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Influence of Attachment Styles on Relationship Satisfaction



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Background

We used proximity seeking behaviors as a mediator between attachment styles and relationship satisfaction. We surveyed college students about their attachment styles, proximity seeking behaviors, and perceived levels of overall satisfaction in their romantic relationships. We predicted that these behaviors and attachment styles act as predictors of overall relationship satisfaction.



Objectives

- We hypothesized that proximity seeking behavior is a mechanism via which attachment style affects satisfaction.
- Individuals with insecure attachment are less satisfied with their relationships.
- Characteristics of insecure attachment can lead to less satisfaction due to proximal seeking behavior.

Participants

- 122 total participants
- 51 of the total 122 participants met the criteria (41%).
- 13 men and 38 women
- Ages ranged from 18-61 years ($M=22.24, SD=7.053$).
- Predominately Caucasian: 36 participants (71%)
- 86% of participants were dating

Methods

- Participants consented to complete an online survey lasting an average of 15 minutes.

Measures

- **Relationship status** was determined by a series of questions agreed upon by our group.
-Ex: "Have you been dating your significant other for three months or longer?"
- **Relationship satisfaction** was measured using the Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Funk & Rogge, 2007).
-Ex: "How well does your partner meet your needs?"

Measures Continued

- **Attachment style** was measured using the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990).
-Ex: "I often worry that others do not really love me."
- **Proximity seeking behaviors** were measured using a new scale developed for the present study.
-Ex: "How strongly do you desire to be with your significant other?"

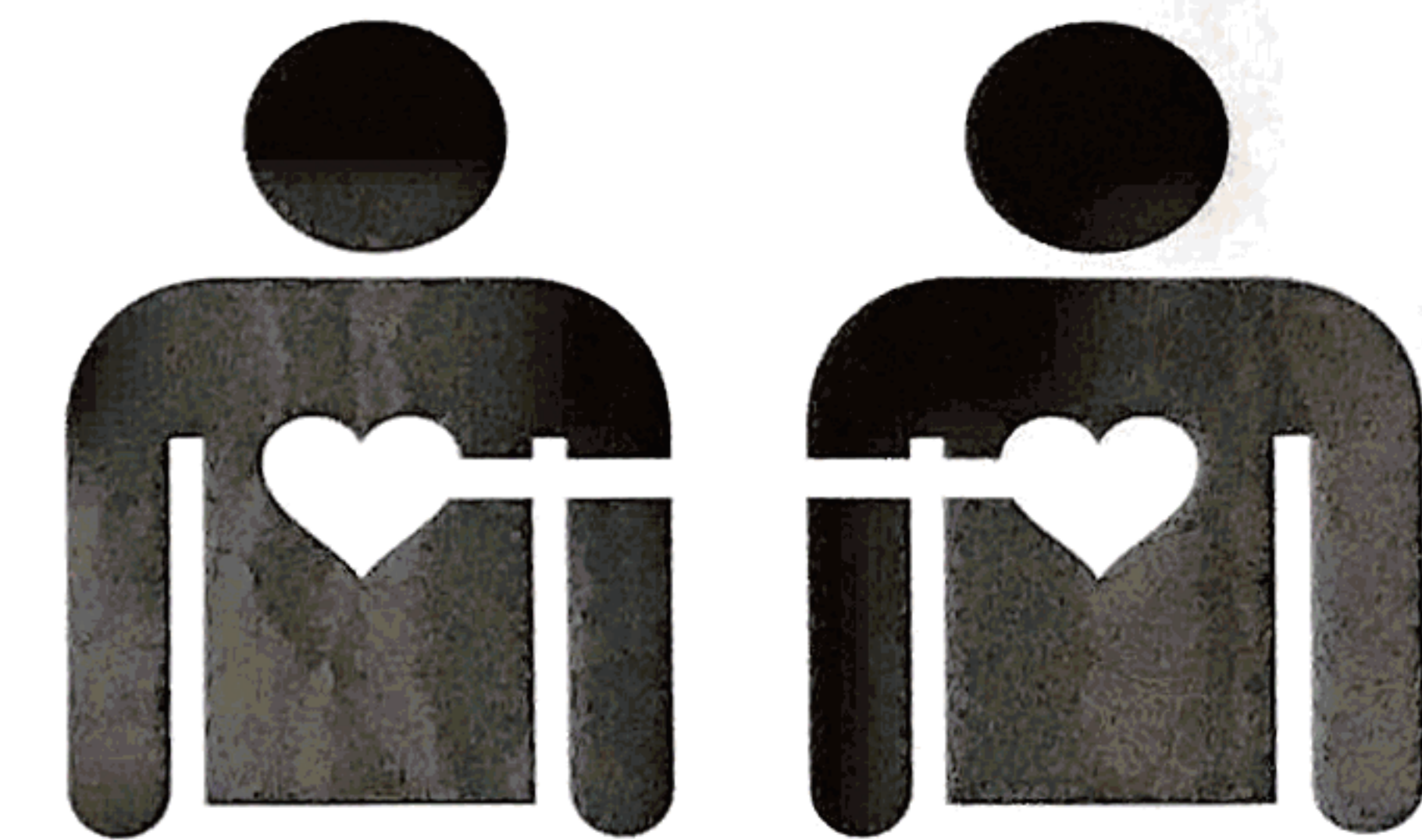
Results

- In regards to attachment, closeness had the most significant influence on relationship satisfaction.
- There was a significantly strong, positive correlation between proximity seeking behaviors and relationship satisfaction ($r=.547, p < 0.01$).

	Low Relationship Satisfaction Mean (SD)	High Relationship Satisfaction Mean (SD)
Closeness	3.116 (.578)	2.994 (.429)
Dependency	2.877 (.421)	3.083 (.477)
Anxiety	2.645 (.746)	2.423 (.728)
ProxScore	4.011 (.526)	4.482 (.358)

Discussion

- We did not take into account long distance relationships.
- There is possibly another factor acting on proximity seeking behaviors: general anxiety.
- There is possibly another factor acting on attachment style: childhood experiences.



Conclusion

- Both attachment style and proximity seeking behaviors influence overall relationship satisfaction.
- However, proximity seeking behaviors did not mediate attachment and relationship satisfaction as we hypothesized.
- Our results showed little evidence that our three main constructs were causally related.