COMMENTARY ON "THE MEANING MAINTENANCE MODEL: ON THE COHERENCE OF SOCIAL MOTIVATIONS"

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ABSTRACT

Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM) was proposed by Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) in the article named "The Meaning Maintenance Model: On the Coherence of Social Motivations". Additionally, writers were interested in four different motivations and suggested MMM as the underlying motivation among them. However, there is a questionable point in the article. The authors actually selected meaning maintenance motivation as the primary motivation, while it is still possible to select another one as the primary. Thus, questions related with the primary motivation claim are needed to be examined. Is meaning maintenance a primary motive? Is there any other triggering mechanism for meaning maintenance? Or is it possible to track the supports for meaning maintenance as demonstrating another mechanism? In this paper, specifically, the aim is to analyze the claim of 'basic motivation' made by Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) from a different perspective within literature about uncertainty reduction.

Keywords: Meaning Maintenance Model, Uncertainty Reduction, Uncertainty Management, Primary Motivations, Commentary.

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"SOSYAL GÜDÜLEMELER BAĞLAMINDA ANLAMI SÜRDÜRME MODELİ" ÜZERİNE BİR YORUMLAMA

ÖZ

Anlamı Sürdürme Modeli (Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM)) Heine, Proulx ve Vohs (2006) tarafından "The Meaning Maintenance Model: On the Coherence of Social Motivations" (Sosyal Güdülemeler Bağlamında Anlamı Sürdürme Modeli) isimli makalede öne sürülmüştür. Yazarlar ayrıca dört farklı güdüleme modeli ile ilgilenmiş ve anlamı sürdürme modelinin diğer dört modelin altında yatan mekanizma olduğunu önermişlerdir. Fakat bu makalede sorgulanabilecek noktalar bulunmaktadır. Yazarlar aslında başka bir güdülemeyi öncü olarak seçebilecekleri halde anlamı sürdürme güdülemesini temel güdüleme olarak seçmişlerdir. Bu nedenle temel güdüleme iddiasının incelenmesi gerekmektedir. Anlamı sürdürme temel bir güdüleme midir? Anlamı sürdürmeyi tetikleyen başka bir mekanizma var mıdır? Ya da anlamı sürdürme güdülemesini destekleyen bulguları başka bir güdülemeyi destekler şekilde takip etmemiz mümkün müdür? Bu yazıda Heine, Proulx ve Vohs (2006) tarafından yapılan temel güdüleme savını belirsizliği azaltma yazınından gelen farklı bir bakış açısıyla incelemek amaçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Anlamı Sürdürme Modeli, Belirsizliği Azaltma, Belirsizliği Yönetme, Temel Güdülemeler, Yorumlama.

INTRODUCTION

In the article of Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006), Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM) was introduced. This model suggests that human beings are naturally meaning makers. Accordingly people seek meaning around the world, and threats to these meanings lead people to search for a re-gained meaning. In order to support these suggestions, they gave examples from different studies about self-esteem, uncertainty, belongingness, and symbolic immortality. They explicitly stated that these topics in the literature can be accepted as motives according to Baumeister and Leary's (1995) defined conditions for a motivation. However they proposed meaning maintenance as the primary motive among the others by suggesting that it is the only motivation that can be observed within other motivations. As they stated, the other mechanisms may be the candidate as well.

In this paper, the proposition is to introduce uncertainty reduction motivation for the primary motivation when compared with the meaning maintenance via giving a new perspective on suggestions and examples included in the article of Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006). Before giving detailed information about this new perspective, it is needed to introduce the article briefly.

1. WHAT WAS PROPOSED IN THE ARTICLE OF MMM?

Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) defined meaning as linking elements with each other, and they introduced humans' relation with meaning making in their article as follows;

> *"Human beings are meaning-makers, driven to make connections, find signals in noise, identify patterns, and establish associations in places where they may not inherently exist."* (p.89)

Authors introduced the Meaning Maintenance Model (MMM) including three claims which are (1) relations form meaning, (2) people have a tendency to attribute meaning, and (3) fluid compensation works as a way to re-gain meaning when it is threatened. In the first claim, meaning was defined as attributed connections between everything. This "everything" may include self-

related, environment-related, and self-environment interaction-related phenomena. In addition, meaning attribution can be formed with different perceptual and cognitive processes; and lead people to create expected relational units. In the second claim, it was suggested that there is an innate tendency in human nature to attribute meaning. Whenever people form a relation (meaning), they start to find evidences for this relation (meaning). Thus, it can be possible for people to predict and control their environment with this tendency. Lastly, in the third claim, authors suggested that when an attributed meaning is disturbed, a new meaning framework is needed to be found. This was called "fluid compensation model". It was suggested that the fluid compensation does not have to be related with the threatened framework; sometimes compensation (meaning maintenance) in another framework brings a decrease in threat perception toward meaning.

To illustrate evidences for MMM, authors were interested in different topics within the psychology literature such as self-esteem, uncertainty reduction, affiliative needs, and symbolic immortality. Writers gave examples from these topics as supportive evidences for fluid compensation. These examples include meaning threat followed by (a) self-enhancement (e.g., Baumeister & Jones, 1978 for self-esteem threat; Greenberg et al., 1992 for immortality salience), (b) increased value of worldviews (Doherty, 1998 for uncertainty; Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989 for immortality salience; Tesser, Crepaz, Beach, Cornell, & Collins, 2000 for self-esteem threat), and (c) strengthened group identification or intergroup categorization (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976 for self-esteem threat; Grive & Hogg, 1999, for uncertainty; McGregor, Zanna, Holmes, & Spencer, 2001 for immortality salience; Tajfel, 1970 for affiliative needs). They suggested that these findings are demonstrations for meaning compensation experienced within a different framework after a meaning threat.

Further, writers were interested in properties of motivations to identify them. Depending on definition of Baumeister and Leary (1995), two properties were examined: satiability and substitutability. Satiability means that a motive can be observed when a need appears, but not observable when saturated as there won't be a need to get more satisfaction. Also, substitutability means that different alternatives can provide satisfaction. Similarities among them

demonstrate the substitutability within a motivation. According to the authors, need for self-esteem, uncertainty reduction, affiliative needs, and symbolic immortality represent these two properties of motivation as meaning maintenance does. Additionally, all of these motivations were also emphasized as representing meaning maintenance. Specifically, all of them were accepted as substitutable under meaning maintenance motivation. It was stated that these motives can be used interchangeably to compensate a meaning threat. However, similarities may point a different mechanism instead of meaning maintenance. Thus, is it possible to look for these similarities from the perspective of another literature such as uncertainty reduction?

2. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM AND POSSIBLE SOLUTION FOR IT?

Suggestions in the article of Heine et al. (2006) are very convincing ideas and evidences can be found in the literature either implicitly or explicitly supporting the meaning maintenance model. However there is a questionable point in their article. The authors select meaning maintenance as a 'basic motive' in humans as well as some other species depending on substitutability among other motives. However, it is possible to suggest that there is (at least) one mechanism that supports substitutability and observable as before than (and possibly triggering) meaning maintenance. This mechanism can be uncertainty reduction.

2. 1. What are Uncertainty and Need to Reduce Uncertainty?

There are different definitions of uncertainty in the literature (e.g., Douglas, 1991; Gudykunst, 1993; Humphreys & Berkeley, 1985; Kagan, 1972; Monat, Averill, & Lazarus, 1972). Depending on all of these different conceptualizations, it is possible to define uncertainty with a broad conceptualization. Uncertainty can be accepted as a perceived difference on a current stimulus that may indicate differences within current relation or possible future outcomes. The difference can be problem at identification or prediction (e.g., novel stimulus). Also, this stimulus can be self (e.g., Sedikides, De Cremer, Hart, & Brebels, 2010), relations (e.g., Knobloch & Solomon, 1999) and environment (e.g., Kahneman & Tversky, 1982) related. At the same

time, certainty means having known, familiar, predictable, or congruent properties of a stimulus. When there is a threat toward certainty, people experience discomfort related with this stimulus. After this experience, people strive to deal with the uncertainty and giving meaning is a way to deal with it.

To make a similar definition with Heine et al. (2006), need to reduce uncertainty can be explained with three claims; (1) there is a tendency to reduce uncertainty, (2) uncertainty reduction strategies help to deal with it, and (3) these strategies may follow a partially predictable path among different frameworks.

First, there is an innate tendency to solve uncertainties (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Kagan, 1972; Van den Bos, 2007; also see Hofstede, 2001; and Van den Bos, 2009). As uncertainty is dangerous, unpredictable and uncontrollable, people need to decrease uncertainties in their lives to survive (e.g., Berlyne, 1962; and Van den Bos, 2009) and fulfill goal attainments (e.g., Jacobson, Weary, & Lin, 2008). As an example for goal attainments; it was found that if a person experiences uncertainties about causal attributions, they need more time and more information in order to fulfill their goals (Jacobson, Weary, & Lin, 2008). Accordingly, it is possible to suggest that without reducing uncertainties, we have to live in a world in which everything needs to be checked over and over again. As an example from clinical sample, Tolin, Abramowitz, Brigidi, and Foa (2003) demonstrated that intolerance for uncertainty is related with both repeating and checking responses among people who are diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder. In short, psychological system strives to deal with uncertainties as a need to get certainty and then to continue daily life.

Second, people use different strategies to deal with it. These strategies may represent reality or give illusionary solutions for uncertainties. For instance, information processing about a stimulus is one way to reduce uncertainties with reality. However, this strategy may change among people depending on their general evaluation toward uncertainty. To illustrate, Sorrentino, Bobocel, Gitta, Olson, and Hewitt (1988) conducted a study and demonstrated that general orientation toward uncertainty determines the selection of information processing as being either systematic or heuristic. Also, as the aim is to reduce uncertainties, these strategies sometimes may

create illusionary certainties as well. For example, people demonstrate common tendencies such as believing the world is fair (belief in just world: Lerner, 1965), having a consensus with others about opinions (false consensus effect: Ross, Greene, & House, 1977), having control over events even if it depends on chance (illusion of control: Langer, 1975; Langer & Roth, 1975), and being better than others (positive illusion: Taylor, & Brown, 1988). These beliefs help people to decrease uncertainties. Importantly, the power of these strategies to deal with uncertainties either with real or illusionary solutions may come from perceived or attributed relations (meaning in MMM). Perceived or attributed relations form expectations. These expectations create an amount of certainty; and then protect people from an exhausted meaning attribution in daily life. Therefore, self, relations, and external world become predictable and controllable. In this second claim, the first two claims of MMM (which are "relations form meaning" and "innate tendency to attribute meaning") were accepted as responsible for dealing with uncertainties. Briefly, it was assumed that meaning maintenance is a way to reduce uncertainties.

In the third claim, it can be suggested that uncertainty reduction strategies may follow a path among different frameworks in a predictable way to get certainty. This claim is very similar with the third claim in MMM in which fluid compensation was proposed. But there is an important difference; the path to find certainty can be predictable to some extent. As an example, Kagan (1972) suggested that people try to deal with uncertainty starting from internal sources, and then look for external sources if internal sources are not enough to get certainty (see also, Hogg, 2009). Therefore; depending on Kagan's suggestion, when faced with uncertainty, people look for internal sources, which are either previously formed relations (e.g., attitudes) or current attributions (e.g., self-perception; Bem, 1972). But if uncertainty stands still, people search external sources such as trusting others' opinions. Examples for external sources can be found in Uncertainty Identity Theory (UIT) suggesting that self-uncertainties lead to group identification, as groups are good sources of information, which in turn reduce uncertainties (Hogg & Abrams, 1993). However this claim still needs to be tested statistically.

Lastly, uncertainty reduction can be accepted as a motivation, which was suggested by Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) as well. Depending on suggestions of Baumeister and Leary (1995), uncertainty reduction

need is satiable because it appears when the need occurs. It is also substitutable as it can be satisfied with different alternatives. For example group identification (Hogg, 2009) or worldview defense (Maas & Van den Bos, 2009) can be observed after uncertainty experiences. Further, it is possible to suggest that studies in self-esteem, affiliation, mortality salience, and meaning maintenance needs can be accepted evidences for substitutability under uncertainty reduction motivation. In the next part, there will be a broader discussion about this issue.

2.2. Evidences for the Suggestion that Uncertainty Reduction is a Primary Motive:

Uncertainty reduction as a basic mechanism was suggested in the psychology literature before. For example, Kagan (1972) accepted uncertainty reduction as one of the basic mechanisms (also see Hogg, 2007). According to Kagan (1972), even striving to find basic mechanisms is a manifestation of uncertainty management within the literature. He states that there may be different strategies to deal with uncertainty; however, they serve as secondary motivations. Moreover, Sorrentino, Short, and Raynor (1984) stated and also demonstrated that when faced with a situation, orientations toward uncertainty become activated and then secondary motivations become salient and responses follow this sequence. Thus, meaning maintenance can be one of the secondary motivations.

There are basically two important issues that may support the suggestion for uncertainty reduction as the primary motive. These are logical ordering and substitutability. Specifically, occurring sequence demonstrates that the need for uncertainty reduction is a prerequisite for meaning maintenance. Further, substitutability among motivations under the need of uncertainty reduction leads us to suggest uncertainty reduction as the primary motive.

First of all, in order to find out which mechanism is the primary, it needs to be identified which one is the previous. Therefore, if there is a triggering mechanism for meaning maintenance, it is not possible to suggest it as a primary motivation. As mentioned before, meaning maintenance is a way to deal with uncertainties. After people experience uncertainty, they need to attribute meaning to make uncertain stimulus more certain. Further, if we look from the opposite

direction, without experiencing uncertainty about a stimulus (e.g., an unknown one), it won't even get our attention to attribute meaning. It just becomes an unimportant stimulus. For example, a person cannot have any attribution about a cultural structure in which she or he has not been interacted before. As this culture does not create an uncertainty salience, there would not be a need to attribute meaning. Also, it is possible to take clouds as an example. A naive person would not need to attribute meaning for different types of clouds if the knowledge about its darkness to be a sign for rain is enough. But a scientist interested in weather conditions needs to attribute meaning and differentiate clouds depending on their properties. The reason behind this difference is that properties of clouds create uncertainties to be solved for a person who experiences uncertainty about them. To summarize, it is difficult to differentiate meaning maintenance from uncertainty reduction motivation (e.g., whether it is possible to find a concept which leads to meaning maintenance without uncertainty). This means that people experience a discomfort whenever faced with an uncertain stimulus and then strive to give meaning (such as adding into a new category or creating a new category) (also see, Piaget, 1953; Piaget, Elkind, & Tenzer, 1968) to get certainty. Therefore, it is possible to suggest sequential flow starting from uncertainty; and it is more appropriate to suggest that uncertainty reduction mechanism is the prior motivation triggering meaning maintenance.

Secondly, in addition to logical ordering, topics mentioned in the article of Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) might demonstrate property of substitutability under uncertainty reduction motivation rather than MMM. These areas in the literature were self-esteem, affiliative needs, and TMT. There are examples within these domains demonstrating impact of uncertainty. As an example, there are researchers in the literature who use self-related uncertainties as a component or a reason for the need of self-esteem. In some of these suggestions, self-esteem was examined via instability in value of self or inconsistencies in self-concept. For instance, Kernis (2003) suggested that (un)stability is an important component of self-esteem as well as its magnitude. He defined unstable high self-esteem as fragile and stable high self-esteem as secure. This conceptualization indicates position of stability (or certainty) related with value of self as a notable one. Similarly, literature gave information about the link between self-esteem and certainty in self-concept. In the article of Campbell (1990) low self-esteem was found as related with low self-concept clarity in different

measures (e.g., measures for confidence, temporal stability, consistence with behaviors, and reaction time in identifying self related concepts). This finding is also parallel with the finding that self-esteem changes developmentally. Robins and Trzesniewski (2005) demonstrated that there are two periods in life, which are adolescence and older ages in which there is a decreasing trend in self-esteem. Writers state that both of these periods include changes physically and socially and this statement suggests the importance of consistency about self-concepts. Additionally, sociometer theory defines need for self-esteem by a need for social inclusion (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995). In this theory, Leary et al. (1995) emphasized survival importance and necessity of others and demonstrated with studies that perceived inclusion or exclusion level determines our self-esteem. This theory also examines self-esteem as depended on (un)certainty in our relation with others. All these different tracks in the self-esteem literature gave insight about the link between self-esteem and uncertainties related with self.

In addition, affiliative needs were examined in uncertainty literature too. In group-identification and in-group favoritism literature, in fact, there are two theories related with uncertainty that are Uncertainty Management Theory (UMT) and Uncertainty Identity Theory (UIT). They demonstrated that when there is an uncertainty about self, people support other people who have similar worldviews (UMT, Maas & Van den Bos, 2009; Van den Bos, 2007; also see Van den Bos, 2009) and identify with groups even if they are extreme ones (UIT, Hogg, 2009; Hogg & Abrams, 1993) to deal with the uncertainty. These theories suggest that as worldviews and groups are the sources of certainties; they are also good sources to deal with uncertainties. Thus, affiliative needs serve to decrease uncertainties via relations (see also sociometer theory for affiliative needs: Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995).

Lastly, TMT was examined in uncertainty literature. Some researchers state that death is a specific case of uncertainty and they conducted studies to discover whether effect of mortality salience can be found when compared with uncertainty. For instance, Van den Bos, Poortvliet, Maas, Miedema, and Van den Ham (2005) demonstrated with studies that both uncertainty salience (US) and mortality salience (MS) produce affective responses after fairness manipulation but the effect of US was more powerful. Also participants in MS condition

were found as mentioning uncertainty though mortality was not mentioned in US condition. In another study, Hohman and Hogg (2011) compared TMT with UIT on group identification. They found that MS effect is only demonstrated when there is an uncertainty about afterlife; and group identification changed depending on uncertainty level in manipulations (also for decreased MS effect on self-esteem with the information about possibility of afterlife see: Dechesne, Pyszczynski, Arndt, Ransom, Sheldon, Van Knippenberg, & Janssen, 2003). There are other studies related with TMT, mentioned in the article of Heine et al. (2006) as well, in which different control conditions were found as creating similar responses such as temporal discontinuity (McGregor, Zanna, Holmes, & Spencer, 2001), self-threat (Miedema, Van den Bos, &Vermut, 2006), and thoughts about burglary and social isolation (Navarette, Kurzban, Fessler, & Kirkpatrick, 2004). All these can be accepted as different kinds of uncertainty manipulations.

As a consequence, possible ordering and substitutability within four different domains lead us to suggest uncertainty reduction motivation as primary, at least for meaning maintenance. From this perspective, motivation for uncertainty reduction triggers meaning maintenance motivation to get certainty. Also, it is possible to suggest that self-esteem, affiliation, and symbolic immortality are different ways to deal with uncertainty via creating meaning. That's why finding MMM under these motives, as Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) did, is plausible but it is a sign of need for uncertainty reduction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The article of Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006) suggests MMM with the claims that (a) we form meaning from relations, (b) there is an innate tendency to attribute meaning and (c) when meaning is threatened, fluid compensation works to re-gain meaning. They also propose that meaning maintenance is a basic motivation underlying self-esteem, affiliation, symbolic immortality, and uncertainty reduction motivations. But why do we need meaning? Eating behavior cannot be examined without investigating the hunger that triggers the need to consume food. Similarly, without finding previous mechanism (the trigger) we cannot be sure about what the primary mechanism is. The answer can be that we may need meaning to get certainty. Therefore, the previous (and possibly the primary) mechanism can be the

uncertainty reduction. Specifically, we propose that uncertainty reduction mechanism is a prior mechanism that triggers meaning maintenance.

This paper accepts assumptions related with (and importance of) meaning maintenance in the article of the Heine, Proulx, and Vohs (2006). Additional proposition of this paper is the position of uncertainty in relation with meaning maintenance. Indeed, order necessity and substitutability demonstrate that uncertainty reduction mechanism occurs prior to meaning maintenance. Therefore, the uncertainty reduction need was defined as the primary motivation and meaning maintenance as a way to deal with uncertainties.

On the other hand, it is not clear in the literature if another mechanism serves a function to decrease uncertainty rather than meaning maintenance. It is possible to suggest that imitation can be another mechanism. Literature for response uncertainty (Thelen, Dollinger, & Kirkland, 1979) demonstrates that when a behavioral response is uncertain, people choose to imitate others (also see line experiment of Ash, 1951). Thus, imitation helps people to deal with uncertainties without understanding reasons. However, response uncertainty is very specific and generalizability of imitation response to other uncertainty topics is not clear. Also, if we accept meaning as relation depending on definition in the article of MMM, discovering relation between stimulus and the appropriate response of others is a meaning too. Thus, dealing strategies with uncertainties need to be investigated in the literature of uncertainty whether there is an alternative rather than meaning maintenance.

We believe this is an important contribution in basic motivation root in the psychology literature as well as meaning maintenance and uncertainty roots. In order to find basic mechanisms/motivations in human nature, it is important to compare and sometimes falsify them. Thus, this paper may also add one step to search for basic motivations in psychology literature.

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Commentary on "The Meaning Maintenance Model:
on the Coherence of Social Motivations"

ÖZET

Anlamı Sürdürme Modeli (Meaning Maintenence Model (MMM)) Heine, Proulx ve Vohs (2006) tarafından "The Meaning Maintenance Model: On the Coherence of Social Motivations" isimli makalede tanıtılmıştır. Bu modelin üç savı bulunmaktadır: (1) olgular arasındaki ilişkiler anlamı yaratır, (2) insanın anlamlandırma eğilimi bulunmaktadır ve (3) anlama dair bir tehdit olduğunda akışkan dengeleme ("fluid compansation") aracılığıyla anlamı tekrar kazanmak mümkündür. Yazarlar alanyazındaki birçok çalışmaya atıfta bulunarak modellerinin desteklendiğini ve dört farklı güdüleme mekanizması ile karşılaştırıldığında anlamı sürdürme modelinin daha temel bir güdüleme olduğunu öne sürmektedirler. Fakat Heine ve arkadaşlarının makalesinde önemli bir problem bulunmaktadır. Yazarlar farklı güdüleme mekanizmalarını (öz-saygı, belirsizlik, aidiyet ve sembolik ölümsüzlük) karşılaştırırken tamamen varsayımsal olarak sonuca ulaşmışlardır. Dolayısıyla Heine ve arkadaşlarının 'temel güdüleme' savının alanyazındaki farklı çalışmalar ışığında incelenmesi gerekmektedir

Anlamı sürdürme modeli değerlendirildiğinde en azından bir mekanizmanın daha temel olduğu ve anlamlandırma ihtiyacından önce oluştuğu iddia edilebilir. Bu mekanizma belirsizliği azaltma ihtiyacıdır ve Baumeister ve Leary'nin (1995) güdüleme tanımına uygunluk göstermektedir. Belirsizliği azaltma güdülemesini üç sav ile açıklamak mümkündür. (1) insanın belirsizliği azaltma eğilimi vardır, (2) belirsizliği azaltma yöntemleri belirsizlikle başa çıkmak için yardımcı olurlar ve (3) bu yöntemler farklı alanlar arasında kısmen tahmin edilebilir bir yol izlemektedir. Alanyazına baktığımızda bu üç savı destekleyen yayınlara ulaşmak mümkündür. Örneğin alanyazında belirsizlikleri çözümlemeye yönelik doğuştan getirdiğimiz bir eğilimimiz olduğundan bahsedilmektedir (ör., Hogg ve Abrams, 1993; Kagan, 1972; Van den Bos, 2007; ayrıca bknz. Hofstede, 2001; ve Van den Bos, 2009). Belirsizliğin tehlikeli, tahmin edilemez, ve kontrol edilemez yapısından dolayı kişilerin hayatta kalmaları (ör., Berlyne, 1962; Van den Bos, 2009) ve hedeflerini gerçekleştirebilmeleri (ör., Jacobson, Weary ve Lin, 2008) için belirsizlikleri azaltmaları gerekmektedir. Belirsizliği azaltmanın farklı yöntemleri bulunmaktadır. Belirsizlik yaratan uyaran ile ilgili bilgi işleme (ör., yüzeysel/derin bilgi işleme: Craik ve Lockhart, 1972) belirsizliği azaltma yöntemlerinden biridir. Ayrıca bazı durumlarda kişilerin yanılsamalar aracılığıyla belirliliğe ulaştığı da gözlemlenebilmektedir (ör., adil dünya inancı (belief in just world: Lerner, 1965)). Önemli nokta şudur ki, Heine ve arkadaşlarının anlamı sürdürme önermesi bir belirsizlikle başa çıkma yöntemi olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Kişiler algıladıkları ya da yükledikleri anlamlar sebebiyle beklentiler geliştirir ve böylece belirliliğe ulaşırlar. Dolayısıyla anlamı sürdürme modelinin ilk iki savının belirsizlikle başa çıkma süreci içinde geçerli olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Kısaca, anlamı sürdürme eğilimi bir belirsizliği azaltma yöntemidir. Son olarak

belirsizliği azaltma yöntemlerinin kısmen tahmin edilebilir bir ilerleyişi mevcuttur. Örneğin Kagan (1972) belirsizlikle başa çıkma sürecinin iç kaynaklardan başladığını ve eğer iç kaynaklar aracılığıyla belirliliğe ulaşılamazsa dış kaynaklara yöneldiğini iddia etmektedir (ayrıca bknz. Hogg, 2009). Kişilerin kendine ilişkin belirsizlik yaşamaları durumunda grup aidiyeti geliştirmeleri ve bu yolla belirlilik elde etmeleri bu durum için örnek teşkil etmektedir (Hogg ve Abrams, 1993).

Belirsizliği azaltma ihtiyacının anlamı sürdürme ihtiyacının temeli olduğunun iki önemli göstergesi bulunmaktadır. Bunlar 'mantıksal sıralama' ve 'yerine konabilirlik' olarak adlandırılabilir. İlk olarak, hangi güdülemenin temel olduğunu bulabilmemiz için hangisinin öncü olduğunu belirlememiz gerekmektedir. Dolayısıyla anlamı sürdürme eğilimini tetikleyen başka bir mekanizma varsa anlamı sürdürme eğiliminin temel mekanizma olduğunu önermemiz mümkün değildir. Daha önce de bahsedildiği gibi anlamı sürdürme eğilimi bir belirsizliği azaltma yoludur. Kişi belirsizlikle karşılaştıktan sonra belirsiz uyaranı daha belirli yapmak adına anlam yükleme ihtiyacı duyar. Diğer taraftan, belirsizlik yaşanmadığı durumda kişi anlam yükleme ihtiyacı da duymayacaktır. Özetle anlamı sürdürme ihtiyacını belirsizliği azaltma ihtiyacından bağımsız değerlendirmek mümkün değildir. Bu sebeple mantıksal sıralamanın belirsizliği azaltma ihtiyacından başladığını önermek daha olası ve daha uygun olacaktır.

İkinci olarak Baumeister ve Leary'nin (1995) önerdiği 'yerine konabilirlik' (substitutability) ilkesi de belirsizliği azaltma güdülemesinin öncülüğüne işaret etmektedir. Yerine konabilirlik ilkesi bir güdülemenin farklı alternatiflerle tatmin edilebileceğinin göstergesidir. Eğer bir güdüleme diğer güdülemeler aracılığıyla tatmin edilebiliyorsa bu durumda ilk güdülemenin daha temel olduğundan bahsedilebilir. Bu noktada Heine ve arkadaşlarının verdiği örnekler ve alanyazında belirsizlik üzerine yapılmış çalışmaları belirsizliği azaltma ihtiyacını destekleyici bulgular olarak göstermek mümkündür. Heine ve arkadaşlarının değindiği öz saygı, ilişkililik ihtiyacı ve sembolik ölümsüzlük güdülemelerinin belirsizlik ile ilgili olduğunu gösteren çalışmalar mevcuttur. Birer örnekle özetlenirse; (a) kişinin kendilik tanımlarında net olmamasının (belirsizlik olmasının) öz saygısında düşüşe neden olduğu (Campbell, 1990). (b) diğer kişilerin bizi kendi gruplarına dahil edip etmediklerine ilişkin belirsizliğin ilişkili olma ihtiyacımız arttırdığı (Sociometer theory: Leary, Tambor, Terdal ve Downs, 1995), ve (c) ölüme ilişkin belirsizlikler azaltıldığında defansif tepkilerin azaldığı (Dechesne, Pyszczynski, Arndt, Ransom, Sheldon, Van Knippenberg ve Janssen, 2003) gösterilmiştir.

Sonuç olarak, alanyazın incelendiğinde Heine ve arkadaşlarının (2006) anlamı sürdürme ihtiyacının temel bir güdüleme olduğu varsayımı geçerliliğini yitirmektedir. Mantıksal sıralama belirsizliği azaltma motivasyonunun

önceliğini gerektirmektedir. Ayrıca yerine konulabilirlik ilkesi açısında farklı motivasyonlarla belirsizliğin ilişkisini gösteren çalışmalar da belirsizliği azaltma motivasyonun önceliğine işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışma ile temel güdüleme mekanizmalarının belirlenmesi açısından eleştirel bir bakış açısı sunmak amaçlanmıştır. İleride yapılacak deneysel çalışmalar ile alanyazında bu konuda ilerleme sağlanabileceği düşünülmektedir.