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## Investigating the Relationship between Attachment Styles and Marital Satisfaction in Women

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### Abstract

*The present study is to investigate the effectiveness of attachment styles on women's marital satisfaction in Qom City. To do so, a number of 50 participants were selected using the convenience sampling method. To collect data, the Relationship Assessment scale developed by Hendrich (1988) and Attachment Styles Questionnaire were used.*

*The present study is a correlational research. The results of the research indicate that only the secure attachment style has a positive relationship with marital satisfaction. Therefore, with the increase in the secure attachment style, marital satisfaction increases and vice versa. But, fearful, avoidant, and preoccupied attachment styles have negative relationship with marital satisfaction. It can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between attachment styles and marital satisfaction.*

**Keywords:** attachment styles, marital satisfaction.

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### Introduction

One of the important issues in family psychology is that an individual is influenced by what happens in the family. Creating interest and affection in members of a family is shaped since childhood. Related to this issue, the type of individuals' attachment to each other can be referred to. Attachment starts from childhood and is shaped gradually and its consequences recur in adulthood. This attachment affects the emotional relationships between wives and husbands because in addition to the love style and the type of interests between couples, attachment has a particular status (Saif, 2001).

Relations among members of a family help the health of family environment. Agreement and sympathy among family members result in satisfaction with marital life, otherwise, the family faces difficulties (Bani Asadi, 1998).

Hazan and Shaver (1990) stated that children's attachment styles affect in creating the type of love style in their adulthood. The basis of parents' behaviors is identified by the type of



attachment styles in children. Attachment styles include secure, avoidant, fearful, and preoccupied attachment styles.

Each of these attachment styles are related with love style in one way or another. Therefore, the degree of marital satisfaction can have roots in the attachment styles. Making easy relationship with others affects avoidance from people, anxiety, and worry in case of facing people, and marital behaviors. Furthermore, sometimes too much affection causes differences in marital life because some spouses are fearful of feeling that their wives or husbands have close relationship with others. This factor can engender some marital dissatisfaction.

With this problem, the present study is to investigate the relationship of marital satisfaction with attachment style in couples and answer this question that whether individuals' attachment has relationship with their marital satisfaction?

### **Research methodology**

The research design is correlational because the research is to investigate the relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction.

### **Population, sample, and sampling method**

The population includes all married women in Qeshm City. The research sample size includes 50 participants. All individuals were selected from different financial and educational levels and therefore, to access participants, different places in the city were used such as universities, parks, and shopping malls. Sampling method in the present study is the convenience sampling method.

### **Research instruments**

Relationship Assessment scale (RAS): this scale was developed by Hendrich (1988) for assessing satisfaction in romantic relations, including 14 items and participants should answer them based on 7-point Likert scale.

Scoring method of this scale was in such a way that after reversing questions 4 and 7, the scores of items were added to each other and then, their average was obtained. A lot of studies indicated the high internal consistency (0.86) of this scale (Ficher & Cercoran, 1994) and its validity (Shi & Dobhan & Manwon, 2004).

Attachment Styles Questionnaire: this questionnaire was developed by Bartholomew, Horowitz in 1991 for assessing adult attachment styles and then translated into English by Doll, Mentz, and Witte. It includes 4 items based on 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The highest value belongs to the higher and more powerful success in attachment.



Banz (2004) investigated the test-retest reliability in 49 couples and for women, it was obtained as 0.65 for secure attachment style, for preoccupied one as 0.82, for fearful one as 0.79, and for avoidant one it was obtained as 0.75. Moreover, in case of men, it was obtained as 0.63 for secure attachment style, for preoccupied one as 0.54, for fearful one as 0.52, and for avoidant one it was obtained as 0.71. Attachment styles for women was higher than men (their husbands) (Dibaji, 2008).

### **Research procedure**

Conducting the research was prolonged about 50 days. After distribution of test sheets, test was conducted via referring to different places such as universities, parks, and relatives. Questionnaires were to be completed by individuals from different socioeconomic situations in order that the research results can be generalized to all individuals. First of all, explanations about research was given to individuals and then, they were asked to, if they want to cooperate, study the questionnaire accurately and select options honestly. It should be noted that individuals were ensured that confidentiality was practiced about them and their information is merely for doing research. A number of questionnaires were answered at the presence of the research and then returned. A number of them due to participants' passivity were given them in order that they would be returned after a while. The highest degree of coordination was related to relatives and the lowest one was related to parks in which a number of questionnaires were lost and some were not returned. In spite of the fact that it had been emphasized that participants answer all questions, in returned questionnaires, there were some unanswered questions and as much as possible, the questionnaires were investigated and individuals were asked to complete them again.

### **Data analysis method**

To develop, classify, and analyze data, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and SD were used. In the inferential statistics, ANOVA was used to investigate the effect of attachment styles on marital satisfaction.



**Results**

Table 1: descriptive statistics of scores obtained from the Attachment Styles' Questionnaire

| <b>Statistical indices</b><br><b>Group</b> | <b>Numbe</b><br><b>r</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Secure</b>                              | ٥٠                       | ٣.٩٤        | ١.١٣      | ١           | ٥           |
| <b>Fearful</b>                             | ٥٠                       | ١.٩٨        | ١.٣٤      | ١           | ٥           |
| <b>Preoccupied</b>                         | ٥٠                       | ٢.٢٨        | ١.٤٧      | ١           | ٥           |
| <b>Avoidant</b>                            | ٥٠                       | ١.٩٤        | ١.٢٨      | ١           | ٥           |

As table 1 indicates, the mean scores of the secure attachment style in women are higher than other styles.

Table 2: descriptive statistics of scores obtained from the Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire

| <b>Descriptive indices</b><br><b>Education</b> | <b>Numbe</b><br><b>r</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Marital satisfaction</b>                    | ٥٠                       | ٥.٦٨        | ١.١٩      | ١           | ٧           |

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To investigate this hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient was separately calculated between scores of marital satisfaction and each of the four attachment styles and after testing the significance of the correlation coefficient test was conducted. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 3: the results of correlation coefficient for the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment styles

| <b>Statistical indices</b><br><b>Variable</b>          | <b>No.</b> | <b>Correla</b><br><b>tion</b><br><b>coeffici</b><br><b>ent</b> | <b>Coefficient</b><br><b>of</b><br><b>determinat</b><br><b>ion</b> | <b>Sig.</b> |
|--|------------|--|--|-------------|
| <b>Marital satisfaction and</b><br><b>secure style</b> | ٥٠         | ٠.٦٧   | ٪٤٤.٨٩   | ٠.٠٠١       |



|  |    |       |        |       |
|--|----|-------|--------|-------|
| Martial satisfaction and fearful style     | ۵۰ | -۰.۵۶ | %۳۱.۳۶ | ۰.۰۰۱ |
| Martial satisfaction and preoccupied style | ۵۰ | -۰.۵۸ | %۳۳.۶۴ | ۰.۰۰۱ |
| Martial satisfaction and avoidant style    | ۵۰ | -۰.۳۳ | %۱۰.۸۹ | ۰.۰۰۱ |

Results of table 3 indicate that correlation coefficients calculated among scores of the four types of attachment styles and marital satisfaction are significant at the level 0.01. It can be concluded that there is significant correlation between attachment styles and marital satisfaction. Consequently, the research hypothesis stating the existence of correlation between attachment styles and marital satisfaction is confirmed. Regarding the issue that only the correlation of secure attachment style with marital satisfaction is positive; therefore, with the increase in secure attachment style, marital satisfaction increases and vice versa. The calculated coefficient of determination indicates that totally 44.89% of marital satisfaction can be explained by secure attachment style. But, the correlation of fearful, preoccupied, and avoidant attachment styles with marital satisfaction is negative. Therefore, with the increase in each of these styles, marital satisfaction decreases and vice versa. The calculated coefficients of determination indicate that respectively 33.64, 31.36, 10.89 percent of marital satisfaction can be explained by preoccupied, fearful, and avoidant attachment styles.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Hypothesis: there is correlation between the degree of marital satisfaction and attachment styles. To investigate this hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient between marital satisfaction and each of the four attachment styles were separately calculated and then, significance test of correlation coefficient was done.

Correlation coefficient of age scores in the four types of attachment styles and marital satisfaction were significant at the level 0.01. It can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between attachment styles and marital satisfaction. As a consequence, the research hypothesis is based on the existence of attachment styles and marital satisfaction. Regarding the issue that only secure attachment style has positive correlation with marital satisfaction; therefore, with the increase in secure attachment style, marital satisfaction increases and vice versa. The calculated coefficient of determination indicates that totally 44.89% of marital satisfaction can be explained by secure attachment style. But, the correlation of fearful, preoccupied, and avoidant attachment styles with marital satisfaction is negative. Therefore, with the increase in each of these styles, marital satisfaction decreases and vice versa. The calculated coefficients of determination indicate that respectively 33.64, 31.36, 10.89 percent of marital satisfaction can be explained by preoccupied, fearful, and avoidant attachment styles.



Regarding the obtained results, there are some limitations in conducting the study. First of all, the results of the research can be generalized to the population of the present study and to generalize it to other populations, other studies should be conducted on married men and women. Another issue is the lack of cooperation of some individuals which cause losing a number of questionnaires. Thirdly, the results can only be generalized to women. In addition, some results can be obtained from the results:

1. Presenting training courses and putting some courses for educating and enhancing individuals' awareness of marriage, life, and married life.
2. Using a questionnaire with fewer questions in order that it cannot cause the lack of participants' cooperation.
3. Investigating the relationship of attachment styles and improving marital satisfaction in men.

## **Resources**

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