

SUBJECTIVE LONELINESS, WELL-BEING AND MARITAL SATISFACTION IN COUPLES WITH DIFFERENT ATTACHMENT STYLES

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Summary. The basic principle of attachment theory is the assumption that early childhood attachment relationships with significant others (primary attachment figure) are the pattern for the later romantic relationships in adulthood (with a romantic partner). Four questionnaire methods were applied to diagnose the quality of relationships in adult life: Plopa's Attachment Styles Questionnaire (KSM); Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) in Juczyński adaptation, de Jong Gierveld Loneliness Scale (DJGLS) and Pospiszył's Marital Happiness Questionnaire (KSM). 250 married couples with different marital experience were subjected. The study proved the existence of statistical relationships between the secure attachment styles, well-being, loneliness and the marital satisfaction. The research confirmed the mediating impact of loneliness and psychological well-being on the marital satisfaction of adults with different attachment styles. As it turned out, the marital satisfaction can be seriously lessened by loneliness in safely attached adults and well-being can enhance this satisfaction in insecurely attached adults.

Key words: attachment styles, marital satisfaction, loneliness, well-being

Introduction

One of the essential human needs is a need to create close relationship with another person. Therefore, the human being has always revealed a natural tendency towards establishing relationships with other people. Developing attachment relationship, determined both biologically and socially, is a fundamental motivation factor in the process of establishing and developing identity, it also affects a sense of life and the level of self-esteem from an early age (Berscheid, 1985; Bowlby, 1988; Aronson, 2014). Bowlby emphasised that attachment patterns interact with individuals' current circumstances to create differences in adaptation and functioning (Bowlby, 1988).

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Adult attachment and marital satisfaction

For many years, the research on the relationships conducted from the perspective of the attachment theory has shown the dynamic character of partnerships that are influenced by conflicts and crises and indicates who or what kind of relationships are likely to encounter such problems. Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first to emphasise that a partner in a romantic relationship is an attachment figure, they also distinguished three attachment styles: secure, anxious-ambivalent and avoidant. The behavioural patterns acquired in childhood reveal exceptional permanence throughout people's lifetime (Weiss, 1973, 2001; Bowlby, 1979, 2007). Nevertheless, Bowlby also assumed that the attachment system is active over the whole life span and contributes to the formation and maintenance of relational bonds in adulthood (Bowlby, 1979, p. 129).

Thus the attachment styles proved to be changeable. Moreover, in different relationships people reveal various levels of security (Baldwin, Fehr, 1995; Davila, Burge, Hammen, 1997; Davila, Karney, Bradbury, 1999). The above mentioned research suggests that certain factors can indirectly affect a sense of relationship satisfaction in people with various attachment styles because there is a big potential in people due to which they can become more secure in their relationships (Davila, Bradbury, 2001).

The association between attachment style and marital satisfaction has been documented by many researchers (Hazan, Shaver, 1990; Feeney, Noller, Callan, 1994; Mikulincer et al., 2002; Plopa, 2007)¹. The research showed that secure attachment has positive correlations with marital satisfaction, adjustment and happiness (depending on what researchers called it), whereas the insecure attachment styles show negative correlations with the indicated factors. As the conducted research suggests, secure attachment acts as a buffer against numerous difficulties that may occur in adult relationships (Mikulincer, Shaver, 2007). Taking into consideration the insecure attachment, it is suggested that it can decrease the likelihood of spousal happiness and at the same time it can increase the possibility of unhappy spouses staying married (Kirkpatrick, Davis, 1994; Davila, Bradbury, 2001). The insecure attachment frequently entails certain negative consequences for a partner, they can be of cognitive (Murray, Holmes, Griffin, 1996), emotional (Davila, Bradbury, Fincham, 1998) and behavioural nature (Kobak, Hazan, 1991; Feeney, Noller, Callan, 1994). Furthermore, the spouses remaining in insecurely attached marriages are at high risk of chronically unhappy relationships (Davila, Bradbury, 2001).

¹ See also: Kobak, Sceery, 1988; Feeney, Kirkpatrick, 1996; Nurmi et al., 1997; Meyers, Landsberger, 2002; DiTommaso et al., 2003; Banse, 2004; Deniz, Hamarta, Ari, 2005; Montevalia, Garcia-Martinez, 2005; Lowyck et al., 2008; McCarthy, Maughan, 2010.

Loneliness, marital satisfaction and well-being

The main consequence of the lack of possibility of building lasting stable relationships with others, particularly with a partner in a romantic relationship is subjective loneliness. This feeling can be a constitutive element of human life which is defined as an existential feeling (Peplau, Perlman, 1982; Śliwak, Zarzycka, Dziduch 2011). Nevertheless, the loneliness experienced in close relationships is mainly of negative emotional nature and depends on the individual sensitivity and anxiety level stemming from unsatisfied feeling or inadequacy of the individual's current bonds (Weiss, 1973; Rembowski, 1992; Olearczyk, 2008; Lindboe, 2014).

The definitions of loneliness emphasise the following aspects: lasting emotional distress evoked when an individual feels alienated, not understood or rejected by others (Rook, 1984), subjectively experienced state of discrepancy between individual needs and expectations and the actual quantity and quality of interpersonal relationships (Peplau, Perlman, 1982; van Baarsen et al., 2001), lack of sense of social integration and possibility of building emotional closeness (Erozkan, 2011).

Loneliness has appeared to be the most common distracting factor of marital satisfaction (Janicka, 2004; Pielage, Luteijn, Arrindell, 2005). Many researchers have examined the relation between insecure attachment and loneliness following Robert Weiss research on the lack of the ability to attach (Weiss, 1973; Hazan, Shaver, 1990; Erozkan, 2011; Lindboe, 2014). In the research on elderly people's relationships stronger emotional loneliness was observed in couples who had health problems, received emotional support occasionally and who were in disagreement (de Jong Gierveld et al., 2009). In a similar research on the Polish sample, husbands and wives dissatisfied with their marriage felt more lonely in comparison with those who were satisfied (Janicka, 2004). In this research the sense of loneliness grew along with their marital dissatisfaction. The extensive research conducted by Jenny de Jong Gierveld et al. (2009) indicates that the level of loneliness in individuals with insecure attachment styles coexisted along with conflict, low sexual activity, low level of satisfactory conversations and spouse emotional support.

The second important factor in the present study is the subjective well-being which consists of three components: satisfaction with life, high level of positive and low level of negative feelings. Well-being is often considered as highly subjective (Czapiński, 2008) and regarded as a component of the quality of life (Jaracz, 2001; Juczyński, 2001). Unlike the loneliness, well-being proved to be a supportive factor in an intimate partner bond (Waite, Gallagher, 2000), particularly in marriages with secure attachment (Bradley, Cafferty, 2001). Generally, emotional support was associated with higher well-being in individuals with higher level of secure attachment (Mikulincer, Shaver, 2007), whereas greater dismissiveness was associated with lower well-being at ambivalently attached adults (Kobak, Sceery, 1988; Consedine, Magai, 2003). The lower level of well-being occurred also when the attachment relationship was viewed as threatened, which caused an increase in the distress symptoms and contributed to marital difficulties (Kobak, Ruckdeschel, Hazan, 1994).

Indirect pathways between adult attachment and marital satisfaction

The research on many factors affecting the sense of satisfaction in relationships gradually led the researchers to the conclusion that there is a broader context of adult attachment which shows associations with it and marital satisfaction. It was a starting point for the research into factors that mediate or moderate previously mentioned satisfaction and attachment styles among adults. Numerous research findings indicated variables that are situation-specific. The research conducted relatively recently has undertaken a more complex task in which the researchers' objective was to establish relatively stable, global and distal factors intermediating adult attachment and marital satisfaction. Two following groups of factors were taken into consideration – psychological distress (also as a the form of depression) and social skills and support. Both were highlighted in three following studies.

In the first study by DiTommaso et al. (2003) 183 university students were examined in terms of their attachment style, level of loneliness and social skills. As for research statistics, the models of statistical analysis of correlations and regressions were used and they indicated that attachment security and social skills were significantly related to loneliness. In particular, securely attached individuals had a higher level of social skills and lower level of loneliness. The regression analyses indicated that the link between secure and fearful attachment, and social loneliness was partly mediated by social skills. In the second study, Erozkan (2011) investigated relationships between attachment, loneliness and depression in a group of 652 college undergraduates by means of the statistical model analysis of correlation and regression. The insecure attachment styles such as fearful, preoccupied and dismissing were positively correlated to higher level of loneliness and depression. At the same time, the secure attachment style was negatively correlated to depression and loneliness showing securely attached adults as those with high self-esteem and trusting.

Both factors – distress and social support – were taken into consideration in another study conducted by Meyers and Landsberger (2002). This time the research group consisted of seventy-three married women. The research analysed indirect associations between attachment styles, marital satisfaction, psychological distress and social support. For the needs of the analysis the mediation and moderation methods using the regression analysis were applied. The results confirmed a direct association between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction. They also indicated that psychological distress mediated the association between secure attachment style and marital satisfaction. Securely attached adults were less exposed to experiencing psychological distress, but the presence of distress completely cancelled out the positive relation between secure attachment and marital satisfaction. The second factor – social support – mediated the relation between avoidant attachment and marital satisfaction. No clear relation between ambivalent attachment and marital satisfaction was observed.

Aim of the study

In the present, cross-sectional study, the direct association between three attachment styles (secure, avoidant, ambivalent) and marital satisfaction is explored empirically in the first stage. Then, the indirect associations between two mentioned factors are investigated. At this stage it was examined whether psychological characteristics (loneliness and well-being) mediate the relation between adult attachment and marital satisfaction. In mediation the independent variable (attachment style) must be significantly associated with a mediating variable (loneliness and well-being), and the mediating variables must be significantly associated with the dependent variable (marital satisfaction) (Baron, Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2009; Hayes, 2013).

For the purposes of this study a multivariate framework was adopted. This framework is based on previous research which focused on subsets of these factors (Peplau, Perlman, 1982; Hazan, Shaver, 1987, 1990; Davila, Bradbury, 2001; de Jong Gierveld et al., 2009) as well as on the research conducted by Meyers and Landberger (2002) who created a similar multivariate model analysis. In addition, a community-based sample of married couples (men and women) was used to determine the indirect pathways in which adult attachment style was related to relationship satisfaction in long-term intimate marriages. This strategy was created in contrast to the past research that had relied on samples of college undergraduates (DiTommaso et al., 2003; Erozkan, 2011).

On the basis of the presented theoretical framework, four hypotheses related to the functioning of marital satisfaction were formulated.

Hypothesis 1. *An attachment style of each spouse is related to his/her sense of marital happiness.* Despite proving this thesis in the previous research (e.g., Mikulincer, Shaver, 2007), it was necessary to confirm these conspicuous basics to allow for the possibility of conducting further mediating analyses.

Hypothesis 2. *Attachment style is related to the feeling of loneliness, and satisfaction with life.* The literature presents rich evidence that proves the existence of relationships between these variables (discussed earlier in the article). However, most of the conducted research focused merely on subsets of these factors. Determining the existence of correlations between indicated variables is an essential condition for developing further models of mediation (Baron, Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2009; Hayes, 2013).

Hypothesis 3. *The feeling of loneliness is a mediator between the attachment style and the level of marital happiness.*

Hypothesis 4. *Satisfaction with life is a significant mediator between the attachment style and the level of marital happiness.*

Both loneliness and satisfaction with life (well-being)² seemed two intervening variables between the attachment styles of adult individuals and a sense of marital satisfaction. Although the relationships of these factors with attachment styles were proved earlier, these two factors have not been examined as mediators so far.

² In the article the term 'satisfaction with life' is also called well-being (see: Juczyński, 2001) to avoid confusing it with 'marital satisfaction'.

Individual differences resulting from the self-image and relationships with others constitute the basis of individual internal working models (Bowlby, 1988), and their dynamics proves the possibility of changes occurring in the attachment styles and the marital satisfaction.

Method

Sample

The research sample consisted of two hundred fifty married couples. That means that we collected about 600 questionnaires, but eventually we decided to select 250 couples: 250 men (husbands) and 250 women (wives) who completed the questionnaires (fully filled responses). The mean age of men in the conducted research was 40.58 ($SD = 11.21$) and women 38.16 ($SD = 10.94$). The average length of marriage was 13.62 years ($SD = 11.62$). Majority of men were blue-collar workers (39.6%), while white collar workers accounted for 19.2%, 9.2% of men were specialist professionals, 2.4% accounted for men at supervisory positions. Approximately 12.8% of men were retired (because of age or illness/disability). As for the women, 50% were white-collar workers, 14.4% were retired (because of age or illness/disability), and women conducting their own business activity accounted for 10.4%, 4% were specialist professionals, and 1.6% of them worked at supervisory positions.

Instruments

The Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ) designed by Mieczysław Plopa (2008) based on Cindy Hazan and Philip Shaver theory (1987) assumes the existence of the three attachment styles. The questionnaire's purpose is to measure an independent variable i.e. attachment style in terms of its three measurements: secure, ambivalent and avoidant. ASQ is used to measure the style of attachment to his/her partner in the current marriage. Responses are given with the use of the Lickert 7-point grading scale and they range from (1) *totally disagree with it* to (7) *totally agree with the statement*. Each scale contains of 8 statements (all scales include 24 statements), so the raw results are within 8-56 points, which are then transformed into standard score (sten). In the Cronbach's alpha reliability test particular scored as follows: secure style $\alpha = 0.91$, ambivalent style $\alpha = 0.78$, avoidant style 0.80. Discrimination power of the specific scales ranged from 0.25 (statement no. 17) to 0.83 (statement no. 4). In the study we can obtain a constellation of different styles, so each of the subjects is described using three indicators that determine the intensity of the three attachment styles. Several varieties of content validity served as the assessment of the validity of ASQ, the study of the internal structure of the test (intercorrelation of the scales), the criterion validity (f.e.: satisfaction with marriage, years of marriage, the quality of communication in marriage) and a method of checking intergroup differences (Plopa, 2008).

The Marital Happiness Questionnaire (MHQ) designed by Kazimierz Pospiszyl (1991) based on the questionnaire designed by H. Eysenck and G. Wilson (1979).

The tool is to estimate the level of the changeable variable i.e. marital happiness, frequently referred to as marital satisfaction. The questionnaire does not include separate scales, there is only one general score for each investigated individual. The questionnaire consists of 23 items concerning various aspects of marital life. These are closed questions with different scales of response (between 3 and 6 possible answers). Questions 1-13 concern the frequency of activities undertaken by both spouses (f.e.: common tasks, ways of leisure, resolving marital conflicts). Questions 14-22 relate to the degree of compatibility of spouses views concerning various aspects of marital life measured from (1) *never* to (7) *always*. Discriminatory power of questions calculated with phi point tetraserial correlation coefficient ranged from 0.22 (question 15) to 0.96 (Question 19). Test reliability calculated with the use of estimation of internal consistency was $\alpha = 0.96$.

The scale for measuring subjective loneliness (DJGLS) was designed by Jenny de Jong Gierveld and Frans Kamphuis (1985). Its Polish adaptation was made by Grygiel et al. (2012). The scale is principally one-dimensional and measures generalised feeling of loneliness (mediating variable). This tool consists of 11 statements. Answers are placed on a five point scale and range from (1) *definitely not* to (5) *definitely yes*. The scale has a high level of reliability and homogeneity: Cronach's alpha inner consistency coefficient $\alpha = 0.89$. According to the assumptions DJGLS scale correlate with UCLA loneliness scale ($r = 0.82$), Lubben Social Networks – LSNs ($r = -0.54$), Rosenberg self-esteem scale – SES ($r = -0.56$), Beck Depression Inventory – BDI ($R = 0.46$), Depression scale CES-D ($r = 0.54$) and four subscales of Berlin Social Support Scale – BSSS: available emotional support ($r = -0.6$), accessible instrumental support ($r = -0.64$), the demand for support ($r = -0.11$), and the search for support ($r = -0.30$) (Grygiel et al., 2012).

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) adapted by Juczyński (2001). The scale is used for measurement of satisfaction with life (well-being) as a mediating variable in the present study. The satisfaction with life factor is an outcome of current subjective assessment of life satisfaction (related to mood and feelings), thus it can be considered as a situational factor. The scale is a short method consisting of five items assessed in seven-item scale. An examined individual is asked to give his/her opinion on each statement by assessing to what degree it is related to his/her past and his/her current life by selecting answers ranging from (1) *I totally disagree* to (7) *I definitely agree*. The tool reliability was tested by Łaguna (2012), in her research the Cronach's alpha inner stability coefficient α reached 0.78.

Results

The means and standard deviations for study variables as well as their intercorrelations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables
($N = 500$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Secure attachment	–					42	10.02
2. Ambivalent attachment	-0.24	–				26	9.94
3. Avoidant attachment	-0.60	0.48	–			20	9.47
4. Marital satisfaction	0.67	-0.31	-0.60	–		104	20.12
5. Well-being	0.47	-0.18	-0.34	0.57	–	24	6.43
6. Loneliness	-0.47	0.22	0.42	-0.45	-0.46	25	8.25

All correlation coefficients are significant at the $p < 0.001$ level

Bivariate correlations confirmed a direct relation between each attachment style and marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was significantly associated with levels of secure attachment ($r = 0.67$; $p < 0.001$), ambivalent attachment ($r = -0.31$; $p < 0.001$) and avoidant attachment ($r = -0.60$; $p < 0.001$). Likewise, correlations confirmed direct relations between attachment styles and two intervening variables loneliness and well-being, as well as significant associations between marital satisfaction and those two intervening variables (all of them $p < 0.001$). These basic results meet the assumptions of mediation (Baron, Kenny, 1986). For each attachment style, mediation would be indicated by (a) significant associations between the attachment style ratings and the mediating variables, (b) significant associations between the mediating variables and the marital satisfaction, and (c) the loss of significance of a previously significant associations between attachment style and the marital satisfaction when controlling the two mediators – loneliness and well-being. Eventually, the last step of the mediation (c) can be carried out by reducing the effect strength of the independent variable on the dependent variable (partial mediation).

In order to analyse the path in which adult attachment style affects marital satisfaction, the analyses of mediation were conducted with the use of PROCESS, the macro developed for SPSS statistical package (Hayes, 2013). The results of these analyses are summarized in graphs below. Figures 1 to 6 present data for the analyses focusing on the attachment styles and the two mediators respectively: (1) secure attachment and loneliness, (2) secure attachment and well-being, (3) ambivalent attachment and loneliness, (4) ambivalent attachment and well-being, (5) avoidant attachment and loneliness, (6) avoidant attachment and well-being.

The obtained results indicated that loneliness significantly mediated the relation between secure attachment and marital satisfaction. The beta value of the mentioned relation was 0.59; $p < 0.001$. The presented association was attenuated after the implementation of mediator (loneliness): $\beta = -0.18$; $SE = 0.09$; $t = -4.85$; $p < 0.001$. This mediation model proved to be statistically significant $R^2 = 0.47$; $F(2, 497) = 223.90$; $p < 0.001$. The two predictor variables and one interaction term as a set accounted for 47% of the variance associated with the marital satisfaction in the model with secure attachment style as the predictor variable (Figure 1). The mediation took place, because the mediator reversed the sign of the relation between

a predictor and an explained variable in the regression model (Bedyńska, Książek, 2012). This situation is also called net suppression or inconsistent mediation (Cichočka, Bilewicz, 2010).

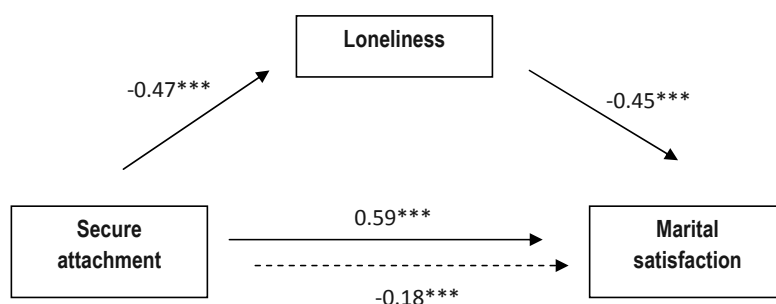


Figure 1. Effects of secure attachment on marital satisfaction mediated by loneliness (** $p < 0.001$)

Loneliness was also found as a significant mediating variable in the association of the ambivalent attachment and the marital satisfaction. The beta value of the mentioned relation was -0.22 ; $p < 0.001$. The presented relation was intensified after implementation of the mediator (loneliness): $\beta = -0.40$; $SE = 0.1$; $t = -10.11$; $p < 0.001$. This mediation model proved to be statistically significant $R^2 = 0.25$; $F(2, 497) = 83.43$; $p < 0.001$. The two predictor variables and one interaction term as a set accounted for 25% of the variance associated with marital satisfaction in the model with ambivalent attachment style as the predictor variable (Figure 2). The intensification of the effect that can be observed, is called suppression (Cichočka, Bilewicz, 2010, p. 191). The influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable seems to be suppressed by the mediator.

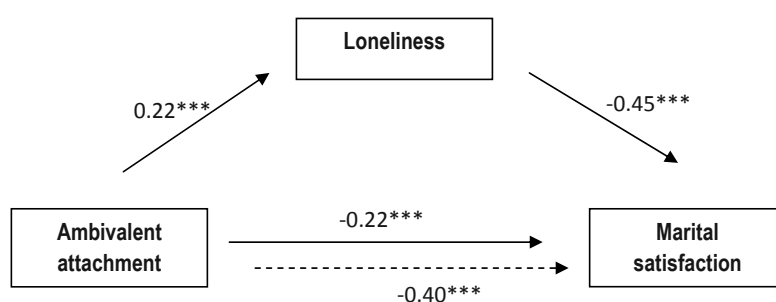


Figure 2. Effects of ambivalent attachment on marital satisfaction mediated by loneliness (** $p < 0.001$)

In the third mediation model, loneliness was also found as a significant mediating variable in the association of avoidant attachment the marital satisfaction. The beta value of the mentioned relation was $-0.5; p < 0.001$. The presented association was attenuated after implementation of the mediator (loneliness): $\beta = -0.24; SE = 0.09; t = -6.35; p < 0.001$. This mediation model proved to be statistically significant $R^2 = 0.41; F(2, 497) = 175.20; p < 0.001$. The two predictor variables and one interaction term as a set accounted for 41% of the variance associated with marital satisfaction in the model with avoidant attachment style as the predictor variable (Figure 3). The partial mediation took place, because the effect of independent variable on dependent variable decreased after mediator was introduced into the model (Bedyńska, Książek, 2012).

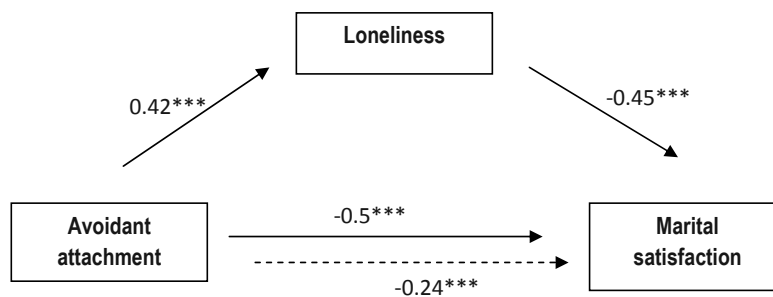


Figure 3. Effects of avoidant attachment on marital satisfaction mediated by loneliness (** $p < 0.001$)

Taking into consideration the second intervening variable – well-being, our findings indicated that it had a significant effect on the tested relationship between attachment and the marital satisfaction. In this model of secure attachment, the beta value of the mentioned relation was $0.51; p < 0.001$. The presented association was attenuated after implementation of the mediator (well-being): $\beta = 0.33; SE = 0.11; t = 9.63; p < 0.001$. This mediation model proved to be statistically significant $R^2 = 0.54; F(2, 497) = 286.73; p < 0.001$ (Figure 4). The two predictor variables and one interaction term as a set accounted for 53% of the variance associated with marital satisfaction in the model with secure attachment style as the predictor variable (Figure 4). The analyses revealed that the path between secure attachment and marital satisfaction was partially mediated by well-being.

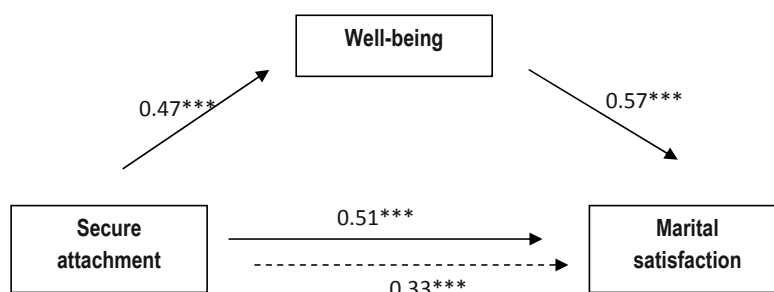


Figure 4. Effects of secure attachment on marital satisfaction mediated by well-being (** $p < 0.001$)

In the fifth model of mediation, well-being significantly mediated the relation between the ambivalent attachment and the marital satisfaction. The beta value of the mentioned relation was -0.31 ; $p < 0.001$. The presented association was intensified after the implementation of the mediator (well-being): $\beta = 0.53$; $SE = 0.11$; $t = 14.79$; $p < 0.001$. This mediation model proved to be statistically significant $R^2 = 0.37$; $F(2, 497) = 148.00$; $p < 0.001$. The two predictor variables and one interaction term as a set accounted for 37% of the variance associated with marital satisfaction in the model with ambivalent attachment style as the predictor variable (Figure 5). Once again, the suppression took place (Cichočka, Bilewicz, 2010), because the substantial intensification of the effect was observed and the mediating variable reversed the sign of the relation between the predictor and the dependent variable.

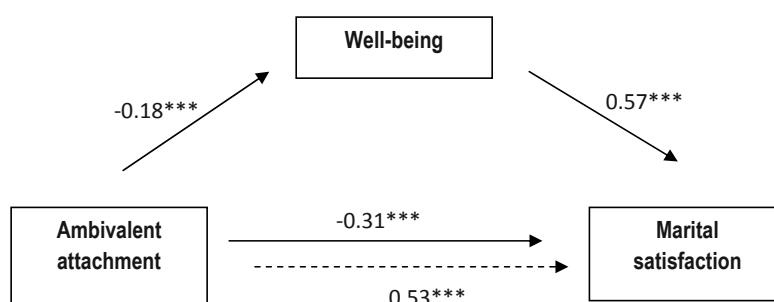


Figure 5. Effects of ambivalent attachment on marital satisfaction mediated by well-being (** $p < 0.001$)

Well-being was also a significant mediating variable in the association of avoidant attachment and marital satisfaction. The beta value of the mentioned relation was -0.46 ; $p < 0.001$. The presented association was intensified after the implementation of the mediator (well-being): $\beta = 0.42$; $SE = 0.10$; $t = 12.65$; $p < 0.001$. This mediation model proved to be statistically significant $R^2 = 0.52$; $F(2, 497) = 269.49$;

$p < 0.001$. The two predictor variables and one interaction term as a set accounted for 52% of the variance associated with marital satisfaction in the model with secure attachment style as the predictor variable (Figure 6). For the third time, the suppression took place, because we observed the substantial intensification of the effect and the mediating variable reversed the sign of the relation between the predictor and the dependent variable.

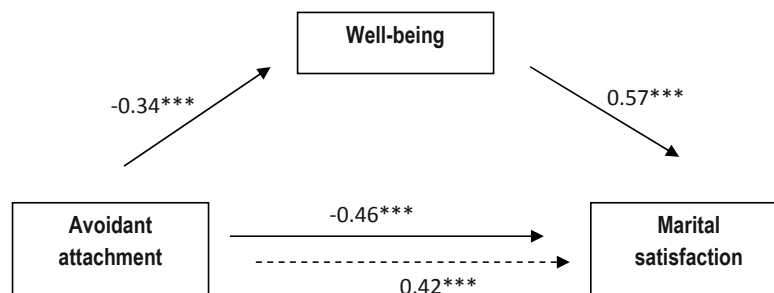


Figure 6. Effects of avoidant attachment on marital satisfaction mediated by well-being (** $p < 0.001$)

Generally, results from the presented analyses indicated that attachment style, loneliness and well-being had significant associations with marital satisfaction. Loneliness mediated the relation between attachment styles and marital satisfaction, in particular the mediation between secure attachment and marital satisfaction with loneliness as a mediator occurred significant and for some reasons interesting. The same effects occurred for the second mediator – well-being. Well-being mediated the relation between attachment styles and marital satisfaction, in particular the mediation between insecure attachment styles (ambivalent and avoidant) and marital satisfaction with well-being as a mediator revealed their significance and turned out to be interesting for many reasons.

Discussion

In the present study all the assumed hypothesis were confirmed. The results supported a direct association between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction in a community-based sample of married couples. It also confirmed a positive relationship existing between secure attachment style and marital satisfaction, which contributes to high quality of marital life and general satisfaction with life (well-being) in the examined individuals (Hazan, Shaver, 1990; Feeney, Kirkpatrick, 1996; Mikulincer et al., 2002). Previous studies showed that secure relationships were characterised by commitment, high levels of trust, interdependence and satisfaction and also were less likely to experience divorce (Collins, Read, 1990; Feeney, Noller, 1990; Simpson, 1990). What was particularly important in those studies is that the secure attachment occurred to be of a special significance for elderly cou-

ples because it alleviated emotional and social loneliness (de Jong Gierveld et al., 2009).

In a number of previous studies the secure attachment acted as a buffer against numerous difficulties encountered in adult relationships (Mikulincer, Shaver, 2007). Nevertheless, the results of Author's mediation analysis seem to undermine this relationship. The results of the present study showed that when the third factor (mediator) has an impact on the relationship between secure attachment and marital satisfaction, this strong relationship changed. The same situation took place when the third factor (mediator) has an impact on the relationship between insecure attachment and marital satisfaction. Marriages with secure attachment style have usually happy relationships, but the mediating factor – loneliness weakened this dependence. Although marriages with ambivalent and avoidant attachment style were at high risk of chronically unhappy relationships (Davila, Bradbury, 2001), this dependence was weakened under the influence of mediating factors. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is not only the insecure individuals who must face the challenges of getting their attachment needs met, but it also refers to secure people who need to work on this aspect to maintain satisfactory relationships (Cohn et al., 1992).

The hypotheses concerning the assumed mediation effect between attachment style and marital happiness were empirically proved. The results indicate that loneliness and psychological well-being partly mediate the association between three styles of attachment and marital satisfaction. On the whole, the feeling of loneliness markedly lowered the marital satisfaction in relationships with various attachment styles, including the secure one, whereas well-being significantly increased the marital satisfaction in these relationships, particularly in the insecure attached individuals. The presented results concerning the six mediation models indicate independent effects with regard to each attachment style (secure, ambivalent, avoidant) and two mediators (loneliness and well-being).

Loneliness was proved (once more) to be a serious mediating factor of marital satisfaction (Weiss, 1973; Hazan, Shaver, 1990; Erozkhan, 2011). In the first model loneliness variable mediated relation between secure attachment and the marital satisfaction and this mediation has attenuated markedly the indicated relation. The secure attachment was previously regarded as a strong predictor of marital satisfaction, but in the case of experiencing serious feeling of loneliness its predictive power of marital happiness weakened (Meyers, Landsberger, 2002). Copel (1988) suggests that loneliness can threaten feelings of personal self-worth and undermine the confidence in the ability to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships. As suggested by Ernst and Cacioppo (1999) intense feeling of loneliness can be connected with negative emotions, depressivity, pessimism or feeling of rejection. In this case, regardless of the permanent secure pattern, the loneliness factor was negatively related with the level of marital happiness. Since this phenomenon was examined in married couples, one may suppose that getting attached to an individual with avoidant attachment style can lead to the feeling of loneliness and decrease the level of well-being.

Similar results, though not so intense as in the previous model, were obtained in the second model where loneliness variable mediated relation between the ambivalent attachment and the marital satisfaction. The effect showed a suppression of negative relationship between ambivalent attachment and marital satisfaction. Ambivalently attached adults are characterized by high levels of anxiety about abandonment and they are extremely needy of and dependent on relationships (Davila, 2003; Stevens, Westerhof, 2006). While they suffer from the high level of loneliness, they can be even more dependent on their spouse and at the same time they experience the high level of marital dissatisfaction. Consequently, such individuals tend to keep closer to their partners and are less likely to get comfort coming from romantic relationships (Erozkan, 2011).

In contrast to the two previous models, in the third one the loneliness variable mediated relation between avoidant attachment and marital satisfaction and this mediation has attenuated the above mentioned negative relation. There are several explanations of this effect. The most plausible one seems to be that loneliness is very frequently a reaction to the absence of intimate needs satisfaction (Ernst, Cacioppo, 1999). Thus, the avoidantly attached adults with a high level of loneliness, are likely to experience the fear of their partner loss and typical avoidant individuals are not aware of this fear. When they feel insecure in their marriage they try to take care of the relationship not to lose it or not to feel threatened by its loss. Normally the social relationships lead to reducing the level of loneliness. Thus, if an avoidant individual feels very lonely getting little support from others, he or she is bound to rely on the partner that is nearby 'within their reach' (Stevens, Westerhof, 2006). Research has repeatedly shown the protective effect of an intimate partner bond on the mental well-being of both men and women (Waite, Gallagher, 2000).

Psychological well-being is generally a factor reinforcing a sense of marital happiness, when those two variables are at bilateral relation (Wensauer, Grossmann, 1995; Merz, Consedine, 2009). However, introduction of well-being to the relation between attachment styles and marital satisfaction modified the situation. In the fourth model, well-being mediated relation between secure attachment and marital satisfaction and this mediation has attenuated the previously strong relation.

The last two mediation models i.e. the fifth and the sixth respectively, proved, the positive influence of well-being on marital satisfaction. Despite the fact that the insecure attachment styles (ambivalent and avoidant) were an independent variable in both models, the variable mediating well-being suppressed the final effect. Thus, well-being in connection with both insecure attachment styles significantly increased the final feeling of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, the above mentioned satisfaction factor markedly influences the general level of marriage quality as well as the level of marital satisfaction in insecurely attached adults (Bradley, Cafferty, 2001; Jaracz, 2001). Thus, there is still a hope for better quality of relationship among insecurely attached adults who possess the high level of psychological well-being.

As for the limitations of the presented study, they refer to theoretical and methodological issues. Firstly, there are two traditions in the research on attachment styles: categorical and dimensional. They both are frequently used but also criti-

cised. In this study the categorial division of styles was adopted following Plopa (2008). Nevertheless, the attachment types may be conceptualized as two orthogonal dimensions in close relations: attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety – both correspond to attachment insecurity (Bartholomew, Horowitz, 1991; Lubiewska, 2013). Low exertion of both dimensions has been accepted to characterize secure individuals. The second kind of conceptualization seems to reflect a more adequate picture of the tested reality. Secondly, the decision to choose two general mediators of marital satisfaction was based on a thorough reading of the literature and they seemed of great significance for the conducted research which proved it. Despite significance of these factors, there may exist other, additional mediators which can be important for this basic relationship between the attachment and the marital satisfaction. Finally, using self-report instruments may have contained common sources of error variation and future research may need cross-referencing partners' perceptions of relationship functioning.

The most valuable contribution of the present study is that it provides several important conceptual advances in understanding of attachment in marriage. The findings indicate that the indirect associations between adult attachment and romantic relationship quality are more salient than the well-documented direct relations. This is because there exist factors such as loneliness or well-being and other research mentions competencies, social support and the depressivity level (Meyers, Landsberger, 2002; Erozkan, 2011) which indirectly affect attachment styles, the marital satisfaction and the spouses' quality of life. These factors significantly modified primary positive or negative relations between variables. Thus, certain types of psychological factors have powerful and unique effects on people (and their marital satisfaction) who have different adult attachment orientations: avoidant people are not always unsupportive, anxious people are not always demanding and secure people are not always supportive (Simpson, Rholes, 2012). Last but not least, presented findings attested that people do have a potential to become more secure in their relationships.

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POCZUCIE SUBIEKTYWNEJ SAMOTNOŚCI, DOBROSTANU
I ZADOWOLENIA Z MAŁŻEŃSTWA W PARACH
O RÓŻNYM STYLU PRZYWIĄZANIA

Streszczenie. Podstawowym założeniem teorii przywiązania jest przekonanie, iż wczesne relacje przywiązania w dzieciństwie z osobami znaczącymi (głównym obiektem przywiązania) stanowią wzór dla późniejszych romantycznych więzi w dorosłości (z partnerem relacji romantycznej). Do diagnozy jakości relacji w dorosłym życiu wykorzystano cztery metody kwestionariuszowe: Kwestionariusz Stylów Przywiązaniowych (KSM) Mieczysława Płopy; Skalę Zadolenia z Życia (SWLS) w adaptacji Zygryda Juczyńskiego, Skalę Poczucia Osamotnienia de Jong Gierveld (DJGLS) i Kwestionariusz Szczęścia Małżeńskiego (KSM) w adaptacji Kazimierza Pospiszyla. Przebadano 250 par małżeńskich o różnym stażu małżeńskim. Badanie udowodniło istnienie statystycznych związków pomiędzy stylami przywiązania, dobrostanem, poczuciem osamotnienia oraz satysfakcją ze związku. Potwierdzono mediujący wpływ zmiennych osamotnienie i dobrostan psychiczny na satysfakcję małżeńską osób o różnych stylach przywiązania. Jak się okazało, satysfakcję małżeńską może poważnie obniżyć poczucie osamotnienia u osób o bezpiecznym przywiązaniu, a dobrostan może podwyższyć tę satysfakcję u osób o pozabezpiecznych stylach przywiązania.

Słowa kluczowe: style przywiązaniowe, satysfakcja małżeńska, osamotnienie, dobrostan

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