

## **The Moderator Role of Attachment Styles in Marital Satisfaction and Quality of Life in Married Working Women**

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Received 27 September 2014; Accepted 25 February 2016

### ***Abstract:***

This study aimed to investigate the moderator role of attachment styles in marital satisfaction and quality of life in married working women. This research is a co-relational design. The group included 514 married women who were working in the laboratories in Rasht. With stratified random selection of 200 women from the group were selected from 8 laboratories. The population included 514 married women who were working in the laboratories in Rasht *with* stratified random sampling from among 8 laboratories as the sample size. To collecting data, Hazan and Shaver (1987) Attachment Style Scale, Olson et al. (1989) marital satisfaction Scale and Varousherbon (1992) quality of life Scale were used. The results showed that moderating role of attachment styles in marital satisfaction and quality of life. Among the predicted or variables, avoidant attachment style has the highest contribution to predict marital satisfaction and quality of life. It can be said that attachment styles can be considered as factors influencing satisfaction and quality of life and the results should be considered in training couples.

***Keywords:*** Attachment styles, Marital satisfaction, Quality of life.

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## 1. Introduction

Marriage is a social phenomenon and the common life of two people linked to the relative independence of each in the development of personality and the blossoming of talents and capabilities of the parties (Floyd et al., 1998). Studies have shown that several variables such as love, commitment, communication, mutual trust, respect, support, loyalty, common interests, mutual understanding, and friendship, concern for each other and attention, mutual exchange of feelings, thoughts and experiences have relationship with marital satisfaction. On the other hand, having marital satisfaction can lead to higher quality of life. Quality of life as a subjective evaluation means that people are the best judge of the quality of their lives. Although objective assessment of quality of life related to health is an important place (Moons et al., 2006). Several studies have shown that the stressful living environment, difficult responsibility and stressful social communication have considerable impacts on quality of life (Iiu, 2006). Now, the quality of life is one of the major concerns of health professionals and known as an indicator to measure the health status in health research. Quality of life is a perception of individuals having of their position in life in the field of cultural and value systems and is in relation with its goals, aspirations and standards. It can be defined as the quality of life as the collection of physical, mental, social well-being that perceived by the person or group of people (such as happiness, satisfaction, pride, health, economic status, educational opportunities, etc.) (Ling, 2005).

An attachment style is one of the factors influencing marital satisfaction and quality of life. In fact, the ways of regulating emotions and communicate with others are different and attachment theory explains these individual differences in adults. Young et al. (2003) considered attachment styles and differentiation as sustainable and multi-generational factors and suggested how one's origin family could affect her/his marriage.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) developed three adult attachments using attachment styles developed by Ainsworth et al. (1978): Secure, avoidance, ambivalent. They stated that attachment styles represent people fundamental differences in mental imagery of romantic love. Secure attachment describes its love experiences as exhilarating, reliable, supportive and pleasant. In contrast, avoiders describe their love experience with fear of intimacy. Ambivalent describe this experience obsessive with extreme jealousy and sexual attraction. The researchers also indicated positive correlations between secure attachment style and marital satisfaction and negative relationship between insecure style and marital satisfaction (Brennan and Shaver, 1995; Fuller and Fincham, 1995 and Feeney, 1996).

Sayadpour (2005) referring to research carried out in this field suggests that secure people expressing their feelings of intimacy and emotions based on love and friendship provided the conditions that cause satisfied in most of them; while avoidance and ambivalent people, with emotional distance and anxiety valued negative on marital communication quality. Balbi (1976, according to Roisman et al., 2005) claimed that early attachment experiences of adults play a major role in the quality and quantity of their close relations in the future. In fact, attachment styles through the mechanism of emotional regulation can affect the quality of life and marital satisfaction (Besharat et al, 2007). So that, the couple with less secure attachment compared to couples within secure attachment specially anxiety unsafe has negative interactions (Gallo and Smith, 2001). Dogan (2010) believes that ultimately the people with healthy attachment favor good quality of life. In research conducted by Besharat and Ganji (2012), Sadeghi (2011), Motadayen (2011), Sadat Dibachi et al (2009), Teymorpour (2010) is known that marital satisfaction and positive relationships between people with secure attachment and ambivalent quality is higher than those with avoidant attachment. With a little research on relations between spouses and the role of attachment styles in marital life and quality of life, more studies are needed in this area. In this regard, this question is raised that attachment styles have moderating role in marital satisfaction and quality of life?

## **2. Methods**

The overall objective of this study was to investigate the moderating role of attachment styles in marital satisfaction and quality of life of married working women. This research was descriptive and correlative. The group included 514 married women working in the laboratories in Rasht. With stratified random selection of 200 women from the group were selected from 8 laboratories.

## **3. Instrument**

The instruments used in this study include:

Hazan and Shavers' Attachment Style Scale: Adult attachment scale was made with Hazan and Shaver (1987) attachment test material and normalized in the case of the Iranian population is a 15-item test and measures three secure attachment, avoidant, and ambivalent in 5-point Likert scale (1 = none, 2 = little, 3 = average, 4 = high, very high=5). The minimum and maximum score of subjects in the test subscales will be 5 and 25, respectively.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the questions of each subscales of secure, avoidant and ambivalent about a sample of students for all subjects, was obtained 0.85, 0.84, 0.85, respectively that indicating good internal consistency of adult Attachment scale. The content validity of 6 Adult Attachment scale was studied using to measure the correlation between the scores of 15 psychology professionals. Kendall agreed coefficients for secure attachment styles, insecure and ambivalent calculated as 0.80, 0.61, and 0.57, respectively.

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (Olson et al., 1989) has 47 simple sentences with five options "strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree, strongly disagree" has been given to the subjects. Subject, in terms of its agreement, signs one option.

Scoring the questions is the Likert scale type and each of the options is awarded a score from 1 to 5. The final score in the whole answer sheets is a score related to the subject received from this questionnaire. Olson, Fournier, and Druckman (1989) reported that alpha coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.92.

Sanaei (2000) measured the questionnaire validity and stated that Enrich scales with family satisfaction scale and life satisfaction are correlated in 0.41 to 0.60 and 0.32, respectively that implying its structure validity.

#### **4. Quality of Life Questionnaire**

SF-36 quality of life questionnaire is applied for applications such as clinical practice, health policy evaluation and researches of the general population. 36-words form designed in America by Varous herbon in 1992. Its validity and reliability in different groups of patients were studied.

The questionnaire has 36 statements that are evaluated eight different health areas includes: physical function, role limitations due to health situation, role limitations due to emotional problems, fatigue or vitality, emotional health, social functioning, pain and general health. Lowest score on this scale is zero and the highest is 100. The score of each dimension will be determined with the score of titles.

The reliability of the questionnaire is estimated between 0.90-0.70 in Iran (Montazeri et al., 2005).

## 5. Results

This section begins with a description of descriptive data and then the analytical results are provided:

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the studied variables

Variables	Mean	Sd
Avoidant attachment style	7.71	5.07
Secure attachment style	7.55	3.74
Ambivalent attachment style	9.29	4.59
Marital satisfaction	115.41	34.5
Quality of life	89.61	23.02

According to Table 1, the mean of avoidant attachment style is 7.71 with standard deviation 5.07 and the mean of secure attachment style is 7.55 with standard deviation 3.74, the mean of ambivalent attachment style is 9.29 with standard deviation 4.59, the mean of marital satisfaction is 115.41 with standard deviation 34.5 and the mean of quality of life is 89.61 with standard deviation 23.02.

Table 2. Correlation between marital satisfaction and quality of life

variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Sig
	0.53	0.28	0.01

As can be seen in Table 2, there is a positive correlation ( $r=0.53$ ) between marital satisfaction and quality of life which is statistically significant ( $P<0.01$ ); in other words, marital satisfaction could explain 28 percent of the variance in quality of life (criterion variable).

Using multiple regression analysis of attachment styles with marital satisfaction was entered into the regression model and their relationship to quality of life was assessed.

Table 3. Summary of step wise regression analysis of the moderating role of attachment style in relationship between marital satisfaction and quality of life

Predictor variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	SE
Avoidant attachment style	0.53	0.28		10.46
Marital satisfaction	0.64	0.41	0.13	9.96
Secure attachment style	0.66	0.43	0.02	9.96

According to the results of stepwise regression, in Table 3, we see that after entering attachment styles in the relationship between marital satisfaction and quality

of life, at first the avoidant attachment style entered into the model as the strongest predictors variable and could explain 28% of the variance in quality of life (criterion variable). In the second step, marital satisfaction was added to the model and these two variables (avoidant attachment style and marital satisfaction) could explain 41% of the variance in quality of life (criterion variable).

Putting marital satisfaction into the model could help to explain 13 percent of the variance in quality of life; while that alone could explain 28 percent of the variance in quality of life.

In the third step, secure attachment style is added to the model and these three variables (avoidant attachment style, marital satisfaction and secure attachment style) could explain 43% of the variance in quality of life (criterion variable).

Putting secure attachment style into the model could help to explain 2 percent of the variance in quality of life.

Table 4. ANOVA test for significant step wise model of the relationship between attachment style and quality of life of married women

Step	Sources changes	SS	Df	MS	F	sig
1	Avoidant attachment style	25728.59	1	25728.59	71.52	0.01
	Remaining	53245.21	148	359.77		
	Total	15145.47	149			
2	Secure attachment style	32630.33	2	16315.17	51.75	0.01
	Remaining	46343.46	147	315.26		
	Total	15145.47	149			

As seen in the above table, F values obtained in two steps is meaningful ( $P < 0.01$ ). So the model in two steps is significant advance with 0.99 confidence level. The relationship between attachment style and quality of life of the married women in the two models is statistically significant.

The predictive variables (avoidant attachment style with  $p < 0.05$  and  $F(1, 14) = 71.52$  and Secure avoidant style with  $p < 0.05$  and  $F(1, 147) = 51.75$  has the predictive power of variable criteria (quality of life for married women).

## 6. Discussion

In this study, the moderator role of attachment styles in marital satisfaction and quality of life of married working women were studied. The results showed that there is a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and quality of life ( $r=0.53$ ) which was statistically significant ( $P<0.01$ ); The results of step wise regression showed that after entering attachment styles in the relationship between marital satisfaction and quality of life, the avoidant attachment style as the strongest predictors variable could explain 28% of the variance in quality of life (criterion variable).

According to the findings of the current study, the marital satisfaction of people with secure attachment and ambivalent style is higher than those with avoidant attachment.

Marital satisfaction of people with ambivalent attachment and secure style showed no significant difference. In the Rajai et al., (2007), Besharat and Ganji (2010), Sadeghi (2011), Motadayen (2011), Teimorpour et al., (2010), Dibachi et al., (2009) studies found that people in this style is more than people with avoidant styles.

It seems that the non-alignment of ambivalent marital satisfaction in favor of the findings is defensible, because marital satisfaction is arising from an interaction between two persons that some social psychological theories suggest. It was found that the ambivalent people who experience the satisfaction of their secure partners in a two-person system are acceptable.

On the other hand, the findings of this study showed higher marital satisfaction in attachment of those couples whose one side is ambivalent.

While most research include Sadeghi (2011), Motadayen (2011), Amin and Teymorpour (2010) has been found that people with secure attachment style was significantly associated with each other in such a way that wives and husbands, while expressing the interest in their relationship show more affection to each other with empathy and express words of love and friendship and are more disclosure.

It should be noted here that couples that have secure attachment have less negative interactions with each other.

Also, secure attachment couples compared with insecure couples have richer relationships, more confident and comfortable and have a greater intimacy with their spouses (Besharat and Ganji, 2010).

On the other hand, the anxious insecure attachment couples with their negative perception but positive from other important are seeking to intimate emotional relationship from others.

And avoidant insecure attachment couples with a negative view of themselves and others important develop a cold and distant relationship that will result to avoid each other. Working women due to conflict in the work place and at home will create a lot of stress.

The outcome of secure attachment is a sense of safety in person (Cassidy and Shaver, 1999). Therefore we can say that this attachment style is a security making source in the face. Secure attachment with their supportive actions provides the context to acquisition social skills, self-esteem, surrounded on the environment, self-objective and finally the sense of independence in the people.

Secure attachment is an internal source preserving mental health during the periods of stress, while lacking a safe source has following the emotional problems. This causes people with secure attachment can have a better quality of life.

Therefore, it is suggested that the higher sample size and different locations used in future research in order to achieve more accurate findings in this field. The results obtained refer to the importance of attachment style in marital satisfaction and quality of life to working women. Therefore, it is recommended that more research done to train couples and aware them in the field of healthy and friendly relations in childhood.

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