

Marital Satisfaction and Attachment Style: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence and
Religious Commitment

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Department of Community Care and Counseling, Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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Abstract

Most couples enter marriage hoping to experience happiness and satisfaction. This study acknowledges that spouses bring their worldviews, personalities, behaviors, and emotions to the marriage relationship, and for this reason, this study investigates the connection between marital satisfaction and attachment style as mediated by emotional intelligence and religious commitment in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. This quantitative, non-experimental, survey-based research analyzes data collected through Amazon Mechanical Turk from 530 married individuals to understand the relationship between variables affecting marital satisfaction. Results from Pearson's correlation analyses show a significant relationship between attachment style subscales (avoidance and anxiety) and marital satisfaction ($p < .05$). Additionally, a comprehensive mediation analysis shows that the attachment style subscales of avoidance and anxiety in the mother and father relationship have an indirect effect on marital satisfaction through both emotional intelligence and religious commitment. Thus, future studies need to consider marriage relationship dynamics, spouses' management of emotions, and the protective role of religion in the marriage relationship.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, religious commitment.

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Dedication

This study is first dedicated to my Savior, Jesus Christ, whose grace has carried me through this process and often reminds me of His eternal and unconditional love. This study is also dedicated to my husband, Elias, and our two children, Victor and Eliana. Without their support and love, this doctoral degree would lose its meaning. Finally, this project is dedicated to my students and friends who have allowed me to participate in their lives as we challenge, inspire, and motivate each other to grow holistically in grace, knowledge, and understanding.

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List of Abbreviations

Adult Attachment Scale-AAS

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

Emotion Analysis Test (TAE)

Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI)

Emotional Competence Questionnaire-45 (UEK-45)

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

Emotion Management Test (TUE)

Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)

Enrich Marital Satisfaction (EMS)

Experience in Close Relationships (ECR)

Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS)

Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)

Quality of Marriage Index (QMI)

Relationship Style Questionnaire (RSQ)

Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10)

Religious Surrender and Attendance Scale-3 (RSAS-3)

Resting-state Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (rsfMRI)

Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS)

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

The Big Five Inventory (BFI)

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

Marital satisfaction is a multidimensional construct connected to a variety of factors and is used to assess the stability and sense of happiness couples attribute to their marriage (Bradbury et al., 2000; Mirecki et al., 2013; Sorokowski et al., 2017; Tavakol, 2017). Marital satisfaction is also subjective because how each spouse sees the benefits and costs of the marriage relationship is a personal matter (Safitri & Sari, 2019; Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). Consequently, differences in marital satisfaction appraisals between spouses may happen and might be due to factors directly related to the spouse, the marriage relationship, and the environment (Čikeš et al., 2018; Tavakol et al., 2017).

This study focuses on the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment style along with the mediating role of emotional intelligence and religious commitment in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the U.S. The goal of the study is to add to the current literature on marital satisfaction as it relates to attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. Thus, this chapter provides some background information on these variables and discusses the study's problem, purpose, and significance. It also presents research questions, definitions of terms, and a brief chapter summary.

Background

Early research and theories propose that marital satisfaction resembles a U-shaped pattern indicating that marital satisfaction is higher at the beginning of the marriage, declines in the middle, and increases again with time (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kurdek, 1999). To explain this view, some researchers have considered developmental stages, the honeymoon effect, parenting, and duration of marriage as possible factors influencing the formation of the U-shaped

pattern (Kwok et al., 2015; Lazar, 2017; Lorber et al., 2015). However, some research findings challenge the U-shaped theory of marital satisfaction and show that, in some cases, the longer couples are married the less satisfied they may become (Wang-Sheng, 2018; Wendorf et al., 2011). Other researchers also indicate that the U-shaped pattern of marital satisfaction is due to the impact of other extraneous variables, such as socioeconomic changes affecting couples during the specific time the study is conducted, cultural aspects not considered, and inaccuracy in sampling (Galambos et al., 2020; VanLaningham et al., 2001). Nevertheless, most researchers agree that studies on marital satisfaction need to include variables related to the individual, the relationship, and the environment to produce significant findings and help explain marital satisfaction (Adzovie, 2020; Mirecki et al., 2013; Sorokowski et al., 2017; VanLaningham et al., 2001).

Current studies show the connection of marital satisfaction to a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that range from demographics to personality characteristics (Kaur & Sokhey, 2011; Otero et al., 2020; Shirzad, 2016; Tavakol, 2017; Turliuc & Candel, 2021; Yu et al., 2020). Tavakol's (2017) analysis of eighty academic papers lists "demographic specifications, personality attributes, attachment style, relationship, communication and intimacy, couples' families, forgiveness and sacrifice, religion, emotional intelligence, personal health, and sexual relations" (p. 203) as factors closely related to the study of marital satisfaction. Dobrowolska et al. (2020) acknowledge that some variables are cross-cultural, but others are culturally bound. For instance, the variable *number of children*, when included in studies with samples from the United States, tend to present a negative correlation with marital satisfaction, but this is seldom the case in similar studies with populations outside the United States (Dobrowolska et al., 2020; Sorokowski et al., 2017; Wendorf et al., 2011).

The literature shows a connection between marital satisfaction and attachment style (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020). Theoretically, how spouses relate to each other is, in part, an expression of their attachment style or internal working model (Diamond et al., 2018). Research shows that individuals with an insecure attachment style tend to view the relationship through the lenses of fear and anxiety while those with a secure attachment style tend to perceive the relationship with a more trusting attitude (Abbasi et al., 2016; Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020). Notably, Abbasi et al. (2016) observe that married Iranian couples reporting secure attachment style show higher levels of marital satisfaction whereas participants reporting avoidant and ambivalent styles display lower levels of marital satisfaction. Similarly, Wijaya and Widyaningsih's (2020) study on the mediating role of dyadic cohesion between secure attachment and marital satisfaction shows that spouses with secure attachment display more harmony in the relationship.

Many studies on marital satisfaction consider the role of emotional intelligence (Batool & Khalid, 2012; Hajihasani & Sim, 2019; Kaur & Sokhey, 2011). Emotional intelligence refers to individuals' ability to manage their emotions and the emotions of other people with whom they interact (Matthews et al., 2017). Malouff et al. (2013) note that spouses who show better management of emotions tend to score higher on relationship satisfaction. Notably, Čikeš et al. (2018) highlight that individuals' management of emotions correlated to marital quality in a sample of Croatian couples. Similarly, Zarch et al. (2014) emphasize that individuals' overall mood impacts marital satisfaction.

Research has also focused on the relationship between marital satisfaction and religious commitment and the need for further studies to understand conflicting findings regarding the possible connections between these two variables (Aman et al., 2019; Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018;

Hajihassani & Sim, 2019; Lazar, 2019). For instance, Lazar's (2019) study with 240 married Jewish women indicates that married women with a high sense of religious commitment experience more sexual and marital satisfaction than those with a lower sense of religious commitment. Conversely, Kasinec (2018) did not find the variable of religious commitment to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction, though it was a statistically significant predictor when combined with romantic attachment. Nevertheless, understanding married individuals' religious commitment is a challenging endeavor since it requires clear definitions of terms and well-structured and reliable instruments (Koenig, 2008). Gaining insight into how religious commitment affects couples' marital satisfaction can help mental health professionals create more effective counseling strategies and techniques that can address the specific needs of religious couples to improve the quality of their marriage (Aman et al., 2019; Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018; Hajihassani & Sim; 2019; Lazar, 2019; Olson et al., 2015; Perry, 2016).

Throughout the years, researchers have created new instruments and revised old ones to measure marital satisfaction, that is, how individuals perceive the costs and benefits of their marriage (Graham et al., 2011). Some of these instruments are brief self-reports while others are longer questionnaires. For instance, the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS) has three items (Schumm et al., 1986). The Quality of Marriage Index (QMI) contains six items (Norton, 1983). The Enrich Marital Satisfaction (EMS) lists 15 items (Fowers & Olson, 1993). The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) has 32 items (Spanier, 1976). Despite their sizes, these instruments have high reliability and validity and have been used frequently in academic research (Fowers & Olson, 1993; Maroufizadeh et al., 2019; Omani-Samani et al., 2018).

Problem Statement

Studies connecting marital satisfaction to either attachment style, emotional intelligence, or religious commitment abound in the literature (Aman et al., 2020; Bedair et al., 2020; Čikeš et al., 2018; Constant et al., 2018; Malouff et al., 2013; Olson et al., 2016; Roth et al., 2012; Wagner et al., 2020; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020). However, these four variables have not been studied in combination recently (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020; Constant et al., 2018; Lavner et al., 2016). For instance, Abbasi et al.'s (2016) study investigates attachment style, marital satisfaction, and emotional intelligence, but it does not address religious commitment. Sandberg et al.'s (2017) research explores the correlation between attachment style and marital satisfaction, but it does not include emotional intelligence or religious commitment. Čikeš et al.'s (2018) study examines emotional intelligence and marital quality, but it does not include attachment style and religious commitment.

Another problem is that there needs to be a single study that combines the variables of marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment in a single study with an American sample population (Kasinec, 2018; Sandberg et al., 2017). Aman et al. (2019) emphasize the need for more studies on the marital satisfaction of American Christian couples. Additionally, current studies that include at least three of the four proposed variables in this study mainly involve non-American sample populations (Abbasi et al., 2016; Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018). For instance, Abbasi et al. (2016) investigate marital satisfaction, attachment styles, and emotional intelligence in a group of married Iranians. Similarly, Cirhinlioglu et al. (2018) look at the mediating role of religiosity between attachment style and marital satisfaction in sample of married Turkish individuals. Thus, the relevance of conducting

a study that addresses marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment that includes an American population exists.

Another point to consider is that while most studies addressing marital satisfaction use only legally married individuals who identify themselves as heterosexual (Jarnecke & South, 2013; Mirecki et al., 2013; Otero et al., 2020; Mazzuca, 2018; Wagner et al., 2020), a few studies use a mix of married and cohabitating couples (Graboyes, 2021; Jackson et al., 2014; Meagher, 2021; Pedro et al., 2015) and non-heterosexual individuals as part of their population sample (Antonelli et al., 2014). The proposed study only gathers data from heterosexual individuals who have been legally married for at least three years in the U.S.

Only a few recent research studies on marital satisfaction include religious commitment or religiosity (Bedair et al., 2020; Kasinec, 2018; Lazar, 2017; Roth et al., 2012; Sandberg et al., 2017). Additionally, most of these studies have non-Christian participants in the sample population (Bedair et al., 2020; Hajjhasani & Sim, 2019; Lazar, 2017) and only a few focus on the Christian population (Olson et al., 2015; Perry, 2016; Roth et al., 2012; Sandberg et al., 2017). Thus, this study also explores the mediating role of religious commitment between marital satisfaction and attachment style in a sample of married heterosexual Christian individuals living in the U.S.

The problem is that the literature addressing marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment variables with heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States is limited. Thus, the proposed study addresses a few gaps in the literature. First, it uses emotional intelligence and religious commitment as mediating variables between marital satisfaction and attachment style. Second, it draws data from heterosexual married American Christian individuals, which contributes to the knowledge and

understanding of this specific group and addresses the lack of religious diversity in the literature. Finally, this study does not include cohabitating couples, which helps create a homogeneous sample.

A call for studies to consider the role of attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment on marital satisfaction exists. For instance, Bedair et al. (2020) consider the importance of investigating attachment styles in connection with marital satisfaction and reminds future researchers to expand on the behaviors that accompany each attachment style and how these behaviors uniquely affect marital satisfaction. Abbasi et al. (2016) highlight the importance of integrating emotional intelligence as a variable in the study of marital satisfaction. Similarly, Kasinec (2018) encourages future marital satisfaction studies to consider the religious life of couples and include their religious affiliation.

Purpose Statement

This study aims to investigate the connection between marital satisfaction and attachment style as mediated by emotional intelligence and religious commitment in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. In this correlational study, marital satisfaction is the criterion variable, while attachment style is the predictor variable. Emotional intelligence and religious commitment serve as mediating variables. According to Mackinnon (2015), mediating variables are commonly used in the field of behavioral sciences and help explain the connection between the predictor and criterion variable.

The demographic questionnaire gathers information on participants' age, gender, ethnicity, times married, education, and church attendance frequency in person and online. The study uses four instruments to measure the variables. The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS) measures participants' marital satisfaction (Schumm et al., 1986). The Experiences in

Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS) measures attachment style (Fraley et al., 2011). The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) measures emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2004). The Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) measures individuals' religious commitment.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it focuses on marital satisfaction as it relates to attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. Since spouses bring their worldview and personality to the marriage relationship, many studies address marital satisfaction in connection with variables related to behavior, cognition, and emotion (Givertz et al., 2019; Hajihasani & Sim, 2019; Harma & Sumer, 2016). The literature shows the connection between attachment styles and emotions and argues that emotional skills are the cornerstone of intimate relationships (Abbasi et al., 2016; Constant et al., 2018; Gleeson et al., 2014). It also shows how religious commitment influences individuals' feelings and how they regulate them (Vishkin et al., 2020). Furthermore, this study adds to the current body of knowledge on marital satisfaction and related variables, and it contributes to the development of psychoeducational strategies that aim to help Christian couples develop emotional awareness and skills. Finally, this study is significant because it combines marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment variables in a unique study with heterosexual married Christian individuals residing in the United States.

Research Questions

The present study contains the following research questions:

RQ1. Is there a correlation between attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), and marital satisfaction,

as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), and in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States?

RQ2. Is the relationship between attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), and marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), mediated by emotional intelligence, as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)?

RQ3. Is the relationship between attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), and marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), mediated by religious commitment, as measured by the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States?

Definitions

1. *Marital Satisfaction* – “A person’s overall evaluation of his or her marriage” (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997, p. 337) as defined by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS) (Schumm et al., 1983). Marital satisfaction and marital quality are interchangeable terms (Delatorre & Wagner, 2020).
2. *Attachment Style* – A person’s way of feeling, relating, attaching to others such as father, mother, spouse, and friends (Fraley et al., 2011) as defined by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS).
3. *Emotional Intelligence* – Emotional and social awareness and efficiency in handling difficult situations in life to maintain overall life quality (Mayer et al., 2004) as defined by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS).

4. *Religious Commitment* – The ability individuals have to live by the beliefs, values, and practices upheld by their religion and apply these beliefs, values, and practices to their daily interactions with others (Worthington et al., 2003) as defined by the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10). Religious commitment and religiosity appear interchangeably to mean the same idea.

Summary

Studies show the connection between marital satisfaction and a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment (Lazar, 2017; Roth et al., 2012; Sandberg et al., 2017; Turliuc & Candel, 2021; Yu et al., 2020). The literature also contains limited studies in which emotional intelligence and religious commitment appear as mediating variables between marital satisfaction and attachment style (Abbasi et al., 2016). Additionally, the sample populations used in many recent studies differ from the one proposed in this study since this study will use only legally married individuals residing in the U.S. (Bedair et al., 2020; Hajihasani & Sim, 2019; Lazar, 2017). Thus, the proposed study provides additional insight on the selected variables and the population under study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

The exploration of the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment style and the mediating role of emotional intelligence and religious commitment continues in this chapter and it includes the theoretical framework, related literature, and chapter summary. The theoretical framework addresses specific theories and concepts related to marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. The related literature presents research findings that connect marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment, establishing the foundation for the proposed study. This chapter also discusses areas that need more research or show inconclusive results. Additionally, a final summary highlights the main points covered in the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

Attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment are among the many variables found in the literature related to marital satisfaction, variables which have intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental implications (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020, Čikeš et al., 2018; Malouff et al., 2013; Sorokowski et al., 2017; Tavakol's, 2017; Zarch et al., 2014). Research shows that spouses with insecure attachment style tend to display more anxious attachment patterns, while spouses with more secure attachment style tend to display more trust in the relationship, which may affect marital satisfaction (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020). Research also shows that married individuals' ability to identify, manage, and apply emotions in the marriage relationship context influences their overall marriage satisfaction (Čikeš et al., 2018; Malouff et al., 2013; Zarch et al., 2014). Additionally, research on the effects of religiosity or religious commitment on marital satisfaction shows some

levels of correlation (Aman et al., 2019; Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018; Hajihassani & Sim, 2019; Kasinec, 2018), though further cross-cultural studies are still needed (Lazar, 2019).

The proposed study considers Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1986; 2005) ecological theory, Bowlby's (1958; 1959; 1960) and Ainsworth's (1969; 1970) attachment style theories, Salovey and Mayer's (1990) emotional intelligence theory, and Worthington et al.'s (2003) spiritual commitment model as the theoretical background to help understand marital satisfaction. As observed, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment are influenced by nature and nurture aspects that affect interpersonal relationships, including the marriage relationship (Aman et al., 2019; Kasinec, 2018; Oliveira & Fearon, 2019; Petrides et al., 2016; Swain et al., 2014; Takeuchi et al., 2011). Research shows that attachment styles are formed early in infancy and influence adult romantic relationships (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simard et al., 2011). Similarly, emotional intelligence is developed over time and affects marriage relationship dynamics (Goleman, 2021; Uhrich et al., 2021). Also, spiritual commitment influences spouses' commitment to each other and the marriage relationship (Aman et al., 2019; Jafari et al., 2015; Lazar, 2019). Therefore, the following section will discuss some foundational theories that support this study's variables and help clarify the proposed research questions.

Marital Satisfaction

Marriage is an essential institution in the history of humanity that serves specific purposes in society (Celesso, 2009; Doe, 2016; Francesconi, 2016; Moses, 2018). Marriage provides the necessary environment for individuals to develop and thrive (Celesso, 2009; Doe, 2016; Francesconi, 2016; Moses, 2018). Culture, religion, and politics progressively have shaped perceptions and expectations about marriage, allowing for different marriage forms to develop in

the world, such as group, polygamy, and monogamous marriages (Arif & Fatima, 2015; Doe, 2016; Francesconi, 2016; Maxwell et al., 2018; Moses, 2018). In the United States, marriage is a monogamous relationship (Celello, 2009; Girgis et al., 2020; Raley, 2018) in which individuals hope to experience a healthy and satisfying marriage relationship that will last a lifetime (Fowers & Olson, 1993; Gottman, 1999; Gurman et al., 2015).

Different views of marriage exist in society, including marriage as a sacrament, a covenant, and a contract. In the Roman Catholic tradition, marriage is a sacrament through which baptized believers receive the grace of God (Madero & Reynolds, 2018; Welch & Cahal, 2018). In the Evangelical community, marriage is a covenant between a Christian man and a Christian woman before God which involves a lifelong commitment (Felkey, 2011; Köstenberger & Jones, 2010; Worthington, 2005). The view of marriage as a contract between two people is more predominant in less religious populations and indicates that either spouse, under the law, can initiate, maintain, and terminate a marriage relationship (Cremer et al., 2015; Strom & Faw, 2017).

Couples enter marriage hoping to experience happiness and satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is a multidimensional construct that has been studied since the 1950s and is primarily defined as the stability and happiness couples attribute to their marriage (Fowers & Olson, 1993; Gottman, 1999; Mangus, 1957; Tavakol, 2017). Many factors affect marital satisfaction, and some are directly related to the spouse, the marital relationship, and the environment in which the marriage takes place (Čikeš et al., 2018; Tavakol et al., 2017). Thus, since intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental processes contribute to the complexity of the marital relationship and satisfaction, researchers call for continual investigation of factors related to marital satisfaction (Ashkzari, 2017; Brandão et al., 2020; Salimi et al., 2019; Ton et al., 2021).

In the intrapersonal process, each spouse brings his and her own personality, worldview, and culture to the marriage relationship (Gottman, 1979; Gurman et al., 2015; Lee & McKinnish, 2018; Safitri & Sari, 2019; Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). These factors, in turn, add to the subjectivity of marital satisfaction and affect how each spouse perceives marital satisfaction and sees the relationship, its costs, and benefits (Gottman, 1979; Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). Thus, it is possible that one spouse may report high levels of marital satisfaction while the other may report low levels (Safitri & Sari, 2019).

The interpersonal process includes marital relationship dynamics, which are created and sustained depending on their usefulness to the marriage (Bradbury et al., 2000). Gottman (1979) notes the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication in marriage and their role in building marital satisfaction. Gottman and Krokoff (1989) contend that defensiveness, stubbornness, and withdrawal in couples' interactions may account for lower levels of marital satisfaction. Gottman's (1999) empirically based longitudinal research on marriage also highlights the role of positive interaction and friendship in shaping marital satisfaction and stability. Gottman and Silver (2015) believe that couples need to avoid criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling in their interactions, which they call the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (p. 32) since they signal destructive patterns in the relationship.

Many researchers draw from Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory to address the environmental processes in marriage. They emphasize that marriage does not happen in a vacuum, but it starts with the individual who is part of societal layers (Čikeš et al., 2018; Roy et al., 2020). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986, 2005), each individual is part of a unique microsystem connected to a specific mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The transactional connections and interactions of these systems help produce and explain human

development and interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 2005). Čikeš et al. (2018) emphasize that when couples experience high levels of marital satisfaction, there is an interaction of the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental factors, which exemplifies Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory.

Instruments measuring couples' marital satisfaction first appeared in the 20th century. Delatorre and Wagner (2020) observe that these instruments are either multidimensional or unidimensional. They note that multidimensional marital satisfaction instruments are usually longer and involve an evaluation of events and interactions in the couple's life (Delatorre & Wagner, 2020). Unidimensional instruments are brief and involve spouses' evaluation of the relationship (Delatorre & Wagner, 2020). The Dyadic Adjustment Scale - DAS (Spanier, 1976) is an example of a multidimensional instrument that contains 32 items, while the three-item Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale – KMS (Schumm et al., 1986) is a unidimensional instrument. This study uses the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale.

Attachment Style

Bowlby's (1958, 1959, 1960) research on parent and infant separation and how the infant deals with emotional pain and distress is foundational to attachment theory and its application to attachment in adult life. Drawing from an evolutionary system and other developmental theories of his time, Bowlby's (1958, 1959, 1960) attachment theory considers infants' attachment behavior as part of a motivational attachment behavioral system (1958, 1959, 1960), which is a natural human survival mode. This motivational attachment behavioral system causes the infant to question the proximity, accessibility, and approachability of the parent or caregiver (Bowlby, 2012; Fear, 2017; Marrone, 2014). Theoretically, the infant's responses to these questions produce different behaviors and disruptions in the bonding between infant and parent which can

cause personality, mental health, and relational issues later in life (Bowlby, 1973; Bowlby, 1980).

Building on Bowlby's (1958; 1959; 1960) observations, Ainsworth (1969; 1970) conducted experiments with infants and expanded the theory (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969) by creating the *Strange Situation*, which was a carefully monitored sequence of events in a laboratory playroom. The *Strange Situation* procedure involved a sequence of actions: a small child and mother interacting, a stranger entering the room, the mother exiting the room, the stranger exiting the room and leaving the child completely alone, and both adults returning to the room to be with the child (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969). Ainsworth's (1969; 1970) observations of this sequence of actions or events led to the identification of secure, anxious-resistant, and avoidant or disorganized attachments in infants and how parental sensitivity and responsiveness match these attachments.

The need to attach to others is a natural human phenomenon. The unique ways individuals attach to others have the potential to affect them throughout their entire lifespan. Researchers note that individuals with a secure attachment style show more sense of security, autonomy, self-efficacy, resilience, and self-esteem (Bifulco & Thomas, 2013; Gillath & Fraley, 2016). Individuals with an insecure attachment style, such as anxious-resistant or avoidant, display more negative thoughts and behaviors (Bifulco & Thomas, 2013; Gillath & Fraley, 2016). For instance, research found that an anxious-resistant attachment style correlates to distrustful, suspicious, attention-seeking, self-critical, insecure, and preoccupied thoughts and behaviors (Bifulco & Thomas, 2013; Gillath & Fraley, 2016). Correspondingly, an avoidant attachment style correlates to higher dismissiveness, independence, emotional unavailability, and unresponsiveness (Bifulco & Thomas, 2013; Gillath & Fraley, 2016).

Attachment theory has allowed researchers to investigate how the emotional bond between child-caregiver sets the stage for future intimate adult relationships (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simard et al., 2011). For instance, Hazan and Shaver's (1987) study with 620 married and single individuals analyzes the implications of the attachment theory to romantic relationships. Hazan and Shaver (1987) observe that intimate adult relationships are also based on the same motivational system from which infant-caregiver relationships operate and show similar patterns. This understanding serves as the basis for the adult attachment theory, which implies that adults in intimate relationships may experience the same levels of attachment styles identified in research with infants (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simard et al., 2011).

Researchers have also considered specific dynamics in the attachment theory. Brennan et al.'s study (1998) indicates that attachment-related anxiety and avoidance are the most common patterns in the adult population (Brennan et al., 1998). Other researchers emphasize that attachment styles may vary in degree. That is, an individual may not belong to a category but rather show different degrees of secure, anxious-resistant, and avoidant attachments (Fraley & Waller, 1998). Additionally, researchers question the extent to which attachment styles are preserved throughout life or modified due to new experiences in life (Fraley et al., 2021; Lopez & Gormley, 2002).

Instruments measuring adult attachment style abound in the literature, and most of them categorize attachment in similar ways to those proposed by Bowlby (1958; 1959; 1960) and Ainsworth (1969; 1970). These instruments often target behavior, affect, and cognition. The Relationship Style Questionnaire-RSQ (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), the Experience in Close Relationships-ECR (Brennan et al., 1998), and the Adult Attachment Scale-AAS (Collins

& Read, 1990) are some of the most popular instruments used in research considering the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment style (Barry & Lawrence, 2013; Guzmán-González et al., 2020; Mohammadi et al., 2016).

The proposed study uses the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), which contains nine items with two subscales: the attachment *anxiety* subscale and the *avoidance* subscale (Fraley et al., 2011). Anxiety is a tendency individuals have to fear any sign of rejection and abandonment, whereas avoidance is a common discomfort individuals have with intimacy and dependence (Fraley et al., 2011). The ECR-RS measures dimensions of attachment-related anxiety and avoidance in the relationships individuals have with their mother, father, spouse, and friend (Fraley et al., 2011). However, researchers may focus on one relationship only (e. g., the mother) and not collect data on the attachment one has with the father, spouse, and friend (Fraley et al., 2011). This study focuses on the attachment one has to the father and mother.

Emotional Intelligence

Many empirical studies addressing the marriage relationship include the theory of emotional intelligence (Anghel, 2016; Kaur & Sokhey, 2011; Lavalekar et al., 2010; Malouff et al., 2013). This inclusion allows researchers to understand the role of feelings in the couple's relationship and how couples develop emotional awareness and regulation (Matthews et al., 2017; Uhrich et al., 2021; Zeidner et al., 2013). Studies on the relationship between marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence have added to the overall understanding of marriage dynamics and the development of strategies for marriage counseling (Kaur & Sokhey, 2011; Lee, 2011; Shirzad, 2016; Zarch et al., 2014).

Research shows that individuals with high emotional intelligence are more effective in interpersonal relationships since they are able to maintain more positive interpersonal relationships, which is crucial in marriage (Batool & Khalid, 2012; Čikeš et al., 2018; Zarch et al., 2014). Individuals with high emotional intelligence have a natural capacity to solve emotion-related problems, understand people's non-verbal communication, and manage their emotions and the emotions of others more effectively (Goleman, 2021; Uhrich et al., 2021). Batool and Khalid (2012) note that some aspects of emotional intelligence, such as empathy, optimism, and impulse control, are significantly related to marital satisfaction. Similarly, Čikeš et al. (2018) observe that emotional self-regulation and regulation of others' emotions are significant factors that affect marital satisfaction. However, Zarch et al.'s (2014) study on the relationship between emotional intelligence components and marital satisfaction with 159 Iranian couples from three distinctive socio-economic levels (rich, semi-rich, and under-rich) shows no significant relationship between the interpersonal component of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction for the under-rich group. They explain that the differing results might be due to cultural and religious factors not included in the study.

Intelligence and emotions comprise the basis of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2004). While intelligence is understood as one's ability to acquire, reason, and apply information accurately, emotional intelligence refers to one's ability to understand, reason, and apply emotions accurately. According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence also includes Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, especially the concepts related to personal intelligences. This is because Gardner's theory expands the definition of intelligence to include linguistic, logical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal,

intrapersonal, and naturalist competencies, emphasizing that all individuals possess these intelligences at various degrees (Gardner, 2011, 2020).

Researchers attempt to understand the physiology of emotional intelligence and determine if neuroscientific findings can help individuals improve their emotional intelligence score and, ultimately, their intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, including their marriage (Bajaj & Killgore, 2021; Gardner, 2011, 2020; Mayer et al., 2004; Takeuchi et al., 2011). For instance, Takeuchi et al.'s (2011) study on the connection between emotional intelligence and regional gray matter density shows that intrapersonal, interpersonal, and situational aspects of emotional intelligence were “related to the specific brain regions known to be involved in the networks of social cognition and self-related recognition, and in the somatic marker circuitry” (p. 1503). Similarly, Bajaj and Killgore (2021) investigate the connection of emotional intelligence with brain activities by collecting data from 55 individuals by using the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and the structural and resting-state functional magnetic resonance imaging (rsfMRI) scan. They conclude that more research is needed to understand the neurobiology of emotional intelligence and its implications for relationships.

According to Goleman (1995, 1998, 2005, 2021), emotional intelligence has five components: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation. Self-awareness is one's ability to recognize emotions and emotional reactions of self and others correctly and recognize that emotions and actions are directly related (Goleman, 1995, 1998). Self-regulation refers to one's ability to implement coping skills and flexibility to control challenging situations as well as one's own emotions and the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995, 1998). Social skills indicate one's ability to communicate effectively with others in a way that shows awareness of one's own emotions and the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995, 1998).

Empathy is recognizing how others are feeling and considering power dynamics that affect individuals' feelings in a given situation (Goleman, 1995, 1998). Finally, motivation refers specifically to intrinsic motivation and involves self-initiative (Goleman, 1995, 1998).

The literature identifies three major research-based models or categories of emotional intelligence: the ability model, mixed model, and trait model (Ackley, 2016; O'Connor et al., 2019; Pavitra & Fauzan, 2019). Although these models or categories show similarities, they also show unique views of emotional intelligence and help researchers develop instruments that measure emotional intelligence. For instance, Goleman's Emotional Intelligence model is a trait model that uses the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI). The inventory has four scales (self-awareness, self-management, relationship management, and social awareness) and twelve subscales (emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control, adaptability, achievement orientation, positive outlook, influence, coaching, mentoring, empathy, conflict management, teamwork, organizational awareness, and inspirational leadership) (Goleman, 1995, 1998).

Bar-On's model of emotional intelligence, represented by the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), is a trait model (Ackley, 2016). This model describes the emotional and social competencies as the basis for forming of a system of intertwined behaviors (Ackley, 2016; O'Connor et al., 2019; Pavitra & Fauzan, 2019). The model has five scales (self-perception, self-expression, interpersonal, decision-making, and stress management) and fifteen subscales (self-regard, self-actualization, emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, assertiveness, independence, interpersonal relationships, empathy, social responsibility, problem-solving, reality testing, impulse control, flexibility, stress tolerance and, optimism) (Bar-On, 2000; Bar-On, 2010).

Finally, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) depicts an ability or performance model which emphasizes that one's capacity to understand and manage emotions can facilitate thinking and decision-making (Ackley, 2016; O'Connor et al., 2019; Pavitra & Fauzan, 2019). Mayer et al. (2004) four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence establishes that ability to become aware of emotions, apply emotions to facilitate thought, understand emotions, and administer emotions are the defining parts of emotional intelligence. Nevertheless, this study uses the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Schutte et al. (1998), which draws from the foundational work of Salovey and Mayer (1990).

Religious Commitment

The empirical study of spirituality and religious commitment started between the 19th and 20th centuries with the work of Starbuck (1899) and Coe (1916, 1920). However, it was Freud (1927) and Jung (1938) whose interest in the psychology of religion motivated researchers to consider religion an important variable in the empirical study of human development. Since then, studies considering religiosity or religious commitment as it relates to marital satisfaction have slowly populated the literature.

Although spirituality and religiosity commitment denote a desire to connect to the sacred (Pargament, 2007), many researchers view spirituality and religiosity as distinct constructs with varying definitions depending on the field of study or religion (Jastrzębski, 2021). They also understand that religiosity encompasses the idea of religious commitment and religious practice (Aman et al., 2019). From a Christian perspective, spirituality is defined as a life indwelt by the Holy Spirit while religiosity or religious commitment is defined as the expression of a life indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Erickson & Hustad, 2015; Kim, 2017; Willard, 2012); that is, the intensity of individuals' commitment to learn and live the teachings of the Christian religion in

private and in public (Worthington et al., 2003). This commitment involves practicing spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, meditation, church attendance, Bible reading, and stewardship, to name a few (Whitney, 2014). Thus, correctly defining these terms helps researchers develop and use reliable instruments that empirically measure spirituality and religious commitment more distinctively in specific religious and non-religious populations (Jastrzębski, 2021).

Measuring spirituality and religious commitment is a demanding task since spirituality is a broad term and because various religions exist in the world. Thus, researchers must consider what aspects of spirituality and religious commitment instruments must address to capture these constructs empirically (Koenig, 2008). In recent years, many instruments have been developed to measure spirituality and religious commitment (Clements et al., 2013; Monod et al., 2011; Worthington et al., 2003). Among these instruments, one finds the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) developed by Paloutzian and Ellison (1982), the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) constructed by Worthington et al. (2003), and the Religious Surrender and Attendance Scale-3 (RSAS-3) created by Clements et al. (2015). This study will use the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10).

Monod et al.'s (2011) systematic analysis of thirty-five instruments to measure spirituality highlights that researchers need to identify what specific variables they want to measure so that they can choose the best instrument capable of assessing the cognitive, behavioral, and affective expressions of spirituality. Similarly, Koenig (2008) encourages researchers to use measurements that focus on spirituality, religiosity, or religious commitment, within a specific religion for more accurate empirical observations and findings. Interestingly, Jastrzębski (2021) contends that there is a lack of instruments measuring unconscious

spirituality, which he considers a reality in the life of individuals often ignored in empirical research.

Researchers also need to consider cultural factors as they develop and modify instruments to measure spirituality and religious commitment (Roth et al., 2012; Stewart et al., 2012). For instance, Roth et al.'s (2012) study addresses the development of a brief instrument to measure religious belief levels and behaviors in the African American population since most existing instruments target the Anglo population. Correspondingly, Stewart et al. (2012) emphasize that researchers need to be careful when attempting to modify instruments by ensuring that they cover any missing concepts and clarify meaning so that the instrument can accurately measure the specific variable in the population.

Understanding individuals' spirituality and religious commitment may help researchers gain insight into the marital satisfaction of specific religious groups (Aman et al., 2019; Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018; Hajihhasani & Sim, 2019; Lazar, 2019). For instance, Lazar's (2019) study with 240 married Jewish women indicates that married women with a high sense of religious commitment and who have been married for longer experience more sexual and marital satisfaction. Aman et al.'s (2019) study addressing marital satisfaction with 508 married Muslim individuals living in Pakistan indicates that religious commitment and religious practices positively influence marital satisfaction in this sample. Similarly, Olson et al.'s (2016) study with 1,513 married Americans, mostly Christians and Mormons, shows that spouses' agreement on religious issues influences marital satisfaction.

The Pew Research Center (2018, 2019) reports that Americans are becoming more spiritual but less religious, with 65% of the population claiming to be Christians. The report does not address levels of spirituality or religiosity. However, the literature indicates that religiosity,

or religious commitment, encompasses individuals' ability to live by the beliefs, values, and practices upheld by their religion and consider these beliefs, values, and practices as they interact with others (Worthington et al., 2003). Additionally, in the Christian tradition, individuals are expected to love God and people in the same way they love themselves (*New International Version*, 2011, Matthew 22:37-39), display the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (*New International Version*, 2011, Galatians 5:22-23), and engage in spiritual disciplines.

Some of the disciplines or practices of the Christian faith involve prayer, fasting, Bible reading, worship, evangelism, stewardship, confession, service, solitude, and submission, among others (Stanley, 2020; Whitney, 2014). Christians engage in these practices due to their commitment to the beliefs and values of the Christian religion. Thus, to understand the dynamics of this type of commitment, researchers developed religious commitment or religiosity inventories to assess individuals' religious commitment levels. These inventories often focus on intrinsic and extrinsic aspects related to beliefs, values, and practices, and they can be used with most religions. For instance, the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) assesses the level of commitment individuals have in integrating their religion into their everyday activities and how they allow their religion to permeate all spheres of their lives, including the marriage relationship. Thus, this study uses the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10).

Related Literature

This section discusses empirical findings on marital satisfaction and related variables. It also expands the analysis on studies that focus on the connection between marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religiosity. Finally, it creates a connection between

the findings and the specific research questions for this study and provides a summary of the main points covered in the chapter.

Marital Satisfaction and Related Variables

The literature shows the social, emotional, mental, physical, spiritual, and financial benefits of having a healthy and satisfying marriage (Carr et al., 2014; Einolf & Philbrick, 2014; Grover & Helliwell, 2019; Guner et al., 2018; Horn, 2013; Waite & Lehrer, 2004) and how it positively correlates to happiness (Stack & Eshleman, 1998). In general, married individuals show higher levels of a positive sense of well-being than the single, divorced, and widowed population (Carr et al., 2014; Grover & Helliwell, 2019). Guner et al. (2018) found that married individuals are more willing to take preventive measures to care for their health than never-married individuals. Horn (2013) notes that marriage has a positive effect on loneliness and isolation and, consequently, helps decrease the risk of anxiety and depression. Additionally, Einolf and Philbrick's (2014) longitudinal study highlights that marriage shows a positive effect on religious giving of money and volunteering. Thus, according to the literature, a healthy marriage has many benefits and is marked by higher levels of marital satisfaction (Carr et al., 2014).

Marital satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that refers to the happiness and satisfaction individuals perceive in their marriage (Čikeš et al., 2018; Schumm et al., 1983; Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997; Tavakol, 2017). Intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental processes underline this perception, add to the complexity of marital satisfaction, and fuel researchers' interest in this topic (Ashkzari, 2017; Brandão et al., 2020; Salimi et al., 2019; Tong et al., 2021). Research shows that couples are diverse and live under diverse conditions; thus, an array of variables may affect marital satisfaction (Bradbury, 2020).

Between 1990 and 2000, a growing interdisciplinary interest in the topic of marital satisfaction surfaced (Bradbury et al., 2000). During that period, researchers believed that marital satisfaction formed a natural pattern in which satisfaction was higher at the beginning of the relationship, lower after a few years, and higher again as the couple adjusted to each other and the relationship dynamics (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kurdek, 1999). However, as other studies developed, researchers observed that the U-shaped pattern of marital satisfaction was possibly affected by developmental stages, the honeymoon period, parenting, duration of the marriage, socioeconomics, and other extraneous variables not yet considered (Galambos et al., 2020; Kwok et al., 2015; Lazar, 2017; Lorber et al., 2015). For instance, Bradbury (2020) notes that a decline in marital satisfaction after the honeymoon period is only sometimes the norm for couples and that couples seem to show more stability in marital satisfaction for longer periods than expected. Other researchers have also observed that the longer couples are married, the less satisfied they seem to become (Wang-Sheng, 2018; Wendorf et al., 2011). These findings, to an extent, seem to contradict the U-shaped concept and signal a need for more research.

Between 2000 and 2010, a new understanding of factors influencing marital satisfaction emerged (Bradbury, 2020). While early research on marital satisfaction views communication as one of the most important variables affecting marital satisfaction, current research focuses on how communication affects marital satisfaction, how marital satisfaction affects communication (Lavner et al., 2016), and how other variables not considered before may affect marital satisfaction. Thus, the literature shows the inclusion of attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment as significant variables in studies of marital satisfaction (Abbasi et al., 2016; Hajjhasani & Sim, 2019; Olson et al., 2016).

Marital satisfaction is connected to spouses' overall sense of well-being (Carr et al., 2014; Chung & Choi, 2014). Many studies investigate if a sense of well-being produces higher levels of marital satisfaction or if marital satisfaction produces a higher sense of well-being in spouses (Carr et al., 2014; Chung & Choi, 2014; Erhabor & Ndlovu, 2013). Researchers note that an increase in marital satisfaction can produce excitement about life that, in turn, affect one's sense of well-being (Erhabor & Ndlovu, 2013). For instance, Carr et al.'s (2014) study on the connection between marital satisfaction and well-being appraisals of husbands and wives ages 50 and beyond indicates that marital satisfaction correlates to life satisfaction and that marital quality and life satisfaction scores for husbands correlate to wives' scores. When wives' rates increase, husbands show higher life satisfaction and marital quality; when wives report low marital quality, husbands' marital quality and life satisfaction decrease (Carr et al., 2014).

The variables of age (Lee & McKinnish, 2018; Sorokowski et al., 2017) and gender (Erhabor & Ndlovu, 2013; Faulkner et al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2014) are part of most marital satisfaction studies. Sorokowski et al. (2017) note that "age should be examined as a predictor of marital satisfaction with respect to the duration of the marriage" (p. 2). Tavakol et al. (2016) highlight that middle-aged couples show lower marital satisfaction when compared to younger couples. Concerning gender, although some studies indicate that men tend to show higher scores on marital satisfaction than women (Boerner et al., 2014; Rostami et al., 2014), Jackson et al. (2014) found no significant difference in their meta-analysis.

Cultural elements may shape variables in unique ways (Tavakol et al., 2016). For instance, Arif and Fatima's (2015) study with 75 married Pakistani individuals exemplifies how some aspects of culture may shape marital satisfaction. In their study, they categorize marriage as *arranged marriage*, *marriage of choice with parental acceptance*, and *marriage by choice*

without parental acceptance. After comparing individuals' scores on the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) and Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Questionnaire (ECR-R), they concluded that those in the *marriage by choice without parental acceptance* category showed lower marital satisfaction. They explain that this is due to the unique cultural values and social expectations in the Pakistani sample population, which values parental interaction and approval (Arif & Fatima, 2015).

The following pages will discuss current findings on marital satisfaction as it relates to attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment which are the focus of this study.

Marital Satisfaction and Attachment Style

Bowlby's (1958, 1959, 1960) and Ainsworth's (1969; 1970) research on infant attachment has helped researchers expand their understanding of attachment styles and served as the theoretical framework for many studies (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simard et al., 2011). Based on the secure, anxious-resistant, and avoidant attachment styles identified by Ainsworth (1969; 1970), some researchers have renamed some of these styles and even identified new ones as they conducted studies with the adult population. For instance, Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy (1985) identified secure (autonomous), dismissive-avoidant, and preoccupied adult attachment styles. Hazan and Shaver (1987) identified three distinct attachment styles within romantic relationships, which they categorized as secure lovers, avoidant lovers, and ambivalent lovers. Similarly, Collins and Read (1990) list close, dependent, or anxious attachment styles. However, Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) research yielded a four-category identification of adult attachment style that considered previous research methodologies and integrated aspects of child/parents attachment and adult romantic attachment.

Thus, although researchers use different terms to refer to specific attachment styles, they are often used interchangeably and draw their meaning from the categories first identified by the groundbreaking work of Ainsworth (1969; 1970).

Studies on the relationships between marital satisfaction and attachment style in various populations indicate that secure attachment often correlates positively to marital satisfaction (Brimhall et al., 2018; Castellano et al., 2014; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020). For instance, Castellano et al.'s (2014) research with 206 Italian couples found that secure attachment during pregnancy produced more marital satisfaction and cooperation in the couple interaction even after they became parents. Brimhall et al.'s (2018) study with 54 male American officers and their spouses notes that secure attachment behaviors help improve communication, which positively affects spouse's overall marital satisfaction. Additionally, Wijaya and Widyaningsih's (2020) study with 202 Indonesian couples found that couples with a secure attachment style show higher couple cohesion in decision-making, which affects marital satisfaction.

Studies on the relationships between marital satisfaction and attachment style indicate that insecure attachment styles, such as anxious and avoidant, affect marital satisfaction negatively (Altgelt & Meltzer, 2019; Bedair et al., 2020; Mcnelis & Segrin, 2019). For example, Bedair et al.'s (2020) study with a sample of 222 heterosexual married individuals living in Qatar shows that participants with insecure attachment style displayed lower levels of marital satisfaction and, for that reason, might be at risk of experiencing divorce. Similarly, Altgelt and Meltzer's (2019) study with 221 married American individuals on the relationship between attachment insecurity and partner satisfaction highlights that an individual's attachment insecurity produces behaviors that emphasize the fear of partner defection, thus, affecting relationship satisfaction negatively.

Some studies on the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment style use mediating variables (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018; Chung, 2014; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020). For instance, Amani and Khosroshahi's (2021) correlational study with 300 married Iranian heterosexual couples uses self-compassion, resilience, and dyadic perspective-taking as mediating variables in the relationship between marital quality and secure attachment style. Wijaya and Widyaningsih's (2020) study with 202 Indonesian couples use dyadic cohesion as a mediating variable between secure attachment and marital satisfaction. Cirhinlioglu et al.'s (2018) study investigates the mediating role of religiosity between attachment style and marital satisfaction in a sample of 510 married Turkish individuals. Finally, Chung (2014) investigates the mediating role of rumination, empathy, and forgiveness in the relationship between adult attachment and marital satisfaction in a sample of 208 married Korean women.

Marital Satisfaction and Emotional Intelligence

Marital satisfaction is "a person's overall evaluation of his or her marriage" (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997, p. 337) and it appears in connection with emotional intelligence in various studies with diverse populations (Čikeš et al., 2018; Hajihassani & Sim, 2019; Kaur & Sokhey, 2011; Malouff et al., 2013; Zarch et al., 2014; Zeidner et al., 2013). For instance, Čikeš et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital quality in a sample of 98 married Croatian couples by using the Emotional Competence Questionnaire-45 (UEK-45), Emotion Analysis Test (TAE), Emotion Management Test (TUE), Quality of Marriage Index (QMI), and the Big Five Inventory (BFI). Results from their study show that both agreeableness and emotional management are significant variables in marital quality (Čikeš et al., 2018), thus, emphasizing the importance of intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) formulated a four-branch ability model of emotional intelligence, which includes emotional awareness, application of emotions to facilitate thought, understanding of emotions, and administration of emotions. This four-branch emotional ability model allows individuals to understand, reason, and apply emotions accurately in various life situations, enabling them to maintain overall life quality (Gardner, 2011, 2020; Mayer et al., 2004). Thus, researchers believe that individuals with high emotional intelligence can solve emotional issues and maintain positive relationships with others, including their spouses (Mayer et al., 2004).

Many researchers have considered the intrapersonal dynamics of emotional intelligence when studying marital satisfaction (Bajaj & Killgore, 2021; Mayer et al., 2004; Gardner, 2011, 2020). For instance, Abbasi et al. (2016) found that intrapersonal aspects of emotional intelligence correlated significantly and directly to marital satisfaction while “the roles of interpersonal and stress management variables were not significant” (Abbasi et al., 2016, p. 5). Additionally, some researchers note that the emotions experienced by one of the spouses can affect the other spouse’s overall marital satisfaction. For example, Bloch et al. (2014) conducted a 13-year longitudinal study on the correlation between marital satisfaction and emotional regulation with an American sample population from the West Coast ages 40-70 who were in long-term marriages. They observed that when wives showed more emotional and behavioral equilibrium after a negative interaction with their husbands, both wives and husbands experienced higher levels of marital satisfaction (Bloch et al., 2014).

Petrovici and Dobrescu (2014) explain that the intrapersonal aspects of emotional intelligence involve the ability to identify and become aware of one’s own emotions, that is, having self-awareness and self-actualization. As expected, this can increase one’s chances of

becoming more successful at the interpersonal level, which involves understanding people's emotions and actions and reactions to those emotions (Petrovici & Dobrescu, 2014).

Nevertheless, research conducted with 316 married individuals in India notes that a partner's emotional intelligence does not always translate into high levels of marital satisfaction in the other spouse and that a partner's low emotional intelligence seems to directly influence the other spouse's marital satisfaction (Lavalekar et al., 2010).

Research on the relationship between marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence adds to the understanding of interpersonal dynamics, which are part of emotional intelligence and affect the marriage relationship (Bajaj & Killgore, 2021; Gardner, 2011, 2020; Mayer et al., 2004). For instance, Batool and Khalid's (2012) analysis of data from 85 Pakistani couples on emotional intelligence, marital adjustment, and conflict resolution found that interpersonal skills, along with empathy and assertiveness, was a significant predictor of conflict resolution and marital quality. Similarly, Deniz et al.'s (2020) study with 302 married Turkish individuals indicates that spouses' ability to empathize with each other and work cooperatively to solve problems is directly related to increased marital satisfaction.

Studies using emotional intelligence as a mediating variable between marital satisfaction and attachment style are scarce. Constant et al.'s (2018) study on the mediating role of emotional competences on attachment orientation and relational intimacy may be the closest example related to the topic. Since the literature connects intimacy to marital satisfaction, Constant et al.'s (2018) study adds to the understanding of the value of emotional intelligence as a mediator. The study uses data from 564 primarily Caucasian heterosexual individuals married or cohabitating who have been together for at least one year (Constant et al., 2018). The study concludes that, though interpersonal aspects are not significant in the correlation, "intrapersonal emotional

competences mediate the association between the anxious attachment dimension and the engagement and communication sub-dimensions of relational intimacy” (Constant et al., 2018, p. 6).

Marital Satisfaction and Religious Commitment

While many studies on marital satisfaction include attachment style and emotional intelligence as important variables (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Givertz et al., 2019; Hajjhasani & Sim, 2019; Mardani et al., 2021; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020), only a few of them include the religious commitment variable (Aman et al., 2019; Cho, 2014; Kasinec, 2018). Since marriage is a religious ritual (Balswick & Balswick, 2006), researchers in general agree that including the variable of religiosity or religious commitment with diverse religious populations can lead to a deeper understanding of the marriage relationship and its unique dynamics (Aman et al., 2021; Kasapoğlu & Yabanigül, 2018; Lazar, 2019).

Some researchers use spirituality, instead of religious commitment, as a mediating variable when investigating marital satisfaction (Kasapoğlu & Yabanigül, 2018). For instance, Kasapoğlu and Yabanigül’s (2018) study with 586 married individuals from Turkey found that spirituality partially mediates the correlation between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction. They suggest that spiritual beliefs produce thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors that promote self-acceptance, forgiveness, compassion, and gratitude, which are influential to the development of multidimensional couple intimacy and marital satisfaction (Kasapoğlu & Yabanigül, 2018).

Another important observation is that a limited number of studies use religious commitment as a mediating variable in the study of marital satisfaction and attachment (Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018). Cirhinlioglu et al.’s (2018) study is part of this limited number. In the study, they analyze a sample of 510 married Muslim individuals and conclude that religiosity

significantly influences attachment style and marital satisfaction. Cirhinlioglu et al.'s (2018) study also shows that “when avoidant attachment in men and anxious attachment in women increase, their religiousness levels decrease” (Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018, Discussion). Cirhinlioglu et al. (2018) explain that religious commitment works as a protective barrier against negative marriage dynamics and that a positive God attachment may increase religious commitment and marital satisfaction (Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018).

Researchers agree that more studies on the relationship between religious commitment and marital satisfaction are necessary since many diverse cultures, socioeconomics, and marriage formats exist in the world and influence and are influenced by religion (Hajihhasani & Sim, 2019; Kasinec, 2018; Lazar, 2019; Zarch et al., 2014). Thus, religious commitment and marital satisfaction studies may yield different results when considering these factors. For example, Hajihhasani and Sim's (2019) study with 194 early married (younger than 18 years old) Iranian Muslim women shows that religiosity was not a significant variable in the marital satisfaction correlation (Hajihhasani & Sim, 2019). They explain that participants' low socio-economic status and early marriage might explain these differing results (Hajihhasani & Sim, 2019). This amplifies the need for further research that includes the religious commitment variable as it relates to marital satisfaction.

Most studies indicate that couples with higher religious commitment scores report more stability and happiness in their marriages independent of their religion (Aman et al., 2019; Kyambi et al., 2017; Lazar, 2019; Sorokowski et al., 2019). For example, Lazar's (2019) study with 240 married Jewish women indicates that married women with a high sense of religious commitment and who have been married for longer experience more sexual and marital satisfaction. Aman et al.'s (2019) study with 508 married Pakistani Muslim individuals living in

Pakistan indicates that religious commitment positively influences marital satisfaction because it helps couples maintain a positive relationship with their spouse. Similarly, Kyambi et al.'s (2017) qualitative study with a group of Evangelical Christians in Kenya found that spouses' religious involvement in spiritual disciplines and commitment promoted virtues such as perseverance and humility, which directly affected their marital relationship and satisfaction positively.

Most studies with married American samples show a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and religious commitment as they focus on the processes involved in the correlation of these two variables (Olson et al., 2015, 2016; Perry, 2016). For instance, Olson et al. (2015) observe that certain indicators of religiosity, such as religious agreement, intercessory prayer for spouses, and forgiveness, correlated to higher levels of marital satisfaction. In a similar study, Olson et al.'s (2016) study on the variations of predictors of marital satisfaction among 1,513 heterosexual married individuals from Arkansas, Utah, and Vermont shows that religious homogamy, or spouse's agreement on religious issues, played a significant role in the marital satisfaction correlation in all three states. Similarly, Perry (2016) found that when a spouse rated the other spouse high on religious commitment, the spouse benefitted from the evaluated spouse's religious commitment and experienced more overall marital satisfaction.

Marital Satisfaction, Attachment Style, Emotional Intelligence, and Religious Commitment

The literature shows that marriage is a sacred relationship involving attachment between spouses, high emotional interactions, and intentional commitment (Köstenberger & Jones, 2010; Gottman & Silver, 2015; Worthington, 2005). Individuals enter marriage hoping to experience high levels of marital satisfaction. Thus, based on this understanding, many researchers justify the inclusion of attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment as essential

variables in the study of marital satisfaction (Abbasi et al., 2016; Dobrowolska et al., 2020; Tavakol et al., 2017).

Since marital satisfaction is a personal evaluation of one's marriage (Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997, p. 337), it is possible that one's attachment style, perceptions of own feelings, the feelings of others, and personal religious beliefs and practices affect this evaluation. Sandberg et al. (2017) indicate that the husband's attachment style and behaviors affect the wife's marital satisfaction. Abbasi et al. (2016) observe that spouses who are confident and trust the other spouse experience more marital satisfaction than those who are more pessimistic and fearful of rejection. Likewise, Carr et al. (2014) note a connection between husbands' life satisfaction and how they perceive their wives' marital satisfaction.

Attachment style is an important factor to consider when evaluating couples' relationships (Ottu & Akpan, 2011). Attachment theories promote the idea that individuals' early interactions produce an internal working model which depicts the individuals' perceptions of self-worthiness and expectations of how others should evaluate them (Bowlby, 1958, 1959, 1960; Ainsworth, 1969, 1970). Accordingly, attachment is one of the primary ways individuals identify, manage, and adjust their emotions and, hopefully, become more emotionally competent in their interpersonal interactions (Constant et al., 2018; Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simard et al., 2011). Thus, individuals' internal attachment working models influence all social interactions, including interactions in the marriage relationship.

The literature also shows that internal working models of attachment can influence how individuals view self, relate to God, and express their religious commitment (Bradshaw et al., 2019; Kent et al., 2018; Sandage et al., 2015). Bradshaw et al.'s (2019) study with 1,714 American adults on attachment to God and social trust suggests that individuals' anxiety and

fears towards God affect how they feel about themselves and how they relate to others in the family and society. Similarly, Kent et al.'s (2018) study indicates that individuals who report a secure attachment to God tend to experience optimism and self-esteem more progressively (p. 471). Correspondingly, Sandage et al.'s (2015) study with 176 Protestant adults ages 21-64 shows that "affect regulation difficulties associated with insecure human attachment experiences may be associated with a dysregulated form of spirituality, which in turn may be associated with increased felt insecurity in one's relationship with God" (p. 804).

Religious commitment encompasses individuals' ability to live by the beliefs, values, and practices upheld by their religion and apply these beliefs, values, and practices as they enter in various relationships (Worthington et al., 2003), including marriage. In the Christian tradition, marriage is a sacred union between a man and a woman in the presence of a congregation and before God that requires a commitment to God and the spouse (Balswick & Balswick, 2006; Maxwell et al., 2018). The Bible teaches that the husband must love his wife as Christ loved His church, and the wife must submit to her husband's authority (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, Ephesians 5:22-33) as they become one flesh (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, Ephesians 5:31).

In the process of attaching, couples exercise emotional awareness, identify emotions, and administer each other's emotions (Collins & Read, 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Abbasi et al. (2016) emphasize that "in general, satisfaction with marital relationship is the outcome of a combination of positive and negative emotions which is experienced by couples in common" (p. 2). This involves interconnected intrapersonal and interpersonal processes that may affect marriage satisfaction at different levels (Abdollahi et al., 2011; Anghel, 2016; Ball, 2015; Olson et al., 2016; Perry, 2016).

Although emotional intelligence is not a biblical term, the Bible encourages Christians to develop virtues and behaviors that reflect those described in emotional intelligence theory and models (Dustman, 2018). For instance, Jesus taught that the greatest commandment is that Christians love God, and the second commandment is to love others (Matthew 22:35-39). Additionally, the Apostle Paul teaches Christians to display the fruit of the Spirit, which is “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). Proverbs 29:11 emphasizes that “a fool gives full vent to his rage, but the wise bring calm in the end” (Proverbs 29:11). These are essential teachings in the Christian religion that can influence individuals’ attachment style, emotional intelligence, and consequently their marital satisfaction (Olson et al., 2015).

Religious commitment influences individuals’ feelings and how they regulate them. Vishkin et al.’s (2020) study on religiosity and desired emotions indicates that “the emotions religious people desire may be those that help strengthen their religious beliefs” (Vishkin et al., 2020). In the Christian religion, believers are to express emotions and attitudes that stem from the fruit of the Spirit, as listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Studies on marital satisfaction show that spouses with higher levels of emotional intelligence are more empathetic towards the other spouse (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021), more resilient in difficult times (Bradley & Hojjat, 2017), and more willing to forgive their spouses (Bell et al., 2018; Chung, 2014).

Empathy involves perspective-taking and compassion and contributes to healthy relationships (Chung, 2014). Empathy is the ability to recognize and experience one’s own feelings and the feelings of others simultaneously, and it is crucial to a healthy relationship (Redmond, 2018). A study by Amani and Khosroshahi (2021) found that compassionate spouses tend to be more solidary, affectionate, and accepting of their spouses and that these qualities are

often connected to secure attachment and marital satisfaction (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021). Redmond (2018) notes that the longer couples spend time together, the more accurate their empathy toward each other becomes.

Resilience in marriage is both an individual and couple-related component, and it is the spouses' ability to deal with the challenges of marriage positively and constructively (Skerrett, 2015). Bradley and Hojjat's (2017) study on the role of resilience as a mediating variable between marital satisfaction and spousal attachment, social support, and affect shows that "low-avoidance attachment can have a positive impact on satisfaction through resilience" (Bradley & Hojjat, 2017, p. 597). They explain that resilient spouses are goal-oriented, optimistic about the marriage relationship, and able to endure difficult times.

The literature shows that resilience emerges through forgiveness (Skerrett, 2015) and that forgiveness can be a positive predictor and mediator in the marital satisfaction correlation (Bell et al., 2018; Olson et al., 2015; Chung, 2014). Chung's (2014) study with 208 married Korean women found that forgiveness was a significant mediator between adult attachment and marital satisfaction while rumination and lack of empathy correlated to lower levels of marital satisfaction. Bell et al.'s (2018) analysis of data from two studies, one with 94 American families and another with 101 Indian families, indicates that forgiveness is a significant mediator between attributions and marital quality in both cultures. They explain that "the more benign attributions U.S. and Indian wives had for their husbands' transgressions, and U.S. husbands had for their wives' transgressions, the more positive marital outcomes each reported" (Bell et al., 2018, p. 287).

Christianity also teaches that trust is essential in building relationships with God and others. The Bible says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own

understanding” (*New International Version Bible*, 2011, Proverbs 3:5). A trusting relationship allows Christian couples to attach, express their emotions freely, grow in multidimensional intimacy, and experience higher levels of marital satisfaction (Dagleish et al., 2015; Olson et al., 2015; Perry, 2016). Moreover, “the satisfaction and joy experienced through Christian marriage... prepares [individuals] to enter into another dimension of life where [they] may further image God, thereby experiencing the even greater joy that results from godly and harmonious family life” (Endara, 2015, p. 730).

Summary

Marriage serves specific purposes in society and human growth and development (Celello, 2009; Doe, 2016; Francesconi, 2016; Moses, 2018). Individuals enter marriage hoping to experience marital satisfaction, which is a subjective construct defined as the level of stability and happiness couples believe to experience in their marriage (Fowers & Olson, 1993; Gottman, 1999; Mangus, 1957; Tavakol, 2017). An array of variables affects marital satisfaction, including attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020, Čikeš et al., 2018; Malouff et al., 2013; Sorokowski et al., 2017; Tavakol’s, 2017; Zarch et al., 2014). Researchers must consider the theoretical basis which supports each variable related to marital satisfaction. For this reason, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 1986; 2005) ecological theory, Bowlby’s (1958; 1959; 1960) and Ainsworth’s (1969; 1970) attachment style theories, Salovey and Mayer’s (1990) emotional intelligence theory, and Worthington et al.’s (2003) spiritual commitment are part of this chapter. Additionally, the chapter presented research findings related to marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment and discussed their interconnectedness.

The following chapter discusses the methodology used to explore the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment style as mediated by emotional intelligence and religious commitment in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. By focusing on the possible correlation and mediation of these variables to marital satisfaction, the study hopes to contribute to a more holistic understanding of marital satisfaction that includes elements from attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. The proposed study also aims to provide insights that can benefit marriage and family counseling.

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

The proposed study investigates the correlation between marital satisfaction and attachment style as mediated by emotional intelligence and religious commitment in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. Thus, this chapter provides detailed information about the study's research design, followed by research questions and hypotheses. It also presents information about specific characteristics of participants, setting, instrumentation, and procedures used to analyze the data. Finally, a summary concludes this chapter.

Design

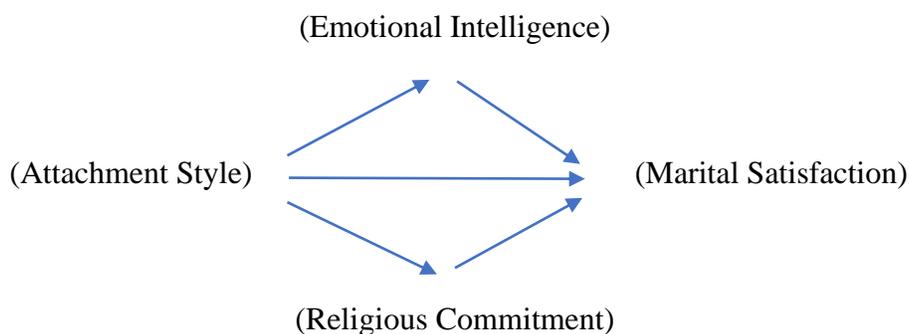
The proposed study is a quantitative, non-experimental, survey-based research design that aims to explore the relationship between attachment style (predictor variable) and marital satisfaction (criterion variable) and the mediating role of emotional intelligence and religious commitment (mediating variables). Answering the research questions in this study requires a non-experimental design since the research questions focus on the correlation between variables, and they do not involve manipulating an independent variable. Wachter Morris and Wester (2018) emphasize that causality is not the goal of a correlational study design. Additionally, correlational studies using survey research data are common in the field of behavioral sciences, as they allow researchers to understand how a variable helps explain another variable, the strength of the relationship between them, and if they have a positive or negative association (Bager-Charleson & McBeath, 2020; Cooksey, 2020; Heppner et al., 2016; York, 2020).

The proposed study includes two mediating variables: emotional intelligence and religious commitment. According to Little (2013), "mediating variables can be psychological

(e.g., knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes), behavioral (e.g., interpersonal skills), and biological (e.g., serum cholesterol level)” (p. 338). Adding mediating variables to a study helps researchers understand if the mediating variables can affect the strength of the connection between the predictor and criterion variables and the direction of their connection (Allen, 2017; Hayes & Little, 2018). Thus, considering the nature of this study, a correlational research design provides a statistical analysis of the relationship of scores from the instruments and quantitatively describes the effect of the mediating variables. It helps one better understand the relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction and the impact of emotional intelligence and religious commitment on this relationship.

Figure 1

Theoretical Model



Research Questions

RQ1. Is there a correlation between attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), and marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States?

RQ2. Is the relationship between attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), and marital satisfaction,

as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), mediated by emotional intelligence, as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States?

RQ3. Is the relationship between attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), and marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), mediated by religious commitment, as measured by the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States?

Hypotheses

Ha1: There is a correlation between attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), and marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States.

Ha2: The impact of attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), on marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), is mediated by emotional intelligence, as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States.

Ha3: The impact of attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), on marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), is mediated by religious commitment, as measured by the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States.

Participants and Setting

Participants in this study are heterosexual Christian adults who have been married for at least two years and do not have children. The number of times they have married did not prevent them from participating in the study. According to experts, the honeymoon is a positive period in the lives of couples which tends to extend to the second year of marriage (Lorber, 2015). This sample group provides a better and more general representation of couples' marital satisfaction since it involves couples who have been married closer to the time the honeymoon period ends. Additionally, since some studies show that married couples wait three years on average to become parents and that parenting factors are negatively associated with marital satisfaction, especially in Western countries (Kwok et al., 2015; Lorber et al., 2015), only couples without children are included in this study.

Participants residing in the United States and whose primary language is English completed the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), Experiences in Close Relationships—Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), and a brief demographic questionnaire through Amazon Mechanical Turk online services. According to Williamson and Johanson (2018), technological changes have allowed for more efficient, reliable, and affordable data collection for academic research. Thus, Amazon Mechanical Turk is a respectable online crowdsourcing marketplace platform where researchers can collect reliable and efficient data for scholarly studies (Sheehan, 2017; Paolacci & Chandler, 2014).

The literature indicates that sample sizes impact “statistical power and precision of estimates” (Cooksey, 2020, p. 274) and that correlational studies usually need to have between 500 and 1000 participants (CloudResearch, n.d.). In this study, 928 individuals completed the

survey through Amazon Mechanical Turk. However, only data from 530 individuals met the criteria and were part of the analysis ($N = 530$). The sample was composed of 306 (57.7%) males and 224 (42.3%) females (Table 1).

Participants' ages ranged from 20 to 69 years ($M = 34.45$), and 19.8% of them were 30 years of age. In terms of ethnicity, 88.7% (470) identified as Caucasian/White, 4.2% (22) Black/African American, .9% (5) Hispanics/Latinos, 2.5% (13) Asian, and 3.6% (19) American Indian/Alaska Native, .2% (1) identified as Other. The question on times of marriage indicates that 84.9% (450) had been married once, 11.7% (62) had been married twice, 2.8% (15) had been married three times, and .6% (3) had been married four times. Analysis of participants' educational levels shows that 70.8% (375) had a bachelor's degree, 21.9% (116) had a master's degree, and the other 7.5% (39) fell into the other educational level categories. Next, the demographic analysis of church attendance shows that 2.5% of participants chose the never/not anymore attended church in person options. Thus, most participants attended church at least once a month. Detailed demographic information appear in Appendix I.

Table 1

Participants' Demographics

Demographic	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Male	306	57.7
Female	224	42.3
Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White,	470	88.7
Black/African American	22	4.2
Hispanics/Latinos	5	9.0
Asian	13	2.5
American Indian/Alaska Native	19	3.6
Other	1	.2
Times Married		
Once	450	84.9
Twice	62	11.7

Three times	15	2.8
Four times	3	.6

Instrumentation

This quantitative correlational study uses a brief demographic questionnaire and four instruments. The demographic questionnaire (Appendix C) gathers information on participants' age, gender, ethnicity, times married, education, and church attendance frequency in person and online. The four instruments, namely, The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), and Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) gather data on the predictor, criterion, and moderating variables in the study. The sections below discuss each instrument.

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS)

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS) is a brief unidimensional three-item instrument that measures individuals' evaluation of their marriage relationship (Schumm et al., 1983, 1985, 1986; Delatorre & Wagner, 2020; Schumm et al., 1983). The KMS correlates to other popular scales that measure marital satisfaction (Schumm et al., 1986; Graham et al., 2011), such as the Quality Marriage Index by Norton (1983). The three questions in the KMS address how married individuals are satisfied with their marriage, their spouse, and their relationship with their spouses. The KMS is organized as a 7-point Likert scale in which one represents *Extremely Dissatisfied* and 7 *Extremely Satisfied*. The lowest score in the KMS is three and the highest is 21. The higher the score, the greater the level of marital satisfaction. The KMS shows a Cronbach's alpha of reliability of .96 (Schumm et al., 1985). The KMS has been included in various studies and its reliability and validity meet criteria (Delatorre & Wagner,

2020; Allen et al., 2018; Omani-Samani et al., 2018). The creators of the KMS allow researchers to use the instrument without any formal permission request (Schumm et al., 1986, p. 387). A copy of this instrument and proof of permission to use is part of appendix E.

Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS)

Fraley et al. (2011) developed the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS) to measure dimensions of attachment-related anxiety and avoidance in the relationships individuals have with their mother, father, spouse, and friend. Anxiety denotes a tendency of individuals to fear any sign of rejection and abandonment, whereas avoidance denotes the typical discomfort individuals have with intimacy and dependence. The scale is a brief modified version of the ECR (Brennan et al., 1998; Fraley & Shaver, 2000) and aims to assess four relational domains or multiple contexts by using similar items, such as “I talk things over with people” (Fraley et al., 2011). The ECR-RS is a 7-point Likert scale in which 1 stands for strongly disagree and 7 for strongly agree. The scale contains nine items with two subscales. The attachment *anxiety* subscale has three items, and the *avoidance* subscale has six items. Individuals with low scores on these subscales indicate more secure attachment. These nine items appear in all four domains. The average scores across all four domains provide an overall anxiety and avoidance score. However, researchers can focus on only one domain or type of relationship they need to measure for their studies, such as the relationship with parents. This popular self-report scale shows acceptable validity and a reliability of .65 for the romantic relationship domain and .80 for parental relationships. The ECR-RS has been included in various studies and translated into many languages since its creation (Fraley et al., 2021; Sironova et al., 2020; Wickham et al., 2018). A copy of this

instrument, containing the mother and father domain only, and proof of permission to use can be found in appendix F.

Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) developed by Schutte et al. (1998) draws from the foundational work of Salovey and Mayer (1990), who first used the term emotional intelligence. The literature shows that the EIS appears under different names, such as the Assessing Emotions Scale, the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test, or the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 2009; Stough et al., 2009). Emotional intelligence denotes one's social awareness and efficiency in handling difficult situations in life to maintain overall life quality (Mayer et al., 2004). The scale addresses regulation, utilization of emotion, and appraisal and expression of emotion and contains statements such as "I expect good things to happen," "I have control of my own emotions," and "I help other people feel better when they are down" (Schutte et al., 1998). The EIS is a 33-item scale organized as a 5-point Likert scale in which 1 represents *Strongly Disagree* and 5 *Strongly Agree* (Schutte et al., 1998). It has three reversed scores: low scores fall below 111 and high scores above 137 (Schutte et al., 1998). The original EIS shows a Cronbach alpha of reliability of .90 (Schutte et al., 1998). The literature shows that the EIS scores correlate with similar self-reporting measures of emotional intelligence (Austin et al., 2004; Brackett & Mayer, 2003) and are used in various studies (Callea et al., 2019; Domínguez-García, 2018; Zhoc et al., 2017). A copy of this instrument and proof of permission to use are part of appendix G.

Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10)

Worthington et al. (2003) developed the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) as a short version of the RCI-17 created by McCullough et al. (1997). The RCI-10 assesses the

level of commitment individuals have in integrating their religion to their everyday activities and how they allow their religion to permeate all spheres of their lives. According to Worthington et al. (2003), the instrument is “particularly useful for Christians” (p. 95). Overall, religious commitment means one’s ability to live by the beliefs, values, and practices upheld by their religion and apply these beliefs, values, and practices to their daily interactions with others (Worthington, 1988; Worthington et al., 2003). The inventory is composed of 10 items scored on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating that the statement is *Not at all true of me* and 5 as *Totally true of me* (Worthington et al., 2003). The scale also has two subscales. The *Intrapersonal Religious Commitment* subscale has six items, and the *Interpersonal Religious Commitment* subscale has four items. The statement “My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life” is an example of statements listed under the *Intrapersonal Religious Commitment* subscale. The statement “I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization” is an example of a statement found in *Interpersonal Religious Commitment* subscale (Worthington et al., 2003 p. 87). The Cronbach’s alphas for the full RCI–10 scale is .93. In contrast, the *Intrapersonal Religious Commitment* subscale shows a .92 and the *Interpersonal Religious Commitment* subscale is .87. The three-week test-retest resulted in a reliability coefficient of .87 (Worthington et al., 2003, p. 87). Scores can range from 10 to 50. The higher the score, the greater the level of religious commitment. This study uses an overall full-scale score in the data analysis. A copy of this instrument and proof of permission to use the RCI-10 is in appendix H.

Procedures

Upon receiving approval from Liberty’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix A), the researcher uploaded the demographic questionnaire (Appendix D) and instruments

(Appendices E-H); namely, the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), and Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) to Qualtrics. As advised by the IRB, the researcher added a Captcha/Recaptcha. Captcha/Recaptcha eliminates the possibility of robot-generated data happening since Captcha/Recaptcha provides a score for each participant between 0 to 1 (Jia et al., 2022; Lorenzi, 2018; Nguyen, 2018). Scores lower than 0.5 are considered suspicious (Jia et al., 2022; Lorenzi, 2018; Nguyen, 2018). Qualtrics produced a link to the Informed Consent (Appendix B) and survey.

The information about the population under study, as specified in the *Participants and Setting* section of this study, was entered in the Amazon Mechanical Turk page to ensure that only eligible individuals would participate. Finally, the researcher posted an invitation with information about the study's intent (Appendix C), along with a link to the Informed Consent and survey, on the main page of Amazon Mechanical Turk. To secure high response rates, eligible participants received monetary compensation of \$2 for completing the survey. The data collection from Amazon Mechanical Turk happened on two different occasions, once in June and a second time in July. Although a total of 928 individuals participated in the study, only data from 530 individuals met the sample selection criteria, had no missing items, and showed Recaptcha scores above .05. The next section discusses the analysis of the collected data.

Data Analysis

The data collected from Amazon Mechanical Turk was processed and analyzed through IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Only data from participants who met the criteria established in the *Participants and Setting* section were part of the analysis. The study used statistical regression from Hayes Process Macro Model 4 (2018) to calculate the

correlation between attachment style (X variable) and Marital Satisfaction (Y variable) and the mediating effect of emotional intelligence (M₁) and (M₂) religious commitment. The F-ratio for the analysis was .05. The sections below expand on these procedures.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis in this study is that attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), correlates to marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS). To test this hypothesis, the analysis calculated participants' scores on the ECR-RS and the KMS in SPSS. Pearson's correlation coefficient determined the relationship between adult attachment and marital satisfaction. "A correlation coefficient is a single number that summarizes both the strength and direction aspects of variable relationship" (Cooksey, 2020, p. 144). Mean and standard deviation also appear in the analysis.

Figure 2

Correlation Model



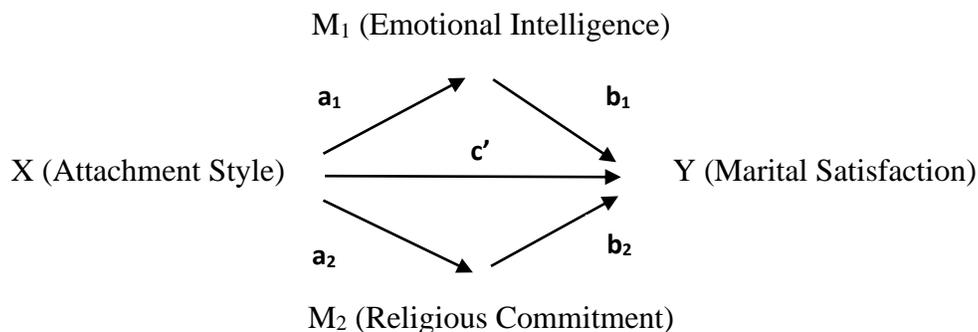
Hypotheses Two and Three

The second hypothesis in this study states that the impact of attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), on marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), is mediated by emotional intelligence, as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS). Similarly, the third hypothesis in this study states that the impact of attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), on marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS),

is mediated by religious commitment, as measured by the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10). Thus, the second and third hypotheses involve mediator variables and, for this reason, were tested in SPSS with Hayes Process Macro, model number 4, for parallel mediation (Figure 1). Hayes and Little (2018) note that the inclusion of multiple mediators can be helpful in the analysis of theoretical principles or ideas that work to connect the variables. Additionally, this also helps in “the comparison of the size of the indirect effects of X through [the mediators], giving a means of determining which indirect effect is stronger of the two” (Hayes & Little, 2018, p. 149). Thus, calculations for mediation paths a_1 , a_2 , b_1 , b_2 , and c' were conducted, and they include subscales of attachment (avoidance and anxiety) in the mother and father relationship (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Parallel Multiple Mediator Model



Summary

This chapter discussed the study’s design, participants, setting, instrumentation, procedures, and methods of analysis. The statistical design reflects the study’s research questions and hypotheses. Thus, it used regression and mediation analyses of the data collected from an online sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. The next chapter reports in detail the analyses of the data.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

This chapter presents descriptive statistics of the data, which includes mean, median, mode, frequency, and standard deviation for the variables of marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. It shows the results of the statistical analysis for each hypothesis. Tables and charts are used in this section to facilitate understanding the statistical results for each hypothesis and provide information about the correlations between variables, the direction of correlations, and the impact of the mediating variables. Additionally, this chapter provides information on the direct, indirect, and total effects for the hypotheses involving mediator variables. Statistical analyses are part of appendices I, J, and K.

Descriptive Statistics

Correlation Analysis

The analysis included 530 individuals ($N = 530$). Due to the structure of the instrument that measures attachment style (ECR-RS), the analysis did not show a total score for attachment style. Instead, it provided scores for the attachment-related anxiety and avoidance subscales for each specific attachment relationship; namely, attachment to mother and father (Fraley et al., 2011). The table below shows the means and standard deviations for the data.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St. Deviation
Marital Satisfaction	530	2.0	7.0	5.58	.945
Mother Att_Avoid	530	1.0	5.67	3.31	.736
Mother Att_Anxiety	530	1.0	7.0	4.78	1.58
Father Att_Avoid	530	1.0	7.0	3.38	.775
Father Att_Anxiety	530	1.0	7.0	4.77	1.58
Emotional Int	530	2.39	5.0	3.73	.454

Religious Commit	530	1.0	5.0	3.60	.865
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Next, the correlation between the predictor variable (attachment style subscales) and the criterion variable (marital satisfaction) was calculated (Table 3). The analysis shows the strength of the correlation between mother attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction ($r = -.533, p < .01$), mother attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction ($r = .094, p < .05$), father attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction ($r = -.483, p < .01$), and father attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction ($r = .084, p < .05$).

The correlations between attachment style subscales (mother and father attachment avoidance and anxiety) and the first mediator variable, emotional intelligence, were the following: Mother attachment avoidance was $r = -.532, p < .01$, mother attachment anxiety was $r = .194, p < .01$, father attachment avoidance was $r = -.490, p < .01$, and father attachment anxiety was $r = .200, p < .01$. Similarly, the correlation between attachment style subscales and the second mediator variable, religious commitment, was calculated (Table 3). The results were the following: Mother attachment avoidance ($r = -.272, p < .01$), mother attachment anxiety ($r = .238, p < .01$), father attachment avoidance ($r = -.263, p < .01$), and father attachment anxiety ($r = .231, p < .01$). Additionally, the analysis shows Pearson correlation calculations for emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction ($r = .652, p < .001$) and religious commitment and marital satisfaction ($r = .407, p < .001$) below.

Table 3

Pearson's Correlations

	MarSat	M_AttAvoi	M_AttAnx	F_AttAvoi	F_AttAnx	EmoInt	ReligCom
MarSat	1						
M_AttAvoi	-.533**	1					
M_AttAnx	.094*	.391**	1				

F_AttAvoi	-.483**	.738**	.316**	1			
F_AttAnx	.084*	.372**	.889**	.304**	1		
EmoInt	.652**	-.532**	.194**	-.490**	.200**	1	
ReligCom	.407**	-.272**	.238**	-.263**	.231**	.499**	1

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Mediation Analysis

In the mediation analysis, each attachment style subscale served as a predictor variable, marital satisfaction was the criterion variable, and emotional intelligence and religious commitment were mediator variables. The mediating impact of emotional intelligence (M_1) and religious commitment (M_2) on the relationship between attachment style subscales and marital satisfaction was tested by using Hayes Process Macro (version 3.5), model number 4, in SPSS. The results focused on the attachment subscales of the ECR-RS in the mother and father relationship; namely, mother attachment avoidance, mother attachment anxiety, father attachment avoidance, and father attachment anxiety. Thus, results were analyzed separately for each attachment style subscale in each relationship. The following statistical diagrams (Figures 4-12) and regression tables (Tables 4-7) show the mediation analyses.

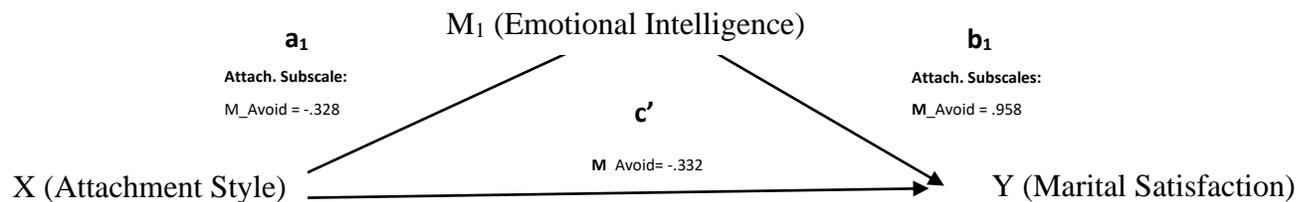
Mother Attachment Avoidance

The mediation analysis of emotional intelligence (M_1) appears in paths a_1 , b_1 , and c' (Figure 4). Considering the mother attachment avoidance subscale, path a_1 showed that the impact of mother attachment avoidance on emotional intelligence was significant ($b = -.328$, $t = -14.435$, $p < .001$). In path b_1 , emotional intelligence ($b = .958$, $t = 11.199$, $p < .001$) significantly impacted marital satisfaction when the constant variable was mother attachment avoidance. The total effect of mother attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction was $b = -.684$, $t = 14.493$, $p < .001$. Path c' demonstrated the direct effect of mother attachment avoidance on marital

satisfaction and showed that mother attachment avoidance had a significant impact on marital satisfaction ($b = -.332, t = -7.000, p < .001$). The indirect effect of mother attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction via emotional intelligence was $b = -.314, SE = .042, 95\% CI [-.400, -.237]$.

Figure 4

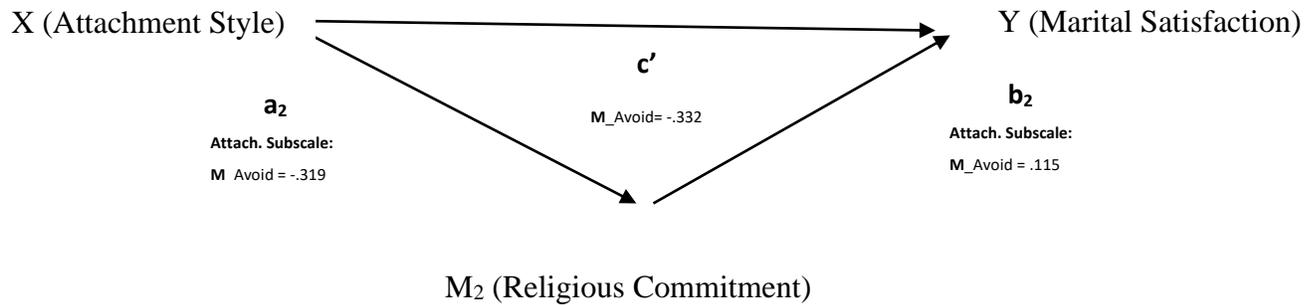
M_1 : Emotional Intelligence (Mother Attachment Avoidance)



The mediation analysis of religious commitment (M_2) appears in paths a_2, b_2 , and c' (Figure 5). Considering the mother attachment avoidance subscale, path a_2 showed that the impact of mother attachment avoidance on religious commitment was significant ($b = -.319, t = -6.507, p < .001$). In path b_2 , religious commitment ($b = .115, t = 2.912, p < .01$) significantly impacted marital satisfaction when the constant variable was mother attachment avoidance. Path c' demonstrated the direct effect of mother attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction and showed that mother attachment avoidance had a significant impact on marital satisfaction ($b = -.332, t = -7.000, p < .001$). The indirect effect of mother attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction via religious commitment was $b = -.036, SE = .015, 95\% CI [-.071, -.010]$.

Figure 5

M_2 : Religious Commitment (Mother Attachment Avoidance)

**Table 4**

Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary (Mother Attachment Avoidance)

Antecedent		Consequent										
		M_1			M_2			Y				
		Coeff.	SE	P	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	P		
X(M_AVOI)	a_1	-.328	.022	.000	a_2	-.319	.049	.000	c'	-.332	.047	<.001
M_1 (EMOTI)		—	—	—		—	—	—	b_1	.958	.085	<.001
M_2 (RELIG)		—	—	—		—	—	—	b_2	.115	.039	<.01
Constant	iM_1	4.829	.077	.000	iM_2	4.666	.167	.000	iy	2.692	.396	<.001
		$R^2 = .283$ $F(1,528) = 208.39$, $p < .001$			$R^2 = .074$ $F(1,528) = 42.34$, $p < .001$			$R^2 = .481$ $F(3,526) = 163.043$, $p < .001$				

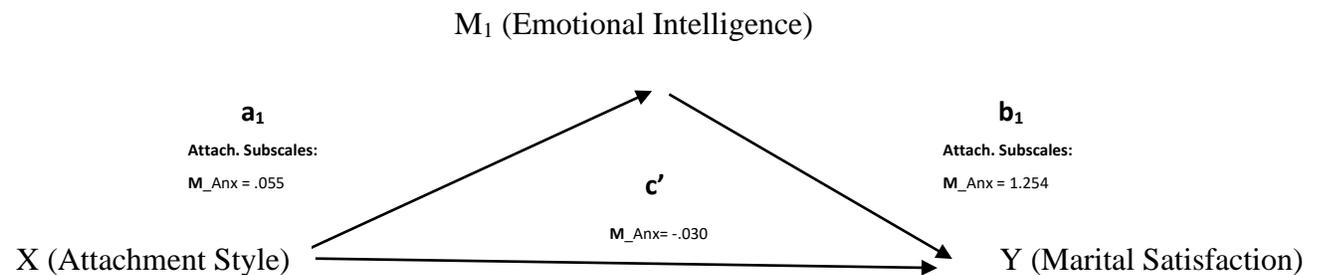
Mother Attachment Anxiety

Considering the mother attachment anxiety subscale, path a_1 showed that the impact of mother attachment anxiety on emotional intelligence was significant ($b = .055$, $t = 4.548$, $p < .001$). In path b_1 , emotional intelligence ($b = 1.254$, $t = 15.888$, $p < .001$) showed a significant impact on marital satisfaction when the constant variable was mother attachment anxiety (Figure

6). Path c' demonstrated the direct effect of mother attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction and that mother attachment anxiety did not have a significant impact on marital satisfaction since $p = 0.135$ ($b = -.030$, $t = -1.496$, $p > .05$). The indirect effect of mother attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction through emotional intelligence was $b = .069$, $SE = .020$, 95% CI [.031, .112].

Figure 6

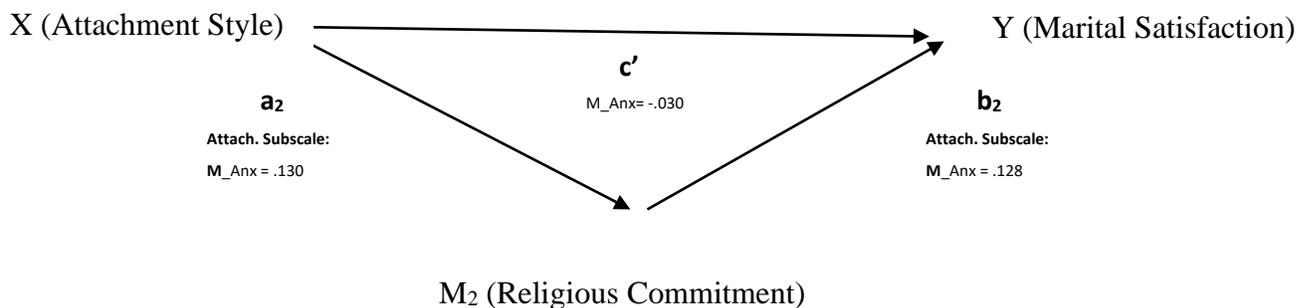
M_1 : Emotional Intelligence (Mother Attachment Anxiety)



Considering the mother attachment anxiety subscale, path a_2 showed that the impact of mother attachment anxiety on religious commitment was significant ($b = .130$, $t = 5.638$, $p < .001$). In path b_2 , religious commitment ($b = .128$, $t = 3.063$, $p < .01$) showed a significant impact on marital satisfaction when the constant variable was mother attachment anxiety (Figure 7). Path c' demonstrated the direct effect of mother attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction and showed that mother attachment anxiety did not have a significant impact on marital satisfaction since $p = 0.135$ ($b = -.030$, $t = -1.496$, $p > .05$). The indirect effect of mother attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction through religious commitment was $b = .016$, $SE = .007$, 95% CI [.005, .033].

Figure 7

*M*₂: Religious Commitment (Mother Attachment Anxiety)

**Table 5**

Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary (Mother Attachment Anxiety)

<i>Antecedent</i>		Consequent										
		<i>M</i> ₁			<i>M</i> ₂			<i>Y</i>				
		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P</i>		
X(<i>M</i> _{ANX})	<i>a</i> ₁	-.055	.012	.000	<i>a</i> ₂	.1301	.023	.000	<i>c'</i>	-.030	.020	>.05
<i>M</i> ₁ (<i>EMOTI</i>)		—	—	—		—	—	—	<i>b</i> ₁	1.254	.078	<.001
<i>M</i> ₂ (<i>RELIG</i>)		—	—	—		—	—	—	<i>b</i> ₂	.128	.041	<.01
Constant	<i>iM</i> ₁	3.473	.0617	.000	<i>iM</i> ₂	2.982	.116	.000	<i>i</i> _y	.580	.260	<.05
		<i>R</i> ² = .0377			<i>R</i> ² = .0568			<i>R</i> ² = .436				
		<i>F</i> (1, 528) = 20.692,			<i>F</i> (1, 528) = 31.792,			<i>F</i> (3, 526) = 135.525,				
		<i>p</i> < .001			<i>p</i> < .001			<i>p</i> < .001 =				

Father Attachment Avoidance

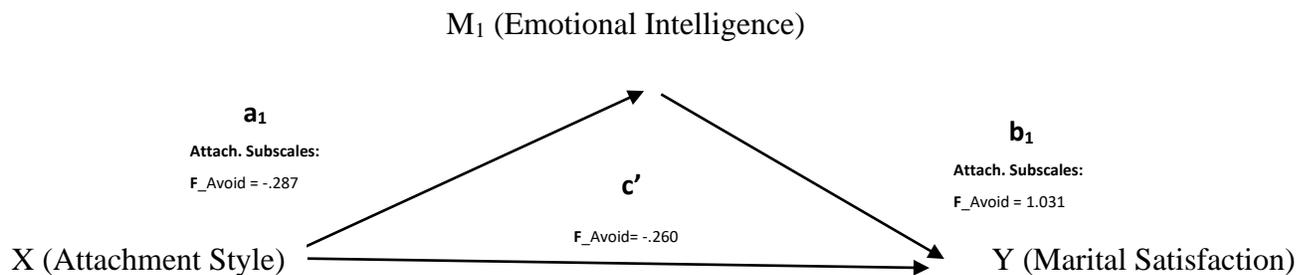
Regarding the father attachment avoidance subscale, path *a*₁ showed that the impact of attachment avoidance on emotional intelligence was significant (*b* = -.287, *t* = -12.930, *p* < .001).

In path *b*₁, emotional intelligence (*b* = 1.031, *t* = 12.200, *p* < .001) showed a significant impact on marital satisfaction when the constant variable was father attachment avoidance (Figure 8).

Path c' demonstrated the direct effect of father attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction and that father attachment avoidance had a significant impact on marital satisfaction ($b = -.260$, $t = -5.845$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of father attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction via emotional intelligence was $b = -.296$, $SE = .038$, 95% CI $[-.373, -.224]$.

Figure 8

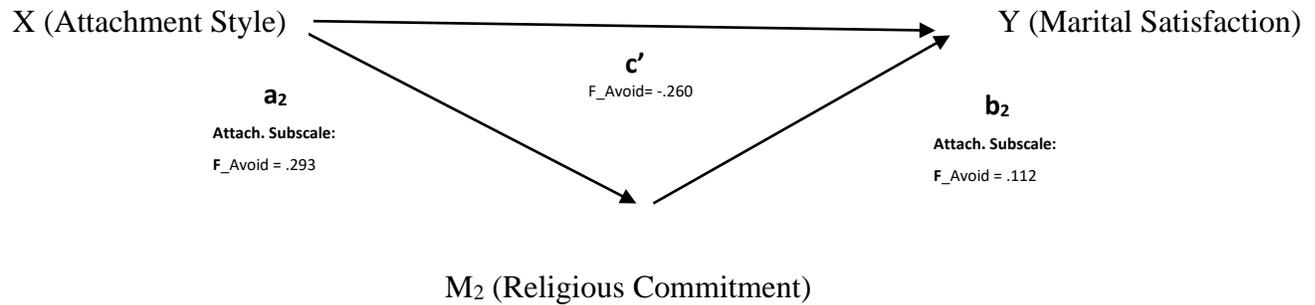
M_1 : Emotional Intelligence (Father Attachment Avoidance)



Considering the father attachment avoidance subscale, path a_2 showed that the impact of father attachment avoidance on religious commitment was significant ($b = .293$, $t = -6.269$, $p < .001$). In path b_2 , religious commitment ($b = .112$, $t = 2.796$, $p < .001$) showed a significant impact on marital satisfaction when the constant variable was father attachment avoidance (Figure 9). Path c' demonstrated the direct effect of father attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction and showed that father attachment avoidance had a significant impact on marital satisfaction ($b = -.260$, $t = -5.845$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of father attachment avoidance on marital satisfaction via religious commitment was $b = -.033$, $SE = .015$, 95% CI $[-.067, -.009]$.

Figure 9

*M*₂: Religious Commitment (Father Attachment Avoidance)

**Table 6**

Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary (Father Attachment Avoidance)

		Consequent										
		<i>M</i> ₁			<i>M</i> ₂			<i>Y</i>				
<i>Antecedent</i>		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P</i>		
X(F_AVOI)	<i>a</i> ₁	-.287	.022	.000	<i>a</i> ₂	-.293	.046	.000	<i>c</i> '	-.260	.044	<.001
<i>M</i> ₁ (EMOTI)		—	—	—		—	—	—	<i>b</i> ₁	1.031	.084	<.001
<i>M</i> ₂ (RELIG)		—	—	—		—	—	—	<i>b</i> ₂	.112	.040	< .05
Constant	<i>iM</i> ₁	4.713	.077	.000	<i>iM</i> ₂	4.598	.162	.000	<i>i</i> _y	2.208	.382	<.001
		<i>R</i> ² = .2405			<i>R</i> ² = .069			<i>R</i> ² = .468				
		<i>F</i> (1, 528)=167.187,			<i>F</i> (1, 528)=39.310,			<i>F</i> (3, 526)=154.318,				
		<i>p</i> <.001			<i>p</i> <.001			<i>p</i> <.001				

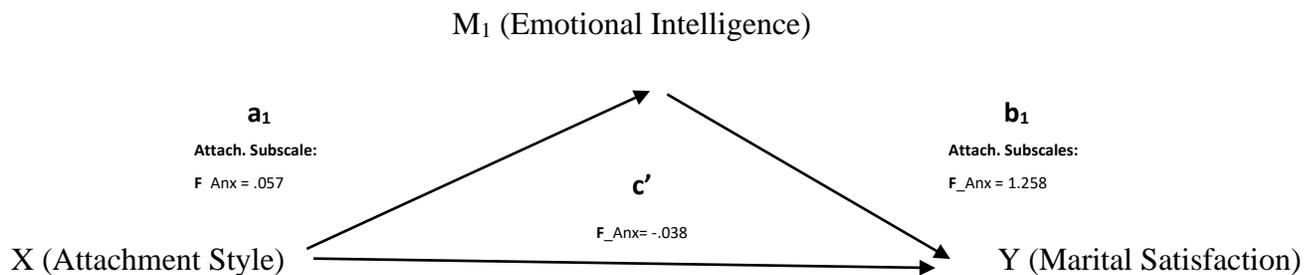
Father Attachment Anxiety

Regarding the father attachment anxiety subscale, path *a*₁ showed that the impact of attachment anxiety on emotional intelligence was significant (*b* = .057, *t* = 4.683, *p* < .001). In path *b*₁, emotional intelligence (*b* = 1.258, *t* = .789, *p* < .001) showed a significant impact on marital satisfaction when the constant variable was father attachment anxiety (Figure 10). Path *c*'

demonstrated the direct effect of father attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction and that father attachment anxiety did not have a significant impact on marital satisfaction since $p = .059$ ($b = -.038$, $t = -1.887$, $p > .05$). The indirect effect of father attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction via emotional intelligence was $b = .072$, $SE = .021$, 95% CI [.033, .117].

Figure 10

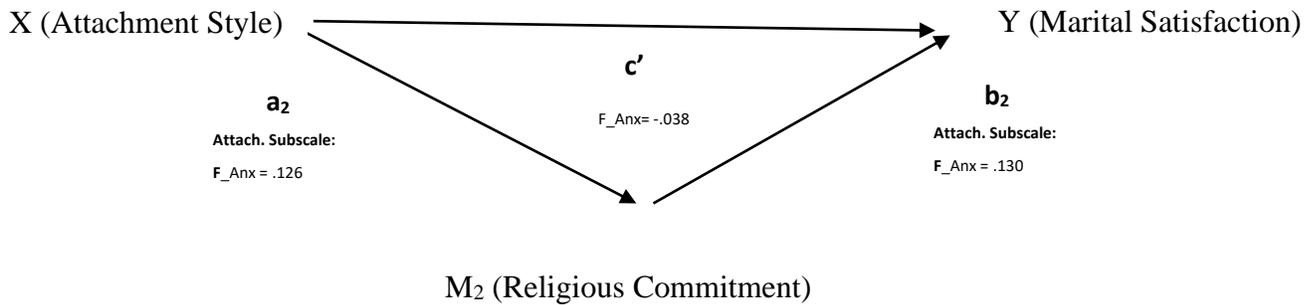
M₁: Emotional Intelligence (Father Attachment Anxiety)



Considering the father attachment anxiety subscale, path a_2 showed that the impact of father attachment anxiety on religious commitment was significant ($b = .126$, $t = 5.464$, $p < .001$). In path b_2 , religious commitment ($b = .130$, $t = 3.115$, $p < .01$) significantly impacted marital satisfaction when the constant variable was father attachment anxiety. Path c' demonstrated the direct effect of father attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction and that father attachment anxiety did not have a significant impact on marital satisfaction since $p = .059$ ($b = -.038$, $t = -1.887$, $p > .05$). The indirect effect of father attachment anxiety on marital satisfaction via religious commitment was $b = .016$, $SE = .007$, 95% CI [.005, .032].

Figure 11

M_2 : Religious Commitment (Father Attachment Anxiety)

**Table 7**

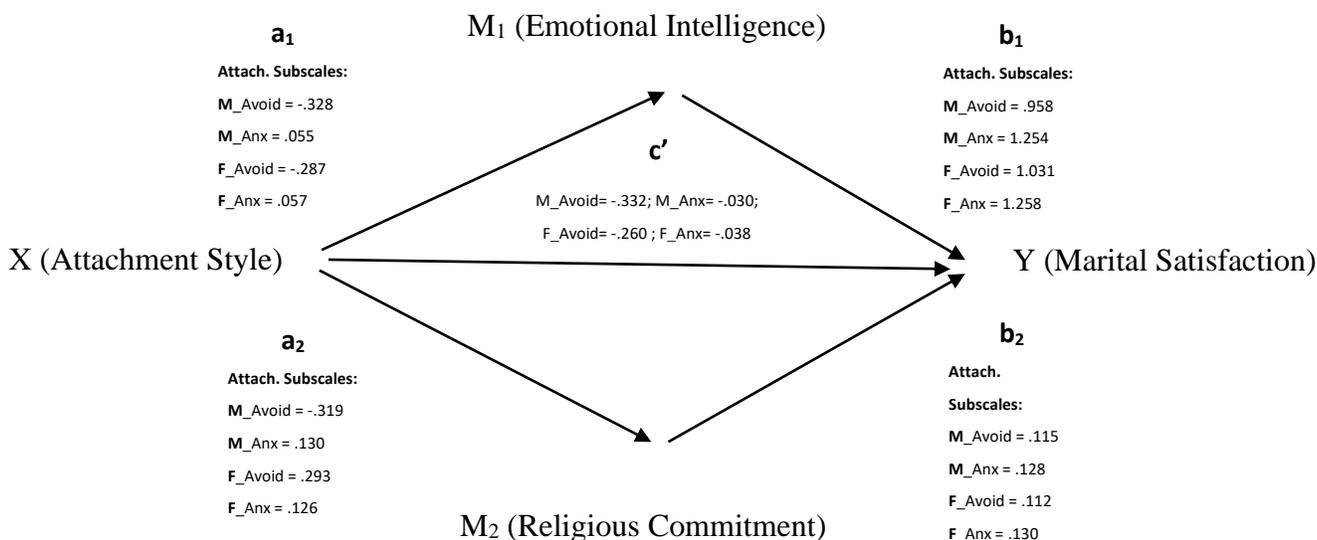
Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary (Father Attachment Anxiety)

		Consequent										
		M_1			M_2			Y				
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	P		
X(F_ANX)	a_1	.0575	.012	.000	a_2	.126	.023	.000	c'	-.038	.020	>.05
M_1 (EMOTI)		—	—	—		—	—	—	b_1	1.258	.078	<.001
M_2 (RELIG)		—	—	—		—	—	—	b_2	.130	.041	<.01
Constant	iM_1	3.465	.061	.000	iM_2	2.999	.116	.000	i_y	.595	.260	<.001
		$R^2 = .0399$ $F(1, 528)=21.936,$ $p<.001$			$R^2 = .053$ $F(1, 528)=29.861,$ $p<.001$			$R^2 = .437$ $F(3, 526)= 136.305,$ $p<.001=$				

The diagram below shows the mediation results for both mediators, emotional intelligence (M_1) and religious commitment (M_2), and each subscale of attachment style.

Figure 12

M₁ & M₂: Emotional Intelligence & Religious Commitment Complete



Results

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis is that attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), correlates to marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS). The instrument used in this study to measure attachment style (ECR-RS) has two subscales, avoidance and anxiety, and focuses on the relationships participants' have with their mother and father. Thus, the correlational analysis focused on two subscales for each relationship: mother attachment avoidance, mother attachment anxiety, father attachment avoidance, and father attachment anxiety.

Pearson correlation of mother attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction showed a moderate negative correlation that was statistically significant ($r = -.533, p < .01$). Similarly, the mother attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction correlation showed a p of .015 and it was a

markedly low and negligible positive correlation with statistical significance ($r = .094, p < .05$). The correlation between father attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction had $r = -.484, p < .01$ and it was statistically significant. However, it had a low negative correlation. Father attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction had a p of $.026$ and a markedly low and negligible positive correlation ($r = .084, p < .05$) that was also statistically significant.

Results indicated that the attachment style variable's subscales (avoidance and anxiety) correlated to marital satisfaction. The avoidance subscale for both mother ($r = -.533, p < .01$) and father ($r = -.484, p < .01$) had higher correlations to marital satisfaction than the anxiety subscale for both mother ($r = .094, p < .05$) and father ($r = .084, p < .05$). Marital satisfaction was negatively associated with mother attachment avoidance ($r = -.533, p < .01$) and father attachment avoidance ($r = -.484, p < .01$), but it was positively associated with mother attachment anxiety ($r = .094, p < .05$) and father attachment anxiety ($r = .084, p < .05$). This means that attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction increase at a similar rate. Contrarily, a decrease in scores in the attachment avoidance subscales indicates an increase in marital satisfaction scores. A low score on the ECR-RS attachment subscales means that the individual has a more secure attachment style (Fraley et al., 2011). Thus, the first hypothesis that attachment style correlates to marital satisfaction was supported.

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis is that emotional intelligence, as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), mediates the impact of attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), on marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. The instrument used in

this study to measure attachment style (ECR-RS) has two subscales, avoidance and anxiety, and it focuses on two relationships: mother and father. The results from the mediation analysis refer to the two attachment style subscales (avoidance and anxiety) as they relate to father and mother. To support the second hypothesis, the analysis considered paths a_1 and b_1 : the relationship path from attachment style (subscales: mother attachment avoidance, mother attachment anxiety, father attachment avoidance, and father attachment anxiety) to emotional intelligence and emotional intelligence to marital satisfaction (Figure 12).

Mother Attachment Avoidance/Anxiety and Emotional Intelligence

Results from the mediation analysis for the two attachment style subscales in the mother relationship and emotional intelligence (Figure 12) showed that in path a_1 , the impact of mother attachment avoidance ($b = -.328$, $t = -14.435$, $p < .001$) and mother attachment anxiety on emotional intelligence ($b = .055$, $t = 4.548$, $p < .000$), both were significant. It is also important to note that in path b_1 emotional intelligence had a significant impact on marital satisfaction when considering the mother attachment avoidance ($r = .958$, $p < .001$) and mother attachment anxiety ($r = 1.254$, $p < .001$) subscales. The indirect effect of mother attachment avoidance ($b = -.314$, $SE = .042$, 95% CI [-.400, -.237]) and mother attachment anxiety ($b = .069$, $SE = .020$, 95% CI [.031, .112]) on marital satisfaction via emotional intelligence shows a mediation because the inclusion of emotional intelligence to the direct effects was significant. Thus, paths a_1 (mother attachment avoidance and anxiety to emotional intelligence) and b_1 (emotional intelligence to marital satisfaction) are significant.

Father Attachment Avoidance/Anxiety and Emotional Intelligence

Mediation analysis results for the father attachment subscales and emotional intelligence (Figure 12) showed that in path a_1 the impact of father attachment avoidance ($b = -.287$, $t = -$

12.930, $p < .001$) and father attachment anxiety on emotional intelligence were both significant ($b = .057$, $t = 4.683$, $p < .001$). It is also important to note that in path b_1 , emotional intelligence had a significant impact on marital satisfaction in the father attachment avoidance ($r = 1.0313$, $p < .001$) and father attachment anxiety ($r = 1.258$, $p < .001$) analysis. The indirect effect of father attachment avoidance ($b = -.296$, $SE = .038$, 95% CI [-.373, -.224]) and father attachment anxiety ($b = .072$, $SE = .021$., 95% CI [.033, .117]) on marital satisfaction via emotional intelligence shows a mediation because the inclusion of emotional intelligence to the direct effects was significant. Thus, paths a_1 (father attachment avoidance and anxiety to emotional intelligence) and b_1 (emotional intelligence to marital satisfaction) were significant. Thus, the analysis results support the second hypothesis.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis is that religious commitment, as measured by the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), mediates the impact of attachment style, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS), on marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. The instrument used in this study to measure attachment style (ECR-RS) has two subscales: avoidance and anxiety. It focuses on the attachment relationship participants have with their mother and father. The results from the mediation analysis refer to the two attachment subscales in participants' attachment relationships to father and mother. To support the third hypothesis, the analysis considered paths a_2 (attachment style subscales to religious commitment) and b_2 (religious commitment to marital satisfaction).

Mother Attachment Avoidance/Anxiety and Religious Commitment

Results from the mediation analysis for each attachment style subscale in the mother relationship and religious commitment (Figure 12) showed that in path a_2 the impact of mother attachment avoidance ($b = -.319, t = -6.507, p < .001$) and mother attachment anxiety on religious commitment ($b = .130, t = 5.638, p < .001$) were both significant. It is also important to note that in path b_2 religious commitment showed a significant impact on marital satisfaction in the mother attachment avoidance ($b = .115, t = 2.912, p < .01$) and mother attachment anxiety ($b = .128, t = 3.063, p < .01$) analysis. The indirect effect of mother attachment avoidance ($b = -.036, SE = .015, 95\% CI [-.071, -.010]$) and mother attachment anxiety ($b = .016, SE = .007, 95\% CI [.005, .033]$) on marital satisfaction via religious commitment shows a mediation because the inclusion of religious commitment to the direct effects was significant. Thus, paths a_2 (mother attachment avoidance and anxiety to religious commitment) and b_2 (religious commitment to marital satisfaction) were significant.

Father Attachment Avoidance/Anxiety and Religious Commitment

Mediation analysis results for the father attachment subscales and religious commitment (Figure 12) showed that in path a_2 , the impact of father attachment avoidance ($b = .293, t = -6.269, p < .001$) and father attachment anxiety on religious commitment ($b = .126, t = 5.464, p < .001$) were both significant. It is also important to note that in path b_2 , religious commitment had a significant impact on marital satisfaction in the father attachment avoidance ($b = .112, t = 2.796, p < .001$) and father attachment anxiety ($b = .130, t = 3.115, p < .01$) analysis. The indirect effect of father attachment avoidance ($b = -.033, SE = .015, 95\% CI [-.067, -.009]$) and father attachment anxiety ($b = .016, SE = .007, 95\% CI [.005, .032]$) on marital satisfaction via religious commitment shows a mediation because the inclusion of religious commitment to the

direct effects was significant. Thus, paths a_2 (father attachment avoidance and anxiety to religious commitment) and b_2 (religious commitment to marital satisfaction) were significant. Thus, the analysis results support the third hypothesis.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Overview

This chapter analyzes findings as they relate to each research question and hypothesis and the implications of those findings. Details about each research question and current findings are discussed and compared to similar findings reported in the literature. Results show that marital satisfaction, as measured by the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS), significantly correlates to attachment style avoidance and anxiety subscales in the father and mother attachment relationship, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships–Relationship Structures Questionnaire (ECR-RS). Results also show that emotional intelligence, as measured by the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), and religious commitment, as measured by the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10), mediate the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment style avoidance and anxiety subscales. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the findings and limitations of the study, and provides recommendation for future studies.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the connection between marital satisfaction and attachment style as mediated by emotional intelligence and religious commitment in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. Four instruments and a demographic questionnaire were used to measure marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. The literature supports the inclusion of these specific variables since they are related to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional areas that influence human relationships, including marriage (Abbasi et al., 2016; Constant et al., 2018;

Vishkin et al., 2020). Thus, theories and current research findings on marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment informed this study.

First Research Question

The first research question addressed the correlation between attachment style (ECR-RS) and marital satisfaction (KMS). Results from multiple regression analysis indicate that the subscales of attachment style (avoidance and anxiety) correlate to marital satisfaction in both father and mother relationships (Table 3). The overall scores on the subscales of mother attachment-related avoidance ($M = 3.31, SD = .736$), mother attachment-related anxiety ($M = 4.78, SD = 1.58$), father attachment-related avoidance ($M = 3.38, SD = .775$), and father attachment-related anxiety ($M = 4.77, SD = 1.58$) indicate that participants in this study have a moderate secure attachment style. It also shows that scores for the attachment anxiety subscales in both relationships, mother and father, were more spread out when considering their standard deviation.

Studies have found a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and secure attachment style (Brimhall et al., 2018; Castellano et al., 2014; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020) and a negative correlation between marital satisfaction and insecure attachment style (Altgelt & Meltzer, 2019; Bedair et al., 2020; Mcnelis & Segrin, 2019). In the current study, marital satisfaction showed a markedly low and negligible positive correlation with mother attachment anxiety ($r = .094, p < .05$) and father attachment anxiety ($r = .084, p < .05$). This means that attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction increased at the similar rate. Marital satisfaction was negatively associated with mother attachment avoidance ($r = -.533, p < .01$) and father attachment avoidance ($r = -.484, p < .01$). Thus, in the current study, a decrease in scores in the attachment avoidance subscale indicates an increase in marital satisfaction scores.

Various theories can help explain the current findings on the attachment style and marital satisfaction correlation. For instance, theories of marriage and marital satisfaction emphasize that each spouse brings his and her personality, worldview, upbringing, and culture to the marriage relationship (Gottman, 1979; Gurman et al., 2015; Lee & McKinnish, 2018; Safitri & Sari, 2019; Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). For instance, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory supports the principle that marriage does not happen in a vacuum, but it starts with the individual (Čikeš et al., 2018; Roy et al., 2020) whose unique transactional connections and interactions produce and help explain human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, 2005). Since attachment styles start developing in infancy, as an individual interacts with parents and caregivers, the effect of one's attachment style on marital satisfaction is theoretically possible. Thus, the results of this study support the idea that intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental factors affect a couple's relationship and that attachment style influences marital satisfaction since it serves as the foundation for future relationships, including the marriage relationship.

Second Research Question

The second research question addresses whether emotional intelligence (EIS) mediates the relationship between attachment style (ECR-RS) and marital satisfaction (KMS). In this study, the two subscales (avoidance and anxiety) of attachment style in the mother and father relationship are part of the analysis. Results from the parallel multiple mediator model (Hayes & Little, 2018) indicate that the indirect effect of mother attachment avoidance ($b = -.314$, $SE = .042$, 95% CI [-.400, -.237]), mother attachment anxiety ($b = .069$, $SE = .020$, 95% CI [.031, .112]), father attachment avoidance ($b = -.296$, $SE = .038$, 95% CI [-.373, -.224]), and father attachment anxiety ($b = .072$, $SE = .021$, 95% CI [.033, .117]) on marital satisfaction via emotional intelligence is considered a significant mediation. Attachment style subscales for both

father and mother relationships have an indirect effect on marital satisfaction through emotional intelligence. Thus, emotional intelligence contributes to the relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction.

The literature supports the current findings on the mediating role of emotional intelligence. Researchers indicate that married individuals' ability to identify, manage, and apply emotions in the marriage relationship context influences their overall marriage satisfaction (Čikeš et al., 2018; Malouff et al., 2013; Zarch et al., 2014). Some researchers note that the emotions experienced by one of the spouses can affect the other spouse's overall marital satisfaction (Bloch et al., 2014). Similarly, Deniz et al. (2020) note that high emotional intelligence may affect spouses' ability to empathize with each other and work cooperatively to solve problems and that this fact might help explain how emotional intelligence is directly related to an increase in marital satisfaction. In this study, participants' emotional intelligence scores are moderate ($M = 3.73$, $SD = .454$).

Attachment theories emphasize that individuals' early interactions produce an internal working model which depicts individuals' perceptions of self-worthiness and expectations of how others should evaluate them (Bowlby, 1958, 1959, 1960; Ainsworth, 1969, 1970). Similarly, attachment is one of the primary ways individuals identify, manage, and adjust their emotions and, hopefully, become more emotionally competent in their interpersonal interactions throughout life (Constant et al., 2018; Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simard et al., 2011). Petrovici and Dobrescu (2014) explain that the intrapersonal aspects of emotional intelligence involve the ability to identify and become aware of one's own emotions, that is, having self-awareness and self-actualization. As expected, this can increase one's chances of becoming more successful at the interpersonal level, including understanding people's emotions

and reactions to those emotions (Petrovici & Dobrescu, 2014). In this study, participants' scores on the mother attachment avoidance ($M = 3.31$, $SD = .736$), mother attachment anxiety ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.58$), father attachment avoidance ($M = 3.38$, $SD = .775$), and father attachment anxiety ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.58$) subscales are moderate. Thus, the results of this study confirm that attachment style correlates to marital satisfaction via emotional intelligence and it agrees with the theoretical understanding that individuals' internal attachment working models influence emotional responses in all social interactions, including interactions in the marriage relationship.

Third Research Question

The third research question seeks to determine whether religious commitment (RCI-10) mediates the relationship between attachment style (ECR-RS) and marital satisfaction (KMS). In this study, attachment style involves two subscales (avoidance and anxiety) in the mother and father relationship. Results from the parallel multiple mediator model (Hayes & Little, 2018) analysis confirm the indirect effect of mother attachment avoidance ($b = -.036$, $SE = .015$, 95% CI $[-.071, -.010]$), mother attachment anxiety ($b = .016$, $SE = .007$, 95% CI $[.005, .033]$), father attachment avoidance ($b = -.033$, $SE = .015$, 95% CI $[-.067, -.009]$), and father attachment anxiety ($b = .016$, $SE = .007$, 95% CI $[.005, .032]$) on marital satisfaction via religious commitment. The inclusion of the religious commitment subscale to the direct effects was significant. Thus, religious commitment contributes to the relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction.

The results from the current study are parallel to those found in the literature. For instance, Cirhinlioglu et al. (2018) found that religiosity had a significant mediating role between attachment style and marital satisfaction. They note that “when avoidant attachment in men and anxious attachment in women increase, their religiousness levels decrease” (Cirhinlioglu et al.,

2018, p. 213). Cirhinlioglu et al. (2018) explain that religious commitment works as a protective barrier against negative marriage dynamics and that a positive God attachment can increase religious commitment and, consequently, marital satisfaction (Cirhinlioglu et al., 2018). In this study, participants' scores on the religious commitment inventory (Table 2) were moderately high ($M = 3.60$, $SD = .865$).

Research also suggests that spiritual beliefs produce thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors that promote self-acceptance, forgiveness, compassion, and gratitude which are significant factors in marital satisfaction (Kasapoğlu & Yabanigül, 2018; Kyambi et al., 2017; Olson et al., 2016). For instance, Kyambi et al. (2017) qualitative study with a group of Evangelical Christians in Kenya found that spouses' religious involvement in spiritual disciplines and commitment promoted virtues such as perseverance and humility, which directly affected their marital relationship and satisfaction positively. Additionally, Olson et al.'s (2016) study with a group of heterosexual married individuals from Arkansas, Utah, and Vermont shows that religious homogamy, or spouses' agreement on religious issues, affects marital satisfaction. Similarly, the current study found that the subscales of attachment style indirectly affect marital satisfaction through religious commitment (Figure 12).

Theoretically, religious commitment encompasses individuals' ability to live by their religious beliefs, values, and practices and consider these beliefs, values, and practices as they build relationships with others, including their spouses (Worthington et al., 2003). While many studies on marital satisfaction include attachment style and emotional intelligence as valuable variables (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Givertz et al., 2019; Hajihassani & Sim, 2019; Mardani et al., 2021; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020), only a few of them include religious commitment (Aman et al., 2019; Cho, 2014; Kasinec, 2018). Since marriage is a religious ritual (Balswick &

Balswick, 2006), researchers, in general, agree that including the variable of religiosity or religious commitment can help researchers gain a deeper understanding of the marriage relationship and its unique dynamics (Aman et al., 2021; Kasapoğlu & Yabanigül, 2018; Lazar, 2019). Thus, the results from this study support the literature and theories on religious commitment and marital satisfaction.

Implications

The current study has contributed to the existing body of research on heterosexual married Christian individuals' marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment and the field of marriage and family counseling. First, the current research findings added to the understanding of a specific segment of the population; namely, heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. Aman et al. (2019) emphasize the need for more studies on the marital satisfaction of American Christian couples. Thus, the knowledge gained about this population through this study can help create awareness about the needs of this specific group. It can also provide insight for those who are developing programs and strategies to meet this population's relational and emotional needs in marriage.

Second, the results of this study contribute to the general understanding of marital satisfaction and individual development. As observed, marriage provides the necessary environment for individuals to develop and thrive (Celello, 2009; Doe, 2016; Francesconi, 2016; Moses, 2018). One's personality, worldview, and culture, among other factors, influence marriage relationship and satisfaction (Gottman, 1979; Gurman et al., 2015; Lee & McKinnish, 2018; Safitri & Sari, 2019; Sternberg & Hojjat, 1997). Thus, allowing individuals to explore their marital satisfaction can positively impact community counseling services as these services focus on strengthening individuals and their families.

Third, this study contributes to the literature on marital satisfaction and its connection to attachment style. The literature indicates that insecure attachment styles, such as anxious and avoidant, affect marital satisfaction negatively (Altgelt & Meltzer, 2019; Bedair et al., 2020; Mcnelis & Segrin, 2019). Since attachment style is formed earlier in infancy and affects an individual throughout life (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simard et al., 2011), community care and counseling professionals can gain insight from this study's findings and use similar instruments to understand couples' attachment styles and encourage positive attachment dynamics.

Fourth, this study contributes to the literature on marital satisfaction and its connection to emotional intelligence. Research emphasizes that interpersonal dynamics can affect the marriage relationship (Bajaj & Killgore, 2021; Gardner, 2011, 2020; Mayer et al., 2004). It also shows that individuals with high emotional intelligence are more capable of solving emotional issues and maintaining positive relationships with others, including their spouses (Mayer et al., 2004). Thus, community care and counseling practitioners can benefit from the results of the current study as they create and implement strategies to strengthen and improve couple's emotional intelligence.

Fifth, this study provides insight into the theory that marital satisfaction resembles a U-shaped pattern indicating that marital satisfaction is higher at the beginning of the marriage, declining in the middle, and increasing again with time (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kurdek, 1999). Extraneous variables such as parenting may affect the U-shaped approach to marital satisfaction (Galambos et al., 2020; Kwok et al., 2015; Lazar, 2017; Lorber et al., 2015). In this study, participants had been married for at least two years, which is technically over the honeymoon period, and had no children. This may explain why they scored moderately high on marital satisfaction ($M = 5.58, SD = .945$).

Finally, this study contributes to the literature on marital satisfaction as it correlates to religious commitment. Cirhinlioglu et al. (2018) explain that religious commitment may form a protective barrier against negative marriage dynamics and promotes positive interactions. Additionally, spouses often benefit from the other spouse's religious commitment and report higher marital satisfaction (Perry, 2016). Thus, the current study adds to community care and counseling practitioners' understanding of the role of religious commitment in promoting positive relationship dynamics and outcomes that can elevate individuals' marital satisfaction.

Limitations

Threats to the internal and external validity of the study exist. Among these threats are the following. First, the number of individuals invited to participate was higher than the number of those qualified to participate in the study. Second, the study collects data from married individuals, not married couples. Third, although the demographic analysis shows some population diversity (88.7% Whites, 9% Hispanics, 4.2% Blacks, 3.6% American Indian/Alaska Native, 2.5% Asian, .2% Other), most participants are White. Fourth, self-report surveys may present unintentional bias due to participants' state of mind or environmental circumstances during the time they completed the surveys. Fifth, the number and length of instruments in the study may have affected participants' motivation to answer questions attentively. Finally, individuals' attention span and intrinsic motivation may have interfered with the accuracy of answers, though this is unknown since participation in the process was voluntary.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The following recommendation for further study addresses four areas: variables, population sample, research design, and instrumentation. For instance, in terms of variables, future studies on marital satisfaction need to continue to include attachment style, emotional

intelligence, and religious commitment. However, it would be beneficial to consider other variables such as how many times one has been married, number of children, and online church attendance, a prevalent practice during the Covid pandemic. Additionally, future studies may also consider the protective role of religious commitment in the marriage relationship.

Concerning the characteristics of the sample population, future studies could consider gathering data from specific minority groups in America, such as Hispanics, Blacks, and Asians to see if there are any differences among these three groups in term of marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. Future studies could also consider collecting data on marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence of couples with children and without children who attend marriage counseling. It would be interesting to see if these groups would yield different results from those reported in the literature and this current study.

Future studies on marital satisfaction and attachment style may consider using a different research design. Perhaps they would include the same mediator variables used in this study and additional moderator variables. This would provide an opportunity for a more comprehensive understanding of the correlation of variables.

Finally, future studies need to consider using different instruments to measure marital satisfaction, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. For instance, the current study uses the ECR-RS, which measures dimensions of attachment-related anxiety and avoidance in the relationships individuals have with their mother, father, spouse, and friend. However, only the mother and father relationships are part of the current study. Future studies could include the overall ECR-RS score which is based on the mother, father, spouse, and friend relationship to see if that would produce different results.

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Appendix A: Institutional Review Board Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

May 23, 2022

Denise Moitinho
Dwight Rice

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY21-22-616 Marital Satisfaction and Attachment Style: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence and Religious Commitment

Dear Denise Moitinho, Dwight Rice,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording). The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Title of the Project: Marital Satisfaction and Attachment Style: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence and Religious Commitment

Principal Investigator: Denise Moitinho, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a Christian adult, 18 or older, who is in a heterosexual marriage, who has been married for at least 2 years, who does not have children, and resides in the United States of America. You may have been married multiple times. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to investigate the correlation between marital satisfaction and attachment style as mediated by emotional intelligence and religious commitment in a sample of heterosexual married Christian individuals living in the United States. The data collected and analyzed will allow a better understand about this segment of the population and contribute to the development of psychoeducational strategies that aim to help Christian couples develop emotional awareness and skills.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Complete the survey about your marital satisfaction, attachment preferences, emotional intelligence, and religious commitment. There are no “right or wrong” answers. This survey will take about 20 minutes to complete.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include increased awareness and knowledge on this topic and the development of strategies that can help married couples improve their relationships and marriage satisfaction.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and the faculty Dissertation Chair will have access to the data.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- The data will be stored on a password-locked computer. Data may be used in future studies and presentations. After three years, data will be deleted.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. To secure high response rates through Amazon Mechanical Turk, participants will be offered monetary compensation of \$2 for the completion of all surveys in the study. The researcher can withdraw data and compensation if the researcher determines that the participant is not eligible to participate.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Denise Moitinho. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at

██████████ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Dwight Rice, at ██████████

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

Yes, I consent.

No, I do not consent.

Appendix C: Study Invitation

Below is the invitation that will be posted in the Mechanical Turk webpage to attract people to participate in the study.

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

You are invited to participate in a research study examining the relationship between marital satisfaction and attachment style as mediated by emotional intelligence and religious commitment. For this study, we will need 150 heterosexual married Christian adult individuals living in the U.S who have been married for at least two years and who are not parents yet. Participants who meet these criteria will be eligible to complete the survey. They will receive two dollars (\$2) as compensation. We ask that you read this form to know more about the study and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the survey. The researcher can withdraw data and compensation if the researcher determines that the participant is not eligible to participate. You have received the opportunity to participate in this survey through your arrangement with Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire

- 1) Please verify you are not a robot.
- 2) Participants in this study will be heterosexual Christian individuals who have been married for at least 2 years, who do not have children, and reside in the United States of America. Do you meet these criteria for this study?
 Yes ____ No ____
- 3) What is your age? _____
- 4) Do you reside in the United States? Yes ____ No ____
- 5) In terms of religion and church affiliation, do you fall into one of these two categories: Evangelical (for example, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Non-Catholic Christian denomination/church, etc.) or Catholic Christian category?
 Yes ____
 No ____
- 6) How long have you been legally married?
 2 years or more ____
 Less than 2 years ____
- 7) Do you have children? Yes ____ No ____
- 8) Do you identify as:
 Male ____ Female ____ Other ____
- 9) Is English your primary language? Yes ____ No ____
- 10) What year were you born? _____
- 11) Do you identify as:
 Caucasian/White ____
 Black or African American ____
 American Indian or Alaska Native ____
 Asian ____

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander _____

Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish Origin _____

Other _____

12) How many times have you been married: 1____ 2____ 3____ 4____

13) What is your highest completed educational level?

No schooling completed _____

Less than high school _____

High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED) _____

College Freshman _____

College Sophomore _____

College Junior _____

College Senior _____

Trade/technical/vocational training _____

Bachelor's degree _____

Master's degree _____

Professional degree _____

Doctorate Degree _____

14) How many times a month do you attend your church in person/in the church building?

In person: once_____ twice _____ 3 times_____ 4 times _____ More than 4 times _____

Never/Not anymore _____

15) How many times a month do you attend your church online?

Online: once_____ twice _____ 3 times_____ 4 times _____ More than 4 times _____

Never/Not anymore _____

Appendix E: KMS - Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale and Permission to Use

Creators of the KMS allow researchers to use the instrument without any formal permission request (Schumm et al., 1986, p. 387). View information below.

VALIDITY OF KMS SCALE

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APPENDIX

KANSAS MARITAL SATISFACTION SCALE

Item	Extremely Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Mixed	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
1. How satisfied are you with your marriage?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. How satisfied are you with your husband as a spouse?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Note: Permission is not required for use of the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale for educational, program evaluation, or scientific purposes. However, the senior author would appreciate being informed of the use of the scale.

Appendix G: EIS - Emotional Intelligence Scale and Permission to Use

Creators of the EIS allow researchers to use the instrument without any formal permission request (Schutte et al., 1998, p. 172). More information about the scale can also be found at The-Schutte-Self-Report-Emotional-Intelligence-Test.pdf (veritas-itc.com). It is a 5-point Likert scale: *Strongly Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Neither Disagree nor Agree* (3), *Agree* (4), and *Strongly Agree* (5).

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N. S. Schutte et al./Personality and Individual Differences 25 (1998) 167–177

Table 1

The 33-item emotional intelligence scale

-
- (1) I know when to speak about my personal problems to others
 - (2) When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them
 - (3) I expect that I will do well on most things I try
 - (4) Other people find it easy to confide in me
 - (5) I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people*
 - (6) Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important
 - (7) When my mood changes, I see new possibilities
 - (8) Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living
 - (9) I am aware of my emotions as I experience them
 - (10) I expect good things to happen
 - (11) I like to share my emotions with others
 - (12) When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last
 - (13) I arrange events others enjoy
 - (14) I seek out activities that make me happy
 - (15) I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others
 - (16) I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others
 - (17) When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me
 - (18) By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing
 - (19) I know why my emotions change
 - (20) When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas
 - (21) I have control over my emotions
 - (22) I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them
 - (23) I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on
 - (24) I compliment others when they have done something well
 - (25) I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send
 - (26) When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself
 - (27) When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas
 - (28) When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail*
 - (29) I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them
 - (30) I help other people feel better when they are down
 - (31) I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles
 - (32) I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice
 - (33) It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do*
-

Note: The authors permit free use of the scale for research and clinical purposes.

*These items are reverse scored.

greater optimism as measured by the optimism scale of the Life Orientation Test [$r(26)=0.52$, $p<0.006$], less pessimism as measured by the pessimism scale of the Life Orientation Test [$r(26)=-0.43$, $p<0.025$], less depression as measured by the Zung Depression Scale [$r(37)=-0.37$, $p<0.021$] and less impulsivity as measured by the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale [$r(55)=-0.39$, $p<0.003$]. Nonverbal expressiveness of emotion as assessed by the Affective Communication Test was not significantly related to scores on the emotional intelligence scale, $r(34)=0.17$.

Appendix H: RCI-10 - Religious Commitment Inventory and Permission to Use

Email requesting permission to use the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10) was sent to Dr. Worthington on 12/06. Dr. Worthington replied on 12/06/21 granting permission.

Religious Commitment Inventory-10

Instructions: The following questions assess the degree to which you adhere to your religious values, beliefs, and practices, and use them in daily living. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements currently describe you using the following scale. If you do not have any religious values, beliefs, or practices, please circle "1" to indicate that.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not at all true of me	Somewhat true of me	Moderately true of me	Mostly true of me	Totally true of me
1. I often read books and magazines about my faith.				1 2 3 4 5	
2. I make financial contributions to my religious organization.				1 2 3 4 5	
3. I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith.				1 2 3 4 5	
4. Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.				1 2 3 4 5	
5. My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.				1 2 3 4 5	
6. I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation.				1 2 3 4 5	
7. Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life.				1 2 3 4 5	
8. It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection.				1 2 3 4 5	
9. I enjoy working in the activities of my religious organization.				1 2 3 4 5	
10. I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions.				1 2 3 4 5	

Question #1 has been updated, with author's permission, to be the following: "I often read books, magazines, and online articles/blogs about my faith."

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY



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|

You have my permission to use the RCI-10. I included information you need to administer, score, interpret, and reference it. I wish you well with your research.



Ex

[External] Re: Request to Add a Word to RCI-10 for Clarification



Moitinho, Denise D (Community Care and Counseling)
To: Everett L Worthington [REDACTED]

Mon 6/20/2022 12:17 PM



Everett L Worthington <eworth@vcu.edu>
To: Moitinho, Denise D (Community Care and Counseling)

Mon 6/20/2022 11:05 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL: Do not click any links or open attachments unless you know the sender and trust the content.]

Sure. That's okay from my perspective and even updates the scale.

Ev

...



Moitinho, Denise D (Community Care and Counseling)
To: Everett L Worthington [REDACTED]

Mon 6/20/2022 10:29 AM

Hi Dr. Worthington,

I would like to ask your permission to add the word "blog" to item 1 in the Religious Commitment Inventory-10 due to technological changes in society. So, the statement would read, "**I often read books and magazines/blogs about my faith.**" Adding this word would make it easier/more relevant to younger participants in my study. Thank you for your consideration. I do understand if you prefer that I do not add this word at this time. I appreciate your prompt reply.

Denise Moitinho

Denise Moitinho, PhD.
Assistant Professor
Department of Community Care and Counseling
School of Behavioral Sciences

Appendix I: Statistical Procedures – Frequencies

Frequencies

		Statistics						
		Age	Gender	EthnicityRace	TimesMarried	Education	ChurchAtt_InPer son	ChurchAtt_On e
N	Valid	530	530	530	530	530	530	5
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Frequency Table

		Age			Cumulative
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Percent
Valid	20	1	.2	.2	.2
	21	3	.6	.6	.8
	22	1	.2	.2	.9
	23	6	1.1	1.1	2.1
	24	18	3.4	3.4	5.5
	25	51	9.6	9.6	15.1
	26	8	1.5	1.5	16.6
	27	29	5.5	5.5	22.1
	28	17	3.2	3.2	25.3
	29	8	1.5	1.5	26.8
	30	105	19.8	19.8	46.6
	31	16	3.0	3.0	49.6
	32	23	4.3	4.3	54.0
	33	13	2.5	2.5	56.4
	34	15	2.8	2.8	59.2
	35	43	8.1	8.1	67.4
	36	7	1.3	1.3	68.7
	37	7	1.3	1.3	70.0
	38	15	2.8	2.8	72.8
	39	11	2.1	2.1	74.9
40	14	2.6	2.6	77.5	
41	16	3.0	3.0	80.6	
42	18	3.4	3.4	84.0	
43	6	1.1	1.1	85.1	

44	9	1.7	1.7	86.8
45	7	1.3	1.3	88.1
46	4	.8	.8	88.9
47	8	1.5	1.5	90.4
48	14	2.6	2.6	93.0
49	3	.6	.6	93.6
50	3	.6	.6	94.2
51	4	.8	.8	94.9
54	5	.9	.9	95.8
55	3	.6	.6	96.4
57	1	.2	.2	96.6
58	4	.8	.8	97.4
59	3	.6	.6	97.9
61	3	.6	.6	98.5
62	3	.6	.6	99.1
63	1	.2	.2	99.2
65	1	.2	.2	99.4
66	1	.2	.2	99.6
68	1	.2	.2	99.8
69	1	.2	.2	100.0
Total	530	100.0	100.0	

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	306	57.7	57.7	57.7
	Female	224	42.3	42.3	100.0
	Total	530	100.0	100.0	

Ethnicity/Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Caucasian/White	470	88.7	88.7	88.7
	Black or African American	22	4.2	4.2	92.8
	Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish Origin	5	.9	.9	93.8
	Asian	13	2.5	2.5	96.2

American Indian or Alaska Native	19	3.6	3.6	99.8
Other	1	.2	.2	100.0
Total	530	100.0	100.0	

TimesMarried

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once	450	84.9	84.9	84.9
	Twice	62	11.7	11.7	96.6
	Three times	15	2.8	2.8	99.4
	Four times	3	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	530	100.0	100.0	

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No schooling completed	1	.2	.2	.2
	Less than high school	1	.2	.2	.4
	High school diploma or equivalent (e.g., GED)	13	2.5	2.5	2.8
	College Freshman	4	.8	.8	3.6
	College Sophomore	1	.2	.2	3.8
	College Junior	2	.4	.4	4.2
	College Senior	4	.8	.8	4.9
	Trade/technical/vocational training	6	1.1	1.1	6.0
	Bachelor's degree	375	70.8	70.8	76.8
	Master's degree	116	21.9	21.9	98.7
	Professional degree	6	1.1	1.1	99.8
	Doctorate degree	1	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	530	100.0	100.0	

ChurchAtt_InPerson

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once (in person)	163	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Twice (in person)	111	20.9	20.9	51.7
	Three times (in person)	77	14.5	14.5	66.2

Four times (in person)	114	21.5	21.5	87.7
More than four times (in person)	52	9.8	9.8	97.5
Never/Not anymore	13	2.5	2.5	100.0
Total	530	100.0	100.0	

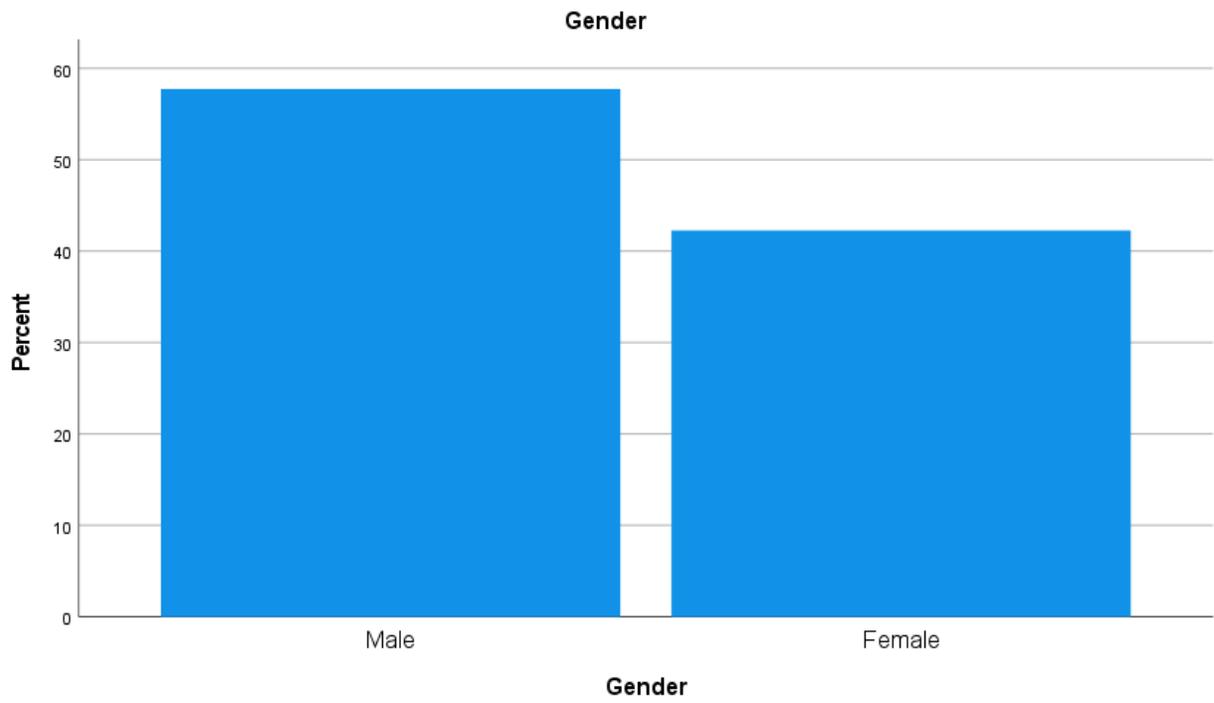
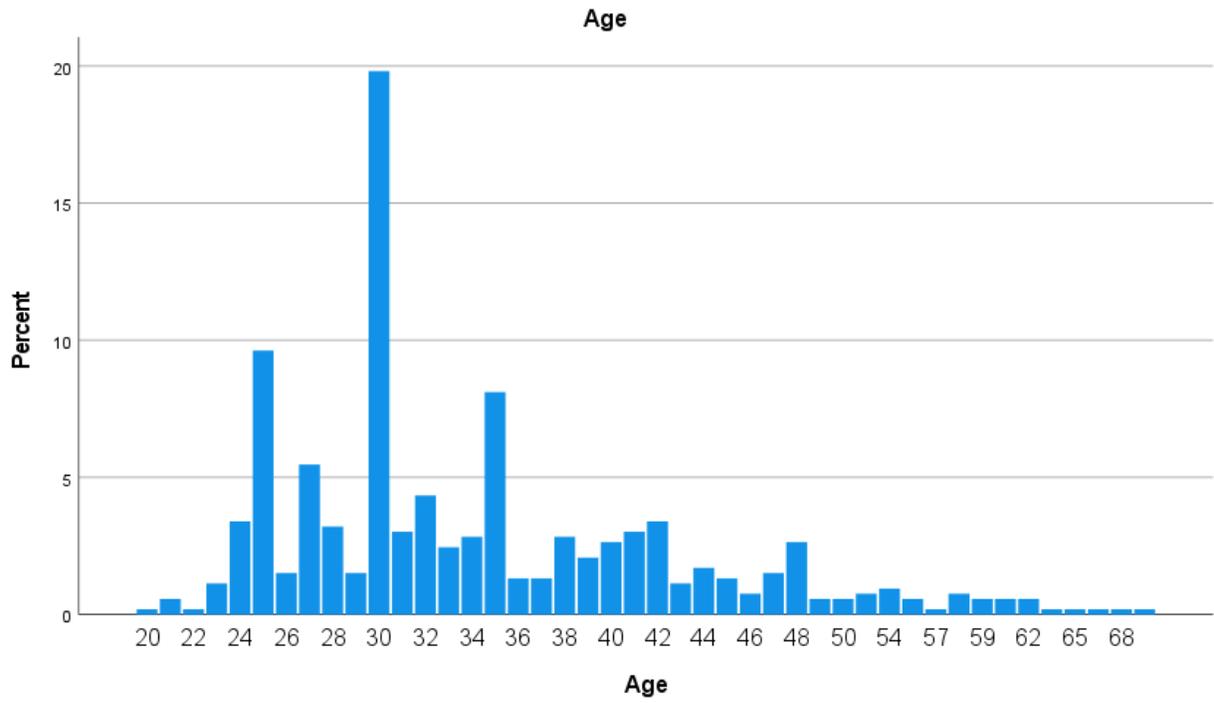
ChurchAtt_Online

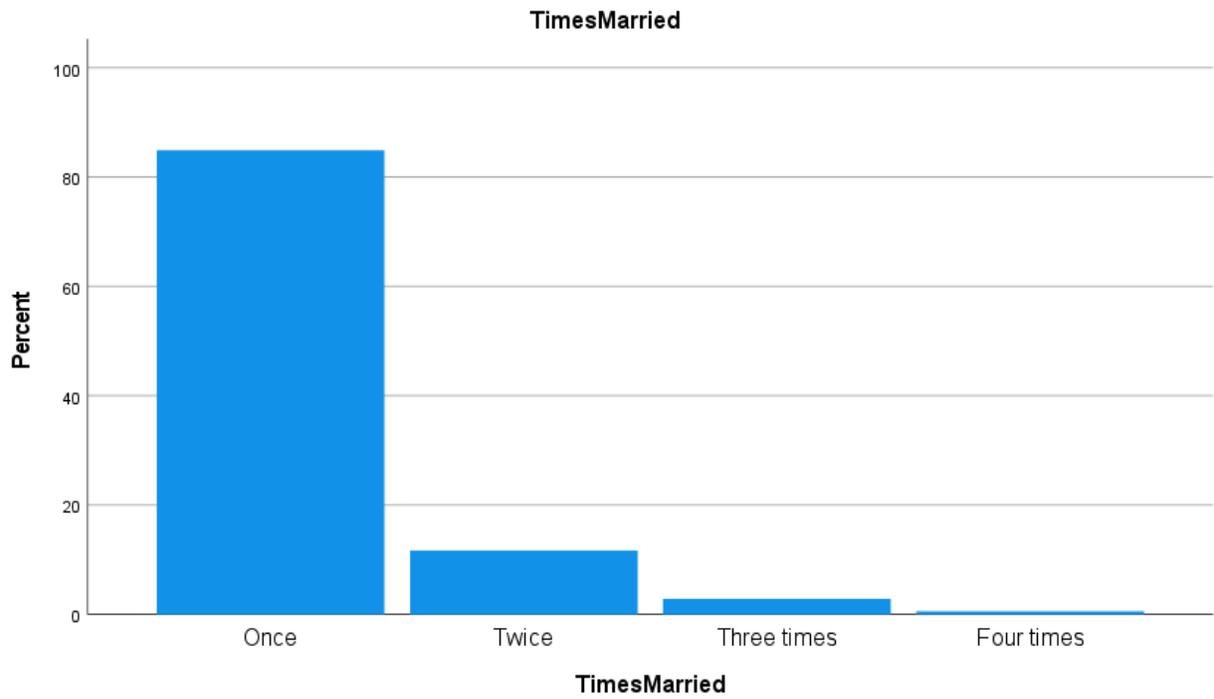
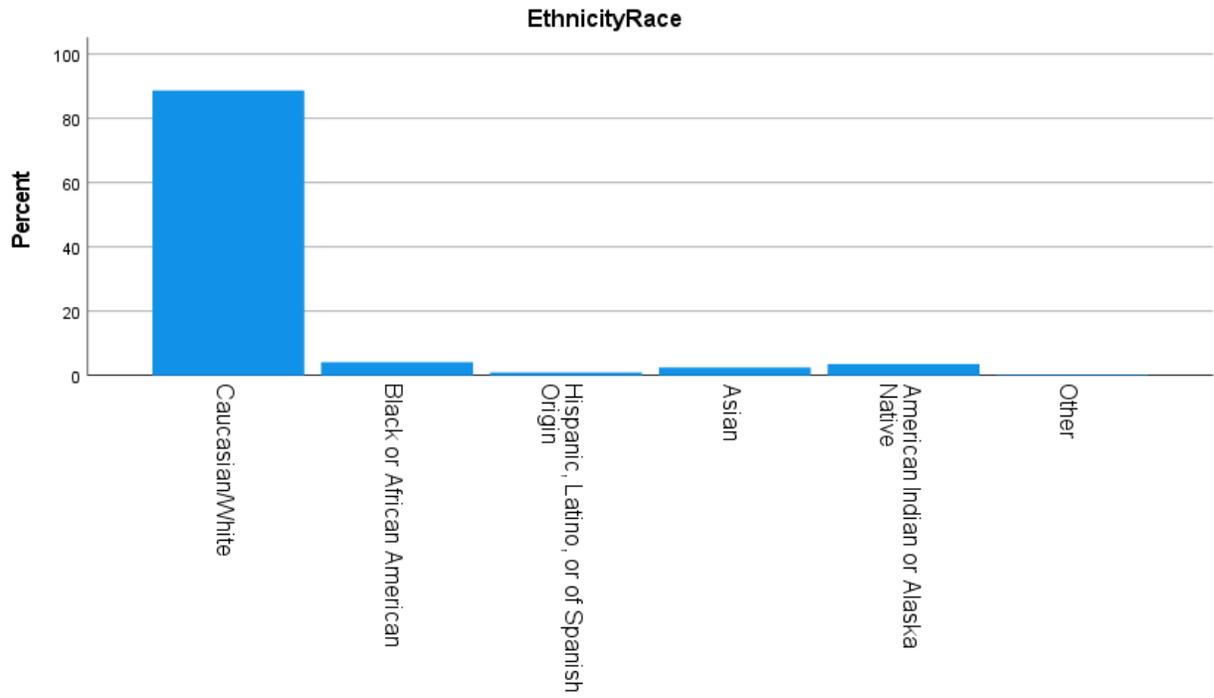
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once (online)	160	30.2	30.2	30.2
	Twice (online)	120	22.6	22.6	52.8
	Three times (online)	90	17.0	17.0	69.8
	Four times (online)	62	11.7	11.7	81.5
	More than four times (online)	36	6.8	6.8	88.3
	Never/Not anymore	62	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	530	100.0	100.0	

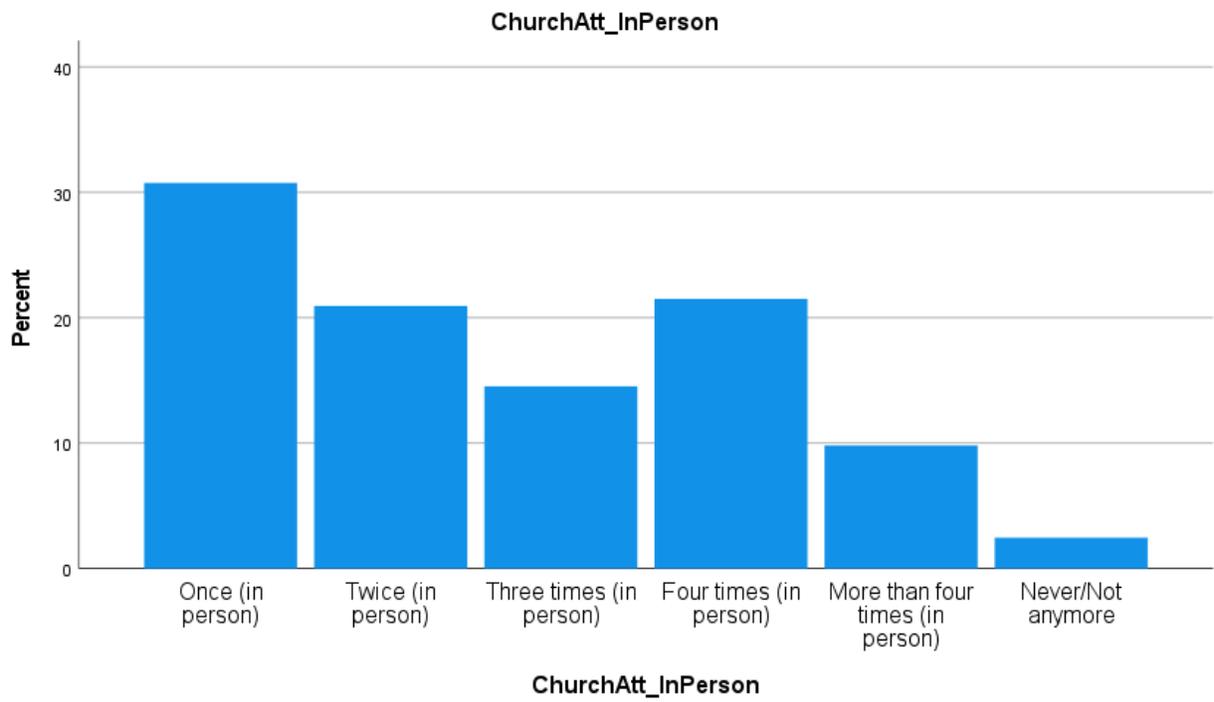
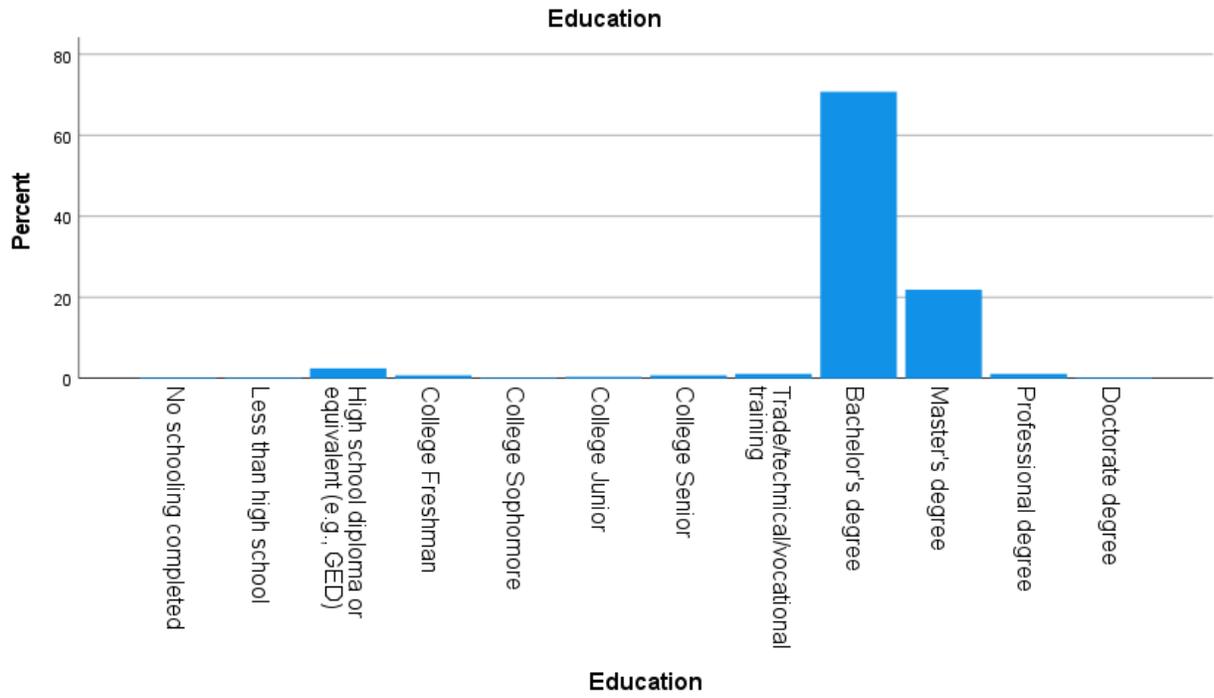
Statistics

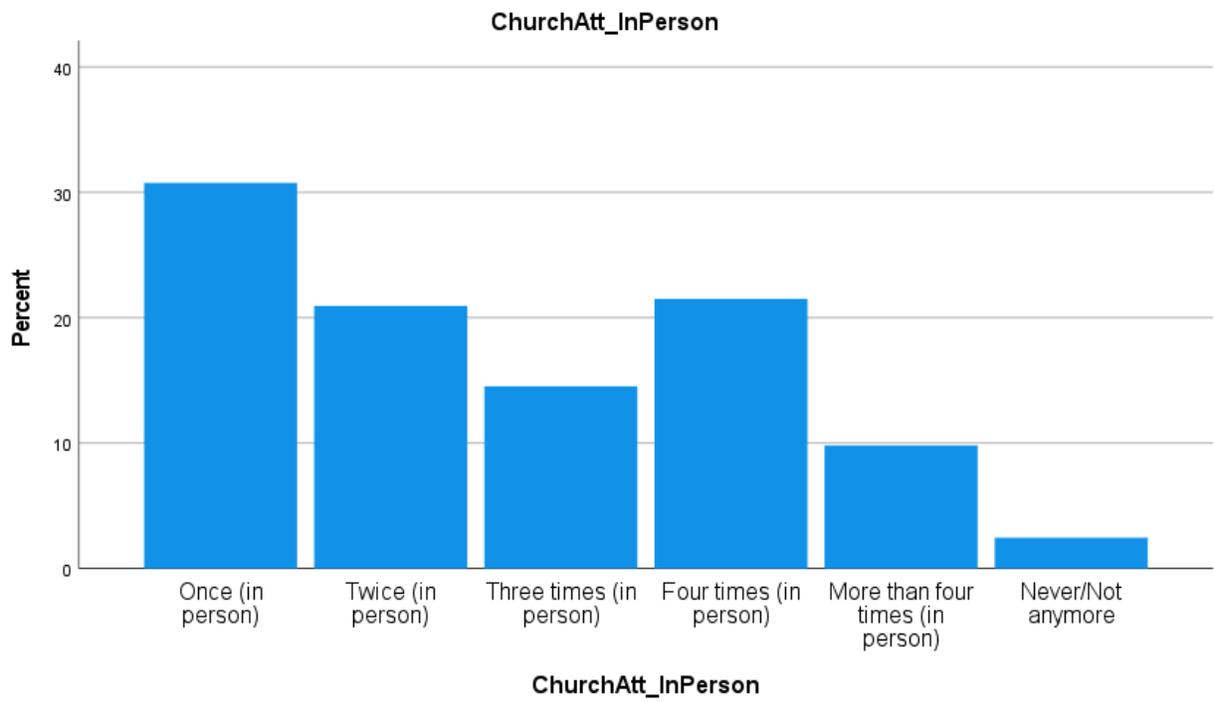
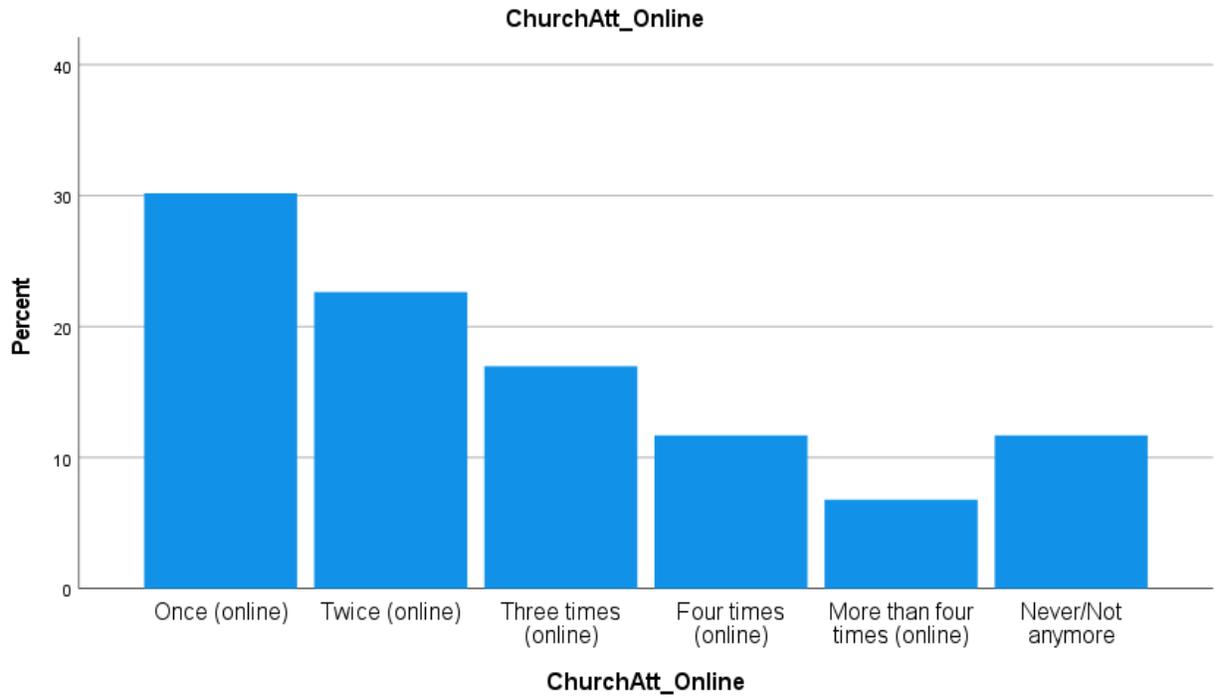
		Age	Gender	EthnicityRace	TimesMarried	Education	ChurchAtt_InPerson	ChurchAtt_Online
N	Valid	530	530	530	530	530	530	530
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Frequencies









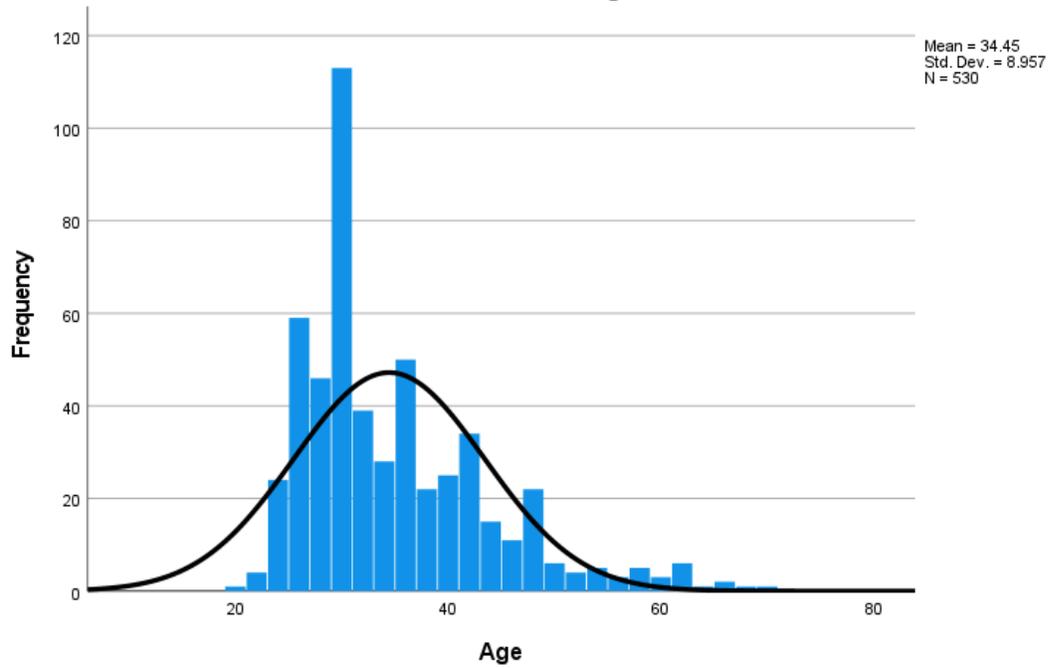
Frequencies

Statistics

Age

N	Valid	530
	Missing	0
Mean		34.45
Std. Deviation		8.957
Variance		80.226
Minimum		20
Maximum		69
Sum		18260

Histogram



Appendix J: Statistical Procedures – Correlations

Correlations

Correlations

		Mother_Attachm ent_Avoidance	EmoIntel
Mother_Attachment_Avoidance	Pearson Correlation	1	-.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530
EmoIntel	Pearson Correlation	-.532**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		EmoIntel	Mother_Attachm ent_Anxiety
EmoIntel	Pearson Correlation	1	.194**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530
Mother_Attachment_Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.194**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		EmoIntel	Father_Attachm ent_Avoidance
EmoIntel	Pearson Correlation	1	-.490**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530
Father_Attachment_Avoidance	Pearson Correlation	-.490**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		EmoIntel	Father_Attachm ent_Anxiety
EmoIntel	Pearson Correlation	1	.200**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530
Father_Attachment_Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.200**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Mother_Attachm ent_Avoidance	RelComm
Mother_Attachment_Avoidance	Pearson Correlation	1	-.272**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530
RelComm	Pearson Correlation	-.272**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Mother_Attachm ent_Anxiety	RelComm
Mother_Attachment_Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.238**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530
RelComm	Pearson Correlation	.238**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Father_Attachm ent_Avoidance	RelComm
Father_Attachment_Avoidance	Pearson Correlation	1	-.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530

RelComm	Pearson Correlation	-.263**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Father_Attachm ent_Anxiety	RelComm
Father_Attachment_Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	530	530
RelComm	Pearson Correlation	.231**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

		Correlations				RelComm
		Mother_Attachme nt_Avoidance	Mother_Attachm ent_Anxiety	Father_Attachme nt_Avoidance	Father_Attachme nt_Anxiety	
Mother_Attachment_Avoidanc e	Pearson Correlation	1	.391**	.738**	.372**	-.272**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	530	530	530	530	530
Mother_Attachment_Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.391**	1	.316**	.889**	.238**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	530	530	530	530	530
Father_Attachment_Avoidanc e	Pearson Correlation	.738**	.316**	1	.304**	-.263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	530	530	530	530	530
Father_Attachment_Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	.372**	.889**	.304**	1	.231**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	530	530	530	530	530
RelComm	Pearson Correlation	-.272**	.238**	-.263**	.231**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	530	530	530	530	530

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		MarSatis	EmoIntel	RelComm
MarSatis	Pearson Correlation	1	.652**	.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	530	530	530
EmoIntel	Pearson Correlation	.652**	1	.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	530	530	530
RelComm	Pearson Correlation	.407**	.499**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

N	530	530	530
---	-----	-----	-----

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix K: Statistical Procedures - Mediations

Matrix

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.1 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com
Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 4
Y : MarSatis
X : M_AttAvo
M1 : EmoIntel
M2 : RelComm

Sample
Size: 530

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
EmoIntel

Model Summary	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p	R ²
	.5320	.2830	.1485	208.3813	1.0000	528.0000	.0000	

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	iM ₁
constant	4.8292	.0773	62.4693	.0000	4.6773	4.9811	
M_AttAvo	-.3282	.0227	-14.4354	.0000	-.3728	-.2835	a ₁

Standardized coefficients
coeff
M_AttAvo -.5320

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
RelComm

Model Summary	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p	R ²
	.2725	.0742	.6942	42.3441	1.0000	528.0000	.0000	

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	iM ₂
constant	4.6664	.1671	27.9179	.0000	4.3380	4.9947	
M_AttAvo	-.3199	.0492	-6.5072	.0000	-.4164	-.2233	a ₂

Standardized coefficients
coeff
M_AttAvo -.2725

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
MarSatis

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p	R ²
	.6941	.4818	.4659	163.0433	3.0000	526.0000	.0000	
Model								
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI		
constant	2.6920	.3967	6.7860	.0000	1.9127	3.4713		
M_AttAvo	-.3329	.0476	-7.0000	.0000	-.4263	-.2395		
EmoIntel	.9589	.0856	11.1995	.0000	.7907	1.1271		
RelComm	.1153	.0396	2.9129	.0037	.0376	.1931		
Standardized coefficients	coeff							
M_AttAvo	-.2595							
EmoIntel	.4611							
RelComm	.1055							

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****
 OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 MarSatis

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
Model Summary	.5335	.2846	.6409	210.0594	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	7.8611	.1606	48.9487	.0000	7.5456	8.1766
M_AttAvo	-.6845	.0472	-14.4934	.0000	-.7773	-.5917

Standardized coefficients	coeff
M_AttAvo	-.5335

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
-.6845	.0472	-14.4934	.0000	-.7773	-.5917	-.5335

Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
-.3329	.0476	-7.0000	.0000	-.4263	-.2395	-.2595

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:				
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	-.3516	.0436	-.4394	-.2714
EmoIntel	-.3147	.0420	-.4003	-.2370
RelComm	-.0369	.0156	-.0717	-.0108

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:				
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	-.2740	.0317	-.3359	-.2115
EmoIntel	-.2453	.0312	-.3073	-.1847
RelComm	-.0288	.0119	-.0555	-.0087

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
 95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
 5000



----- END MATRIX -----

Matrix

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.1 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com
Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 4
Y : MarSatis
X : M_AttAnx
M1 : EmoIntel
M2 : RelComm

Sample
Size: 530

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
EmoIntel

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.1942	.0377	.1993	20.6920	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	3.4734	.0617	56.3174	.0000	3.3523	3.5946
M_AttAnx	.0557	.0122	4.5488	.0000	.0316	.0797

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
M_AttAnx	.1942

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
RelComm

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.2383	.0568	.7073	31.7925	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.9826	.1162	25.6700	.0000	2.7544	3.2109
M_AttAnx	.1301	.0231	5.6385	.0000	.0847	.1754

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
M_AttAnx	.2383

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
MarSatis

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6603	.4360	.5072	135.5258	3.0000	526.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.5806	.2605	2.2285	.0263	.0688	1.0923
M_AttAnx	-.0302	.0202	-1.4965	.1351	-.0699	.0095
EmoIntel	1.2541	.0789	15.8889	.0000	1.0991	1.4092
RelComm	.1283	.0419	3.0632	.0023	.0460	.2106

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
M_AttAnx	-.0507
EmoIntel	.6030
RelComm	.1174

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

MarSatis

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.0944	.0089	.8878	4.7493	1.0000	528.0000	.0298

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.3194	.1302	40.8616	.0000	5.0636	5.5751
M_AttAnx	.0563	.0258	2.1793	.0298	.0056	.1071

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
M_AttAnx	.0944

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
.0563	.0258	2.1793	.0298	.0056	.1071	.0944

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
-.0302	.0202	-1.4965	.1351	-.0699	.0095	-.0507

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.0865	.0227	.0445	.1329
EmoIntel	.0698	.0208	.0316	.1121
RelComm	.0167	.0073	.0052	.0339

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.1451	.0348	.0790	.2145
EmoIntel	.1171	.0325	.0549	.1834
RelComm	.0280	.0119	.0088	.0554

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

----- END MATRIX -----

Matrix

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.1 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com
 Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 4
 Y : MarSatis
 X : F_AttAvo
 M1 : EmoIntel
 M2 : RelComm

Sample
 Size: 530

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 EmoIntel

Model Summary	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.4904	.2405	.1573	167.1870	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4.7131	.0772	61.0300	.0000	4.5614	4.8648
F_AttAvo	-.2877	.0222	-12.9301	.0000	-.3314	-.2440

Standardized coefficients
 coeff
 F_AttAvo -.4904

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 RelComm

Model Summary	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.2632	.0693	.6979	39.3109	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4.5988	.1627	28.2702	.0000	4.2792	4.9183
F_AttAvo	-.2938	.0469	-6.2698	.0000	-.3859	-.2018

Standardized coefficients
 coeff
 F_AttAvo -.2632

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 MarSatis

Model Summary	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.6842	.4681	.4783	154.3186	3.0000	526.0000	.0000

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.2080	.3823	5.7758	.0000	1.4570	2.9590
F_AttAvo	-.2603	.0445	-5.8458	.0000	-.3478	-.1728
EmoIntel	1.0313	.0845	12.2006	.0000	.8653	1.1974
RelComm	.1122	.0401	2.7965	.0054	.0334	.1911

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
F_AttAvo	-.2134
EmoIntel	.4959
RelComm	.1027

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

MarSatis

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.4836	.2338	.6863	161.1511	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	7.5849	.1613	47.0183	.0000	7.2680	7.9019
F_AttAvo	-.5900	.0465	-12.6945	.0000	-.6813	-.4987

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
F_AttAvo	-.4836

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
-.5900	.0465	-12.6945	.0000	-.6813	-.4987	-.4836

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
-.2603	.0445	-5.8458	.0000	-.3478	-.1728	-.2134

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	-.3297	.0394	-.4091	-.2544
EmoIntel	-.2967	.0383	-.3738	-.2244
RelComm	-.0330	.0150	-.0676	-.0091

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	-.2702	.0290	-.3268	-.2133
EmoIntel	-.2432	.0288	-.2995	-.1880
RelComm	-.0270	.0121	-.0548	-.0074

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

----- END MATRIX -----

Matrix

Run MATRIX procedure:

***** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.1 *****

Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. www.afhayes.com
 Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

Model : 4
 Y : MarSatis
 X : F_AttAnx
 M1 : EmoIntel
 M2 : RelComm

Sample Size: 530

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 EmoIntel

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.1997	.0399	.1988	21.9364	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	3.4654	.0617	56.1789	.0000	3.3443	3.5866
F_AttAnx	.0575	.0123	4.6836	.0000	.0334	.0816

Standardized coefficients
 coeff
 F_AttAnx .1997

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 RelComm

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.2314	.0535	.7097	29.8615	1.0000	528.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2.9999	.1165	25.7407	.0000	2.7709	3.2288
F_AttAnx	.1266	.0232	5.4646	.0000	.0811	.1722

Standardized coefficients
 coeff
 F_AttAnx .2314

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 MarSatis

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.6613	.4374	.5059	136.3051	3.0000	526.0000	.0000

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	.5956	.2600	2.2911	.0224	.0849	1.1063
F_AttAnx	-.0382	.0202	-1.8878	.0596	-.0779	.0016
EmoIntel	1.2584	.0789	15.9476	.0000	1.1034	1.4134
RelComm	.1301	.0418	3.1157	.0019	.0481	.2122

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
F_AttAnx	-.0638
EmoIntel	.6051
RelComm	.1191

***** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL *****

OUTCOME VARIABLE:

MarSatis

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.0846	.0072	.8894	3.8072	1.0000	528.0000	.0516

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	5.3470	.1305	40.9844	.0000	5.0907	5.6033
F_AttAnx	.0506	.0259	1.9512	.0516	-.0003	.1016

Standardized coefficients

	coeff
F_AttAnx	.0846

***** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Total effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c_cs
.0506	.0259	1.9512	.0516	-.0003	.1016	.0846

Direct effect of X on Y

Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c'_cs
-.0382	.0202	-1.8878	.0596	-.0779	.0016	-.0638

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.0888	.0229	.0468	.1373
EmoIntel	.0723	.0210	.0332	.1172
RelComm	.0165	.0071	.0052	.0329

Completely standardized indirect effect(s) of X on Y:

	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
TOTAL	.1484	.0352	.0817	.2204
EmoIntel	.1208	.0327	.0584	.1869
RelComm	.0275	.0116	.0087	.0539

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:

95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:

5000

----- END MATRIX -----