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A Comparative Study to Explore the Level of Empathy and Life Satisfaction in Married and Unmarried Early Adults

Vaibhavi Vaish¹, Dr. Neerja Pandey²,

¹ B.A.(H) Applied Psychology, Amity University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

²Assistant Professor, Amity Institute of Behavioural and Allied Sciences, University, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the correlation between empathy levels and life satisfaction among young adults, with a specific focus on differentiating between married and unmarried individuals. Empathy, which refers to the capacity to comprehend and express concern for the emotions of others, assumes a pivotal function in fostering interpersonal connections and promoting overall welfare. The research was encompassing a group of individuals between the ages of 18 and 40, specifically young adults, including both married and unmarried participants. Participants were selected using convenience sampling techniques, ensuring representation from various socio-demographic backgrounds to achieve a comprehensive sample. Participants were required to complete self-report measures in order to evaluate their levels of empathy and life satisfaction. The assessment of life satisfaction will involve the utilization of standardized measures such as the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), which gauges the overall satisfaction across various domains of life. A comprehensive examination will be undertaken to investigate the correlation and regression analyses between empathy levels and life satisfaction in both married and unmarried individuals. Statistical analyses, including, will be employed for this purpose, in order to establish the relationship between these variables. There is a hypothesis that individuals exhibiting higher levels of empathy will express higher levels of life satisfaction, irrespective of their marital status. However, it is anticipated that individuals who are married may demonstrate slightly elevated levels of life satisfaction in comparison to those who are unmarried, as a result of the perceived advantages that come with being in a marital union. Understanding the correlation between empathy and life satisfaction in young adults can offer valuable insights into the factors that contribute to overall well-being during this transformative period of life.

Keywords: Empathy, life satisfaction, young adults, carl rogers, marital status

Introduction

Empathy is a multidimensional construct comprised of two components: cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Cognitive empathy refers to the ability to infer and recognise the emotions of others, while affective empathy refers to the ability to experience others' emotions vicariously. In other words, people with high levels of empathy can easily recognise the emotions of others and experience that emotion. Empathy is a multidimensional construct comprised of two components: cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Cognitive empathy refers to the ability to infer and recognise the emotions of others, while affective empathy refers to the ability to experience others' emotions vicariously. In other words, people with high levels of empathy can easily recognise the emotions of others and experience that emotion. Empathy is a multidimensional construct comprised of two components: cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Cognitive empathy refers to the ability to infer and recognise the emotions of others,

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Empathy: -

Empathy is a multidimensional construct comprised of two components: cognitive empathy and affective empathy. Empathy is a basic component of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). It is a multidimensional and complex epistemological process and is a way of knowing that involves both our affective and cognitive systems. (Bohart & Greenberg, 1997; Duan & Hill, 1996; Feshbach, 1997).

According to developmental theorists, it is a capacity present from birth which develops over time as our emotional and cognitive systems mature. Titchener translated the term empathy from the German word "einfühlung", as "to feel one's way into" (Bozarth, 1997).

The psychologist Edward Titchener (1867-1927) established the term "Empathy" in 1909 into the English language as the translation of the German term "Einfühlung" (or "feeling into"), a term that by the end of the 19th century was in German philosophical circles understood as an important category in philosophical aesthetics. "Empathy is divided into two types: **affective empathy** (the ability to respond emotionally to another's emotional state) and **cognitive empathy** (the ability to understand another's perspective or mental state).

It was originally used in German aesthetics as a means of coming to know a particular work of art. Later, empathy was used by Rogers (1959; 1975) and Kohut (1971; 1977) to describe a way of being towards others to promote healing in psychotherapy. Cognitive empathy refers to the ability to infer and recognise the emotions of others, while affective empathy refers to the ability to experience others' emotions vicariously. In other words, people with high levels of empathy can easily recognise the emotions of others and experience that emotion. In a society frequently guided by individualism and self-centeredness, empathy shines as a guiding light for fostering genuine human connection and fostering understanding. The ability to perceive and share the feelings of others, regardless of differences, is a fundamental skill that promotes compassion and enhances our interactions. Empathy is not solely categorized as a soft skill, but rather, it stands as the foundational pillar for promoting robust relationships, enhancing communication effectiveness, and fostering societal cohesiveness.

In previous times, empathy was regarded as an inherent characteristic that could not be imparted through teaching. However, further studies have demonstrated that this crucial human skill, which is essential for health-care providers, is changeable and can indeed be taught. The positive impact of physician empathy on patient ratings has been substantiated through pilot and retention studies (3,4) as well as a randomized controlled trial. Empathy can be described as the sharing of one's emotions and taking someone's perspective and feeling compassionate and wanting to help.

In this exhaustive investigation, we embark on a thorough examination of empathy, unravelling its importance, origins, neurological foundations, developmental components, and its significant influence on both individuals and society. Empathy, in its fundamental form, encompasses the ability to put oneself into someone else's shoes, perceive the world from their perspective, and experience their emotions. The capacity to acknowledge and empathize with the emotions of others, whether it be joy, sorrow, pain, or triumph, remains unchanged as . The foundation of human connection lies in the emotional resonance, which allows us to establish significant relationships and effectively navigate the intricate dynamics of social interactions with empathy and comprehension. The number remains unchanged. The origins of empathy can be attributed to our evolutionary history, where it is believed to have developed as a means of ensuring survival. In ancient times, early humans depended on their capacity to empathize with their fellow members of the tribe to establish mutual protection, cooperation, and caregiving. Over the course of millennia, the quality of empathy has become deeply intertwined within the intricate framework of our social relationships, significantly influencing the dynamics observed within our families, communities, and wider societal structures. The phenomenon of empathy is a multifaceted combination of cognitive and emotional processes, intricately coordinated by different areas within the brain. From a neurological standpoint, this intricate interplay plays a crucial role in fostering empathy. Mirror neurons, which are specific cells that activate both during the execution of an action and when witnessing others perform the same action,

significantly contribute to the development of empathy. These neurons allow us to replicate the experiences of others in our own minds, thereby facilitating emotional resonance and perspective-taking. The inception of empathy commences at an early stage in life, with the formation of attachment bonds between infants and their caregivers. By engaging in attentive caregiving practices, children acquire the skills to identify and manage their own emotions, establishing a solid groundwork for developing empathetic connections with others. As children mature, their ability to empathize grows as a result of engaging in social interactions, developing cognitively, and fostering moral reasoning. Empathy, however, is not exclusively an inherent characteristic; it is also molded by external influences such as environmental factors, cultural dynamics, and personal encounters. The enhancement of empathic abilities, which can foster a more compassionate and inclusive society, can be achieved through exposure to diverse perspectives, opportunities for perspective-taking, and positive social modeling. In today's society, the concept of empathy carries significant weight and has far-reaching implications across multiple sectors, such as healthcare, education, business, and politics. "In healthcare environments, the presence of empathetic communication between healthcare practitioners and patients has been found to be correlated with superior clinical outcomes, heightened patient satisfaction, and enhanced compliance with treatment protocols." In the field of education, the cultivation of empathy can serve to facilitate a supportive learning atmosphere, diminish instances of bullying, and augment the development of social-emotional learning competencies among students. In addition, the numerical sequence retains its original form. Additionally, empathy serves as an essential component in promoting effective leadership, resolving conflicts, and fostering a sense of togetherness within a community. Leaders who exhibit empathy possess enhanced abilities to comprehend the requirements and worries of their team members. This, in turn, allows them to cultivate trust and promote collaboration, ultimately serving as an inspiration for collective efforts aimed at achieving common objectives. Likewise, empathy functions as a driving force behind social change, propelling advocacy initiatives, fostering social justice, and bridging gaps amidst diverse communities. Despite its intrinsic worth, empathy does come with certain hurdles and constraints. Empathic distress, also known as the emotional weight endured when observing the anguish of others, has the potential to result in burnout and compassion fatigue, particularly within the caregiving and assisting professions. Moreover, the feeling of empathy can be purposefully biased towards individuals belonging to the same group, while being reduced or absent towards those in different groups. This phenomenon plays a significant role in fostering intergroup conflict and prejudice. Ultimately, empathy serves as a fundamental principle in establishing meaningful human bonds, cultivating comprehension, kindness, and unity within an ever more interconnected global society. By fostering empathy at the individual, interpersonal, and societal levels, we can overcome barriers arising from differences, foster inclusive communities, and construct a world that is both empathetic and compassionate, benefiting future generations.

Life satisfaction: -

Life satisfaction is a complex concept that serves as a fundamental aspect of human well-being and overall quality of life. As individuals traverse the intricacies of life, their evaluation of life satisfaction acts as a gauge for their subjective encounters, spanning diverse realms such as physical well-being, mental health, social connections, financial status, and personal gratification. **Life satisfaction**, defined as individuals' subjective evaluation of their overall quality of life, encompasses various domains including relationships, work, health, and personal fulfillment (Diener et al., 1985).

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of life satisfaction is of utmost importance for researchers, policymakers, and individuals alike. This knowledge offers invaluable insights into the various elements that contribute to a truly fulfilling and meaningful existence. Throughout history, scholars from various disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, and sociology have dedicated their efforts to contemplate the essence of human happiness and satisfaction. Aristotle, in his work *Nicomachean Ethics*, argued that eudaimonia, which is often translated as "happiness" or "flourishing," serves as the ultimate objective in human existence. This state of fulfillment is attained by engaging in virtuous actions and nurturing personal potential. Correspondingly, the utilitarian tradition, advocated by eminent philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, highlights the pursuit of maximum pleasure and minimum pain as

the fundamental principles for leading a prosperous life. In current psychological research, the notion of life satisfaction has received considerable focus, especially in the context of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being encompasses not only life satisfaction but also the existence of positive emotions and the non-existence of negative ones. Diener, Lucas, and Oishi (2018) provide a formal definition of subjective well-being as "an individual's assessments of their overall life" and suggest that this concept encompasses both cognitive and affective aspects. Life satisfaction refers to the cognitive aspect that reflects individuals' evaluations regarding the quality of their lives. In the realm of life satisfaction assessment, it is customary to employ self-report evaluations whereby individuals gauge their overall contentment with life using a numerical scale, such as the case with . A frequently employed assessment tool is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), crafted by Ed Diener and fellow researchers in 1985. The SWLS comprises five items aimed at evaluating overall life satisfaction on a global scale. This assessment encompasses various facets, including fulfillment, contentment, and perceived quality of life. Alternative methods for assessing life satisfaction, such as the Cantril Ladder and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, present separate approaches that possess distinct focus areas and scopes. Research on life satisfaction encompasses a wide range of academic fields, such as psychology, sociology, economics, and public health, indicating its interdisciplinary significance. Psychologists delve into the examination of variant factors that contribute to individual differences in life satisfaction, as well as its determinants. These factors encompass personality traits, coping strategies, social support, and resilience. Sociologists analyze the influence of social structures, institutions, and cultural norms on the level of life satisfaction among individuals. This exploration delves into various concepts such as social capital, social integration, and inequality. Economists thoroughly examine the correlation among income, wealth, and life satisfaction, investigating the decline in positive effects of material wealth on individual happiness. "The examination of life satisfaction transcends academic exploration and encompasses practical implications in the realms of policy development and program assessment." Governments and international organizations are increasingly acknowledging the significance of subjective well-being as a supplementary measure alongside traditional economic indicators such as gross domestic product (GDP). The incorporation of indicators like life satisfaction into national surveys and policy evaluations exemplifies a wider transition towards comprehensive methods for assessing societal advancement and human development. The significance of life satisfaction research extends to the realm of individual well-being interventions and therapeutic strategies. Positive psychology interventions, including gratitude exercises, mindfulness practices, and strengths-based interventions, seek to improve life satisfaction by encouraging positive emotions, nurturing meaningful connections, and developing personal strengths. Psychotherapeutic methods, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and existential therapy, are employed to address maladaptive thought patterns and existential concerns that have the potential to diminish overall life satisfaction. In essence, the concept of life satisfaction plays a pivotal role in the examination of human well-being, encapsulating individuals' personal assessments of their overall quality of life. Scholars strive to unravel the intricacies of life satisfaction and its determinants by drawing upon philosophical traditions, psychological theories, and empirical research. Research on life satisfaction sheds light on the factors that contribute to a fulfilling and meaningful existence. This offers significant insights for individuals, communities, and societies who are dedicated to improving well-being and overall quality of life. The SWB construct is a tripartite category of phenomena, which includes: emotional responses (i.e. positive affect (e.g. joy, optimism) and negative affect (e.g. sadness, anger)), domain satisfactions (e.g. work satisfaction, relationship satisfaction), and global judgements of life satisfaction (LS).

Review of Literature

SaprioH.

(1992)Empathy, characterized as an almost ethereal sentiment, holds utmost significance in human engagements, especially within the medical domain. However, physicians may experience a decrease in empathy due to medical education and the demands of their practice. In order to uphold empathy, doctors derive advantages from engaging in conversations about patient experiences, immersing themselves in the humanities,

and fostering a harmonious blend of knowledge and storytelling. These practices aid physicians in preserving their enthusiasm and human interaction, which are crucial attributes frequently overshadowed by the demands and aloofness associated with contemporary medical practice.

Eva Oberle et al. (2010) conducted research on the title “Life Satisfaction in Early Adolescence: Personal, Neighbourhood, School, Family, and Peer Influences”. They conducted a multi-level modelling (MLM) to analyse the variability of life satisfaction at individual and school level. As postulated, the inclusion of optimism and the dimensions pertaining to the ecology of early adolescence in the model resulted in a notable decrease in the range of life satisfaction, as observed across both levels of analysis. Both personal (optimism) and all the ecological assets had a significant and positive impact on the life satisfaction of early adolescents. The outcomes indicate that employing an assets perspective is beneficial for comprehending life satisfaction during early adolescence, both theoretically and practically.

Frazier P. et al (1996) conducted a study on “desire for marriage and life satisfaction among unmarried heterosexual adults.” This study investigated the determinants impacting the prevailing patterns of matrimony among individuals who are unmarried and above the age of 30. In a survey conducted with a sample size of 217 participants, it was determined that the status of being single can be attributed to both obstacles and personal decisions. Men showed a higher inclination towards the institution of marriage compared to women, with those who had never been married displaying a greater desire for marriage than those who had experienced divorce. Divorced individuals have reported a greater level of life satisfaction, which can be attributed to lower self-esteem among those who have never been married. The study presents potential repercussions for counseling services and future research endeavours.

Diener E. et al (2008) conducted research titled “The Satisfaction with Life Scale and the emerging construct of life satisfaction.” Since its initiation in 1985, the Fulfilment With Life Scale (SWLS) has been a conspicuous device for measuring life fulfilment inside subjective well-being. Connected to mental wellbeing and prescient of future behaviors like suicide endeavors, it's too utilized in wellbeing brain research to gage the subjective quality of life in the midst of wellbeing challenges. Later investigate has refined our understanding of life fulfillment judgments, provoking this audit to upgrade psychometric information on the SWLS and address future appraisal issues.

This twenty-three-year study investigated the correlation between the development of empathy during adolescence and the acquisition of social competencies in adulthood. A study conducted with a sample size of 1,527 adults revealed longitudinal consistency in measures of adolescent empathy and a general upward trend in empathy levels throughout adolescence. "Girls were found to have higher levels of empathy, thus indicating a gender disparity in this trait that favored them." Both the levels of empathy and its changes during adolescence demonstrated significant predictive power for adult social competencies, implying enduring social consequences. This emphasizes the long-lasting influence of developmental processes on adjustment and social outcomes throughout adulthood.

Guspar A. et al. (2022) conducted a study on the empathy development from adolescence to adulthood and its consistency across target. The objective of this study was to investigate the progression of empathy from adolescence to adulthood, as well as its significance in deciphering emotions and evaluating empathy both towards humans and animals. Two cross-sectional studies were undertaken, with one focusing on measuring empathy in individuals across various age groups, and the other specifically evaluating emotion decoding in adolescents. The results showed a growth in empathy levels towards both targets as individuals grow older. There were notable differences observed based on gender, and there were also moderate correlations found between empathy towards humans and empathy towards animals. The decoding of emotions displayed variation according to the type of emotion, wherein the ability to recognize negative emotions was successfully predicted by empathy.

Greimel E. et al (2010) studied the “Development of neural correlates of empathy from childhood to early adulthood: an fMRI study in boys and adult men.” This research delved into the alterations in empathy-related neural mechanisms throughout the developmental stages,

spanning from childhood to early adulthood. Functional MRI was utilized to examine 47 males ranging in age from 8 to 27 as they participated in tasks related to emotional facial recognition and the ability to infer emotional states in oneself and others. During self-referential tasks, there were observed age-related enhancements in fusiform and inferior frontal gyrus activity, while diminished activity in the precuneus and intraparietal sulcus. Based on these findings, it can be inferred that there is a development of neural maturation in processing empathy. This information provides valuable knowledge for designing therapeutic interventions for conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, which are characterized by deficits in empathy.

Dijkstra P. et al (2014) conducted a study to assess the role of positive illusions and empathy in intimate relationships. This study investigates the association between positive illusions regarding a partner's empathy, relationship quality, and adjustment in a sample of 55 couples. The research findings indicated that women frequently maintain positive perceptions regarding their partner's empathy. The relationship quality and adjustment were found to be correlated with the positive empathy illusions of both individuals. "It is intriguing to observe that the partner's positive empathy illusions, especially among men, had a significant impact on the quality of the relationship." The significance of favorable perceptions within intimate relationships is highlighted by these findings, providing valuable insights for the field of relationship counseling and theory.

Wastell C.A. (1991) performed a study on empathy in marriage. This study conducted a survey of 44 married couples, with 20 of them expressing an intention for separation while the remaining 24 were selected from the general population. The findings indicated that increased scores on the marital ideals scale were associated with enhanced marital happiness among males, whereas higher scores on the level of regard scale were linked to greater happiness among females. In regards to marriages, males expressed higher levels of happiness in shorter marital unions, characterized by a higher number of children and a lack of desire for separation. The aforementioned findings shed light on gender disparities in factors that predict marital satisfaction, thus indicating potential directions for future investigation.

O'Brien and DeLongis (2009) published a study on coping with stress.

The primary objective of this investigation was to examine the interpersonal stress and coping dynamics prevalent in stepfamily couples. Through a span of one week, data was gathered from a total of 82 couples via interviews as well as daily questionnaires. Hierarchical linear modeling was employed to analyze stress and coping patterns both within and across days. The findings indicated that couples demonstrated heightened levels of empathic responding when stressors were personally significant. The perception of stress and implementation of coping mechanisms are impacted by the adjustment within a marital relationship. There is a positive correlation between greater empathic responding and a decrease in next-day marital tension, indicating that empathic responding plays an adaptive role in stress management within relationships.

Kim S., Kang H. et al. (2013) published a paper titled "Empirical application of empathy enhancing program based on movement concept for married couples in conflict."

This research examines the efficacy of a kinesthetic empathy program designed for married couples experiencing conflict. "Utilizing qualitative techniques, a total of three couples actively engaged in an expressive movement program." The findings suggest that the program improves self-awareness and emotional attunement, thus establishing a connection between comprehending concealed intentions and empathy. Furthermore, the program serves as a valuable supplement to conventional marriage counseling. In general, the study illustrates the capacity of movement programs to enrich empathy within couples by facilitating their perception, emotions, cognition, and interaction with one another.

Ramezani A. (2019) published a paper titled "The Effectiveness of a ToM Training Program in Promoting Empathy Between Married Couples."

This research investigates the influence of Theory of Mind (ToM) training on empathy among married couples facing conflicts. Sixteen couples were divided into two groups, namely the experimental and control groups. The experimental group participated in a series of eight weekly Theory of Mind (ToM) training

sessions. The assessment of empathy levels for couples was conducted utilizing the Interpersonal Reactivity Index, with the integrity of keeping unchanged, in order to maintain a professional tone and grammatical accuracy in the English language. The findings demonstrated that training in Theory of Mind (ToM) was successful in enhancing empathic concern and perspective-taking skills. This suggests that ToM training has the potential to increase empathy among married couples navigating marital conflict.

Beadle J. et al (2012) studied the Effects of age-related differences in empathy on social economic decision-making. This study examines the impact of aging on socio-economic decision-making, with a specific focus on the role of empathy. A total of 80 individuals in good health volunteered to take part in the Ultimatum Game with a Repeated Fixed Opponent (UG-R). The impact of empathy on economic decision-making in older adults has not been clearly established, despite previous research indicating a connection between empathy and prosocial behavior in younger adults. The objective of this study is to delve into the age-related disparities in social economic decision-making and examine the impact of empathy. The purpose is to gain a better understanding of how these variables interplay to influence the decision-making process among older individuals.

Riess H. (2017) studied the science of empathy. Emotional empathic tendency showcases an individual's propensity to resonate with and understand the emotions experienced by another person. Empathetic individuals demonstrate increased physiological responses, including heightened arousal and pleasantness. Females generally exhibit a higher level of empathy compared to males, resulting in increased emotional sensitivity and a greater likelihood of shedding tears. Parents who have empathic children are more likely to spend a greater amount of time with them, show affection, and display tolerance towards infant cries. Consequently, this behavior helps to reduce the likelihood of child abuse. Individuals with a strong sense of empathy demonstrate altruistic behavior, decreased aggression, and give importance to positive social characteristics. They demonstrate superior scores on measures of moral judgment, participate more frequently in volunteer activities, and exhibit decreased levels of aggressiveness during childhood. A revised Emotional Empathic Tendency Scale for children exhibits a negative correlation with teacher evaluations of aggressiveness.

Allemand M. et al. (2014) studied empathy development in adolescence as a predictor of social competencies in adulthood. This comprehensive 23-year study investigated the potential connections between the development of empathy during adolescence and the subsequent social competencies observed in adulthood. A study was conducted involving 1,527 adults, with an age range of 35 years old. Among the participants, 48.3% identified as female. The purpose of the study was to measure adolescent empathy on an annual basis from ages 12 to 16. An evaluation of various adult outcomes, such as empathy, communication skills, social integration, relationship satisfaction, and conflicts, was conducted at the age of 35. The findings indicated that there was a consistent and lasting pattern of empathy in adolescents, characterized by overall growth during the teenage years. Notably, there were significant variations between individuals, and girls demonstrated a higher level of empathy compared to boys. Changes in adolescent empathy were found to be a predictive indicator of adult social competencies, thereby shedding light on the long-term social ramifications that extend beyond the adolescent period.

Dorris L. (2022) studied cognitive empathy across the lifespan. This study investigates the progression of cognitive empathy throughout various stages of life by utilizing the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test with a total of 4545 participants, ranging in age from less than 5 years to over 75 years." The findings indicate that children in the 6-7 and 10-12 age range experience positive developmental progress. However, during adolescence, there is a decrease in this progress followed by stability in adulthood. Moreover, individuals aged 65 and above, specifically males over 75, demonstrate a decline in developmental gains. Women consistently

outperform men at all stages of life. Having a comprehensive understanding of the development of cognitive empathy is crucial for informing moral education in children and providing support for older adults. Standardized tests have the potential to assist in the timely identification of developmental issues as well as neurological conditions that impact cognitive empathy.

Kim E., Son J et al. (2020) studied the cognitive and emotional empathy in young adolescents. This research examined the cognitive and emotional empathic capabilities as well as the brain activation patterns of adolescents (aged 13–15) in comparison to adults (aged 19–29). The findings demonstrated a notable decline in empathic capabilities among adolescents, accompanied by heightened activity within brain regions associated with emotional empathy when performing various tasks. There were no substantial disparities identified in the activation of cognitive empathy task. Adolescents who display lower levels of cognitive empathy demonstrate heightened activity within the brain regions associated with emotional empathy. The results indicate that adolescents may counteract reduced cognitive empathy by exhibiting increased activation in regions associated with emotional empathy.

Chung (2014) This study delves into the relationship between attachment theory and marital satisfaction. By studying a sample of 208 Korean married teachers, it investigates how adult attachment styles impact marital well-being. It also explores the mediating role of dispositional forgiveness in connecting attachment and marital satisfaction. Additionally, it uncovers distinct pathways through which anxious and avoidant attachment styles influence forgiveness and marital contentment, involving factors such as excessive rumination and lack of empathy.

The findings focus on the importance of considering direct, indirect, and gender-specific effects when analysing attachment dynamics within marriages. The internal working model developed through attachment experiences influences how we perceive the world and ourselves.

Sened et al. (2017) Empathic accuracy (EA; Ickes & Hodges, 2013) is the extent to which people accurately perceive their peers' thoughts, feelings, and other inner mental states. It has particularly interested researchers in the context of romantic couples. Reviews of the literature suggest a possible link between romantic partners' EA and their relationship satisfaction (Ickes & Simpson, 2001; Sillars & Scott, 1983). The association was also stronger in relationships of moderate length, suggesting that Emotional Accuracy may be more meaningful when relationships are consolidating but before they become stable.

The ability to accurately perceive a partner's negative emotions was more strongly related to satisfaction than the ability to perceive positive emotions. The results showed a small but significant link between Emotional Accuracy and relationship satisfaction.

Edwards (2007) This study, conducted by Jodie K. Edwards, Ph.D., at Purdue University, studies the role of attachment, conflict, empathy, and forgiveness in relationship satisfaction. It involved 312 university students who completed various questionnaires.

The findings suggest that individuals with higher attachment security tend to be more forgiving. While forgiveness was linked to higher relationship satisfaction, attachment was a better predictor of satisfaction in a relationship.

The study also found that individuals with insecure attachment are more likely to feel threatened by conflict, show less empathy towards their partners, be less forgiving after transgressions, and be less satisfied in their relationships.

The results of this study could help in developing targeted interventions, such as fostering attachment security, to improve relationship satisfaction.

Empathy contributes to relationship satisfaction by fostering understanding, enhancing emotional connections, aiding in conflict resolution, and reducing negative behaviours.

Empathy and relational competence (Year: 53(2), 397–410) This is a study proposing a model of relationship satisfaction. The model suggests that personality traits, especially empathy, influence relationship satisfaction through their effects on certain behaviours. This model was tested on 264 heterosexual couples.

The results showed that three aspects of empathy had predictable effects on self-reported behaviour, which significantly influenced how partners perceived those behaviours. These perceptions of partner behaviour was an important factors in relationship satisfaction.

The model is based on the idea that personality traits, especially empathy, influence relationship satisfaction through their effects on certain behaviours.

Łada & Kaźmierczak (2018) This study explores how temperamental traits and empathy, both linked to emotional regulation, impact relationship satisfaction. It specifically looks at the role of emotional empathy as a mediator between temperamental characteristics and relationship satisfaction.

The study focuses on temperamental arousability, which includes global negative arousability and its components - fear, sadness, discomfort, and frustration. It investigates how these factors affect emotional empathy and relationship satisfaction.

The study involved 150 young adults aged 20 to 35, all of whom had been in romantic relationships for at least six months. The participants completed a sociodemographic survey and a set of questionnaires, including the **Adult Temperament Questionnaire - Short Form, the Empathic Sensitiveness Scale, and the RELAT Questionnaire.**

The results showed that empathic concern (the ability to feel and understand others' emotions) fully mediated the relationship between global negative arousability and relationship satisfaction. In conclusion, the study suggests that partners who exhibit higher global negative arousability might become more satisfied in their relationships when they are more compassionate and caring towards others.

Bühler et al. (2021) This study is a systematic review and meta-analysis that examines the development of relationship satisfaction based on age and relationship duration. The data was collected from 165 independent samples, including 165,039 participants.

The study found that relationship satisfaction tends to decrease from age 20 to 40, reaches a low point at age 40, then increases until age 65, and plateaus in late adulthood.

The presence of children and the measure of relationship satisfaction were found to explain some of the variance in the mean level of relationship satisfaction. The pattern of findings was consistent across various factors such as birth cohort, sample type, country, ethnicity, gender, household shared with partner, marital status, relationship transitions, and dyadic data.

Goodman-Deane et al. (2016) This study investigates the impact of different communication technologies on well-being and personal relationships. It involved an online survey of 3421 participants from Australia, the UK, and the US, examining the use of ten communication methods and their effect on life satisfaction and satisfaction with various types of relationships.

The results showed that the communication methods used by individuals significantly affected their satisfaction levels. However, these methods accounted for less than 1% of the variance in most cases, as satisfaction levels are influenced by many other factors.

The study concluded that different communication technologies are associated with life and relationship satisfaction in different ways. Some technologies had positive associations, while others had negative ones. This finding helps clarify the mixed results of previous studies. The study also found that communication methods that include non-verbal cues are associated with higher life and relationship satisfaction.

Levesque et al. (2014) The study aimed to explore the relationships between dyadic empathy, dyadic coping, and relationship satisfaction among 187 heterosexual couples. Here's a more detailed explanation of these terms and the study's findings:

Dyadic Empathy: This refers to the ability of one partner in a relationship to understand and share the feelings of the other partner. In the context of this study, dyadic empathy was measured in terms of empathic concern (the ability to sympathize with a partner's emotional state) and perspective-taking (the ability to understand a partner's point of view).

Dyadic Coping: This refers to the strategies that couples use to deal with stress. Effective dyadic coping strategies can help couples manage conflicts and maintain relationship satisfaction.

Andreychik (2017) The study aimed to understand the role of empathy in relationship satisfaction. Empathy in this context refers to the ability of one partner to understand and share the feelings of the other. The study differentiated between empathy for a partner's positive emotions (positive empathy) and empathy for a partner's negative emotions (negative empathy).

The research found that both types of empathy were associated with relationship quality, but the association was stronger for positive empathy. This suggests that while it's important for partners to empathize with each other's negative emotions, empathizing with each other's positive emotions may be even more beneficial for the relationship. This adds to the growing body of research on emotional empathy, social support, and positive psychology.

In conclusion, the study suggests that empathy, particularly positive empathy, plays a crucial role in relationship satisfaction. It highlights the importance of not only understanding and sharing a partner's negative emotions but also their positive emotions. The findings could have significant implications for interventions aimed at improving relationship satisfaction. For instance, couples therapy or counseling could focus on enhancing both partners' capacity for positive empathy.

Dijkstra et al. (2014) This study delves into the intricate dynamics of intimate relationships, focusing on the role of empathy and the concept of positive illusions about a partner's empathy. **Positive illusions** refer to the overly favorable and often unrealistic perceptions individuals hold about their partners. In this study, the focus is on positive illusions about a partner's level of empathy. The researchers were interested in understanding whether individuals hold positive illusions about their partner's empathy and how these illusions are related to relationship quality and adjustment.

The study found that women were more likely to hold positive illusions about their partner's empathy. This suggests that women may have a tendency to perceive their partners as being more empathetic than they actually are. Interestingly, the study found that both an individual's own positive illusions and their partner's positive illusions were consistently related to their evaluation of relationship quality and adjustment. This suggests that how we perceive our partner's empathy, and how our partner perceives our empathy, can significantly impact how we evaluate our relationships. It highlights the importance of empathy in relationship satisfaction and adjustment.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between empathy, positive illusions, and relationship satisfaction. It underscores the importance of both understanding and sharing a partner's feelings and maintaining a positive, albeit realistic, perception of a partner's empathic abilities. The findings could have significant implications for interventions aimed at improving relationship satisfaction.

Leuchtmann (2018) The study found that conflict regulation predicted concurrent relationship satisfaction but did not predict change in relationship satisfaction across four years. This suggests that while conflict regulation can contribute to relationship satisfaction at a given time, it may not necessarily lead to changes in satisfaction over time.

Haugen et al. (2008) This study investigates the role of empathic accuracy, the ability to accurately understand another's cognitive and emotional states, in close relationships. Empathic accuracy is important for feeling understood, validated, and cared for in a relationship. Research shows that understanding one's partner leads to positive outcomes like higher marital adjustment, less conflict, and better communication.

The study highlights the importance of both affective and cognitive empathy in dyadic coping and conflict regulation.

Kerem E, N.F et al. (2001): In their study to examine the cognitive-affective nature of the empathy, they concluded that for the participants, whose experiences had emotional components in undertone had demonstrated a much fuller and more meaningful relational experiences. Their participants also experienced empathy as challenging one's own perspective, depending on the other person's similarities or familiarity, not sharing one's feelings and even maintaining an emotional distance, and generally fostering an environment of love, care, and acceptance.

Whalen, E. et al. (2017): They examined the relationship between empathy demonstrated by individuals with secure attachment styles and life satisfaction. Individuals who had secure

attachment styles demonstrated a significant positive correlation with empathy and life satisfaction.

Depow, F, et al. (2021): Their study suggested that in daily life interactions, religious people and women exhibited greater empathy than conservatives and the wealthy, though not substantially.

Rationale

It is of utmost importance to grasp the correlation between empathy levels and life satisfaction in young adults, encompassing both those who are married and unmarried, due to various compelling reasons. To begin with, empathy, a quintessential trait that involves comprehending and embracing others' emotions, is of paramount importance in fostering interpersonal connections, which greatly contribute to one's overall state of welfare. Examining the correlation between empathy levels and life satisfaction can yield valuable insights into the significance of empathic abilities in promoting rewarding relationships and subjective well-being. Secondly, the number denotes an important milestone in life, characterized by a range of social, emotional, and psychological transformations. Conducting an investigation into the levels of empathy and life satisfaction among married young adults can offer valuable insights into the impact of marital status on these factors. Gaining insights into the intricacies of empathy within spousal relationships can offer valuable guidance for interventions that seek to foster marital harmony and satisfaction. Additionally, the investigation of empathy levels and life satisfaction among unmarried young adults provides significant insights into the significance of empathy within various social settings, including friendships, familial connections, and romantic relationships. This study has the potential to offer a comprehensive comprehension of the elements that contribute to the level of life satisfaction among individuals who are not married. Furthermore, it can shed light on the advantages of cultivating empathetic connections in different social environments. Researching empathy levels and life satisfaction among young adults who are both married and unmarried can enhance our comprehension of the elements that impact subjective well-being. Furthermore, it can provide valuable insights for developing approaches aimed at fostering positive interpersonal connections and overall life contentment.

Methodology

Purpose

This research aims to investigate the level of empathy in early adults, comparing married and unmarried individuals.

Objective

To investigate the relationship between empathy and life satisfaction, the researcher aims to provide insights into the nuanced dynamics of empathy in relation to marital status among early adults.

Hypothesis

H1-Empathy levels would be higher in married individuals rather than unmarried individuals.

H2- Higher levels of empathy would result in higher levels of life satisfaction

Variables

Empathy is the potential to look on or recognize accurately the internal frames of reference of others (Rogers,1965). This emphasizes empathy as a cognitive and emotional process. According to Rogers, Empathy is the potential or the ability of the human being to see the world from the perspective of another person in order to feel their pain and emotions that are hurt to understand the source of their feelings and emotions on the same level with themselves.

Life satisfaction: Diener defined Life satisfaction or Satisfaction with life as the tendency of an individual to have a personal evaluation of his/her own life. This evaluation is in terms of cognitive as well as emotional analysis.

Sample

The study involves a diverse sample of participants aged 18-40, both married and unmarried early adults.

Inclusion Criteria

Individuals between the ages of 18 to 40 years.

People fluent in English.

Consent is mandatory for the study

Who can comprehend and complete the questionnaire accurately.

Exclusion Criteria

Individuals who are unwilling to provide informed consent.

Individuals who are unable to comprehend the questionnaire.

Non-English speakers.

People of other age groups.

Tools

The Perth Empathy Scale (PES) is a 20-item self-report questionnaire that assesses people's ability to recognize emotions in others (i.e., cognitive empathy) and vicariously experience other's emotions (i.e., affective empathy), across positive and negative emotions. Originally developed in English, the aim of our study was to introduce the first Polish version of the PES and test its psychometric performance. Our sample was 318 people (184 females, 134 males) with ages ranging from 18 to 77. The factor structure was verified with confirmatory factor analysis. Reliability was tested in terms of internal consistency and test-retest reliability. To explore convergent, divergent, and discriminant validity, we examined relationships between the PES and measures of depression, anxiety, and emotional intelligence. It was shown that the scale was characterized by the intended four-factor solution, thus supporting factorial validity. The internal consistency reliability was also good and test-retest reliability was moderate. The convergent, divergent, and discriminant validity were strong. The clinical importance of assessing affective empathy across both positive and negative emotions was supported. Overall, our results therefore suggest that the Polish version of the PES has strong psychometric performance and clinical relevance as a measure of the multidimensional empathy construct.

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) was developed to assess satisfaction with the respondent's life as a whole. The scale does not assess satisfaction with life domains such as health or finances but allows subjects to integrate and weight these domains in whatever way they choose. Normative data are presented for the scale, which shows good convergent validity with other scales and with other types of assessments of subjective well-being. Life satisfaction as assessed by the SWLS shows a degree of temporal stability (e.g., .54 for 4 years), yet the SWLS has shown sufficient sensitivity to be potentially valuable to detect change in life satisfaction during the course of clinical intervention. Further, the scale shows discriminant validity from emotional well-being measures. The SWLS is recommended as complement to scales that focus on psychopathology or emotional well-being because it assesses an individuals' conscious evaluative judgment of his or her life by using the person's own criteria.

Procedure

Participants were recruited from college campuses through the announcements on all the social media platforms of the researcher.

The data for this study was collected via simple random sampling.

All the participants were required to electronically provide their consent before proceeding to mark their responses. It was a mandatory section and unless the participants provided their informed consent, submission for the survey was forbidden.

The survey also included some basic demographic details such as gender, socioeconomic status, family structure and the course they are enrolled in.

Responding to each and every question was mandatory and if the participants were unwilling to answer any specific questions, they were given the choice to refrain from participating in the research study.

All the participants were ensured that the data collected would be kept confidential and would be used for research purposes only.

Result Analysis

The results of the study on the comparative levels of empathy and life satisfaction in married and unmarried early adults are as follows:

1. Empathy Levels:

Hypothesis H1: Empathy levels would be higher in married individuals rather than unmarried individuals.

Analysis: The study found that married individuals ($M = 72.88$, $SD = 9.14$, $n = 52$) have higher empathy scores compared to unmarried individuals ($M = 68.67$, $SD = 12.09$, $n = 52$), $t(102) = -2.002$, $p = 0.048$, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, indicating that empathy levels are indeed higher in married individuals than unmarried individuals.

2. Relationship Between Empathy and Life Satisfaction:

Hypothesis H2: Higher levels of empathy would result in higher levels of life satisfaction.

Analysis: The study found a positive correlation between empathy and life satisfaction, $r = .318$, $p = 0.001$, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that higher levels of empathy are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, supporting the hypothesis.

Overall, the study suggests that being married is associated with higher levels of empathy, and higher empathy levels are linked to higher levels of life satisfaction in early adults.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study aimed to compare the levels of empathy and life satisfaction between married and unmarried early adults. The findings revealed that married individuals exhibited higher levels of empathy compared to unmarried individuals, supporting the hypothesis that empathy levels are higher in married individuals. Additionally, the study found a positive correlation between empathy and life satisfaction, indicating that higher levels of empathy are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, thus supporting the hypothesis that empathy influences life satisfaction positively. These results highlight the importance of interpersonal relationships, particularly marriage, in fostering empathy and potentially enhancing life satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics can have implications for interventions aimed at improving mental health and well-being, especially among young adults. Further research could explore other factors that influence empathy and life satisfaction, as well as longitudinal studies to understand the long-term effects of marital status on empathy and life satisfaction.

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