

Trust in Romantic Relationships

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Abstract - This study explores the relationship between trust and the quality of romantic relationships among married individuals. A sample of 181 participants (128 females, 53 males) aged 18 and older was collected using an online survey. Participants completed the Personal Information Form, Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale, and Trust in Romantic Relationships Scale. Data analysis, conducted using SPSS 26, revealed a significant positive relationship between trust and the quality of romantic relationships. Regression analysis indicated that trust in romantic relationships accounted for 62.5% of the variance in relationship quality. Additionally, trust and relationship quality varied significantly by gender, age, employment status, educational level, and marriage duration. Findings underscore the reciprocal influence of trust and relationship quality, highlighting their critical role in fostering healthy and sustainable romantic relationships. Implications for marital and family counseling are discussed, alongside suggestions for enhancing trust and relationship satisfaction.

Keywords - Trust; Romantic Relationships; Marriage; Relationship Quality

I. INTRODUCTION

In this part of the research, the problem situation, purpose, problem statement, sub-problems, importance, limitations, assumptions and definitions are included.

Problem Status

Family, which is one of the elements that form the basis of society, is formed by the marriage relationship. Marriage is of great importance in order to ensure continuity in society. Marriage encompasses and reflects cultural values that extend beyond the individual relationship between two people [1].

According to Bowen (1975), marriage forms a complex web of emotional interactions between couples. This network is shaped by the couples' own family lives. From this perspective, marriage is about how couples react to each other, how they manage the dynamics in their communication, and how they manage their conflicts [2].

Researchers argue that as people in marital relationships have mutual trust, their commitment will increase. In this way, it is emphasized that the trust of the spouses in each other can enable them to get a high level of satisfaction from their relationships and to invest more in their relationships [3].

In relationships, the concept of trust is the feeling of trust, security and comfort that one person feels in another person [4]. In relationships, trust has an important place in assessing the quality of the relationship [3]. For a long time, the definition of marital relationship quality and what dynamics it consists of has been investigated. Marital quality is a concept that cannot be sharply delimited and there is no common idea on how to measure it. For this reason, concepts such as marital harmony, marital satisfaction and marital stability are also used in studies on marriage quality [5].

There are many definitions of marital relationship quality in the literature. According to Gleen (1990), marital quality is how married couples evaluate their marriage [6]. A harmonious marital relationship can be defined as one in which couples are always in touch, often agree on marital difficulties, communicate openly, and take a satisfactory approach to resolving conflicts [7]. In this context, the problem of this research is to determine what kind of relationship the quality of trust and marriage relationship in romantic relations and how this relationship may differ in terms of gender, age, duration of marriage, employment status and education level.

Purpose of the Research

The main purpose of this study is to measure the trust of married individuals in their partner with whom they have a marital relationship and, accordingly, to what extent trust affects the quality of romantic relationships.

Problem Statement

The problem statement of this study consists of the question "Is there a significant relationship between trust in relationships and the quality of romantic relationships?"

Sub-Problems

Is there a significant relationship between trust and romantic relationship quality in romantic relationships?

Does trust significantly predict relationship quality?

Do trust and relationship quality differ significantly by gender?

Do trust and relationship quality differ significantly according to age?

Do trust and relationship quality differ significantly according to educational status?

Do trust and relationship quality differ significantly according to employment status?

Do trust and relationship quality differ significantly according to the duration of marriage?

Importance of Research

Marriage, the most important aspect of which is the joint work of men and women, is a state of union approved by the society and regulating social life [8]. Trust is the foundation for maintaining relationships with people [9]. One of the most important elements to be able to build a quality marital relationship is trust. In this context, the trust that people have for each other in romantic relations increases the quality of marriage relations. In this study, when the studies on marriage quality and trust are examined separately, it is thought that they offer a significant relationship to each other. Based on this idea, this research will make important contributions to practitioners working in the field of marriage and family counseling.

II. METHOD

At this stage of the study, information about the research model, research group, data collection tools and data analysis was given.

Research Model

In this study, the relational survey model, which is a type of descriptive research, was used. The aim of measuring the change between two or more variables and the degree of this change constitutes the relational survey model. In this context, the relationship between marital relationship quality and trust in romantic relationships will be examined.

Research Group

In the selection of the people to participate in the study, random method and snowball sampling method were used. During the implementation phase of the study, scales were administered to married people aged 18 and over who were in the researcher's

environment, easily accessible and wanted to participate in the research voluntarily. The data were collected from 181 married individuals and the analyzes were made on 181 people. The study group consisted of 181 married individuals, 128 (70.7%) females and 53 (29.3%) males, aged 18 years and over, as seen in Table 1. In terms of educational status, 10 of the participants have primary education (5.5%), 27 have high school (14.9%), 102 have undergraduate (56.4%), 22 have associate degree (12.2%) and 20 have graduate (11%) education. 50.7% of the participants are working and 49.3% are not working. Considering the duration of marriage, 53 (29.3%) of the participants have been married for 5 years or less, 70 (38.7%) for 6 – 15 years, 44 (24.3%) for 16 – 30 years and 14 (7.7%) for 30 years or more.

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTIONS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Gender	n	%	Employment Status	n	%
Female	128	70,7	Yes	125	69,1
Male	53	29,3	No	56	30,9
Sum	181	100,0	Sum	181	100,0

Age	n	%	Education Status	n	%
18 - 24	14	7,7	Primary	10	5,5
25 - 34	56	30,9	High school	27	14,9
35 - 44	66	36,5	Undergraduate	102	56,4
45 - 54	31	17,1	associate degree	22	12,2
55 and older	14	7,7	Graduate	20	11,0
Sum	181	100,0	Sum	181	100,0

Duration of marriage	n	%
5 years and below	53	29,3
6 – 15 year	70	38,7
16 - 30 year	44	24,3
30 years and above	14	7,7
Toplam	181	100,0

Data Collection Tools

In this study, personal information form, Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale (ARIS) and Trust in Romantic Relationships Scale (FQAS) were used to collect the data.

Personal Information Form

The personal information form developed by the researcher consists of various questions in which various demographic characteristics of the participants are determined. Form; It consists of questions that aim to learn situations such as gender, age, education level, employment status and duration of marriage. The Personal Information Form is presented in Annex-3.

Trust Scale in Romantic Relations

This test, a tool developed by Larzelere and Huston (1980), is designed to measure trust in marriage or romantic relationships [10]. Its original form is one-dimensional, contains eight items, and is based on a Likert-type rating (1 = Never, 7 = Always). The

total score of this scale ranges from 8 to 56, with high scores indicating a high level of trust in the relationship. The correlation between the items ranged from .72 to .89 and the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as .93 [10].

The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Çetinkaya, Kemer, Belgan and Tezer [11]. It has been removed due to the fact that Article 6 can be interpreted differently in construct validity studies. As a result, it has become a one-dimensional scale consisting of seven items. During the evaluation phase, items 1 and 2 are scored backwards. In the reliability studies, the correlation coefficient of the two-half test reliability was found to be positive and statistically significant ($r = .86$; $p < .001$). In addition, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient is .89 [11]. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale obtained in this study was found to be .899 (highly reliable). The items of the Trust in Romantic Relations Scale are presented in Annex-4

Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale

The Perceived Relationship Quality Scale was developed by Fletcher, Simpson and Thomas and adapted to Turkish by Sağkal and Özdemir [12], [13]. However, instead of the entire PRQC, items that best represent sub-dimensions such as love, commitment, intimacy, satisfaction, trust and passion were selected [12].

As a result of the analyses, corrected item total correlations were calculated for the 6-item form of PRQC at .45 and above and Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated at .85 and above [12]. In the reliability tests and construct validity studies carried out by Sağkal and Özdemir, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .86 [13]. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the ARIS, which was administered to 110 participants in the sample group twice with an interval of 4 weeks, was obtained as .81 [13].

The scale is evaluated in the range of 1 (None) to 7 (Many) and consists of 6 items. The scoring of the scale ranges from 6 to 42. An increase in the scores obtained from the Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale indicates an increase in the quality of romantic relationships. The reliability coefficient in this study was calculated as .906 (highly reliable). The items of the Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale are presented in Annex-5.

Analysis of Data

In the statistical evaluation of the data, firstly, the normality assumption was examined with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests ($P > .05$). In the study, whether the total scores of the scale differed according to gender and employment status was determined by the Student's t test, and whether they differed according to age, education level, duration of marriage, etc., was determined by One-Way Analysis of Variance and Tukey multiple comparison test. SPSS 26.0 V. statistical package program was used in all statistical calculations. The findings of the study were given as $n(\%)$, mean, standard deviation values, and the findings were accepted as significant at the level of $p < .05$.

After the data set, descriptive statistics were used in the statistical analysis of the research and Pearson correlation analysis was performed to determine the relationships between marital relationship quality and trust in relationships. Simple linear regression modeling was used. Independent groups t-test was applied to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the change in the quality of romantic relationships compared to the status of trust.

III. RESULTS

In this section, statistical analyses of the data collected for the purpose of the research on the marriage quality of married individuals aged 18 and over who make up the research group and their trust in romantic relations are included.

In the study, reliability coefficients (cronbach alpha) were calculated in order to check the internal consistency of the answers given by the individuals to the scale items (Table 2).

TABLE 2. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY COEFFICIENTS OF THE ANSWERS GIVEN BY THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE SCALE ITEMS

Scale	Internal Consistency Coefficient	Assessment
<i>Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale</i>	0,906	Highly Reliable
<i>Trust Scale in Romantic Relations</i>	0,899	Highly Reliable

Looking at Table 2, the reliability levels of the collected data are high. In this context, it can be interpreted that the participants participating in the research are sincere and objective while answering the scales.

Statistical analyses of the data were transferred in the order given in the sub-problems.

Investigation of the Relationship Between Trust and Romantic Relationship Quality in Romantic Relationships

Since the aim of the study is to understand the relationship between marital quality and trust in relationships, correlation analyses are presented first. In this context, marital quality was considered as a dependent variable, while trust in relationships was considered as an independent variable. The correlation table between marriage quality and trust in romantic relationships is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3. CORRELATION TABLE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PERCEIVED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND THE TRUST SCALES IN RELATIONSHIPS

		Trust in Relations
Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality	r	.791
	p	.000

In the study, a significant positive high-level relationship was found between the perceived romantic relationship quality of individuals and the total scores of the trust scales in romantic relationships.

After the correlation analysis, the results of simple linear regression analysis to investigate the effect of trust on marital quality in romantic relationships are presented.

Data on the effect of trust on marriage quality in romantic relations are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4. REGRESSION ANALYSIS RESULTS ON THE EFFECT OF TRUST IN PARTICIPANTS' ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS ON PERCEIVED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

Variables	B	Std. m.	R ²	t	P
Constant	11.139	1.390		8.014	.000
Trust in Relations	.602	.035	.625	17.279	.000

According to the results of the regression analysis, there is a significant regression model between the Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale and the Trust in Romantic Relationships Scale. The change in the quality of the romantic relationship explains 62.5% of the change in trust status ($R^2 = .625$). In the research, a 1 unit increase in the state of trust in romantic relationships will cause a .602 increase in the perceived romantic relationship quality.

Investigation of Trust and Romantic Relationship Quality in Romantic Relations by Gender

In this section, the findings on the quality of marriage and the examination of trust in romantic relationships in terms of gender are presented.

Do trust and relationship quality differ significantly by gender? The data for the question are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5. PERCEIVED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY BY GENDER AND TRUST STATUS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Scales and Sub-Dimensions	Gender	n	Mean	Ss	P-value
Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale	Female	128	33.42	7.87	.012
	Male	53	36.60	7.24	
Trust Scale in Romantic Relations	Female	128	37.74	10.48	.096
	Male	53	40.53	9.50	

In the study, a significant difference was determined between the perceived romantic relationship quality levels of male and female participants ($P=.012$; Table 5). It was determined that the perceived romantic relationship quality levels of male participants were higher than those of women.

Investigation of Trust and Romantic Relationship Quality in Relationships by Age

In this section, the findings on the examination of marriage quality and trust in romantic relationships in terms of age are presented (Table 6).

TABLE 6. PERCEIVED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY BY AGE AND TRUST STATUS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Scales and Sub-Dimensions	Age	n	Mean	Ss	P- value
Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale	18-24	14	a40.00	3.51	<.001
	25-34	56	ab36.96	5.16	
	35-44	66	33.12	7.36	
	45-54	31	b29.13	10.99	
	55 and above	14	ab35.64	5.57	
Trust Scale in Romantic Relations	18-24	14	a42.36	6.79	<.001
	25-34	56	ab41.95	6.73	
	35-44	66	ab36.71	10.43	
	45-54	31	b33.39	14.01	
	55 and above	14	ab41.36	8.14	

In the study, a significant difference was determined between the perceived romantic relationship quality and the total scores of the trust scales in romantic relationships according to the age of the participants ($P<.001$; Table 6). It was determined that the scores of the participants between the ages of 18 and 24 were higher than the participants between the ages of 45 and 54.

Investigation of Trust and Romantic Relationship Quality in Romantic Relations by Educational Status

In this section, data on the examination of marriage quality and trust in romantic relations in terms of educational status are presented.

The findings related to the question "Do trust and relationship quality differ significantly according to educational status?" are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7. PERCEIVED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY BY EDUCATION STATUS AND TRUST STATUS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Scales and Sub-Dimensions	Education Status	n	Mean	Ss	P-Value
Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale	Primary	10	b28.70	11.58	.033
	High school	27	a37.63	5.23	
	Bachelor	102	ab34.11	7.77	
	Associate	22	ab34.73	8.98	
	Graduate	20	ab33.60	5.73	
Trust Scale in Romantic Relations	Primary	10	32.90	11.78	.086
	High school	27	42.41	8.70	
	Bachelor	102	38.80	9.64	
	Associate	22	36.68	13.59	
	Graduate	20	37.00	9.14	

In the study, a significant difference was found between the total scores of the perceived romantic relationship quality scale according to the educational status of the participants ($P < .05$; Table 7). It was determined that the perceived romantic relationship quality and confidence levels in romantic relationships of the high school graduate participants were higher than the primary school graduates.

Investigation of Trust and Romantic Relationship Quality in Romantic Relations by Working Status

In this section, the findings on the examination of marriage quality and trust in romantic relations in terms of working status are presented (Table 8).

TABLE 8. PERCEIVED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AND TRUST STATUS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Scales and Sub-Dimensions	Employment Status	n	Mean	Ss	P-value
Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale	Yes	125	33.56	8.06	.041
	No	56	36.13	6.96	
Trust Scale in Romantic Relations	Yes	125	37.82	10.37	.146
	No	56	40.21	9.88	

In the study, a significant difference was found between the perceived romantic relationship quality levels of the working and non-working participants ($P = .041$; Table 8). It was determined that the perceived romantic relationship quality and trust levels in romantic relationships were higher than the employees of the non-study participants.

Investigation of Trust and Romantic Relationship Quality in Romantic Relations by Duration of Marriage

In this section, the findings regarding the examination of marriage quality and trust in romantic relations in terms of marriage duration are included (Table 9).

TABLE 9. PERCEIVED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AND TRUST STATUS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS BY DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Scales and Sub-Dimensions	Duration of marriage	n	Mean	Ss	P-value
Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale	5 years and below	53	a37.64	5.27	<.001
	6 – 15 years	70	ab34.26	6.55	
	16 – 30 years	44	b30.34	10.41	
	30 years and above	14	ab35.00	6.92	
Trust Scale in Romantic Relations	5 years and below	53	a42.23	6.74	<.001
	6 – 15 years	70	ab38.44	9.64	
	16 – 30 years	44	b33.68	12.99	
	30 years and above	14	ab40.57	9.07	

In the study, a significant difference was determined between the total scores of the perceived romantic relationship quality and the trust scales in romantic relationships according to the duration of marriage ($P<.001$; Table 9). It was determined that the perceived romantic relationship quality and trust levels in romantic relationships scores of the participants with a marriage period of 5 years or less were higher than the participants in the range of 16 - 30 years.

IV. RESULT

In the study, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between trust and marriage quality in romantic relations and that they predict each other to a high degree. The result reached in the study is parallel to the results of the studies in the literature. The high level of reliability of the collected data shows that the participants who participated in the research answered the scales sincerely and objectively. A high level of reliability indicates that the result of the research is reliable, accurate and consistent. In this context, the fact that other researchers can verify this enables decisions to be made based on scientific knowledge.

Trust in a relationship is the feeling of trust that spouses have in each other. Trust is the commitment of the spouses to each other, their fidelity and the faith they have in the other person. Perceived romantic relationship quality, on the other hand, is a person's perception of how fulfilling, supportive, and happy a relationship is. This reflects the partners' satisfaction with each other, how much they enjoy the relationship, and how healthy the relationship is overall.

The relationship between trust and perceived romantic relationship quality is often reciprocal. A high level of trust can make partners feel more committed to each other and can also contribute to making the relationship more fulfilling. Likewise, a healthy relationship quality can also increase trust, because as partners trust each other, they tend to form a deeper bond. Therefore, the positive relationship between trust in relationships and perceived romantic relationship quality can form the basis of healthy and sustainable relationships. A sense of trust in the relationship can increase the communication of the spouses, reduce their conflicts, and develop a relationship that is built on a more solid foundation.

According to the results of the regression analysis of the study, there is a significant regression model between the Trust Scale in Romantic Relationships and the Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale. In a significant regression model, it shows that the independent variable has a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable. The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable represents a true and significant relationship, not a random one. The change in the quality of the romantic relationship also affects the state of trust.

In the study, when trust and relationship quality in relationships were interpreted according to gender, a significant difference was determined between the perceived romantic relationship quality levels of male and female participants. It was determined that the relationship quality levels of male participants were higher than women.

In the findings of the research, when trust and relationship quality in relationships were interpreted according to age, a significant difference was determined between the total scores of the participants. It was concluded that the scores of the participants between the ages of 18 and 24 were higher than the participants between the ages of 45 and 54.

A significant difference was found between the total scores of the perceived romantic relationship quality scale according to the educational status. It was determined that the perceived romantic relationship quality and trust levels in romantic relationships scores of the participants who graduated from high school were higher than the participants who graduated from primary education.

In the study, a significant difference was determined between the non-working participants and the working participants, and it was determined that the perceived romantic relationship quality and trust levels in romantic relationships of the non-working participants were higher than the employees.

A significant difference was found between the perceived romantic relationship quality according to the duration of marriage and the total scores of the trust scales in romantic relationships. It was determined that the perceived romantic relationship quality and trust levels in romantic relationships scores of the participants with a marriage period of 5 years or less were higher than the participants in the range of 16 - 30 years.

In order to increase trust and perceived romantic relationship quality in relationships, suggestions can be made such as open communication between couples, keeping their promises to each other, trying to understand each other by empathizing, seeking solutions and making joint decisions together to solve problems, learning from past experiences, and activities that will nurture their relationships positively. In addition to these, it should not be forgotten that the relationship dynamics and needs of each couple's relationship are different.

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