A SURVEY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-DIFFERENTIATION, ATTACHMENT STYLES AND PRELIMINARY MALADAPTIVE SCHEMAS AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF MARRIED STUDENTS. CASE STUDY: 30-40 YEARS OLD STUDENTS, RESEARCH AND SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: *The present study is aimed to survey the relationship between self-differentiation, preliminary maladaptive schemas, and attachment styles on one hand and quality of life on the other hand. The study is a correlative work with study population comprised of married students at age rage 30-40 in Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Unit Tehran. Totally, 106 students were selected through cluster sampling. Data gathering tools were self-differentiation questionnaire, preliminary maladaptive schema questionnaire, attachment styles questionnaire, and quality of life questionnaire. Multi-variant regression was used for data analyzing. The results showed relationship between self-differentiation, preliminary maladaptive schema, and attachment styles on one hand and quality of life on the other hand. In other words, quality of life increases with increase of self-differentiation or quality of life increases with increase of sub-scales of preliminary maladaptive schemas. In addition, quality of life increases as attachment styles converge to security.*

Keywords: *Self-differentiation, Preliminary maladaptive schema, Attachment styles, Quality of life.*

INTRODUCTION

Quality of life is an area of interest for many researchers in social, economic, cultural, and political fields. It can be explained as "unique perception of an individual of whether their life is satisfactory and acceptable in light of their relationship with family, friends, and the society." Quality of life also has to do with the mental, social, economic, emotional, cultural, religions, and sexual satisfaction. Based on the definition, different fields of life are determined including family health, social relationship, profession, income, and living condition.

Self-differentiation is the key concept in Bowen's systemic theory. According to the theory, self-differentiation refers to one's capability to determine and differentiate emotional processes from rational processes and also one's capability to choose which one of them has higher priority in a specific situation [1].

There are several factors effective in quality of life. Research results have confirmed relationship between preliminary maladaptive schemas and quality of life. Schemas are formed from the early days of life and extend their effects throughout the life. On the other hand, preliminary schemas are the beliefs that people hold about themselves, others, and the environment. In general, these schemas are rooted in dissatisfaction of one's needs in childhood. John Balbi has carried out several studies on attachment and believes that attachment guarantees survival of the infant by keeping them close to their mother. In other words, all men are influenced by their preliminary attachment; although the nature of these attachment (positive, negative, problematic) depend on quality of attachment. Balbi argued that different ways of mutual interaction among children and those who take care of them leads to formation of three styles of attachments including secure, avoidance unsecure, and ambivalent anxious unsecure [2]. Self-differentiation is the main concept of Bowen's systemic theory [1]. According to Bowen, the extent of emergence of self-differentiation in one shows their capability to differentiate logical and emotional processes. That is, one's ability to avoid automatic emotional adherence indicates their self-differentiation. According to Bowen's theory, self-differentiation in internal levels refers to one's ability to tell and differentiate emotional and logical processes and also to decide which one of these has higher priority in a specific situation [3].

Self-differentiation is important because it enables the individual to employ personal viewpoints in important relationships. That is, the individual would be able to employ their emotions in serious emotional relationship or throughout unpredictable events [3].

surveyed relationship between self-differentiation and satisfaction with martial life and found that among the aspects of self-differentiation, only emotional detachment and reaction predict marital problem. In his study titled "surveying the relationship between self-differentiation and quality of life of boy/girl student" showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between differentiation and quality of life and its elements effective on physical/mental health, social relationships and perception of living condition (p = 5%). Moreover, Freeman [4], showed that there is a significant relationship between preliminary maladaptive schemas, satisfaction with marital relations, and interpersonal relationships.

Yong [5] argued that some of the schemas and mainly those rooted in unwanted experiences are formed throughout the childhood. surveyed preliminary maladaptive schemas and attachment among the adults. Their results showed that there is a relationship between styles of attachments and one's maladaptive schemas on one hand and mental health problems on the other hand. Brown [6] conducted a study titled styles of attachment and agreement between married couples and found that attachment styles of men and women are different, which in turn, can be effective in agreement between couples. Found that attachment styles

were effective on interpersonal relationship including marital relationship. Argued that individual's perception of their situation in life as to culture and value system that they are living in is related to their wishes, goals, and standards. With this introduction, one may conclude that there are many issues unsolved in this field. In light of this, the present paper is an attempt to survey the relationship between self-differentiation, preliminary maladaptive schemas, and quality of life one hand and quality of life on the other hand.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

1. Is there a relationship between self-differentiation and quality of life?
2. Is there a relationship between preliminary maladaptive schemas and quality of life?
3. Is there a relationship between attachment styles and quality of life?
4. Is there a relationship between quality of life and self-differentiation, preliminary maladaptive styles, and attachment styles?

METHODOLOGY

The participants were selected through cluster sampling. Study population was comprised of married students (30-40 years old) attending Islamic Azad University, Research and Science Tehran Unit. Regarding the objective and hypotheses, the study is correlative non-experimental work. Four questionnaires were used including self-differentiation questionnaire (DSI-R), Yong's schema questionnaire, attachment style questionnaire, and quality of life questionnaire (SF). At first, 60 participants were selected randomly to fill out the questionnaire. Based on the obtained results, reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha.

Data gathering was done through field study. The researchers attended the university and briefed the participants about the questionnaire. The participants were asked to give right and honest answers and they were ensured about confidentiality of their answers. To describe the data, frequency of distribution, statistical diagrams, median, and distribution indices were used. The Pearson Correlation and multivariate regression analyses were used for analyzing the data.

FINDINGS

Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: There is a relationship between self-differentiation and quality of life.

Table 1- Correlation between self-differentiation and quality of life

Variable	Statistics	Quality of life
Self-differentiation	Correlation coef.	0.885**
	Sig.	.000
	N	106

As listed in the Table above, there is a correlation (0.88) between self-differentiation and quality of life, which is significant ($p = 0.01$). In other words, increase of self-differentiation leads to increase of quality of life.

Hypothesis two: There is a relationship between preliminary maladaptive schemas and quality of life.

Table 2- Correlation between preliminary maladaptive schema and quality of life

Variable	Statistics	Quality of life
preliminary maladaptive schemas	Correlation coef.	-0.795**
	Sig.	.000
	N	106

As listed in the Table above, there is a correlation (-0.79) between preliminary maladaptive schemas and quality of life, which is significant ($p = 0.01$). In other words, increase of preliminary maladaptive schemas leads to decrease of quality of life.

Hypothesis three: There is a relationship between attachment styles and quality of life.

Table 3- Correlation between attachment styles and quality of life

Variable	Statistics	Quality of life
attachment styles	Correlation coef.	.913**
	Sig.	.000
	N	106

As listed in the Table above, there is a correlation (0.91) between attachment styles and quality of life, which is significant ($p = 0.01$). In other words, increase of attachment styles leads to increase of quality of life.

Hypothesis four: There is a relationship between quality of life on one hand and preliminary maladaptive schemas and attachment styles on the other hand

Table 4- The variables, model and regression coefficients for the predictor variables in the step-by-step regression analysis

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2
1	.913(a)	.833	.832
2	.935(b)	.874	.872

Table 5- Variance analysis to test significance of predictor variables

Model		Squares sum	DF	Mean squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.852	1	11.852	514.794	.000(a)
	Remainder	2.371	103	.023		
	Total	14.224	104			
2	Regression	12.432	2	6.216	353.904	.000(b)
	Remainder	1.792	102	.018		
	Total	14.224	104			

Table6- Standardized/non-standard correlation coefficients of independent variables to predict quality of life of married students

Model		Non-standard coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
		B	Measured SD	(B)		
1	Fix	4.123	.046		89.706	.000
	Style of attachment	.312	.014	.913	22.689	.000
2	Fix	5.523	.247		22.366	.000
	Style of attachment	.510	.036	.890	14.002	.000
	preliminary maladaptive schemas	-.170	.030	-.611	-5.746	.000

The table above lists R, R2 and adjusted R2. Value of R with style of attachment as the only predictor is 0.83, while by adding the second variable "preliminary maladaptive schema", value of R is increased to 0.87.

Variance analysis to test significance of the prediction models are listed in the Table above. Only attachment variable is taken into account in the first model and the second model adds preliminary maladaptive schemas. It is notable that the both predictor models were significant.

Non-standard and standardized correlation coefficients, t value, and significance value of the predictor variables are listed in the table above. Maximum Beta coefficient was obtained by attachment style (0.89) followed by beta coefficient of preliminary maladaptive schemas (-0.61).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The relationship between self-differentiation, preliminary maladaptive schemas, and attachment styles on one hand and quality of life on the other hand was examined. Study population was comprised of married students at age rate 30-40, Islamic Azad University, Research and Science Tehran Unit. Totally, 106 participants were selected through cluster sampling – i.e. one faculty was selected among 16 faculties. Four questionnaires were used for data gathering including self-differentiation questionnaire (DSI-R), Yong's schema questionnaire, attachment style questionnaire, and quality of life questionnaire (SF). Descriptive and inference statistics (multivariate regression) were used for data analyzing. Correlation between self-differentiation and quality of life was confirmed by inference analysis. In other words, increase of self-differentiation led to increase of quality of life- i.e. hypothesis one is supported. The results are consistent with Griffin and Apstal [7], Pleg and Dar [8] and Yong et al [9].To explain the results, according to Bowen's theory, and family can remain stable as a social system only when the members have self-differentiation. From inference analyses viewpoint, there was correlation between preliminary maladaptive schemas and quality of life. To put it another way, increase of the former led to decrease of the latter i.e. hypothesis two is supported. This result is consistent with Freeman [4], Stialz [10] and Beck [11].

To shed more light on the findings, examined relationship between family function, maladaptive schema, and satisfaction with life and found that there was negative relationship between family function and preliminary maladaptive schema. He also reported positive relationship between family function and satisfaction with life and negative relationship between preliminary maladaptive

schema and satisfaction with life. His results highlighted key role of the variables family function and preliminary maladaptive schema on satisfaction with life. He named this process as "magic of schema." So that there is a correlation between attachment styles and quality of life.

In other words, increase of attachment styles leads to increase of quality of life. Therefore, hypothesis three is supported. Introduced a four-element model that uses behavioral description to extract attachment style as a combination of positive and negative internal active models. Maximum Beta value for prediction of quality of life was obtained by attachment style followed by preliminary maladaptive schema. Therefore, hypothesis four is supported. Argued that the key elements of an adult personality are cognitive methods and vulnerable self-esteem, which emerge in child's understanding of their acceptability and desirability. These elements have to with how preliminary social interactions happen. In conclusion, the results indicated that self-differentiation, preliminary maladaptive schema, and attachment styles are related to quality of life.

RECOMENDATIONS

Couple therapy, family therapy, and treatment schema and their effect on quality of life can be subject of future studies to determine which of them is more effective. In addition, the effect of each variable introduced in this paper and treatment model designed for that model on quality of life can be further studies. Questionnaire with fewer questions, which are easier to administer, can also be used in future studies. Finally, all the factors effective on quality of life can be surveyed by future works.

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