

The Relationship between Couples' Attachment Style and Self-Efficacy with Happiness and Marital Satisfaction

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Abstract

Introduction: couples' happiness and marital satisfaction variables in recent years has been of interest to psychologists. **Purpose:** the purpose of the current study is to investigate the relationship between attachment and self-efficacy styles of the couples and their happiness and material satisfaction (couples that are students of Tehran University). **Method:** the statistic population of this study includes all the married students of Tehran University in 1393. Based on Kerjcie and Morgan table and using convenience sampling, 127 couples were selected as the statistic population. This study is a fundamental and descriptive study and belongs to correlation type which is performed as a field study. The data collection tools are Collins and Reid Adult Attachment test, Schwartz and Jerusalem Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire. For data analysis, descriptive indexes and multi-variable regression are used. **Results:** the obtained results indicate that a positive significant relationship exists between attachment and closeness indicators and couples' happiness and material satisfaction and a negative significant relationship exists between stress and couples' happiness and material satisfaction. It also reveals that between self-efficacy and Tehran University's couples' happiness and material satisfaction, a positive significant relationship exists. **Conclusion:** based on this research's outcomes, it is concluded that in order to increase couples happiness and material satisfaction, indicators of attachment styles and self-efficacy can be used.

Keywords: attachment styles, self-efficacy, happiness, material satisfaction.

Introduction:

Family is a structure that forms its performance through interactional patterns. An influential family is a family in which husband and wife communicate over and over through conversations and form their interaction patterns in these conversations. Therefore, not the conflict itself but the way that conflicts are dealt with can be destructive or constructive (Hunler and Gencoz, 2005).

In the mean time, some characteristics can have an impact on the type of couples' behavior towards each other and bring about material satisfaction or lack of satisfaction. For instance, people with different attachment styles can show different behaviors towards their spouses. Also, people with different levels of self-efficacy have different happiness and satisfaction, in comparison. These characteristics on each side can influence other side and lead to complement behaviors. Therefore these types of characteristics have special importance in couples' lives and their happiness and self-efficacy.

One of the characteristics that can influence marriage is attachment style. Attachment is a way that is used for Conceptualizing and measuring the quality of bilateral relationship. Related to this subject, Cotterel believes that the sensible feature of attachment is an emotional connection between two people that develops the sense of psychological safety. Berck defines attachment as follows: attachment is a deep emotional connection that people create in their lives with a special individual in a way that when they interact with them, they feel joy and exhilaration and when they are stressed out, they feel peace for having them beside.

Bowlby (1988) recognized three types of attachments of safe, avoidant, and ambivalent. Safe attachment is connected with positive communicative features such as Intimacy and contentment. Avoidant attachment is connected with lower levels of intimacy and commitment. Ambivalent attachment is connected with passion, excitement and obsession in less joyful relationships.

Self-efficacy also can affect people's material satisfaction. Among Self-referential thoughts that influence humans' motives, emotions, performance and effectiveness, nothing is more pervasive than people's judgment about their self-efficacy (Bandura, 2000). Self-efficacy or, as Bendora pu it, self-efficiency is individuals' belief in their abilities to organize and perform a series of activities for managing different conditions and situations; in other words, self-efficiency is a person's belief in his/her capability of success in a special situation. According to Bendora, this belief is a determining factor of how a person behaves, thinks and feels.

Self-efficacy is related to peoples' ability to use different methods that controls life's events. Self-efficacy opinions are the shaping factors of the basis and foundation of peoples' performance. People, who believe that they can achieve their desirable results from their activities, are encouraged in pursuing their activities when a problem occurs.

On the other hand, happiness and joy are among the most important psychological needs of human beings that play an important role in personality formation and mental health (Mark et al., 2010). In a marriage, in addition to satisfaction, another important factor of happiness exists which is affected by personality characteristics. Happiness is one of the most significant psychological needs of humans that have a great impact on personality formation and mental health. Everybody wants happiness for themselves and others. Since ancient times up to the present time, positive emotions including happiness have attracted a lot of attention. Plato, in his Republic book, refers to three elements in human existence which includes the intellect or reasoning, emotions and desires. He defines happiness as a condition of a human when harmony and balance exists between all these three elements. Aristotle believes that at least three types of

happiness exist; in the lowest level, he refers to happiness as pleasure; in a higher level, happiness is success and accomplishment; the third type of happiness, from Aristotle's perspective, is the happiness caused by spirituality. He believe that true happiness is not derived from gratification, but from doing something that has ethical value; it means that true happiness is achieved from emanation of virtue. Jeremy Bentham believed that happiness is indistinguishable from physical pleasures, such as activities that increase pleasure and decrease pain and discomfort. Farabi believes that man's spiritual and worldly happiness is achieved by realizing the four virtues that are the theoretical virtues, intellectual virtues, moral virtues and practical achievements. He believes that the path to prosperity is to have good ethical habits and that the good humor is moderation.

Some researchers refer to happiness as a positive psychological condition that is determined with a high level of general satisfaction from life, positive emotions and a low level of negative emotions. Seligman, Reshid and Park define the concept of happiness with three indicators: positive emotions (a joyful life), commitment (a busy life or a good life), and significance (a meaningful life). Seligman believes that, based on the recent studies, it has been proven that happiness is the creating factor of benefits much more than just having a good feeling; happy people are more health and successful and have more social challenges and commitments.

According to the definition, material satisfaction is when husband and wife feel happy and satisfied from being with each other. It is believed that material satisfaction is the harmony between the current condition and the desired condition. Based on this definition, material satisfaction is achieved when the current condition in marriage matches the person's desired situation. Also, Alice in 1898 suggests that material satisfaction is the feelings of happiness, satisfaction and pleasure that are experiences by the husband or wife when they consider all aspects of their life. Devila and Bradbury (2001) indicate that a positive mutual understanding between couples, which is among characteristics of the people with safe attachment style, can predict protective and material satisfactory behaviors between couples.

According to Hudson, the husband's or wife's understandings of the amount, intensity and scope of the problems in a relationship, reflects the level of their material satisfaction (Pandy and Anand, 2010). The current study investigates the attachment and self-efficacy styles of the couples with happiness and material satisfaction. To answer this question, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and attachment styles of the couples with happiness and material satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are presented. First hypothesis: a relationship exists between attachment styles and happiness of the Tehran University's couples. Second hypothesis: a relationship exists between attachment styles and material happiness of the Tehran University's couples. Third hypothesis: a relationship exists between self-efficacy and happiness of the Tehran University's couples.

Research methodology

This study in terms of the purpose is fundamental, in terms of the data collection method is descriptive and from correlation type that is implemented as a field study. The statistic population of this study is all the married students of Tehran University in the years of 1392-1393. The total number of these couples is 200. The sample size is 127 couples that are selected by the convenience sampling method. This research's tools for data collection are as follows:

Collins and Reid Adult Attachment test (RAAS): is Consists of 18 articles that is scored through marking on 5 degree Likert scale, from zero to four. This test has 3 sub-scales of attachment, closeness

and stress that is determined for each sub-scale by 6 articles. The test reliability for the Collins and Reid research in 1990 was reported more than 80%. In this study, also, 4 questionnaires were retested and was assessed in a 20 people group in the time expand of 10 days that resulted in the correlation coefficient 76%.

Schwartz and Jerusalem Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (1996): this questionnaire is consists of 10 questions and examines the individual's self-efficacy. The responses include 5 choices Likert scale of strongly disagree=1, somewhat disagree=2, no opinion=3, somewhat agree=4, strongly agree=5. For the questionnaire reliability, one researcher calculated the Cronbach's alpha= 0.83 another researchers calculated the Cronbach's alpha= 0.84.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (1994): this questionnaire includes 29 sentences. The concurrent validity of the questionnaire from friends' judgments is 43% and validity of the structure, using positive affection, happiness and negative affection have been reported respectively 32%, 57% and 52%. The validity of this questionnaire is reported -65% through correlation with Beck depression questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by retesting and after 7 weeks was reported to be 78%.

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire*: in order to assess the amount of material satisfaction, the Enrich material satisfaction questionnaire is used. The original questionnaire was consists of 115 questions and 12 scales that was modified by Olson et al. (1989). Except the first scale that has 5 questions, each scale includes 10 questions. The answers are in the form of five choice answers (strongly agree, somewhat agree, no opinion, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree). Each scale of this questioner is about one of the important aspects of a married life. The assessment of these aspects in a marriage can describe the potential problems of the couples or determine the empowering factors of them. It also can be used as a diagnostic tool for the couple who seek couples therapy or strengthening of their relationship. This 12 scales of this questionnaire is as follows: Idealistic Distortion (ID), Marital Satisfaction (MS), Personality Issues (PI), Marital Communication, Conflict Resolution, Financial Management, Pleasure Activities, Sexual Relation, Children and Parenting, Family and Friend, Egalitarian Roles, Religious Orientation. The reliability of the questionnaire is reported by Cronbach's alpha in different researches from 0.83 to 0.92. Accordingly, the score expand changes from 115 to 575. It is clear that the high score indicates material satisfaction.

Research Findings

A relationship exists between attachment styles and the happiness of Tehran University couples. To examine this hypothesis, concurrent stepwise regression is used; which results are presented in the following. As presented in table1, the regression of happiness prediction from attachment styles is overall significant and the amount of F equals 14.65. Attachment with the Beta coefficient of 0.39 and closeness with the Bata coefficient of 0.28 can predict couples' happiness in a significant positive way. But stress with the Beta coefficient of -0.22 can predict couples' happiness in a significant negative way. Also the amount of R2 indicates that 0.31 of happiness variance is predicted by the total attachment score and its dimensions.

* Enriching and Nurturing Relationship Issue, Communication and Happiness

Table1. The result of multivariable regression of happiness prediction

Predicting variable	F	P<	R	R^2	β	t	P<
Attachment	14.65	0.001	0.56	0.313	0.39	5.09	0.001
Closeness					0.28	1.29	0.02
Stress					-0.22	-1.13	0.03
Attachment total score					0.45	6.53	0.001

To examine every dimension of attachment in predicting happiness, stepwise regression is used whose results are presented in table2.

Table2. Stepwise regression of attachment dimensions in happiness

Determinin g variable	Predict variable	F	Regression coefficient (B)	Standard coefficient (β)	t	Amount of R^2	Significance level
Happiness	Step1: attachment	57.38	1.39	0.505	7.57	0.255	0.001
	Step2: closeness	36.30	0.563	0.240	3.40	0.303	0.001
	Step3: stress	32.21	-0.433	-0.210	-45.2	0.331	0.001

The stepwise regression model in table2 indicates that all three dimensions of attachment can predict happiness and the sum of these dimensions are able to explain 33% of variance variable of happiness. In the first step, attachment alone explained 25% of happiness variance that after inserting the second variable, which is closeness, the explained amount increased to 30%. Here the share of mentioned variable is 5% of happiness variance. The stress variable explained 3% of the happiness variance. . All the effects of mentioned variables explanation of happiness variance is at significance level of 0.001.

Second hypothesis: a relationship exists between attachment styles and material satisfaction of Tehran University marries couples. To examine this hypothesis, concurrent stepwise regression is used; which results are presented in the following. As presented in table3, the regression of material satisfaction prediction from attachment styles is overall significant and the amount of F equals 13.48. Attachment with the Beta coefficient of 0.31 and closeness with the Beta coefficient of 0.23 can predict couples' material satisfaction in a significant positive way. But stress with the Beta coefficient of -0.19 can predict couples' material satisfaction in a significant negative way. Also the amount of R^2 indicates that 0.18 of material satisfaction variance is predicted by the total attachment score and its dimensions.

Table1. The result of multivariable regression of happiness prediction

Predicting variable	F	P<	R	R^2	β	t	P<
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Attachment	13.48	0.001	0.45	0.182	0.31	4.23	0.001
Closeness					0.23	1.17	0.01
Stress					-0.19	-1.21	0.02
Attachment total score					0.72	5.53	0.001

To examine every dimension of attachment in predicting material satisfaction, stepwise regression is used whose results are presented in table4.

Table2. Stepwise regression of attachment dimensions in happiness

Determining variable	Predict variable	F	Regression coefficient (B)	Standard coefficient (β)	t	Amount of R^2	Significance level
Material satisfaction	Step1: attachment	46.38	2.21	0.432	6.57	0.198	0.001
	Step2: closeness	33.30	0.764	0.234	3.45	0.234	0.001
	Step3: stress	21.79	-0.234	-0.320	-2.23	0.278	0.001

The stepwise regression model in table4 indicates that all three dimensions of attachment can predict material satisfaction and the sum of these dimensions are able to explain 18% of variance variable of material satisfaction. In the first step, attachment alone explained 15% of material satisfaction variance that after inserting the second variable, which is closeness, the explained amount increased to 17%. Here the share of mentioned variable is 2% of material satisfaction variance. The stress variable explained 1% of the material satisfaction variance. All the effects of mentioned variables explanation of material satisfaction variance is at significance level of 0.001.

Third hypothesis: a relationship exists between self-efficacy and happiness of Tehran University marries couples. To examine this hypothesis, concurrent regression is used. As presented, the regression of happiness prediction from self-efficacy variable is significant and the amount of F equals 34.18. Self-efficacy with the Beta coefficient of 0.411 can predict couples' happiness in a significant positive way. Also the amount of R^2 indicates that 0.16 of happiness variance is predicted by the self-efficacy score.

Table5. The result of multivariable regression of happiness prediction

Predict variable	F	$P <$	R	R^2	β	t	$P <$
Self-efficacy	34.18	0.001	0.411	0.169	0.411	5.84	0.001

Forth hypothesis: a relationship exists between self-efficacy and material satisfaction of Tehran University marries couples. To examine this hypothesis, concurrent regression is used. As presented, the regression of material satisfaction prediction from self-efficacy variable is significant and the amount of F equals 36.19. Self-efficacy with the Beta coefficient of 0.456 can predict couples' material satisfaction in

a significant positive way. Also the amount of R^2 indicates that 0.21 of material satisfaction variance is predicted by the self-efficacy score.

Table6. The result of multivariable regression of happiness prediction

Predict variable	F	P<	R	R^2	β	t	P<
Self-efficacy	36.19	0.001	0.411	0.213	0.456	5.19	0.001

Conclusion:

The results of the first hypothesis analysis show that between attachment style and closeness and happiness, a significant positive and between stress and happiness, a significant negative relationship exists. The results of this study is in line with the results of Cassidy and Shaver (1999), Fraley and Bonnano (2004), Brennan and Shaver (1995), Simpson et al. (2002), Bartholomew (1990), Feeney (2002), Bowlby (1998), Srouf et al. (1990), and Young (2001) researches. About this result, it can be said that attachment styles are people's general responses to discomfort and unhappiness. Thus, it is possible that it is related to people's health. Since people with safe attachments have a more positive attitude towards themselves and others, they are more likely to adjust their emotions more effectively; therefore there are less exposed to various disorders, while people with anxiety attachment use dysfunctional coping methods to deal with negative emotions such as repression, separation and etc. This dysfunctional coping with negative emotions puts them at higher risk for a variety of disorders. The common feature of insecure attachment styles is derived from intimate relationships and negative attitude toward others. This influences academic and behavioral difficulties and causes them to encounter various problems.

In addition to this, it is safe to say that people treat others in a way that they have learned from their parents. People, who have ambivalent attachment, are described as people who have inability in creating a relationship with other people and have defect in social development. Young believes that people who have had insecure attachment to their parents in childhood, mistreat their friends in school and struggle with variety of educational problems. According to this group of researchers, the parents of these children have neglected them and showed inappropriate responses to their children's behavior. These type of behavior in children leads to characteristics such as distrust, being fragile, and problems related to sympathy for others, sensitivity and emotional satisfaction in their emotional relationships. Children with behavioral problems, due to their aggressive and antisocial behaviors, have less intimacy with their mothers and in result, the safe attachment relationship will not be formed between parent and child.

The result of second hypothesis analysis shows that a significant positive relationship exists between attachment style and closeness and material satisfaction and that a significant negative relationship exists between stress and material satisfaction of Tehran University married couples. The results of this study is in line with the results of Cassidy and Shaver (1999), Fraley and Bonnano (2004), Brennan and Shaver (1995), Simpson et al. (2002), Bartholomew (1990), Feeney (2002), Bowlby (1998), Srouf et al. (1990), Cassidy (1994) and Young (2001) researches. In explaining these results, it can be said that some characteristics can have an impact on the type of couples' behavior towards each other and bring about material satisfaction or lack of satisfaction. For instance, people with different attachment styles can show different behaviors towards their spouses. Also, people with different levels of self-efficacy have different happiness and satisfaction, in comparison. These characteristics on each side can influence other side and

lead to complement behaviors. Therefore these types of characteristics have special importance in couples' lives and their happiness and self-efficacy. One of the characteristics that can influence marriage is attachment style. Attachment is a way that is used for Conceptualizing and measuring the quality of bilateral relationship. Related to this subject, Cotterel believes that the sensible feature of attachment is an emotional connection between two people that develops the sense of psychological safety. Berck defines attachment as follows: attachment is a deep emotional connection that people create in their lives with a special individual in a way that when they interact with them, they feel joy and exhilaration and when they are stressed out, they feel peace for having them beside. Bowlby (1988) recognized three types of attachments of safe, avoidant, and ambivalent. Safe attachment is connected with positive communicative features such as Intimacy and contentment. Avoidant attachment is connected with lower levels of intimacy and commitment. Ambivalent attachment is connected with passion, excitement and obsession in less joyful relationships.

The third hypothesis analysis shows that a significant positive relationship exists between self-efficacy and happiness of Tehran University married couples. The results of this study are in line with the results of William et al. (2008), Thompson et al. (2010) and Zimmerman and kistantas (2005) researches in the field of relationship between happiness and self-efficacy. In the case of this finding can be said that research has shown that self-efficacy has a direct and positive relationship with happiness. In fact, it is known that low efficiency is a characteristic feature of stress disorder (Maddux, 2002). Overall, Bandura found that the higher the level of physiological and emotional arousal of a person, the lower the personal skill level is. In other words, in a given situation, the more fear, anxiety or stress a person have, the less that person feels the adequately to deal with it. People, who have high personal performance, believe they can more effectively deal with the events and circumstances that they face. Since they expect to overcome their problems, they show endurance in difficulties, and often operate in a high performance level. These people, compared to those who have little personal effectiveness, have more confidence in their abilities and have little doubt about them. They see problems as challenges rather than threats and actively seek out new opportunities.

The forth hypothesis analysis shows that a significant positive relationship exists between self-efficacy and material satisfaction of Tehran University married couples. The results of this study are in line with the results of William et al. (2008), Thompson et al. (2010) and Zimmerman and kistantas (2005) researches. To explain these findings, this can be said that a sense of self-efficacy is associated with stress. People with low efficiency often have low self-esteem and they have hopeless thoughts about their success. The researchers believe that more improved quality of life leads to the less use of emotion-focused coping behaviors. And according to research and logical reasoning and Folkman and Lazars opinions, it seems that the more rational use of emotion-focused coping decreases, the amount of problem-focused coping method increases. In accordance with the findings of this study, this is a desirable outcome that will have a positive effect on the quality of life for students. As Gray writes: use of problem-focused strategies makes an individual, purposeful and usually students are using it, when the stressor is perceived and evaluated as a manageable and tractable. In addition, according to the Marlatt model (1985), general coping skills deficit will help a diminished sense of self-efficacy and increasing the likelihood of another behavior as a coping strategy that is used properly in high-risk situations. According to this model, the primary objective of rehabilitation of people with poor coping strategies is to help people create cognitive behavioral strategies and efficiency to deal with interpersonal situations and

negative emotional states. In addition, it can be said that coping responses are a combination of cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage stress and have a processing nature. Therefore, coping is not only a static state, but also is subject to change, depending on the time and conditions. The main limitations of this study can be noted that the results of this study can be generalized only to married couples of Tehran University and the generalization of the results to other communities should be done with caution. In the present study only the relationships between the variables are studied and therefore cause and effect relationship cannot be issued. Another limitation is lack of control on variables such as the number of children or mood disorders and personality. In this regard, it is suggested that strategies to put variables, that can increase marital satisfaction, in priority as research projects. Researchers should use a larger sample size in the future. With this process, the results can be generalized more properly to other communities and sample populations.

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