



INFLUENCE OF ATTACHMENT STYLE ON SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION AMONG HOMEMAKERS

Psychology

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ABSTRACT

The current study aimed to explore the influence of attachment styles on subjective wellbeing and relationship satisfaction among homemakers. The objective of the study was to see if there is a significant difference in the level of subjective wellbeing and relationship satisfaction in homemakers with secure, pre-occupied, fearful, and dismissive style of attachment. There were sixty female homemakers who participated in the study from all over India. The sample for this cross-sectional study was gathered through purposive sampling. Data collection tools used for this study were Experiences in Close Relationship (ECR), Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), Scale of Positive And Negative Experiences (SPANE) and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). The data was collected using Google Forms and analyzed using SPSS version 15.0. A Non-parametric test was carried out on the data which indicated that there is a statistically significant level of difference in relationship satisfaction between the four types of attachment however, there was no significant difference in the level of Life Satisfaction and Positive and Negative Experiences.

KEYWORDS

Attachment Styles, Subjective Wellbeing, Relationship Satisfaction, Homemakers.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage has been considered as one of the important social institutions, however, the potential to form close relationships rides on the attachment patterns of individuals. Indian cultural norms do not encourage married women to prioritize working outside of the home and therefore most of them end up becoming a homemaker. A homemaker refers to “an individual who maintains the upkeep of his or her residence and is not employed outside the home” (Verma, 2017).

Attachment is a shared emotional relationship that can help one establish security and determine a person's mental health (Bowlby, 1969). Initially, Hazan and Shaver proposed a three-category model which included secured, pre-occupied and avoidant attachment styles. Secured attachment style refers to attachments marked by whereas individuals having a pre-occupied attachment style feel unworthy of their partner's love and affection (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Later, Bartholomew expanded the avoidant dimension, thereby proposing a four-category model of attachment styles. The dimension included dismissive avoidant and fearful avoidant style of attachment. Individuals with dismissive avoidant attachment style demonstrate a high sense of self-reliance but avoid close relationships whereas fearful avoidant individuals have a fear of rejection and abandonment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Attachment theory has provided a framework to understand role of individual differences on relationship satisfaction.

Personal relationships are of great importance to human beings. Here, the concept of relationship satisfaction is defined as the “subjective evaluation of the quality of the relationship shared by an individual and their closed ones” (Miller & Tedder, 2011). In marital couples, relationship satisfaction can be understood in terms of “a subjective and global evaluation of the relationship” (Foley, 2018).

Studies in the area of adult attachment, have revealed that secure attachment is positively associated with marital satisfaction whereas insecure attachment styles, predict a negative correlation between attachment style and marital satisfaction (Mohammadi et al., 2016). A study was carried in 2016 to investigate the relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction in housewives. The study was done on a sample of 200 homemakers, and it was found that there was a significant negative correlation between marital satisfaction and anxious attachment style (Salmabad et al., 2017). Therefore, the kind of attachment style, individuals have in the context of marriage can predict their marital quality.

In some studies, relationship satisfaction has been found to have a relationship with life satisfaction and overall subjective wellbeing (Diener & Larsen, 1984).

Diener's tripartite model of subjective well-being was introduced in 1984. This comprehensive model emphasized three components of well-being which are life satisfaction, pleasant affect and infrequent negative affect (Diener, 2021; Diener et al., 1999). Life satisfaction is defined as “the evaluation of one's life as a whole, not simply one's current level of happiness”. Positive and negative affectivity plays a huge role in our everyday experiences and our enjoyment (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

The literature shows that, the hedonic aspects of wellbeing along with the relationship satisfaction and attachment style haven't been studied together. Moreover, In India, 64% of the women are homemakers and yet they are an understudied population hence, there is a need to study this population. Given, the importance, this paper attempts to study the attachment styles and the related effects on subjective well-being and relationship satisfaction in homemakers.

METHOD

Participants

A cross-sectional study was conducted in which sixty female homemakers between the age bracket of 20-60 years with a duration of marriage above two years and having writing and reading skills in English were selected for the study using purposive sampling. Participants were chosen from all over India. Participants having any psychiatric illness and working from home or holding part-time jobs were excluded from the study.

Tools

Socio-Demographic Data: Socio-demographic data of the sample was collected. This included their general information regarding their age, sex, educational qualification, marital status, duration of the marriage, family structure, and clinical information such as the family history of psychiatric illness, any ongoing investigation or treatment for any psychiatric disorder.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10): It is a questionnaire with 10 items that are used for measuring psychological distress. The Cronbach alpha coefficient is .88 (Kessler et al., 2003).

Subject Wellbeing scales

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS): The SWLS is a short instrument that has 5 items designed to measure global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life. Internal consistency of the SWLS has been reported to be .87 and test-retest correlation was .82 (Diener et al., 1985).

Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE): The SPANE has 12 items in the questionnaire which includes six items to assess positive feelings and six items to assess negative feelings. The

Cronbach alpha coefficient is .88 for the positive experience dimension and .83 for the negative experience dimension (Diener et al., 2009).

Experiences in Close Relationships Revised (ECR-R): The ECR-R is a 36-item self-report attachment measure developed by. ECR-R gives scores on two subscales, Avoidance and Anxiety. Cronbach's alpha was 0.91 for anxiety scale and 0.94 for the avoidance scale (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

Relationship Assessment Scale: RAS has 7 items that are designed to assess general relationship satisfaction. Respondents answer each item using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (low satisfaction) to 5 (high satisfaction). The alpha coefficient was .73 (Hendrick, 1988).

Procedure

After getting the clearance from Institutional Ethical Committee, participants were chosen using purposive sampling. An informed Consent Form was provided to the participants. Initially, socio-demographic details were taken from the participants. Upon making sure that the instruction for the tools is understood, an attachment style questionnaire was administered, followed by subjective wellbeing and relationship satisfaction questionnaires. All the information was collected via Google Forms. The tests were scored as designated by the tools. The collected data was then analysed & the appropriate interpretations were recorded.

Data analysis

The data was analysed using SPSS version 15.0 computer software. Descriptive Statistics was used to draw inferences from the empirical data. Comparison among different attachment styles was done using the Kruskal Wallis test. P-value < 0.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

Results indicated that the maximum percentage of respondents (36.6%) were in the age bracket of 40-50 years. The maximum percentage of participants fell under the preoccupied style of attachment (26.7%) and the least number of participants had a secured attachment style (23.3%).

Table 1: Kruskal Wallis Test scores of life satisfaction for different attachment styles

Attachment Styles	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	Asymp. Sig.
Secured	14	37.61		
Pre-occupied	16	24.38	4.99	.172
Fearful	15	33.10		
Dismissive	15	27.80		

Table 2: Kruskal Wallis Test scores of positive and negative experiences for different attachment styles.

Attachment Styles	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	Asymp. Sig.
Secure	14	30.43		
Pre-occupied	16	25.22	2.271	.518
Fearful	15	33.20		
Dismissive	15	33.50		

Table 3: Kruskal Wallis Test scores of relationship satisfaction for different attachment styles.

Attachment styles	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	Asymp. Sig.
Secured	14	41.29		
Pre-occupied	16	28.28	7.970	.047
Fearful	15	29.47		
Dismissive	15	23.83		

DISCUSSION

The attachment style of an individual is an important predictor of marital quality as well as the overall subjective wellbeing.

One of the objectives of the studies was to see if there was a significant difference in the level of relationship satisfaction among different attachment styles. The results of this study showed that there is a significant difference in the level of relationship satisfaction, hence it can be highlighted here, that those who have a secured attachment style have a higher level of relationship satisfaction. This can be corroborated with previous studies as well. One of the reasons is that individuals with secured attachment are more likely to experience happiness from their close relationships which foster a healthy and higher level of intimacy. Secured attachment individuals tend to have

access to examples and incidents of positive events in the relationship and trust validating experiences (Bayrami et al., 2012). Participants with a preoccupied style of attachment style showed a lower level of satisfaction in the relationship as compared to those who had secured attachment. According to a study done on homemakers found that anxious attachment style has a negative correlation with marital satisfaction (Salmabad et al., 2017).

Results reflected that fearful and dismissive avoidant individuals had the lowest level of relationship satisfaction. According to the study done by Ayenew (2016) on couples, found that those who had an avoidant attachment style used avoidant strategies which eventually led to unresolved issues giving rise to a low level of relationship satisfaction.

Another objective was to see if there was a significant difference in the level of subjective wellbeing in homemakers having different attachment styles. In the study, subjective wellbeing has been understood in terms of two of its domains namely, life satisfaction and frequency of positive and negative affect experiences. The results indicated that there was no significant statistical difference among attachment styles for both domains. The results don't support the previous studies which have indicated that life satisfaction and positive and negative experiences and attachment styles have a strong correlation. The reasons behind this could be that the sample acquired in each attachment category is small and therefore that may have reduced the power of the study and increased the margin of error.

Contextual factors like mood fluctuations and the order of presentation of the questions can influence the results on the life satisfaction scale (Diener & Pavot, 2009). A study reported that due to the pandemic, women spend even more time doing household chores which were linked to lower wellbeing and decreased happiness. Studies have shown that individuals may ignore or deny negative emotional reactions, therefore, under-report them even though they recognize undesirable factors in their lives. With the advent of Covid-19, studies suggested that the severity of the pandemic led to an increase in the negative affect (Diener & Pavot, 2009; Foa et al., 2020). Moreover, the subjective wellbeing scales haven't been used on the Indian population which may also be a reason why significant differences couldn't be seen between groups. Past research studies have indicated that when compared to individualistic cultures, collectivistic cultural members are less likely to equate an emotionally "happy life" with a "satisfying life" and the overall affect balance has a weaker correlation with life satisfaction (Schimmack et al., 2002). They rely on their significant others as to how they appraise their life instead of their own judgement. Hence, more than attachment styles, these external factors may play a role in an individual's overall subjective wellbeing.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed to understand the influence of attachment styles on subjective wellbeing and relationship satisfaction in homemakers. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the level of subjective wellbeing. However, there was a significant difference in the level of relationship satisfaction among different attachment styles. The major limitation of the current study was that the number of participants, in each attachment style was not enough which may have played a role in the result and analysis. Additionally, the data collected and analyzed were based on self-report measures and not by other methods like interviews, which may also pose a limitation. Future studies could explore the differences between working women and homemakers or female and male homemakers to see the role of income and gender difference respectively.

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