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## **THE PATHWAYS TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: LOVE CHARACTER STRENGTH AND PARENTAL COMMUNICATION**

*Research article*

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## The pathways to positive outcomes in youth development: love character strength and parental communication

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### Abstract

In today's world, young people attending high school face many developmental challenges and need a holistic examination of their developmental process, with both positive and negative aspects. Desired outcomes for healthy youth development include individual character strengths such as the strength of love and the contextual characteristics of close relationships such as parental communication that are linked to these strengths. These factors can reduce negative traits such as risk-taking behaviors and increase positive outcomes such as life satisfaction. The aim of this study is to determine the prevalence of character strengths among high school youth and to reveal the relationship between these strengths and risk-taking behaviors. In addition, based on the need to reveal the effect of individual characteristics based on context, it was aimed to examine the relationship between character strengths of love and parental communication with risky behavior and life satisfaction by including demographic variables. Values in Action Inventory for Youth, Youth Assets Survey, Life Satisfaction Scale, and Demographic Characteristics Form were used in the study. In addition to descriptive statistics, correlation, MANOVA test and structural equation modeling were used in data analysis. According to the findings, some strengths were found to be ranked higher among adolescents. It was noteworthy that demographic variables and some of the character strengths were associated with important outcomes in adolescents' development. Other findings included that relationships with parents had some influence on the relationship between the strength of love and risk-taking behavior and life satisfaction as examined through structural equation. The findings of the research is considered to be useful for institutions and professionals and policy makers working in education and schools, youth centers, social services, police units and aiming to increase the well-being and positive development of young people.

*Keywords:* character strengths, love, parental communication, youth development

### 1. Introduction

The need to investigate human competencies and to reveal their strengths in mental health research has been neglected more in the past. Nowadays, the research (Park, 2004; Silva et al., 2020; Smith, 2006) of these competencies in terms of human happiness and satisfaction with life is becoming more significant. Instead of seeing adolescence as a problematic period, the development of adolescents in all aspects, including their strengths, has gained importance due to the change in this perspective (Bowers et al., 2011; Vimont, 2012). The healthy development of young people in all aspects should include not only outcomes such as happiness, well-being

The first results of this research were partly presented at the Great Lakes Regional Counseling Psychology Conference, April 2019, Louisville, KY.

and life satisfaction but also understanding the human relationships that lead to these outcomes and the strengths of character related to these relationships (Bencivenga & Elias, 2003; Steen, Kachorek & Peterson, 2003; Park & Peterson, 2008). There is a higher need for studies that examine this context of human relations.

How character strengths develop in a context based on close human relationships and how character interacts with these relationships has been emphasized in recent studies (Shoshani & Slone, 2012; Thomas, Cunha & Santo, 2022) on developing positive aspects of young people. When we talk about the context in which character strengths interact, the love-based parental relationships, one of the character strengths, comes to mind. According to Comte Sponville (2004), the strength of love, which is one of the most important of many other character strengths and is observed to be experienced intensely in youth, is the strength where all virtues begin and end. It is experienced in the context of parental relationships, primarily the mother. Because in the family, there is a suitable ground for developing virtues stemming from love. The family is seen as a network of relationships in which the intimacy, which is the most special part of the person, is shared most deeply and included in the relationship (Isaacs, 2006). The fact that love means having strong feelings of goodwill and desiring the best for the other person (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999) suggests that one of the best contexts in which this strength can be experienced is in parental communication. The feeling of being truly loved in the family is very satisfying for young people and enables them to fulfill their academic and developmental responsibilities (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). All these characteristics of the family that involve love can lead to life satisfaction when they interact with the character strength of love that young individuals have and are included in their lives. It can also help them stay away from maladaptive behaviors such as risk-taking behaviors from a developmental perspective.

Because many factors such as education process, family life, socio-economic level, political and religious life levels of young individuals living in big cities can lead to differences in their behaviors, there is a need to know the effect of demographic characteristics in studies that will examine relatively complex features such as character, life satisfaction and risk-taking, which can also be shaped by environmental influences. Therefore, it may become difficult to explain youth behavior in big cities (Kazgan, 2006). It is known that socio-economic factors can both affect parents' interactions with their children (Kim, Lee & Han, 2018) and be related to character traits (Proyer, Gander, Wyss & Ruch, 2011). Therefore, including predominantly family-based variables such as the number of siblings, birth order, and mother's employment in youth studies may provide a more meaningful explanation of youth behavior.

As in all societies, in eastern societies such as Turkey, the goal of developing parental relationships based on the strength of love and character (Bhatt, Tweed, Dooley, Viljoen, Douglas, Gagnon & Besla, 2012; Park & Peterson 2009) will always remain important. Turkey is a country where half of the population is younger than 29.7 years of age (Gür et al., 2012) and the highest population density is high school youth between the ages of 15-19 (Yentürk, 2007). Despite having a young population, studies that can guide effective youth work are limited (Gür et al., 2012). There is a need to increase youth research in the country by taking into account this age distribution and to address the developmental adaptation needs of young people in a multidimensional way. In this respect, in addition to risk-taking behaviors of young people, positive characteristics such as life satisfaction and factors such as personal strengths and interpersonal relationships that can affect them should be monitored with up-to-date data over the years. By understanding the current changes in youth behaviors, it may be possible to increase the life satisfaction of young people and protect them from negative risk-taking behaviors.

### **1.1.Character strengths as personal strengths**

Character is the morally valuable dimensions of personality. Virtue, on the other hand, is the basic qualities valued by moral philosophers or spiritual thinkers (Park & Peterson, 2008). Character strengths are positive personal traits and competencies that occur in the emotions, thoughts and behaviors of adolescents and are the psychological processes and structures that determine virtuousness. They are specific ways of demonstrating virtues (Niemiec, Rashid & Spinella, 2012; Peterson, 2006; Shoshani & Slone, 2012). For example, the virtue of humanity can be achieved through strengths such as kindness, love, and social intelligence. These strengths are similar in terms of showing human characteristics, but they are also different in terms of content. Six-dimensional virtuousness refers to the higher-level positive character traits (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) of wisdom, courage, humanity, temperance and transcendence that are formed by the twenty-four character strengths.

"Good character", one of the strengths emphasized in the introduction, forms the basis of positive youth development (Park & Peterson, 2008). Character traits that constitute good character are sometimes examined as value traits. In the studies (Düzen, 2009; Erdem Artan, 2005; Kazgan, 2006; Şen, 2010; Vatandaş, 2013) involving surveys on the values of youth, it has been observed that mostly post-secondary youth are the subject for research, values can be dealt with social needs rather than the individual, and the importance of values or the existence of social values are the investigated items. In the classification of character strengths, individual value characteristics are handled in a dynamic structure, in the form of values reflected in action/behavior, and in a behaviorally observable structure, in terms of reflecting values with behaviors (VIA-Values in Action: Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The multidimensional presentation of the values of young people as character strengths at the individual level through 24 subscales, each of which is measured with 7-9 items, has an important place in terms of value research. From time to time, skills, attitudes and values can be classified and discussed together with the title of values in various publications and trainings. The character strengths approach, with its comprehensive classification of the characteristics of values, can also contribute to conceptual clarity. Therefore, this study aims to examine the prevalence of twenty-four character strengths among young people and the prominent ones among these strengths.

The period of high school youth, which is known to coincide with the period of abstract thinking in terms of mental development, draws attention as a period in which adolescents begin to acquire values and character traits. In a process that includes these characteristics, adolescence can be seen as a life interval in which both positive and negative aspects of development such as life satisfaction and risk-taking behaviors flourish together. Therefore, the effects of character strengths as factors related to young people's risk-taking and life satisfaction are discussed in the next section.

### **1.2.Character strengths and parental communication as factors associated with risk taking and life satisfaction**

The absence or minimal level of risk-taking behaviors during adolescence can be seen as one of the important indicators of the well-being of young people. Risk-taking behavior is defined in terms of its positive meaning, such as taking risks for development, as well as its possible negative consequences (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2007). These behaviors are considered as low (e.g. cheating) and high (e.g. drug use) risk behaviors and are seen as behaviors that threaten the future of young people psychologically and socially (Parsons, Siegel

& Cousins, 1997; Cited in Özmen & Sümer, 2011). There are some studies in the literature emphasizing that character strengths are related to avoidance of risk-taking behaviors (Ma et al., 2008). Some strengths, such as wisdom strengths, self-regulation, and sense of meaning, are higher in young people who do not engage in risky behaviors (McWhirter, McWhirter, McWhirter & McWhirter, 1998). The effect of character strengths on risky behaviors is widely discussed in the literature (Davidson, Wingate, Slish & Rasmussen, 2010; Herndon, 2011; Kendler, Liu, Gardner, McCullough, Larson & Prescott, 2003; Kuo, Gallo & Eaton, 2004; O'Keefe & Wingate, 2013). In addition to many character strengths, it is pointed out in these studies that many different character strengths such as self-control, prudence, spirituality may be related to risky behaviors.

In addition to keeping young people away from risky behaviors, character strengths lead to adaptation in many other areas. While transcendence strengths provide young people with a sense of meaning, the strengths under the headings of wisdom, humanity and temperance support psychological adjustment in cognitive, social and behavioral dimensions. It leads to being harmonious and experiencing positive emotions at school (Shoshani & Aviv, 2012; Shoshani & Slone, 2012). These personal strengths are positive traits that protect (Franks, 2011) from risky behaviors and strengthen well-being. In addition to well-being, many studies conducted at different times since the emergence of character strengths theory (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) have already demonstrated that these strengths contribute to life satisfaction (Miljković & Rijavec, 2008; Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Proyer, Gander, Wyss & Ruch, 2011). Among these character strengths, the positive effect of the strength of love stands out among the strengths that are particularly related to life satisfaction. In order to understand this connection between the strength of love and life satisfaction more comprehensively, as mentioned in the next section, this study aims to reveal the effect of the strength of love on life satisfaction through parental interaction.

In addition to the prevalence of character strengths, the level of differentiation of demographic characteristics was also addressed in this study. In addition to demographic variables such as gender, age and level of education, some other demographic variables such as mother's employment status (Aktepe & Yalçinkaya, 2016) are also included in value research. In this study, which focuses on the strength of love, one of the character strengths seen as a value characteristic, the relationship between demographic variables and the variables of parental communication, risk taking, and life satisfaction was also examined. For this purpose, in addition to the mother's employment, family-based variables such as the order and rank of the siblings were included in the study.

### **1.3.The interaction of the love strength and the parental communication**

As the modern family structure is constantly changing, researchers need to take a closer look at the complexity of families (Rueter & Koerner, 2008). Communication patterns of parents and adolescents, which are among the most important issues in the study of family structures, have important effects on adolescents' successful transition to adulthood (Nakhaee, Vagharseyyedin, Afkar & Mood, 2017). Open communication, empathy, warmth, support, setting consistent expectations, which are the characteristics of these communication patterns, are indicators of interpersonal communication in the family and positively affect the adaptation of adolescents at an early age (Rueter & Koerner, 2008; Sahertian, Sahertian & Wajabula, 2021; Zhu, Shek, & Yu, 2022). These indicators that ensure the adaptation of young individuals were also considered to reflect the characteristics of the character strength of love.

While family functionality and communication are linked to the strength of love, they are also indirectly related to risky behaviors. For example, it is important to create family environments that emphasize mutual warmth, closeness and commitment and to strengthen family ties in order to protect against risky sexual behaviors (Malcolm et al., 2012). It has been found that the communication styles of 9th grade students, who are in critical developmental periods, with their parents affect their substance use (Shin, Miller-Day & Hecht, 2019). Adolescents who had more open communication with their parents were observed to be less dependent on social networks and showed less maladaptive online behaviors in general (Ramos, Cano & Meneses, 2022). Therefore, it is noteworthy that adolescents' interactions with their parents have a role in both developmental adaptation and preventing the development of risky behaviors.

The relationship between parents and adolescents are considered to be not only a one-way process from parents to adolescents, but also an interactive process towards parents, including the strengths that adolescents have such as love. The aforementioned positive communication characteristics can also develop adolescent-centered based on the strength of love, one of the character strengths that have been emphasized more in recent years. There are studies on the existence of different character strengths between parental attachment and psychological adjustment (Mancinelli et al., 2021). In addition, in Littman-Ovadia's study (2011), the mediating effect of the love strength on the effect of attachment relationships towards parents on life satisfaction was revealed. In this study, it is aimed to look at the other aspect of this relationship, considering that the mutual interaction between the context and the individual based on close human relationships (Thomas, Cunha & Santo, 2022) contributes to youth development. Thus, it is important to examine the mediating effect of parental relationship, which is a context, on the effect of individual love character strength on life satisfaction and risk-taking behaviors of adolescents. In other words, the effect of having love character strength on parental relationships and the relationship between this interaction and life satisfaction and risk-taking behaviors constitute another aim of this study.

As a result, this study aimed to examine the prevalence of character strengths and the relationship between these strengths and risk-taking behaviors in order to determine the value distributions of young people. In addition, the differentiation of character strengths of love, parental communication, risk-taking behaviors and life satisfaction according to demographic characteristics were examined in this study. Finally, the other aims of the study were to examine the effect of love character strength and parental relationships on risk-taking behaviors and life satisfaction of high school youth. Since the subject is relatively new in our country, it can contribute to the expansion of similar research in the future. The study is considered to provide up-to-date findings that support the youth studies of many managerial institutions (General Directorate of Security, 2013; The Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2013; The Ministry of Development, 2018; The Ministry of National Education, 2009) that aim at the holistic development of young people in terms of psychosocial, artistic and sportive aspects.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Model**

This research is a correlational study with a quantitative dimension that aims to examine the relationships between dependent and independent variables. Data were collected through graded measurement tools. The renewed and updated approval from the Social and Human

Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee (dated 07.12.2021 and numbered E-92662996-044-37698) was taken at Bursa Uludağ University for the data collection procedure.

## 2.2 Study Group

The research group consisted of 637 high school students attending Turkish public high schools located in city center and who were reached through convenience sampling that is one of the non-probability sampling techniques. Incomplete or incorrectly coded answer sheets were removed and 602 data were included in the analysis. The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Frequency Distributions Regarding Demographic Variables*

		n	%
Grade	9,00	136	23,3
	10,00	253	43,4
	11,00	147	25,2
	12,00	47	8,1
Gender	Female	320	55,5
	Male	257	44,5
Age	14,00	16	2,8
	15,00	136	23,9
	16,00	210	36,8
	17,00	160	28,1
	18,00	47	8,2
	19,00	1	,2
Number of siblings	,00	41	7,1
	1,00	264	46,0
	2,00	173	30,1
	3,00	59	10,3
	4,00	25	4,4
	5,00	8	1,4
	6,00	3	,5
	7,00	1	,2
Birth order	First	215	39,3
	Only	24	4,4
	Middle	117	21,4
	Last	191	34,9
Mother's employment	Non-employed	403	70,7
	Employed	167	29,3
Preschool attendance	Yes	330	57,9
	No	240	42,1

Among the participants, the proportion of 10th grade students was %43,4, the proportion of girls was %55,5, the proportion of 16-year-olds was %36,8, the proportion of those with one sibling was %46,0, the proportion of those who were the first child was %39,3, the proportion of those whose mothers were employed %29,3, and the proportion of those who had received preschool education was 57.9%.

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

In this study that examined the impact of affective factors (motivation, attitude, and self-efficacy) on reading skill, the funnel plots displaying the publication bias are presented in Figure 1:

*Values in Action Inventory for Youth (VIA-Youth)*: It consists of 198 items to assess six virtue dimensions and twenty-four character strengths and is graded on a five-point Likert scale (1=Very much like me, 5=Very much unlike me). Higher scores indicate higher levels of character strengths. Within the scope of the adaptation of the inventory into Turkish (Kabakçı, 2013; Kabakçı, Ergene & Dogan, 2019), forward and backward translation methods were used. The linguistic equivalence of the inventory was calculated and the correlation between the two applications was found to be .80. According to the results of confirmatory factor analysis conducted within the scope of construct validity, significant and sufficient item *t* values, factor loadings and goodness of fit index values to the extent of six virtue dimensions were obtained. For the criterion validity of the inventory, correlations with six different value characteristics were examined and positive coefficients ranging between .21-.56 were obtained. Internal consistency reliability coefficients were found between .64-.91 and test-retest reliability coefficients were found between .72-.89. Scores for both the 6 virtue dimensions and the 24 character strength subscales can be obtained separately from the inventory and scores between 197-985 can be obtained. "I do the right thing even if people make fun of me", "I am very optimistic about the future", "I am a believer" are sample items of the inventory. For this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .96 for the total score.

*Youth Assets Survey (YAS)*: It was developed by Oman et al. (2010) for high school students to measure individual, family and social developmental assets in 17 areas. In the construct validity study, a 61-item Likert-type scale structure with 17 factors explaining 65% of the variance was reached. Internal consistency coefficients ranged between .55-.92. In the Turkish adaptation (Kabakçı, 2018), forward and backward translation was performed and the linguistic equivalence coefficient was .84. Within the scope of construct validity, 17 factors with factor loadings ranging between .51-.88 and explaining 66% of the variance emerged and very similar results to the original were obtained. The internal consistency coefficient was .52-.92 for the subscales and .90 for the total score. The 2-week test-retest reliability coefficient was .78. In addition, the item-total correlation levels were found to be adequate at the level of .21-.52 except for three items. Items such as "My parent(s) know where I am after school." and "You take good care of your body by exercising." can be given as sample items. For this study, the relationships with mother and father subscales of the scale were used and the total reliability was found to be .77.

*Risk Involvement and Perception Scale (RIPS)*: It was originally developed (Siegel et al., 1994; Cited in Parsons, Siegel & Cousins, 1997) for adolescents and is a 9-point Likert-type scale. According to the exploratory factor analysis conducted in the Turkish adaptation (Özmen & Sümer, 2011), a 2-dimensional structure with 23 items, namely high risk behaviors (eg Smoking marijuana) and low risk behaviors (eg Cheating), was reached. The internal consistency coefficient of the inventory, which had good fit indices as a result of confirmatory factor analysis, was found to be .86 for the total score, .86 for low risk behaviors and .79 for high risk behaviors. For this study, the internal consistency coefficients were found to be .87, .85, and .83, respectively.



*Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)*: It is a five-item Likert-type scale (1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree) measuring general life satisfaction. In the development studies (Diener et al. 1985), it was found that the scale items were collected in a single factor with a factor loading of 66% and the scale was correlated with similar scales at the level of 0.50-0.68. In the Turkish adaptation (Köker, 1991), surface validity was ensured and it was found to have a consistency coefficient of .85 as a result of the test-retest applied three weeks apart. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale for this study was .86.

*Demographic Information Form*: It was prepared to collect information on demographic characteristics. The form included some basic questions about the student's self, family and school and consisted of 6 items.

## 2.4. Data Analysis

Analyses were conducted with SPSS 23.0 and Amos 23 package programs and 95% confidence level was used. Based on the fact that the kurtosis and skewness values obtained from the intra-item scales should be appropriate range (Groeneveld & Meeden, 1984; Moors, 1986; Hopkins & Weeks, 1990; De Carlo, 1997), the scores obtained were determined to be in accordance with the normal distribution. In addition, missing values and extreme values were analyzed through frequency tables. In addition to descriptive statistics, the relationships between variables were analyzed with Pearson Correlation Coefficient. Demographic variables were analyzed in terms of scores with MANOVA test. Mediation and moderating effects were analyzed with SEM. The mediating variable is a part of the cause and effect relationship between two variables and some conditions are required for the mediation effect. First of all, the independent variable should have an effect on the mediator and dependent variables. In addition, when the mediator variable is included in the analysis, if there is a non-significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, it is referred to as full mediation effect; when there is a decrease in the relationship, it is referred to as partial effect (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Burmaoğlu, Polat & Meydan, 2013; Gürbüz & Bekmezci, 2012; McKinnon, Fairchild & Fritz, 2010). The existence of the moderating variable and the effect is determined by the fact that the interaction formed by the product of the independent variable and the moderating variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Sharma, Durand & Gur-Arie, 1981).

## 4. Findings

In line with the research problems, the results are presented in this section. Firstly, the prevalence of character strengths among high school students and the relationship between these strengths and risk taking, parental relationships and life satisfaction are presented. Then, the findings related to the examination of the variables in the study according to demographic variables are emphasized. Finally, the findings of the structural equation analysis (SEM), in which the mediating and direct variables affecting the dependent variables are discussed, are presented.

### 4.1. Prevalence of character strengths and their relationship with risk taking, life satisfaction and parental communication

Examination of the averages of high school students' character strengths showed that perspective, humility, citizenship, appreciation beauty and excellence, and gratitude were the most prominent strengths. However, the lowest ranked character strengths were forgiveness and open-mindedness (Table 2).

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics and correlations*

	$\bar{X}$	Ss	r <sup>1</sup>	r <sup>2</sup>	r <sup>3</sup>
Creativity	3,72	0,69	,02	,17**	,16**
Curiosity	3,72	0,67	-,06	,22**	,13**
Love of learning	3,68	0,68	-,24**	,17**	,21**
Open-mind.	3,29	0,80	-,20**	,23**	,19**
Perspective	4,11	0,70	-,18**	,40**	,47**
WISDOM	3,70	0,49	-,20**	,34**	,34**
Honesty	3,87	0,67	-,24**	,31**	,30**
Bravery	3,56	0,78	-,11**	,38**	,47**
Persistence	3,63	0,75	-,02	,22**	,15**
Zest	3,39	0,68	-,22**	,29**	,33**
COURAGE	3,61	0,52	-,20**	,42**	,44**
Kindness	3,87	0,65	-,23**	,31**	,27**
Love	3,42	0,76	-,04	,32**	,29**
Social intelligence	3,68	0,71	-,19**	,55**	,52**
HUMANITY	3,65	0,59	-,18**	,48**	,43**
Fairness	3,71	0,66	-,25**	,20**	,23**
Leadership	3,33	0,75	-,20**	,27**	,21**
Citizenship	4,03	0,67	-,17**	,41**	,48**
JUSTICE	3,69	0,55	-,26**	,37**	,38**
Forgiveness	3,23	0,88	-,19**	,18**	,12**
Humility	4,11	0,74	-,18**	,40**	,47**
Prudence	3,74	0,62	-,22**	,26**	,26**
Self-control	3,49	0,80	-,11	,37**	,46**
TEMPERANCE	3,64	0,55	-,24**	,41**	,45**
App.of bea.&exc.	3,97	0,71	-,15**	,22**	,17**
Gratitude	3,97	0,63	-,06	,21**	,21**
Hope	3,72	0,69	,02	,17**	,16**
Humor	3,72	0,67	-,06	,22**	,13**
Spirituality	3,68	0,68	-,24**	,17**	,21**
TRANSCENDENCE	3,81	0,49	-,14**	,27**	,24**

<sup>1</sup>Risk taking behaviors; <sup>2</sup>Parental communication; <sup>3</sup>Life satisfaction

Examination of the relationships between character strengths and risk-taking behaviors showed that 17 strengths were negatively related to risk-taking behaviors. The analyzed data indicated that strengths such as love of learning, fairness, and spirituality have higher and more significant correlations with risk-taking than the others. On the contrary, all of the character strengths scores were found to have positive and significant correlations with life satisfaction. Correlation of the strengths such as perspective, bravery, social intelligence, humility, and self-control were higher than the rest. All of the relationship with parents scores showed positive and significant correlations with the strengths, and the correlations of strengths such as social intelligence, love and kindness and the humanity virtue group formed by these strengths were significantly prominent.

#### 4.2. Examination of differences according to demographic variables

In order to examine whether the variables in the study differ according to demographic variables, firstly the descriptive statistics and normality levels of the variables were examined. The results obtained are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Variables and Normality Test

	$\bar{X}$	Ss	Skewness	Kurtosis
Love strength	3,69	0,74	-,559	,057
Relations with mother	3,71	0,71	-1,463	1,819
Relations with father	3,42	0,86	-1,080	,565
Parental communication	3,57	0,68	-1,155	1,176
Risk taking	0,87	0,75	1,567	2,691
Life satisfaction	4,68	1,38	-,551	-,326

According to Table 3, since the skewness and kurtosis values are between +3 and -3, normality is ensured and parametric test techniques were used in the analysis. The results of parametric tests are presented below.

First of all, the results of the MANOVA test conducted to examine the character strength of love according to demographic variables (grade, gender, age, number of siblings, birth order, mother's employment, preschool education) are given below (Table 4).

Table 4. Examination of Love Strength in terms of Demographic Variables

		Love strength		F	p	Eta squared
		$\bar{X}$	ss			
Grade	9,00	3,58	,80	2,437	,064	,015
	10,00	3,68	,74			
	11,00	3,83	,68			
	12,00	3,56	,72			
Gender	Female	3,76	,76	2,578	,109	,005
	Male	3,59	,71			
Age	14,00	4,03	,39	1,742	,139	,014
	15,00	3,61	,76			
	16,00	3,64	,75			
	17,00	3,76	,73			
	18-19	3,66	,70			
Number of siblings	,00	3,77	,63	,880	,494	,009
	1,00	3,68	,78			
	2,00	3,74	,73			
	3,00	3,61	,73			
	4,00	3,53	,62			
	5,00+	3,57	,78			
Birth order	First	3,69	,71	1,367	,252	,009
	Only	3,71	,68			
	Middle	3,64	,77			
	Last	3,78	,72			
Mother's employment	Non-employed	3,66	,73	,000	,994	,000
	Employed	3,74	,77			

Preschool education	Yes	3,71	,75	,010	,921	,000
	No	3,70	,71			

According to the results of the analysis conducted to examine the character strength of love in terms of class, gender, age, number of siblings, birth order, mother's employment status, and preschool education variables, the strength of love did not show a significant difference according to the variables ( $p>0.05$ ).

The results of the analysis to examine the relationship with mother in terms of demographic variables are presented in the Table 5.

Table 5. *Examination Relationship with Mother in terms of Demographic Variables*

		Relationship with mother		F	p	Eta squared
		$\bar{X}$	ss			
Grade	9,00	3,73	,69	1,916	,126	,012
	10,00	3,67	,75			
	11,00	3,80	,61			
	12,00	3,61	,80			
Gender	Female	3,68	,73	2,143	,144	,004
	Male	3,76	,65			
Age	14,00	4,03	,39	1,287	,274	,011
	15,00	3,75	,66			
	16,00	3,65	,73			
	17,00	3,75	,71			
	18-19	3,68	,81			
Number of siblings	,00	3,84	,47	1,698	,134	,018
	1,00	3,71	,70			
	2,00	3,73	,67			
	3,00	3,61	,92			
	4,00	3,46	,87			
	5,00+	3,85	,82			
Birth order	First	3,75	,64	,134	,940	,001
	Only	3,89	,35			
	Middle	3,69	,77			
	Last	3,69	,76			
Mother's employment	Non-employed	3,70	,72	,128	,721	,000
	Employed	3,76	,68			
Preschool education	Yes	3,72	,67	,726	,395	,002
	No	3,74	,74			

According to the results of the analysis conducted to examine the relationship with mother in terms of class, gender, age, number of siblings, birth order, mother's employment status, and preschool education variables, the relationship with mother did not show a significant difference according to the variables ( $p>0.05$ ). Similarly, the findings obtained by examining the relationship with the father in terms of demographic variables are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Examination of Relations with Father in terms of Demographic Variables

		Relationship with father		F	p	Mean difference	Eta squared
		$\bar{X}$	ss				
Grade	9,00	3,40	,88	2,295	,077		,018
	10,00	3,37	,91				
	11,00	3,50	,75				
	12,00	3,45	,88				
Gender	Female	3,35	,90	11,087	,001*		,023
	Male	3,51	,79				
Age	14,00	3,77	,67	2,574	,037*	1-5	,022
	15,00	3,44	,87				
	16,00	3,33	,88				
	17,00	3,51	,75				
	18-19	3,29	1,09				
Number of siblings	,00	3,56	,77	1,066	,379		,011
	1,00	3,42	,87				
	2,00	3,42	,85				
	3,00	3,24	1,02				
	4,00	3,47	,70				
	5,00+	3,65	,78				
Birth order	First	3,41	,84	,553	,646		,004
	Only	3,53	,68				
	Middle	3,37	,89				
	Last	3,50	,86				
Mother's employment status	Non-employed	3,43	,82	1,060	,304		,002
	Employed	3,41	,92				
Preschool education?	Yes	3,46	,85	,485	,487		,001
	No	3,41	,88				

\*p&lt;0,05

According to the results of the MANOVA test conducted to examine the relationship with father in terms of demographic variables, the relationship with father scores show a significant difference according to gender ( $p < 0,05$ ). Accordingly, the average of males is higher. The effect level was found to be small ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ). Relationship with father also showed a significant difference according to age ( $p < 0,05$ ). The average of 14 year olds was higher than the average of 18-19 year olds. The effect was similarly low ( $\eta^2 = .02$ ).

The results of the MANOVA test conducted to examine the parental communication according to demographic variables are given below (Table 7).

Table 7. Examination of Parental Communication in terms of Demographic Variables

		Parental Communication		F	p	Eta squared
		$\bar{X}$	ss			
Grade	9,00	3,57	,69	2,421	,065	,017

		10,00	3,52	,72			
		11,00	3,65	,56			
		12,00	3,53	,73			
Gender	Female		3,52	,69	8,127	,005*	,017
	Male		3,63	,62			
Age		14,00	3,91	,39	2,360	,053	,021
		15,00	3,60	,67			
		16,00	3,49	,68			
		17,00	3,63	,64			
		18-19	3,48	,81			
Number of siblings		,00	3,71	,49	1,762	,119	,018
		1,00	3,57	,67			
		2,00	3,58	,65			
		3,00	3,43	,87			
		4,00	3,47	,67			
		5,00+	3,80	,72			
Birth order	First		3,58	,61	,243	,866	,002
	Only		3,72	,39			
	Middle		3,53	,73			
	Last		3,60	,72			
Mother's employment	Non-employed		3,57	,66	,698	,404	,001
	Employed		3,59	,68			
Preschool education	Yes		3,59	,65	,013	,910	,000
	No		3,58	,70			

\*p&lt;0,05

Parental communication showed a significant difference according to gender ( $p<0,05$ ). Accordingly, the average of males is higher. The effect was low ( $\eta^2=.02$ ).

The results of the MANOVA test conducted to examine the risk taking behavior, that is a dependent variable, according to demographic variables are given below (Table 8).

Table 8. Examination of Risk Taking Behaviors in terms of Demographic Variables

		Risk taking behaviors		F	p	Eta squared
		$\bar{X}$	ss			
Grade		9,00	,69 ,63	1,845	,138	,012
		10,00	,90 ,74			
		11,00	,88 ,72			
		12,00	1,26 ,95			
Gender	Female		,65 ,56	50,943	,000*	,097
	Male		1,15 ,86			
Age		14,00	,58 ,53	1,904	,109	,016
		15,00	,66 ,58			

		16,00	,94	,78			
		17,00	,92	,77			
		18-19	1,2	,89			
			7				
Number of siblings		,00	,81	,74	,443	,819	,005
		1,00	,90	,77			
		2,00	,84	,71			
		3,00	,88	,70			
		4,00	,81	,64			
	5,00+	,59	,33				
Birth order		First	,86	,72	,180	,910	,001
		Only	,86	,92			
		Middle	,83	,71			
		Last	,90	,75			
Mother's employment		Non-employed	,87	,78	1,200	,274	,003
		Employed	,89	,68			
Preschool education		Yes	,91	,76	3,614	,058	,009
		No	,79	,69			

\*p&lt;0,05

Risk taking behaviors showed a significant difference according to gender ( $p<0,05$ ). Accordingly, the average of males is higher. The effect was big ( $\eta^2=.09$ ).

The results of the MANOVA test conducted to examine the life satisfaction according to demographic variables are given below (Table 9).

Table 9. Examination of Life Satisfaction in terms of Demographic Variables

		Life Satisfaction		F	p	Eta squared	
		$\bar{X}$	ss				
Grade		9,00	4,47	1,626	,183	,010	
		10,00	4,77				
		11,00	4,79				
		12,00	4,33				
Gender		Female	4,77	2,210	,138	,005	
		Male	4,58				
Age		14,00	4,90	,571	,684	,005	
		15,00	4,63				
		16,00	4,67				
		17,00	4,71				
		18-19	4,52				
Number of siblings		,00	4,74	,273	,928	,003	
		1,00	4,58				
		2,00	4,78				
		3,00	4,55				
		4,00	4,78				
	5,00+	4,80	1,49				
Birth order		First	4,62	1,41	,128	,943	,001

	Only	4,88	1,43			
	Middle	4,70	1,41			
	Last	4,71	1,33			
Mother's employment	Non-employed	4,67	1,40	,314	,575	,001
	Employed	4,69	1,33			
Preschool education	Yes	4,67	1,36	,048	,826	,000
	No	4,72	1,35			

Life satisfaction scores did not show a significant difference according to the demographic variables ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### 4.3. Examining the interaction of love and parental communication

The effects of love character strength and parental communication on life satisfaction and risky behaviors were examined with structural equation modeling. First of all, the results regarding the pathway of the direct effects of love character strength are given in Figure 1.

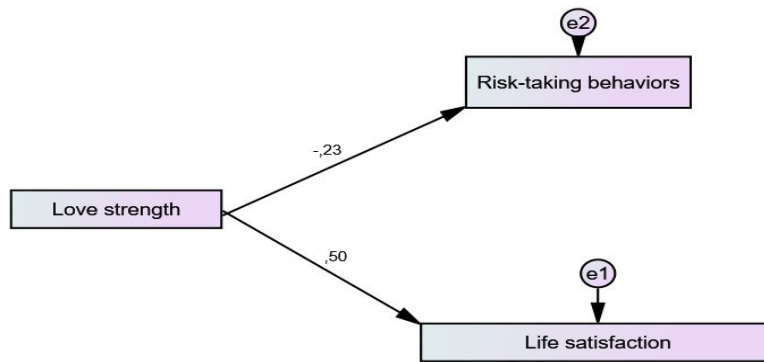


Figure 1. Pathway for Direct Impact

The results of the direct effects of love character strength are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Results for Direct Impact

			Beta	S.E.	C.R.	P
Life satisfaction	<---	Love	,501	,066	14,111	***
Risk taking	<---	Love	-,231	,040	-5,769	***

\* $p < 0,05$

While love character strength positively affected life satisfaction (Beta=0,501  $p < 0,05$ ), it negatively affected (Beta=-0,231  $p < 0,05$ ) risk-taking behaviors. The results of the pathway regarding the mediating role of parental communication in the effect of love character strength on risk-taking behaviors and life satisfaction are given in Figure 2.



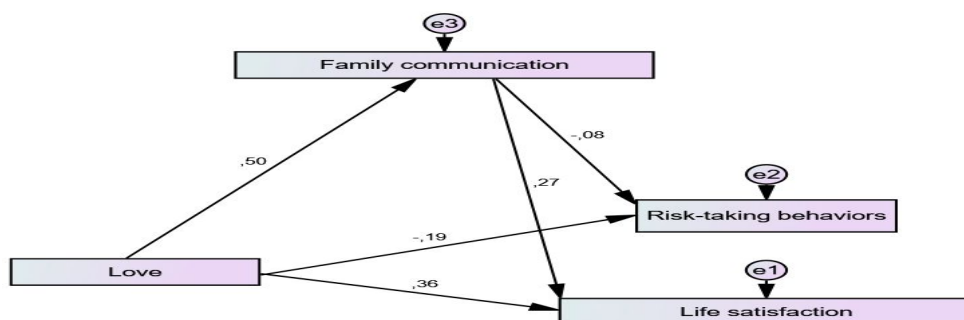


Figure 2. Pathways for the Mediating Role of Parental Communication

The results regarding the mediating role of parental communication in the effect of love character strength on risk-taking behaviors and life satisfaction are given in Table 11.

Table 11. The Results for the Mediating Role of Parental Communication

		Beta	S.E.	C.R.	P
Parental communication	<--- Love	,501	,032	14,082	***
Life satisfaction	<--- Love	,365	,073	9,243	***
Risk taking	<--- Love	-,191	,046	-4,146	***
Risk taking	<--- Parental communication	-,079	,051	-1,719	,086
Life satisfaction	<--- Parental communication	,272	,080	6,900	***

\*p<0,05

In terms of the effect of character strength of love on life satisfaction, in the first model, love has a positive effect on life satisfaction (Beta=0,501 p<0,05). Love affects relationships with parents (p<0,05). When relationships with parents were included in the model, love continued to affect life satisfaction, but the effect coefficient decreased from 0,501 to 0,365. Therefore, parental communication have a partial mediating role in the effect of love on life satisfaction. According to the Sobel test, mediation is significant (Sobel test=3,32 p<0,05).

In terms of the effect of character strength of love on risk-taking behaviors, in the first model, strength of love has a negative effect on risk-taking (Beta=-0,231 p<0,05). The strength of love affects parental communication (p<0,05). When parental communication were included in the model, love continued to affect risk-taking, but the coefficient of effect decreased from -0,231 to -0,191. Therefore, parental communication have a partial mediating role in the effect of love on risk taking. According to the Sobel test, mediation is not significant (Sobel test=-1,54 p>0,05).

The results of the pathways related to the moderating role of parental communication in the context of the effect of love strength are given in Figure 3.

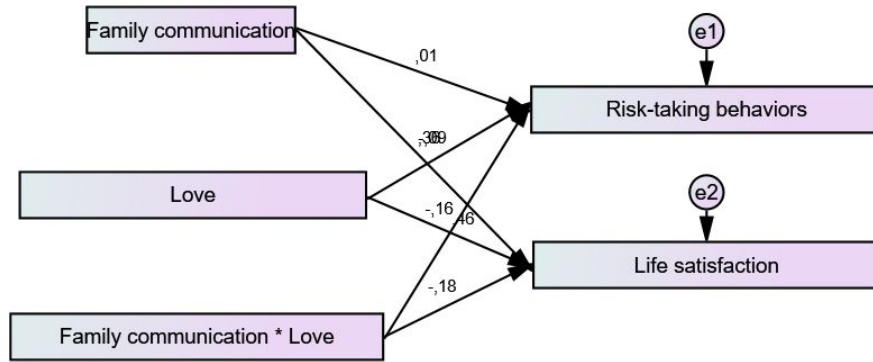


Figure 3. Pathways for the Moderating Role of Parental Communication

The results regarding the moderating role of parental communication in the context of the effect of character strength are presented in Table 12.

Tablo 12. The Results for the Moderating Role of Parental Communication

		Beta	S.E.	C.R.	P
Risk Taking	<--- Parental Communication	,008	,044	,193	,847
Life satisfaction	<--- Parental Communication	,356	,069	10,893	***
Risk Taking	<--- Love	-,093	,040	-2,312	,021
Life satisfaction	<--- Love	,457	,063	14,002	***
Risk Taking	<--- Parental Communication * Love	-,165	,007	-4,081	***
Life satisfaction	<--- Parental Communication * Love	-,178	,011	-5,465	***

\*p<0,05

The variable of parental communication\*love strength, which is obtained by multiplying the independent and mediating variables, has a negative effect on the dependent variable of risk taking (Beta=-0,165 p<0,05). Therefore, parental communication have a moderating role in the effect of love strenght on risk taking.

The variable of parental communication\*love strength, which is obtained by multiplying the independent and mediating variables, has a negative effect on the dependent variable of life satisfaction (Beta=-0,178 p<0,05). Therefore, parental communication have a moderating role in the effect of love strenght on risk taking.

### 5. Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, the prevalence of character strengths in high school youth and the relationship of these strengths with parental communication, risk taking and life satisfaction were examined. In addition, it was investigated whether the strength of love, parental communication, risk taking and life satisfaction differ according to some demographic variables such as class, gender, age, number of siblings, birth order, mother's employment

status, and pre-school education status. The effects of love character strength and parental relationship on life satisfaction and risk-taking behaviors were also investigated. The discussion of the findings obtained according to this order is presented below.

### **5.1. Prevalence of character strengths in adolescents**

According to the findings on the prevalence of character strengths among high school youth, humility, citizenship, appreciation of beauty and excellence, and gratitude were found to be the most prominent strengths. Forgiveness, open-mindedness, zest, and love were found to be the lowest ranked strengths.

In different studies (Park & Peterson, 2005; Toner, Haslam, Robinson & Williams, 2012) in which samples from Turkey (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2006) were also included, it was found that the averages of appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, and perspective strengths were similarly ranked higher. Unlike these studies, it was noteworthy that the strength of love ranked lower in this study. This suggests that the individual and interpersonal expression of the strength of love may differ according to culture. The presence of perspective at the top of the prominent strengths can be interpreted as a sign that adolescents enter the abstract period in terms of their developmental level. In addition, it can be assumed that other strengths with high averages, like the humility, citizenship, and gratitude are the value characteristics that are given importance in Turkish culture. It was considered that this situation may be related to the high scores of the participant adolescents in these values in terms of their upbringing. In addition, the lower ranked strengths such as forgiveness, leadership, open-mindedness may require increased life experience and maturity or improved living conditions. The development of such strengths of the participants at an early age may be related to their development in life conditions such as career and family life.

In different studies based mainly on Turkey that examine the values of youth, variables such as race, school type, gender, age, education level, social quality of the place of residence (Açıkgeçen, Köse, Günel & Demirkol, 2011; Erdem Artan, 2005; Likaj, 2008; Özensel, 2004; Vatandaş, 2013), as well as the level of differentiation of values according to geographical region and city of residence are discussed. These studies conducted over different geographical regions emphasize that there are differences or similarities in dimensions such as the weight or importance given to values. In addition, the group or social structure in which one lives were taken into consideration to affect the acquisition and experience of values. In this context, the differences in the distribution of character strengths, each of which is also a value, may result from the effects of different demographic variables. In this study, in order to address the sources of these differences, the strength of love, which is ranked low in adolescents, was examined according to some demographic variables and its effects in the context of structural equation were focused separately. Since it is not possible to address each of the twenty-four character strengths in detail within the scope of this study, it was deemed meaningful to include the love strength, which is thought to be the source of close relationships in adolescents, and the findings are discussed below.

### **5.2. Relationships between character strengths, risk taking, life satisfaction and parental communication**

Significant negative relationships were found between most of the character strengths and risk-taking behaviors. The negative correlations of love of learning, honesty, kindness, fairness, prudence, and spirituality strengths with risk-taking behaviors were more prominent. In terms of life satisfaction, all strengths, especially perspective, bravery, humility, and self-control,

showed positive and significant correlations with life satisfaction. In terms of parental communication, all strengths, especially social intelligence, citizenship, and humility, showed positive and significant correlations with life satisfaction.

First of all, positive relationships were found between life satisfaction and all character strengths, similar to the literature (Park, Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Proyer, Gander, Wyss & Ruch, 2011). In fact, character strengths can be considered to cover the strengths in three dimensions necessary for the three types of relationships required for a happy life. These are related to one's relationships with oneself (eg self-control, prudence, persistence), with other people (eg social intelligence, leadership, kindness) and with the transcendent (eg gratitude, spirituality, appreciation of beauty and excellence). Therefore, it can be said that character strengths are perhaps the most consistent and stable individual value traits predicting life satisfaction in the literature.

Regarding the results of this study on the relationship between risk-taking behaviors and character strength, it is noteworthy that there are broadly similar findings in the literature. Self-control strength, which was found to be negatively associated with risk-taking behaviors, although not at a significant level in this study, was found to be interactive with and protective from different risk behaviors such as alcohol abuse (Anderson, Costello & Stein, 2008), smoking (Muraven, 2010), and violence (Herndon, 2011), as well as with the general risk behaviors (Scott, 2007; Tangney, Baumeister & Boone, 2004) in similar studies. Again, in line with the results of this study, forgiveness was found to be associated with smoking (Kendler et al., 2003) and prudence was found to be associated with substance use (Proyer, Gander, Wellenzohn & Ruch, 2013). Similar to the results of this study, spirituality was found to be associated with low risk behaviors such as substance use and antisocial behaviors (Ghandour, Karam & Maalouf, 2009; Evans, Cullen, Dunaway & Burton, 1995; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Kendler et al., 2003).

Among other character strengths, honesty (Seider, Gilbert, Novick & Gomez, 2013), gratitude (Kendler et al., 2003), and love of learning (Karris, 2007) were negatively associated with different risk behaviors, while the relationship between different character strengths and low risky sexual behaviors was also revealed in Ma et al.'s study (2008). Unlike the results of this study, in different studies (Kuo, Gallo & Eaton, 2004; O'Keefe & Wingate, 2013), the strength of hope was found to be associated with risky behaviors and as a protective factor against it in terms of behaviors such as suicide and substance use. Comparison of the findings of this study with the literature showed that there is a negative relationship between character strengths and risk-taking behaviors in general, and it is seen that character strengths are considered as a protective aspect in these studies. Certain character strengths can be considered as more protective for certain risk-taking behaviors as well as risky behaviors in general.

### **5.3. Relationship of demographic variables**

Some findings were also obtained regarding whether the dependent and independent variables differed according to the demographic variables grade, gender, age, number of siblings, birth order, mother's employment status, and preschool education status. Accordingly, it was concluded that the dependent variables of character strength of love, relationship with mother and life satisfaction did not differ according to demographic variables.

However, some differences emerged in terms of relationship with father, parental communication and risk-taking behaviors. Accordingly, the level of relationship with father

was found to be higher in males. In terms of age, relationship with father mean scores of 14-year-olds were higher than 18-19-year-olds. In terms of parental relationship, it was determined that the scores of boys were higher than girls. Risk-taking behaviors were similarly found to be higher in boys and it was noteworthy that the result was at a high effect level. Although different demographic factors affecting parents' interactions with their children such as parental income and education level are emphasized in the literature (Kim, Lee & Han, 2018), in this study, differences emerged in terms of age and gender variables.

There are similar findings (Croisant, Haque, Rahman & Berenson, 2013) in the literature that boys have more risk behaviors than girls. At this point, reasons (Croisant, Haque, Rahman & Berenson, 2013; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000) such as the fact that parents approve their daughters' risky behaviors such as substance use less than boys and that such behaviors of boys are approved more by their peers, especially in school environments, may be explanatory. It is known that peer influence is also at the forefront for adolescents at this age. In addition, the influence of the media (Giaccardi, Ward, Seabrook, Manago & Lippman, 2017) today is emphasized to contribute to more risky behaviors, especially through determining the ideal of masculinity. These effects are seen more especially in the areas of risky sexual behaviors, substance use, and physical injury.

Different studies have shown that parental gender (Renk, Liljequist, Simpson & Phares, 2005), adolescent gender (Nilsson, 2017), and adolescent age (Ashraf & Najam, 2011) are important factors in determining the quality and conflicts in parent-adolescent relationships. Girls report that (Nilsson, 2017) they experience more conflict with their parents and are exposed to more parental monitoring than boys. In another study, male adolescents reported more conflict with their parents than girls, and girls reported more conflict with their mothers than boys (Ashraf & Najam, 2011). A study (Stanik, Riina & McHale, 2013) in the literature reporting that parents have closer relationships with their younger adolescent children is consistent with the findings of the present study. In addition, mothers reported closer relationships with these adolescents than fathers.

Unlike the finding that boys have positive relationships with their parents, in Renk, Liljequist, Simpson & Phares' study (2005), boys stated that the problem behaviors they experienced with their parents were more prominent problems than girls. Similarly, mothers stated that they had more problems with their sons than daughters. They stated that material issues such as computers were more important in their conflicts with their fathers.

#### **5.4. Examining the interaction of love strength and parental communication**

The results of the interaction between the dependent and independent variables obtained by structural equation analysis showed that the character strength of love has a positive effect on life satisfaction and a negative effect on risk-taking behaviors. In addition, it was also revealed that parental relationship has a partial mediating role as well as a moderating role in the effect of love strength on both risk-taking and life satisfaction.

According to some previous findings (Renk, Liljequist, Simpson & Phares, 2005), values can be the subject of conflict with parents, especially in younger adolescents. Many strengths, including the strength of love, which is also considered as a value in the character strengths literature, were found to be related to positive attachment to parents in Lavy & Littman-Ovadia's study (2011). Love showed full mediation between avoidant attachment and low life satisfaction. Unlike the aforementioned mediating effect of love strength between parental relationships and life satisfaction, this study investigated the role of parental communication

between love strength and life satisfaction. Thus, the interaction between individual character strength and close relationships in the context of peer relationships, which was recently revealed in Thomas, Cunha & Santo's research (2022), was once again confirmed in this study in the context of love strength and parental communication. The context and the individual each other in two ways and this interaction is associated with some positive outcomes in youth development.

A more detailed look at these positive outcomes shows, for example, that parental communication is an important predictor of adolescents' assertiveness. At the same time, parental communication is the basis of children's emotional development and helps them to experience different emotions, interpret their behavior and learn how to communicate with others (Nakhaee, Vagharseyyedin, Afkar & Mood, 2017). Adolescents with a conversational communication orientation were found to have a lower risk of adjustment problems (Rueter & Koerner, 2008). Again, as interpersonal communication in the nuclear family increases, so does adolescent religiosity. A family with open communication always provides empathy, support and equal treatment of adolescents, which leads to the development of religious practices and beliefs. It is known that religious belief is a factor that shapes the personality of the adolescent (Sahertian, Sahertian & Wajabula, 2021). These findings suggest that positive family interactions, which may require the presence of the strength of love, contribute to the multifaceted development of adolescents.

In order to understand this contribution, and more specifically as one of the indicators of positive development in adolescence, this study focuses on life satisfaction. Life satisfaction is perhaps one of the concepts most associated with character strengths theory over the years (Niemic, 2013). In recent studies (Capone, Joshanloo & Scheifinger, 2021; Mohsen & Jovanović, 2018) on life satisfaction, unlike this study, there are differences according to demographic variables. In addition, it is noteworthy that variables that provide social support, love strength and family support such as being married (Soares, Pais-Ribeiro & Silva, 2019), and variables that can be linked to parental relationships such as positive parental communication continue to be important in predicting life satisfaction. According to the results of this study, the positive effect of love character strength and parental relationships on life satisfaction in young individuals is similar to the aforementioned studies conducted with different ages.

The relationship between risk-taking behaviors, another variable that is one of the indicators of positive development, and parental relationships has also been widely discussed in the literature (Litta et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2021). Adolescence is a challenging developmental period characterized by an increase in risk-taking, especially risky sexual behaviors (Malcolm et al. 2012). Parenting style emphasizing parental power and obedience and open communication have been found to be negatively associated with substance use. On the other hand, conflict avoidance style was found (Shin, Miller-Day & Hecht, 2019) to be positively associated with substance use (alcohol, cigarette, substance). Again, maladaptive behaviors such as cyber aggression, violence, and addiction in the social networks of adolescents attending middle and high school were found to be associated with accusatory parenting style, especially with the father (Ramos, Cano & Meneses, 2022). In Stanik, Riina & McHale's study (2013), close relationships with the mother were found to be associated with low risk behaviors in male adolescents. It was also found that close relationships with the father and spending time together were associated with low risk behaviors for adolescents. It was emphasized that the father's supervision and guidance in activities outside the home may explain (Stanik, Riina & McHale, 2013) this connection. The findings of many studies that relationships with parents

can be protective against risky behaviors were also confirmed in this study. It is noteworthy that parental monitoring and attention seem to explain this negative relationship.

Thus, it is noteworthy that both love strength and parental communication affect life satisfaction and risky behaviors. The present study indicates that character strengths such as love interact with parental communication and are related to the existence of positive and negative developmental characteristics of young people. Therefore, this research makes a contribution to addressing the strengths of young people in a more ecological context based on close human relationships. The character strength of love protects young people from risky behaviors and leads to high life satisfaction by strengthening their relationships with their parents. Relationships with parents provide a more meaningful basis for addressing the character strength of love, which is an individual trait, in interaction with other people.

It is also useful to interpret the findings of the study by taking into account some limitations. Since the data were collected from high school students, the findings are limited to the population from which the data were collected. The relationships between variables were handled with relational descriptive research and it should be taken into consideration that the findings may be different from the inferences expected in longitudinal studies. In addition, if risk behaviors are taken into consideration in self-report scales, there is a possibility of biased reporting in the statements. In future studies, it would be useful to examine the interaction of different character strengths with individuals whom young people see as role models in the context of close relationships. It would be useful to take into account the demographic variables and factors related to the risky behaviors of young people in the context of love strength/parental communication as a result of the study, while creating psychoeducational programs for young people. In addition, in these programs, the strength of love can be handled in terms of the capacity to love and be loved, and it may be useful to increase the communication between parents and adolescents in a two-way form. Trainings can be given not only from parents to adolescents, but also to adolescents on how to communicate with their parents, including the strength of love. The results of the present study are important in terms of preventing risky behaviors that increase with grade and age level in high school and the necessity to carry out protective, preventive and empowering studies from an early age in order to gain individual character traits that increase positive development and healthy parental relationships in the contextual dimension.

## **5.2 Ethical Text**

“In this article, the journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical rules were followed. The responsibility belongs to Ömer Faruk Kabakçı for any violations that may arise regarding the article. The renewed and updated approval from the Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee (dated 07.12.2021 and numbered E-92662996- 044-37698) was taken at Bursa Uludağ University within the scope of the research “The pathways to positive outcomes in youth development: love character strength and parental communication”. There is no conflict of interest between the authors. The contribution rate of the first author to the article is 60%, and the contribution rate of the second author to the article is 40%.

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