

**The Relationship between Trait Anxiety,  
Attachment, Sexism, Relationship Satisfaction and  
Life Satisfaction among Iranian Couples**

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the roles of gender, trait anxiety, attachment and sexism on relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples who are studying in EMU. Seventy seven Iranian couples were selected as a sample to answer the scales including; the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the revised version of Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory (ECRI-R), Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and Satisfaction With Life scale (SWLS). The findings of the study showed higher trait anxiety was related to low life satisfaction but it was not related to relationship satisfaction, and women showed higher trait anxiety compare to men. Secure attachment style predicted higher life satisfaction via the mediating role of higher relationship satisfaction. There was no difference between men and women in attachment style. Hostile Sexism (HS) showed a trend in predicting low relationship satisfaction and Benevolent Sexism (BS) did not predict relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction, although men's BS and HS scores were higher than women. The results are discussed in light of the Iranian culture.

**Keywords:** Trait anxiety, attachment, sexism, relationship satisfaction, life satisfaction

## ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, DAÜ’de okuyan İranlı çiftlerde cinsiyet, sürekli kaygı, bağlılık ve cinsiyetçiliğin ilişki doyumu ve yaşam doyumu üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktır. Yetmiş yedi İranlı çift Sürekli Kaygı Envanteri, Yakın İlişkiler Envanteri, Çelişik Duygulu Cinsiyetçilik Ölçeği, Çiftlerarası Uyum Ölçeği, ve Yaşam Doyumu ölçeklerini cevaplandırmıştır. Çalışma bulgularına göre, yüksek sürekli kaygının, düşük yaşam doyumunu yordadığı fakat ilişki tatminini yordamadığı saptanmıştır. Kadınların erkeklere oranla daha fazla sürekli kaygı gösterdiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Güvenli bağlanan bireylerin yaşam doyumu, ilişki memnuniyetinin aracı değişken rolü oynamasından dolayı arttığı görülmüştür. Düşmanca cinsiyetçiliğin ilişki memnuniyetine etkisi olduğu fakat korumacı cinsiyetçilikle ilişkisi bulunmadığı görülmüştür. Erkeklerin kadınlardan daha yüksek düşmanca ve korumacı cinsiyetçilik tutumları gözlenmiştir. Erkek ve kadınların ilişki memnuniyeti ve yaşam doyumu arasında bir farklılık olmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bulgular, İran kültürü göz önünde bulundurularak tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sürekli kaygı, bağlılık, cinsiyetçilik, ilişki doyumu, yaşam doyumu.

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to investigate the roles of gender, trait anxiety, attachment and sexism on relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples who are studying in EMU.

### 1.1 Anxiety

According to Hembree (1990), anxiety involves a multi-dimensional structure and is a situation where substructures that are connected with different states develop. Lewis (2000) clarifies the idea of structure mentioned in this definition as a representation of feelings generally supported by feeling afraid and surprised. Anxiety emerges from genetics, biology, learning and encounters in the living environment and has been explained according to Spielberger in two ways: trait anxiety and state anxiety. State uneasiness is a passionate response brought on by individuals deciphering specific states as threatening (Spielberger, 1966). Trait anxiety is portrayed as a predisposition to perceive specific circumstances as threatening and to react to these circumstances with expanded state anxiety (Spielberger, 1966). According to Spielberger (1972) trait anxiety indicates moderately stable individual differences in anxiety proneness, in contrast, state anxiety reflects a temporary emotional state that may vary in strength and change over time. The focus of this study was trait anxiety.

### **1.1.1 Anxiety and relationship satisfaction**

Previous research has shown that when couples feel secure in their relationships they are more fulfilled and act in ways that upgrade the relationship (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Of course, satisfied couples are more likely to respond to verbal as well as nonverbal behavior that passes on compassion, support and love towards one another than dissatisfied couples (Cordova, Gee & Warren, 2005; Marshall, 2008) and express more outflows of affection through hugging and touching (Mackey, Diemer & O'Brian, 2000). Likewise, satisfied couples are more prone to utilize active relational support methods, which function to accomplish and maintain satisfactory levels of relational closeness (Canary, Stafford, & Semis, 2002). Anxious relationship beliefs and behaviors can be identified by lower relationship satisfaction. When anxious people think that intimacy will be threatening, this could hinder them to behave intimately so they don't get hurt, which can be related to discomfort with going into intimate relationships and relationship dissatisfaction (Chatav & Whisman, 2009).

Researchers have come to recognize that healthy romantic relationships are facilitated by individual psychological well-being (Epstein & Baucom, 2002), and research has shown that mindfulness is positively associated with a number of potential "intrapersonal supports" for healthy relationships, including positive affectivity, self-esteem, and relationship satisfaction, and inversely related to negative affectivity, anxiety, anger-hostility, depressive symptoms, and stress reactivity (Brown, 2004). A study done by Caughlin, Huston, and Houts (2000) showed that trait anxiety is connected with marital satisfaction, and this connection was clarified in an expanded way by self-reports of communication paths between

partners. Women who hold anxious expectations about being rejected act in a negative way in communications with their partners and are more likely to break-up than women without these expectations (Downey & Feldman, 1996).

### **1.1.2 Anxiety and life satisfaction**

According to the quality of life model (Frisch, Cornell, Villanueva, & Retzlaff, 1992) while vital needs have been met or satisfied people have positive feelings; anxiety can be connected with low life satisfaction which may happen because of the failure to reach the needs in valued areas of life. Parkerson, Broadhead, and Tse (1990) examined the relationship between life satisfaction and anxiety in medical students and reported that students who had more elevated amounts of life satisfaction, reported lower grades of anxiety. With less clarity about other factors taken in this relationship, for example, age, sex, and social support, it is hard to recommend whether life satisfaction was specifically related to anxiety or not in a specific way through factors, coping for example (Heppner, Cook, Wright, & Johnson, 1995). Frisch (1998) predicts that low levels of life satisfaction may bring anxiety. It is likewise well known that some mental issues like depressive disorder or anxiety disorder influence life satisfaction in a negative way (Henning, Turk, Mennin, Fresco, & Heimberg, 2007). One study by Norberg, Diefenbach, and Tolin (2008) explored whether and how the quality of life is influenced by anxiety and depressive disorder comorbidity. Results demonstrated that patients with anxiety disorder reported lower life satisfaction than non-clinical members. Besides, anxiety disorder comorbidity in patients with depressive disorder did not additionally affect life satisfaction, yet patients with a depressive disorder comorbid with an anxiety disorder reported fundamentally more functional inability and less life satisfaction

than did people with anxiety disorder alone or those without a psychiatric diagnosis (Norberg, Diefenbach, & Tolin, 2008).

### **1.1.3 Anxiety and gender**

According to outcomes from epidemiological researches it has been found that there exist higher rates of anxiety among females compared to males, especially during adolescence (Lewinsohn, Gotlib, Lewinsohn, Seeley, & Allen, 1998). Behavioral genetic researches have the capacity to recognize sex and age difference in the origins of anxiety. There is some proof of a bigger genetic impact amongst young women (Topolski et al., 1999), with a general increment in genetic impact crosswise over both young men and young women during adolescence (Scourfield et al., 2003).

Research by Kemp (1996) showed that men perpetually score higher on introversion and independence than women, within overall populations. Women have a tendency to be more sensitive and anxious than men. Studies have also shown that females have a tendency to show more elevated amounts of anxiety and fearfulness than males. For instance, the results of studies have demonstrated that females score higher than males on anxiety tests (Lucht et al., 2003). Lifetime predominance rates of anxiety are assessed to be higher than other classes of mental disorders (Kessler et al., 2005), and females are evaluated to be influenced by anxiety more than males. Some researchers have contended that, in the case of trait anxiety, sex differences may reflect socialization contrasts in the perceived appropriateness of reporting anxious signs (Dweck & Bush, 1976; Ollendick, Matson, & Hessel, 1985). In line with previous studies, being female is related to higher scores on negative ways of thinking (Nolen-Hoeksema & Jackson, 2001). Negative thinking interceded the relationship between being a female and anxiety. This proposes that negative

thinking can be related to females' higher scores on anxiety (Chapell et al., 2005; Misra & McKean, 2000).

## **1.2 Attachment**

Attachment theorists state that an infant's initial relationship with a caregiver influences how that individual will approach his or her future relationships (Bowlby, 1969). Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) proposed three main styles of attachment taking into account emotional responses that were based on the Strange Situation Paradigm: Secure attachment, infants who, when upset, turn into the caregiver for support; avoidant attachment, infants who, when bothered, hint at separation; and anxious/ambivalent attachment, infants who, when troubled, display signs of protest towards the caregiver and seem furious and distraught.

Researchers propose that these early attachment styles stay powerful in a person's life well past initial stages (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969). Hazan and Shaver (1987) contend that the initial relationship during infancy can have incredible effect on an individual's attachment style in adult romantic relationships. Research suggests two fundamental dimensions, anxiety and avoidance, which can be utilized to express adult attachment style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). People with Avoidance attachment style attempt to stay autonomous from their romantic partners in terms of emotional intimacy (Ainsworth et al., 1978). People with Anxious attachment style stress over the ability or supportiveness of their accomplice amid times of need. Attachment theory suggests that individuals' experience inside close relationships shape their beliefs and desires for other relational interactions (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1980). Attachment serves as a vital source of security, giving comfort in emotionally problematic times in romantic relationship.

Attachment styles are important in romantic relationships, because of their part in forming people's practices with their partners (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992).

Young adulthood is often described in terms of the new statuses and roles that occur in this stage of life. The developmental reality is that individuals do not merely have their environment imposed on them, but interact with and shape the environments that influence them, contributing to a variety of pathways to adulthood (Hogan & Astone, 1986). During young adulthood attachment with romantic partners outrank attachment to parents and parents are replaced with partners as major attachment figures during adulthood (Doherty & Feeney, 2004). In adulthood, closeness to partners provides the primary secure base for individuals who explore the world. Leisure activities and work are important examples of exploration during this period (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Diamond (2001) suggests that both romantic love and sexual desire are key components of the attachment in adulthood period.

### **1.2.1 Attachment and relationship satisfaction**

The Theory of Attachment proposes that attachment drives relationship satisfaction; childhood experience is a basis for attachment styles (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Studies have demonstrated that attachment avoidance is connected with less relationship quality, and both anxious and avoidant attachments are connected with negative relationship procedures, for example, decreased trust, acceptance, and intimacy (Litke, 2007). It is normal that the endorsement of anxious relationship beliefs in romantic relationship is related to the hindrance of intimate behavior and lower relationship satisfaction (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The impact of attachment on relationship satisfaction is best seen as a dyadic impact. A dyadic methodology presumes that people's relationship will be affected by both their own and their



partner's attachment style (Mikulincer, Horesh, Levy-Shiff, Manovich, & Shalev, 1998). Observationally, results have upheld the causal part of attachment in relationship quality, as research has discovered that secure attachment predicts more prominent relationship steadiness and more prominent relationship satisfaction compared to insecure attachment (Collins, Cooper, Albino, & Allard, 2002; Mikulincer, Florian, Cohn, & Cohn, 2002).

Past attachment studies (Brennan & Shaver, 1992; Simpson, 1990) state that people with secure attachment style reported larger amounts of relationship satisfaction than insecure attached people. People enter adult romantic relationships with desires in view of past experience. An insecure adult who experienced unsatisfying relationships in infancy would expect similar results of adult relationships. Correspondingly, young people who experience secure and safe relationships could probably enter adulthood partnerships expecting a similar environment (Stackert & Bursik, 2003). Secure attachment has been connected with relationship improving methods, for example, hopeful beliefs about love, more intimacy, elevated amounts of commitment, and effective communication. More prominent avoidant attachment has been connected with techniques that undermine relationship quality, for example, the beliefs that love does not exist, the need to place limits on intimacy, low levels of commitment, and emotional control in communication (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). More noteworthy anxious attachment has additionally been connected with relationship disturbing courses of action, for example, the belief that relationships are intrusive behavior, destructive, low levels of commitment combined with powerful urge for commitment, and coercive communication styles (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

### **1.2.2 Attachment and life satisfaction**

Researchers have found that an individual's attachment style is a strong indicator of life satisfaction (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). Sumer and Knight (2001) found that secure attachment is connected with higher employment and life satisfaction. Secure attachment may prompt a steady and agreeable relation with others and make a chain of accomplishments in interpersonal relationships that enhance the individuals' examination of their life satisfaction. Studies have demonstrated that people with secure attachment style show higher life satisfaction and lower mental problems (Feeney, 1999). Level of life satisfaction and commitment to the persisting relationships were lower in people with avoidant attachment style (Simpson, 1990). Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) demonstrated that people with an avoidant attachment style show higher psychological issues and lower level of life satisfaction. People with anxious and avoidance attachment style were lower in life satisfaction (Bethany & Lorne, 2008). Kim, Carver, Deci, and Kasser (2008) and Hinnen, Sanderman, and Sprangers (2009) observed that attachment anxiety and avoidant corresponded contrarily with life satisfaction. Hwang, Johnston, and Smith (2009) examined psychosocial change in people with physical disabilities and discovered people with secure attachment style reported the most noteworthy well-being while those with avoidant attachment style reported the least level of life satisfaction.

### **1.2.3 Attachment and gender**

Researchers have observed sex differences in attachment style, based on the findings forms of attachment in infancy and during early childhood have basically the equal distribution in men and women (Giudice, 2009). However, researches in romantic attachment styles during adulthood have shown differences between men and women (Giudice, 2011; Schmitt et al., 2003). Some examinations stated that females'

attachment influences males' relationship satisfaction however not the other way around (Kachadourian, Fincham, & Davila, 2004). Further research found that anxious, not avoidant, attachment predicts partners' attachment style, paying little respect to partner sex (Feeney, 1999). Additionally, females' relationship satisfaction is adversely influenced by males' avoidance attachment, and men's relationship satisfaction is adversely influenced by women's anxious attachment (Kane et al., 2007). Research has likewise proposed that women are more adversely influenced by men's anxious than men's avoidant or secure attachment, while men are all the more adversely influenced by women's avoidant or anxious attachment than women's secure attachment (Mikulincer et al., 1998). In an investigation of dating couples, Kane and partners (2007) found that women's attachment anxiety and avoidance were fundamentally adversely connected with male partner's support discernments, and men's attachment avoidance however not anxiety was adversely connected with female partner's support recognitions.

### **1.3 Sexism**

Glick and Fiske (1996) proposed a theory that sexism toward women is typically conflicted, including hostile sexism as well as benevolent sexism. The hypothesis sets that the relations between the genders are described by the concurrence of male dominance in the public and personal reliance. From one perspective, men predominance in political, economic, and social establishments support hostile sexism, which portrays women as incompetent and inferior. Then again, sexual reproduction makes men and women intimate and much related with one another, this relationship making benevolent sexism, which portrays women as expecting to be protected. The important examination bolsters both positive and negative attitudes that serve to advocate unequal sex relations.

Glick and Fiske's (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Theory depicts two sorts of sexist attitudes that consolidate desires with respect to the parts to which men and women ought to follow. Hostile Sexism (HS) describes hostile feelings toward women who do not fit in with customary sex roles and challenge male force. In contrast, Benevolent Sexism (BS) characterizes subjectively kind however disparaging mentality that cast women as delicate creatures who should be protected by men (Glick et al., 2004). In spite of the fact that BS contains minding and uplifting disposition toward women, it strengthens male predominance by inferring women are weaker and ideally equipped to customary sex roles (Glick & Fiske, 1996). For instance, stereotypical traits credited to women (i.e., warm and sustaining) position women as more qualified for household roles, though qualities ascribed to men (i.e., free and confident) position men as ideally equipped for high status roles (Glick et al., 2004).

### **1.3.1 Sexism and relationship satisfaction**

Benevolent sexism guarantees women they will be protected in close relationships, which can have benefits for women. At the point when men support BS, they act all the more emphatically inside important relationship (Overall, Sibley, & Tan, 2011). These relationship advantages help to manage men's societal dominance in light of the fact that they strengthen women's emphasis on the relational area and incapacitate women's resistance to wider inequalities (Jost & Kay, 2005). Although, the relationship advantages guaranteed by benevolent belief systems may have costs for women inside the relationship when these guarantees are not conveyed. Case in point, when women who support BS are included with romantic partners who do not support BS, they have a tendency to be more hostile and resistant amid conflict,

apparently in light of the fact that their partners are not appreciating them in the way they expect (Overall et al., 2011).

As it is mentioned in Ambivalent Sexism Theory (Glick & Fiske, 1996), as part of BS there arises an intimacy need for women and men to depend on one another because of their interdependence which describes heterosexual relationships. While on one side HS is working to maintain and continue value on women's warmth and sensitivity, and also accepting power based on women's relationship (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Overall et al., 2011). However on the other side BS argues that women's positive interpersonal behaviors decrease women's capability from the perspective of outside the relationship domain (Hammond & Sibley, 2011). Accordingly, the individually positive way that BS shows romantic relationships supports women's typical and traditional roles and decreases women's opposition in terms of gender inequity (Jost & Kay, 2005).

Women with lower education have more strong BS orientations (Rudman & Heppen, 2003) those women believe that in all conditions they should care and support their husband's career and housework is only the job that they would do (Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009). Therefore, it is important to mention that when women agree and accept the praised position as a manager of the relationship they abandon the role of expert provider, and its associated privileges and power to man. Many researches have shown that BS is costly for women who are outside the relationship. Exposure towards BS attitudes decreases felt-competence of women and also their performance success, and leads their concentration to valuable interpersonal self-attributes, like being romantic or warm (Barreto, Ellemers, Piebinga, & Moya, 2010).

### **1.3.2 Sexism and Life Satisfaction**

Napier, Thorisdottir, and Jost (2010) reported a negative impact of HS on life satisfaction, which stayed critical when controlling for the impacts of BS and related connection. It suggests, in more egalitarian countries, forceful attitude towards women is not justifiable and causes ideological disharmony. Napier et al. (2010) reported that in countries with high sexual orientation imbalance and sexist attitudes, endorsing of BS was still decidedly correlated to life satisfaction. However HS was not likewise supported. Napier and Jost (2008) reported that benevolent sexism from the World Values Survey was associated to life satisfactions among men and women. Conversely, hostile sexism was adversely related to life satisfaction. Cowan and her colleagues (1998, as cited in Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001) found that females who show higher equality in their married life look to report greater life satisfaction than females whose marriages are traditional. Females try to reach higher satisfaction with their life generally while they are in a marriages relationship which their roles are not traditional. Equality among men and women in the marriages might manifest itself during the sharing of the responsibility of the care of the children and the household duties, beside the equal decision-making role of the family.

Research has shown that beliefs that explain and justify existing inequalities can often reduce negative affect, improve the positive affect, and are mostly related with increased life satisfaction and subjective health (Napier & Jost, 2008). By accepting that the social structure is unchangeable, BS might enhance life satisfaction for female and male (Jost & Hunyady, 2002).

### **1.3.3 Sexism and gender**

Men endorse HS at fundamentally greater levels than women (Glick et al., 2000). Conversely, Glick et al. (2000) mentioned that women have a tendency to reject HS, yet at times embrace BS at the same or to a greater degree than men, especially when they live in nations where men's HS is high. In spite of the fact that the theory behind ambivalent sexism toward women began from men's attendant fear of and requirement for women, women can likewise have hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes toward other women. The element structures of benevolent and hostile sexism are the same for both male and female members proposing that sexism toward women is transmitted socially to men and women (Glick et al., 2004). On the whole, men score higher on both BS and HS than women, which is not shocking given their stake in a generally sexist overwhelming role. Women at times outpoint men on BS in nations with the higher general sexism scores (Glick et al., 2000). There is evidence that HS and BS are differently endorsed by adolescent girls and boys as well as by adult men and women (De Lemus, Castillo, Moya, Padilla, & Ryan, 2008.) Lameiras, Rodriguez, and González (2004) stated that the different patterns of socialization for boys and girls, differences in power and evidence that BS and HS are differently endorsed by men and women, increase the possibility of gender differences in developing of sexist attitudes.

### **1.4 Relationship satisfaction**

Relationship satisfaction alludes to the “positive versus negative influence experienced in a relationship and is affected by the degree to which a partner satisfies the individual's most essential needs” (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998, p. 359). Relationship quality can be influenced by internal and external variables identified

with the couple, for example, attachment styles, demographic elements, personality, and emotional loneliness (Knoke, Burau, & Roehrl, 2010).

Whether called satisfaction, happiness, or quality, the build is normally conceptualized as a person's subjective assessment of the marriage or relationship, and is frequently measured as an individual variable (Anderson, Russell, & Schumm, 1983). It is presently broadly recognized that supportive and positive relationships are correlated to health, both mental and physical (Berkman, 1995) and that an absence of this sort of relationships is connected with poor physical and psychological well-being results and mortality (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Layton, & Brayne, 2010). Past research on the subject of relationship satisfaction has concentrated on different sections that have been demonstrated to be significant signs of relationship satisfaction. The majority of behaviors used to keep up relationships are prosocial, which help advance trust, relational closeness, and liking in the relationship. Five essential prosocial support systems are openness, positivity, assurances, task sharing and social networking. Research proposes that relationships that contain elevated amounts of prosocial maintenance methodologies have a tendency to be steady and committed, and individuals give off an impression of being more satisfied inside their relationship (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011). Gottman's (1994) research also demonstrated that satisfied couples are more inclined to discuss issues of conflicts, though dissatisfied couples are prone to minimize or stay away from clashes. The way partners oversee conflict is a superior indicator of relationship satisfaction, than the experience of the conflict itself (Guerrero, Anderson & Afifi, 2011).



### **1.4.1 Relationship satisfaction and gender**

Sex contrasts in relationship satisfaction were accounted for in numerous studies. Women were regularly less satisfied by relationships than men (Cunningham, Braiker, & Kelley, 1982; Fowers, 1991). According to these studies it is possible to be seen that gender differences impact couple's relationship satisfaction directly. Relationship satisfaction can be referred to the roles individuals play in the relationship, being comfortable in their roles has been expressed to have an effect on satisfaction. Men who accept society's idea of masculine norms were strongly related with women's relationship satisfaction (Burn & Ward, 2005). Female relationship satisfaction should be linked with partners' support and relational equality (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994). Women who notice themselves as greater on femininity are more satisfied in their relationships (Langis, Sabourin, Lussier, & Mathieu, 1994), however for men, a negative relationship has been detected between the self - perception of masculinity and relationship satisfaction (Burn & Ward, 2005).

One element that is sometimes overlooked while examining relationship satisfaction is the perception of each mate based upon their sex roles. Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) tested the effect of sex roles on relationship stability, which was defined by assessing the rate of satisfaction reported by each couple. This study discovered that the gender roles had a straight effect on stability and satisfaction of the relationship among couple. Rochlen and Mahalik (2004) tested women's awareness of their male partners' gender roles and the effect that awareness had on her relationship satisfaction. The result of study showed that women's perceptions were noticeably in contact with their level of relationship satisfaction (Rochlen & Mahalik, 2004).

## **1.5 Life satisfaction**

Subjective well-being has been described as being comprised of three associated, but differentiated elements: Positive affect, negative affect, and global life satisfaction (Lucas & Diener, 2000). Positive and negative affect relate to the long-term rates of positive feelings (e.g., joy) and negative feelings (e.g., sadness) encountered by different people. Global life satisfaction refers to a cognitive evaluation of the general quality of an individual's life, according to self-selected standards (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Life satisfaction, the cognitive part shown as a sense of health, is based on a person's perception of how happy they are about their life (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2005). Life satisfaction is used synonymously with happiness, subjective health or quality of life. Life satisfaction is shown as an indicator of total life quality, and is a necessary element of "positive mental health" (George, 1981). Life satisfaction shows the differences between individuals' expectations, hopes, and desires and what they reflect in their present state (Calman, 1984).

Some experts agree that life satisfaction is quite defended from changes because it is sometimes determined by genes (Diener et al., 1999). The quality of life is the result of a complicated interaction between the internal and external elements. Some others, also think that life satisfaction is affected by interaction of different elements, for example; Gibson (1986) underlines social interaction; Emmons and Diener (1985) concentrate on personality elements; and Willits and Crider (1988) believe that religion is another element that effects the level of life satisfaction.

To be able to achieve health and well-being there must be life satisfaction which is its indicator and it is in a close way related to mental and physical health (Melendez, Tomas, Oliver, & Navaro, 2009). Life satisfaction as a main issue that has to be studied, as life satisfaction is the basis of health and welfare and is parallel to increasing meaningful, quality and welfare of life (Ozer, 2000).

### **1.5.1 Life satisfaction and gender**

It might be expected that women have the least levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem because they have traditionally possessed less strength and less support than men, whereas in most cultures men possess more freedom. Nevertheless, a lot of studies have discovered only tiny differences between men and women in life satisfaction (Herzog, Rodgers, & Woodworth, 1982). Sex-related differences have been discovered in a number of global studies. For instance, Diener (1984) provided findings from a preview of thirteen studies that made a comparison between men and women on the level of subjective well-being and found out that there was a difference between two genders and male showed higher life satisfaction. A large number of researches have reported higher male satisfaction (Goldbeck, Schmitz, Besier, Herschbach, & Henrich, 2007). Women and men seem to derive life satisfaction from different sources. For instance, Diener and Fujita (1995, as cited in Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001) discovered that social resources (i.e., friends and family) are predictive of life satisfaction for both of males and females, but they are more expected of life satisfaction for females. Women's roles as the conservators of relation with family and friends lead to their relatively higher confidence on the social support. Elements that might be even more relevant to men's personal targets, such as influential connections and authority, were understood to be relevant to life satisfaction for men, but not for women. Pinquart and Sörensen (2000) found that the

social network combination was more likely to be related to women's life satisfaction, and social economic position was more necessary for life satisfaction and happiness among men. Empirical literature has recommended that women are more likely to be sensitive than men to functional ability and to the family and social relations (Wilhelmson, Andersson, Waern, & Allebeck, 2005). While men on the other hand are more likely to be sensitive than women to finances and economy.

### **1.6 Relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction**

There has been a large amount of studies proving that romantic relationships have many different correlates. Couples with more calm and satisfaction in their relationships seem to enjoy better life and health (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The maintenance of satisfied relationships is regarded as an important life goal for complete mental and physical health (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In general, the term 'satisfaction' shows that a necessity or a need has been satisfied. The ability to form satisfied relationships is a necessity of social adaptation among youth (Dresner & Grolnick, 1996). Continuation of marriage certainly depends on an important factor which is called relationship satisfaction, because when partners create a life full of satisfaction with each other marriage is more successful. Relationship is a feature that shows how good people are in terms of interacting with each other. In some definition it is considered as an essential part of general well-being and health in order to have more quality in life. Good interpersonal relationships are important to the general health because people need social relations to thrive (Luong, Charles & Fingerman, 2011).

A strong romantic relationship is a central component of overall well-being in adulthood (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). However, understanding the elements

underlying satisfying relationships is essential in understanding how a successful relationship can be reached, which can in turn help to the overall health of people and families. Low quality relationships might diminish a person's quality of life, and it is able to be a source of stress (Burman & Margolin, 1992). For specific purposes people get married, the reasons like having a meaningful life and seeking for a better quality in their own marital life (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). Different types of relationship lead individual's social life in different ways by influencing individual's behavior toward all people around. When the topic is satisfaction of relationships, concentration is on specific human behaviors that can influence relationship satisfaction (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Oishi, Diener, and Lucas (2007) found that people who experience the highest levels of life satisfaction are above average in terms of their relationships.

### **1.7 Current study**

The aim of this study was to investigate the roles of gender, trait anxiety, attachment and sexism on relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples who are studying in EMU. The aforementioned literature has been based on western cultures. Below, literature from Iran has been outlined, although, it is limited in content.

The main emphasize of this study is "Iranian nationalities" that makes it different form previous studies. Lack of study on sexism as well as comprehensive research on prediction of life and relationship satisfaction among Iranian couples caused to select Iranian couples as participants in this study. This kind of topic has been studied for different nationalities and different cultures but in terms of Iranian couple there have only been a few numbers of researches. People in Iran and their life style are

different from European and Americans countries in terms of religious backgrounds and their cultural, so then investigating the relation between these constructs among Iranian people seems necessary. Therefore this study aims to fill this gap in the mentioned area.

Most relevant to this study is women's status in Iran. Izadi, Ebrahimi and Zilaie (2010) findings demonstrated that highly educated women and women who worked outside the home expected that their husbands would cover family costs. Moreover, in regards to house duties and child raising, women expected participation from their husbands. Since the women are still expected to be in charge of family and children's households in Iranian families, the desire of participation in these subjects could be a conflict of expectations between couples in modern Iranian families. When Iranian couples travel abroad for any purpose, they face different lifestyle which is not followed in Iran. Mohseni (2000) conducted a survey on Iranians' sex related attitudes. Highest rate of people concurred that men were dominant and only a few percent agreed that men and women were equal.

In terms of attachment, one study in Iran, investigated the relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction by Raeisipoor (2013) found that there was a positive relationship between secure attachment style and sexual satisfaction and also relationship satisfaction. Additionally a positive relationship between insecure attachment style and marital dissatisfaction has been reported in Iranian couples (Besharat, 2003; Besharat & Ganji, 2012). Some studies in Iran demonstrated that individuals with secure attachment style, have less issues in marriage life, they have less interpersonal issues and are happier in contrast with individuals with avoidant attachment style who are conflicted (Besharat, 2001; Hamidi, 2007).

As for life and relationship satisfaction, in dimensions of family and marriage, physical and mental health is viewed as one of the components that impact satisfaction in life that have proportional effect on one another. Studies have demonstrated that there is relationship in physical and mental health with marital quality and satisfaction (Kouhi, Etemadi, & Fatehizadeh, 2015). Darvizeh and Kahaki (2008) investigated the relationship adjustment among married students in university, in their study they found a significant positive relationship between well-being and relationship adjustment. A comparative study on life satisfaction among Iranian men and women has been done by Ghahraman (2005). This study showed that there was no significant relationship between life satisfaction and gender and also other variables like occupational status, placement of life, and educational group. Kousha and Moheen (2004) conducted a study on relationship satisfaction among women that suggested married women's life satisfaction is directly related to their marriage satisfaction, relief experiences, and their employment. The results suggested that any factor to increase the educational or employment in women, directly effect on women's life satisfaction.

### **1.7.1 Hypotheses of the study**

Based on the literature outlined above, the study tested the following hypotheses:

1. High trait anxiety will be related to low relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction.
2. Secure attachment will predict better relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction.
3. High HS will be related to low relationship satisfaction.
4. High BS will be related to higher relationship satisfaction.

5. There is a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction.
6. There is difference between men and women in trait anxiety, sexism, attachment, life satisfaction and relationship satisfaction.



## Chapter 2

### METHOD

#### 2.1 Participants

This research used 77 Iranian married heterosexual couples as participants. Women aged between 21 and 42, ( $M = 29.45$ ,  $SD = 4.34$ ) and men aged between 25 and 48, ( $M = 33.31$ ,  $SD = 4.96$ ). All the couples were selected via a purposive sampling method. Iranian students' society in EMU provided required information to access Iranian couples who are currently studying in EMU. The participants were all students from different departments of different degree, undergraduate, masters, and PhD currently studying at EMU and living in North Cyprus. Their marriage duration was between 2 months and 22 years ( $M = 59.62$ ,  $SD = 55.98$ ) in months.

#### 2.2 Materials

Participants received a series of questionnaires in the following order:

*The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI)*, (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushen, Vagg & Jacobs, 1983). The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) is known as a self-report inventory consists of 20 items measuring trait anxiety (e.g. "I feel nervous and restless") and other 20 items to measuring state anxiety (e.g. "I feel secure"). This scale built on a 4-point Likert scale starting from 1 (Almost Never) to 4 (Almost Always) for trait anxiety items and from 1 (Not at all) to 4 (Very much so) for state anxiety items ( $\alpha = .93$ ). Higher scores represent higher level of anxiety. Only trait anxiety part of scale was used in this study, because trait anxiety is the focus of this

study. The scale was translated and adapted to Persian by Fathi and Dastani (2009) (English version of scale is available in appendix A).

*The revised version of Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory (ECRI-R)*, (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). ECRI-R is applied to evaluate adult attachment styles in terms of close relationships. This scale has 36 items for two different dimensions including attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety. Each item shows participants' level of feelings in close relationships based on 7-point Likert scale starting from 1 (disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). First 18 items are to evaluate attachment anxiety (e.g. "I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love") ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and the other 18 items evaluate attachment avoidance (e.g. "I find it easy to depend on romantic partners") ( $\alpha = .86$ ). Higher scores in attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance represent insecure attachment style and lower scores in attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance represent secured attachment style. The scale was translated and adapted to Persian by Panaghi, Maleki, Zabihzadeh, Poshtmashhadi, and Soltaninezhad (2014) (English version of scale is available in appendix B).

*Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 2001)*. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory measures participants' sexist attitudes concerning women. This scale consists of 22 items in total; first 11-items are to evaluate hostile sexism (e.g. "Women are too easily offended"). Items 7, 18, and 21 were reverse items which reduced reliability and were therefore deleted leading to Cronbach's alpha of .82. The other 11 items measure benevolent sexism (e.g. "Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility"). Items 3 and 6 were reverse items which reduced reliability and were deleted leading to Cronbach's alpha of .54. The items are rated based on a 6-point Likert scale starting from 0 (Strongly disagree) to 5

(Strongly agree). The higher scores represent higher hostile and benevolent sexism attitudes. The scale was translated and adapted to Persian by Sarvghad (2013) (English version of scale is available in appendix C).

*Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)*, (Spanier, 1976). This scale was used to assess the level of relationship satisfaction. The DAS contains four different subscales. First 13 items are to measure Dyadic consensus (e.g. “Goals, Handling family finances”, and “things believed important”) ( $\alpha = .93$ ). Second part of this scale which measures Dyadic Cohesion comprises 5 items, it actually measure frequency of positive relation and interactions between each couple. (e.g. “Laugh together”) ( $\alpha = .80$ ). Third part of this scale is Affectional Expression including 4 items, these items are to assess level of agreement on how affection is expressed. (e.g. “Being too tired for sex”) ( $\alpha = .71$ ). Final part of this scale including 10 items assess Dyadic Satisfaction, this part in fact measures perceived stability of their marriage and considers how fights are handled in their life (e.g. “How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight”) ( $\alpha = .86$ ). The reliability of the total scale was  $\alpha = .95$ . The scale was translated and adapted to Persian by Sanai (2008). The total scores of the scale was used to assess relationship satisfaction (English version of scale is available in appendix D).

*Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)*, (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS includes five items about life satisfaction (e.g. “In most ways my life is close to my ideal”). This scale is designed based on a 7-point Likert scale starting from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores in this scale indicates higher level of satisfaction with life ( $\alpha = .87$ ). The scale was translated and adapted to

Persian by Bayani and koocheky (2007) (English version of scale is available in appendix E).

### **2.3 Design**

This was a cross-sectional study, utilizing a questionnaire design. The Independent variables were gender, trait anxiety, ambivalence sexism, attachment and dependent variables were relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction.

### **2.4 Procedure**

After obtaining ethical approval from Ethics Committee of Psychology Department (See appendix F) Persian version of all the scales and also demographic information page were prepared in a package. The Iranian students' society was contacted in EMU and asked them to introduce couples among Iranian students to participate and answer the surveys of this study. The couples who were interested to participate this research, were given the informed consent to learn the aim of this study and the logic behind it. After they accepted to participate in this study and signed informed consent (See appendix G), both male and female filled all five questionnaires provided in Persian language. Each participant completed a set of questionnaires individually, not as a couple, couples were also instructed not to share their responses with one another. They also answered demographic information including age, education and their marriage duration. Participants received debrief form at the end (See appendix H). At the end data analysis was completed via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program version 21.

## Chapter 3

### RESULTS

The aim of this study was to find the relationship between trait anxiety, sexism and attachment style on relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among 77 Iranian couples in EMU. Means, standard deviations, *t* values and correlations between variables were represented separately for men and women in Table 1.

#### 3.1 Gender differences on variables

This study investigated whether gender has significant effect on trait anxiety, sexism, attachment, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction. An independent *t*-test was applied to examine the difference between men and women.

The results of the independent sample *t*-test showed that there was a significant difference between men and women in trait anxiety  $t(152) = 2.33, p = .02$ . The result indicated that women ( $M = 1.87, SD = .48$ ) showed more anxiety than men ( $M = 1.69, SD = .48$ ). Independent *t*-test showed that difference between men and women in hostile sexism were significantly different  $t(152) = -3.12, p = .00$  and men showed more hostile sexism attitude ( $M = 2.85, SD = .92$ ) than women ( $M = 2.37, SD = .98$ ). Difference between men and women in benevolent sexism was significant  $t(152) = -2.1, p = .04$  and men showed more benevolent sexism attitude ( $M = 2.78, SD = .65$ ) than women ( $M = 2.54, SD = .77$ ). Result of data showed that there was no significant difference between men and women in attachment anxiety  $t(152) = -.41, p = .68$  and also there was no significant difference between men and women in

attachment avoidance  $t(152) = -.21, p = .83$ . Independent t-test in this study showed that there was no significant difference between men and women in relationship satisfaction  $t(152) = .17, p = .86$ . The result indicated that there was no significant difference between men and women in life satisfaction  $t(152) = .90, p = .37$  (See Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics based on sex and correlations between variables

	Male	Female	T	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	value							
1. Trait anxiety	1.69 (.38)	1.87 (.48)	2.33*	—						
2. Hostile sexism	2.85 (.92)	2.37 (.98)	-3.12*	.14	—					
3. Benevolent sexism	2.78 (.65)	2.54 (.77)	-2.1*	.29	.43**	—				
4. Attachment anxiety	2.71 (.86)	2.65 (.97)	-.41	.25**	.32**	.28**	—			
5. Attachment avoidance	2.33 (.84)	2.30 (.84)	-.21	.37**	.19**	.16**	.56**	—		
6. Relationship satisfaction	3.75 (.65)	3.77 (.63)	.17	-.46**	-.31**	-.21*	-.63**	-.76**	—	
7. Life satisfaction	4.98 (1.24)	5.15 (1.09)	.90	-.65**	-.24**	-.11	-.28**	-.48**	.57**	—

Note: \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*  $p < .05$ .

### 3.2 What predicts relationship satisfaction?

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of trait anxiety, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and life satisfaction after controlling for the influence of age, gender, and marriage duration to predict relationship satisfaction among couples.

Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violations of the assumption of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. The correlation between independent variables was lower than .70. And the correlation between independent variable and dependent variable was higher than .30. The tolerance was higher than .10 and VIF was lower than 10.

Age, gender, and marriage duration were entered in step 1, explaining 0 % of the variance in relationship satisfaction. After entry of trait anxiety, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and life satisfaction in step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 70.3 %,  $F = (9, 144) = 37.92, p = .00$ . The six factors explained an additional 70.2 % of variance in relationship satisfaction, after controlling for age, gender, and marriage duration,  $R$  square change = .70,  $F$  change (6, 144) = 56.76,  $p = .00$ . In the final model, three factors were statistically significant, attachment anxiety ( $\beta = -.26, p = .00$ ), attachment avoidance ( $\beta = -.48, p = .00$ ) life satisfaction ( $\beta = .21, p = .00$ ) whereas, hostile sexism was marginally significant ( $\beta = -.10, p = .09$ ) (See Table 2).



Table 2. Hierarchical regression analysis for predicting relationship satisfaction

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SEb</i>	$\beta$
Step 1			
Gender	-.00	.12	-.00
Age	-.00	.02	-.03
Marriage duration	.00	.00	.05
Step 1 statistics:	$R^2 = .00$		
Step 2			
Gender	.08	.07	.06
Age	-.01	.01	-.09
Marriage duration	.00	.00	.03
Trait anxiety	-.09	.08	-.07
Hostile Sexism	-.06	.04	-.09 <sup>†</sup>
Benevolent Sexism	-.00	.05	-.00
Attachment anxiety	-.18	.04	-.26 <sup>*</sup>
Attachment avoidance	-.36	.04	-.48 <sup>*</sup>
Life satisfaction	.11	.04	.21 <sup>*</sup>
Step 2 statistics:	$R^2 = .70$		

Note: <sup>\*</sup> $p < .05$ , <sup>†</sup> $p = .09$

### 3.3 What predicts life satisfaction?

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of factors to predict life satisfaction among couples. Trait anxiety, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and relationship satisfaction after controlling for the influence of age, gender, and marriage duration.

Age, gender and marriage duration were entered in step 1, explaining 5 % of the variance in life satisfaction. After entry of trait anxiety, hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance and relationship satisfaction in step 2, the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 58 %,  $F = (9, 144) = 21,87$ ,  $p = .00$ . The six factors explained in additional 53 % of variance in life satisfaction, after controlling for age and gender, and marriage duration  $R$  square change = .53,  $F$  change  $(6, 144) = 30.22$ ,  $p = .00$ . In the final model, four factors were statistically significant, gender ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $p = .00$ ), trait anxiety ( $\beta = -.53$ ,  $p = .00$ ), relationship satisfaction ( $\beta = .30$ ,  $p = .00$ ) and relationship duration ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p = .03$ ) (See Table 3).

Table 3. Hierarchical regression analysis for predicting life satisfaction

Predictors	<i>B</i>	<i>SEb</i>	$\beta$
Step 1			
Gender	-.17	.22	-.07
Age	-.00	.03	-.00
Marriage duration	.00	.00	.20
Step 1 statistics:	$R^2 = .05$		
Step 2			
Gender	-.33	.16	-.14*
Age	-.01	.03	-.06
Marriage duration	.00	.00	.19*
Trait anxiety	-1.27	.15	-.53*
Hostile Sexism	.00	.08	-.00
Benevolent Sexism	-.01	.10	-.00
Attachment anxiety	.12	.09	-.09
Attachment avoidance	-.14	.12	-.10
Relationship satisfaction	.54	.18	.30*
Step 2 statistics:	$R^2 = .58$		

Note: \*  $p < .05$ .

### 3.4 Pathway analyses

#### 3.4.1 Relationship satisfaction as a mediator

Mediation analysis was used to find if the effect of attachment style on life satisfaction was mediated by relationship satisfaction.

### 3.4.1.1 Attachment anxiety as predictor

In step 1 the pathway between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction was significant,  $\beta = -.28$ ,  $p = .00$ . In step 2 attachment anxiety also predicted relationship satisfaction  $\beta = -.63$ ,  $p = .00$ . In step 3 the pathway between relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction was significant while controlling for attachment anxiety,  $\beta = .64$ ,  $p = .00$ . Controlling for relationship satisfaction the significant relationship between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction became non-significant,  $\beta = .12$ ,  $p = .15$ . A Sobel test was significant,  $Z = 6.16$ ,  $p = .00$  (See Figure 1).

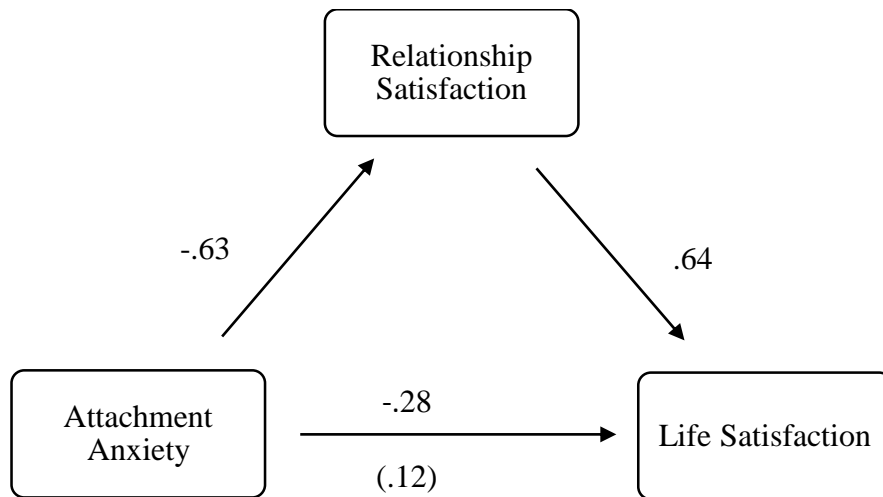


Figure 1. Standard regression coefficient for relationship between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction mediated by relationship satisfaction. (The standardize regression coefficient between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction, controlling for relationship satisfaction is in parentheses).

### 3.4.1.2 Attachment avoidance as predictor

In step 1 the pathway between attachment avoidance and life satisfaction was significant,  $\beta = -.48$ ,  $p = .00$ . In step 2 attachment avoidance also predicted relationship satisfaction  $\beta = -.76$ ,  $p = .00$ . In step 3 the pathway between relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction was significant while controlling for attachment avoidance,  $\beta = .49$ ,  $p = .00$ . Controlling for relationship satisfaction the significant

relationship between attachment avoidance and life satisfaction became non-significant,  $\beta = .11$ ,  $p = .30$ . A Sobel test was significant,  $Z = 4.49$ ,  $p = .00$  (See Figure 2).

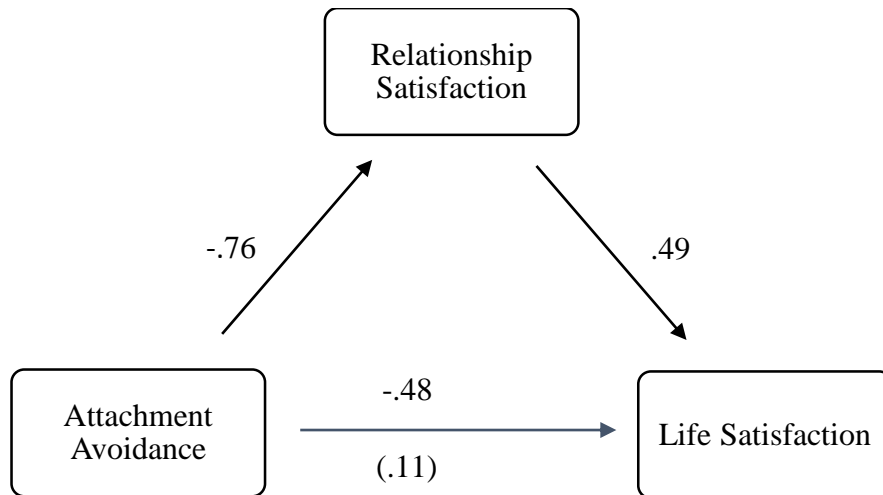


Figure 2. Standard regression coefficient for relationship between attachment avoidance and life satisfaction mediated by relationship satisfaction. (The standardize regression coefficient between attachment avoidance and life satisfaction, controlling for relationship satisfaction is in parentheses).

### 3.4.2 Life satisfaction as a mediator

The alternative causal sequence may also have been viable, such that the effect of attachment style on relationship satisfaction might be mediated by life satisfaction. To measure this a third mediation analysis was conducted.

#### 3.4.2.1 Attachment anxiety as predictor

In step 1 the pathway between attachment anxiety and relationship satisfaction was significant,  $\beta = -.63$ ,  $p = .00$ . In step 2 attachment anxiety also predicted life satisfaction  $\beta = -.28$   $p = .00$ . In step 3 the pathway between life satisfaction and relationship satisfaction was significant while controlling for attachment anxiety,  $\beta = .42$ ,  $p = .00$ . Controlling for life satisfaction the significant relationship between

attachment anxiety and relationship satisfaction became lessened in strength,  $\beta = -.51, p = .00$ . A Sobel test was significant,  $Z = 3.26, p = .00$ .

#### **3.4.2.2 Attachment avoidance as predictor**

In step 1 the pathway between attachment avoidance and relationship satisfaction was significant,  $\beta = -.76, p = .00$ . In step 2 attachment avoidance also predicted life satisfaction  $\beta = -.48, p = .00$ . In step 3 the pathway between life satisfaction and relationship satisfaction was significant while controlling for attachment avoidance,  $\beta = .27, p = .00$ . Controlling for life satisfaction the significant relationship between attachment avoidance and relationship satisfaction became lessened in strength,  $\beta = -.63, p = .00$ . A Sobel test was significant,  $Z = 3.75, p = .00$ .

Thus, attachment style indirectly affects relationship satisfaction via higher life satisfaction. However, relationship satisfaction appears to be a stronger mediator than life satisfaction. Indeed, the direct effect of attachment style on life satisfaction became non-significant when including relationship satisfaction in both analyses. In contrast, the direct effect of attachment style on life satisfaction was still significant when including relationship satisfaction in the mediation analyses.

## Chapter 4

### DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between trait anxiety, sexism and attachment style (anxious vs. avoidant) on relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples in EMU. Overall, based on the findings of this study the hypotheses were mostly supported. To sum up the results, it was found that trait anxiety was related to life satisfaction. When couples showed higher trait anxiety their life satisfaction was low. Women showed higher trait anxiety compared to men. Hostile Sexism (HS) showed a trend in predicting low relationship satisfaction, when couples showed higher HS they were less satisfied with their relationship however, HS was not related to life satisfaction. Benevolent Sexism (BS) was not a predictor of relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples, although men's BS and HS scores were higher than women. Additionally, secure attachment style (low avoidance and low anxious attachment) predicted better relationship satisfaction but it did not predict better life satisfaction among couples. No gender differences in attachment style were observed. The study also revealed that when couples were more satisfied with their relationship their life satisfaction was higher, however relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction rates did not differ among men and women. Finally, findings of the mediation analyses showed that attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance via higher relationship satisfaction affected life satisfaction, suggesting that insecure attachment styles decreases relationship satisfaction which in turn reduces life satisfaction.

The outcomes of this study were in line with others findings, showing that psychological symptom variables such as anxiety have an effect on various domains of life satisfaction (Frisch et al., 1992) which suggested that anxiety can be connected with low life satisfaction when individuals fail to reach needs in valued areas of life. Anxiety is related to significant distress, functional limitations and low health-related quality of life in numerous domains of life (Saarni et al., 2007). Diener and Fujita (1995) indicated that based on an individual's goals, various resources can predict an individual's well-being and satisfaction. Anxiety results in people feeling concern towards many different situations or events, this known to be as an important psychological issue because of its effects on people. Orientation, interpretation and evaluation of events by people are necessary factors that raise or lower anxiety (Bayram & Bilgel, 2008).

Results of studies among Iranian students have shown a negative relationship between trait anxiety and quality of life. As anxiety of students increased, their satisfaction with the quality of life decreased (Nasrabadi, Mazloun, Nesari, & Goudarzi, 2008). Additionally, in the current sample, life in university and being a student can generally create the basis of an environment that results in anxiety and stress. University students may experience anxiety situations caused by different stressful and/or exciting situations within the new environment of the university (Bayram & Bilgel, 2008) which might influence their relationship satisfaction and also life satisfaction.

As it was expected, results of the current study indicated that women's trait anxiety was higher than men. The findings are same as previous studies which have shown that females have a tendency to show more anxiety than males (Ostvar & Taghavi,



2006). As Asadi et al. (2010) found in their study with Iranian students females got meaningfully higher scores on anxiety than male students. According to Hosseinfard, Birashk, and Atefvahid (2005) the frequency of psychological problems among Iranian women is higher than men. Anxiety is one of the most prevalent symptoms among Iranian women and recent estimations showed about 50% of the 70-million Iranian population consists of women under social and family pressure (Faal-Kalkhoran, Bahrami, Farrokhi, Zeraati, & Tarahomi, 2011). Iranian women even if they work outside, are still the main person responsible for household chores (Rafatjah, 2012). Hence, women in Iranian family usually perceive stress because of responsibilities related to outside work, household duties and childcare (Rostami, Ghazinour, Nygren, & Richter, 2014). Researchers have shown that knowledge of coping strategies for anxiety can promote well-being and is effective in reducing behavioral and social problems. Higher anxiety among women than men may be due to the sex roles of women in social and interpersonal relationships and also social and cultural limitations (Asadi et al., 2010).

The results of this study supported the prevalent view of higher attachment security as contributing to higher experiences of couple satisfaction. Correlations between relationship and secure attachment of partners were confirmed in this research and previous researches. According to attachment theory, the endorsement of anxious relationship beliefs is related to the hindrance of intimate behavior and lower relationship satisfaction (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Results also supported studies conducted in Iran on attachment (Besharat, 2003; Besharat & Gangi, 2012; Raeisipoor, 2013). Securely attached individuals have a positive view of themselves and other people, they accept relationships positively and continue friendly

relationship (Mikulciner et al., 2002). These kinds of characteristics of secure attachment people can lead to strengthened relationships with others. Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, and Morelli (2000) found that secure attachment was more common than other attachment styles in most cultures and a certain cross-cultural variances have been found in adult attachment style. For instance, Germans were found to be higher on avoidance whereas Japanese and Israelis showed higher anxious/ambivalent attachment style.

In the current study also no significant difference was found between men and women in terms of attachment style. This is in line with research by Hamidi (2007) who found no significant difference between Iranian male and female students in attachment styles. A meta-analyses study by Giudice (2011) was conducted in relation to gender roles in attachment styles among a large sample of participants in numerous regions of the world, and revealed that regions except East Asia showed great gender difference and also culture differences in attachment styles between men and women. Schmitt et al. (2003) examined gender differences in adult attachment styles in 62 cultural regions. Findings showed that male scores were higher in avoidance attachment than women. However some countries such as Tanzania indicated women showed more avoidant than men.

In the field of sexism, as far as the researcher is aware there are close to no studies conducted in Iran. Therefore, findings related to sexism were supported by related Western studies. The role of sexist attitudes among Iranian couples who left their culture and religion who live in another country was thought to be relevant for relationship and life satisfaction in the current study. There is consensus on the fact that gender role attitudes are culture based and differ in each society (Yu & Xie,

2008). According to Overall et al. (2011) endorsement of HS causes greater dissatisfaction while going through problems, most likely because men who endorse HS deal with issues in aggression way and produce resistance in partners related to inequality. When couples are talking about their relationship issues and problems, men who support BS behave more emphatically (Overall et al., 2011). Similarly, it was found that endorsing HS can be predictive of lower relationship satisfaction.

According to Lameiras et al. (2004) the HS gender difference is easy to understand, because of men and women's different self-role identification. HS basically reflects men's prejudice toward women, and women are usually less sexist toward themselves. Many women with traditional beliefs especially in less-developed cultures typically think BS is a kind of respect and protective attitude toward them, so women can easily accept BS than HS. Traditional gender role norms are frequently highly accepted by men more than women because of this different role identification (Fisman et al., 2006). Therefore different gender roles in Iran is the main reason for the findings of men's higher HS compare to women. Iran is a religious country with different cultural principals, therefore even young women in Iran believe that they should be obedient and supporting to their husband. The husband is the breadwinner of the family and has higher authority within the family. Despite the fact that Iran is modernizing and becoming a part of universal sex roles and gender equality, patriarchy still dominates the majority of families (Moghadam, 1992).

Glick et al.'s (2000) research of 19 nations showed that sexism predicted gender inequality in different nations and in each country the level of males' level of sexism predicted females' level of sexism. In nations with higher level of gender inequality,

women showed higher level of benevolent sexism than men. In all countries, men showed significantly higher hostile sexism. Such cultural studies focused on individualism-collectivism, primarily comparing Western and East Asian samples. People in individualistic cultures might show weaker prescription to gender roles in relationships compared to people in collectivist societies because people are less interdependent and individualist countries show higher relational flexibility (Heine & Buchtel, 2009). Research suggested that developing countries show higher sexism attitudes and hence show more traditional gender role attitudes than more developed countries (Eastwick et al. 2006).

However, with the changing forms of Iranian families, women now are socially active and most of them are economically independent as they increase their education level, and work outside in all sections of the society. Although Islamic values and culture of Iran have shaped the way of life in the family and have supported the patriarchal family structure and male-domination in Iran. As a result, Iranian women today have more awareness about equality and their rights; so, they no longer accept the traditional principles and values that assume them in their families as a second-class member (Edalati & Redzuan, 2010), this can be why Iranian women in the current study were more informed about sexist attitudes and they did not accept HS and BS.

Findings also found that when individuals are more satisfied with their relationship and marriage they show higher life satisfaction. These results supported researches by Darvizeh and Kahaki (2008) in Iran. As it is known, increasing the level of happiness among people will cause an increase in marital life satisfaction. Happiness can directly affect couples' attitude and higher moods, this can cause a chain effect

such that it will cause positive interactions between couples. Under such situations couples look at problems as positive events. Consequently, by creating a proper marital life and positive emotions, couples are able to reach life satisfaction and to solve their problems easily. Satisfaction with relationship in marital life is an important factor in psychological health, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and success in education and also other achievement in life. In contrast, conflicts in the relationship among couples result in deficiency in their social relationships, and decline of cultural and family values among couples (Nourani, Jonaidy, Shakeri, & Mokhber, 2010). Cross cultural studies compared Korean and American adolescents in life satisfaction. Korean reported lower levels of life satisfaction, as well as their satisfaction with family, friend and living environment was lower compared to American adolescents (Park & Huebener, 2005). Additionally, a cross-cultural study related to American and Chinese people showed that Chinese life satisfaction scores were significantly lower than the life satisfaction of the American. The results of the study showed that students in environments with better chances and opportunities for individual control show higher level of life satisfaction (Shigehiro, 2006). These studies prove that life satisfaction may vary from culture to culture.

Moreover, the relationship between relationship and life satisfaction can be best understood in relation to attachment style. It was found that insecure attachment styles led to lower relationship satisfaction which in turn influenced lower life satisfaction. Similarly, anxious attachment style led to lowered life satisfaction which in turn influenced lower relationship satisfaction, this relationship was however not as strong as the latter. This is in line with previous research which shows that people with secure attachment style have more happiness, less interpersonal problems and

also less problems in their married life in compare to people with insecure attachment style (Besharat, 2001; Hamidi, 2007). Nickerson and Nagle (2005) also found individuals' attachment style is a major predictor of life satisfaction. Security of attachment might lead to a calm and satisfactory relation with others and it builds a series of success in interpersonal relationship which causes more life satisfaction for individuals. Hence, it is not surprising that research has revealed that people with a secure attachment are higher in life satisfaction (Feeney, 1999). But people with avoidant attachment are lower life satisfaction and commitment to the relationship (Simpson, 1990). Similarly, according to Sumer and Knight (2001) secure attachment style is related to satisfied and stable relations with others and creates an achievement in interpersonal relationship and increases people's evaluation of their life satisfaction. These findings were supported in the current study.

Regarding to the predictive power of socio demographic variables against psychological variables on life satisfaction, studies suggested that some predictors and patterns of life satisfaction differ for men and women (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). The results of current study did not show a difference between men and women in relationship satisfaction or life satisfaction. The non-significance differences between men and women in current study may be a result of high levels of education of the samples. Increasing educational and work opportunities as well as new values can have significantly affected the structure of gender roles. Education may affect subjective well-being by allowing individuals to make progress towards their goal or to adapt to changes.

Similar to most studies, this study had a few limitations. The data of this study were based on self-reports. Some couples may have been less sincere in their answers.

Participants should have answered the questions individually, however since the questionnaires were completed at participants' homes, reciprocal interactions between partners were likely and could not be avoided. In addition some couples may have reported in a socially desirable manner rather than given their sincere responses. Furthermore, the sample included a well-educated and also internet using sample that live in a culture different from their own. Their opinions and attitudes may reflect acculturation experiences and growth which inevitably occurs when living abroad. Therefore the results may not generalize to less educated couples belonging to a low socioeconomic group within Iran.

The limitations however also lend vital information on the implication and future direction for research within this field. Gender role attitudes are different within each society and culture. Therefore an adequate instrument to measure sexist attitudes should be designed. Although the instrument used was previously adapted and used in the Iranian culture (Sarvghad, 2013) there are still an insufficient number of studies that can validate the inventory. Considering the fact that gender role attitudes are culture oriented and because of the importance of these attitudes in couples' relationships, the development of a culture-specific questionnaire adapted to the Iranian culture is necessary. Having equal gender role attitudes can help to improve couples sexual function, better relationship with partner (Arends-toth & Vijer, 2007) develop their satisfaction in marital life and advancement of mental health (Schwarzwald, Koslowsky, & Izhak-Nir, 2008). It is therefore vital that future studies are conducted within the Iranian culture to assess the role of gender ideology as well as create ways in which we can enhance more gender equality in couples.

Family is an essential component in the life of people. The higher level of perceived support from family can increase level of life satisfaction and health. The support from family improves more self-confidence and helps people to resolve difficulties better (Mobasheri et al., 2014). Such different family structures might have been related to life satisfaction in the current study and therefore need to be examined in future studies. Not all internal and external factors that affect people's life satisfaction and relationship satisfaction were considered in this study. Therefore, we must be cautious while examining the findings of the study to consider and investigate other effective elements.

To conclude, this research sheds light on certain critical variables that can help to enhance Iranian couples' relationship and life satisfaction. Having secure attachment styles, more egalitarian gender ideologies and having lower trait anxiety all contribute to happier individuals and healthier relationships.



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## **APPENDICES**



## Appendix A: State-trait anxiety inventory

A number of statements which people have used to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then circle the appropriate number to the right of statement to indicate select to indicate how you **generally feel**. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer which seems to describe how you generally feel.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>Almost never always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Almost</b>
1. I feel pleasant	1	2	3	4
2. I feel nervous and restless	1	2	3	4
3. I feel satisfied with myself	1	2	3	4
4. I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be	1	2	3	4
5. I feel like a failure	1	2	3	4
6. I feel rested	1	2	3	4
7. I am calm, cool, and coecte	1	2	3	4
8. I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them	1	2	3	4
9. I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter.	1	2	3	4

10. I am happy	1	2	3	4
11. I have disturbing thoughts	1	2	3	4
12. I lack self-confidence	1	2	3	4
13. I feel secure	1	2	3	4
14. I make decisions easily	1	2	3	4
15. I feel inadequate	1	2	3	4
16. I am content	1	2	3	4
17. some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me	1	2	3	4
18. I take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind	1	2	3	4
19. I am a steady person	1	2	3	4
20. I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests	1	2	3	4

## Appendix B: Experience in Close Relationship- Revised

The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by circling a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

Question	1= strongly disagree ..... 7= strongly agree						
1 I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love. I often worry that my partner will not want to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2 stay with me I often worry that my partner doesn't really love	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3 me. I worry that romantic partners won't care about	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4 me as much as I care about them I often wish that my partner's feelings for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5 were as strong as my feelings for him or her	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6 I worry a lot about my relationships. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7 or she might become interested in someone else When I show my feelings for romantic partners,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9 I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10 My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11 I do not often worry about being abandoned. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12 close as I would like Sometimes romantic partners change their	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13 feelings about me for no apparent reason My desire to be very close sometimes scares	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14 people away.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to						
15	know me, he or she won't like who I really am.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	It makes me mad that I don't get the affection						
16	and support I need from my partner	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
17	I worry that I won't measure up to other people.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	My partner only seems to notice me when I'm						
18	angry.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep						
19	down.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts						
20	and feelings with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on						
21	romantic partner	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I am very comfortable being close to romantic						
22	partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic						
23	partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
24	I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner						
25	wants to be very close	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I find it relatively easy to get close to my						
26	partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	It's not difficult for me to get close to my						
27	partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I usually discuss my problems and concerns						
28	with my partnet	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times						
29	of need.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
30	I tell my partner just about everything.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
31	I talk things over with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
32	I am nervous when partners get too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	I feel comfortable depending on romantic						
33	partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
34	I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
	It's easy for me to be affectionate with my						
35	partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

36 My partner really understands me and my needs. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## Appendix C: The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the scale below:

- 0 Disagree strongly
- 1 disagree somewhat
- 2 disagree slightly
- 3 agree slightly
- 4 agree somewhat
- 5 agree strongly

1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.
2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality."
3. In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men.
4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts as being sexist.
5. Women are too easily offended.
6. People are not truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the other sex.
7. Feminists are seeking for women to have more power than men.
8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.
9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.
10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.

11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.
12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.
13. Men are incomplete without women.
14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.
15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.
16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.
17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.
18. Many women get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.
19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.
20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well-being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.
21. Feminists are making unreasonable demands of men.
22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

## Appendix D: Dyadic adjustment scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occa- sionally Disagree	Fre- quently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
1. Handling family finances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Matters of recreation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Religious matters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Demonstrations of affection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Sex relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Conventuality (correct or proper behavior)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Philosophy of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Amount of time spent together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Making major decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Household tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Leisure time interests and activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Career decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occa- sionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. In general, how often do you think that things between	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



you and your partner are going well?						
19. Do you confide in your mate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Do you ever regret that you married? ( <i>or lived together</i> )	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves?"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Every Day	Almost Every Day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
23. Do you kiss your mate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	All of them	Most of them	None of them	Very few of them	None of them
24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Laugh together	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Calmly discuss something	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Work together on a project	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometime disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no)

	Yes	No
29. Being too tired for sex.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Not showing love.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. The circles on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please fill in the circle which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely    Fairly    A Little    Happy    Very    Extremely    Perfect  
Unhappy    Unhappy    Unhappy                      Happy    Happy

32. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

- I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and *would go to almost any length* to see that it does.
- I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do all I can* to see that it does.
- I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do my fair share* to see that it does.
- It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I can't do much more than I am doing now* to help it succeed.
- It would be nice if it succeeded, but I *refuse to do any more than I am doing now* to keep the relationship going.
- My relationship can never succeed, and *there is no more that I can do* to keep the relationship going.

## Appendix E: Satisfaction with Life Scale

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding. The 7-point scale is as follows:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = slightly disagree

4 = neither agree nor disagree

5 = slightly agree

6 = agree

7 = strongly agree

\_\_\_ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

\_\_\_ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

\_\_\_ 3. I am satisfied with my life.

\_\_\_ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

\_\_\_ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

## Appendix F: Ethics approval letter



Eastern  
Mediterranean  
University

Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

The Department of Psychology  
Eastern Mediterranean University  
Research & Ethics Committee  
Cigir Kalfaoglu – Acting Chairperson  
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Ref Code: 15/1-23

Date: 16.3.2015

Dear Sara Salehi,

Your ethics application entitled “*Relationship between trait anxiety, attachment, sexism, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples*” has been approved by the ethics committee on 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2015.

If any changes to the study described in the application or supporting documentation is necessary, you must notify the committee and may be required to make a resubmission of the application. This approval is valid for one year

Yours sincerely,

Assistant Prof. Dr. Cigir Kalfaoglu  
On Behalf of the Research & Ethics Committee  
Psychology Department  
Eastern Mediterranean University

## Appendix G: Informed consent

### The relationship between trait anxiety, attachment, sexism, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples

Dear participant,

Please take a few minutes to read the following information on this research carefully before you agree to participate. **If at any time you have a question regarding the study, please feel free to ask the researcher who will provide more information.**

This study is being conducted by **Sabrieh Salehi** under the supervision of **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Senel Husnu Raman**. It aims to **investigate relationship between trait anxiety, attachment, sexism, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples**. The study should take no more than 40 minutes to complete.

Of course, you are not obliged to participate in this research and are free to refuse to participate. You may also withdraw from the study at any point without giving any reason. In this case, all of your responses will be destroyed and omitted from the research. If you agree to participate in and complete the study, all responses and questionnaires will be treated confidentially. Your name and identifying information will be kept securely and separately from the rest of your questionnaire. Data will be stored for a maximum of six years after the study. Once the data is analyzed, a report of the findings may be submitted for publication.

#### CONSENT FORM

**Research Title: The relationship between trait anxiety, attachment, sexism, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples.**

**Name of Researchers:**

**Sabrieh Salehi. Sari\_salehi@yahoo.com**

**Please tick the boxes to confirm that you agree to each statement.**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for this study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.
3. I agree to take part in this study.

Name/ID of Participant

Date

Signature

*If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study, please inform Dr. Şenel Husnu Raman, Chair of the Psychology Research & Ethics Committee at Eastern Mediterranean University, in writing, providing a detailed account of your concern (shenelhusnu.raman@emu.edu.tr).*

## Appendix H: Debrief form

### Participant Debrief form

Thank you very much for participating in this study with the title **the relationship between trait anxiety, attachment, sexism, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples**. Please take a few more minutes to read the following information, which will explain the aims and purpose of the research further. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the researcher whose contact details are stated below.

This research is investigation **the role of gender, trait anxiety, attachment and sexism on relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples**.

Previous researches have shown that **each variable is positively correlated with relationship satisfaction**. We are extending this work to see if **there is a positive relationship among trait anxiety, attachment, sexism, relationship satisfaction and life satisfaction among Iranian couples**.

If during the completion of this questionnaire you felt any distress or discomfort and you would like to speak to a professional, please contact **(PDRAM, “Psychological Counselling, Guidance & Research Center”)**, <http://pdram.emu.edu.tr>, **+90 392 630 2251**). You may also contact the researcher **(Sabrieh Salehi, sari\_salehi@yahoo.com)** or the research supervisor **(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Senel Husnu Raman, [shenelhusnu.raman@emu.edu.tr](mailto:shenelhusnu.raman@emu.edu.tr))** with any questions.

Once again thank you for your valuable contribution to this research. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Sabrieh salehi