28	3.75	.80		
	16 years and longer	29	3.62	.94		
Avoiding C.R.S..	1-5	33	3.25	.93	2.13	.10
	6-10	24	3.48	.74		
	11-15	28	3.78	.71		
	16 years and longer	29	3.44	.86		

* $p < .05$

According to the results of the one-way analysis of variance shown in Table 8, the individuals whose divorce cases are continuing are positive ($F=2.33, p=.07$), accommodating ($F=1.82, p=.14$) and avoiding ($F=2.13, p=.10$) conflict resolution styles do not differ significantly depending on the duration of marriage.

Empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles according to the number of children of individuals in the divorce process

Table 9. Empathic Tendency Levels by Number of Children

	Number of Children	n	Average Rank	Median	H	p
Empathic T.	1	33	65.12	3.50	5.62	.13
	2	51	55.23			
	3 and more	20	60.45			
	No child	10	38.05			

* $p < .05$

According to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis analysis, empathic tendencies of the individuals whose divorce cases are ongoing ($H=5.62, p=.13$) do not differ significantly according to the number of children they have.

Table 10. Positive, Negative, Accommodating and Avoiding Conflict Resolution Styles by Number of Children

	Number of Children	n	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p
Positive C.R.S.	1	33	3.55	.76	1.22	.31
	2	51	3.59	.68		
	3 and more	20	3.63	.77		
	No child	10	3.13	.83		
Negative C.R.S.	1	33	2.24	.85	.59	.62
	2	51	2.42	.80		
	3 and more	20	2.34	.87		
	No child	10	2.61	1.00		
Accommodating C.R.S.	1	33	3.56	.83	.89	.45
	2	51	3.53	.89		
	3 and more	20	3.69	.86		
	No child	10	3.15	.82		
Avoiding C.R.S.	1	33	3.46	.85	.38	.77
	2	51	3.55	.85		
	3 and more	20	3.41	.76		
	No child	10	3.27	.92		

$p < .05^*$

According to the results of the one-way analysis of variance (Table 10), positive ($F=1.22, p=.31$), negative ($F=.59, p=.62$), accommodating ($F=.89, p=.45$). and avoiding ($F=.38, p=.77$) conflict resolution strategies of the individuals whose divorce cases are ongoing do not differ significantly based on the number of children they have. In the results of Kruskal-Wallis and Anova tests, no significant difference was found between the number of children variable and empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles.

Empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles according to the age difference between the individuals in the process of divorce and their spouses

According to the results of one-way analysis of variance (Table 11), empathic tendencies ($F=.36, p=.83$), and positive ($F=1.61, p=.17$), accommodating ($F=1.57, p=.18$) and avoiding ($F=.91, p=.45$) conflict resolution strategies of the individuals with ongoing divorce cases do not differ significantly according to the age difference between them and their spouses ($p>.05$).

According to the Kruskal-Wallis-H result, which was conducted to determine whether the negative conflict resolution styles subscale according to Table 12 shows a significant difference according to the age difference between the spouses, no significant difference was found ($H=3.46, p=.48$). As a result of Anova and Kruskal-Wallis analyzes carried out, there is no significant difference between the scores obtained from the scales of empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles, and the age differences between the spouses of the individuals in the divorce process.

Table 11. Empathic Tendency and Conflict Resolution Styles by Age Difference with Spouse

	Age Difference	n	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p
Empathic T.	Same age	21	3.40	.65	.36	.83
	Less than 5 years	51	3.38	.64		
	5-10 years	32	3.47	.46		
	11-15 years	5	3.15	.48		
	16 years and more	5	3.40	.34		
Positive C.R.S.	Same age	21	3.66	.71	1.61	.17
	Less than 5 years	51	3.40	.75		
	5-10 years	32	3.73	.65		
	11-15 years	5	3.80	.59		
	16 years and more	5	3.20	1.16		
Accommodating C.R.S.	Same age	21	3.51	.89	1.57	.18
	Less than 5 years	51	3.45	.82		
	5-10 years	32	3.72	.81		
	11-15 years	5	4.00	.33		
	16 years and more	5	2.90	1.46		
Avoiding C.R.S.	Same age	21	3.56	.82	.91	.45
	Less than 5 years	51	3.37	.85		
	5-10 years	32	3.56	.84		
	11-15 years	5	3.93	.28		
	16 years and more	5	3.13	1.07		

* $p <.05$

Table 12. Negative Conflict Resolution Style by Age Difference with Spouse

	Age Difference	n	Average Rank	Median	H	p
Negative C.R.S.	Same age	21	68.50	2.21	3.46	.48
	Less than 5 years	51	52.84			
	5-10 years	32	56.97			
	11-15 years	5	62.20			
	16 years and more	5	57.50			

* $p <.05$

Findings regarding empathic tendencies and conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process according to their desire for divorce

Table 13. Empathic Tendency, and Negative and Accommodating Conflict Resolution Styles According to the Status of Desire for Divorce

	Desire for Divorce	n	\bar{X}	R	U	p
Empathic T.	Yes	85	61.52	5229	891	.02*
	No	29	45.72	1326		
Negative C.R.S.	Yes	85	53.44	4542	887	.02*
	No	29	69.41	2013		
Accommodating C.R.S.	Yes	85	60.78	5166	954	.06
	No	29	47.90	1389		

*p <.05

According to the results of Mann Whitney- U test (Table 13), it was determined that empathic tendency (U=891, p= .02) and negative (U=887, p=.02) conflict resolution style differed significantly with respect to the status of desire for divorce. The empathic tendency mean score of individuals who want to divorce (\bar{x} =61.52) is higher than the mean score of those who do not want to divorce (\bar{x} =45.72). On the other hand, the fact that the average score of the individuals who do not want to divorce from the negative conflict resolution styles subscale (\bar{x} =69.41) is higher than those who want to divorce (\bar{x} =53.44) can be shown as the source of the significant difference.

In addition, it was observed that accommodating (U=954, p=.06) conflict resolution style did not show a significant difference according to the state of desire for divorce (p>.05).

Table 14. Positive and Avoiding Conflict Resolution Styles by Desire for Divorce

	Desire for Divorce	n	\bar{X}	Sd	t	p
Positive C.R.S.	Yes	85	3.65	.73	2.71	.00*
	No	29	3.23	.66		
Avoiding C.R.S.	Yes	85	3.64	.76	3.99	.00*
	No	29	2.97	.83		

* p < .05

According to independent samples t-test results (Table 14), it was concluded that the average scores of positive (t=2.71. p=.00; 95% CI [.11, .72]; n2=.06; Cohen'sd=.25) and avoiding (t=3.99. p=.00; 95% CI [.34. 1.01]; n2=.12; Cohen'sd=.37) conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process differ significantly according to the status of desire for divorce. When the effect sizes are evaluated, it is seen that the participants' desire for divorce has a normal effect on their empathic tendency and avoiding conflict resolution style scores (Cohen, 1988; Akt., Özsoy & Özsoy 2013).

The fact that the empathic tendency mean score of individuals who want to divorce (\bar{x} =3.65) is higher than the mean score of those who do not want to divorce (\bar{x} =3.23) can be shown as the source of the determined difference. In addition, the fact that the average score of the participants who want to divorce from the avoiding

conflict resolution style subscale (\bar{x} =3.64) is higher than those who do not want to divorce (\bar{x} =2.97) can be shown as the source of the difference determined in the avoiding scores.

Statistical analysis of the relationship between empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process

According to table 15 there was a positive, weak and significant correlation ($r = .30, p = .00$) between empathic tendency and positive conflict resolution style, while a negative, weak and significant correlation was found between negative conflict resolution style ($r = -.21, p = .02$). While there was a positive, weak and significant correlation between empathic tendency and accommodating style ($r = .21, p = .03$), no correlation was found between avoiding and accommodating styles ($r = .10, p = .29$).

While a negative, weak and significant correlation was found between positive and negative conflict resolution styles ($r = -.22, p = .02$), there was a positive, moderate and significant correlation between positive and accommodating conflict resolution styles ($r = .55, p = .00$) and a positive, moderate and significant correlation between positive and avoiding conflict resolution styles ($r = .46, p = .00$).

Table 15. Statistical Analysis of Correlation Between Empathic Tendency and Conflict Resolution Styles

		Empathic Tendency	Positive C.R.S..	Negative C.R.S.	Accommodating C.R.S.	Avoiding C.R.S.
Spearman's rho	Empathic T.	r	1.00	.30**	-.21*	.21*
		p	.	.00	.02	.03
	Positive C.R.S..	r	.30**	1.00	-.22*	.55**
		p	.00	.	.02	.00
	Negative C.R.S..	r	-.21*	-.22*	1.00	-.30**
		p	.02	.02	.	.00
	Accommodating C.R.S.	r	.21*	.55**	-.30**	1.00
		p	.03	.00	.00	.
	Avoiding C.R.S.	r	.10	.46**	-.28**	.57**
		p	.29	.00	.00	.00

** . The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

* . The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

While a negative, weak and significant correlation was observed between negative and accommodating conflict resolution styles ($r = -.30, p = .00$), there was a negative, weak and significant correlation between negative and avoiding conflict resolution styles ($r = -.28, p = .00$).

It was found that there was a positive, moderate and significant correlation between accommodating and avoiding conflict resolution styles ($r = .57, p = .00$).

Considering the relationships between empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles, there is a positive relationship between empathic tendency and positive conflict resolution styles. It is seen that the participants with a high empathic tendency have a higher frequency of using the positive style. A weak negative correlation was found between empathic tendency and negative style. Based on this information, we can state that

individuals in the divorce process with low empathic tendencies use more negative conflict resolution styles. A weak positive correlation was found between empathic tendency and accommodating style. As the empathic tendency levels of the participants included in the study increase, the frequency of using accommodating style also increases.

As a result of the analysis, a weak negative relationship was found between positive and negative conflict resolution styles. The frequency of use of negative conflict resolution style decreases by the participants who use the positive conflict resolution style more. At the same time, a moderate positive correlation was found between the positive conflict resolution styles of the participants and their accommodating and avoiding styles. Based on this information, it is possible to say that the use of positive conflict resolution styles has increased and the frequency of use of accommodating and avoiding styles has increased.

There was a moderate positive correlation between accommodating and avoiding conflict resolution styles of the participants whose divorce cases are still ongoing, and it is possible to say that the use of avoiding strategy will increase when the frequency of use of accommodating conflict resolution styles of the individuals included in the research increases.

As a result of the Spearman correlation analysis, which was carried out to determine the relationships between the empathic tendencies and conflict resolution styles of the individuals in the divorce process, a correlation could not be determined only between the empathic tendency levels of the participants and avoiding conflict resolution style.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that there was a significant positive relationship between empathic tendency and positive conflict resolution styles, and the frequency of using positive conflict resolution styles increased as the empathic tendency levels of the participants increased.

According to the results of the research, there is a negative relationship between empathic tendency and negative conflict resolution styles. As the empathic tendency levels of the participants increase, the frequency of using negative conflict resolution styles decreases. Individuals with high empathic tendencies tend to approach conflicts in their personal relationships with an empathic perspective and use positive conflict resolution styles. Individuals who adopt negative conflict resolution styles, on the other hand, cannot develop an empathic response towards the person with whom they are in communication, and may engage in more aggressive or damaging attitudes and approaches. It has been determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between empathic tendency and accommodating conflict resolution styles, and accommodating conflict resolution styles of the participants whose divorce cases are ongoing and who have high levels of empathic tendency also increase.

According to the results of the research, no relationship was found between the empathic tendency levels of the participants in divorce cases and their avoiding conflict resolution styles. Although the number of studies examining the relationship between empathic tendency and conflict resolution styles is quite low in the literature, there are studies that show parallelism with the research result (Güney, 2021). According to the results of this research, there is a significant positive relationship between the empathic tendency levels of the participants and their positive conflict resolution styles and a significant negative relationship was found between the empathic tendency levels and negative conflict resolution styles, but unlike the results of the research, no relationship was found between empathic tendency and accommodating conflict resolution styles. Again, as in the result of the research, no relationship was found between empathic tendency and avoiding style in this study.

As a result of the research, the relationships between the conflict resolution styles sub-dimensions were discussed, and according to the findings, it was concluded that there was a positive, moderate and significant relationship between positive and accommodating conflict resolution styles, and there was a positive, moderate and significant relationship between positive and avoiding conflict resolution styles. In addition, a negative, weak and significant relationship was detected between positive and negative conflict resolution styles, and in the research conducted by Güney (2021), no relationship was found between these two concepts.

It was determined that there was a negative, weak and significant relationship between negative and accommodating conflict resolution styles, and a negative, weak and significant relationship between negative and avoiding conflict resolution styles. It was concluded that there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between accommodating and avoiding conflict resolution styles. Again, according to the results of Güney's research (2021), a negative and significant relationship was obtained between negative and accommodating conflict resolution styles of the participants, but no significant relationship was found between negative and avoiding styles. It was concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between avoiding and accommodating strategies. These findings are partially consistent with the research results.

According to the results of the research, a statistically significant difference was found between the participants' empathic tendency scores and their gender. This may be attributed to the fact that women's empathic tendency levels are higher than men's. In many studies examining the empathic tendency levels of individuals according to the gender variable, it has been concluded that women's empathic tendencies are higher than men (Yıldırım, 2005; Çiçek, 2006; Wied et al., 2007; Atli, 2008; Kite, Deaux & Haines, 2008; Kapıkıran, 2009; Ekinci & Aybek, 2010; Allemand, Steiger & Helmut, 2015; Mert, 2017; Oral, 2019; Adempira, 2020). On the other hand, in the studies conducted by Yılmaz and Akyel (2008) and Gülle (2015), results were obtained that individuals' empathic tendencies did not differ according to gender. Individuals with a high level of empathic tendencies are more tolerant, helpful and understanding in human relations (Dökmen, 1988). Moreover, while raising their children, mothers and fathers engage in behaviors that force their children, especially their daughters, to understand the people around them (McDevit, Lennon & Kopriva, 1991). Accordingly, it can be expected that women will act more understanding, helpful and tolerant during the divorce process than men.

According to another result of the study, no statistically significant difference was found between the empathic tendency scores of the participants and their age. These results are also consistent with other research findings (Şipit, 2019; Çelik, 2008; Baykal, 2019; Oral, 2019). There are also studies in the literature that do not show similarities with the research findings. In the study conducted by Adempira (2020), contrary to the results of the research, it was concluded that the empathic tendencies of the participants differed significantly according to their ages, and the scores of the participants in the 36-40 age range from the empathic tendency scale were higher than the other individuals. On the other hand, Cotton (2007) stated that as individuals get older, empathic skills increase. However, some studies have shown that the most important period for the development of empathy skills is childhood, and that empathy can develop in children depending on age (Durakoğlu & Gökçeşlan, 2010; Çelik, 2010; Gürsoy, 2015). According to this, it can be concluded that the empathic tendency develops in childhood and does not show a significant change afterward. This situation can be evaluated as the empathic tendency gains in childhood are determinant in divorce.

The results of the research show that the empathic tendency levels of the individuals in the divorce process do not differ according to the education levels of the participants. When the literature is examined, these findings are also supported by other research results (Dağlı, 2017; Mert, 2017; Oral, 2019; Adempira, 2020). Unlike the studies mentioned, it was concluded in the study conducted by Kılıç (2005) that as individuals' education levels increase, their empathic skills also increase.

According to the results of the research, it was concluded that the empathic tendency levels of the individuals in the divorce process did not differ significantly according to how their marriage took place, the duration of marriage and the number of children. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the number of studies that examined the empathic tendencies of the participants according to the variables of marriage types, the duration of marriage and the number of children is quite low, but in the existing studies, similar results were obtained and it was concluded that the empathic tendency did not differ according to the variables in question (Dağlı, 2017; Mert, 2017; Oral, 2019).

When the research findings are examined, the empathic tendency levels of the individuals whose divorce cases are ongoing differ significantly according to whether they want to divorce or not. This difference is due to the fact that the empathic tendencies of individuals who want to divorce are higher than those who do not want to divorce. In parallel with the results of the research, Oral (2019) found that the empathic tendencies of the participants who made the divorce decision themselves were higher than those whose spouses gave the divorce decision instead of themselves.

In the study, a significant difference was found between avoiding conflict resolution styles scores of the participants and their gender. This may be attributed to the fact that women with ongoing divorce cases use avoiding conflict resolution styles more frequently than men. No significant difference was detected between positive, negative and accommodating conflict resolution styles and the gender of the participants. According to

the findings of the research, women use positive, avoiding and accommodating conflict resolution styles more than men; men, on the other hand, prefer negative conflict resolution styles. The fact that men adopted the negative conflict resolution strategy more supports the finding that avoiding sub-dimension differs in favor of women. In the studies in the literature where conflict resolution styles are discussed in terms of gender variable (Shi, 2003; Uğurlu, 2003; Özen, 2006; Cann et al., 2008; Köroğlu, 2012; Tulum, 2014), similar to the research results, results showed that women preferred the positive strategy more than men. Moreover, according to Güney's (2021) research, which is similar to the research results, positive, negative and avoiding styles differ based on gender, and women use these styles more frequently than men.

Women exhibit more specific behaviors and avoidant attitudes than men in conflict situations (Hisli-Şahin, Basım & Çetin, 2009). Compared to men, women who care more about relationships show the attitude of reconciliation and avoiding against aggressive behaviors more frequently (Ting-Toomey, 1986). On the other hand, men use conflict resolution approaches based on coercion or pressure in conflict situations experienced in personal relationships more than women (Mills & Chusmir, 1988). Considering the findings obtained as a result of the research, it is seen that women who care more about interpersonal relations prefer positive or avoiding conflict resolution strategy in conflict situations, while men prefer negative conflict resolution style, which is an oppressive and coercive strategy. Moreover, unlike the results of the research, it was determined in the study conducted by Demir (2021) that accommodating conflict resolution styles differ based on gender, and that men use this style more often than women. Conversely, Özen (2006) concluded that avoiding conflict resolution styles do not differ according to gender.

In the study, no significant difference was found between conflict resolution style scores of the participants and their ages. In the study conducted by Akin (2018), in which conflict resolution styles were examined according to age, it was stated that there was no significant relationship between the age variable and conflict resolution styles.

While the education levels of the participants did not differ according to positive, negative and accommodating conflict resolution styles, it was determined that avoiding style differed significantly. It has been concluded that the frequency of using avoiding strategy is higher in primary school graduates than in associate degree and undergraduate graduates, which is the source of the determined difference. In the study of Güney (2021), which is similar to the finding obtained, it was determined that avoiding style differed significantly according to the education level.

In a different study conducted by Akin (2018), it was concluded that positive and accommodating conflict resolution styles differ based on the education levels of individuals. According to the results of the study, the education level of the participants who preferred more positive conflict resolution styles was higher than the other individuals, and it was seen that the education levels of the participants who preferred accommodating conflict resolution styles were lower. As a result of the research, which is similar to the study, it was determined

that the education level of the individuals in the divorce process who used accommodating conflict resolution styles was lower.

When the literature is examined, there are studies indicating that individuals with high education levels prefer positive conflict resolution styles providing healthier and constructive solutions to conflicts when preferred during conflict (Akın, 2018; Güney, 2021). On the other hand, it is seen that there are research results stating that people with low education levels mostly use the strategies of accommodating and avoiding, where conflicts cannot be resolved and healthy results cannot be obtained (Uyar, 2021; Güney, 2021).

In the research, it was determined that the conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process did not differ significantly according to their marriage types. When the literature was examined, no study addressing the marriage type variable was found. In the study, it was concluded that the conflict resolution styles of individuals in the divorce process did not differ significantly according to the duration of marriage. Similar results were obtained in the study in the literature where the duration of marriage variable was discussed (Uyar, 2021). These results show that how long couples have been married does not alone affect their conflict resolution styles.

It was determined in the study that the conflict resolution styles of the participants did not differ according to the number of children. In the study conducted by Uyar (2021), which deals with the number of children and positive conflict resolution styles, a finding consistent with the research was obtained. In another study, it was concluded that positive conflict resolution styles differed significantly in favor of positive conflict resolution styles according to the number of children of the participants, and it was seen that this result was not consistent with the research result (South, 2021). The contradiction of this result with the findings of the study may be due to the differences in the samples and the fact that not only the number of children but also different parameters were effective in determining the conflict resolution styles used.

In the study, it was concluded that the conflict resolution styles of the individuals in the divorce process did not differ significantly with their spouses according to the age difference. It has been determined that there is only one study in the literature that has been examined according to the age difference variable between the participants and their spouses, and results similar to the results of the research have been reached (Uyar, 2021). Moreover, it has been determined that positive, negative and avoiding conflict resolution styles of individuals whose divorce cases are ongoing differ significantly according to whether they want to divorce or not. It is seen that participants who want to divorce prefer positive and avoiding conflict resolution styles, while individuals who do not want to prefer negative conflict resolution strategies.

As a result of the research findings, the re-examination of the concepts that are the subject of the research in different and larger sample groups, the examination of different concepts that affect empathy and conflict resolution styles in individuals in the divorce process, and the evaluation of empathic skills in state-supported institutions for both divorced couples and premarital and ongoing marriages. It is recommended to organize

informative trainings on the development of the use of positive conflict resolution styles and the use of positive conflict resolution styles.

SUGGESTIONS

It is recommended to organize informative trainings on the subject of re-examination of the concepts that are the subject of research in different and larger sample groups, examination of the different concepts that affect empathy and conflict resolution styles in individuals in the divorce process, and improving the use of empathic skills and positive conflict resolution styles in government-sponsored institutions for both divorced couples and premarital and ongoing couples.

ETHICAL TEXT

In this article, journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics rules, journal ethics rules were followed. The author is responsible for any violations that may arise in relation to the article.

Ethics committee permission was obtained for the research with the decision of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee of Ordu University dated 25/02/2021 and protocol 2021-25 numbered

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