



Secure Attachment and Forgiveness: The Mediating Role of Psychological Resilience

Güvenli Bağlanma ve Affedicilik: Psikolojik Sağlamlığın Aracılık Rolü

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• Received: 03.03.2017 • Accepted: 17.08.2017 • Published: 02.04.2018

ABSTRACT: This study aims at investigating the mediating effect of psychological resilience on secure attachment and forgiveness among university students. The participants were 293 university students (57% female, 43% male; mean age, 20.96 years; standard deviation (SD), 1.85) selected randomly and who were asked to complete a package, consisting of a Relationships Scale Questionnaire, an Ego Resiliency Scale, a Heartland Forgiveness Scale and a Personal Information Form. The hypothesis tested the mediation effects of psychological resilience between secure attachment and forgiveness using structural equation modeling. The results of the analysis reveal the mediating role of psychological resilience between secure attachment and forgiveness. The findings are discussed in line with the relevant literature available and conclusions are drawn.

Keywords: secure attachment, psychological resilience, forgiveness, positive psychology.

ÖZ: Bu çalışmada üniversite öğrencilerinde güvenli bağlanma ve affedicilik arasında psikolojik sağlamlığın aracılık etkisi araştırılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılan 293 üniversite öğrencisi (%57 kadın, %43 erkek; ortalama yaş 20.96, SD. 1.85) İlişki Ölçekleri Anketi, Psikolojik Sağlamlık Ölçeği, Heartland Affedicilik Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formunu doldurmuşlardır. Araştırmanın hipotezi olan güvenli bağlanma ve affedicilik arasında psikolojik sağlamlığın aracılık rolü yapısal eşitlik modeli ile test edilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre üniversite öğrencilerinde psikolojik sağlamlık güvenli bağlanma ve affedicilik arasında aracı olduğu bulunmuştur. Bulgular ilişkili literatür ışığında tartışılmış ve sonuçlar yazılmıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: güvenli bağlanma, psikolojik sağlamlık, affedicilik, pozitif psikoloji.

1. INTRODUCTION

University life brings about uneasiness for young people since it can lead to many developmental duties. An undergraduate not only tries to become independent from his/her parents and to find his/her own personality, but also strives for existence in his/her own future. Along with his/her personality developmental and occupational requirements, a youngster may also need to make social friends, strike up an emotional friendship and rearrange his/her relationships. Within that period, a young person's skill in building close relationships with those around him/her is considered of capital importance in accommodating himself/herself to a new life and in fulfilling his/her social, academic and occupational developmental duties on a sound basis. Hence, this study focuses on the interrelationship among secure attachment, psychological resilience and forgiveness that affects young people in building healthy relationships.

1.1. Attachment and Forgiveness

In the early years of life, attachment, defined as emotional and social intimacy between infant and caregiver (Bowlby, 1982), is based on the expectations of the infant from the adult and the interaction of that infant with the caregiver. Such interaction between infant and

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caregiver in the early years of life brings about different attachment responses; secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-anxious (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1982).

Attachment, the social and emotional bond between parent and child, is the determinant of relationship patterns not only during babyhood, but also in adolescence and adulthood years (Ainsworth, 1989; Muris & Maas, 2004). According to attachment theory, schemas developed by an individual towards him/her and others in the childhood period structures are also experiences of such an individual in the future. This structuring process gives shape to perceptions, beliefs, interpersonal relationships, expectations and attitudes of an individual towards him/her and others (Collins & Read, 1990), and affects cognitions, emotions and behaviors of that individual during lifelong social relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton, 1985; Pietromonaco & Barrett, 1997). Insecurely attached individuals see others as unreliable and rejectionist, while they perceive themselves as worthless and question their own worth. On the other hand, securely attached individuals see others as secure and responsible in their interpersonal relationships, while they consider themselves as independent, likeable and having competence to cope with potential threats (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Secure attachment facilitates interpersonal relationships in stressful circumstances. Positive perceptions of securely attached individuals towards themselves and others ensure that they rely on others intimately, build strong relationships, and get support from others in stressful cases (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). As securely attached individuals have high levels of emotional awareness and empathetic skills (Laible, 2007), they could become more sensitive to emotional distress in others. These individuals also have high levels of adaptive skills (Akhunlar, 2010; Cooper et al., 1998). All these characteristics provide opportunities for securely attached individuals to build healthy interpersonal relationships.

An important notion in interpersonal relationships is forgiveness. In broad terms, forgiveness is defined as the "reframing of a transgression and the attenuation or transformation of negative transgression-related thoughts, feelings, or behaviors" (Thompson et al., 2005). Forgiving is "a willingness to abandon one's right to resentment, negative judgment, and indifferent behavior toward one who unjustly injured us, while fostering the undeserved qualities of compassion, generosity, and even love toward him or her" (Enright, 1996). Forgiving involves cognitive, affective, behavioral, motivational, decisional and interpersonal aspects (Enright & Gassin, 1992; Hill, 2001; McCullough et al., 2003). Forgiveness is the process in which the desire for avoidance and revenge is often reduced (McCullough et al., 2003; Thorensen et al., 2000), and is defined as emotional replacement of negative emotions, negative cognitions, and negative behaviors with positive other-orientated emotions (e.g. empathy, psychological balance, respect, compassion, and conciliation) (Enright & Gassin, 1992). In brief, when one forgives, one's thoughts, emotions, behaviors change positively.

Forgiveness emerges as a reaction to a problem experienced in interpersonal relationships and is considered as a structure that allows for the healing of emotional wounds, the rebuilding of trust and the fixing of relationships (Makinen & Johnson, 2006). Studies suggest that with a raised level of forgiveness, negative psychological experiences such as stress, anxiety and depressive emotion reduce, life satisfaction levels increase, and levels of anger reduce (Bugay & Demir, 2011; McCullough, 2000; Thompson et al., 2005), psychological well-being improves (McCullough & Witvliet, 2002), and physical health improves (Lawler-Row et al., 2011).

Recent studies suggest that secure attachment and forgiveness share common ground, and that secure attachment even facilitates forgiving. As secure attachment is positively associated with positive emotions, such as hope and self-esteem, and is negatively associated with signs of anger and hostile emotions (Armitage & Harris, 2006; Shorey et al., 2003), it is suggested that secure attachment facilitates forgiving that would allow transition from negative emotions to positive ones (Burnette et al., 2007). Both concepts involve certain structures, such as trust,

communication, empathy and arrangement of emotions as well as a series of complex psychological changes focused on oneself and others. In order for individuals to forgive, they would often need to behave emphatically, overcoming suspicion, guilt and anger feelings (Enright, 2001). Anxiety of insecurely attached individuals obstructs empathizing with an offender and makes things difficult for them to control negative feelings (Collins & Read, 1994; Gillath et al., 2005). On the contrary, a sense of attachment security reduces the need for self-protection and self-enhancement (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005), and allows a person to use resources for empathizing with an offender and to control feelings of anger, thereby forgiving more easily (McCullough et al., 1997; Paleari et al., 2005).

1.2. Psychological Resilience as a Mediating Variable

Psychological resilience is the interaction of individuals' internal and external factors, involving protective and risk factors in order to overcome negative effects of poor life conditions (Rutter, 1999). Psychological resilience is defined as survival and coping skills (Resnick, 2008); skill to struggle with challenges, stress and loss (Begun, 1993), skill to cope with excessively challenging and stressful states (Masten, 2001), internal and external adaptation and a coping skill demonstrated under challenging conditions (Block & Kremen, 1996). In summary, psychological resilience may be considered a fundamental structure functioning as a resistance element against stressful life events.

Psychologically sound individuals are those who do not admit defeat to the hardships of life, who are emotionally strong and could behave courageously (Wagnild, 2011), and who have the ability to use proper coping techniques (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Individuals with a high level of psychological resilience have insight regarding their skills and abilities, and are self-confident. These individuals demonstrate regression behavior when experiencing stressful events like everybody else, then find a state of equilibrium again and proceed toward their goals. Individuals with a high level of psychological resilience are more resistant to fear, desperation, anxiety, depression and other negative emotions, as well as the physical effects thereof (Wagnild, 2011). On the other hand, individuals with a low level of psychological resilience experience disappointment quickly after stressful events, exercise ineffective and inflexible coping responses, lack an ability to recover, and are less aware of their strengths (Block & Kremen, 1996).

The relationship between psychological resilience and attachment has attracted the attention of researchers. Studies show that secure attachment contributes to the development of psychological resilience as a protective factor in the adulthood stage (Bowly, 1988; Rholes & Simpson, 2004; Simpson & Rholes, 1998). For adults with earthquake experience, results reveal a positive relationship between secure attachment and psychological resilience (Kararımak & Güloğlu, 2014). Under difficult circumstances, securely attached individuals tend to use a problem-focused coping style (Terzi et al., 2009), and are psychologically more resilient (Kararımak & Güloğlu, 2014). Furthermore, findings show that secure attachment, which is in positive relationship with positive emotions such as hope and self-esteem and in negative relationship with signs of anger and hostile emotions (Armitage & Harris, 2006; Shorey et al., 2003), makes it easier for individuals to properly cope with adverse situations.

In a similar manner, results reveal a positive relationship between psychological resilience and forgiveness. It has been suggested that forgiveness is indeed a healthy coping response, ensuring a use of a problem-focused coping style by affecting an individual's manner of re-assessing a situation and meaning-focused coping style through interpersonal problem-solving (Anderson, 2006; Broyles, 2005). A forgiver could be forgiving by evaluating the situation again, looking over his/her negative emotions and giving up his/her negative emotions, such as anger, guilt, revenge and suchlike. (Rasmussen & Lopez, 2000). It would not be wrong

to say that psychological resilience facilitates forgiveness as the former could control negative emotions and ensure healthy coping with circumstances.

1.3. Present Study

It should be emphasized that secure attachment, forgiveness and psychological resilience are sources of overcoming stressful circumstances, and are factors that protect individuals' psychological health due to their preventive roles. Research findings reveal that secure attachment would improve psychological resilience through enabling an individual to perceive self and others in a positive manner, to adjust emotions, to develop an empathetic point of view, to feel positive emotions, to overcome stress effectively and to provide a capacity to develop healthy relationships, (Fonagy, 2003; Siegel, 2001). Therefore, such features would facilitate forgiveness by enabling that individual to keep negative emotions, such as anger, under control, to look from the point of view of the offender, to re-assess the case, and to feel positive emotions (McCullough et al., 1997; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Paleari et al., 2005). Starting from this point of view, this study investigates the mediating role of psychological resilience compared to secure attachment and forgiveness variables.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants and Procedure

A cross-sectional survey was conducted between September and November, 2015, with 293 [168 (57%) female, 125 (43%) male] volunteer university students in Eskisehir, a medium sized city in Turkey. The mean age of the participants was 20.96 (SD, 1.85) with a range of 18-28. Of the participants, 19 (6.5%) were freshman, 96 (32.83%) were sophomores, 105 (35.8%) were juniors, and 73 (24.9%) were seniors. The participants in the study were selected from different faculties. Permission to use the scales employed in the research was obtained from the individuals who developed or applied them. Before the administration of the scales, permission was obtained from the various faculty administrations and professors during class. Based on a pre-determined time scale, data was collected from the students. The completion of data material took about twenty minutes.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Relationships Scale Questionnaire

Developed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994), this questionnaire consists of 30 items to assess a quadruple attachment prototype. The scale response is on the basis of a 7-point Likert type scale. It consists of the following sub-dimensions; secure, dismissive, fearful and preoccupied attachment. A Turkish validity-reliability study was conducted by Sümer and Güngör (1999). A test repetition reliability of this scale was adapted to Turkish culture ranges from .54 to .78. Internal consistency coefficient ranged from alpha .27 to .61 (Sümer & Güngör, 1999).

2.2.2. Ego Resiliency Scale

Developed by Block and Kremen (1996) to measure psychological resilience, this scale was adapted into Turkish by Karairmak (2007). The scale consists of a total of 14 items and rates on a 4-point Likert-type scale. The Cronbach's Alpha value attained from the scale items was found to be .80. The internal consistency coefficient of the test-retest (conducted three weeks apart) was reported to be .76. As proof for the validity of similar scales, the correlation, which was calculated on another scale (Connor-Davidson Psychological Resilience Scale) for testing psychological resilience, was found to be .68. A positive significant relationship was found between the scores attained on both psychological resilience scales (Karairmak, 2007).

2.2.3. Heartland Forgiveness Scale

This was developed by Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Michael, Rasmussen and Billings (2005) to measure a university student's forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others and forgiveness of situations. The scale consists of 18 items with 7-point Likert type scores and three sub-dimensions, namely forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, and forgiveness of situations. A total score is also attained by this scale. Adaptation into Turkish culture was carried out by Bugay and Demir (2010). The Cronbach Alpha value attained from the entire scale was calculated as .81. As a result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, for the scale model consisting of 18 items as well as 3 factors (forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others and forgiveness of situations), the compatibility values GFI = .92, AGFI = .90, RMSEA = .06 were found to be satisfactory (Bugay & Demir, 2010).

2.2.4. Personal Information Form

A personal information form was used to gather data about the students' gender, ages and their grade levels. In line with the principle of confidentiality, no information regarding identity was taken on this form.

2.3. Data Analysis

In order to examine whether psychological resilience mediates the relationship between secure attachment style and forgiveness, Preacher and Hayes, (2008) a bootstrapping procedure was conducted. Bootstrapped confidence intervals were generated to test the indirect effect of psychological resilience on secure attachment style and forgiveness. For the mediation analysis, gender was entered into the mediational model as control variables. In this study, we estimated 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap 95% confidence intervals. The bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval should not entirely include zero for the indirect effect to be significant. Data was analyzed using an IBM SPSS 21 with a Preacher and Hayes's (2008) PROCESS macro.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics and correlations for the study variables are presented in Table 1. Secure attachment style was positively related to psychological resilience ($r = .33, p < .01$) and forgiveness ($r = .23, p < .01$). In addition, psychological resilience was positively correlated with forgiveness ($r = .26, p < .01$).

Table 1. Descriptive correlations among study variables

Variable	Secure Attachment Style	Psychological resilience	Forgiveness
Secure attachment style	-		
Psychological resilience	.33**	-	
Forgiveness	.23**	.26**	-
Mean	19.16	39.12	83.1
SD	3.79	4.81	10.42
Skewness	.25	.42	.11
Kurtosis	.65	.13	.13

Note. ** $p < .01$

3.2. Mediation Analyses

To test for a possible mediating role of psychological resilience, we performed regression based mediation analyses by employing procedures provided by Preacher and Hayes (2008). In Table 2, the results of the mediation analyses are shown.

Table 2. Test of mediating model, path coefficients, and indirect effect

	Path		Bootstrap 95% CI	
	Coefficient (SE)	<i>t</i>	Lower Level	Upper Level
Model (Figure 1)				
Secure attachment → Resilience	.41 (.07)	5.81**	.27	.55
Resilience → Forgiveness	.44 (.13)	3.45**	.19	.69
Secure attachment → Forgiveness	.43 (.16)	2.66**	.11	.76
SA → PR → Forgiveness	.18 (.07)	-	.06	.33

Note. ** $p < .01$, SA = Secure attachment, PR = Psychological resilience, SE = Standard error

As expected, secure attachment has a significantly positive role on psychological resilience, $B_{SE} = .41_{.07}$, $t = 5.81$. Psychological resilience has a significant positive role on forgiveness, $B_{SE} = .44_{.13}$, $t = 3.45$. Direct the effect, secure attachment effect on forgiveness, is found to be $B_{SE} = .43_{.16}$, $t = 2.66$. The results of the bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure reveal that the indirect effect of secure attachment on forgiveness via psychological resilience is positive (indirect effect coefficient = .18). The bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval (95% CI) is found as a lower limit of .06 as an upper limit .33. If the 95% CI for the estimates of the mediation effect does not include zero, the mediation effect is considered to be significant at the .05 level. Our findings show the indirect effect of a secure attachment style on forgiveness through psychological resilience is significant. The result of the mediation model is presented in Figure 1.

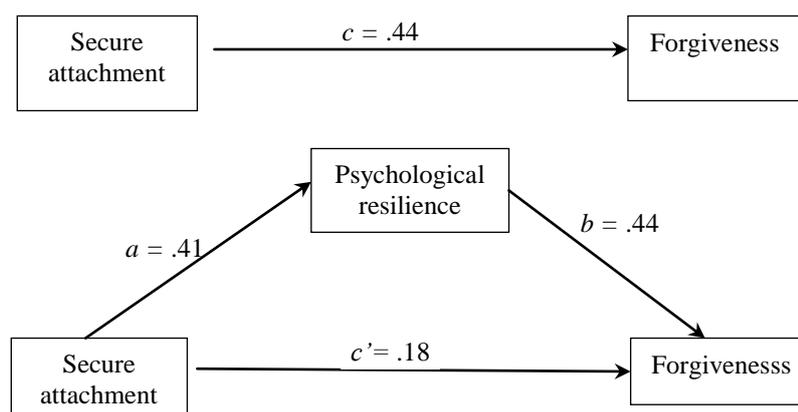


Figure 1. Mediation for secure attachment on forgiveness via psychological resilience

As can be seen in Figure 1, the path between secure attachment style and forgiveness is small, but still significant once psychological resilience is entered into the regression equation. Therefore, people who have high levels of this secure attachment style are likely to have exhibit greater forgiveness, and this in part is due to psychological resilience, whereby people who score high on secure attachment style are likely to use psychological resilience more often.

Through high levels of psychological resilience, they are therefore, more likely to show greater levels of forgiveness.

4. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

This study deals with the mediating role of psychological resilience between the secure attachment and forgiveness of university students who need to build emotional and social relationships and cope with stressful living conditions. As hypothesized, the results of the present study indicate that psychological resilience mediated the association between secure attachment and forgiveness. In other words, secure attachment levels of the studied university students have a positive effect on their psychological resilience, which in turn affects their forgiveness levels positively.

The findings of this study are supported by the findings of another current study (Dwiwardani et al., 2014) revealing that forgiveness is predicted by both secure attachment and psychological resilience. Furthermore, study findings reveal a positive relationship between secure attachment and psychological resilience (Kararırmak & Güloğlu, 2014; Lamiser-Atik, 2013; Rholes & Simpson, 2004; Simpson & Rholes, 1998), and between psychological resilience and forgiveness (Anderson, 2006; Broyles, 2005), which support the findings of this study.

The research findings reveal that securely attached university students who had developed a positive point of view and had felt positive emotions toward self and others are likely to have a high level of capacity to cope with stress efficiently and to develop healthy interpersonal relationships, thus having a high level of psychological resilience (Fonagy, 2003; McCullough et al., 1997; Paleari et al., 2005; Siegel, 2001). A resilient individual with such features tends to be more forgiving (Anderson, 2006; Broyles, 2005). In addition, a resilient individual has problem-solving strategies, emotional intelligence, affect regulation, autonomy, a sense of purpose, positive emotions, social skills and a belief in a bright future (Gómez-Ortiz, 2015; Ong et al., 2006; Prince-Embury, 2008; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). These features make it easy, especially in university life, for students who have problems in their emotional and social relationships to repair such impaired relationships, to dress their wounds; in other words, to forgive (Anderson, 2006). In brief, forgiveness of securely attached students positively changes as their psychological resilience increases.

Another finding of this study is that there is a direct relationship between secure attachment and forgiveness. This finding is supported by previous study findings (Crawley, 2005; Davidson, 2000; Gates, 2014). These researchers show that secure attachment constitutes a basis for forgiveness (Dwiwardani et al., 2014), and greater security of attachment was predictive of greater forgiveness (Lawler-Row, Hyatt-Edwards, Wuensch, & Karremans, 2011). Individuals who are securely attached share many of the positive characteristics of disproportionately forgiving people, such as effective self-regulation, empathy, and agreeableness (Macaskill et al., 2002; McCullough et al., 2001; McCullough et al., 2003). In short, due to the fact that there is a similarity between secure attachment and forgiveness, securely attached students are likely to have increased levels of forgiveness.

In conclusion, there are important contributions to this study. The study findings may be useful for university student affairs and counselling center staff when working with students who complain about insecure attachment, low psychological resilience and a lack of forgiveness. Building emotional and social relationships is a significant development duty of university students. A university requires a young person to become involved in and adapt to a new system, which is larger in size than a sheltered system like a family, and whose protective

effect is relatively reduced. It can be considered that psychological resilience functioning as a resistance element in response to stressful living conditions is a protective factor for university students. Based on the findings resulting from research, it would not be wrong to say that the psychological resilience of university students has a determining role in their attachment styles and forgiveness characteristics. Within this framework, universities have a responsibility to ensure the healthy development of university students whose personal development continues and who have ample opportunity to improve as individuals. For example, an academic program may be enriched with elective courses that are useful for the personal development of students. Furthermore, university units that provide psychological assistance may also provide programs for development of social skills to help students discover their personal characteristics, as well as psycho-educational programs to increase secure attachment styles and to improve psychological resilience and forgiveness. These would include psychological counseling and guidance services provided by individual psychological counselors.

Since this study is conducted on university students, the research findings only apply to university students and are limited to the qualities as quantified by the measuring tools used in this study. The data used in this study was only collected via self-reporting, which may reduce internal validity. Using multiple methods in the collection of data may help to reduce the effect of subjectivity. In addition, using different methods, such as observation and peer evaluation, may be essential to measure levels of resilience and vulnerability levels. Furthermore, the measurement of the relationship between variables through relational research methods is one constraint of this study. It is considered that investigation of attachment patterns during different development periods and on different groups during an examination of forgiveness and psychological resilience, as well as the performance of longitudinal and qualitative studies, makes a significant contribution to any understanding of such personality patterns.

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UZUN ÖZET

Bebekle bakım veren kişi arasında duygusal ve sosyal bir yakınlık olarak tanımlanan bağlanma (Bowlby, 1982), yaşamın ilk yıllarında bebeğin yetiştikinden beklentileri ve bakıcısıyla etkileşimi bağlamında temellenmektedir. Yaşamın erken yıllarında çocuk ile bakıcısı arasındaki etkileşim sonucu güvenli, güvensiz-kaçınan ve güvensiz- kaygılı olarak farklı bağlanma tepkileri oluşmaktadır (Bowlby, 1982; Ainsworth, 1989). Bağlanma kuramına göre, çocukluk döneminde bireyin kendisine ve diğerlerine yönelik geliştirdiği şemalar, onun gelecekteki deneyimlerini de yapılandırmaktadır. Bu yapılandırma ise bireyin kendisine ve diğerlerine

ilişkin algılarını, inançlarını, kişilerarası ilişkilerini, beklentilerini ve tutumlarını biçimlendirmekte (Collins & Read, 1990, s.645), yaşam boyu sosyal ilişkilerindeki biliş, duygu ve davranışlarını etkilemektedir (Bowlby, 1973, s.345-353; Bretherton, 1985, 3-35; Pietromonaco & Barrett, 1997, p. 1409; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986, s.61).

Kişilerarası ilişkilerde önemli kavramlardan biri de affetmedir. Affetme, “birinin, onu haksız yere inciten başka birine karşı, sevgi, cömertlik ve merhamet gibi hak edilmeyen hislerin teşvik edilmesiyle, kızma, olumsuz yargılama ve ilgisiz davranma gibi hisleri isteyerek terk etmesi” olarak ifade edilmektedir (Enright, 1996). Affetme, kişilerarası ilişkilerde yaşanan soruna tepki olarak ortaya çıkmakta ve duygusal yaraları tamir etme, güveni yeniden inşa etme ve ilişkiyi onarmayı sağlayan bir yapı olarak görülmektedir (Makinen & Johnson, 2006). Son zamanlarda araştırmalar, güvenli bağlanma ve affedicilik arasında pek çok ortak noktanın olduğunu hatta güvenli bağlanmanın affetmeyi kolaylaştırdığını vurgulamaktadırlar. Her iki kavram da güven, iletişim, empati ve duygu düzenleme gibi yapıları ve bireyin kendine ve diğerlerine odaklanmış karmaşık bir dizi psikolojik değişiklikleri içermektedir. Affetmek için, bireylerin genellikle empatik davranmaları, şüphe, suçluluk ve öfke gibi duygularını aşmaları gerekmektedir (Enright, 2001). Güvensiz bağlanan bireylerin kaygıları, suçluyla empati yapmayı engellemekte ve olumsuz duyguları kontrol etmesini zorlaştırmaktadır (Collins & Read, 1994; Gillath, Shaver, & Mikulincer, 2005). Tersine güvenli bağlanan bireyler, kendini koruma ve kendini geliştirme ihtiyacını azaltarak (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005), kaynaklarını suçluyla empati yapma ve öfke duygusunu kontrol etmek için kullanmakta ve daha kolay affedebilmektedirler (McCullough, Worthington, & Rachel, 1997; Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2005).

Psikolojik sağlamlık kötü yaşam olaylarının olumsuz etkilerinin üstesinden gelmek için koruyucu ve risk faktörlerini içeren, bireylerin içsel ve dışsal faktörlerinin etkileşimidir (Rutter, 1999). Psikolojik sağlamlık, hayatta kalma, zor durumların üstesinden gelme yeteneği (Resnick, 2008), zorluklarla, stresle ve kayıplarla mücadele etme becerisi (Begun, 1993), aşırı sıkıntı ve stres durumunun üstesinden gelmek için bir yetenek (Masten, 2001), sıkıntılı koşullar altındayken gösterilen içsel ve dışsal uyum ve başa çıkabilme becerisi (Block & Kremen, 1996; Masten, 1994) olarak tanımlanmaktadır.

Güvenli bağlanma, affetme ve psikolojik sağlamlığın, son yıllarda baş etme kaynağı olmaları ve önleyici rolleri nedeniyle bireylerin psikolojik sağlıklarını koruyucu faktörler olduğu vurgulanmaktadır. Araştırma bulguları, güvenli bağlanmanın, kişinin kendisine ve diğerlerini olumlu algılayma, duygu düzenleme, empatik bakış açısı geliştirme, olumlu duygular hissetme, stresle etkili başa çıkma ve sağlıklı ilişkiler geliştirme kapasitesi sağlayarak psikolojik sağlamlığı etkilediğini (Fonagy, 2003; Schore, 2001; Siegel, 2001), bu özelliklerin ise öfke gibi olumsuz duyguları kontrol etmeyi ve suçlunun bakış açısından bakabilmeyi, durumu yeniden değerlendirmeyi ve olumlu duygular hissetmeyi sağlayarak affetmeyi kolaylaştırdığını (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachel, 1997; Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2005) belirtmektedirler. Buradan yola çıkarak, bu araştırmada psikolojik sağlamlığın güvenli bağlanma ve affedicilik değişkenleri arasındaki aracı rolü araştırılmaktadır.

Araştırmaya 293 üniversite öğrencisi katılmıştır. Öğrencilerin 168'i (%57) kadın, 125'i (%43) erkektir. Yaş ortalaması ise 20.96 (SD = 1.85). Katılımcıların, 19 (6.5%) birinci sınıf, 96 (32.83%) ikinci sınıf, 105 (35.8%) üçüncü sınıf, ve 73 (24.9%) son sınıf öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmada kullanılan ölçekler, İlişki Ölçekleri Anketi (Relationships Scale Questionnaire), Psikolojik Sağlamlık Ölçeği (Ego Resiliency Scale), Heartland Affetme Ölçeği (Heartland Forgiveness Scale) ve Kişisel Bilgi Formudur. Verilerin analizinde AMOSS programı kullanılarak yapısal eşitlik analizi yapılmıştır.

Değişkenler arası korelasyona bakıldığında güvenli bağlanma ile psikolojik sağlamlık ($r=.33, p < .01$) ve affedicilik ($r=.23, p < .01$) arasında olumlu yönde ilişki olduğu görülmektedir.

Psikolojik sağlık ile affedicilik arasında da olumlu ilişki görülmektedir ($r = .26, p < .01$). Psikolojik sağlamlığın aracılık rolü için yapılan regresyon temelli aracılık analizinde güvenli bağlanma psikolojik sağlamlığı olumlu yönde etkilerken ($B_{SE} = .41_{.07}, t = 5.81$), psikolojik sağlık ise affediciliği olumlu yönde etkilemektedir ($B_{SE} = .44_{.13}, t = 3.45$). Bootstrapping analizi sonucu psikolojik sağlık aracılığıyla güvenli bağlanma ve affedicilik arasında dolaylı etki olduğu görülmüştür (.18).

Çalışma sonucunda üniversite öğrencilerinin güvenli bağlanma düzeyleri psikolojik sağlamlıklarını pozitif yönde etkilediği, psikolojik sağlık düzeylerinin ise affedicilik düzeylerini pozitif yönde etkilediği görülmektedir. Kısacası, güvenli bağlanma düzeyi yüksek olan öğrencilerin psikolojik sağlamlıkları yükselmekte ve bundan dolayı affedicilikleri de artmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulgusu, hem güvenli bağlanmanın hem de psikolojik sağlamlığın, affetmeyi yordadığı yönündeki araştırma bulgusu (Dwiwardani & diğ., 2014) ile desteklenmektedir. Ayrıca, güvenli bağlanma ve psikolojik sağlık (Kararımak ve Güloğlu, 2014; Lamiser-Atik, 2013; Rholes & Simpson, 2004; Simpson & Rholes, 1998), psikolojik sağlık ve affetme (Anderson, 2006; Broyles, 2005) arasında pozitif yönlü ilişki olduğunu belirten araştırma bulguları, bu araştırma sonucunu destekler niteliktedir.

Araştırma bulguları, kendine ve diğerlerine olumlu bakış açısı geliştiren ve olumlu duygular hisedenden güvenli bağlanan üniversite öğrencilerinin, stresle etkili başa çıkma ve sağlıklı ilişkiler geliştirme kapasitelerinin kısacası psikolojik sağlamlıklarının yüksek olduğunu belirtmektedirler (Fonagy, 2003; McCullough, Worthington, & Rachel, 1997; Paleari, Regalia, & Fincham, 2005; Schore, 2001; Siegel, 2001). Bu özelliklere sahip psikolojik olarak sağlam bireyler affedici olabilmektedirler (Anderson, 2006; Broyles, 2005).

Kişilik gelişimlerinin devam ettiği ve kendilerini geliştirmek için oldukça fazla fırsata sahip olan üniversite öğrencilerinin sağlıklı gelişimleri için üniversitelere büyük görevler düşmektedir. Öğrencilerin ders programlarının kişisel gelişimlerine yönelik seçmeli derslerle zenginleştirilmesi sağlanabilir. Üniversitelerin psikolojik yardım veren birimlerinde, öğrencilerin kişisel özelliklerini keşfetmelerine yönelik sosyal beceri geliştirme, güvenli bağlanma davranışlarını artırma, psikolojik sağlamlığı ve affediciliği artırıcı psiko-eğitsel programlar düzenlenebilir. Ayrıca güvenli bağlanma, affedicilik ve psikolojik sağlık konularında psikolojik yardıma ihtiyacı olan öğrencilere bireysel ve grupla psikolojik danışma yardımları verilebilir.

Araştırma üniversite öğrencileri ile gerçekleştirildiğinden, araştırma sonuçlarının sadece üniversite öğrencilerine genellenebilmesi ve verilerin araştırmada kullanılan ölçme araçlarının ölçtüğü niteliklerle sınırlı olması araştırmanın sınırlılıklarındandır. Ayrıca araştırmada değişkenler arası ilişkilerin ilişkisel araştırma yöntemleri ile ölçülmesi bu araştırmanın sınırlılıkları arasında yer almaktadır. Bağlanma örüntülerinin, affetmenin ve psikolojik sağlamlığın farklı gelişim dönemlerinde, farklı gruplarla çalışılması, boylamsal ve niteliksel çalışmaların yapılması bu kişilik örüntülerinin anlaşılmasına büyük katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.