SELF-DEFINING MEMORIES OF CHANGE AND CONTINUITY:

THE EFFECT OF UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

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SELF-DEFINING MEMORIES OF CHANGE AND CONTINUITY: THE EFFECT OF UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Müge Özvarol, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
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ABSTRACT

Self-Defining Memories of Change and Continuity:

The Effect of University Experience

The present study investigated stability and change in self-concepts in response to a transitional life experience: university experience. Life transitions typically present challenges to the self, in which case individuals use autobiographical reasoning and integration of memories to restore coherence. There is also the tendency to view the self in an improving way (Wilson & Ross, 2003). The phenomenological and narrative characteristics of self-defining memories for changing and stable self-concepts were examined in relation to the change students experienced in transition (psychological and material) and the time passing over the event. To investigate the effect of transitional impact, memories of students from Istanbul and other cities who came to Istanbul to study university were compared. Freshman and junior undergraduates recalled two self-defining memories, one memory representing how they changed after starting university and another one representing how they remained the same after starting university. We found that both change and continuity memories were specific memories. We also found that change memories were more integrative. However, freshmen who experienced less challenge had slightly more integrative memories. Contrary to the expectations, this might indicate that when the challenge is not high, people can complete the meaning making process in shorter time and integrate their memories into self. Additionally, meaning making was related to well-being such that students who retrieved two non-integrative memories had lower life satisfaction compared to students who retrieved at least one integrative memory. Finally, students retrieved relationship/intimacy

memories at most for both change and continuity memories. However, they focused more on personal development and achievement memories for change memories while retrieving memories about more stable aspects of self like values.

ÖZET

Değişim ve Devamlılığa Dair Benlik Tanımlayıcı Anılar: Üniversite Deneyiminin Etkisi

Bu çalışmada, insan yaşamı için önemli bir geçiş dönemi olan üniversite deneyiminin değişen ve süregelen benlik kavramları üzerindeki etkisi incelenmektedir. Hayattaki geçiş dönemleri çoğunlukla benlik için zorlayıcı durumlar ortaya koymaktadır. İnsanlar bu durumlarda otobiyografik mantık adı verilen, anıları hatırlarken akıl yürütme yöntemlerine daha sık başvurarak ve daha belirgin anıları hatırlayarak bu dönemlerin öncesi ve sonrasındaki benliklerinde tutarlılığı sağlamaya çalışmaktadırlar. Ayrıca insanların çoğunlukla anılarını sürekliliği olan ancak daha iyiye giden bir benlik algısını yansıtmak için hatırladıkları görülmektedir. (örn. Wilson & Ross, 2003). Çalışmada, değişen ve süregelen benlik kavramlarına dair benlik tanımlayan anıların özellikleri karşılaştırılmaktadır. Ayrıca geçiş dönemi etkisinin bu anıların anlatı ve fenomenolojik özellikleri üzerindeki etkisi incelemektedir. Geçiş dönemi olayı üzerinden geçen zamanın ve geçiş döneminin psikolojik ve fiziki etkilerinin incelenmesi amacıyla üniversitenin birinci ve üçüncü sınıflarındaki okuyan öğrenciler üniversiteye başlarken şehir değiştirip değiştirmediklerine göre ikişer gruba ayrılmıştır. Çalışmada katılımcılar üniversite deneyiminin etkisiyle benliklerinin nasıl benzer kaldığına ve benliklerinin nasıl değiştiğine dair iki farklı benlik tanımlayan anı hatırlamışlardır. Üniversite deneyiminin bu anıların anlamlandırılması, anıların hayat hikayesine entegrasyonu ve uyumluluğu gibi anlatı özelliklerini ve fenomenolojik özelliklerini nasıl etkilediğini ve üniversite deneyiminin süresinin etkilerini incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, hem değişim hem de devamlılık anıları çoğunlukla belirgin anılar

olmuştur. Anıların entegrasyonu incelendiğinde değişim anıları daha yüksek entegrasyon içerdiği halde, daha az değişim yaşayan öğrencilerin anılarında daha yüksek entegrasyon görülmüştür. Ayrıca her iki anısında da entegrasyon olmayan öğrencilerin iyi oluş halinin diğer öğrencilerden daha düşük düzeyde olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Son olarak, her iki türdeki anılar da benlikle en çok ilişkiler konusunda ilişkili olsa da, değişim anılarında kişisel gelişim ve başarı bağlamına devamlılık anılarından daha fazla yer verildiği; devamlılık anılarında ise değerler ve tutumlar bağlamlarına daha çok yer verildiği gözlemlenmiştir.

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However, the last note is for myself. Moving out from home to a new city to study university was the very first adult decision I made solely by myself, and the toughest one back then. I can see today that it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I ended up spending 14 years at this beautiful campus that I call home. It is full of good and bad memories that made a big part of who I am today. Finally, I am proud of myself for the person I have become and for completing this thesis.

As Bilbo Baggins said once, I think I am quite ready for another adventure.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Starting university can be considered an important event from the perspective of psychology of memory for it is a transitional life event (McAdams, 2001; Brown, 2016; Enz & Talarico, 2016) that people today would expect to see in a typical life (Berntsen & Rubin, 2004; Tekcan, Kızılöz & Odaman, 2012; Janssen, Uemiya, & Naka, 2014; Scherman, Salgado, Shao, & Berntsen, 2017). Additionally, considering most people study at university between ages 18 – 24, it is within the reminiscence bump period (Glück & Bluck, 2007), a special period in temporal distribution of memories which corresponds to adolescence and early adulthood, and people retrieve exceptionally more memories from this period compared to the rest of their life span (Jansari & Parkin, 1996; for a review see Munawar, Kuhn, & Haque, 2018). Since university experience is as a commonly experienced important life transition which takes place within an important period in memory organization, it is an intriguing question to examine how people's autobiographical memories are influenced by this significant period of university experience. Current study investigated characteristics of people's self-defining memories (SDMs), a special sub-type of autobiographical memories which exemplifies who a person is (Moffitt & Singer, 1994), for changing and stable self-concepts across starting university and how they were influenced by residential moves which take place to start university at a different town.

1.1 Self and memory

The link between autobiographical memories and the self has been discussed in psychology for a long time (Guerini, Marraffa, Meini, & Paternoster, 2019; for a

review, see Greenwald, 1981). Autobiographical memories (ABMs) are among the main sources of self-knowledge (Conway, 2005; Conway, Singer, & Tagini, 2004; McAdams, 2001). According to Brewer (1986) the connection of ABMs and the self has a distinctive pattern, which helps to differentiate ABMs from other forms of long-term memories. The self is the combination of conscious experience, generic knowledge about the self, and memories related to it, therefore autobiographical memories are the database for the self (Brewer, 1986).

Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000) introduced the Self-Memory Systems Model to explain how memories are formed and retrieved in relation to the self. According to the model, there is a dynamic, bidirectional relationship between ABMs and self-concepts. Autobiographical knowledge base stores information regarding self at three different specificity levels to form one's ABMs. These are lifetime periods, general events, and event-specific knowledge in a hierarchical order respectively. An ABM could belong to more than one category or include more than one example from the categories. Knowledge about self-concept is also stored in ABMs at different levels, therefore it is part of the autobiographical knowledge base. Self has an important active role in the retrieval of ABMs. ABMs do not merely store distinct self-knowledge, but recollection of memories shapes the self-concept. Autobiographical memories augment one's active self-concept, while at the same time current self-concept influences which memories to recollect. Mostly the recollections are congruent with the active self-view. According to Conway and Pleydell-Pearce (2000), especially goals initiated by the current self-concept serve as a control mechanism for construction and retrieval of autobiographical memories. Cameron, Wilson, and Ross (2004) agrees with this perspective, stating that people define their selves depending on their memories, which bounds them, but at the same

time this enables a preference among which memories to retrieve and which of them to ignore. Among all, SDMs might be considered special, in terms of their significance to identity. Since they are not augmenting the self-view but they themselves represent it.

When it comes to the cases of life changes, self - identity is subject to change and how self and memories correspond to such periods of life is an important aspect (Conway, Singer, Tagini, 2004). A life changing period impacts self-identity and therefore the memories associated with those self-concepts supposed to be reconstructed or chosen according to changes in life. Within a dynamic framework, autobiographical memories are used in actively developing the self by extracting meaning out of life experiences.

1.1.1 Principles of self

Conway and Pleydell-Pearce's (2000) SMS model proposes that goals of the self-concept which is active at the time of retrieval are the determining criteria for retrieval in a way that memories which support these goals are more likely to be remembered whereas memories which are contradicting or irrelevant with the goals are less likely to be remembered. However, before understanding specific goals related with given self-concepts, it is also important to consider principles of the self and its goal setting nature (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) since they can be observed for all self-concepts a person would have. According to Leary and Baumeister (2000) self is not a stable construct, but an active agent which aims to regulate self-esteem through self-verification and self-enhancement mechanisms (Sedikides, 1993), which compare actual self with different selves or other people to assess its value. Self-verification is the process where self needs to find evidence from internal states,

memories, or outside world to validate its accurate value; whereas self-enhancement is the process where the self looks for clues to boost its value.

Temporal Self-Appraisal Theory (Cameron, Wilson & Ross, 2004) suggests self-assessment is not limited to the comparison of the actual self with other people, or with the ideal/ought self, but the actual self can be compared to past and future selves as well with an intrinsic goal of boosting self-esteem. Additionally, the Temporal Self-Appraisal Theory proposes that past selves are the safest resource for self-appraisal: a healthy mind can distort the facts about other people or the ideal self with limitation to favor actual self in a comparison. On the contrary, people can distort the truth about their past selves both through reconstructing past memories to devalue past selves or through choosing memories representing worse versions of the self from the past in order to favor actual self. Devaluing a past self is not as costly to the self as devaluing the current self, since it leaves room for development.

People also report that they are well aware of the link between goals and memory retrieval and they explicitly reported that they use this function of memories on purpose. In another line of memory research, when people were asked why they retrieve their memories, building a self-appraisal and reminding on their self-identity appears among the main reasons (see Bluck, 2003; Bluck & Alea, 2008; Wilson & Ross, 2003). In Bluck's (2003) definition of memory functions, people report that they retrieve their autobiographical memories for self-enhancement, to keep the record of self-concept and for emotion regulation.

Similarly, in Wilson and Ross' (2003) definition, identity function serves two motives, first is to hold a consistent and coherent view of the self, and the second is self-enhancement. Research emphasized the self-enhancement function more than the others in terms of shaping what people remember. Conway and Ross (1984)

explored in a pre- and post- study evaluation procedure, where they asked participants to evaluate themselves on a skill before and after a bogus training. In that study, participants reported lower scores for their abilities on a hindsight evaluation, although the experimenters have the pre-training evaluations. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that when people are motivated or expect to see an improvement for instance in their abilities, in their relationship quality or in their self-esteem, they reconstruct the past accordingly, even if they lack any clue of improvement in current selves. As Wilson and Ross (2003) suggested, identity formation through autobiographical memories is not a static process where it is once constructed and remain identical. Due to the reconstructive nature of remembering, impact of current self-concept and goals are important in shaping what to remember and what to inhibit (Conway, 2005).

1.1.2 Role of university experience

Considering all the theoretical perspectives mentioned above about how memories are used to in a way to represent self-concepts in a more positive way and boost self-esteem, university experience would give the opportunity to observe them more easily. Because, in addition to the self's intrinsic motivation of seeing an improved self-appraisal, university experience is a transitional event where development is inherently expected since it an educational institution where people attend at the time of becoming an adult.

University experience may bring many and mostly positive changes to a person's life, hence, challenges to identity. Having a continuous sense of self across all changes in life is equally important as having a sense of developing self (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). Therefore, the developments happening through the

course of life should be built up on each other with a meaning and in a way to serve continuous sense of self. Habermas and Bluck (2000) suggested that the better the coherence of a life story narrative, the stable the sense of self and coherence of life story develops with age. Thus, people need autobiographical reasoning to link the experiences to the self (Pasupathi, Mansour, & Brubaker, 2007).

Habermas and Köber (2015) investigated how people restore continuity in their sense of self after biographical ruptures, i.e. "major external life changes" in their definition, like loss of a significant other, having a new relationship, moving to a new apartment/town, changing occupation. They compared different age groups (four groups of young adults, one middle age group and one old age group) in terms of how their sense of self-continuity is correlated with biographical ruptures they have underwent in the last four years. Age groups did not merely differ in their sense of self-continuity. Sense of self-continuity did not correlated with autobiographical reasoning either. However, they found that remembering memories without developing reasoning is not sufficient to maintain a continuous sense of self, such that only for the high objective change in life group (operationalized as the frequencies of biographical rupture events), autobiographical reasoning was found to be correlated with less self-discontinuity. They concluded that when a discontinuity occurs in life, it can be integrated into the life story by using autobiographical reasoning. Reasoning helps people to integrate any experience into life story while maintaining a coherent sense of self. In the scope of the current study, we therefore would expect that the higher the change participants went through, the more autobiographical reasoning (coherence in our terms) would be associated with a better higher self-esteem and self-concept clarity.

There are also debates about how long it takes for an extraordinary event in life to take place in memory to provide a continuous sense of self. Habermas and Köber (2015) found that especially within the 4 years of a biographical rupture, autobiographical reasoning might diminish its negative impact on sense of self-continuity. They did not investigated the number of changes participants have experienced in other periods of life, but they reported that more middle and old age participants were in the least biographical ruptures groups. Since they have found that only for higher change group autobiographical reasoning was correlated with sense of self-continuity, we might assume that time passed since the biographical ruptures is another influential criteria. Because, based on the life-script (Berntsen & Rubin, 2004) and life story (e.g. Thomsen & Berntsen, 2008) studies, middle and old age participants probably experienced similar biographical ruptures as well, but at a further past. We can conclude considering the findings and implications of these studies that the recency of the biographical rupture might affect the relationship between autobiographical reasoning and sense of self-continuity. Therefore, in the current study time spent at university might influence how coherent people's memories would be.

On the other hand, in terms of temporal stability, McAdams et al. (2006) compared two groups of undergraduate students longitudinally to investigate continuity and change of the memories which are mostly included in the life story. They asked memories for 10 extraordinary life events, two memories for each of the following category: peak experiences, turning points, nadir experiences, earliest and other vivid memories. Participants retrieved memories for all these categories at three points in time (first session, second session – short term retrieval of memories in three months and third session – retrieval of memories in long term in 3 years) to

see the stability of memories – i.e. the case of retrieving same event memories over time in each session. They found that people's emotional tone and narrative complexity was increasing with time and correlated between sessions such that those who report positive memories in the first session kept reporting positive memories. On the other hand, specific events participants reported have changed in time, less in short term (3-month period) than in long term (3-year period), and motivational themes (agency, communion and personal growth) of these memories showed little longitudinal stability. Still, participants reported different aspects of the same events at different times. Based on this study, themes people choose to narrate about their university experience might differ from each other, such that relationship themed memories might decrease in older group since communion themes were not correlated with first and third sessions in McAdams et al.'s (2006) study.

Similarly, Köber and Habermas (2017) investigated life stories and other important memory narratives of children, adolescents and young adults and found that memories for culturally normative events (mostly life-script events including starting and graduating from college) were more stable over time compared to non-normative positive (e.g. major achievements, close relationships) and negative events (e.g. divorce, serious illness). Normative events are found to be one of the key elements which makes a life story stable and sense of self coherent over time. Therefore, memories of starting university which are expected to be influential and stable over time, are more likely to differ in terms of integration by time to build a coherent sense of self. Based on the findings mentioned above, current study will investigate memories of university students across cohorts. Although all memories are expected to be more coherent than non-coherent in the current study, according to the findings of Habermas and Köber (2015), it is expected to see more coherent

memories in juniors compared to first year students. Additionally, since stability and coherence in times of change in the sense of self were primarily investigated in the life stories, current study will focus on the change and continuity concepts in SDMs as well.

As found by McAdams (2006), higher autobiographical reasoning was associated with better life satisfaction and higher well-being. McAdams (2006) developed the terms redemption and contamination in narrating a life story, to describe the ways people justify their experiences. Redemption is the meaning making process where people derive a positive meaning out of their negative experiences such as sufferings and adverse conditions by linking them to positive events which take place later in their life. On the contrary, contamination is where people experience adversity or link their negative experiences to a preceding positive events and diminish the former event's positive meaning. The results showed that redemption is associated with better life adjustment and life satisfaction. McLean and Lilgendahl (2008) also investigated the impact of redemptive recollections for high and low point memories and found that, especially for young participants, redemptive low point memories serve identity function more frequently, and redemption is associated with higher well-being. Therefore, in the current study, we expect autobiographical reasoning, especially in negative change memories, is expected to be associated with higher life satisfaction.

1.1.3 Memory characteristics and the self-concept

Theories mentioned in the previous section are suggesting that SDMs may be retrieved in a way to boost self-esteem. While retrieving SDMs, specific self-concepts associated with those memories are also important in the sense that validity

of a self-concept (if one defines themselves on that concept at the time of retrieval). Accordingly, whether the retrieved memories are about changed or continuous self-concepts might influence the phenomenology of SDMs. In the current study, SDMs for change and continuity will be investigated for phenomenological qualities. Visual perspective, subjective temporal distance, specificity and integration are especially found to be related to valence of a self-concept. Additionally, change and continuity SDMs might differ from each other on these qualities. Following sections explain how they are related.

1.1.3.1 Visual perspective

Visual perspective is one of the features of memory narratives (Nigro and Neisser, 1983). They proposed that when a person retrieves a memory, they can see the moment through either field or observer perspectives. People may move between these two perspectives. Switching from field to observer perspective helps a person to detach from the emotions of an experience, whereas one tends to remain in the field perspective to re-experience the original event more vividly. They found that the ratio of memories retrieved predominantly from field perspective is almost two-third as opposed to one-third of memories retrieved from observer perspective. Siedlecki (2015) investigated the correlations between visual perspective and valence of memories and showed that field perspective is correlated with the emotional intensity at the time of retrieval for positive and neutral memories, but there was no significant correlation between emotional intensity and the visual perspective of negative memories. Additionally, they have found that more positively evaluated memories in general and less negative memories among all the negative memories were correlated with field perspective.

Libby and Eibach (2002) extended the findings to self-concept and ABM relationship, where they showed that people use observer perspective not just to detach from an emotion but from a self-concept, including a past self. They run both correlational and experimental studies. In the correlational study (Exp. 1), they asked university students to retrieve memories from high school both for the stable aspects of the self and the changed aspects of the self. Results showed that participants recalled memories of self's stable aspects dominantly from field perspective and field perspective memories had higher feeling of reliving. They also investigated the phenomenon in experimental settings. In order to collect memories of events which are congruent vs. incongruent with current self-concept, they studied with religious and antireligious people about their memories of performing religious actions like attending church ceremonies and praying either for their own religion or for someone else's religion (Exp. 2). Antireligious people, for whom the memories were not congruent with current self-concept, reported most of the memories from third person perspective, whereas religious group for whom the memories were congruent with their self-concept retrieved memories predominantly with field perspective. They also investigated two self-concepts, which are both valid but in different contexts by asking teenagers about their self-concepts in different relationship schemas (Exp. 3). Teenagers were asked to describe their self-concept in their relationship with their parents or with their friends as the priming procedure. Later, they were asked to retrieve memories either about their families or about their friends. Those who wrote memories incongruent with the primed relationship schema retrieved memories mostly from observer perspective (83 % for parents schema priming and 69 % for friends schema priming). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in case of a transitional event where people experience a self-concept change,

memories that are retrieved from a further point in would be more likely to be retrieved from the observer perspective. Additionally, for memories depicting a self-concept which is incongruent with the person's current self-concept, or depicting a negative self-concept, observer perspective will be more likely as well.

1.1.3.2 Subjective temporal distance and dating

Ross and Wilson's (2002) research on subjective temporal distance claims that dating errors for autobiographical memories can be related to self-appraisals. According to Temporal Self-Appraisal Theory (Cameron, Wilson & Ross, 2004), people see their more distant selves less favorable where they evaluate their current self most favorable since people are seeking evidence for self-improvement, especially on attributes which are important to them. This theory suggests that people achieve positive current self-appraisals in two ways. First, they evaluate selves from more remote memories as less favorable than they actually are. Second, they date less favorable selves further away in time to feel more distant from them.

Wilson (2000) showed how this phenomenon works in her study. They manipulated the perceived time distance for a failure in a high school class by locating this date within two different time periods, first one was from birth to date and the second one was from age of 16 to date. They did not change the actual time of the event, but in the former, within a broader time period high school would feel closer than they would feel in a shorter period of from the age of 16. Thus, they manipulated the subjective distance and observed that people tend to criticize their distant selves more critically. Ross and Wilson (2002) argued that this is mainly because people want to feel they have improved on critical aspects of self. Their results also supported what Conway and Ross' (1984) study. Therefore, it is

reasonable to conclude that when people are motivated or expect to see an improvement, they reconstruct the past accordingly, since it is harder to distort the perception of current selves with a healthy mind because it would contradict with the present facts and cues about the actual state of the current self perpetually.

Additionally, in another study, Wilson (2000) asked participants to write one of the following types of self-descriptions; flattering the self and reflecting accurate self. What they found was in line with the above findings. Even though they do not push previous selves further in time, they included negative past self-evaluations in the flattering description condition. Another factor influencing subjective temporal distance is the valence of the memories for past events. According to Ross and Wilson (2003), people should feel closer to past accomplishments and should distance themselves from an earlier failed self. Considering these findings, in the current study, if people write self-defining memories from further past, they will be more likely to depict negative self-aspects especially in change-emphasizing condition, to show an improvement. In the continuity-emphasizing condition, memories are expected to be more recent and to be about more favorable self-aspects.

1.1.3.3 Specificity

Self-defining memories are found to be highly specific, i.e. referencing to events which occurred in a single, specific time, and in a definite period (Blagov & Singer, 2004; Singer, Rexhaj, & Baddeley, 2007). However, when it comes to life transitions, it is hard to implement specificity concept of self-defining memories to transition memories. Since transitions include a switch from one phase of life to another in a sense and since they are binding two different phases of life, they are

hardly compared to self-defining memories which are conceptualized as specific event memories demonstrating who a person is. In a study by Enz and Talarico (2016), they investigated the phenomenology of transitions, turning points and transition-linked turning points. They differentiate these three kinds from each other, such that they proposed transitions as part of life story whereas turning points are assumed as reference points in autobiographical memory. They found that turning point memories were more specific than the transition-linked turning points. Least specific memories were the transition memories, which are expected more likely to be longer periods. When we reflect these findings to the change and continuity memories, memories of changing self-concepts might be more likely to include turning points whereas continuity memories are expected to be more like transitions since they would be about self-concepts which remained accurate across different phases of life.

1.1.3.4 Integration

According to Singer and Blagov (2004) people engage in actively developing a narrative of identity which links experiences and self together and give a meaning to them all. However, this is a macro-level effort, but it applies to self-defining memories as well, since the consistency of a life narrative requires self-defining memories to endure as well. To hold a consistent sense of self, as explained by Habermas and Köber (2015), in cases of life changes autobiographical reasoning builds up a sense of congruence again, even if the sense of self suffered a disruption. Therefore, in this study, we expect change memories to be more integrated for a continuous sense of self.

1.2 Transitional impact of starting university and residential moves

Conway, Singer, and Tagini (2004) suggest that there autobiographical memories need to provide two qualities, they need to build a sense of coherence and there need to be a correspondence between experience and memory, such that memories are required be true to some extent but not totally accurate. They call this phenomenon "adaptive correspondence" because the memories may remain true to the experience mostly and can be retrieved in a way to build self-coherence at the same time.

Additionally, distinctiveness of an event makes it more likely to be remembered, and to be used as an anchor while dating our experiences according to Conway et al. (2004). In that sense, when one's life is full of routines, daily experiences are less likely to be used as dating anchors since they are hard to discriminate from one another. Accordingly, if an event occurs with life changing consequences, it is more likely to serve as a milestone in memory, as it would in one's life course (Brown, 2016). Therefore, events like starting university and moving to a new town are potential candidates to be anchors in autobiographical memory organization and many other memories are expected to be retrieved in reference to these events at least for dating.

In Transition Theory (Brown, 2016), there are two kinds of impact an event could have, material impact and psychological impact. While the former refers to changes in physical conditions and materials one owns, the latter refers to psychological changes such that people's perception of who they are, mood changes and so on (Svob, Brown, Reddon, Uzer, & Lee, 2014). The difference between these two kinds of impact have been investigated especially with reference to historical events (e.g. Brown, Lee, Krslak, Conrad, Hansen & Havelka, 2009). In their study, Brown et al. (2009) were interested in how people defines periods in their lives and

in their autobiographies with reference to events that highly impacted their societies. So, they investigated people from eight countries for several negative public events like 9/11, war, and earthquake. They also investigated people from two different regions of the countries to compare the impact of change in the fabric of daily life. This was necessary since people in the same country would see the events same in terms of their historical importance whereas only those who live in the region of earthquake, war or 9/11 would suffer due to the catastrophe in their daily living. They found out that the more daily life conditions were influenced by the disastrous events, the more frequently people date their autobiographical memories with reference to these historical events. Additionally, they found that this impact (living in history effect in their terms) is related to how easily people's daily life turns to normal routines. For instance, in case of 9/11, people in New York experienced the psychological effects for a long time but their physical conditions did not change as much. On the other hand, for life conditions to turn back to normal in Sarajevo after war or Turkey after the earthquake took many months and up to years in some parts of the countries. This difference is reflected in the living in history effect such that people in those countries used more references to historical events in their memories. To sum up, material change seems like a defining criterion for whether to use a specific event as a reference in time. In the current study, university experience is expected to be a psychologically influential event for all students, however, to compare the impact of residential moves, transitional impact of starting university will be assessed as a measure of changes in life.

1.3 Current study

Present study aims to investigate characteristics of self-defining memories in relation to life transitions. Since building sense of self-coherence is the matter in times of change, we focused on the changing and continuous self-concepts. Therefore, our first question was to investigate the differences in the narrative and phenomenological characteristics of self-defining memories about change and continuity.

We also addressed the impact of transitional event and time passed since the transitional event. Starting university was chosen as the transitional event since it is a common and recent life transition for young adult population. Additionally, starting university is a period where people expect to develop over time. This was an important feature since people are motivated to see their self as continuous but improving.

Our first assumption was that transitional impact of the university would be different for people from different cities, such that the psychological impact of starting university would be the same for all people. On the other hand, people who move to another city during this transitional period would experience higher material impact, since their fabric of daily life, for instance places they spend time and their physical conditions would change considerably (Brown, 2016). We assumed that the amount of change people experience would have an effect on memory characteristics. Accordingly, we were interested in the differences in memory characteristics between people from different cities.

Finally, we were interested in the effect of time passed since the transitional event. First, time is expected to give people more time to think about their

experiences and make meaning out of them. Second, time is a factor that influences feeling of distance from memories and the past selves (Habermas & Köber, 2015).

Our first hypothesis was to observe a difference between change and continuity memories regarding memory specificity. Since the memories for turning points were found to be more specific than memories for transitions, we hypothesized that change memories will be more specific than continuity memories since they would be more likely to include turning points.

Our second hypothesis was that change memories were expected to be more integrative than continuity memories since in times of change, people needs to explain that change to themselves and integrate memories of such events into their narrative identity to have a coherent sense of self. We further hypothesized that there would be an effect of cohort and city, such that older participants would retrieve more integrative memories due to the time they have had since starting university. This is because autobiographical reasoning is an effortful process and it takes time (McLean & Fournier, 2008). Therefore people who had more time to think and share their self-defining memories of the transitional event of starting university would have more time to process these memories and were expected to have memories they could integrate into their sense of self.

The other indication of autobiographical reasoning was coherence of memories. We hypothesized that change memories would to be more coherent since change memories would be more likely to require a resolution to create a sense of continuity in the self. We also hypothesized that coherence of memories would be associated with higher self-esteem and higher life satisfaction, more in the case of change memories than continuity memories. Additionally, we hypothesized that the higher the impact of starting university, which was the case for students from

different cities in this study, the more coherent and integrated memories would be associated with better life satisfaction.

Finally, we hypothesized that for both change and continuity memories, more positive evaluations of self would be retrieved from more recent times, while memories with negative self-evaluations would be retrieved from a distant past based on the fact that people prefer to feel closer to their past accomplishments (Cameron, Wilson, Ross, 2004).

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1 Participants

Boğaziçi University students enrolled in the Introduction to Psychology and Social Psychology courses participated in this study. In the beginning of the semester, a general online preselection survey was sent via e-mail to all students who are registered in psychology courses mentioned above. This survey included surveys for all experiments with a preselection process that were run in the Boğaziçi University Psychology Department during the semester. In total, 1,449 students took the online preselection survey. For the purposes of the current study, the preselection survey aimed to ensure that participants considered starting university as a transitional event. To control the impact of it, we only accepted participants who did not experience another transitional event. Based on this survey, students who experienced another transitional event around the time they have started university were excluded (N = 588). These events included new romantic relationships, break-ups, hospitalization, changes in sexual orientation and religious beliefs. Additionally, participants who attended another university before (N = 124) or who transferred between departments at their present university (N = 79) were not invited to take part in this study. Similarly, participants who left their parent's housed during high school or before (N = 361) were excluded to limit all the participants' experience of moving to live on their own. Finally, participants who studied in the English preparatory year for more than its regular time (up to three semesters, N = 297) were excluded from the list of participants.

As a result, 260 students were invited to the experiment via e-mail. In the experimental sessions across two semesters in 2018 and 2019, 70 Boğaziçi

University undergraduates participated. One participant who completed the experimental session was excluded from the data since he did not report any memories. The final sample consisted of 69 participants (41 female, 28 male, M_{age} = 21.16, SD_{age} = 1.65). All students who participated in the preselection survey and the experiment took partial course credit for the psychology course they were enrolled in.

There were two participant variables of interest. First variable was the city students were coming from. Boğaziçi University is in Istanbul, Turkey, which is the largest city in Turkey with a 15 million population according to the TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2018) report on nation's population. According to UN's World Cities (2018) report, it is the 15th largest megacity in the world. Since our first variable was to measure whether people experience high material impact while starting university, this variable (city) had two levels: İstanbul (N = 34) vs. other cities (N = 35). Second participant variable was the time passed since students started university. This was operationalized as the cohort students belong to. There were 43 freshmen and 26 juniors. Table 1 shows the number of participants in each category and Table 2 shows the age of participants across groups.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants across Conditions

	İstanbul		Other Cities		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
Freshmen	12	8	12	11	43
Juniors	8	6	9	3	26

Table 2. Age Distribution of Participants in Groups according to Gender

		Female			Male		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
İstanbul	Freshmen	12	21.67	2.14	8	20.62	1.60
	Juniors	8	22.25	2.31	6	21.83	2.31
Other Cities	Freshmen	12	20.66	.65	11	20.09	1.04
	Juniors	9	21.22	1.56	3	21.00	1.00

2.1.1 Living conditions

Our participants answered some questions about their socioeconomic status (SES). First of all, 63 of 69 (91%) participants reported that they used to live in a metropolitan (including Istanbul) or a city and six participants reported that they lived in smaller towns before university. Most of the participants (N = 48) reported that they used to live in the same city for more than 18 years, whereas only 6 of them lived in a city for less than 10 years (minimum number was 5 years). Other 15 participants lived in the same city between 11 – 17 years. Only people who lived with their families before university were invited to the experiment. Current living conditions of the participants were listed in Table 3.

Table 3. Number and Percentage of Participants for Different Living Conditions

	Family	Shared Flat	Private Flat	Dormitory	Total
N	12	14	6	37	69
%	17.4	20.3	8.7	53.6	100

2.1.2 Education

English preparatory year (two semesters) is included in the regular curriculum of Boğaziçi University. In the current study, 59 out of 69 students (86%) reported that they studied the English preparatory year. All students reported that their current program was the first program they enrolled.

2.1.3 Socioeconomic status

Mothers' and fathers' education were taken as indicators of socioeconomic status (SES) and more than half of the fathers (43 of 69, 62%) and mothers (36 of 69, 52%) of participants were graduated from universities or higher degrees. In terms of income, there were a smaller number of participants, 13 out of 69 (19%), who reported that they would consider their families as low to middle SES group. Around half of the participants (45%) evaluated their status as middle SES, whereas 25 participants (36%) considered themselves as middle to high SES.

42 participants who answered the question reported that there were at least some people in their family or extended family who went to university before they attended university. Additionally, 55 out of 69 students reported that they were not working in any job, and 14 participants reported that they were working for part-time or freelance jobs.

2.2 Materials

In this study, we collected data with the following instruments: online preselection questionnaire, Transitional Impact Scale, Self-Defining Memory Instructions, Memory Experiences Questionnaire (Short Form), Centrality of Event Scale, Self - Concept Clarity Scale, Self-Esteem Scale, Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale

(PANAS), and Satisfaction with Life Scale. Additionally, participants were asked about demographic information.

2.2.1 Online preselection questionnaire

The preselection questionnaire was run for three purposes. The first aim was to recruit equal number of students with regard to pre-university residence. The second aim was to ask questions regarding starting university in a separate session from the memory retrieval task. Because, asking about the transitional impact of starting university and questions regarding the memory of this event could prime the self-defining memories and might have caused them to be retrieved from a shorter time interval around starting university instead of the whole university experience. For these purposes, this questionnaire started with transitional impact scale for starting university.

The third aim was to ensure that starting university will be the only milestone experience around the time it happened. Therefore, participants were also asked to report any other transitional event they experienced around the time they started university. They also filled the transitional impact scale for that event. Additionally, they answered some other background questions like whether they are studying at their first university, the entrance year for their present university. All questions are provided in Appendix A.

2.2.2 Transitional impact scale

This scale was created by Svob et al. (2014) to measure the impact of transitional life events. The scale consists of 12 items in total for these 2 subscales, measuring psychological and material impact. Psychological impact measures how the

transitional events influences psychological states and way of thinking of a person. This subscale has items like “this event has changed my attitudes” and “this event has impacted my emotional responses”. Material impact subscale measures the changes in physical conditions and surroundings including places and people due to the transitional event. Material impact subscale has items like “this event has changed things I own”. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). See Appendix A for the scale as part of the online preselection questionnaire (Q 13). Cronbach’s Alpha for the Turkish version used in the current study was measured as .88.

2.2.3 Self-defining memory instructions

Self-defining memory (SDM) instructions were adapted from the original self-defining memory instructions (Singer & Blagov, 2004). The instructions were to retrieve memories of clearly remembered important life experiences; memories that explain or hint who they are. In addition to those instructions, in the beginning of each memory, one of the two following statements was added. For the first memory (change memory), participants were asked to write an SDM which shows how they changed after starting university. For the second memory (continuity memory), an SDM which shows that they have not changed after starting university, that they are still the same person as they were before university. Time frame is not specified since the current study also investigated the periods the memories come from and the specificity of memories between change and continuity memories. The self-defining memory instructions are provided in Appendix B.

2.2.4 Memory experiences questionnaire

In order to measure phenomenological qualities of memories, we used the short version of Memory Experiences Questionnaire (MEQ, Lucetti & Sutin, 2016). This is a 31-item questionnaire measuring 10 constructs of phenomenological characteristics of a retrieved memory, namely vividness, coherence, accessibility, time perspective, sensory detail, emotional intensity, visual perspective, sharing, distancing and valence. Cronbach's alphas were above .70 for all subscales in short form. The Turkish translation used in this study was based on Erdoğan's (2008) translation of the original long version (Sutin & Robins, 2007). All subscales had 2 – 4 questions. For instance, time perspective has items such as "my memory for the day when the event took place is clear" and sharing has items like "I frequently think about or talk about this event with others". All the items by subscales are listed in Appendix C. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – not at all, 5 – very much). In the current study, Cronbach's alphas were measured as .77 in both scales completed for continuity memories and change memories. Turkish version of the short form is presented in Appendix D.

2.2.5 Centrality of event scale

Centrality of Event Scale was developed by Berntsen and Rubin (2006) as long and short forms and measures the degree to which people integrate events into their identities. The short form of the scale consists of seven items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$) and presented in Appendix E. The scale includes items like "I feel that this event has become a central part of my life story". The scale was rated on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 (not at all) to 7 (totally).

In the current study, we used the Turkish translation by Boyacıoğlu and Aktaş (2018) and it is presented in Appendix F. In the validity and reliability study, Boyacıoğlu and Aktaş (2018) found that the short version has a Cronbach's alpha of .89 and .82 for positive and negative memories respectively. Our study yielded a Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$ for continuity memories and Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$ for change memories. All inter-item correlations were above .50.

2.2.6 Self-esteem scale

To measure participants' self-esteem, Turkish version of the 10-item Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used in this study. It was first adapted to Turkish by Çuhadaroğlu (1986) and a later psychometric study by Sümer and Güngör (2000) revealed the reliability of this scale with a Cronbach's alpha as .85. In the current study, the scale was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and Cronbach's alpha was .92. The English version is given in Appendix G and the Turkish version of the scale is given in Appendix H.

2.2.7 Self-concept clarity scale

Campbell et al. (1996) developed this scale to measure how clear people's ideas about their own self-concepts are. The scale includes 12 items such as "I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality" and "My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another". The scale was given in Appendix I. The Turkish version used in this study (Appendix J) was adapted by Sümer and Güngör (1999) with 7-point Likert Scale. However, we used a 5-point Likert scale similar to Küçükarslan (2014), (1 – strongly disagree; 5 – strongly agree) since it was

asked in the same questionnaire with Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale that is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach' alpha value was .89 in our study.

2.2.8 Satisfaction with life scale

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Appendix K) is created by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) and measures the degree to which people are satisfied with their lives. It has five items like "In most ways my life is close to my ideal." This scale was adapted to Turkish by Durak, Şenol-Durak and Gençöz (2010; Appendix L). Cronbach's Alpha was .81 for the Turkish version and item total correlations were ranged from .59 to .63 for university students. The scale was rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree; 7 – strongly agree).

2.2.9 Positive and negative affect schedule

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was first developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, (1988) to measure the mood in two dimensions. This measure has two subscales, one for positive affect and one for negative affect. Both scales have 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – very slightly or not at all, 5 – extremely). This scale was adopted into Turkish by Gençöz (2000). This study revealed Cronbach's Alphas as .83 for positive affect and .86 for negative affect scales. The scale is given in Appendix M.

2.2.10 Demographics

There were seven questions in this section about family, education and income. These questions were added to determine socioeconomic status and are asked at the end of the study. The questions are given in Appendix N.

2.3 Design and procedure

This study has a 2 (city: Istanbul vs. other) X 2 (cohort: freshmen vs. juniors) X 2 (memory type: change memory vs. continuity memory) mixed design. First, all participants took the online questionnaire and those who meet the conditions were selected based on their answers in online preselection questionnaire. After at least 2 weeks of their online preselection survey completion, they were invited to the experimental session via e-mail. Participants took part in the experiment in a computer lab, in separated cubicles. The study started with writing of the self-defining memories followed by the memory experiences questionnaire immediately after each memory. Order of the two self-defining memories were randomly counterbalanced. Nearly half of the participants (N = 33) recalled the change memory first, and the other participants (N = 36) recalled the continuity memory first. Remaining questionnaires were presented in the same order for every participant, starting with MEQ. Later, participants filled out self-esteem questionnaire, self-concept clarity questionnaire, satisfaction with life scale and demographical questions respectively. Participants were fully debriefed at the end of the session. This study was reviewed and approved by the institutional review board, the Ethics Committee for Master's Theses and PhD Dissertations in Social Sciences and Humanities at Boğaziçi University. Approval Form is presented at Appendix O.

2.4 Manipulation check

To check the assumption that people who came from other cities to Istanbul for university would show different material impact by starting university, we run a pilot study. All the materials to be used in the study were given to second year psychology students in a single session. Participants were given partial course credit for their

participation. Fifty students took part in the pilot study, 16 of them were excluded from the analyses because they were either master's students or they were enrolled in a different university or department before. Among the 34 students (24 females), 13 used to live in the same city (Istanbul, Turkey) they attended university. As expected, material impact scores were significantly higher for people from other cities who moved to Istanbul to start university (M = 4.20, SD = .47) than those who were already living in Istanbul (M = 3.38, SD = .84; t (32) = -3.63, p = .001). Psychological impact scores for starting university were the same for Istanbul group (M = 3.74, SD = .78) and for other cities group (M = 3.82, SD = .88), t (32) = -.25, p = .805.

In conclusion, our findings in this pilot study supported what Brown (2016) suggested: those who moved to a new city to start university experienced greater material impact. On the other hand all students who did and did not move to a new city showed similar psychological impact. Therefore, we concluded that starting university can be considered as a life transition.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

3.1 Transitional impact scores

Following the manipulation check in the pilot data, this sample was also tested for the transitional impact of moving from another city to start university. A 2 X 2 factorial ANOVA showed that there was an effect of city on the material impact, F (1, 65) = 8.29, p = .005, MSE = .53, η_p^2 = .11 but cohort did not have an effect, F (1, 65) = 2.916, p > .05, MSE = .53. As predicted, participants from other cities (M = 3.88, SD = .68) rated material transitional impact of starting university higher than participants from Istanbul (M = 3.45, SD = .81). There was no difference in terms of the material impact of starting university between freshmen (M = 3.57, SD = .71) and juniors (M = 3.84, SD = .85). Interaction between city and cohort was not significant either, F (1, 65) = 2.16, p > .05, MSE = .53.

For the psychological impact scores, a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA did not yield any significant effect of city, F (1, 65) = .72, p > .05, MSE = .95, or cohort, (F (1, 65) = .862, p > .05, MSE = .95. The interaction between city and cohort was not significant either, F (1, 65) = .41, p > .05, MSE = .95. Figure 1 shows material and psychological transitional impact of all groups.

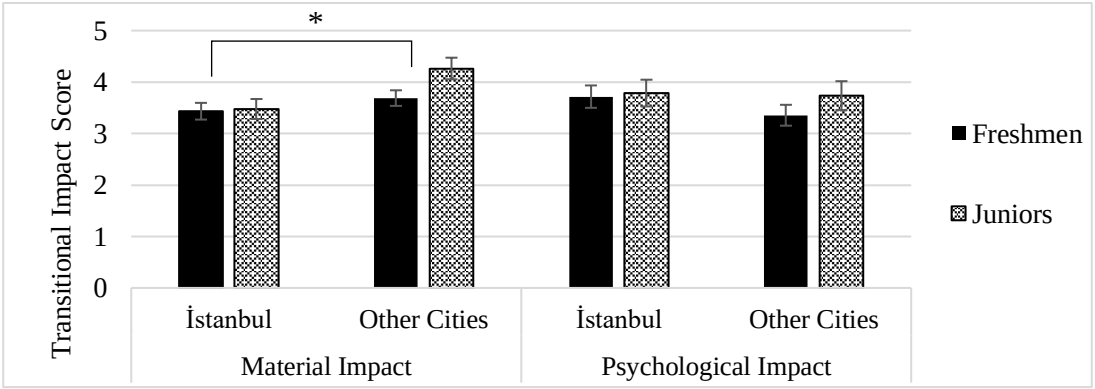

Figure 1. Transitional impact scores for starting university

We also assessed the impact of starting university by asking whether participants would consider starting university as a turning point in their lives. A 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA showed no difference between cities ((F (1, 65) = .071, p > .05, MSE = 2.34) or between cohorts (F (1, 65) = .050, p > .05, MSE = 2.34). All groups evaluated starting university as a turning point to the same extent (See Figure 2). Interaction was not significant either, F (1, 65) = .588, p > .05, MSE = 2.34.

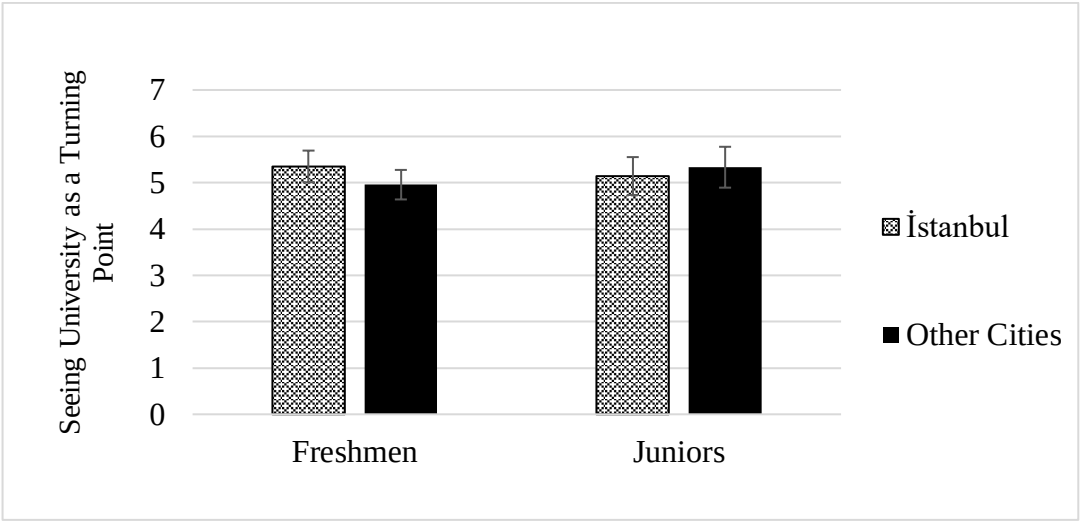

Figure 2. Starting university as a turning point

3.2 Narrative qualities

Memory narratives were coded for six characteristics. There were 138 narratives in total, with equal number of memories for each memory type (change and continuity). Two narratives from continuity memories and one narrative from change memories were excluded from these analyses because did not qualify as memories. In these three cases, participants stated that they had a memory about starting university but they did not explicitly narrated the memory, focusing on the influence or their own evaluation of the event. Therefore, all the analyses on narrative qualities were run on 135 memories, 67 of which were continuity memories and 68 of them were change

memories. However, all other analyses were run with the scores for all 138 memories.

All the narratives were coded by a single trained coder. For reliability purposes, 60 of the memories (30 continuity memories and 30 change memories) were coded by a second coder as well. All the analyses were run according to the first coder. Reliability analyses were run by collapsing the categories into two such as specific vs. non-specific, or high coherence (level 2 and level 3) vs. low coherence (level 0 and level 1). Agreement between the two coders are presented in the pertinent sections.

3.2.1 Gender differences

We compared the gender effect in narrative length in a 2 x 2 factorial ANOVA and found that female and male participants did not differ in their narrative length in change memories (t (67) = 1.26, p > .05) and in continuity memories (t (67) = - .10, p > .05). Narrative length of memories in terms of number of words according to gender is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Narrative Length of Change and Continuity Memories according to Gender in Number of Words

	Female			Male		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Change Memories	41	143.68	102.62	28	115.75	68.14
Continuity Memories	41	100.49	53.68	28	102.07	73.05

We also compared male and female participants in the narrative characteristics of specificity, integration and coherence. We found no difference in any of the characteristics (all ps > .05 and highest χ^2 was 2.02). Table 5 shows the

percentages of memories retrieved by female and male participants in the narrative qualities of specificity, integration and coherence.

Table 5. Narrative Qualities according to Gender

		Female		Male	
		Change Memories	Continuity Memories	Change Memories	Continuity Memories
Specificity	Specific	76%	78%	67%	80%
	Non-specific	24%	22%	33%	20%
Integration	Integrative	63%	42%	46%	46%
	Non-integrative	37%	58%	54%	54%
Contextual Coherence	Low	37%	51%	48%	58%
	High	63%	49%	52%	42%
Chronological Coherence	Low	20%	32%	26%	42%
	High	80%	68%	74%	58%
Thematic Coherence	Low	10%	34%	22%	38%
	High	90%	66%	78%	62%

3.2.2 Narrative length

Narrative length, measured as the word count of written narratives, of change and continuity memories were compared. Change memories (M = 132.35, SD = 90.71) were almost 30 % longer than continuity memories (M = 101.13, SD = 61.77), t (68) = -3.17, p = .002. Additionally, length of continuity memories and change memories were highly correlated (r (68) = .48, p < .001).

3.2.3 Specificity

Specificity was coded based on Singer and Blagov's (2000) self-defining memory categorization manual. According to this manual, there are three levels for specific memories. Type 1 specific memories include only single-event statements which take place at a specific, short time interval and they are rich in imagistic details. For instance, they can include a quotation from speech, vivid pictures or descriptions of intense emotions. Type 2 specific memories consist of single-event statements accompanied by contextual information to locate memory among other memories. For instance they provide a background about why this memory is important or how it is linked to other memories. In addition to these links, it has single-event statements in detail like type 1 specific memories. Type 3 specific memories consist of multiple single-event statements. They may extend in terms of time in a way to link not general periods but more than one specific events that can extend beyond a day.

On the other hand, non-specific memories have two types; episodic and generic memories. Episodic memories are events that take place in episodes of broader time periods from weeks to months without mentioning single events in details. Generic memories include events which are repeated regularly without giving a reference to a distinctive single event. For instance, these memories might include time periods like every holiday or every summer. Inter-rater agreement was 84 % in the specificity of memories and Cohen's Kappa was .51

The distribution of specific memories and non-specific memories with their subtypes among memory types is reported in Table 6. However, three types of specific memory categories were collapsed into a single category and two non-

specific memories were collapsed into a single category for all other analyses and we used a binary coding for memory specificity as specific vs. non-specific memories.

Results showed that, there was no difference between memory types in specificity in collapsed categories, χ^2 (1, N = 134) = .37, p > .05. However, change and continuity memories differed from each other in terms of specificity types, χ^2 (2, N = 101) = 4.63, p = .039, *Cramer's V* = .25. Change memories were higher in type 3 specific memories (22.1 %) than continuity memories (9.1 %). Since change memories are more likely to be about events bridged around a turning point, being at a specificity level that covers more than one single event was in line with the predictions.

Table 6. Specificity of Continuity and Change Memories

Memory Type	Continuity Memory		Change Memory	
	N	%	N	%
Specific Memories	52	78%	49	72%
Type 1	28	42%	17	25%
Type 2	18	27%	17	25%
Type 3	6	9%	15	22%
Non-specific Memories	14	21%	19	28%
Episodic Memories	7	10%	13	19%
Generic Memories	7	10%	6	9%
Unclassified	1	1%	0	0%
Total	67	100%	68	100%

Participants from all cities (χ^2 (1, N = 134) = .16, p > .05) and both cohorts (χ^2 (1, N = 134) = .92, p > .05) retrieved mostly specific memories. Table 7 presents the number and percentage of specific and non-specific memories for all cities and both cohorts.

Table 7. Distribution of Specific and Non-specific Memories

		Specific Memories		Non-specific Memories	
		N	%	N	%
City	Istanbul	48	74%	17	26%
	Other Cities	53	77%	16	23%
	Total	101	75%	33	25%
Cohort	Freshmen	61	73%	23	27%
	Juniors	40	80%	10	20%
	Total	101	75%	33	25%

3.2.4 Integration

Integration of memories was also coded according to Singer and Blagov's (2000) manual for self-defining memories in two categories as integrative and non-integrative memories. According to this study, integration is the meaning making process where people make explicit connections of the memory with a meaning about the self or the world. Non-integrative memories are those without such connection, regardless of how emotional and important they may seem to the individual. Inter-rater agreement was 75 % in the integration of memories and Cohen's Kappa was .51

To examine the relationship between memory type and the memory integration, we run a 2 (integration) x 2 (memory type) chi-square for independence analysis. In line with our hypothesis, the difference between the integration of change memories and continuity memories was significant, χ^2 (1, N = 135) = 3.269, p = .051, *Cramer's V* = .07. Change memories were more integrative (57%), than

continuity memories (41%). Number and percentage of integrative and non-integrative memories in each memory type are presented in Table 8.

We also run two separate chi-square analyses for the effect of city and cohort separately for change and continuity analyses. Our hypothesis on the impact of city (χ^2 (1, N = 67) = .853, p > .05) and cohort (χ^2 (1, N = 67) = .777, p > .05) were not significant for continuity memories. For change memories, city had a marginally significant effect, χ^2 (1, N = 67) = 3.360, p = .056, *Cramer's V* = .22, contrary to our hypothesis such that Istanbul participants had more integrative memories (68 %) than participants who came from other cities (45 %). Similarly, cohort had a marginal impact on integration, χ^2 (1, N = 67) = 2.627, p = .086, *Cramer's V* = .20, in a way that freshmen retrieved more integrative memories than junior participants (65% and 44%, respectively).

Table 8. Integration of Continuity and Change Memories

Memory Type	Continuity Memory		Change Memory	
	N	%	N	%
Non-integrative Memories	39	58.2	29	42.6
Integrative Memories	28	41.8	39	57.4

Centrality of event scale (CES) scores were also compared for integrative and non-integrative memories. Since this scale measures also the integration of events into a person's identity. Therefore, the measures of integration as coded from the narratives and as reported by participants were expected to be correlated. In line with our expectations, integrative memories had higher CES scores for continuity memories (t (65) = -2.142, p = .036) and for change memories (t (65) = -2.071, p = .039). Figure 3 shows the CES scores for integrative and non-integrative memories in two types of memories.

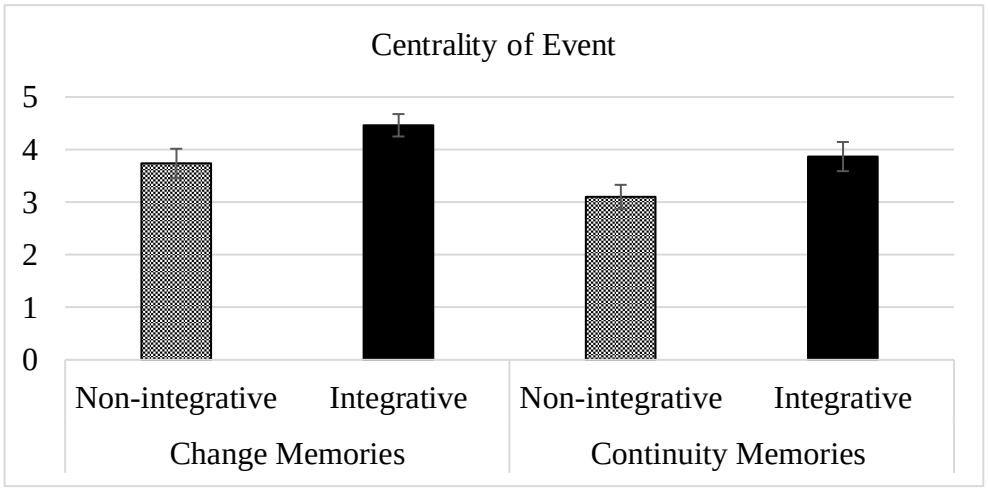

Figure 3. Centrality of event scores across integration levels for change and continuity memories.

CES scores were also compared for city and cohort of participants. A 2 x 2 between subjects ANOVA showed that there were no significant group effect or interaction effect (all *p*s > .05) in CES scores of change memories. A 2 x 2 between subjects ANOVA did not showed an effect of cohort (F (1, 65) = .21, p > .05, MSE = 2.05) and the effect of city on the CES scores of continuity memories, (F (1, 65) = 3.10, p = .083, MSE = 2.05). Istanbul participants (M = 3.74, SD = .25) scored same in CES as participants from other cities (M = 3.11, SD = .26). However, there was a significant interaction effect between cohort and city, F (3, 65) = 3.97, p = .05, MSE = 2.05, η_p^2 = .06, such that junior students from Istanbul rated their memories as more integrative to their identity (M = 4.17, SD = 1.34) than juniors from other cities (M = 2.83, SD = 1.32). There was no difference between freshmen from Istanbul (M = 3.30, SD = 1.78) and other cities (M = 3.38, SD = 1.17).

3.2.5 Coherence

Coherence is the concept that covers the reasoning and integration of memories to create a life story (Habermas & Bluck, 2000). In our study, we coded memory

coherence in three categories according to Reese et al. (2011) categorization as contextual, chronological and thematic coherence. Contextual coherence evaluates to what degree a person locates the events in time and place by considering level of information on time and place in the memory narrative. Chronological coherence is the degree to which a person narrates event statements in a memory with a temporal order explicitly. Finally, thematic coherence is the coherence which assesses the existence of a theme in the memory, its resolution and the impact of the resolution. In a sense, thematic coherence implies to what degree people integrate memories into their narrative identity with explicit messages about who they are and what the memory means. All these three types of coherence were coded from level zero to three.

We run separate chi-square analyses to see the impact of city and cohort on three types of coherence. In all three types of coherence measures, we compared the distribution among coherence levels between cities and cohorts. None of our analyses for these two variables showed significant effect (all *p*s > .05, χ^2 (3, N = 135) < 5.71) except the cohort effect in contextual coherence which was detailed in the next section. Additional comparisons between memory types for each coherence type were presented in the following sections.

3.2.5.1 Contextual coherence

Change and continuity memories did not differ from each other in contextual coherence (χ^2 (3, N = 135) = 3.631, p > .05). Most memories fell within two categories; at level 1, there is some mention of time or location (37.3 % of change memories, 34.2 % of continuity memories) and at level 2 there is at most specific mention of either time or location (31.3 % of change memories, 45.6 % of continuity

memories). Distribution of memories across levels of contextual coherence was shown at Table 9. Inter-rater agreement was 76 % in contextual coherence of memories and Cohen's Kappa was .50. Among all coherence types, we found the effect of cohort only in contextual coherence. Cohort had an effect on the contextual coherence in continuity memories, χ^2 (3, N = 67) = 7.573, p = .056, *Cramer's V* = .20. Freshmen had more contextually coherent continuity memories than juniors (21 % vs. 4 % for freshmen and juniors respectively). However, city did not result in a significant difference, χ^2 (3, N = 135) = 4.57, p > .05.

Table 9. Percentage Distribution of Change and Continuity Memories in Contextual Coherence

Coherence Level		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Change Memories					
Cohort	Freshmen	9.3%	39.5%	39.5%	11.6%
	Junior	8.0%	20.0%	56.0%	16.0%
City	İstanbul	11.8%	32.4%	38.2%	17.6%
	Other Cities	5.9%	32.4%	52.9%	8.8%
Continuity Memories					
Cohort	Freshmen	9.5%	40.5%	28.6%	21.4%
	Junior	28.0%	32.0%	36.0%	4.0%
City	İstanbul	18.8%	40.6%	21.9%	18.8%
	Other Cities	14.3%	34.3%	40.0%	11.4%

3.2.5.2 Chronological coherence

There was a significant difference between change and continuity memories in chronological coherence, χ^2 (3, N = 135) = 9.072, p = .028, *Cramer's V* = .24. Continuity memories were more likely to be narrated without chronological order

such that there were more memories at level 0 chronological coherence in continuity memories (13.4 %) than in change memories (1.5 %). This might be due to the fact that people reported more single-event memories in continuity memories, in which there was a little need for a temporal order because of number of events in the memory. There was a 75% agreement between the coders in the chronological coherence. However, since one rater coded all the memories as highly coherent, Cohen's Kappa was not calculated for chronological coherence.

City and cohort did not have an effect on chronological coherence. Neither cohort, χ^2 (3, N = 135) = .95, p > .05 nor city, χ^2 (3, N = 135) = 2.15, p > .05 yielded significant results in the 4 x 2 chi square analyses that compared the distribution of memories among coherence levels between cities and cohorts separately. Table 10 shows the distribution of memories across levels of chronological coherence.

Table 10. Percentage Distribution of Change and Continuity Memories in Chronological Coherence

Coherence Level		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		Change Memories			
Cohort	Freshmen	0.0%	25.6%	41.9%	32.6%
	Juniors	4.0%	12.0%	44.0%	40.0%
City	İstanbul	2.9%	17.6%	38.2%	41.2%
	Other Cities	0.0%	23.5%	47.1%	29.4%
		Continuity Memories			
Cohort	Freshmen	11.9%	19.0%	33.3%	35.7%
	Juniors	16.0%	28.0%	24.0%	32.0%
City	İstanbul	12.5%	28.1%	21.9%	37.5%
	Other Cities	14.3%	17.1%	37.1%	31.4%

3.2.5.3 Thematic coherence

Level of thematic coherence differed between two types of memories as well, χ^2 (3, N = 135) = 11.873, p = .008, *Cramer's V* = .27. The percentage of continuity memories without an identifiable theme (level 0) in the narrative were higher than change memories (13 % in continuity vs. 1 % in change memories). This showed that narratives of change memories included more resolution sentences. It was expected that in cases of life changes, people would need to explain the change to themselves. Coders agreed 80 % in thematic coherence of memories. However, since the second coder coded all the memories as level 2 or level 3 coherent, coherence rates of coder two become a constant value as high coherence. Therefore Cohen's Kappa was not calculated.

Additionally, in a 2 (city) x 2 (cohort) chi-square analysis, we did not found any significant difference neither for city, χ^2 (3, N = 135) = 2.64, p > .05 nor for cohort, χ^2 (3, N = 135) = 3.32, p > .05. Table 11 shows the distribution of memories across levels of thematic coherence.

Table 11. Percentage Distribution of Change and Continuity Memories in Thematic Coherence

Coherence Level		Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Change Memories					
Cohort	Freshmen	0.0%	11.6%	51.2%	37.2%
	Juniors	0.0%	20.0%	44.0%	36.0%
City	İstanbul	0.0%	17.6%	44.1%	38.2%
	Other Cities	0.0%	11.8%	52.9%	35.3%
Continuity Memories					
Cohort	Freshmen	7.1%	23.8%	47.6%	21.4%
	Juniors	4.0%	40.0%	32.0%	24.0%
City	İstanbul	3.1%	37.5%	40.6%	18.8%
	Other Cities	8.6%	22.9%	42.9%	25.7%

3.2.6 Content of the memories

Content of the memories were coded according to Thorne and McLean's (2001) Event Coding Manual in SDMs. The manual originally includes seven event categories: life-threatening events, recreation/exploration, relationship, achievement/mastery, guilt/shame, drug, alcohol, tobacco use and unclassifiable events. We coded all events according to this classification however since some categories occurred less than the others, we collapsed them into other category and excluded from the analyses. Among all change and continuity memories, there were a total of nine life-threatening events, one alcohol – drug abuse event and one uncategorized event. Table 12 demonstrated the content category distribution of both memory types. In the analyses, other category was excluded. Fleiss Kappa for the inter-rater reliability in event type was .59 and two coders agreed on 75 % of the memories.

There were no differences in content of memories according to city (χ^2 (2, N = 124) = 2.24, $p > .05$) or cohort (χ^2 (2, N = 124) = .30, $p > .05$). Additionally, most dominant content type was relationship theme (50 % of all memories, standardized residual = 20.7), χ^2 (2, N = 124) = 15.70, $p < .001$. Fifty-four percent of continuity memories (χ^2 (2, N = 61) = 12.23, $p = .002$) and 46% of change memories (χ^2 (2, N = 63) = 4.57, $p > .05$) were about relationships. Change and continuity memories were not different from each other in terms of content distribution, χ^2 (2, N = 124) = 1.18, $p > .05$.

Table 12. Distribution of Memory Content for Memory Types

	Continuity Memories		Change Memories	
	N	%	N	%
Content of the Memory				
Recreation/Exploration	16	26%	17	27%
Relationship	33	54%	29	46%
Achievement	12	20%	17	27%

3.2.7 Self – event connections

Self-event connections are the categories which defines the link of the memory with the aspects of self. We coded eight categories of self-connections according to McLean and Fournier's (2008) study. We used this narrative coding to investigate the distribution of these connections in self-defining memories since they would most likely hint about what makes those memories a self-defining memory. The purpose of this analysis was to explore which connections appear most frequently in self-defining memories, and whether any type of connection appears more frequently in change and continuity memories. A Fleiss Kappa of .27 was measured for self – event connections and the coders agreed on 39 % of the memories.

We compared memory types in terms of self-event connections. A Likelihood Ratio χ^2 analysis showed differences between the distribution of self – event connection categories for change and continuity memories (χ^2 (7, N = 135) = 21.970, p = .003, *Cramer's V* = .39).

The distribution of self-event connection categories for change and continuity memories are presented in Table 13. First, both change and continuity memories were mostly linked to intimacy/interpersonal aspects of the self. Most memories were explaining who a person is in relationship contexts such as "Şimdi onlar en

yakın arkadaşlarım. Hep de öyle kalacaklar [Now they are my closest friends. They will always be]" in continuity memories or "…ben onlarla vakit geçirmeye çalıştıkça aramızın daha kötü olduğunu sezdim … ve ben de salmaya karar verdim. [… I sensed that when I try to spend more time with them, our relationship would be worse … and I decided to let go" in change memories.

Among self – event connections, two categories were different between change and continuity memories. Memories were connected to values more in continuity memories (11.9 % vs. 2.9 %). For instance continuity memories included expressions of values such as "…üniversiteye başlasam da eski dostuklarımı asla unutmamaı ve vefalı bir arkadaş olmam gerektiğini bana yeniden hatırlattı [... this reminded me that although I started university, I have to be a loyal friend and never forget my old friends]". This finding is important since values may seem as the more stable aspects of self in life transitions (Bardi, Buchanan, Goodwin, Slabu & Robinson, 2014) and therefore might have served the self-defining memories in continuity condition better.

Second difference was in personal growth connections such that change memories were more focused on the personal growth than continuity memories (29.4 % vs. 4.5 %). In line with our prediction based on the Temporal Self-Appraisal theory (Cameron, Wilson, Ross, 2004), participants focused more on personal growth in change memories participants focused more on the growth. People frequently emphasized what they have learned such as "En çok sevdiklerin gerçekten yanında mı diye görebilmeyi öğrendim. [I have learned to see whether you have the ones you love most are with you.]".

Table 13. Distribution of Self – Event Connections for Memory Types

	Continuity Memories		Change Memories	
	N	%	N	%
Self - Event Connections				
Intimacy/Interpersonal	24	35.82	23	33.82
Values	8	11.9	2	2.9
Outlook	5	7.5	6	8.8
Self-esteem/Worth	5	7.5	6	8.8
Personal Growth	3	4.5	20	29.4
Hobbies/Interests	8	11.9	4	5.9
Personality	5	7.5	2	2.9
No Connection	9	13.4	5	7.4

3.3 Phenomenological characteristics

Phenomenological characteristics of the memories were measured with 10 subscales of the Memory Experiences Questionnaire (Lucetti & Sutin, 2016). Figure 4 shows the comparison of all 10 subscale measures for change and continuity memories. We run paired sample t-tests for each phenomenological characteristic. Memory type did not have any effect on any of the phenomenological characteristics except distancing (all *p*s > .05). Change memories (M = 2.72, SD = 1.29) had higher distancing than continuity memories (M = 1.80, SD = .81), t (68) = 5.498, $p < .001$ and were rated lower than the medium point of the scale (M = 2.5; t (68) = -7.150, $p < .001$).

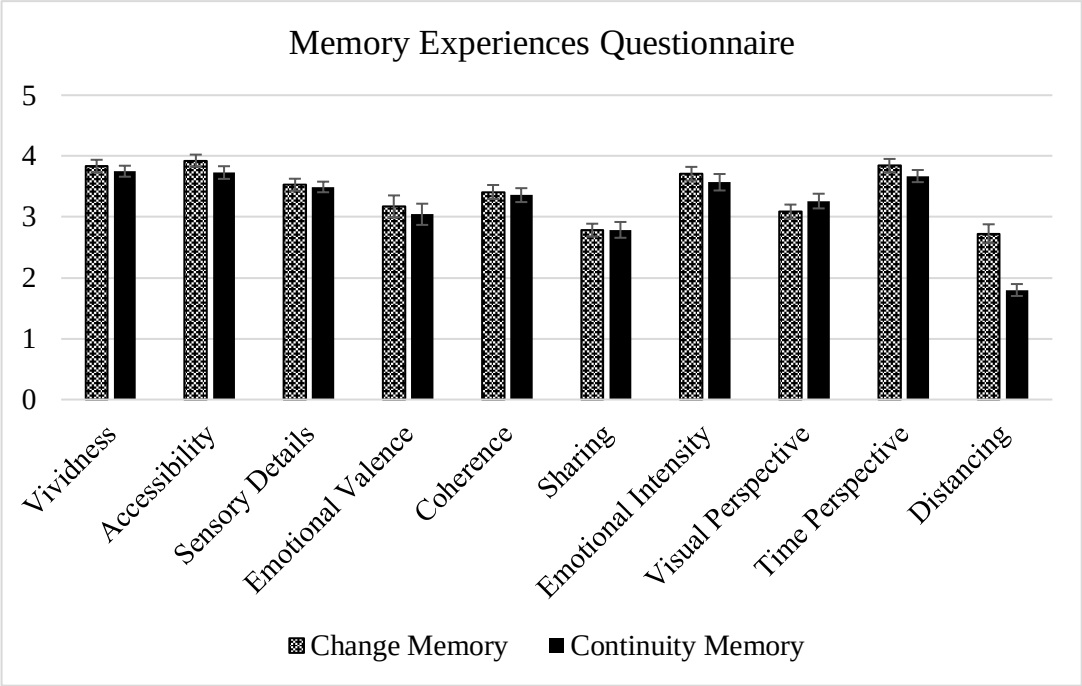

Figure 4. Memory phenomenology for continuity and change memories

3.4 Subjective temporal distance and dating of memories

Subjective temporal distance was how close to or distant from people feel to their selves in a memory and measured with the distancing subscale of the Memory ∗ Experiences Questionnaire (Lucetti & Sutin, 2016). As mentioned in the previous section, a paired-sample t-test showed that participants felt more distant to their change memories (M = 2.72, SD = 1.29) than their continuity memories (M = 1.80, SD = .81), t (68) = 5.498, p < .001. Since time passed since the event is also a factor of how distant people feel from memories, the impact of city and cohort on subjective distance was examined while controlling for age of event with two separate ANCOVA analyses for continuity memories and change memories.

In continuity memories, the effect of age of event was not significant as a covariate (F (1, 64) = 1.24, MSE = .69, p > .05). There was no effect of city (F (1, 59) = .1.96, MSE = .69, p > .05) or cohort (F (1, 59) = .665, MSE = .69, p > .05).

For change memories, age of event had a significant impact on how distant people felt from change memories (F (1, 60) = 8.07, MSE = 1.58, p = .006, η_p^2 = .12). Distancing was positively correlated with age of event (r (68) = .28, p = .019). However, city (F (1, 60) = .03, MSE = 1.58, p > .05) or cohort (F (1, 60) = .89, MSE = 1.584, p > .05) did not affect distancing from the memory.

Distancing was also analyzed in relation to variables about self-concept since Temporal Self-Appraisal Theory (Cameron, Wilson, & Ross, 2004) predicts that people would prefer to feel distant from their negative evaluations of self and negative memories. It was also found that people detach from the memories when they switch their visual perspective in the memory retrieval (Libby & Eibach, 2011). In order Participants rated two variables about their self-concept in the memories since self-appraisal is predicted as an important aspect for the memory qualities. First variable was self-concept valence, it measured as how positively or negatively participants evaluated their self-concept in the memories. Second variable was self-concept representativeness, and it was participants' ratings on how representative they see self-concept in the memory of who they are now. A linear regression analysis was run to examine how people's subjective distance from the memories were predicted by the valence of the memory, self-concept valence, age of memory and the visual perspective.

For change memories, results demonstrated that the model was significant (F (3, 64) = 2.56, MSE = 1.51, p = .047, R^2 = .14) and age of event was the only significant predictor (β = .25, p = .038), stating that people feel more distant from older memories. Although valence of the memory (r (69) = - .183, p = .066) and self-concept valence (r (69) = -.179, p = .071) showed a trend of negative correlation with distancing from the memory but it was not significant. The trend was in a way that

the more negative the memory or the more negatively the self in the memory was evaluated, the more people tended to distance from those memories. For continuity memories, the regression model was not significant (F (3, 65) = 1.54, $p > .05$, MSE = .64 $R^2 = .09$).

Self-concept representativeness was found to be negatively correlated with distancing in both memory types such that the memories which includes a representative self-concept were felt closer. Although self-concept valence was correlated with representativeness for both memory types, it was not significantly correlated with distancing of continuity or change memories. Correlation coefficients are presented in Table 14 for change memories and continuity memories.

Table 14. Correlation Coefficients for Distancing

	Change Memories			Continuity Memories		
Measure	1	2	3	1	2	3
1. Distancing	–			–		
2. Self-Concept Valence	-0.179	–		-0.225	–	
3. Self-Concept Representativeness	-.265*	.269*	–	-.496**	.293*	–

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

In addition to the correlation analyses, hierarchical regression analyses were run for change and continuity memories separately to consider the impact of other phenomenological characteristics. At first step, the following phenomenological characteristics of the memory were entered into regression; vividness, valence, emotional intensity. Age of event was also entered into the model in the first step. At second step, valence of self-concept and representativeness of self-concept were entered. The first model was significant, F (4, 64) = 2.67, MSE = 1.51, $p = .04$, $R^2 = .143$ and age of event was the only significant predictor $\beta = .26$, p

= .030. When the self-concept variables entered into the model, there was not significant improvement in the model, *F-change* (6, 62) = 2.05, $p > .05$. However, second model was significant F (2, 62) = 2.52, MSE = 1.46, $p = .03$, $R^2 = .196$. In this model, age of event remained as a significant predictor ($\beta = .24$, $p = .040$) and perspective in the memory ($\beta = -.21$, $p = .093$) and self-concept representativeness ($\beta = -.23$, $p = .065$) approached significance.

This hierarchical regression model was repeated for continuity memories as well. Unlike change memories, first model was not significant F (4, 63) = .33, MSE = .69, $p > .05$, $R^2 = .02$. When self-concept related variables were entered into the model, it became significant, *F-change* (6, 62) = 2.05, $p < .001$, R^2-*change* = .29. In this case, the only significant predictor was self-concept representativeness ($\beta = -.60$, $p < .001$).

3.4.1 View of self and valence of memories

The relationship between self-concept representativeness and self-concept valence and valence of memories were also investigated to see if people retrieve more negative memories about the less representative self-concepts for self-enhancement of more negative memories about more negative self-concepts. There was no difference between continuity and change memories in terms of self-concept valence (t (68) = .52, $p > .05$). Valence of memories did not differ for continuity memories (M = 3.04, SD = 1.45) and change memories (M = 3.17, SD = 1.45) either, t (68) = .56, $p > .05$.

Pearson correlation analyses showed that both for change and continuity memories, self-concept valence in the memory were highly positively correlated with valence of the memory (r (68) = .60 and r (68) = .62 respectively, ps < .001).

Nonetheless, although we hypothesized that more negative memories would come from further past, contrary to our hypothesis, valence of memories was not correlated with age of memory for change memories (r (68) = -.08, p > .05) or for continuity memories (r (68) = -.03, p > .05). Figure 5 demonstrates the distribution of age of memory. Likewise, valence of self-concept was not significantly correlated with age of memories neither for change memories (r (68) = -.16, p > .05) nor for continuity memories (r (68) = -.11, p > .05). However, self-concept valence in change memories but not in continuity memories were significantly correlated with other self-related measures; self-esteem (r (68) = .40, p < .001) and self-concept clarity (r (68) = .31, p = .009), and also with positive mood (r (41) = .40, p = .009).

For self-concept representativeness, continuity memories (M = 4.01, SD = .75) were seen as better representative of self than change memories (M = 3.74, SD = 76), t (68) = 2.09, p = .041 although continuity memories (M = 3.42, SD = 1.46) were rated significantly less central events than change memories (M = 4.17, SD = 1.43), t (68) = -3.78, p < .001.

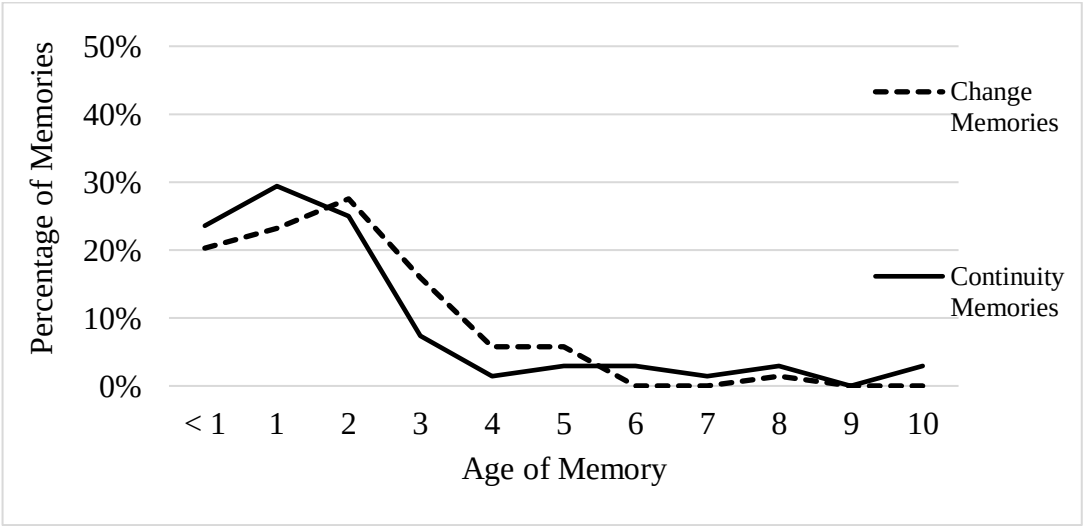

Figure 5. Time distribution of change and continuity memories.

3.5 Visual perspective

Visual perspective in change (M = 3.07, SD = .96) and continuity memories (M = 3.26, SD = 1.00), was not different, t (68) = 1.25, $p > .05$. The relationship of visual perspective with self-concept was at interest of this study. Therefore, Pearson correlation analyses were run for distancing in change and continuity memories. Self-concept valence and self-concept representativeness were correlated both for continuity (r (66) = .29, $p < .05$) and change memories (r (67) = .27, $p < .05$) but neither of them were correlated with visual perspective. Correlation coefficients are presented in Table 15.

Table 15. Correlation Coefficients for Visual Perspective

	Continuity Memories			Change Memories		
Measure	1	2	3	1	2	3
1. Visual Perspective	–			–		
2. Self-Concept Valence	.052	–		-.115	–	
3. Self-Concept Representativeness	.034	.293*	–	.078	.269*	–

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

Two hierarchical regression analyses were run for continuity and change memories to consider the impact of other phenomenological characteristics. First model covered phenomenological characteristics (vividness, valence, emotional intensity) and age of memory; and the second model added self-concept variables. In the analyses for continuity memories, first model was significant, F (4, 61) = 3.13, MSE = .93, p = .021, R^2 = .17. Age of event was a significant predictor, β = -.28, p = .021. Valence (β = .22, p = .062) and vividness (β = -.23, p = .060) of memory were marginally significant predictors. When the self-concept variables entered into the model, there was not significant improvement in the model, F-$change$ (2, 59) = .88, p

> .05 and not any other predictor than in model 1 became significant. However, valence of the memory (β = .33, p = .033) became a significant predictor rather than being a marginally significant predictor.

This hierarchical regression model was repeated for change memories as well. In change memories, first model was significant too, F (4, 62) = 2.63, MSE = .81, p = .043, R^2 = .14. In this step, vividness was the only predictor (β = -.35, p = .006). After adding self-concept related variables into the regression in model 2, there were no significant improvement, F-$change$ (2, 60) = 1.78, p > .05, R^2-$change$ = .05. Still, model 2 was significant, F (6, 60) = 2.39, MSE = .79, p = .039, R^2 = .19. In addition to the vividness of memory (β = -.32, p = .013), self-concept valence approached significance as well (β = -.32, p = .053).

3.6 Self-esteem and self-concept clarity

Participants across levels of independent variables were compared in self-esteem and self-concept clarity because we hypothesized that they might influence what kind of memories participants would choose to narrate as self-defining memories. For instance, self-concept clarity was expected to be correlated with memory integration since a clear self-concept would be more likely to have associated integrative memories. Similarly, integrative memories were expected to be associated with higher self-esteem. Means and standard deviations are presented in Table 16.

Table 16. Self-Esteem and Self-Concept Clarity Scores

		Self-Esteem		Self-Concept Clarity	
		M	SD	M	SD
City	Istanbul	3.76	0.81	2.97	0.79
	Other Cities	3.58	0.96	3.08	0.93
Cohort	Freshmen	3.79	0.92	3.03	1.00
	Juniors	3.47	0.82	3.02	0.56

Groups were not different in self-esteem scores neither in terms of city (t (67) = .42, $p > .05$) nor in term of cohort (t (67) = 58, $p > .05$). Similarly, city (t (67) = .61, $p > .05$) or cohort (t (67) = .04, $p > .05$) did not yield in significant differences in self-concept clarity. Self-esteem and self-concept clarity were positively correlated, r (68) = 60, $p < .001$, stating that participants who had higher scores in self-concept clarity, i.e. who had a better sense of who they are, also had a higher self-esteem.

On the other hand, in line with our hypothesis, participants who reported integrative change memories (M = 3.85, SD = .79) had higher self-esteem than participants who retrieved non-integrative change memories (M = 3.41, SD = .98.9), F (1, 65) = 4.51, p = .046, MSE = .77, η_p^2 = .06. This impact of memory integration on self-esteem was not observed for continuity memories (F (1, 65) = .17, $p > .05$, MSE = .78).

Self-esteem was also investigated to see how it is correlated with people's evaluations on the specific self-concept they have narrated about. Self-esteem scores were not correlated with the evaluation of self-concept in continuity memories (r (68) = -.082, $p > .05$) although people's evaluation of those self-concepts were significantly positively correlated with how representative they thought those self-concepts were representing themselves. Self-esteem was, on the other hand, highly correlated with how people evaluate their self-concept in change memories (r (68) = .40, p = .001). Evaluation of self-concepts were also moderately correlated with the representativeness of those self-concepts (r (68) = .27, p = .025), but representativeness was not correlated with self-esteem (r (68) = .11, $p > .05$).

Finally, self-esteem and self-concept clarity was found to be positively correlated with positive mood (r (42) = .61 and r (42) = .32 respectively, ps < .05)

and negatively correlated with negative mood (r (42) =-.44 and r (42) = -.56 respectively, ps < .01).

3.7 Satisfaction with life

There was no difference in satisfaction with life between groups according to city (t (67) = .42, p > .05) or according to cohort (t (67) = .58, p > .05). On the other hand, we were interested in the relationship between integration of memories and life satisfaction. Retrieval of integrative continuity memories (t (65) = -1.44, p > .05) did not yield to higher life satisfaction. Those who retrieved integrative continuity memories (M = 4.38, SD = 1.20) had similar life satisfaction scores with those who retrieve non-integrative continuity memories (M = 3.94, SD = 1.24). However, people who retrieved integrative change memories (M = 4.38, SD = 1.05) tend to have higher life satisfaction (t (65) = -1.91, p = .06) than those who had non-integrative change memories (M = 3.81, SD = 1.38). Furthermore, when we analyzed retrieval of integrative memories in those who did not retrieve integrative memories in any condition had lower life satisfaction (F (3, 65) = 4.53, p = .037, MSE = 1.35, η^2 = .07). Nonetheless, contrary to our hypotheses, there was no effect of cohort on the relationship between integrative memories and life satisfaction (F (1, 63) = .04, MSE = 1.49, p > .05) or by city F (1, 63) = .95, MSE = 1.48, p > .05.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

In the present study, we investigated how self-defining memory characteristics were influenced 1) by the impact of the transitional event of starting university and 2) memory type regarding the self-concept. Similarly, we investigated how these memory characteristics were associated with self-esteem, self-concept clarity and life satisfaction. The present study derived from the findings that self-defining memories are the fundamental pieces that brings one's self on a unified narrative identity (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Therefore, we focused on memory integration and coherence of memories in change and continuity memories during a life transition.

To our knowledge, current study was one of the few studies which investigated self-defining memories in relation to other life events (see Weeks & Pasupathi, 2011, for an example) rather than subject factors like attachment styles (Özbek Akçay, 2014), age (Singer, Rexhaj, Baddeley, 2007), culture (Jobson & O'Kearney, 2008) or psychopathology (Raffard, D'Argembeau, Lardi, Bayard, Boulenger, Boulenger, & Van Der Linden, 2009). All our findings were discussed in the following sections with reference to the current literature on autobiographical memories.

4.1 Narrative characteristics of memories

4.1.1 Memory specificity

We found that change and continuity memories recollected in this study were predominantly specific memories. The retrieval of specific memories were regardless of city and cohort. This finding is in line with previous self-defining memory studies

with non-clinical college populations where more than 70 % of the memories were found to be specific memories (Singer & Moffitt, 1992; Singer, Rexhaj, & Baddeley, 2007; Wood & Conway, 2006).

Our second finding on specificity was that memory type was correlated with the subtypes of specificity. We found that change memories were more likely to include multiple specific events and episodes that cover multiple events, such that they had a reference to the turning point and examples for the change coming with that turning point. When the narratives were investigated deeply, we observed that this is mainly because people refer to more than one event in order to emphasize or demonstrate the change through comparison. For instance memories were focused on the entire episode where participants mentioned the case before the change, when the change has started and the current situation, i.e. after the change. One of the memories from the memory narratives we collected is a good example of this specificity:

> Üniversiteye başlamadan önce benim gibi olmayan insanlara karşı çok önyargılıydım ve düşünceleri bana uymayan kişilerle arkadaş olmazdım ve bu insanlarla aynı ortamda olmaktan hoşlanmazdım. Fakat üniversiteye girdikten sonra siyasi geçmişimize dair bir olayda tam zıt bakış açısına sahip olduğum insanlarla tanıştım. Bu kişilerden biriyle ilk konuştuğumuzda gerginlik oluştu ve ben hoşlanmadığım için ortamdan ayrıldım. Sonraki karşılaşmalarımızda bu konu birkaç kere daha açıldı ve ben bu sefer ortamdan ayrılmak yerine düşüncemi daha net açıkladım ve sonrasında onun düşüncesini değiştiremediğimi fark edince evet bu da onun fikri diyerek bu konuyu bir kenara ittim ve onunla arkadaşlığımı bu konu dışında sürdürmeye karar verdim. Bu olaydan sonra insanları birazcık daha oldukları gibi kabul etmeye çalışıyorum. [Before I started university, I was very prejudiced against people who were not like me, and I wouldn't be friends with people whose thoughts didn't fit me, and I wouldn't like being in the same environment with those people. But after I started university, I met people with whom I had the opposite perspective about a political event. When we first spoke to one of these people, there was tension and I left because I didn't like it. In our later encounters, this topic was re-opened several times, and this time I explained my thoughts more clearly instead of leaving, and when I realized that I couldn't change his mind, I pushed this issue aside accepting that it was his idea and decided to continue my friendship with him. After that even, I'm trying to accept people a little bit more.]

Whereas continuity memories consisted more of specific memories focused on a single event. Most continuity memories in our study were memories exemplifying self by reflecting on a single event consistent with the current self-concept with a sentence explaining that the event in memory is an example of a continuous self-concept. For instance:

> Arkadaşımla orta kantinde buluşmak için sözleşmiştik. O benden önce gitmiş. İçeri girdiğimde kalabalık bir grupla oturuyordu. Onu görmeme rağmen, o beni görmeden hemen kaçtım. Çünkü yanında tanımadığım ve yanına gidersem muhtemelen tanıştırılacağım bir sürü insan vardı. Bundan çok korktum. Lisede de böyleydim. Bir şey değişmediğini düşünüp üzülmüştüm oradan çıkınca. [I was supposed to meet my friend at the school cafeteria. He was there before me. When I walked in, he was sitting with a crowded group. Although I saw him, I ran away before he saw me. Because there were a lot of people I didn't know, and I'd probably get introduced to them if I went. I was so scared. I was like this in high school too. I was upset to see that nothing has changed.]

Enz and Talarico (2016) investigated transitions, turning points and transition linked turning points as three different kind of events which take place around transitional periods. They found that turning point memories were more specific memories whereas transitions were more likely to be extended periods. Transition-linked turning points lay between life transitions and turning points in terms of specificity. When compared to the Enz and Talarico's (2016) study, specificity of change memories in our study were more like transition-linked turning points and transitions, whereas continuity memories were more specific like regular self-defining memories (Singer & Blagov, 2004).

4.1.2 Memory integration

In the present study, total number of integrative and non-integrative memories were identical and contrary to our expectations, we did not observe any main effect of cohort or city. We found that change memories were more integrative than continuity

memories, which is in line with the previous findings stating that in times of changes, people need autobiographical reasoning to restore their narrative identity (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Integration was therefore an important factor in present study since meaning making and autobiographical reasoning were fundamental aspects of memories in times of changes (Habermas & Köber, 2015). When there are influential changes in life, to keep track of who a person is, retrieving self-defining memories with explicit meaning, i.e. integrative memories, is more important since they serve as the database for identity and better integration was found associated with better well-being, in cases of positive processing of memories to integrate into self (Lilgendhal & McAdams, 2011) and to integrate memories as growth memories (Bauer & McAdams, & Sakaeda, 2005). Similarly, Mutlutürk and Tekcan (2015) found that when people are retrieving memories which are inconsistent with their present self-concept (self-discrepant memories), they use more meaning making statements. We expected more integrative memories for participants from other cities since they were exposed to more biographical ruptures and a higher amount of change during their moving out to a new city. However, cohort or city did not make any difference in the integration of continuity memories. On the other hand, change but not continuity memories showed a trend for city and cohort of participants.

The results did not conform our hypothesis and showed that participants who did not move to a new town and participants who are in their first year at university retrieved higher number of integrative memories. One argument could be that those who experienced a higher impact since they moved to a new city might require more time to make meaning out of their changing environment and their experiences in order to integrate their memories. Therefore, first year students from Istanbul would be the group who were exposed to the least amount of change in their lives and

accordingly, they would be the group who needed least time to integrate their memories. Pals (2006) explained that meaning making is a mechanism which requires cognitive effort and develops with sharing with others or telling them as stories internally. Therefore, those who experienced greater change might still be in the meaning making process and accordingly, they may fail to state an explicit meaning from the memories referring to a recent change. Similar to the idea in the previously mentioned findings, those who experience less change in their lives might not diverge from their identity and therefore they could restore continuity more easily. Another point is that many students who took the online preselection survey were eliminated and not invited to the study since they reported that they experienced another event which could also be considered as a transitional event around the time they started university.

Junior students were on the eve of another life transition which is part of the life scripts as well: college graduation (Berntsen & Rubin, 2004). In a study by Suh, Diener and Fujita (1996), they found that college graduation is a tough period where people are mostly confused about their life goals. They also found that recent but not remote events are more related to people's well-being, which might indicate that in our study, junior participants might be dealing with integrating more recent events than events linked to starting university, which took place four years ago on average. Since they are potentially in a process of configuration of their self (Suh et al., 1996), they may have more challenges to the integration to the self.

Finally, we expected a difference in integration such that older participants would retrieve more integrative memories. Our interest in the effect of cohort was rather related to the time passed since the event, not to the age of participants. However, our results showed that the number of integrative memories did not

increase with age linearly. Singer et al. (2007), found that integration increases with age and older adults had more integrative memories. One explanation could be that age difference in the current study might be not sufficient to make a difference in terms of cohort. Although our subjects were from different cohorts (freshmen vs. juniors), they were all young adults. Therefore we showed that the age effect in memory integration might be observable between groups with higher age differences.

4.1.3 Coherence

We hypothesized that coherence, as a sign of autobiographical reasoning, would be associated with the change people experience and also with their well-being. More specifically, we expected memories of junior students and students from other cities to be more coherent in their self-defining memories. Our study yielded to significant differences in thematic coherence. Results showed that change memories were written more frequently with an identifiable theme. Since change memories focused on demonstrating the change, they had a clearer theme to develop onto. Additionally, they mostly included a resolution. It was evident in literature that autobiographical reasoning would help through times of change and distress (Sutin, Costa Jr., Wethington & Eaton, 2010) although valence of the memory and reasoning is also important (Pasupathi & Mansour, 2006). Sutin et al.'s (2010) found that learning lessons from stressful life transitions but not blaming them as events which changed the course of life, had positive correlates in terms of personality traits and well-being. Singer, Blagov, Berry, and Oost (2012) proposed that self-defining memories were the fundamental elements to have a coherent narrative identity. Therefore, creating the meaning out of specific SDMs were considered as extremely important to have a coherent self. As Habermas and Köber (2015) suggested, in times of change,

coherence becomes more important to restore a narrative identity and McLean and Fournier (2008) suggested that thematic coherence and self-event connections were the two main elements of autobiographical reasoning.

We also found that most memories were moderately coherent in terms of contextual coherence, which was the mention of time and place in a narrative. We did not observe a significant difference between memory types. Moreover, cohort or city did not influence contextual coherence either.

However, we observed a significant difference between change and continuity memories in terms of chronological coherence. Continuity memories were more likely to be narrated without a chronological order. The main reason was that since continuity memories were mostly specific single events, there were little number of events which needed to be put in an order.

4.1.4 Self – Event Connections

Results regarding self-event connections supported Cameron, Wilson and Ross' (2004) temporal self-appraisal theory. In the current study, both continuity and change memories mostly focused on intimacy and interpersonal matters. Moreover, continuity memories were more likely to be connected to the self in more stable concepts like values and outlook, whereas change memories were mostly connected with self in terms of self-growth. As Conway and Ross (1984) suggested when people anticipate an improvement, even if there was no actual improvement they experience the feeling by distorting their perception of their previous self. Therefore, we expected that people would retrieve memories to make them feel developed over time and our results for change memories confirmed this. Retrieval of memories

which are linked to the self in domains of self-worth and self-growth is in line with these findings.

Content of the memories complied with the dominant categories in self-event connections such that for both change and continuity memories, we observed that relationship theme was the most mentioned theme in the memories. Similarly, relationship/intimacy connection was the mostly used self-event connection for both change and continuity memories. However, change memories focused more on the achievement theme while continuity memories focused more on the recreation/exploration theme. Thorne and McLean (2003) investigated late adolescent's relationship memories and found that relationship memories about conflicts and transitions were in fact used to gain insight about one's self or learn a lesson about life. Due to the similarity of the age group with current study, our results were supporting the previous findings that most of the memories were about relationships in this age group.

4.2 Phenomenological characteristics

We found that in line with the definition of self-defining memories (Singer, 1995) memories recollected in our study was highly vivid, involved sensory details, mostly retrieved from the first person perspective, easily accessible, frequently shared as a coherent story and emotionally intense memories regardless of memory type, or cohort or city. However, we investigated two of the phenomenological qualities further to see their relationships with self-concept; subjective distancing and visual perspective since they were found to be related according to Temporal Self-Appraisal Theory (Cameron, Wilson, & Ross, 2004).

Subjective distancing was the only score at which memories of change and continuity differed from each other such that people were feeling more distant from continuity memories than they feel from change memories. What we found was that the older the memory, participant felt distant from change memories but not from continuity memories. Moreover, the impact of age of memory was the strongest factor to be associated with subjective distancing, which stated that the older the memories, the more distant participants felt from them. However, we also found a week negative correlation of subjective distance with valence of the self-concept in the memory and valence of memory. More specifically, when people retrieve a memory about self-concept they evaluate negatively, they are more likely to feel distant from those memories. Additionally, people felt more distant to memories where they thought the self-concept in the memory is not representative for their current selves as previously found by Ross and Wilson (2002).

We also found that visual perspective tend to be correlated with subjective distance such that memories retrieved with third person perspective were associated with higher distancing ratings. This was also in line with the previous findings suggesting that perspective change is associated with distancing from the memory since it is a way of emotional relaxation in cases of retrieving memories about incongruent self-views (Libby, Eibach, & Gilovich, 2005) or reliving the memories without their emotional costs (Sutin & Robins, 2008).

Similar to subjective distancing, age of event was a determinant for perspective of memories such that older memories were more likely to be retrieved with third person perspective. Additionally, self-concept valence was subtly associated with the perspective of change memories.

4.3 Self and memory

Contrary to our expectations, valence of the self-concepts was not associated with the age of memories. Our predictions were based on the Temporal Self-Appraisal Theory of Cameron, Wilson and Ross (2004) which suggested that the less favorable selves were retrieved from further past. Our study failed to confirm this hypothesis. Valence of memories were correlated with valence of the self-concept, hence there were no relationship of valence with the age of memory.

4.4 Well-being

We hypothesized that memory integration would be associated with the well-being of the participants and this hypothesis is partially supported. As in the case of the redemption stories of McAdams, (2006), memory integration in change stories were associated with better life satisfaction. This effect was not observed in continuity memories.

4.5 Limitations and future directions

Present study addressed the ways self-defining memories impacted by a specific life transition, starting university and how the stability or change of self-concepts influenced self-defining memory characteristics. To our knowledge this is the first study which compares stable and changing self-concepts through autobiographical memories in relation to the impact of a transitional event. However, we had two main limitations in this study.

First, we had to run this study with excluding many participants to control the impact of the transitional event. However, having more than one transitional event around the same time in life was a more common trend in the population who took

our online preselection survey. More than one third of the participants had another transitional event at the time of starting university. Events like breaking-up with a romantic partner, death of a significant other, starting a new relationship were the most commonly mentioned transitional events. Therefore, in the current study we do not know if there is some other factor which caused our participants not report any other transitional events. For instance, considering many other transitional events reported were about relationships, our subjects might be biased in an attachment style or personality trait disproportionately or they might have been at a different ego development level.

Second, we did not asked juniors in our study about the upcoming the transition period they were about to enter, their graduation. Perhaps, they might have successfully integrated their past whereas their near future may bring up questions about who they are. Based on the Tekcan, Kaya-Kızılöz and Odaman's (2012) study of life-scripts in the same culture, it was found that starting university (university exam which denotes the starting university) most by the young adults whereas other university experiences including graduation was reported more frequently. Thus, we may infer that university experience including graduation is considered a more prominent occasion in the eyes of university students. If this would be the case, then we would expect the upcoming life transition to be more central to people's identity.

Deriving from our limitations, a future direction would be to repeat our study with a population that undergoes multiple transitional events at the same time by measuring a general transitional impact score. It was our advantage in the present study to measure a single transitional event at a time. However, we do not know what other factors accompany the number of transitional events occurring within the transition to university period. Therefore, including people who experience other

transitional events but by involving a ranking between transitions would provide the opportunity to investigate how people bridge life transitions to their self-defining memories. It would also be interesting to observe if they are referring to the highest impact life transitions in their self-defining memories. Since in our study we did not found an effect of high material impact on memory characteristics, comparing people's memories while letting them to choose which life transition to integrate would broaden our knowledge on the link between transitions and self-concepts.

Another direction could be inclusion of older adults undergoing other transitional events. For instance, getting a job, getting married, having a child, moving to a new country might be most commonly experienced transitional events for adults. Similarly, retirement might be a powerful life transition for old adults. Since previous findings in narrative identity research showed an impact of age on coherence of life stories and meaning making (Pasupathi & Mansour, 2006), future studies might compare transitional events from different age groups. Since across different stages of life, there are different number of expected life transitions which are mostly the life-script events, studies could focus on some age groups. For instance, adults who by time experience quite a number of life transitions according to life script studies (Berntsen & Rubin, 2004) might become at going through them and their reflection in self-defining memories could be quicker. Additionally, middle age adults whose life transitions become more about their children rather than their self can be investigated for their self-defining memories about own self-concepts and also about their identity as parents. These kinds of comparisons would tell us more about the dynamic relationship between experiences and self-identity. Therefore, how other age groups reacts to life transitions in defining their selves could be an interesting comparison to investigate.

Moreover, we examined a mostly positively evaluated transitional event in this study, where people would expect personal development as a natural result of the event. However, Habermas and Köber's (2015) study on autobiographical reasoning implied that when the biographical rupture is stronger, autobiographical reasoning becomes more important to be able to build a coherent sense of self back and it is also important for life satisfaction. Therefore, a negative transitional event like immigration might be interesting to look for the memory qualities of similar self-defining memories.

Finally, we focused on the self-defining memories in the first place since transitional events bring challenges to the self primarily (Habermas & Köber, 2015). However, they are also expected to impact the memory organization (Conway, Singer, & Tagini, 2004). For instance, immigration (Svob & Brown, 2012) and residential relocations (Enz, Pillemer, & Johnson, 2016) are transitional events known to make another reminiscence bump in the temporal distribution of memories. Therefore, future research could investigate how other autobiographical memories like important memories, or happiest and saddest memories would be impacted by such life transitions in terms of temporal distribution as well as narrative qualities.

4.6 Conclusions

In summary, we found the effect of memory type on memory characteristics in the two major indicators of autobiographical reasoning. People retrieved more thematically coherent change memories and change memories were more integrative than continuity memories. Additionally, as they were linked to turning points, change memories consisted more of multiple specific events bridging upon a turning point whereas continuity memories were specific single events.

In the present study, we also focused on the self-concept and subjective distance from the memories. We found that time affected the subjective distance from both continuity and change memories. However, in change memories, in addition to time distancing was correlated with people's appraisal of self-concept in the memories and how representative they consider the self-concept in the memories.

Contrary to our expectations, cohort and city participants moved from did not have an effect of memory characteristics. Therefore, our study could not address a direct link from life transitions to characteristics of self-defining memories. However, we assume that further research in analysis of life transitions from a broader perspective considering past and future events would increase our knowledge on the dynamic relationship between the self and the memories.

APPENDIX A

ONLINE PRESELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Doğum tarihiniz (Birth Date)

2. Cinsiyetiniz (*Gender)*: Kadın *(Female)*/ Erkek *(Male)* /Diğer *(Other)*

3. Üniversiteye giriş yılınız *(University Entrance Year)*:

4. Hazırlık sınıfında okudunuz mu *(Did you study the [English] preparatory year)*:

Cevabınız evet ise kaç dönem *(If you answered yes, number of semesters)*:

5. Boğaziçi Üniversitesindeki eğitiminize ara verdiğiniz bir dönem oldu mu? *(Did you have any break during your studies at university?)*

Cevabınız evet ise kaç dönem *(If you answered yes, number of semesters)*:

6. Şu anda kaçıncı üniversitenizde okumaktasınız? *(What is the number of universities you were enrolled including the one you are currently studying at?)*

Birinci/İkinci/Diğer *(One/Two/Other)*

7. Üniversite içinde bölüm değiştirdiniz mi? *(Did you transferred to another department within university?)*

8. Üniversite ya da bölüm değiştirdiyseniz bir önceki üniversitenizde/bölümünüzde kaç dönem okudunuz? *(If you were transferred between universities or departments, how many semesters did you study in the previous department?)*

9. Üniversiteye başlamadan önce hangi şehirde yaşıyordunuz? *(In which city you used to live before you started university?)*

10. Üniversiteye başlamadan önce yaşadığınız yeri aşağıdakilerden hangisi en iyi tanımlar? *(Which of the following best describes your hometown before university?)*

Köy/Kasaba/İlçe/Şehir/Büyükşehir *(Village/Town/District/City/Metropolitan Area)*

11. Üniversiteye başlamadan önce birlikte yaşadığınız kişileri aşağıdakilerden hangisi en iyi tanımlar? *(Which of the following best describes your company at your residency before university?)*

Ailem ile/Akrabalarım ile/ Yurtta/ Diğer *(Family/Relatives/Dormitory/Others)*

12. Şu anda birlikte yaşadığınız kişileri aşağıdakilerden hangisi en iyi tanımlar? *(Which of the following best describes your company at your residency now?)*

Ailem ile/ Akrabalarım ile /Yurtta/ Öğrenci evi/Partnerim-Eşim ile/

Tek başıma/ Diğer *(Family/Relatives/Dormitory/Shared Flat/Partner-Spouse/Private Flat/Others)*

13. Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları üniversiteye başlamanızı düşünerek cevaplayınız. *(Please rate the items below considering your experience of starting university.)*

Üniversiteye başlamak *(Starting university)*…

a. birlikte zaman geçirdiğim kişileri değiştirdi. *(has changed the people I spend time with.*

b. yaşadığım yeri değiştirdi. *(has changed where I live.)*

c. yaptığım aktiviteleri değiştirdi. (*has changed the activities I engage in.)*

d. zaman geçirdiğim yerleri değiştirdi. (*has changed the places where I hang out)*

e. sahip olduğum şeyleri değiştirdi. (*has changed the things I own.)*

f. maddi / fiziksel koşullarımı değiştirdi. *(has changed my material circumstances.)*

g. neyin doğru neyin yanlış olduğuna dair anlayışımı etkiledi. *(has influenced my understanding of right and wrong.)*

h. duygusal tepkilerimi etkiledi. (*has impacted my emotional responses.)*

i. düşünme şeklimi değiştirdi. *(has changed the way I think about things.)*

j. tutumlarımı / tavırlarımı değiştirdi. *(has changed my attitudes.)*

k. kendimle ilgili görüşlerimi değiştirdi. *(has changed my sense of self.*

l. beni psikolojik olarak etkiledi. *(has impacted me psychologically*.)

Cevap Skalası *(Rating Scale)*

Kesinlikle katılmıyorum (1)/ 2/ 3/ 4/ Kesinlikle katılıyorum (5)

(Strongly disagree (1)/ 2/ 3/ 4/ Strongly Agree (5))

Kendi hayat hikayenizi düşündüğünüzde, üniversiteye başlamanızı önemli bir dönüm noktası olarak görüyor musunuz? Neden? *(Do you see the event of starting university as an important turning point in your life? Why?)*

Kesinlikle bir dönüm noktası değil (1)/ 2/ 3/ 4 /5/ 6/ Kesinlikle bir dönüm noktası (7)

(Not a turning point) 1/ 2/ 3/ 4 /5/ 6/ 7 *(Definetely a turning point)*

18. Üniversiteye başladığınız sıralarda (öncesinde ya da sonrasında) yaşadığınız hayatınızı etkilediğini düşündüğünüz başka bir olay oldu mu? Evet/Hayır

(Did you experience any other event which impacted your life, around the time you started university? Yes/No)

19. Cevabınız evet ise olay nedir? *(If yes, what is the event?)*

20. Olayın tarihini mümkünse gün/ay/yıl olarak yazınız.

(Please indicate the exact date of the event if possible, in dd/mm/yyyy format)

21. Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları belirttiğiniz bu olayı düşünerek cevaplayınız.

(Please rate the items below considering this event.)

a. birlikte zaman geçirdiğim kişileri değiştirdi. *(has changed the people I spend time with.*

b. yaşadığım yeri değiştirdi. *(has changed where I live.)*

c. yaptığım aktiviteleri değiştirdi. (*has changed the activities I engage in.)*

d. zaman geçirdiğim yerleri değiştirdi. (*has changed the places where I hang out)*

e. sahip olduğum şeyleri değiştirdi. (*has changed the things I own.)*

f. maddi / fiziksel koşullarımı değiştirdi. *(has changed my material circumstances.)*

g. neyin doğru neyin yanlış olduğuna dair anlayışımı etkiledi. *(has influenced my understanding of right and wrong.)*

h. duygusal tepkilerimi etkiledi. (*has impacted my emotional responses.)*

i. düşünme şeklimi değiştirdi. *(has changed the way I think about things.)*

j. tutumlarımı / tavırlarımı değiştirdi. *(has changed my attitudes.)*

k. kendimle ilgili görüşlerimi değiştirdi. *(has changed my sense of self.*

l. beni psikolojik olarak etkiledi. *(has impacted me psychologically.*)

Cevap Skalası *(Rating Scale):*

Kesinlikle katılmıyorum (1)/ 2/ 3/ 4/ Kesinlikle katılıyorum (5)

(Strongly disagree (1)/ 2/ 3/ 4/ Strongly Agree (5))

m. Kendi hayat hikayenizi düşündüğünüzde, bu olayı önemli bir dönüm noktası olarak görüyor musunuz? Neden? *(Do you see this event as an important turning point in your life? Why?)*

Kesinlikle bir dönüm noktası değil (1)/ 2/ 3/ 4 /5/ 6/ Kesinlikle bir dönüm noktası (7)

(Not a turning point) 1/ 2/ 3/ 4 /5/ 6/ 7 *(Definetely a turning point)*

APPENDIX B

SELF-DEFINING MEMORY INSTRUCTIONS

Devamlılık Anısı Yönergesi *(Continuity Memory Instruction)*:

Şimdi sizden, üniversiteye başladıktan sonra değişmediğinizi, hala üniversite öncesindeki gibi olduğunuzu gösteren, sizin için kişisel bir anlam taşıdığına ve sizi tanımladığına inandığınız bir anınızı hatırlamanızı istiyoruz. *(In this part, we ask you to recall a memory, in which you believe that you haven't changed after you started college, which defines you as a person and which still feels important to you.)*

Bu olay aşağıdaki özelliklere sahip olmalıdır *(This memory should have the following attributes)*:

• Net bir biçimde hatırladığınız *([a memory that] you remember very clearly)*,

• Sizin için önemli olan *([a memory that] is important to you)*,

• Olumlu ya da olumsuz bir deneyiminizi içeren *([a memory that] includes a positive or negative experience)*,

• Sizi siz yapan, kim olduğunuz hakkında ipuçları veren, sizi yakından tanımasını istediğiniz birine kim olduğunuzu anlatmak için kullanabileceğiniz bir olay *(It is a memory that helps explain who you are as an individual and might be the memory you would tell someone else to get to know you better)*.

Değişim Anısı Yönergesi *(Change Memory Instruction)*:

Şimdi sizden, üniversiteye başladıktan sonra nasıl değiştiğinizi gösteren, sizin için kişisel bir anlam taşıdığına ve sizi tanımladığına inandığınız bir anınızı hatırlamanızı istiyoruz. *(In this part, we ask you to recall a memory, which demonstrates how you have changed after you started college, which defines you as a person and which still feels important to you.)*

Bu olay aşağıdaki özelliklere sahip olmalıdır *(This memory should have the following attributes)*:

• Net bir biçimde hatırladığınız *([a memory that] you remember very clearly)*,

• Sizin için önemli olan *([a memory that] is important to you)*,

• Olumlu ya da olumsuz bir deneyiminizi içeren *([a memory that] includes a positive or negative experience)*,

• Sizi siz yapan, kim olduğunuz hakkında ipuçları veren, sizi yakından tanımasını istediğiniz birine kim olduğunuzu anlatmak için kullanabileceğiniz bir olay *(It is a memory that helps explain who you are as an individual and might be the memory you would tell someone else to get to know you better)*.

APPENDIX C

MEMORY EXPERIENCES QUESTIONNAIRE SHORT FORM BY SUBCALES

Vividness

1. My memory for this event is very vivid.
2. My memory for this event is very detailed.
3. My memory for this event is dim (R).

Coherence

1. The order of events in the memory is clear.
2. This memory is of an event that occurred once at a particular time and place, not a summary or merging of many similar or related events.
3. This memory comes back to me in bits and pieces, not as a logical, coherent story (R).
4. This memory is a blending of many similar, related events rather than a specific memory about a particular event (R).

Accessibility

1. This memory was easy for me to recall.
2. It was difficult for me to think of this memory (R).
3. I had to think for a while before I could recall this event (R).

Time Perspective

1. My memory for the day when the event took place is clear.
2. My memory for the hour when the event took place is clear.
3. My memory for the year when the event took place is vague (R).

Sensory Details

1. As I remember the event, I can hear it in my mind.

2. When I recall this event, I think the same things I thought when the event originally happened.

3. My memory for this event does not involve a lot of sensory information (sounds, smells, tastes, etc.) (R).

4. As I remember the event, I have a difficult time recalling the particular physical reactions and sensations I had during the experience (R).

Visual Perspective

1. In my memory, I see this experience through my own eyes.

2. I view this memory as if I was an observer to the experience (R).

3. As I remember this event, I feel like an observer watching myself (R).

Emotional Intensity

1. My emotions are very intense concerning this event.

2. The memory of this event evokes powerful emotions.

3. This memory does not evoke strong emotions in me (R).

Sharing

1. Since it happened, I have talked about this event many times.

2. I frequently think about or talk about this event with others.

3. I rarely tell others about this memory (R).

Distancing

1. I feel like the person in this memory is a different person than who I am today.

2. When I recall this memory, I think, “that’s not me anymore.”

3. I feel like I am the same person in the memory as I am today (R).

Valence

1. The overall tone of the memory is positive.

2. The overall tone of the memory is negative (R).

(R): Reverse Coded Items

5-Point Likert Scale:

1 (Not at all)/2/3/4/5 (Very Much)

APPENDIX D

MEMORY EXPERIENCES QUESTIONNAIRE – SHORT FORM

1. Bu anının aklıma gelmesi benim için zordu.
2. Olayı hatırladığımda, zihnimde seslerini duyabiliyorum.
3. Bu anının genel havası olumlu.
4. Bu olayla ilgili anım flu.
5. Bu anıdaki olay sırası net
6. Bu anıyı nadiren başkalarına anlatırım.
7. Bu olayla ilgili hislerim çok yoğun.
8. Bu anıyı sanki bu deneyimime dışardan bakan bir gözlemciymişim gibi görebiliyorum.
9. Bu anının yaşandığı yılla ilgili anım flu.
10. Bu olayla ilgili anım çok canlı.
11. Bu anı benim için hatırlaması kolay bir anıydı.
12. Yaşandığından beri, bu olayla ilgili birçok kez konuştum.
13. Bu anıdaki kişinin bugün olduğumdan farklı bir kişi olduğunu hissediyorum.
14. Bu anının yaşandığı günle ilgili anım net.
15. Bu anının genel havası olumsuz.
16. Bu anıyı tutarlı ve mantıklı bir hikaye olarak değil, parçalar halinde hatırlıyorum.
17. Bu anıyı hatırlayabilmem için öncesinde bir süre düşünmem gerekti.
18. Sık sık bu anı hakkında düşünür ya da başkalarıyla konuşurum.
19. Bu anıyı hatırladığımda, “ben artık bu değilim” diye düşünüyorum.
20. Bu olayın anısı güçlü duygular uyandırıyor.
21. Bu olayı hatırladığımda, kendimi olayı izleyen bir gözlemci gibi görüyorum.

22. Bu anı bir kez belirli bir yerde ve zamanda olan tek bir olayla ilgilidir, birçok benzer ya da ilişkili olayın bir özeti ya da birleşimi değildir.
23. Bu anıdaki kişinin bugün olduğum aynı kişi olduğunu hissediyorum.
24. Bu olayı hatırladığımda, olay olduğu anda düşündüğüm aynı şeyleri düşünüyorum.
25. Bu anıyı hatırladığımda, deneyimimi kendi gözlerimle görüyorum.
26. Bu anının yaşandığı saatle ilgili anım net.
27. Bu olayla ilgili anım çok ayrıntılı.
28. Bu anı belirli bir olayla ilgili bir anı değil, birçok benzer ve ilişkili olayın bir karışımı.
29. Bu anı bende güçlü duygular uyandırmıyor.
30. Bu olayla ilgili anım çok fazla duyusal bilgi içermiyor (sesler, kokular, tatlar vs.).
31. Bu olayı hatırladığımda, bu deneyimim sırasındaki belirli fiziksel tepki ve duyumlarımı hatırlamakta zorlanıyorum.

Cevap Skalası:

Hiç (1) / 2/ 3/ 4/ Çok (5)

APPENDIX E

CENTRALITY OF EVENT SCALE

1. I feel that this event has become part of my identity.
2. This event has become a reference point for the way I understand myself and the world.
3. I feel that this event has become a central part of my life story.
4. This event has colored the way I think and feel about other experiences.
5. This event permanently changed my life.
6. I often think about the effects this event will have on my future.
7. This event was a turning point in my life.

7-Point Likert Scale:

1 (Not at all)/2/3/4/5/6/7 (Totally)

APPENDIX F

CENTRALITY OF EVENT SCALE IN TURKISH

1. Bu olayın kimliğimin bir parçası haline geldiğini hissediyorum.
2. Bu olay, kendimi ve dünyayı anlamamda bir referans noktası haline geldi.
3. Bu olayın hayat hikayemin merkezi bir parçası haline geldiğini hissediyorum.
4. Bu olay, diğer deneyimlerimle ilgili duygu ve düşüncelerimi etkiledi.
5. Bu olay, hayatımı kalıcı bir biçimde değiştirdi.
6. Sık sık bu olayın geleceğim üzerindeki etkileri hakkında düşünürüm.
7. Bu olay, hayatımda bir dönüm noktası oldu.

Cevap Skalası:

1 (Hiç) / 2/ 3/ 4/ 5/ 6/ 7 (Tamamen)

APPENDIX G

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

2. At times I think I am no good at all. (R)

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of. (R)

6. I certainly feel useless at times. (R)

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. (R)

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. (R)

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

(R): Reverse Coded Items

5-Point Likert Scale: 1 (Strongly disagree)/2/3/4/5 (Strongly agree)

APPENDIX H

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE IN TURKISH

1. Kendimi en az diğer insanlar kadar değerli buluyorum.
2. Bazı olumlu özelliklerim olduğunu düşünüyorum.
3. Genelde kendimi başarısız bir kişi olarak görme eğilimindeyim.
4. Ben de diğer insanların birçoğunun yapabildiği kadar bir şeyler yapabilirim.
5. Kendimde gurur duyacak fazla şey bulamıyorum.
6. Kendime karşı olumlu bir tutum içindeyim.
7. Genel olarak kendimden memnunum.
8. Kendime karşı daha fazla saygı duyabilmeyi isterdim.
9. Bazen kesinlikle kendimin bir işe yaramadığını düşünüyorum.
10. Bazen hiç de yeterli bir insan olmadığımı düşünüyorum.

Cevap Skalası: 1 (Kesinlikle katılmıyorum)/ 2/ 3/ 4/ 5 (Kesinlikle katılıyorum)

APPENDIX I

SELF-CONCEPT CLARITY SCALE

1. My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another.

2. On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day, I might have a different opinion. (R)

3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am. (R)

4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really the person that I appear to be. (R)

5. When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I'm not sure what I was really like. (R)

6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.

7. Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself. (R)

8. My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently. (R)

9. If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day. (R)

10. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone what I'm really like. (R)

11. In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.

12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I don't really know what I want. (R)

(R): Reverse Coded Items

5-Point Likert Scale: 1 (Strongly disagree)/2/3/4/5 (Strongly agree)

APPENDIX J

SELF-CONCEPT CLARITY SCALE IN TURKISH

1. Kendime ilişkin inançlarım sıklıkla birbirleriyle çatışır.

2. Kendim hakkında bir gün bir görüş, başka bir gün ise farklı bir görüşüm olabilir.

3. Kişiliğimi nasıl tanımladığım sorulsa, yapacağım tanım bir günden diğerine değişebilir.

4. Kendim hakkındaki görüşlerim çok sık değişiyor.

5. Geçmişte nasıl bir kişi olduğumu düşündüğümde, gerçekte nasıl biri olduğumdan emin değilim.

6. Bazen gerçekten göründüğüm gibi birisi olmadığımı hissediyorum.

7. Kişiliğimin farklı yönleri arasında pek çelişki yoktur.

8. Bazen başkalarını kendimi tanıdığımdan daha iyi tanıdığımı düşünüyorum.

9. Nasıl bir kişi olduğumu merak etmekle çok zaman geçiririm.

10. İstesem bile başka birine gerçekten nasıl biri olduğumu anlatabileceğimi düşünmüyorum.

11. Genelde, kim ve nasıl bir kişi olduğum konusundaki görüşlerim açıktır.

12. Benim için, bir konu hakkında karara varmak oldukça güç, çünkü ne istediğimi gerçekten bilmiyorum.

Cevap Skalası: 1 (Kesinlikle katılmıyorum) / 2/ 3/ 4/ 5 (Kesinlikle katılıyorum)

APPENDIX K

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE

Please answer following questions to evaluate your life.

____ In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

____ The conditions of my life are excellent.

____ I am satisfied with my life.

____ So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.

____ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

7 = Strongly agree

6 = Agree

5 = Slightly agree

4 = Neither agree nor disagree

3 = Slightly disagree

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly disagree

APPENDIX L

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE IN TURKISH

Lütfen hayatınıza dair aşağıdaki değerlendirmeleri yapınız.

_____ Pek çok açıdan ideallerime yakın bir yaşamım var

_____ Yaşam koşullarım mükemmeldir

_____ Yaşamım beni tatmin ediyor

_____ Şimdiye kadar, yaşamda istediğim önemli şeyleri elde ettim

_____ Hayatımı bir daha yaşama şansım olsaydı, hemen hemen hiçbir şeyi değiştirmezdim.

7 = Kesinlikle katılıyorum

6 = Katılıyorum

5 = Çok az katılıyorum

4 = Ne katılıyorum ne de katılmıyorum

3 = Biraz katılmıyorum

2 = Katılmıyorum

1 = Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

APPENDIX M

POSITIVE AFFECT NEGATIVE AFFECT SCALE

Bu ölçek farklı duyguları tanımlayan birtakım sözcükler içermektedir. Son iki hafta nasıl hissettiğinizi düşünüp her maddeyi okuyun. Uygun cevabı her maddenin yanında ayrılan yere işaretleyin. Cevaplarınızı verirken aşağıdaki puanları kullanın. *(This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Think about how you have been feeling in the last two weeks, read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Use the following scale to record your answers.)*

1 = Çok az veya hiç *(Very slightly or not at all)*

2 = Biraz *(A little)*

3 = Ortalama *(Moderately)*

4 = Oldukça *(Quite a bit)*

5 = Çok fazla *(Extremely)*

1. İlgili *(Interested)*
2. Sıkıntılı *(Distressed)*
3. Heyecanlı *(Excited)*
4. Mutsuz *(Upset)*
5. Güçlü *(Strong)*
6. Suçlu *(Guilty)*
7. Ürkmüş *(Scared)*
8. Düşmanca *(Hostile)*
9. Hevesli *(Enthusiastic)*
10. Gururlu *(Proud)*
11. Asabi *(Irritable)*
12. Uyanık – dikkati açık *(Alert)*
13. Utanmış *(Ashamed)*
14. İlhamlı *(Inspired)*
15. Sinirli *(Nervous)*
16. Kararlı *(Determined)*
17. Dikkatli *(Attentive)*
18. Tedirgin *(Jittery)*
19. Aktif *(Active)*
20. Korkmuş *(Afraid)*

APPENDIX N

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demografik Bilgiler

1. Cinsiyetiniz *(Gender)*: Kadın *(Female)*/ Erkek *(Male)*/ Diğer *(Other)*

2. Bölümünüz *(Department)*:

3. Doğum tarihiniz *(Birth Date)*:

4. Çalışma durumunuz *(Employment Status)*: Çalışmıyorum *(Unemployed)* /Yarı zamanlı *(Part-time)* /Tam zamanlı *(Full-time)* /Diğer *(Other)*

5. Annenizin en son bitirdiği *okul (Mother's education)*:

İlkokul *(Elementary shool)*/ Ortaokul *(Middle school)* / Lise *(High school)*/ Üniversite *(Graduate)* / Lisansüstü *(Post Graduate)*

6. Babanızın en son bitirdiği okul *(Father's education)*:

İlkokul *(Elementary shool)*/ Ortaokul *(Middle school)* / Lise *(High school)*/ Üniversite *(Graduate)* / Lisansüstü *(Post Graduate)*

7. Geniş ailenizde sizden önce üniversite eğitimi almış kişileri düşününce *(When you think of people in your extended family)*:

a. Ailemde üniversiteye giden ilk kişi benim. *(I am the first in my family who study at university)*

b. Ailemde benden önce üniversite eğitimi almış ya da üniversiteye başlamış birkaç kişi vardır. *(There are few people in my family who study at university before I do)*

c. Ailemde benden önce üniversite eğitimi almış birçok kişi vardır. *(There are many people in my family who study at university before I do)*

8. Türkiye genelinde kendi sosyoekonomik durumunuzu nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz? *(How do you evaluate your socioeconomic status in Turkey?)*

Düşük gelir düzeyi *(Low SES)* / Düşük – orta gelir düzeyi *(Low to Middle SES)*

Orta gelir düzeyi *(Middle SES)* / Orta – üst gelir düzeyi *(Middle to High SES)* / Üst gelir düzeyi *(High SES)*

9. Ailenizin toplam aylık geliri yaklaşık ne kadardır? *(How much is your family's net income?)*

10. Bu gelir kaç kişinin geçimini sağlamaktadır? *(How many people's living does on this income depend?)*

APPENDIX O

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
İnsan Araştırmaları Kurumsal Değerlendirme Alt Kurulu

Sayı: 2018-09

14 Mart 2018

Müge Özvarol
Psikoloji

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Değişim ve Devamlılığa Dair Benlik Tanımlayıcı Anılar: Üniversite Deneyiminin Etkisi" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2018/09 sayılı başvuru İNAREK/SBB Etik Alt Kurulu tarafından 14 Mart 2018 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

Doç. Dr. Gül Sosay

Yrd. Doç. Dr. İnci Ayhan

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Bengü Börkan

Dr. Nur Yeniçeri

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