Attachment (Avoidance and Anxiety) in Relation to Marital Satisfaction in Couples Born

between 1980 and 2000

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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

This quantitative correlational study examined the relationship between attachment styles (Anxiety, Avoidance) correlated to marital satisfaction in heterosexual couples living in the U.S., born between 1980-2000, and the moderating role of social media use. Attachment styles develop during the infant stage through interactions with adult caregivers. It is apparent from research results that early attachment styles affect how a person interacts, impacting satisfaction in adult romantic relationships (Sandberg et al., 2015). The emergence of social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, has given people new ways to communicate with each other, build networks, and share information. According to research, more time and attention spent on social media can be diverted from romantic relationships, which could lead to arguments and unfavorable consequences that affect marital satisfaction (Bouffard et al., 2021). The association between intimate relationships and the use of digital media has also been found to have certain advantages. Intimate digital communication was found to boost marital satisfaction and intimacy (Lomanowska & Guitton, 2016). In this study, a demographic questionnaire and three instruments were used to gather data: the Experience in Close Relationship Scale-short form, the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale, and the Social Media Use Integration Scale. The Hayes, regression, and correlation data analysis techniques were applied to ascertain the association between marital satisfaction and attachment types (Anxiety, Avoidance). Data analysis was done using Hayes PROCESS macro to find the variables' moderation. The statistical analysis revealed that there is a correlation between attachment style (Anxiety and Avoidance) and marital satisfaction, and higher levels of social media use did have a statistically significant moderating outcome on the strength or direction of the relationship between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction.

Dedications

First and foremost, I devote this study to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, whose mercy, and faithfulness enabled me to do the seemingly impossible. Additionally, this study is dedicated to my dreamcatcher and prayer warrior husband, James, as well as our three children, our daughter-in-love, and our granddaughter, Jeshan, Shakira, Janith, Chrissy, and Serena. My parents, who have always inspired me to aim high, are also honored in this study. My dear friend and prayer partner Iba who has prayed with me and for me fervently. Lastly, I dedicate this project to my clients who have let me be a part of their story.

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Experience in Close Relationship Scale-Short Form (ECR-S)

The Enrich Marital Satisfaction (EMS)

Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS)

Intuitional Review Board (IRB)

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

This dissertation investigated the relationship between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction in couples living in the U.S., born between 1980 and 2000, and the moderating role of social media use. A person born between 1980 and 2000 is commonly referred to as a millennial, yet some sources give a different birth year range (Andrade et al., 2020; Dai & Chilson, 2021; Dalessandro, 2018; Duckett, 2021). For this study, this cohort will be known as "those born between 1980 and 2000."

The importance of social media to this cohort and the observed effects of its influence on attachment patterns emphasize the value of such an examination in the context of marital satisfaction among couples and interpersonal interactions (Zhang & Li, 2021). According to Geiger and Livingston (2019), attachment is defined as a link formed in infancy through the caregiver-child relationship. Attachment can lead to empathy-based courtship with appropriate boundaries and substantial relationships. Avoidant attachment can result in significant, rigid, and distant relationships. Anxious attachment can lead to uneasy, stressful partnerships.

The widespread adoption of social media platforms has revolutionized how individuals connect and communicate, presenting opportunities and challenges for romantic relationships, particularly among the specified generation. Therefore, this introduction explores the historical, cultural, and psychological evolution of attachment styles and highlights key findings of pre-existing literature, shedding light on the complex interplay among attachment styles, marital satisfaction, and social media use among couples born between 1980 and 2000.

Background

The desire to understand the complexities of attachment patterns in romantic relationships has recently grown in popularity, particularly among couples born between 1980 and 2000 (Geiger & Livingston, 2019). The emergence of social media, the power of peer pressure, and the development of new technologies have been found to have significantly impacted this generation (Andrade et al., 2020; Duckett, 2021). As a result of these factors, the outlook on marriage and other close relationships for individuals in this generation has been altered (Dillon, 2022). These individuals are motivated by their intimate relationships and acquaintances just as much as by social media, peer pressure, and technological abilities (Knoetze, 2017). Social media activities, such as calendaring, posting, and browsing, are increasing. Unlike older generations, those born between 1980 and 2000 use social media platforms to connect with their friends (Andrade et al., 2020). While they recognize that the use of social media to engage with others romantically has adverse outcomes (primarily related to lying, cheating, and impartiality) (Dalessandro, 2018), social media is also seen as beneficial in partner engagement and interactions (Belotti et al., 2022).

There is a large body of research on attachment styles and attachment behaviors in adult romantic relationships and marital relationships that needs to be considered (Sandberg et al., 2015). According to Bowlby (1973) and Ainsworth (1978), the attachment styles that children develop because of their early interactions with caregivers range along a continuum of emotion regulation, with anxious attachment at one end and avoidant attachment at the other. Secure attachment is in the middle of this range, between anxious attachment's excessive control and limit of emotions and avoidant attachment's uncontrolled, chaotic, and ineffectively managed emotions (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

The behavior displayed in a relationship is a description of an attachment style. Early attachment styles affect the quality of all adult relationships, especially romantic relationships (Ainsworth et al., 1978). According to MacKenzie et al. (2008), there is a presumption that an infant's social and emotional responses as an adult are influenced by the information they learn about the world and themselves from their primary caregiver. Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory relies heavily on the attachment behavioral system, a fundamental psychobiological mechanism that drives people to seek out intimate relationships with nurturing individuals. Behaviors associated with attachment are a response to early infant/childhood-developed self and other-related ideas and feelings. Neuropsychological research has recently supported this idea by claiming that the human brain adapts to function in social connection conditions. It also suggests that dependence on others is the default tactic for regulating emotions (Ein-Dor & Hirschberger, 2016).

Research that identifies specific behaviors within a couple's relationship about attachment security can provide suitable interventions. Women born between 1980 and 2000 prioritize independence from succeeding in their careers to having children (Geiger & Livingston, 2019). Compared to women in the mid-nineteen seventies, these women are more financially independent, and their definition of finances relates to independence, success, and power (Eckenroad, 2023). The mindset of independence due to financial security is an essential aspect of marital satisfaction connected to attachment in couples born during this time. This new area of research provides knowledge of how attachment-related behaviors affect marital stability and happiness, which relates to specific behaviors in a relationship that will be explored (Sandberg et al., 2015). Attachment theory by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (1978) has tremendously

changed our understanding of how childhood attachment experiences shape romantic relationships as adults.

The evolution of attachment theory and its uses throughout generations and cultures have been the subject of extensive study. Understanding the significance of attachment theory to the marital happiness of couples within the specified generation requires examining how it has developed through time (Eckenroad, 2023). Several studies have investigated the transference of attachment styles from generation to generation. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), people who report feeling safe and secure in their interpersonal relationships are more likely to have had similar experiences with their primary caregivers as newborns. Conversely, those with anxious or avoidant attachment were more likely to have had specific difficulties in their upbringing. These findings establish the framework for investigating how attachment patterns may influence marital satisfaction among married people born between 1980 and 2000. Examining the ideas that underpin relationships, this field of study is essential to understanding the conceptual and theoretical foundations of attachment and their impact on marital satisfaction.

Several theoretical models have contributed to our comprehension of attachment and marital contentment (Rosalina et al., 2020). The Social Exchange Theory is a prominent example of this thinking; it proposes that people weigh the pros and cons of their social interactions and make choices based on how they can most benefit from those interactions (Thibaut, 2017). This theory implies that people with different attachment styles may value the costs and advantages of their relationships differently, which has consequences for understanding the association between attachment style and marital satisfaction (Archibald, 2022).

The Investment Model is also important since it expands the Social Exchange Theory to account for additional variables, including commitment, satisfaction, and alternatives (Rusbult,

1980). This model suggests that the sustenance of marital satisfaction is possible if both partners are committed to and satisfied by their relationships. In addition, the theoretical framework provided by attachment theory allows us to make sense of the correlation between attachment patterns (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital contentment. This theory contends that an individual's attachment behavioral system significantly impacts their desire for intimacy, support, and security in romantic relationships (Aljasir, 2022). Secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles, among others, have all been demonstrated to have an impact on marital satisfaction. Securely connected people have strong and steady trust in others, while highly avoidant people have low trust in others, and extremely anxious people have fluctuating trust in others (Rusbult, 1980). These attachment styles have also been correlated with patterns of communicative behavior. However, other influences, such as social media use, might also affect marital satisfaction.

Social Media Advancements and Relationship Dynamics

The advent of social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, has provided individuals with new avenues for sharing information, developing networks, and connecting with others. Research suggests that increased social media use can reduce attention and time invested in relationship partners, potentially triggering conflicts, and adverse outcomes (Bouffard et al., 2021). This detachment from immediate physical surroundings, often referred to as being "alone together," highlights the potential disconnection and disengagement that social media use may foster within intimate relationships (Duckett, 2021). However, research also suggests that social media use has positive outcomes linked with increased feelings of social assistance and that diminished feelings of loneliness are associated with heightened feelings of social support and decreased loneliness (Hatamleha et al., 2020).

The Mediated Construction of Reality

The widespread use of digital media devices and the internet has created a mediated construction of reality where social media and interpersonal interactions intersect (Duckett, 2021). This phenomenon raises concerns about the potential impact on marital communication and social interaction. The allure of constant virtual interaction through smartphones can lead to a detachment from the immediate presence and replace face-to-face communication with shorter digital messages, potentially affecting the quality of intimate connections. Therefore, it is vital to comprehend how people born between 1980 and 2000 and impacted by social media navigate social media platforms, moderate genderlect communication norms, and construct shared meaning within their marriages in the polymedia home (Duckett, 2021). Polymedia is the concept of a wide range of usage of communication media.

W. Wang et al. (2020) explored the association between upward social comparison on mobile social media and mental health among married adults. Their findings indicated that upward social comparison was associated with depression, with envy mediating this relationship. The association shown is moderated by marital quality, meaning successful marriages can shield people from the negative consequences of upward social comparison. In a similar study, Nidhi et al. (2021) investigated the impact of working from home on a married woman's work-life equilibrium and emotional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors revealed that the shift to remote work increased the workload, negatively affecting work-life balance and mental health. Factors such as increased working hours, home distractions, and regular schedule challenges contributed to these outcomes. These findings suggest that there may be other factors that should be considered in addition to social media use that affect marital satisfaction.

This further propounds the need to consider the interplay between work-related stressors, attachment dynamics, and marital satisfaction in the context of advancements in social media.

Moreover, Hynes and Kingzette (2021) addressed the engagement of couple and family therapists (CFTs) with younger generations through social media. The study emphasized the significance of social media in the lives of the specified generation and the increasing use of social media platforms by mental health providers. Recommendations for CFTs included maintaining professionalism, being accessible, demonstrating aligned values, establishing a robust online presence, and catering to the younger generation's preferences to engage effectively through social media. Still, future research should examine the intricate mechanisms underlying the association between technology use and attachment processes, considering contextual factors and individual differences. Additionally, investigating interventions and strategies that promote healthy attachment dynamics and marital satisfaction in the digital age is essential.

Problem Statement

Literature is replete with studies on attachment and marital satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 2020; Kazim & Rafique, 2021; Mardani et al., 2021; Maxwell et al., 2020) and attachment and social comparison (Thai et al., 2016; W. Wang et al., 2020). However, the moderating role of social media use in the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born in the U.S. between 1980 and 2000 has not been considered recently. The relationship between social media use, attachment, and marital happiness in couples born between 1980 and 2000 has not yet been studied, according to Maxwell et al. (2020). The increasing use of social media among individuals within this cohort has raised concerns about its impact on mental health and overall well-being (Aichner et al., 2021). Prior research has concentrated chiefly on adolescents and college students, overlooking the well-being of married

adults. Negative consequences of mental health, such as higher risks of depression, have been associated with upward social comparison on mobile social media (W. Wang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the mechanisms underlying the association between upward social comparison and mental health outcomes in married adults have not been well-documented (W. Wang et al., 2020). In the studies of couples related to marital attachment patterns and marital satisfaction in Christian couples, the participants were Caucasian, religious, and college-educated. There was a noted lack of racial and ethnic diversity (Hee et al., 2019). There is also a scarcity of literature addressing attachment patterns, marital satisfaction, and social media use characteristics in heterosexual married adults living in the United States. In this study, social media use was explored as a moderator in marital happiness and attachment types. Investigating how social media affects relationships is crucial as it has become an integral part of peoples' lives.

Purpose Statement

This study investigated attachment related to relationship satisfaction within the marital relationship of couples born between 1980 and 2000 while considering the moderating role of social media use. Building on previous research on the impact of social media, this study aimed to ascertain if the use of social media influences the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction.

By understanding the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction, the research aims to provide insight into the interaction of attachment styles, marital satisfaction, and social media use. Attachment is the criterion variable in this correlational study, whereas marital satisfaction is the predictor variable. The moderating variable is social media use. According to Mackinnon (2015), in behavioral sciences, moderating factors are frequently used to explain the

strength and direction of the relationship between the predictor and the criterion variable. Furthermore, this study contributes to the development of psychoeducational strategies intended to strengthen relationships in couples born between 1980 and 2000, as well as our understanding of marital satisfaction and related aspects. It also clarifies how pastors and marriage counselors can help to lessen the consequences and provide guidance for interventions and tactics that promote positive relationship dynamics in the digital age. Finally, what makes this study unique is the coupling of marital satisfaction and attachment style (anxiety, avoidance) in a single study involving married heterosexual couples, born between 1980 to 2000, residing in the United States.

Significance of the Study

This dissertation examined the relationship between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980-2000 and the moderating role of social media use. The study ascertained the correlation between attachment style (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction. Additionally, it examined if social media use influences the relationship between attachment styles (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction. The result of this study helps guide treatments and methods to support good relationship dynamics in the digital age and assists in understanding the role of pastors and marriage therapists in supporting and minimizing the consequences (Hynes & Kingzette, 2021). This dissertation contributes to a better understanding of the effects of social media use on the mental health of married adults, sheds light on the specific challenges faced by married working couples whose ages fall within the specified years and provides training programs for family therapists in effectively utilizing social media to engage with the selected generation.

As a result, this study aims to broaden our understanding of marital satisfaction by exploring if social media use affects the strength of the relationship between attachment (Anxiety and Avoidance) and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, since married couples in this cohort comprise the largest generation group in the U.S. (2018 National and State Population Estimates, n.d.), Adade et al. (2023) emphasizes the need to study their social media use patterns. Their research magnifies the role of education and income in facilitating social media use, as higher education levels and income enable individuals to acquire digital skills and afford the necessary gadgets and data charges. Also noted is how popular Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp usage and integration are among married couples and other social media users. This context adds value to the study as it contributes to understanding social media use patterns among married couples within the cohort, particularly concerning these popular platforms.

The hypothesis for this study, which is coherent with prior studies on the relationship between attachment, marital satisfaction, and social media use (17 studies evaluated by Stöven & Herzberg, 2021), is that individuals who demonstrate high levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance will be less satisfied in their marital relationship (Stöven & Herzberg, 2021). Therefore, attachment has no direct influence on social media use. In line with prior research, it also hypothesized that attachment is unrelated to social media use associated with marital dissatisfaction (Sherrell & Lambie, 2018).

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there an association between attachment and marital satisfaction?

a. Is there an association between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction?

b. Is there an association between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction?

RQ2: Does social media use moderate the relationship between attachment (Anxiety and Avoidance) and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000

Definitions

Attachment- Typical style with which individuals relate to others in romantic relationships (Brennan et al., 1998; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

Marital satisfaction- The subjective evaluation of overall happiness, fulfillment, and contentment within a marital relationship, reflecting how individuals perceive their marriage as positive and rewarding (Savitri & Ulfah, 2019).

Specified generation- A group of people influenced and impacted by the same phenomenon, such as social media, technology, and recession; a generation where there was increased use of social media (Aichner et al., 2021). This group is also known as Millennials or Generation Y.

Social media use- Usage style of social networking platforms that lets users create, share, and engage in social networking (Altuwairiqi et al., 2019).

Relationship dynamics- The patterns, interactions, and processes in a romantic relationship that include communication, emotional connection, conflict resolution, and overall satisfaction (Bouffard et al., 2021).

Intimate communication- The exchange of personal and emotional information, thoughts, and feelings between partners in a romantic relationship, fostering a sense of closeness, trust, and understanding (Savitri & Ulfah 2019).

Polymedia home: A home environment heavily influenced and mediated by social media, where various forms of media, such as smartphones, social networking sites, and digital devices, are integrated into daily life and impact interpersonal relationships within the family system (Duckett, 2021).

Upward social comparison- The act of comparing oneself to others perceived as more successful, attractive, or accomplished, often leading to feelings of inferiority and dissatisfaction (W. Wang et al., 2020).

Phubbing- The behavior of ignoring face-to-face communication and diverting attention to a smartphone or other digital device in the presence of others, thereby neglecting social interaction and connection (Duckett, 2021).

Marital quality- The subjective evaluation of a marriage's general well-being and contentment, considering a variety of factors like communication, emotional support, closeness, and shared values (W. Wang et al., 2020).

Summary

The study investigated attachment in couples born between 1980 and 2000 in relation to marital satisfaction and the moderating influence of social media use. Attachment avoidance is defined by a negative perception of others, which leads to discomfort with intimacy and a reluctance to be intimate with people. Attachment anxiety is characterized by a negative self-image and a fear of rejection (Vollmann et al., 2019). Individuals who exhibit significant levels of attachment avoidance and/or anxiety are said to be insecurely attached (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Those with a secure attachment style are more trustworthy in their relationships (Abbasi et al., 2016; Amani & Khosroshahi, 2020; Bedair et al., 2020; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020).

This research aims to understand how social media use affects the correlation between attachment and marital satisfaction. To fully grasp the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction of couples born between 1980 and 2000 and the interacting role of social media, it is necessary to review literature from a wide range of fields, such as psychology, sociology, and relationship studies.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

This study examined how attachment (Anxiety and Avoidance) affects marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000 and the function of social media as a moderator. In addition to being the largest generation group in the United States (Manning et al., 2019), this age group differs from previous generations in that social media influences their interactions and expectations with others (Zhang & Li, 2021). For these reasons, the study of attachment and marital satisfaction in this sector is becoming increasingly important. In the modern era of social media and other influencing attitudes, it is crucial to research how attachment is affected by these views (Vazquez et al., 2019). The problem is that most research on marital satisfaction focuses on attachment patterns and behaviors (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2020). Studies on marital satisfaction in spouses and attachment are scarce in this age group. This dissertation aimed to comprehend and explore the influence of attachment on marital satisfaction among couples born between 1980 and 2000.

Theoretical Framework

Attachment is a common occurrence in a family unit. John Bowlby's (1973) attachment theory focuses on the primary caregiver, often the parent, and the child. Based on Bowlby's (1973) interpretation and those of Ainsworth et al. (1978), attachment styles are formed during childhood through interactions with caregivers and continue into adult romantic relationships. (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Conventionally, an individual's internal functioning and operating model, or an internalized concept of the safety/security of relationships, have been described as their attachment style. The impact of how one has interacted in one's family of origin and the experiences of those interactions influence interactions in a romantic relationship.

Bowlby's suggested behavioral system has been the leading framework for most attachment-styles research for many years. Using the concepts of Bowlby and Ainsworth's theory, Hazan and Shaver (1987) presented that the bonds children formed with parents translate into various attachment types as adults: secure, avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) developed four categories of attachment types: secure, preoccupied, dismissive, and scared. These categories evolved from the initial attachment types. Bowlby's hypothesized behavioral system has been used in most studies on attachment types for many years.

Comprehending the important aspects that can increase intimacy and contribute to marital satisfaction when one is attached is simpler. Additionally, understanding the factors that contribute to relationships deteriorating due to insecure attachment patterns is provided by studying attachment. Additionally, recent research indicates that secure attachment is seen and understood in expressions of scopes like "anxious over relationships," which distinguishes preoccupied and fearful people from other people, and "comfort with closeness," which distinguishes secure and preoccupied people from those who are avoidant (Brennan et al., 1998; Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Despite the significance of understanding how distinctive attachment styles affect marital satisfaction, there has been a lack of research on the influence of external factors such as social media, economic challenges, and childhood trauma.

Related Literature

Adults born between 1980 and 2000

According to study findings, people born between 1980 and 2000 were affected by the recession in several ways, including having to move back in with their parents or continue living with them (Candel & Turliuc, 2019). The current generation has a different perspective on

marriage compared to previous generations. They marry significantly later than previous generations because marriage is not a goal for them (Candel & Turliuc, 2019). According to Manning et al. (2019), a study conducted on single individuals born between 1980 and 2000 revealed that a higher proportion of Gen Xers and Baby Boomers were involved in partnerships that transitioned from friendships with benefits to romantic relationships. According to studies, most couples in this age range choose to cohabitate over being married (Dai & Chilson, 2021). According to a new study by Manning et al. (2019), people's decision to choose cohabitation over marriage is influenced more by their attitude toward marriage than by their behavior.

Benefits of Marital Satisfaction

Improved mental health has been shown to have a significant positive impact on a high-quality marriage. Pieh et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study to examine the effects of better mental health in a high-quality marriage during the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown measures implemented in Austria. The study was conducted using a cross-sectional survey questionnaire, and the data analysis was done using a thematic analysis by the researchers. They discovered that enhanced emotional closeness and attachment between spouses was correlated with better mental health in marriage. The results showed that deepening trust and understanding, as well as encouraging open and honest communication, were significantly influenced by better mental health among emotionally intimate partners.

Improved mental health in marriage also leads to better conflict resolution. Conflict is inevitable in any relationship or marriage and may become problematic if not managed effectively. According to Dai and Chilson (2021), couples that engaged in healthy conflict resolution techniques were more likely to have successful marriages. Couples with improved mental health are likely to listen to each other, express their needs and concerns, and cooperate in

seeking mutually beneficial solutions. Luetke et al. (2020) carried out a quantitative study that assessed the relationship regarding changes in intimate and sexual behaviors and experiences in COVID-19-related relationships, which is consistent with the findings of A. Wagner et al. (2019). The data used by the researchers came from the study design. In the United States, 1,010 adult individuals took part in the study. The goal of the study was to find out how changes in intimate and sexual behaviors among people in romantic or sexual relationships were impacted by relationship conflict due to the coronavirus (Luetke et al., 2020). According to the findings, the researchers reported that couples with repeated COVID-19-related conflicts with their partner were considerably more likely to report a reduced occurrence of partnered intimate and sexual behaviors than those without such experience, showing a dose-response trend among partnered sexual behaviors.

Improved mental health in marriage has many advantages that can lead to a more fulfilling and satisfying relationship. Additionally, couples that prioritize their mental health and work together to support each other's well-being build a stronger and more resilient relationship that can weather the challenges they experience in life together. Increased happiness, income, and satisfaction are significant benefits of marital satisfaction that may lead to a more fulfilling and meaningful life. According to Zulkarnain and Ramli (2021), income stability among couples born in the specified years, being happier and more satisfied with their lives, was a significant precursor to marital satisfaction. Similarly, Williamson and Lavner (2019) sought to investigate the relationship between life income and marital satisfaction in a quantitative study using a sample of 431 ethnically diverse newlywed couples from low-income backgrounds. Their findings indicated that couples from low-income backgrounds experienced a high level of conflict and divorce due to insufficient capital to sustain their marriage. On the contrary, the

researchers elucidated that couples from high-income backgrounds perceived increased happiness due to sufficient life income to sustain their families. The researchers indicate that life income among couples was a precursor to a happy life and a couple's life satisfaction. These findings reiterate that there is a connection between finances, mental health, and marital satisfaction.

Increased happiness and life satisfaction in marriage positively correlate with higher income and financial stability. Savitri and Ulfah's (2019) findings indicated that other employees have more marital satisfaction than nurses because they are less dedicated to their jobs, which resulted in increased happiness and life satisfaction, unlike that of nurses who are more dedicated to their work. Similar findings were reported by (Kazim & Rafique, 2021), who investigated the relationship between increased happiness and life satisfaction as predictors of marital satisfaction. The researchers reported that a happy and fulfilling marriage provides a sense of purpose and meaning among couples. Partners who perceive increased happiness and life satisfaction in their marriage are likelier to feel a sense of purpose and meaning. Increased wealth and financial security have a direct positive influence on marital happiness and life satisfaction. The evidence from the examined articles supports the concept that a happy and satisfying marriage may give couples emotional, physical, and financial support, leading to a more meaningful and rewarding existence.

Factors Influencing Marital Satisfaction among Couples

Couples' Intimacy and Self-Esteem

Intimate relationships are fundamental pillars of marital satisfaction among dating and married couples. Through a qualitative study of 180 married couples, A. Wagner et al. (2019) examined the link between intimacy and marital satisfaction among married couples. They

established that couples appreciate touch satisfaction as it reduces anxiety. S. Wagner et al. (2020) also examined the role of esteem in marital satisfaction. They reported that couples with high self-esteem exhibited a strong desire to resolve marital conflicts compared to married partners with low self-esteem who prefer silent treatment when there is disagreement. Other researchers have linked strong intimacy relationships to increased marital satisfaction among married partners. To better understand the role of intimacy in marital satisfaction, Ahuja and Khurana (2021) conducted an online survey with 100 participants. They discovered that couples who cooperate in helping each other out with household tasks were more likely to be satisfied in their marriage than their counterparts who do not. Casale et al. (2019) also recruited 344 participants to investigate how narcissistic traits in one partner influence marital satisfaction in married couples. They established that when a partner is a narcissist, they focus on self-perfection at the expense of their partner's marital happiness. As assessed by the evidence gathered, close relationships positively influence couples' satisfaction levels. Engaging in numerous activities jointly reinforces this bond and increases marital satisfaction.

Researchers have demonstrated a significant link between intimacy and marital satisfaction among married couples. Hammond et al. (2018) examined the influence of intimacy on marital satisfaction and found that couples with passionate romantic relationships exhibited low stress levels and healthy behaviors. Agreeing with Hammond et al. (2018), according to Karney and Bradbury (2020), married couples who regularly engaged in sexual activity reported higher levels of satisfaction and fewer instances of conflict. Dai and Chilson (2021) also established that physical and emotional intimacy played a significant role in fighting depression and insomnia among married couples. Other scholars, such as Baumann et al. (2020) and Vaillancourt-Morel et al. (2018), linked increased marriage success to intimate relationships

among married couples. Married women who were unfaithful to their partners reported poorer marital satisfaction than their counterparts who were faithful to their partners, according to Vaillancourt-Morel et al. (2018). Close intimate relationships among married couples enhance marital satisfaction through improved conflict resolution.

Communication Between Couples

Good communication contributes to marital satisfaction among married couples, especially in the event of disagreement, which is inevitable in marriages. Taggart et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study with 116 heterosexual couples to investigate the importance of good communication in marriage. They found that healthy communication promotes conflict resolution since most marriages experience ups and downs. Further findings by Denes et al. (2020) revealed that good communication between husbands and wives reduces misunderstandings, leading to increased confidence and trust among the couples. Alipour et al. (2020) found that healthy discussion between partners on their genuine feelings helps build transparent and successful marriages. Thus far, there is consistent evidence across existing studies that healthy communication reduces conflict and misunderstanding, increasing marital satisfaction.

A couple with healthy conversation behavior is more likely to have high marital satisfaction than their counterparts with poor communication (Taggart, et al., 2019). To understand the role of communication in marital satisfaction, Sim et al. (2019) conducted a phenomenology study with 11 couples to investigate the connection between communication and marital contentment and reported a significant link. Specifically, Sim et al. (2019) said that good communication involves listening to your partner to understand their needs and how to address them, leading to high marital satisfaction. Nguyen et al. (2020) recruited 414 newlywed couples

to examine their perception of good communication and reported that positive interaction between couples reduces stress levels and helps promote cohesiveness during decision-making. Similarly, Parise et al. (2019) conducted an online survey with 97 married couples to examine the importance of communication in marital satisfaction. They highlighted that constant feedback through healthy partner communication enhances high marital satisfaction. Communication is vital to marital satisfaction because it promotes togetherness and unity among married couples.

Individual's Spirituality and Religiosity

Married couples with the same spiritual beliefs and connections are likelier to have more connections than partners with different spiritual connections. Andrade et al. (2020) discovered a significant relationship between religious solid commitment and higher levels of marital happiness among the selected couples. Couples born between 1980 and 2000 with a profound spiritual connection reported greater fulfillment and happiness in their marriages. Vazquez et al. (2019) recruited 180 interracially married couples through an online survey to establish the relationship between spirituality and marital contentment. They reported that strong spiritual commitment mediated racial discrimination in marriages, thus reducing stigma-related challenges leading to couple satisfaction. It is critical to follow the researcher's advice and take suitable measures to decrease prejudice in interracial unions. The discoveries of Genç and Su (2021) align with those of Aman et al. (2019) and Vazquez et al. (2019), who conducted studies involving 178 Black-White couples. Their research emphasizes the importance of religion in contending racial discrimination against such couples, eventually improving marital satisfaction. Couples with solid spiritual connections can overcome marital challenges such as racial discrimination and misunderstandings, leading to higher marital satisfaction.

Several researchers have expressed interest in understanding the role of religiosity in marital satisfaction. Scholars such as Hwang et al. (2020) conducted a longitudinal study with 173 married couples to investigate the role of religiosity on marital satisfaction. They found that husbands with religious wives exhibited high levels of marital satisfaction. Moore et al. (2021) discovered in a sample of 33 Black married couples that reading the word of God and putting God first in their activities transforms marriages and increases marital pleasure. Concurring with the findings of Hwang et al. (2020) and Moore et al. (2021), Ripley et al. (2022) revealed that religiosity allows married couples to employ spiritual interventions such as silent prayers and reading the word of God to find support when their relationships are in trouble. Savitri and Ulfah (2019) conducted an online questionnaire study with nine couples. They discovered that religiosity increases mutual understanding through shared faith and beliefs, leading to better understanding in marriage. Thus far, the evidence reviewed suggests that religiosity fosters marital satisfaction among married couples because they believe in solving their differences.

Socioeconomic Status/Income Level/Occupation/Employment Status

Socioeconomic status influences a couple's marital satisfaction in various ways, such as providing shelter and food that builds a happy marriage. Additionally, Zulkarnain and Ramli (2021) hypothesized that financial stability has a favorable effect on marital satisfaction among the specified couples. Couples can concentrate on creating a solid and fulfilling relationship when they are financially secure since it lowers stress and lays a foundation for security (Zulkarnain & Ramli, 2021). However, it is crucial to recognize that financial stability is not the sole determinant of marital satisfaction, and a comprehensive understanding of all contributing factors is necessary to support healthy and fulfilling marriages. In agreement with Zulkarnain and Ramli (2021), Habenicht and Schutte (2023) discovered that low income makes it more

difficult for couples to communicate since they can only attain their goals with money. Other researchers, however, have shown no link between income level and marital satisfaction among couples (Horrell et al., 2021; Leonhardt et al., 2021; Manning et al., 2019). Horrell et al. (2021) established that marital satisfaction does not depend on the availability of income, as other factors such as communication, religiosity, and intimacy directly link marital satisfaction. Combined, the evidence reviewed thus far indicates that sufficient income levels enhance marital satisfaction among couples, arguing that some couples may remain satisfied despite financial challenges.

Relationship between Attachment and Marital Satisfaction

Avoidant Attachment

Existing literature studies have shown that avoidant attachment in couples negatively impacts marital satisfaction. Researchers like Candel and Turliuc (2019) conducted a systematic literature evaluation of 132 works to determine the relationship between avoidant attachment and marital satisfaction. The researchers made a noteworthy finding concerning avoidant attachment. They found that the level of marital dissatisfaction related to this attachment style differs depending on the age and length of the relationship. Agreeing with Candel and Turliuc (2019), A. Wagner et al. (2019) also established that an avoidant attachment style in a marriage is associated with extensive marital disharmony and dissatisfaction. Several researchers, including Debrot et al. (2020), explored the effects of avoidant attachment on marital satisfaction and discovered that avoiding connection to spouses dramatically increased levels of marital unhappiness and hence encouraged marital dissatisfaction. An avoidant attachment, as per the findings of the reviewed studies, is associated with marital dissatisfaction.

Insecure attachment in relationships and marriages is a causal factor in marital dissatisfaction. Hammond et al. (2018) sought to establish the relationship between avoidant attachment and marital satisfaction and found lower marital satisfaction among couples that experienced an avoidant attachment relationship style. According to Paradis and Maffini (2021), who explored the association between marital happiness and relationship attachment style, insecure and avoidant attachment was a causal component in marital discord, ultimately leading to breakups and divorces. This finding is consistent with that of Hammond et al. (2018). The findings highlighted by Hammond et al. (2018) reported that people who experience avoidant attachment are likely to have unsatisfactory relationships and marriages because of anxiety and romantic detachment from their spouses. Combining the evidence in the reviewed literature studies, one can conclude that avoidant attachment causes marital dissatisfaction and detachment.

Prior studies have shown that avoidant attachment behaviors in marriage and relationships relate to feelings of unhappiness and relationship conflict. To expound on this, Li et al. (2021) studied the effects of various attachment styles on marital satisfaction among newlyweds and reported that couples with avoidant and insecure attachments experienced marital dissatisfaction, with a majority citing romantic detachment as a causal factor. Similar findings by Mitchell (2023) found that couples with unstable marriages and relationships have a propensity for relational detachment, which links to marital dissatisfaction. Bretaña et al. (2020), who sought to establish the relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction, reported findings that were consistent with those of Li et al. (2021) and Mitchell (2023). They discovered that avoidant attachment style in relationships significantly affected the levels of

satisfaction experienced by couples. The evidence from examined studies suggests that avoidant attachment negatively influences marital satisfaction.

Anxious Attachment

Prior research studies have indicated that anxious attachment in marriages and relationships can cause disharmony and marital dissatisfaction. Through a quantitative study with 172 participants, Callaci et al. (2020) sought to understand the effects of anxious attachment on marital satisfaction. They found that anxious couples usually experience anxiety, depression, and stress, which may lead to marital and relationship dissatisfaction. In agreement with Callaci et al. (2020), Kulibert et al. (2019) also examined the influence of anxious attachment on marriages, and they reported that couples who feel insecure and anxious are more likely to experience marital disharmony because of the lack of trust in their partners. Reiterating the findings by Callaci et al. (2020) and Kulibert et al. (2019), Guidry et al. (2019) studied the impacts of anxious attachment on marriages, and they found that anxious attachment was associated with mental health disorders such as stress and depression that negatively affected marital satisfaction in couples. Anxious attachment in relationships negatively impacts marital satisfaction through emotional detachment and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

Additional studies have also shown that anxious attachment negatively affects marital satisfaction. To understand the effects of attachment anxiety in relationships, McNulty et al. (2021) investigated the effects of attachment anxiety among couples. Results show that anxious attachment in relationships brings about relationship depression, anxiety, and strain. These outcomes considerably reduce marital satisfaction for related couples. Agreeing with McNulty et al. (2021), Lyvers et al. (2021) found that relationship anxiety was associated with emotional distress that caused fear of intimacy and thus reduced levels of marital satisfaction among

couples. Bühler et al. (2020) highlighted findings that were related to those of McNulty et al. (2021) and Lyvers et al. (2021), reporting that anxious attachment between spouses was a causal factor in marital dissatisfaction and discord in partnerships. The reviewed studies significantly highlight the negative influence of anxious attachment on marital satisfaction among couples.

Earlier research has posited that low levels of marital satisfaction characterize attachment anxiety in relationships. According to David and Roberts (2021), who studied the impact of attachment anxiety in partnerships, jealousy, and clinginess were the common traits of anxious partners, which exacerbated relationship and marital dissatisfaction. Like David and Roberts (2021), Siegel et al. (2018) also established that anxious attachment prevented couples from living in harmony through distrust, which caused negative marital satisfaction among affected couples. Showing consensus with David and Roberts (2021) and Siegel et al. (2018), Overall et al. (2022) also reported that anxious attachment was prone to romantic conflicts and violence between couples and thus prevented marital satisfaction. As per the findings of the reviewed studies, anxious attachment in relationships causes marital dissatisfaction and conflicts in relationships and marriages.

Disorganized Attachment

Existing research has shown that individuals exhibiting disorganized attachment styles have low marital satisfaction levels through inconsistent behaviors. To expound on this, Heidari et al. (2018) examined the impacts of disorganized attachment in relationships. They found that insecure attachment reduced the well-being of couples through inconsistent habits that harmed the quality of relationships and marital well-being. Other researchers, such as Gewirtz-Meydan and Finzi-Dottan (2020), also established that disorganized attachment in relationships was likely to initiate partner violence that subsequently harmed the marital satisfaction enjoyed by couples.

Zhou et al. (2020) investigated the impact of insecure attachment in relationships. They reported results that were like those of Gewirtz-Meydan and Finzi-Dottan (2020), and Heidari et al. (2018) also found a connection between disorganized attachment and marital dissatisfaction. Disordered attachment can hurt marital satisfaction due to the fear of rejection and the mood disorders it causes. When one spouse displays inconstant behavior that demoralizes the well-being and pleasure of the relationship, it is a clear sign of disordered attachment.

More studies have also shown that disorganized attachment is associated with reduced marital satisfaction. By recruiting 1014 participants, Conradi et al. (2021) sought to establish the influence of disorganized attachment on relationships. They reported that many relationships were dysfunctional, where one partner experienced disorganized attachment, thus impeding couples from enjoying marital satisfaction. Beffel et al. (2021) have established, together with Conradi et al. (2021), that disordered attachment relates to low relationship satisfaction. Reasons such as volatile partner behavior and the existence of personality disorder behaviors are contributing factors to this. Emphasizing the previous findings, Meyer et al. (2021) found that disorganized attachment significantly lowered relationship and marital satisfaction among couples, thus causing disharmony and distress. The findings in the reviewed studies illustrate that disorganized attachment is a causal factor in marital dissatisfaction.

Previous research studies have shown that insecure attachment, such as disorganized attachment, negatively influences marital satisfaction. An empirical study by Mitchell (2023) indicates that unpredictable attachment patterns and relationship insecurity contributed to disharmony and dissatisfaction in marital affairs in couples within the specified age group. Couples who identify the influence of attachment styles and make efforts to address feelings of insecurity are more likely to traverse trials successfully and cultivate more robust, more

satisfying relationships (Mitchell, 2023). The research conducted by Sommantico et al. (2021) and Mitchell (2023) offers a valued understanding of the difficulties faced by chaotic couples in relationships.

These studies emphasize that toxic partner conduct and inconsistent partner conduct are common concerns faced by such couples. The existence of toxic partner behavior, categorized by negative communication patterns, abusive inclinations, or manipulative behaviors, can considerably affect the overall satisfaction levels within a relationship. It produces a harmful atmosphere that erodes trust and promotes dissatisfaction. When one's partner is volatile or unpredictable in their behaviors and promises, it can lead to irritation and dissatisfaction. This unpredictability makes instituting a secure foundation for a satisfying relationship challenging. Bolt et al. (2019) discovered results comparable to those of Sommantico et al. (2021) when they examined the results of disorganized attachment in couple relationships within the specified years. They learned that couples who struggled with insecure partners with unpredictable behaviors, such as partner violence, eventually experienced marital dissatisfaction and relationship disharmony. By combining the data from the examined studies, it can be concluded that spouses' illogical behavior, which results from disorganized attachment, leads to marital dissatisfaction.

Secure Attachment

Prior research studies have shown that secure attachment in marriages and relationships guarantees healthier relationships and positive marital satisfaction (FRAMO, 1976; Treboux et al., 2004). Aiming to understand the effects of secure attachment in relationships, Rosalina et al. (2020) examined the impacts of secure attachment on marriages. They found that individuals with secure attachment tended to be more satisfied with their marital experience and healthy

relationships. Other researchers, such as Wijaya and Widyaningsih (2020), also studied the influence of secure attachment on relationships by recruiting 202 couples. They reported that secure attachment enhances romance between couples and thus boosts their marital satisfaction and decision-making. The study by Amani and Khosroshahi (2020) additionally supports the idea that secure attachment plays a vital role in relationships. Their findings show that resilience and secure attachment directly impact the quality of marriage, contributing to improved levels of marital satisfaction.

More literature studies have also shown that secure attachment promotes healthy relationships and marital satisfaction. Proponents of the positive influence of secure attachment, such as Mardani et al. (2021), examined the impacts of secure attachment on marital status and found that secure attachment significantly improved marital satisfaction in relationships by enhancing romantic attachment between couples. Monin et al.'s (2019) conclusions were similar when examining the influence of secure attachment on marriages. They discovered a positive correlation between marital security and a secure attachment style, which supports marital happiness and agreement. Lozano et al. (2021) decisively found that marriages with a contented spouse lean towards a secure attachment style, leading to better marital satisfaction. This discovery is consistent with the studies conducted by Mardani et al. (2021) and Monin et al. (2019). Based on the reviewed studies, it is essential to note that a secure attachment style improves marital satisfaction among secure couples.

Secure attachment style among couples significantly fosters romantic attachment and marital satisfaction. Researchers such as Quinn-Nilas (2020) have exhaustively studied the impact of secure attachment on marriages. Their findings suggest that secure attachment promotes increased attentiveness between partners, leading to the progress of romantic

attachment and improved marital satisfaction in couples. Like Quinn-Nilas (2020), Busby et al. (2020) also examined the effects of various attachment styles and their influence on marriages. They reported that secure attachment fostered marital satisfaction through mutual feelings of security, mindfulness, and romanticism among couples. Bühler et al. (2021) discovered that persons in secure relationships are more likely to be happy in marriage than couples in anxious and insecure relationships; their findings are congruent with those of Quinn-Nilas (2020) and Busby et al. (2020). The researchers also found that secure attachment enhances romantic attachment and sexual satisfaction in marriages, further increasing satisfaction levels. The findings of the analyzed studies show that secure attachment style has a considerable positive influence on marital satisfaction in relationships and marriages.

History and Evolution of Social Media

The Emergence of Social Media Platforms

The invention of networking avenues has transformed social contact and interaction, redefining how people unite, disseminate information, and establish affiliations. Networking platforms have changed tremendously over the last several years due to technological breakthroughs and increased internet connectivity. Initial examples of social networks date back to the 1970s when text-based internet forums like Usenet and Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) made it possible for people to exchange information and engage with one another (Dhingra & Mudgal, 2019). The advent of the World Wide Web in the nineties opened new avenues for social engagement, according to Król and Zdonek (2022), where individuals could develop customized platforms on networks like Geocities and communicate with others with common hobbies.

These networks served as the cornerstones upon which the internet revolution that followed was constructed. For example, in December 2009, Facebook Corporation achieved a significant milestone when it became the most popular networking service on the planet, with millions of verified and frequent users (Mihalis Kuyucu, 2020). Facebook and other digital platforms introduced new methods for people to socialize, exchange ideas, and express themselves. Because of the growth of mobile phones and the spread of internet connectivity, these social networking routes have become an important component of many people's daily lives, including those of spouses.

The influence of the Internet on interpersonal interactions has been the subject of several investigations. One of the studies found that avoidantly attached people might utilize social media more frequently to ease loneliness than turn to their spouse, which would be detrimental to marital fulfillment (Young et al., 2020). The study also discovered that people with a low avoidant attachment style and high levels of anxiety are more likely to experience negative impacts on marital satisfaction because of using social media. According to Bowlby's theory of attachment, children's early experiences with guardians help them form internal interaction frameworks (Choate & Tortorelli, 2022). During adult interactions, their operating models influence individual desires and behaviors. According to research, people with stable attachment patterns report better marital fulfillment capacities (Sagone et al., 2023). Individuals who report feeling secure tend to have favorable opinions of themselves and their spouses, communicate well, and display increased confidence and intimacy in their unions. Contrarily, those with insecure attachment patterns, like nervous or evasive ones, may have trouble expressing themselves and building confidence in their spouses. Since the conception of social media in 2000, there has been a rapid increase in not only the number of users but also the time spent on

social media (Worsley et al., 2018). Scholars have increasingly focused on how internet use affects attachment behaviors and marriage contentment. According to a study by Konlan et al. (2023), using social media excessively can result in unhappy relationships and reduced marriage quality. These results raise concerns about how social media can affect attachment preferences and eventual marital contentment.

Growth and Transformation of Social-Media

Continuous innovation and the incorporation of new capabilities and features have been key factors in the rapid expansion of networking channels. Social networks like Facebook, among others, saw considerable increases in subscribers as consumers welcomed them. Technological developments have contributed to this expansion, including more internet connectivity and the incorporation of online communities into numerous facets of people's lives. By emphasizing visual components like photographs and videos, the rising relevance of the metaverse has become a vital feature of the internet's expansion, transforming how people circulate and use content (Dwivedi, 2022). Marriage attachment and pleasure are significantly impacted by the growing dependence on visual representations of certain aspects of marriage to gain approval and acceptance from others.

Studies have investigated the phenomenon of "Facebook jealousy," in which people may become nervous or anxious due to their spouse's affiliations or activities on social networks (Lemay et al., 2019). This envious attitude may result from fears about connection and could affect how happy a couple is in their marriage. Additionally, the development of "relationship status" and the open display of emotion on the internet have presented new obstacles for those in relationships (Goldberg et al., 2022). As a result, partners could experience stress from social media, and such characteristics can affect attachment preferences and interpersonal judgments.

Furthermore, the rapid spread of information and the availability of various persons via digital networks have ignited concerns about betrayal and relationship limitations. According to Adebayo (2020), using the Internet to interact emotionally and sexually with people beyond one's marital partner can reduce marital fulfillment. The study results reveal that social media may affect attachment tastes and marriage satisfaction by presenting barriers and relational characteristics. The following graph highlights the use of social media platforms by age group. The graph displays the use of social media in couples born between 1980 and 2000, in the second and third bars, for each platform.

Figure 1

Use of Social Media Platforms by Age Group in the United States.
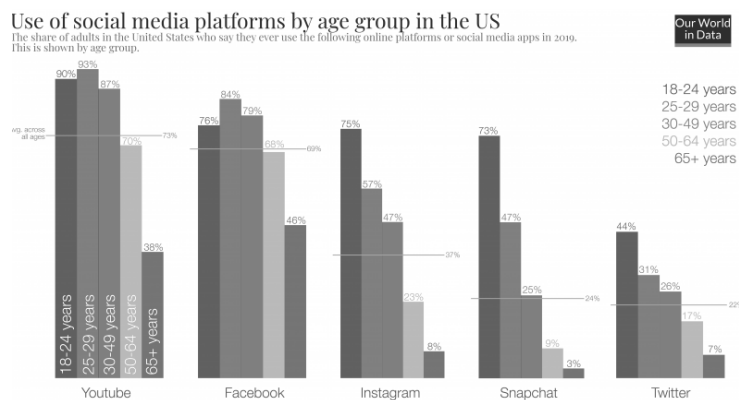
Data source: L.Silver et al. (2019).

Key Technological Advances in Social-Media

Mobile Integration - The widespread adoption of mobile devices and tablets has enabled people to navigate networking services from any location on any occasion, enhancing interaction and communication (L.Silver et al., 2019). Users' capacity to capture and share real-time events such as photographs and videos has improved the proximity and legitimacy of internet connections. The development of smartphone applications tailored for various operating systems

has also provided a faultless and simple user interface, which has accelerated the growth of online social networks. Services that utilize location have become more prevalent due to blending the internet with smartphones. Networks like Instagram and Facebook integrate geo-location data to deliver tailored suggestions and advertisements, improving the user interface (Appel et al., 2019). Additionally, the fusion of the internet and smartphones has generated innovative communication methods, like phone conversations and messaging services, which enable real-time connections between people.

Algorithmic Filtering - When excess data flooded online networks, algorithms were created to organize and personalize audience feeds. These algorithms examine user activities, choices, and habits to produce material customized to their needs (Ali, 2021). The effects of algorithmic filtering can be advantageous, as it makes it easier for users to find interesting and pertinent material, which improves their general social media engagement. On the contrary, it can be detrimental as technology can produce reverberations and bubble filters where people are restricted to information that supports their preexisting beliefs (Ekström et al., 2022). Bubble filters and reverberations may increase extremism and reduce exposure to different opinions among individuals.

Augmented Reality (AR) - AR technology has been incorporated into various online mediums, creating new user participation and connection opportunities. AR blends digital material into the physical environment to produce engaging and lasting memories (Dwivedi, 2022). Individuals can change their avatars, discover virtual worlds, and engage with simulated objects due to the introduction of AR visual effects and filters on networks like Snapchat (Boardman et al., 2020). By boosting visual narratives and self-expression, AR technology has significantly changed how people use the Internet. Users may now produce and distribute AR-

enhanced material, like enhanced films or snapshots, distorting the line separating the actual and virtual worlds (Dwivedi, 2022). The distinction between recreation and business has become increasingly blurred because of the use of these innovations by corporations and advertisers to develop creative and compelling marketing strategies.

Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning - As a result of the integration of machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) technology, several social networking systems function much more competently and deliver better customer service (Haleem et al., 2022; Soori et al., 2023); algorithms for content suggestion use AI powers to evaluate user preferences and behavior. Furthermore, AI algorithms identify and address problems like junk, fraudulent identities, and unsafe information, resulting in a more secure and dependable social media ecosystem.

Blockchain Technology - The digital space could transform due to blockchain innovation if it can solve concerns about data security, confidentiality, and copyright (Habib et al., 2022). Blockchain technology could offer users greater authority over their metadata and promote openness when filtering content by decentralizing the data repository and leveraging encryption techniques (Zubaydi et al., 2023). Blockchain-based internet networks are evolving in response to worries over hacking and restrictions. These networks provide characteristics such as immutable material and autonomous management frameworks.

Attachment and Social Media Use

The rise of digital networks has significantly changed how people communicate and build connections digitally. Learning how people with various forms of attachment link on the internet and how it might impact happiness in marriage is made possible by using the structure provided by attachment theories. Several researchers have conducted internet associations and attachment

styles. According to research by Gazder and Stanton (2020), people with a strong sense of attachment typically engage in improved internet relationship practices defined by compassion, mutual assistance, and constructive interaction. Securely connected people utilize social networking sites more often for connection maintenance and relationship building rather than for publicity or approval seeking.

On the other hand, those with fragile attachments could follow alternative social networking practices. People with nervous attachment inclinations may speak of their relationships on the internet regularly or ask for other people's opinions to feel validated and reassured (Evraire et al., 2022). Their online conduct can be motivated by an unrelenting desire for validation and interest, which might cause marital pleasure to suffer if their spouse interprets these behaviors as focus-seeking or insecurity. People with avoidant attachment patterns may tend to refrain from online social contacts or have minimal internet activity (Evraire et al., 2022). The likelihood that they will divulge confidential data or participate in stronger online interactions may be lower, reducing the likelihood of doing so. This aversion to digital social connections may hurt marital fulfillment if it fosters a feeling of emotional distance or an absence of closeness within the union.

Additionally, research by Sullivan (2021) has discussed the possible effects of attachment-based envy and monitoring activities in digital situations. Envy relating to a partner's browsing habits may be more likely in people with unstable attachment patterns, especially those with nervous dispositions. Because of their envy, they can check their spouse's networking accounts more frequently, which may undermine trust and exacerbate relationship problems. It is crucial to remember that several elements, including the general strength of the marriage and the person's utilization of social networks, may affect how attachment patterns affect social media

use. According to N.Silver and Slater (2019), people with unstable attachment patterns can utilize online platforms to make up for marital shortcomings or pursue alternate avenues for affirmation. These coping mechanisms could worsen issues with bonding and marital discontent.

Attachment versus Couples' Behaviors

Researchers have been studying the role of attachment and behaviors for decades. A qualitative study conducted in the indicated time frame using interviews with single unmarried women (Manning et al., 2019) revealed that single women have greater expectations for marriage than for cohabitation. There were also greater expectations to cohabit with a future spouse. A study conducted using the need to belong (NTB) 10-item scale to determine the effect of Facebook use related to NTB concluded that anxiously attached individuals exhibited excessive use of Facebook because of a strong desire to form and maintain social bonds motivated by a need to belong (Stănculescu & Griffiths, 2021). The need to belong is a normal desire that all of us have. This study provides evidence that while attachment is a natural occurrence, individuals with anxious attachment might have an increased desire to use Facebook than securely attached individuals.

A study conducted with Facebook users in the framework of relationship impression management concluded that the motives for using Facebook to show that they are in a relationship were related to self-esteem management and attitudes related to the perception of others of the individual's quality of relationship (Gewirtz-Meydan & Finzi-Dottan, 2020). Individuals exhibiting this behavior tended to have anxious and avoidant attachment habits. The influence of attachment styles on how a person experiences the relationship and manages what other people think of their relationship is displayed in their behavior. Females spend more time than male partners checking their spouses' Facebook accounts when they feel envious, according

to a study examining how male and female partners differ in their Facebook monitoring habits regarding jealousy (S. Wagner et al., 2020). As the prior study shows, partner monitoring on technical social media platforms can increase the dangers to romantic partner relationships. According to a study by Vazquez et al. (2019), there is a significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and social media addiction. Other researchers have determined that during 2008 and 2010 in the US, there was a correlation between the rise in divorce rates and the dispersion of Facebook use when all other potential divorce grounds were well-ordered (Pieh et al., 2020).

Additionally, the use of social media was positively associated with marital dissatisfaction (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2020). Romantic partners' use of electronic communication is related to their relationship functioning and attachment (Candel & Turliuc, 2019). The effect of attachment patterns on consumerist behaviors was related (S. Wagner et al., 2020). Attachment style and behaviors influence the quality of marriages for both men and women; increased levels of secure attachment and attachment behaviors are significantly associated with higher marital quality. According to Li et al. (2021), only perceptions of partner actions can shed light on the connection between attachment and relationship pleasure, even though couple attachment styles are associated with financial activities and perspectives of partner behaviors. According to the results of a study conducted to determine the relationships between attachment and internet addiction, mainly social media addiction, individuals who did not have strong emotional bonds in their family of origin are more prone to become addicted to social media than individuals who did (D'Arienzo et al., 2019). Considering that social media influences individuals' daily lives, a four-stage investigation disclosed that certain traits and behaviors may be connected to emotions and psychological forms (Altuwairiqi et al., 2019).

Social media has been found to have both positive and negative effects on the Secure, Intimate, Escapist, Narcissistic, and Discrepancy behavioral models. The findings suggest that individuals tend to choose romantic partners with similar levels of attachment disturbance and interpersonal problems and that attachment styles and associated behavior partly explain the link concerning the gravity of personality disorders and the level of gratification and relationship quality in intimate relationships (Beeney et al., 2018).

When couples supported each other, it enhanced attachment security and marital satisfaction. Support among couples enhanced marriage satisfaction and attachment security. Marital conflict declines when a couple supports one another (Vazquez et al., 2019). Nevertheless, community support still plays a significant role in a couple's marriage. Contrary to assistance from the community, the support of a partner has a role in reducing marital conflict. Li et al. (2021) found that, as predicted, a partner's observation of their partner's handling of finances impacted the satisfaction experienced in the relationship. The cohort under study was affected by the recession and is perceived to have had a shift in how they view money management. According to Vazquez et al. (2019), this generation, seen as prudent spenders with little investment time, also understands the need for financial security.

Social media use and marital satisfaction

People are currently adopting networking platforms as a regular part of their lives, offering an avenue for self-expression, dialogue, and maintaining connections. Research studies have examined the impact of internet use on marital confidence, contentment, and happiness. Research shows that frequent internet use is associated with poorer relationship quality. For example, research by González-Rivera & Hernández-Gato (2019) reveals that using Facebook more frequently makes people more likely to experience resentment, conflict with partners, and a

lower degree of romantic satisfaction. Tandoc and Goh (2021) reported similar discoveries that the outcome of extreme Facebook use was adverse relationship outcomes, such as a deterioration in relationship satisfaction and a greater chance of separation. These findings may have a causal relationship between chronic use of social media and the disregard of interpersonal relationships and romantic private time. Internet use may divert from genuine interaction and conversation within marriage, which can lower satisfaction.

The probability of dishonesty and marital discontent may also rise due to exposure to other relationship possibilities through internet use (Birnbaum et al., 2022). However, there are some positive aspects to the link between digital media consumption and relationship intimacy. According to several studies, beneficial correlations involve some facets of internet use and the caliber of relationships. Lomanowska and Guitton (2016) discovered that engaging in intimate digital communication increased marital intimacy and satisfaction. These favorable connections might result from internet use's prospective benefits for preserving and improving relations. Especially in relationships across borders, online channels allow spouses to communicate, share encounters, and convey affection. Additionally, social media can give partners a venue for collaborative activities like organizing vacations, strengthening bonds, and improving intimacy (Décieux et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the control of union boundaries may be impacted by disseminating private data and memories through networking. Inconsistencies between confidentiality worries and desires might make one feel violated, which lowers relationship happiness. It is crucial to remember that individual and environmental factors may impact how internet use affects relationships. The quality of relationships can be a moderator in the association between internet

use and the quality of relationships, which includes the state of physical marriage and the internet's incentives.

Summary

In conclusion, most studies have found a connection between attachment, behaviors, and marital satisfaction. The influence of social media use on attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000 has yet to be studied. The articles reviewed suggest that an individual's social media use, attitude toward marriage, and marital roles are pertinent contributing factors that should be studied with marital satisfaction, especially in couples within the specified generation. It is essential for marriage counselors, when working with these couples, to consider and identify not only the attachment affecting marital satisfaction but also the contributing factors, such as social media use, that hinder a couple's relationship.

Considering that those born between 1980 and 2000 are the largest population in the US (Manning et al., 2019), it would be helpful for the church at large to update pre-marital counseling material and marital counseling tools so that they are more tech-savvy and online. Furthermore, it would be necessary for the church to address the growing unbiblical problem of cohabitation preference for marriage among this generation. A limitation identified is the need for more research studies on attachment styles and marital satisfaction, particularly in couples within the specified years. Further research needs to be conducted on the attachment and behaviors of couples who fall into this category and who have continued to live with their parents due to financial difficulties and the impact on marital conflict.

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

This study, which adopts a correlational quasi-experimental approach, assessed how attachment (Anxiety and Avoidance) relate to marital satisfaction and the interaction effect of social media use among couples born in the United States between 1980 and 2000. Three assessments and a demographic questionnaire employing SurveyMonkey.com assessed the responses of the generation understudy. The chapter includes design, research questions, participants and setting, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis. The objective in collecting data was to answer research questions, share suggestions for future studies, and provide suggestions for clinicians who help couples within this generation with marital challenges.

Design

Correlational quasi-experimental design is a methodical and exacting strategy that focuses on the empirical confirmation of hypotheses through statistical approaches (Warner, 2020). This design is frequently employed in social scientific inquiry to examine the associations between variables and evaluate hypotheses (Allen, 2017). The present investigation employed a correlational quasi-experimental approach as it is necessary to quantify the degree of association between attachment (criterion variable) and marital satisfaction (predictor variable) and the moderating role of social media (moderator variable) through numerical data. The use of statistical analyses enabled the determination of the significance of the relationship and furnishes objective evidence to substantiate the research hypotheses. A typical correlational analysis considers all possible values of an independent variable. In most cases, quasi-experiments have more control than a conventional correlational study (but less than that of a true experimental

study). Correlational investigations establish the association between two variables but do not establish causation (Seeram, 2019).

This design was deemed appropriate because it allows for the examination of the link between two variables without requiring any form of adjustment. The utilization of correlational quasi-experimental analysis proves advantageous when the researcher seeks to examine the magnitude and orientation of the association between two distinct variables. This approach is particularly advantageous for exploring the presence of a meaningful correlation between the two variables (Warner, 2020). The study's null hypothesis posits no statistically significant correlation between attachment (Anxiety and Avoidant) and the use of social media and marital satisfaction levels. The hypothesis implies that married couples with secure attachment styles—as opposed to those with insecure attachment styles, such as avoidant and anxious—tend to report higher levels of happiness in their marriages.

To summarize, the current work employed the correlational quasi-experimental research methodological design. Utilizing a correlational quasi-experimental design facilitates the impartial quantification of variables and the application of statistical procedures to ascertain the significance of associations. Attachment styles have no direct influence on social media use. Lower marital satisfaction is seen in individuals with elevated attachment anxiety and elevated attachment avoidance (Stöven & Herzberg, 2021). It was also generalized that attachment (Anxiety and Avoidance) is related to marital dissatisfaction and is not correlated to social media use (Sherrell & Lambie, 2018).

Research Questions and Hypothesis(es)

RQ1: Is there an association between attachment (Anxiety and Avoidant) and marital satisfaction?

a. Is there an association between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction?

b. Is there an association between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction?

H₀: There is no association between attachment and marital satisfaction.

H₁: There is an association between attachment and marital satisfaction.

RQ2: Does social media use affect the relationship between attachment (Anxious and Avoidant) and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000?

H₀: Social media use does not affect the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000.

H₂: Social media use affects the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000.

Participants and Setting

To conduct an a priori power analysis to determine the minimal sample size needed for the investigation, G*Power was used. Four factors were considered in the power analysis: statistical procedure, test power, effect size, and significance level. The significance level, also known as Type I error, is the probability of rejecting a null hypothesis by chance that it is true (Haas, 2012). A 95% confidence level is used in most quantitative studies, as it adequately provides enough statistical evidence of a test (Huyler & McGill, 2019). The projected measurement of the association among the variables in consideration is indicated as the effect size (Cohen, 1988). Cohen (1988) distinguished between three effect sizes: small, medium, and large.

Berger et al. (2013) purported that a medium effect size is better as it balances between being too strict (small) and too lenient (large). The power of the test indicates the probability of correctly rejecting a null hypothesis (Sullivan, 2021). An 80% power is usually used in most

quantitative studies (Sullivan, 2021). For this study, the statistical test that was used was multiple

regression, a statistical method that uses several explanatory factors to forecast the value of a

response variable. In line with explanatory factors, it was decided that two hundred participants

will complete the survey to conduct multiple regression to detect a medium effect size at the 5%

level of significance, with 80% power. In the final analysis once the missing data was eliminated,

there were 172 completed data responses. A subsequent power analysis revealed that with 172

responses the power to detect a medium effect size is 77.46%

Figure 2

G Power Output
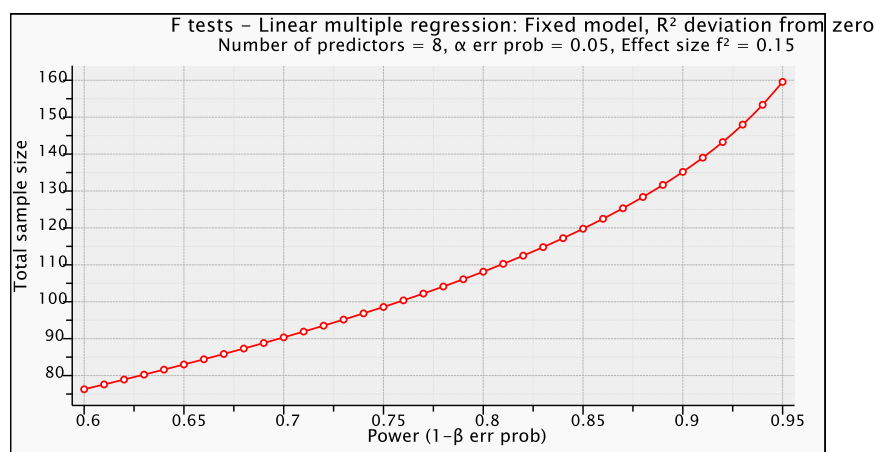
By adopting such a defined and statistically justified sample size, the research study was

suitably powered to detect any noteworthy differences between the means of the two groups,

boosting the validity and reliability of the results. The comprehensive assessment of statistical

power, alpha level, and impact size also guarantees that the study can draw noteworthy

conclusions from the data. It effectively addresses the research questions related to attachment

styles, marital satisfaction, and social media use, moderation among couples born between 1980 and 2000. The use of G Power software improves the study's methodological rigor. It focuses on gathering correct and reliable data, which advances knowledge of attachment dynamics and marital satisfaction in this specific age group.

All potential participants had to be currently in a heterosexual marriage. The participants had to be living in the US, born between 1980 and 2000, and married to someone born within the same time frame to meet the minimum conditions for participation. This could be the couple's first or second marriage. The participants were recruited using snowball sampling. The respondents were able to access the demographic questionnaire and surveys using the paid version of the online tool, https://surveymonkey.com.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To be qualified for participation, individuals had to be born between 1980 and 2000, in a heterosexual marriage, in their first or second marriage, married to a spouse born between 1980 and 2000, and living in the United States.

Participant Screening

Study applicants completed an initial basic assessment interview form to investigate exclusion criteria.

Consent for Treatment

Candidates who were successful in the screening process and met the inclusion conditions were required to sign a form providing informed consent to treatment electronically (Appendix A), which described the advantages of participation, the extent of confidentiality, and the benefit of it, along with a form providing demographic data.

Instrumentation

The proposed study measured one independent variable, one dependent variable, and one moderator variable, utilizing three separate instruments.

Demographic questionnaire

The purpose of the demographic questionnaire was to gather information about the background of the participants. The instrumentation included a 15-question survey that took approximately 2 to 3 minutes to complete. The questions were helpful in gathering data related to essential characteristics of the specified cohort (see Appendix B).

Experience in Close Relationship Scale-Short Form (ECR-S)

Study participants attachment styles were assessed using the Experience in Close Relationship Scale (ECR-S). The ECR-S is a 12-item self-report questionnaire created by Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, and Vogel grounded on Ainsworth's study on infant attachment styles. It was developed from the ECR scale by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998). According to Wei et al. (2007), the ECR-S helps to assess a distinctive "trait" pattern in individuals who are in romantic relationships. Furthermore, the assessment helps form an idea of how an individual reacts emotionally to intimate relationships (Wei et al., 2007). The reliability and factor structure measures were determined across six studies (Wei et al., 2007). The scoring of the ECR-S is on two factors: avoidance and anxiety. The internal consistency level within these two factors of the ECR-S-Short version is high, with coefficient alphas of 0.84 and 0.78 for the Avoidance and Anxiety subscales, respectively. This attests to the validity and dependability of the scale for data gathering. Each item was rated by participants on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, with one representing strongly disagree and seven strongly agree. The scale contained statements about feelings and behavior in romantic relationships. Previous research has shown that the ECR, ECR-R, and

ECR-S have strong reliability and validity, which made it a useful tool for examining

connections in individuals who were born between 1980 and 2000. Its comprehensive nature

allowed for evaluating both anxious and avoidant attachment dimensions, providing for a

thorough examination of individuals' attachment styles concerning marital satisfaction.

The distribution of the ECR-S questionnaire provided a quick and straightforward

method for collecting data, taking between 2 to 5 minutes to complete. Its short length

guaranteed that participants can complete the questionnaire without substantial respondent

fatigue, enabling higher response rates and improving overall data quality (Xiaoyun & Fenglan,

2020). The outcome comprises two scores for two independent factors: attachment anxiety and

avoidance. The lowest score on each scale is 7, and the highest score is 42. Moreover, percentile

levels convey the scores concerning a prescriptive sample. Compared to peers, a percentile of 50

is considered typical (and healthy) attachment, and more serious concerns with adult attachment

are assessed when it is a higher percentile. Wei et al.(2007) defines attachment avoidance as the

distress of dependency and relational connection, as well as extreme demand for autonomy and

an unwillingness to divulge oneself. Attachment anxiety is the distress of interactive rejection

and/or abandonment, a strong need for approval from others, and anxiety when their partner is

unfeeling or unmindful. Individuals with a higher score on either or both categories are

considered as adults to have an insecure attachment style. Individuals with secure adult

attachment orientation score low on the levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance (Brennan et

al., 1998). Additionally, high scores are associated with depression, anxiety, interpersonal

challenges, or loneliness.

The study's objective to use the ECR-S was to unbiasedly investigate each participant's

attachment tendencies, showing the myriad styles and connections concerning attachment styles

and marital satisfaction in this specific age cohort. This quantitative method contributes to a

deeper understanding of attachment dynamics in this generation by offering insightful

information on people's emotional experiences and behaviors in romantic relationships. Using

the ECR-S compared to the ECR for this study, the underlying construct in assessing the anxiety

and avoidance measures for both the ECR and ECR-S was the same. Given that this group has a

shorter attention span, using the shorter version was deemed advantageous. Furthermore, ECR-S

is specific to romantic relationships (Wei et al., 2007), and data obtained helped investigate the

complex links concerning attachment styles and marital satisfaction in this cohort. While the

ECR-R also focuses on attachment-related anxiety and avoidance in romantic partners, it focuses

on assessing an individual's availability and responsiveness (Fraley et al., 2000). The focus of

this study was on an individual's attachment in relation to responsiveness and not availability.

The ECR-RS assessment focuses on assessing interpersonal relationships (not just romantic

partners) (Fraley et al., 2006).

The ECR-S is in the public domain, and permission is granted for use with citations.

ECR-S questionnaire (Appendix C)

The Enrich Marital Satisfaction (EMS)

The Enrich Marital Satisfaction (EMS) scale is a self-report measure designed to evaluate

the level of satisfaction individuals experience within their marital relationships. Developed by

Fowers and Olson in 1993, the EMS is a reliable and validated instrument with 15 items

organized into two factors. Cronbach alpha reliability of the EMS scale is 0.936, indicating that

the scale is reliable in collecting valid responses to answer the research questions. Respondents

indicated their agreement or disagreement level with each statement on the scale, which

comprises statements about various facets of the marital relationship. The EMS uses an answer

design that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), which assists participants in

sharing their feelings and perceptions regarding various aspects of their marriage (Nunes et al.,

2022). Because of its clear and practical design, it takes about 5 to 7 minutes to complete. This

briefness ensured minimal participant burden and increased the likelihood of a high response

rate.

The EMS, designed to assess levels of marital satisfaction, was a pivotal component in

this pursuit, providing valuable insights into the emotional experiences, contentment, and well-

being of individuals within their marital relationships. As the study investigated attachment and

its influence on marital satisfaction, the data obtained from the EMS was significant in

establishing potential associations and patterns in couples born between 1980 and 2000. The

findings provide vital insights into the unique challenges and strengths that this age group faces

in the context of their marital relationships, developing a fuller knowledge of the dynamics

within modern couples.

Moreover, the EMS data has significant implications for establishing targeted

interventions focused on improving and maintaining good marriage relationships among couples

born between 1980 and 2000. The research provides evidence-based insights into therapy

techniques and support mechanisms targeted to the needs of this age group by identifying

potential areas of concern or specific attachment patterns associated with lower levels of marital

satisfaction. In earlier investigations by Nunes et al. (2022) and Chauhan and Sekher (2023), the

EMS, was found to be a reliable and validated instrument, revealing solid psychometric qualities,

confirming its usefulness for assessing marital satisfaction among couples born between 1980

and 2000. The researcher obtained permission to use the scale for this dissertation (see Appendix

G). The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (Appendix D)

Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS)

The social media use integration scale (SMUIS) developed by Jenkins-Guarniere, Wright, and Johnson to assess "engaged use of social media," or "the degree to which social media integrates into users' daily routines and social behavior, as well as the importance and association of emotions to this use" (Jenkins-Guarnieri et al., 2013, p.39). In the development stage, SMUIS focused on the social media network Facebook.com. The SMUIS, however, was designed to be adaptable enough to be used with other social media platforms by substituting the word "Facebook" in the item statements with the names of alternative social media platforms (Jenkins-Guarnieri et al., 2013). Social integration and emotional connection comprise a 10-item scale: integration into social routines. These three points, (a) action and participation, (b) pleasant experiences, and (c) social context, cover three different aspects of social networking site (SNS) engagement. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for our data was .914 for total scale scores and .893 and .828 for scores on subscales 1 and 2, respectively. The authors also evaluated the test-retest reliability over three weeks. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA), with 13 questions, and a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were utilized to independently assess the structural validity of the two subsamples. (RMSEA = .08, CFI = .96, TLI = .95) The final CFA model exhibited a respectable model fit.

The 10 statements are rated using a Likert-type scale. The response options are from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with numerals one through five listed sequentially. This allowed the participants to express their views and perspectives on many elements of social media use (Adamczyk, 2019). Higher scores suggest more time using social media and integration. The SMUIS subscale scores and its overall score all showed robust positive correlations with the Facebook intensity scale (FBI) (all rs > .69), supporting its convergent

validity. Given its comprehensive nature, the SMUIS provided valuable insights into participants' attitudes and beliefs about marriage. It provided participants with a better understanding of how their everyday activities and social relationships intertwine with social media and the relevance and emotional connection that this use has for them. The completion of the SMUIS takes between 5 to 7 minutes, according to Jenkins-Guarniere et al. (2013). Its brevity ensured that participants respond to the survey efficiently, minimizing potential fatigue and enhancing data quality.

The data gathered from the SMUIS was instrumental in exploring how participants' attachment influenced the use of social media, which in turn affects marital satisfaction, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of marital dynamics within the specified age cohort. By incorporating the SMUIS alongside other survey instruments, the study aimed to understand the moderating role of social media use between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction among individuals born between 1980 and 2000. In this study instrument, social media replaced Facebook.

The researcher obtained permission to use the scale for this dissertation. (Appendix H). SMUIS scale (Appendix E)

Procedures

Each participant received the surveys using the same URL via SurveyMonkey.com. No official procedures were taken to prevent collaboration when the participant's spouse was also a participant. The researcher used SurveyMonkey.com to create the online surveys. Screened candidates received a demographic information form and a detailed informed consent to treatment form detailing the risks and rewards of involvement and the extent of confidentiality. The information collected from the online surveys was protected using multiple security

measures, such as encryption of computer-based files, and document storage. Therefore, only those few approved parties directly participating in this study had access to the data.

Data Analysis

The resulting quantitative data was analyzed using the statistical software suite Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). version 25. Scrutinizing the data set for lacking data and removal was done using listwise deletion. A case was eliminated from an analysis using listwise deletion if at least one of the designated variables had a missing value. The analysis for each instrument was only performed on cases with all available data. Predictor and dependent variables are reported using descriptive statistics. Continuous variables, such as ECR-S, EMS, and SMUIS scores, measures of central tendencies of means and standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values were calculated.

The independent variable, attachment, and the dependent variable is measured on 5- and 7- point Likert scales, respectively, making it ordinal. Likert scales are always ordinal, and the intervals between positions on the scale are monotonic and need definition as numerically uniform increments (Hayes, 2022). In this case, the Likert scales are from 1 to 7 and 1 to 5; however, they were be treated as an interval as there are at least five responses (Wu et al., 2017). According to Wu et al. (2017), more Likert scale points will affect in a closer approach to the underlying distribution, normality, and interval scales. Two dimensions were assessed for the independent variable; attachment avoidance and anxiety. The items corresponding to each of the two dimensions were averaged together by calculating the mean responses of each construct. By doing this, an overall measure of attachment anxiety and avoidance was created. The dependent variable, marital satisfaction, has two dimensions: marital satisfaction and idealized distortion. Fifteen items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale, which was averaged to generate a complete

measure of marital satisfaction and idealized distortion. The variable social media use was employed to test for moderation, which is also considered an independent variable (Hayes, 2022). This variable measured using the SMUIS scale, which has two factors—social integration and emotional connection. The two dimensions of social integration and emotional connection were measured by taking the average of the items corresponding to each dimension. These two dimensions were then recoded into high or low levels by assigning values below the mean as 0 and those equal to or greater than the mean as 1.

The assumptions for the Pearson correlation were tested to make sure that both variables are continuous, data are from a random or representative sample, there are no outliers, there is normality, and finally, there is a linear relationship between the two variables. The researcher assessed linearity through visual inspection of a scatter plot to establish the linear relationship between the variables, as it is jeopardized if the linearity assumption is violated (Hayes, 2022). Any standardized value that fell outside -3 to +3 outliers was assessed by calculating standardized scores for the variables. Standardized deviations were deemed outliers. Lastly, normality was evaluated through pictorial examination of histograms as well as the calculation of skewness and kurtosis statistics. The histogram for Attachment avoidance was run excluding the outliers and the results were the same. Hair et al. (2010) and Byrne (2010) debated that data is normal if skewness is between -2 and +2 and kurtosis is between -7 and +7. In addition, the assumptions of the Pearson correlation for moderation were tested for the following: the dependent and independent variables which were measured on a continuous scale, the moderator variable was a nominal variable with two groups (high and low), and data for both variables had a linear relationship.

Second, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients was calculated to assess the link between ECR-S and EMS. The ECR-S attachment style and EMS marital satisfaction scores were investigated. This determined if attachment avoidance and anxiety are connected to marital satisfaction (marital satisfaction and idealized distortion), which helped answer the first study question and associated hypotheses, "Is there an association between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction?"

Third, social media was used as the third variable to investigate the strength of the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction. Moderation analysis includes introducing an interaction term into the multiple regression model to establish if the interaction term is noteworthy (Hayes, 2022). The interaction effect was calculated by computing the ECR-S score and SMUIS scores. A linear regression analysis was conducted to test the effect of the interaction. The moderation analysis results were interpreted by using, the three tables, Model Summary, ANOVA, and Coefficients that linear regression analysis displays by default, to determine if social media use had any effect on the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000. Moderation analysis via hierarchical multiple regression assumptions included linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. According to Hayes (2022), linearity and homoscedasticity need to be assessed using plots of the standardized residuals and the standardized predicted values. There were no violations of the linearity assumption and homoscedasticity found as the plots were not curved or rectangular (Hayes, 2022). To assess the normal distribution of data, histograms were visually reviewed. Computation of kurtosis and skewness statistics were performed to assess normalcy further. Finally, to determine if the multicollinearity between the two variables had been violated, each variable factor was calculated by the inflation factor (VIF) (Hayes, 2022).

Specifically, the following model was tested in SPSS for moderation using the PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2022).

Marital satisfaction = b0 + b1anxiety + b2 avoidance + b3 social media use integration* anxiety + b4 social media use integration*avoidance. The two-way interaction terms of social media integration* anxiety, social media integration*avoidance, was assessed for statistical significance. The predictive power of attachment (independent variable) on marital satisfaction (dependent variable) and social media use (moderator variable) was examined using multiple regression analysis. This multidimensional approach contributed to understanding the varied contributions of attachment to variation in marital satisfaction and social media engagement. The researcher conducted multiple regression analysis to establish the relationship between the independent variable (attachment styles) and the dependent variable (marital satisfaction) and test for the influence of the moderator variable (social media use) on the relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction. "Does social media use affect the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000?" is the second question and hypothesis that this helped address.

Internal and External Validity Aspects

Examining several external validity criteria is necessary to guarantee the validity and generalizability of the results. Internal validity is the observation of the direct effects of the connection of the independent variable without the involvement of other external factors (Huyler & McGill, 2019). Implementing rigorous measures to minimize interpersonal interactions during the survey completion process improved the data's integrity.

Furthermore, the study recognizes the scarcity of quantitative data on attachment types and marital satisfaction within the targeted age group. In contrast to experimental approaches,

which entail variable manipulation and control over extraneous factors, this study uses a correlational approach. Despite being less expensive and time-consuming, it is important to keep in mind that this methodology does not prove causal links between variables (Seeram, 2019). According to Huyler and McGill (2019), the correlational study offers valuable insights into relationships and patterns, enabling the assessment of attachment and the possible effects on marital satisfaction in the future.

Concerning external validity, it is critical to recognize the limitations of generalizing findings to the specified population. Findings cannot be applied to the clinical community since the study participants are not clients. Similarly, since study participants were not specifically recruited as neither churchgoers nor believers, study results cannot be applied to pastors or organizations with a religious affiliation. Despite these restrictions, a positive result from this study offers preliminary support for treatments aimed at helping couples from the targeted generation achieve higher levels of marital satisfaction by using interventions that are specific to this generation. This information adds value to the development of targeted interventions tailored to the specific needs of couples born between 1980 and 2000, thereby boosting marriage and relationship success within this age group.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate attachment related to relationship satisfaction within the marital relationship of couples living in the US, while considering the moderating role of social media use. The data was analyzed using the statistical software package Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine the association among the three variables. The data set was examined for missing data and removal was done using listwise deletion. A case was eliminated from an analysis using listwise deletion if at least one of the designated variables had a missing value. The analysis was only performed on cases with all available data. The research utilized PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2022). The three tables, Model Summary, ANOVA, Correlation and Coefficients that linear regression analysis displays by default were used to interpret the correlation and moderation analysis results. The study was designed to test the following questions and related hypotheses.

RQ1: Is there an association between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction?

a. Is there an association between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction?

b. Is there an association between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction?

H$_0$: There is no association between attachment and marital satisfaction.

H$_1$: There is an association between attachment and marital satisfaction.

RQ2: Does social media use affect the relationship between attachment (Anxious and Avoidance) and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980-2000?

H$_0$: Social media use does not affect the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction

H$_2$: Social media use affects the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction

Descriptive Statistics

Two hundred and eighteen participants participated in the survey. Forty-two responses were moved by SPSS due to incomplete data using listwise. 176 completed responses were analyzed for the subscale attachment avoidance, 175 completed responses were analyzed for the subscale attachment anxiety, and 172 completed responses were analyzed for marital satisfaction, and 170 completed responses were analyzed for social media use. To detect a medium effect size at the 5% level of significance with 80% power, it was decided that two hundred participants will complete the survey to conduct multiple regression. In the final analysis, once missing data was eliminated, there were 172 completed data responses for the outcome variable. A subsequent power analysis revealed that with 172 responses the power to detect a medium effect size is 77.46% (Faul et al, 2007).

The data screening was done prior to conducting inferential statistics. Despite negative skews to the sample distributions for several variables, the normality and homoscedasticity of the residuals and VIFs below five supported the use of ordinary least squares analysis (Hayes, 2022). Warner (2020) suggested a minimum sample size of 143 data points for moderation models with main and interaction effects at an α of .05 and a low R^2 ($R^2 = .10$) for a statistical power of .80. All samples were above $n = 143$.

Of the respondents, 52.4% were female, and 47.6% were male. In terms of racial identity, 72% of the participants were White, 14% were Asian, 6% were Hispanic or Latino, 4% were Black, and 4% were Native American or other Pacific Islander. Most of the participants stated that they were in their first marriage. Most of the participants were born in 1980, 1985, 1986, or 1992 . Bar chart from preliminary data screening disclosed that the scores for participants' responses were roughly normally distributed throughout each group. Minimum

scores, means, and standard deviations were calculated for all study variables and are reported according to attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, marital satisfaction, and social media use.

Attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were two different components that were scored on the Experience in Close Relationship Scale-Short Form (ECR-S), which was used to assess how survey participants respond to emotional close relationships and to examine the general "trait" pattern. The scores for statements pertaining to anxiety levels 2, 4, 6, and 8 were reversed. Statements linked to avoidance 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 were reverse coded so that a 7 on the original variable was changed to a 1, a 6 was changed to a 2, etc. For every scale, there is a minimum score of 7 and a maximum score of 42. Higher scores indicate more difficulty with adult attachment.

The Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS), which was used to examine marital satisfaction in individuals, was scored on two subscales: marital satisfaction, and idealistic distortion. Statements 2, 5, 8, and 9 relating to marital satisfaction and statements 12 and 14 related to idealistic distortion were reverse coded. The original variable was changed to a 1, a 5 was changed to a 2, etc. The scale's total score was determined with the following formula: EMS = MS - [(MS) × (correlation between MS and ID)2 × (ID × 0.01)]. Higher scores indicate increased levels of marital satisfaction (Wei et al., 2007).

The Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS) was used to understand the moderating role of social media use between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction among respondents. The scale has ten-items. The first six statements are related to emotional connection, and the latter four statements are related to social routines. High mean values would indicate high integration levels of social media use (Jenkins-Guarnieri et al., 2013). The data

analysis results between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidant), marital satisfaction, and the

moderating role of social media use are seen in Tables 4 and 5.

The mean, standard deviation, and sample size for attachment anxiety, attachment

avoidance, and marital satisfaction were calculated. These measures serve as a foundational

overview, setting the stage for the subsequent analyses. The mean values indicate the average

level of attachment anxiety, avoidance, and marital satisfaction within the sample, while standard

deviations highlight the degree of variability.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristic Table

	$N = 172$	%
Race		
White	124	72.09
Black or African American	8	4.65
Asian	21	13.20
Hispanic or Latino	13	7.55
Middle Eastern or North African	0	0.00
Multiracial or Multiethnic	3	1.74
Native American or Alaska Native	3	1.74
Gender		
Female	90	52.38
Male	82	47.62
Years of birth		
1980-1984	43	25.00
1985-1989	59	34.3
1990-1994	41	23.8
1995-2000	29	16.86

Figure 3

Histogram of Attachment Anxiety
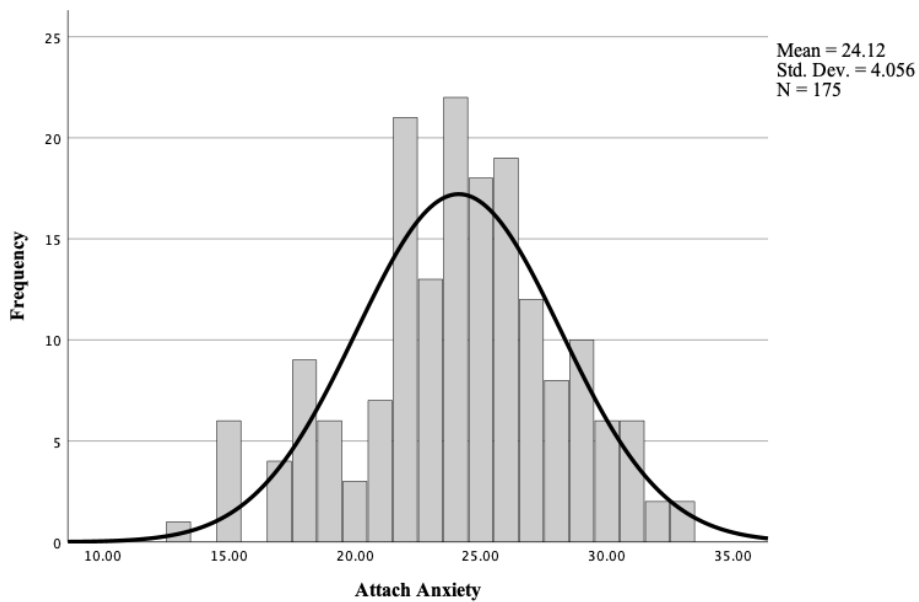
Figure 4

Histogram of Attachment Avoidance
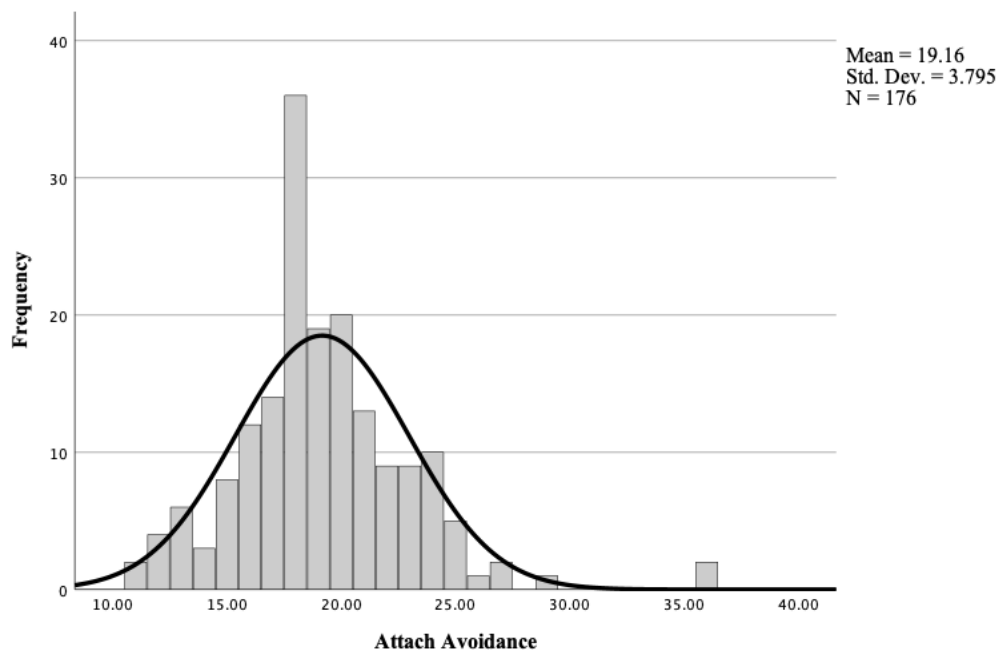
Figure 5

Histogram of Marital Satisfaction
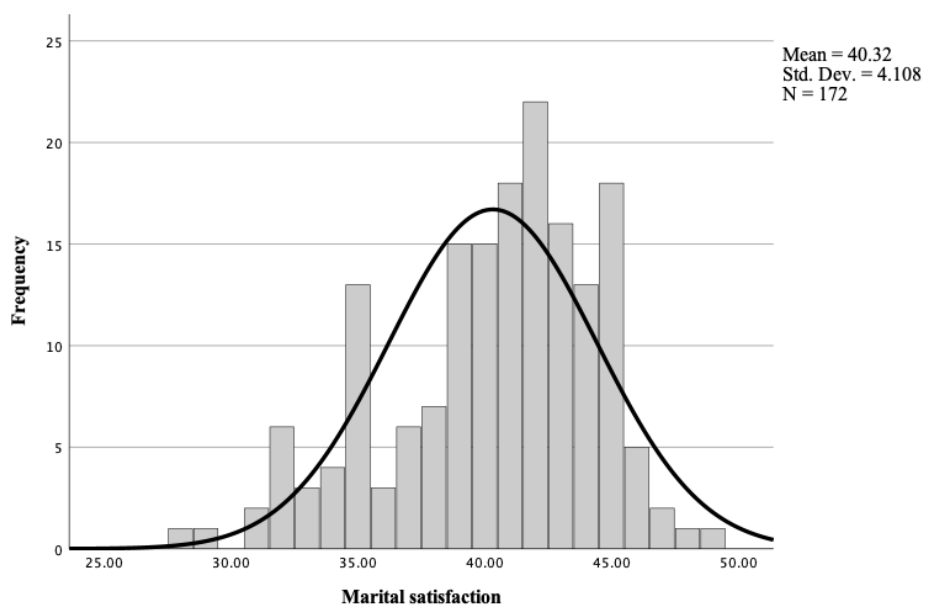
Figure 6

Scatterplot of Attachment Anxiety
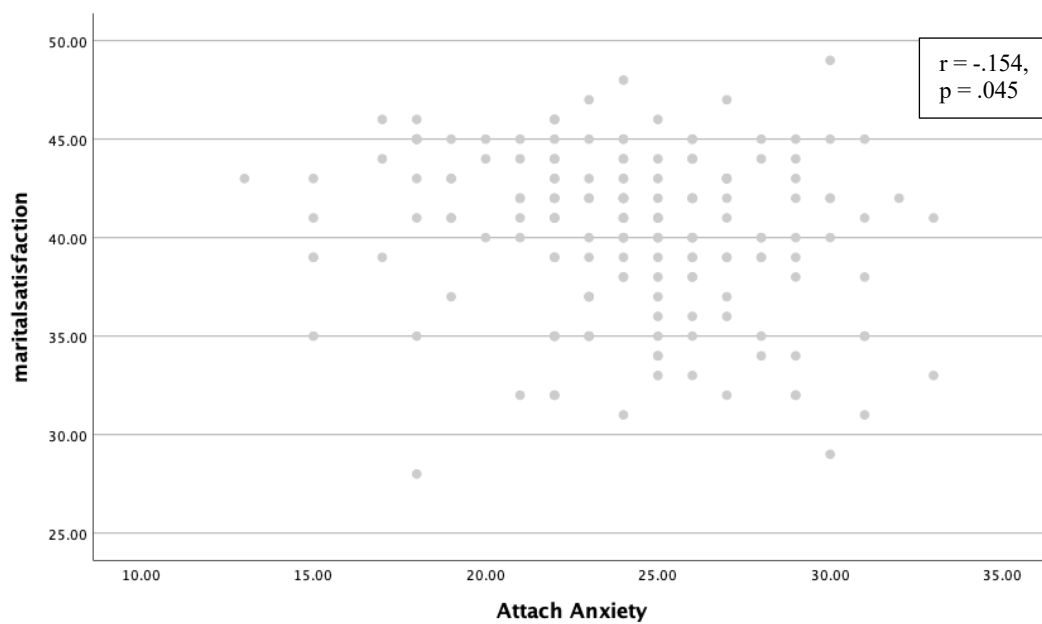
Figure 7

Scatterplot of Attachment Avoidance
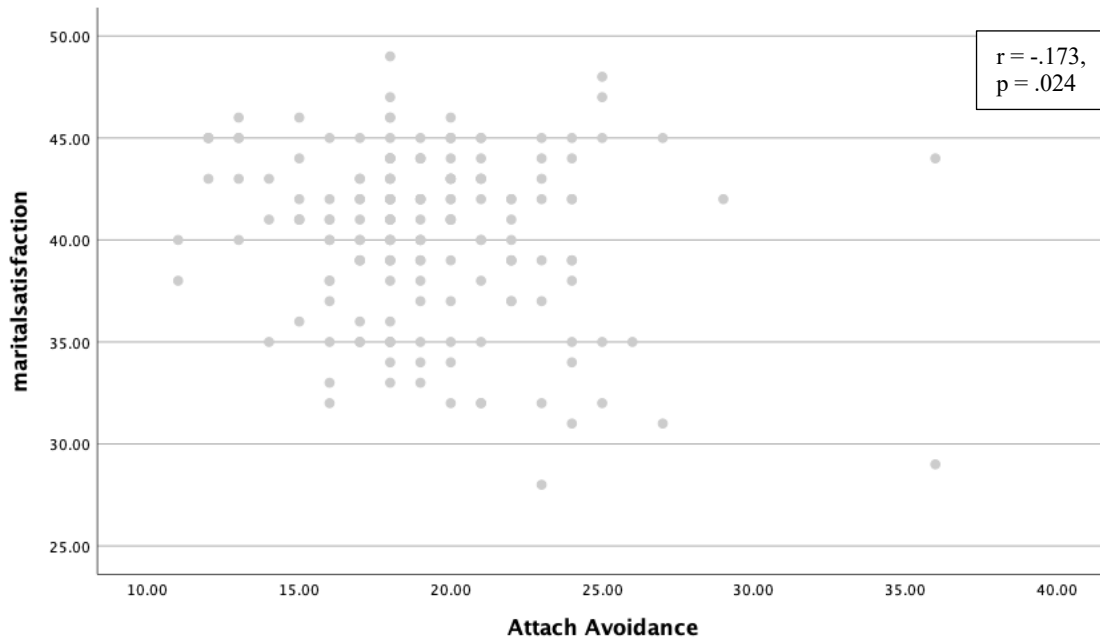
A review of the normal P-P plot of residual histograms and scatter plots of residual scores demonstrated normality and homoscedasticity with EMS scores as the outcome variable for both mean ECR-S and mean SMUIS scores (Figures 3, 4, and 5). The histogram of the sample distribution of EMS scores was deemed normal (Figure 5). The points in the scatter plot are more scattered and no pattern can be seen, therefore the multicollinearity assumption is not violated (figures 6 and 7). The histogram for Attachment avoidance was run excluding the outliers and the results were the same.

Table 2

SPSS Output of Descriptive Statistics with Mean and Standard Deviation

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Attach Anxiety	24.1200	4.05599	175
Attach Avoidance	19.1648	3.79490	176
Marital Satisfaction	40.3198	4.10777	172

The variable sub-scale attachment anxiety was explored through the sample group of 175 participants. As seen in the above table the mean level of attachment Anxiety score is at 24.12 (M = 24.12), which indicates attachment anxiety at a moderate level (Bhandari, 2023) and has an individual response with a standard deviation of 4.06 (SD = 4.06).

Variable sub-scale attachment avoidance, defined by the mean score of 19.16 in a sample group of 176 participants. The standard deviation of 3.79 (SD = 3.79) indicates a significant degree of dispersion in scores, which is an indicator of variation in respondents. While this fact might hint at the lower levels of attachment avoidance among the participants, it still does not provide sufficient distinct results.

The outcome, Marital Satisfaction having a mean of 40.32 (M = 40.32), is defined by using the data collected from 172 group members. A format with 4.11 (SD = 4.11) represents the distribution of answers, demonstrating a moderate scatter (Bhandari, 2023).

Correlation

Table 3

SPSS Output of Correlation Between Attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and Marital Satisfaction

Marital Satisfaction
$N = 172$

	N	Pearson Cor	Sig (2 tailed)
Att Anx	175	-0.154	0.045
Att Avoid	176	-0.173	0.024

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Direct associations and strength between attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and marital satisfaction were investigated using correlation analysis. The analysis began with the calculation of the bivariate correlations among attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and marital satisfaction. The information that was generated shows the nature of the relationship that exists between attachment patterns and marital satisfaction (Table 3).

Bivariate Pearson's R correlations were calculated for all study variables. The correlation Table 3 reveals the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction variables. The result turned out to be a statistically significant negative correlation ($r = -.154$, $p = .045$) between attachment anxiety and the degree of marital satisfaction. Attachment anxiety exhibits a negative correlation with marital satisfaction. Higher anxiety is associated with lower marital satisfaction. A link is identified between spouses who exhibit higher levels of attachment anxiety characteristics and lower levels of satisfaction in their marriage. These findings align with attachment theory, emphasizing the impact of attachment styles on relationship dynamics (Brennan et al., 1998).

Similar results were obtained between attachment avoidance and the degree of marital satisfaction. The correlation in Table 3 reveals the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction variables. A statistically significant negative correlation between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction was found at (r = -.173, p = .024), suggesting that higher avoidance is associated with lower marital satisfaction. Therefore, the satisfaction in relationships of spouses who scored high in attachment avoidance, a form of avoidance marked by an aversion to commitment, dependence, or fear of discussing feelings, are negatively impacted (Debrot et al. (2020).

Moderation

Process Macro was used to carry out the moderation analysis (Hayes, 2022). Model 1 of PROCESS was utilized (Hayes, 2022).

Table 4

SPSS Output for PROCESS Macro, Model Summary of Social Media Use, Attachment Anxiety, and Marital Satisfaction

Model 1
Y: Marital Satisfaction
X: Attachment Anxiety
W: Social Usage

$N = 164$

R	R-sq	MSE	F	dfl	Df2	p
.2393	.0573	16.2851	3.2394	3.0000	160.0000	.0237

Model	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	23.6735	7.8683	3.0087	.0030	8.1344	39.2126
Attach Anx	.6359	.3240	1.9625	.0514	-.0040	1.2758
Social U	.5970	.2322	2.5714	.0110	.1385	1.0556
Int_1	-.0232	.0096	-2.4129	.0170	-.0422	-.0042

Product terms key:
 Int_1 :   Attach Anxiety x   Social Usage

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	dfl	Df2	p
X*W	.0343	5.8219	1.0000	160.0000	.0170

Focal predict: Attach Anxiety (X)
Mod var: Social Usage (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

Social U	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
21.0000	.1486	.1379	1.00774	.2829	-.1238	.4209
30.0000	-.0603	.0845	-.7133	.4767	-.2272	.1066
38.0000	-.2459	.0958	-2.5682	.0111	-.4350	.0568

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95
W values in conditional tables are the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles.

An overall significant connection was established (F = 3.23; p = .023) when model building was done with variables such as social media usage and attachment anxiety that were proven to be important predictors of marital satisfaction. However, the adjusted R-squared result (adjusted R^2 = .011) indicates that the model only partially explains the variance in marital fulfillment. This finding leads to the conclusion that attachment anxiety has a negative influence on marital satisfaction and that social media use does not predict marital satisfaction directly (Beta = .59, p = .01; Beta = .023, p = 0.01). However, higher levels of social media use (84th percentile) negatively impacts the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction. The influence is statistically significant. Higher the levels of social media use higher the negative relationship between attachment (anxiety) and marital satisfaction (b_3 = -.24, p = .01). This validates the hypothesis that greater levels of social media use negatively affects the relationship between attachment (Anxiety) and marital satisfaction.

Table 5

SPSS Output for PROCESS Macro, Model Summary of Social Media Use, Attachment

Avoidance, and Marital Satisfaction

Model: 1
Y: Marital Satisfaction
X: Attachment Avoidance
W: Social Usage

$N = 165$

R	R-sq	MSE	F	dfl	df2	p
.2858	.0817	15.8976	4.7733	3.0000	161.0000	.0032

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	23.4861	6.7016	3.5045	.0006	10.2516	36.7205
Attach Avoidance	.8282	.3471	2.3858	.0182	.1427	1.5137
Social U	.6095	.1974	3.0877	.0024	.2197	.9994
Int_1	-.0305	.0103	-2.9544	.0036	-.0509	1.0101

Int_1: Attach Av x.   Social U

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction (s):

	R2-chng	F	dfl	df2	p
X*W	.0498	8.7282	1.0000	161.0000	.0036

Product terms key:
Focal predict: Attach Anxiety (X)
Mod var: Social U (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

Social use	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
21.0000	.1874	.1459	1.2838	.2011	-.1008	.4756
30.0000	-.0873	.0871	-1.0019	.3179	-.2593	.0848
38.0000	-.3314	.0996	-3.3284	.0011	-.5280	-.1348

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output: 95
W values in conditional tables are the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles.

An overall significant connection was established (F = 4.77; p = .032) when model

building was done with variables such as social media usage and attachment avoidance that were

proven to be important predictors of marital satisfaction. This finding leads to the conclusion that attachment avoidance has a negative influence on marital satisfaction and that social media use does not predict marital satisfaction directly. (Beta = .6095, p = .002; Beta = -.03, p = .003). However, higher levels of social media use negatively influences the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction. The association is statistically significant. Higher the levels of social media use (84th percentile), higher the negative relationship between attachment (avoidance) and marital satisfaction (b_3 = -.33, p = .001). This validates the hypothesis that greater the levels of the use of social media negatively affects the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction.

Results

RQ1: Is there an association between attachment (avoidant and anxiety) and marital satisfaction?

a. Is there an association between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction?

b. Is there an association between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction?

H_0: There is no association between attachment (anxiety, avoidant)and marital satisfaction.

H_1: There is an association between attachment (anxiety, avoidant) and marital satisfaction.

It was hypothesized that attachment (anxiety and avoidance) would correlate with marital satisfaction (H1).

Hypothesis 1 - Association Between Attachment and Marital Satisfaction

Gaining insight into the dynamics of attachment styles and how they influence marital satisfaction is essential to understanding the complexity of committed, intimate relationships, particularly for individuals born between 1980 and 2000. The relationship between attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, and marital satisfaction will be examined under Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1a: *There is an association between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction.*

While the data analysis showed a negative and significant correlation between marital satisfaction and attachment anxiety (r = -.154 and p = .045), results indicated a statistically significant negative correlation between anxiety and marital satisfaction, r(168) = -.154, p< .045. This correlation explains approximately 2% of the variance and marital satisfaction scores. This signifies that as attachment fretfulness grows, there is a decrease in marital satisfaction.

Table 6

SPSS Output ANOVA Analysis related to Attachment Anxiety and Marital Satisfaction

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	67.773	1	67.773	4.074	.045[b]
	Residual	2795.103	168	16.638		
	Total	2862.876	169			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Attach Anxiety

Null hypothesis= all coefficients are 0.

Alternative hypothesis= at least one coefficient is different to the 0

Table 7

SPSS Output of Strength and Direction of Attachment Anxiety and Marital Satisfaction

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	44.147	1.937		22.789	<.001
	Attach Anxiety	-.160	.079	-.154	-2.018	.045

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

The p-value (.045) of the F statistic is less than .05, which gives us the evidence to reject the null hypothesis at 5% significance (Table 6). When attachment anxiety increases by one unit,

it decreases marital satisfaction by .160 (Table 7). This evidence supports Hypothesis 1a, which

proposes that insecurely attached people are generally less capable of having increased levels of

marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1b: *There is an association between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction.*

Similarly, the analysis showed a statistically significant negative relationship between

attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction (r = -.176, p = .024). This correlation explains

approximately 3% of the variance in marital satisfaction scores, which is a stronger effect

compared to the attachment anxiety subscale. This indicates that higher levels of attachment

avoidance are associated with lower marital satisfaction. The results of this investigation

supported the existence of a statistically significant negative association, suggesting that there is

an association between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction, which is consistent with

hypothesis 1b, implying that married individuals with higher rankings of attachment avoidance

report lower levels of marital satisfaction.

Table 8

SPSS Output ANOVA Analysis related to Attachment Avoidance and Marital Satisfaction

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	85.979	1	85.979	5.191	.024[b]
	Residual	2798.968	169	16.562		
	Total	2884.947	170			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Attach Avoidance

Table 9

SPSS Output of Strength and Direction of Attachment Avoidance and Marital Satisfaction

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	*Std. Error*	*Beta*	*t*	*Sig.*
1	(Constant)	43.918	1.611		27.257	<.001
	Attach Avoidance	-.187	.082	-.173	-2.278	.024

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

The p-value (.024) of the F statistic is less than .05, showing cause to reject the null hypothesis at 5% significance (Table 8). When attachment avoidance increases by one unit it affects the decrease of marital satisfaction by .187 (table 9). This study propositioned the evidence of the negative correlation, which, in line with Hypothesis 1b, implies that married individuals with higher rankings of attachment avoidance are dissatisfied in their marital relationships.

RQ2: Does social media use affect the relationship between attachment (Anxious and Avoidant) and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980-2000?

H_0: social media use does not affect the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000.

H_2: social media use affects the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000.

It was hypothesized that social media use affects the relationship between attachment (anxiety, avoidance) and marital satisfaction.

An investigation into the relationships between the variables of social media use, attachment (anxious and avoidance), and marital satisfaction was done.

Moderating Role of Social Media Use

Hypothesis 2 investigates the potential moderating role of social media use in the relationship between attachment patterns (anxiety and avoidance) and marital satisfaction among those born between 1980 and 2000.

First, data relating to social media use's moderating influence on attachment anxiety was investigated:

Null Hypothesis: Social media use does not moderate the relationship between attachment (anxiety) and marital satisfaction.

Alternative Hypothesis: Social media use moderates the relationship between attachment (anxiety) and marital satisfaction.

Table 10

SPSS Output of Moderation Effect Model Summary: Social Media Use *Attachment Anxiety

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.152[a]	.023	.011	4.09547

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Use, Attach Anxiety

Table 11

SPSS Output of F-test for Marital Satisfaction, Attachment Anxiety and Social Media Use Variance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.450	2	31.725	1.891	.154[b]
	Residual	2700.428	161	16.773		
	Total	2763.878	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Use, Attach Anxiety

The results revealed an adjusted R-square of .023, indicating that approximately 2.3% of the variance in marital satisfaction is explained by attachment anxiety, social media use, and their interaction (Table 10). The F-test for the overall model was marginally significant (F 1.89, 161) = 1.891, p = .154), suggesting that the model had some explanatory power (Table 11).

Table 12

SPSS Output of ANOVA Analysis: Model Fit for Anxiety and Social Use as Predictors

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	63.450	2	31.725	1.891	.154[b]
	Residual	2700.428	161	16.773		
	Total	2763.878	163			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Use, Attach Anxiety

The ANOVA indicates that the regression model, including social media use and attachment Anxiety as predictors, did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance (p = 0.154) at a 5% significance level (Table 12). While the model does not provide strong evidence to support direct effect, it is essential to consider the significance level in the context of the chosen alpha level (e.g., 0.05). While attachment anxiety remains a significant predictor of marital dissatisfaction, social media use does influence the level, direction, and presence of the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction among individuals born between 1980 and 2000.

As per the information resulting from PROCESS macro, an overall significant connection was established (F = 3.23; p = 0.023) when model building was done with variables such as

social media usage and attachment anxiety that were proven to be important predictors of marital satisfaction. However, the adjusted R-squared result (adjusted R^2 = .011) indicates that the model does not explain the variance in marital fulfillment.

Secondly, data relating to social media use's moderating influence on attachment avoidance was investigated:

Null Hypothesis: Social media use does not moderate the relationship between attachment (avoidance) and marital satisfaction.

Alternative Hypothesis: Social media use moderates the relationship between attachment (avoidance) and marital satisfaction.

Table 13

SPSS Output of Moderation Effect Model Summary: Social Media Use *Attachment Avoidance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.179[a]	.032	.020	4.08118

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Use, Attach Avoidance

Table 14

SPSS Output of F-test for Marital Satisfaction, Attachment Avoidance and Social Media Use Variance

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	88.897	2	44.448	2.669	.072[b]
	Residual	2698.279	162	16.656		
	Total	2787.176	164			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Use, Attach Avoidance

The results revealed an adjusted R-square of .032, indicating that approximately 3.2% of the variance in marital satisfaction is explained by attachment avoidance, social media use, and their interaction (Table 13). The F-test for the overall model was marginally significant ($F2, 162$) $= 2.669$, $p = .072$), as seen in Table 14, suggesting that the model had some explanatory power.

Table 15

SPSS Output of Moderation: Coefficients Interpretation Social Media Use on the relationship

Between Attachment Avoidance and Marital Satisfaction

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	*Std. Error*	*Beta*	*t*	*Sig.*
1	(Constant)	42.326	2.109		20.068	<.001
	Attach Avoidance	-.168	.085	-.154	-1.981	.049
	Social Use	.037	.038	.075	.963	.337

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

The coefficient for the interaction term (social media use * attachment avoidance) did not reach significance ($B = .037$, $\beta = .075$, $p = .337$) (Table 15). The standardized beta coefficient (β) represents the size and direction of the moderation effect, and in this case, it suggests that social media use did not have a direct effect on the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction.

Table 16

SPSS Output of ANOVA Analysis: Model Fit for Avoidance and Social Use as Predictors

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	88.897	2	44.448	2.669	.072[b]
	Residual	2698.279	162	16.656		
	Total	2787.176	164			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Use, Attach Avoidance

The ANOVA indicates that the regression model, including social media use and attachment Avoidance as predictors, did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance (p = 0.072) at a 5% significance level (Table 16). While the model does not provide a strong indication to support direct effect of social media use on the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction, it is essential to consider the significance level in the context of the chosen alpha level (e.g., 0.05).

Based on the data from PROCESS macro, overall significant connection was established (F = 4.77; p = 0.0032) when model building was done with variables such as social media usage and attachment avoidance that were proven to be important predictors of marital satisfaction. However, the adjusted R-squared result (adjusted R^2 = .002) indicates that the model does not explain the variance in marital fulfillment. The results do not support the presence of a direct effect of social media use on the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction. While attachment avoidance remains a significant predictor of marital satisfaction, social media use does influence the level, direction, and presence of the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital fulfillment among individuals born between 1980 and 2000.

Based on the statistical analysis, social media use in both the anxious attached group and the avoidant attached group does appear to be a significant moderating factor for marital satisfaction. Social media use does appear to have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between attachment (anxiety, avoidance) in couples born between 1980 and 2000, as hypothesized. This sophisticated understanding adds to the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between attachment patterns, social media use, and marital satisfaction.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Overview

This chapter examines findings in relation to each research question and hypothesis, as well as their implications. Details about each study question and current findings are addressed and contrasted with similar findings reported in the literature. Attachment styles (Anxiety, Avoidance), as measured by the Experience in Close Scale (ECR-S), have a correlation with marital satisfaction as measured by the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS). The findings also indicate that social media use, as measured by the Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS), does moderate the relationship between attachment style (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, this chapter addresses the findings and limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future studies.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between attachment style (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction of couples born between 1980 and 2000 and the moderating role of social media use in a sample of heterosexual married individuals living in the United States. A demographic questionnaire and three instruments were used to measure attachment style (Anxiety, Avoidance), marital satisfaction, and social media use. The evidence supports the inclusion of these specific factors since they are associated with cognition, emotions, and behaviors that influence human relationships, including marriage (Abbasi et al., 2016; Conradi et al., 2021; Quinn-Nilas, 2020). Hence, this study was informed by theories and recent research findings on marital satisfaction, attachment style, and social media use.

First Research Question

   The first research question addressed the correlation between attachment style (ECR-S) and marital satisfaction (EMS). Results from correlational analysis indicate that the subscales of attachment style (Anxiety, Avoidance) correlate negatively to marital satisfaction. The overall scores on the subscales of attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance indicate that participants in this study have a low level of marital satisfaction. This would imply that they are afraid to show their true feelings to people and are hesitant to get close to their partners. Additionally, it would also imply that they have low trust in others and have fluctuating confidence in others. It also shows that scores for the attachment anxiety and avoidance were a normal distribution. This means that the scores for participants' responses are proportionally distributed throughout each group. Additionally, the avoidance subscales showed greater dispersion when viewed through the lens of their standard deviation, a measure of respondent variation that may possibly point to lower participant attachment levels. Furthermore studies have found a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and secure attachment style (Abbasi et al., 2016; Amani & Khosroshahi, 2020; Bedair et al., 2020; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020) and a negative correlation between marital satisfaction and insecure attachment style (Bedair et al., 2020; Hammond et al., 2018; Li et al., 2021). In the current study, attachment anxiety showed a statistically significant negative correlation with marital satisfaction. Suggesting that higher anxiety is associated with lower marital satisfaction. This means that when anxiety increases, marital satisfaction decreases. A statistically significant negative correlation between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction was found suggesting that higher avoidance is associated with lower marital satisfaction, consistent with previous studies.

The present understanding of the connection between attachment (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction is supported by a variety of theories. People who have insecure attachment styles (Anxiety, Avoidant) may feel uncomfortable and humiliated because of their lack of confidence in handling difficult situations, which can lead to psychological stress (Bühler et al., 2020; Guidry et al., 2019; Lyvers et al., 2021; McNulty et al., 2021). Many people dread rejection and loneliness in relationships because of their insecure connection (Callaci et al., 2020; Kulibert et al., 2019; Stöven & Herzberg, 2021). To understand the implications of attachment anxiety in relationships, McNulty et al. (2021) investigated the outcome of attachment difficulties in couples. These findings indicate that relational strain, anxiety, and depression are caused by anxious attachment. The Bivariate Pearson's R Correlations test revealed the correlation between couples' degrees of marital pleasure and their greater levels of attachment anxiety characteristic. According to Brennan et al. (1998), these results support attachment theory by highlighting the influence of attachment types on relationship dynamics. For linked couples, these reasons significantly lower marital satisfaction. Rusbult (1980) found in his study related to the investment model that those who are extremely avoidant have low trust in others, those who are highly anxious have fluctuating confidence in others, and those who are securely attached have high and steady trust in others (those who are both low on avoidance and anxiety). Looking deeper into the influence of avoidant attachment, several studies, including Debrot et al. (2020), investigated the effect of avoidant attachment on marital satisfaction and found that cutting off communication with spouses significantly raised levels of marital misery, which in turn fostered marital discontent. The analyzed studies indicate that marital dissatisfaction is related to an avoidant attachment and low expectations for the future as well. In relation to avoidant attachment, there are studies that found that attachment avoidance does not

effect marital satisfaction (Sherrell & Lambie, 2018). Those with an anxious, avoidant attachment style are more prone to experience marital unhappiness due to these variables. Additionally, theories highlight the fact that every spouse in a marriage contributes to their personality, viewpoint, upbringing, and culture (Eckenroad, 2023; Rosalina et al., 2020; Hazan & Shafer, 1987). These problems raise the risk of marital discontent among those with an anxious, avoidance attachment style. This theory contends that an individual's attachment behavioral system significantly effects their desire for intimacy, support, and security in romantic relationships (Aljasir, 2022). 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 confirm the theory and 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. Securely attached persons experience greater satisfaction in their sexual and romantic relationships, while avoidantly and anxiously attached persons account for lower satisfaction with sexual and romantic satisfaction (Vazquez et al., 2019). Higher attachment behaviors appear to influence the relationship between conflict style and marital quality (Hee et al., 2019). In line with attachment theory, this study is evidence that the relationship between attachment anxious style and attachment avoidant style have lower marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 to 2000, in living in the US.

Second Research Question

The second research question addresses the potential moderating effect of social media use (SMUIS) on the relationship between attachment style (Anxiety and Avoidance) (ECR-S) and marital satisfaction in individuals born between 1980 and 2000. Results were obtained using

the PROCESS Macro in SPSS (Hayes, 2022). Social media use had no statistically significant direct effect on the connection between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction. However, higher level of social media use reported a moderation on the relationship between attachment anxiety and marital satisfaction. While the outcome of high attachment anxiety is decreased marital satisfaction, greater levels of social media use negatively moderates the relationship between attachment (anxiety) and marital satisfaction. Results also indicate that social media use did not reach significance in having a direct influence on the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction. However, a higher levels of social media use reported a negative moderating effect on the relationship between attachment avoidance and marital satisfaction. These results mean that while social media use does not directly affect the relationship between attachment (anxiety, avoidance), greater levels of social media use affects the strength and direction of the relationship between attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance in individuals in this generation.

An investigation into how attachment style functions as a moderating factor between problematic social media use and user well-being describes how variations in attachment style can have varying consequences on the well-being in various users (Sherrell & Lambie, 2018; Young et al, 2020). In contrast to previous generations, people born between 1980 and 2000 stay in touch with their friends through social media (Andrade et al., 2020). Belotti et al. (2022) suggest that social media might be beneficial for partner involvement and exchanges, even though Dalessandro (2018) acknowledges that utilizing it for romantic purposes can result in bad outcomes (mostly lying, cheating, and impartiality). Furthermore, Casale et al. (2019) discovered that individuals born between 1980 to 2000 use of online forums was linked to their venting of negative emotions. Additionally, studies show that social media use is associated with reduced

feelings of loneliness and higher feelings of social support (Hatamleha et al., 2020). Real-time connections between people were made possible using these platforms, according to a study on how the internet and smartphones combined to create novel communication methods, including messaging services and phone calls (Appel et al., 2019; L.Silver et al., 2019). People who have a strong feeling of attachment tend to follow better internet connection practices, which are characterized by empathy, helping others, and positive communication. According to research by Evraire et al., (2022); Gazder and Stanton (2020); Gewirtz-Meydan and Finzi-Dottan (2020); Li et al., (2021), people with secure connections use social networking sites more frequently for relationship creation and connection maintenance than for seeking attention or validation. Lomanowska and Guitton (2016) discovered that intimate digital communication increased marital satisfaction and closeness. These beneficial connections could be explained by the possible benefits of internet use for preserving and strengthening relationships. Spouses can communicate, share experiences, and show affection using online platforms, particularly in cases of international partnerships. Furthermore, Décieux et al. (2018) discovered that social media can provide a platform for couples to engage in cooperative activities, including planning trips, fortifying relationships, and enhancing intimacy.

Mihalis Kuyucu (2020) found that 90% of social media users between the ages of 18 and 49 reported seeing relationship-related Facebook postings, compared to 68% of users over the age of 50. According to a similar study, most people in partnerships between the ages of 18 and 49 said that seeing these messages had little bearing on how they felt about their own romantic connection (Dhingra & Mudgal, 2019; Król & Zdonek, 2022). The mean age in the current study was 35, and since they fall into the above category, these findings align with this study that social media does influence the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction.

Approximately 40% of married users between the ages of 18 and 29 believe social media is somewhat or very important for staying updated about their partner's life, compared to 29% of users between the ages of 30 and 49 and only 17% of users aged 50 and beyond (Manning et al., 2019). In this current study, 67.86% of participants said they rarely let social media use affect their behavior and actions. Only 16.67% stated that the use of social media affects their behavior and actions to a large extent, and 15.48% stated that the use of social media does not affect their behavior and actions. Three out of five responders stated that they use social media for learning, and 51.79% of responders stated that they use social media for networking. These results might help to explain why there is a moderating effect of social media use on the connection between attachment and marital satisfaction in increased levels of social media use.

The effect of social media use on interpersonal interactions has been the subject of numerous research. The recent findings on the moderating effect of social media use on attachment style (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital satisfaction are supported by a mixed body of literature. According to studies (Choate & Tortorelli; 2022, Konlan et al., 2023; Young et al., 2020), people with high levels of anxiety are more likely to see detrimental effects on marital satisfaction because of utilizing social media. According to a different study, avoidantly attached individuals may use social media more frequently to reduce their feelings of loneliness rather than talking to their partner, which could be harmful to the satisfaction of their marriage (Dwivedi, 2022; Young et al., 2020). Research has examined the phenomena known as "Facebook jealousy," when individuals experience anxiety or uneasiness because of their spouse's participation in or association with social media (Dhingra & Mudgal, 2019; Lemay et al., 2019; Sagone et al., 2023; Mihalis Kuyucu, 2020). The above-mentioned conclusions are supported by the study's findings. Therefore, the findings of these studies support the second

research question's hypothesis, which states that, for couples born between 1980 and 2000, social media use moderates the relationship between attachment (Anxious, Avoidant) and marital satisfaction.

Implications

The current study has contributed to the existing body of research on the relationship between attachment styles (Anxious, Avoidant) and marital satisfaction and the moderating role of social media use on couples born between 1980 and 2000. According to Maxwell et al. (2020), the moderating role of social media use has not been studied in relation to how attachment styles (Anxiety, Avoidance) and marital happiness relate to couples who were married between 1980 and 2000. Most of the previous studies have focused on teenagers and college students, ignoring married adults' well-being (W. Wang et al., 2020).

First, couples born in the United States between 1980 and 2000 are among the specific population segments that the current research findings have contributed to our understanding of. An implication from this research is the potential development of counseling programs and plans aimed at improving the relational and emotional needs of similar populations. According to Aman et al. (2019) and Baumann et al. (2020), there is an urgent need for research on couples' marital satisfaction. Thus, understanding of the requirements of this group can be increased by learning more about this community through this research study and developing pre-marital and marital counseling programs to help individuals within this identified group and similar groups with specific tools to enhance marital satisfaction.

Secondly, this study adds to the body of knowledge regarding attachment style and marital pleasure. By utilizing tools like those in this study, the findings of this research contribute to our understanding of couples' attachment styles and aid in fostering positive

attachment dynamics. According to research, anxious and avoidant insecure attachment styles have a detrimental effect on marital happiness (Altgelt & Meltzer, 2019; Bedair et al., 2020; Beffel et al., 2021; Bretaña et al., 2021; Candel & Turliuc, 2019). As attachment style is formed early in infancy and influences an individual's life (Fraley et al., 2000; Gewirtz-Meydan & Finzi-Dottan, 2020; Hazan & Shaver, 1987;), community care and counseling professionals can utilize the results of this study to understand couples' attachment styles and promote positive attachment dynamics by using instruments like those used in this study. Furthermore, almost 75% of the participants in this study identified as Christians in terms of their spiritual connection. The findings, in contrast to prior research (Aman et al., 2019; Hwang et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2021; Ripley et al., 2022), indicate that there is no difference in the association between Christian and non-Christian demographics' when considering attachment types and marital satisfaction.

Thirdly, this study contributes to the literature on the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000. This study shows that the association between attachment styles and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000 who live in the United States when prior findings in studies are considered (Hwang et al., 2020; Ripley et al., 2022), is the same as the relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction in couples born outside of 1980 to 2000. According to study findings, those who were born between 1980 and 2000 experienced a variety of effects from the recession, including needing to move back in with their parents or continue to live with them (Candel & Turliuc, 2019). Several other studies suggest that this is the reason why the current generation does not see marriage as a goal, in contrast to earlier generations (Bretaña et al., 2021; Candel & Turliuc, 2019). As a result, they marry somewhat older than other generations (Manning et al., 2019).

Research also indicates that they opted for cohabitation rather than marriage (Manning et al., 2019). Consistent with these findings, in the present investigation, the demographic questionnaire revealed that 105 out of 177 participants reported living with their partner before being married.

Finally, this study contributes to the literature on the moderating role of social media on the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction. Studies have found that individuals born between 1980 and 2000, regardless of their feelings, turn to social media use (Mihalis Kuyucu, 2020). The demographic survey results in this study indicated that 60.12% used social media for learning, and 51.79% used social media for networking. A study on attachment style as the moderator of the relationship between social media use and mental health and well-being found that attachment style influences the extent to which social media affects users' mental health and well-being (Young et al., 2020). More attachment anxiety and less avoidance in attachment relationships were linked to problematic social media usage in this cohort, according to a different study on the association between attachment anxiety and social media use and the mediation function of well-being (Worsely et al., 2018). A study by Konlan et al. (2023) found that excessive use of social media can lead to unhappy relationships and lower-quality marriages. Social media usage has become a normal way to connect. Recently, no studies have been done on the moderating role of social media use in the relationship between attachment (anxious, avoidant) and marital satisfaction. People who were born between 1980 and 2000 utilize social media to keep in touch, learn, network, and get news. Current generations are heavy users of social media, with individuals born between 1980 and 2000 favoring Facebook over all others (González-Rivera & Hernández-Gato, 2019).

This study suggests that high levels of social media use does affect the relationship between attachment (Anxious, Avoidant) and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980 and 2000. The study also found that social media use did not have a direct effect on the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction. These findings might be particular to this cohort as social media is a "normal" daily use (Konlan et al., 2023; Worsley et al., 2018). The study's conclusions suggest that when promoting positive relationship dynamics and outcomes that can raise marital satisfaction in this cohort, the focus should be on "increased" social media use as a predictor of the direction and strength of the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction rather than social media's direct effect as a predictor of attachment and marital satisfaction.

Limitations

A drawback of the study is that married individuals, not married couples, provided the data. It would provide a more accurate picture of marital satisfaction to have data from both partners in a marital relationship. A second limitation is that due to the small effect size, the research findings have limited practical significance. The statistical tests showed that there were statistically significant relationships among the variables observed; however, these relationships were minimal, explaining less than 3% of the variance in the outcomes. In the power analysis, the sample size was determined as 200; this study received 218 responses, forty-two responses were removed by SPSS due to missing data using listwise. This study has a moderate sample size, but this does not mean that the minimal effect size is related. Excessively large sample sizes in studies can lead to statistically significant but possibly non-clinically relevant results with modest effect sizes (Vaske et al., 2020). Similar effect sizes are not all the same significance. In

some situations, but not in others, a "small" effect size could be more useful than a "large" effect size (Cohen, 1988).

A third limitation is that due to the moderate sample size, it is reasonable to conclude that the sample is not a good representation of the overall population. For example, 75% of the sample identified themselves as Christian, which is a higher rate than the U.S. population overall. However, the sample was diverse regarding age, gender, and diversity. This could be in line with the findings of a study done by Abu-Raiya and Pargament (2015), which found that marital satisfaction was considerably greater for Christians than non-Christians. Furthermore, Christian couples report greater marital satisfaction and frequently profit from each other's commitment to God (Perry, 2015). A fourth limitation is that the survey respondents were recruited via Facebook posts using snowball sampling. There were no official procedures taken to prevent deception or fabrication of online identities, and sampling bias might have been present.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The constraints of this investigation could serve as a foundation for subsequent studies delving into the following suggestions concerning four domains: variables, population sample, research design, and instrumentation. Future research on marital satisfaction should, for example, keep examining attachment style and social media use as variables. However, it would be beneficial to consider other variables such as mental health, level of education, finances, and children. More than 57% of participants reported that social media has affected their mental health. It would be interesting to find out if the effect is negative or positive. Given that over 83% of participants in this study reported having attended college or higher, a comparative study comparing the effects of secondary and college education on attachment, marital happiness, and social media moderation in this cohort may be helpful. A comparable study on attachment style

(anxious, avoidant), marital satisfaction, and the moderating effects of children and finances is also advised. Approximately 36% of respondents cited finances, and over 20% mentioned children as the most stressful factors influencing marital satisfaction. Finally, future studies on attachment styles, marital satisfaction, and the moderating role of social media should consider using different research designs, such as case studies. Perhaps they could also use other instruments like the Relationship Structure questionnaire (ECR-RS) and Social Networking sites usage and needs scale (SNSUN).

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Appendix A

Date: 3-8-2024

IRB #: IRB-FY23-24-975
Title: Attachment (Secure, Anxiety, Avoidance) in relation to marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980-2000 in the U.S. and the moderating role of social media use.
Creation Date: 12-5-2023
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Shevanthi Kanaganayagam
Review Board: Research Ethics Office
Sponsor:

Study History

| Submission Type | Initial | Review Type | Exempt | Decision | Exempt |

Key Study Contacts

| Member | Thomas Vail | Role | Co-Principal Investigator |

| Member | Shevanthi Kanaganayagam | Role | Principal Investigator |

| Member | Shevanthi Kanaganayagam | Role | Primary Contact |

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Shevanthi Kanaganayagam asking you to participate in a research study titled "ATTACHMENT STYLES IN RELATION TO MARITAL SATISFACTION IN COUPLES BORN BETWEEN 1990-2000". Ms. Kanaganayagam will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. This study is being led by Shevanthi Kanaganayagam of PI of, Behavioral Department at Liberty University. The Faculty Advisor for this study is Dr. Thomas Vail, Department at Liberty University.

What the study is about
The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction in couples born between 1980-2000, while considering the moderating role of social media. This study seeks to determine whether attachment styles have an impact on social media use by building on earlier studies on the influence of social media. By understanding the relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction, the research aims to provide insight if attachment styles impact social media use and in turn impact marital satisfaction.
What we will ask you to do
I will ask you to complete 4 surveys which will take 30 minutes approximately. The demographic instrumentation which includes a survey comprised of fifteen questions and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. The survey will consist of five demographic information questions. It will also include five questions on marital expectations. Finally, the survey will include five questions regarding external influences and challenges (social media, finance, career) that impact marital relationships. You will then be asked to complete the Experience in Close Relationship Scale (ECR), by Phillip Shaver, Catherine Clark, and Kelly Brennan (1998). This is a 36-item self-report questionnaire using the Likert scale, which would take between 5-10 minutes to complete. You will then be requested to complete The Enrich Marital Satisfaction (EMS) scale, consisting of 15 items, developed by Fowers and Olson in 1993 and will take between 5-7 minutes average to complete. Lastly you will be requested to complete The Social media use integration scale (SMUIS) by Jenkins-Guarniere, Wright, and Johnson (2013). This survey consists of 10 questions and will take 7-10 minutes on average. The research study is funded by the writer.

Risks and discomforts
I do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits. An indirect benefit would be a better understanding of oneself. This dissertation study will investigate the relationship of attachment styles and marital satisfaction of couples born between 1980-2000 and the moderating role of social media. Additionally, it will examine how attachment styles affects social media and marital satisfaction. Furthermore, it will explore how couple and family therapists can effectively engage with the specified generation through social media by considering professionalism, accessibility, aligned values, branding, and reputation. This dissertation will contribute to a better understanding of the effects of social media use on the mental health of married adults, shed light on the specific

challenges faced by married working couples whose ages fall within the specified years, and provide guidance for couples and family therapists in effectively utilizing social media to engage with the specified generation.

Incentives for participation
The participants will not receive any incentives/compensation for being part of the study.

Privacy/Confidentiality/Data Security
Multiple security measures such as encryption of computer-based files, signed consent forms and storing of documents etc., will be used to protect the information collected from the online survey. Before data analysis, all personal information will be purged from the survey items. Therefore, only those few approved parties who are directly participating in this study will be able to access the data.

Please note that the survey(s) are distributed using SurveyMonkey.com, a company not affiliated with Cornell and with its own privacy and security policies that you can find at its website. We anticipate that your participation in this survey presents no greater risk than everyday use of the Internet.

Taking part is voluntary
Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to participate before the study begins, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you feel uncomfortable, with no penalty to him/her.

If you have questions
The main researcher conducting this study is Shevanthi Kanaganayagam a graduate student at Liberty University. If you have questions, you may contact Shevanthi Kanaganayagam at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Participants at 607-255-6182 or access their website at https://researchservices.cornell.edu/offices/IRB. You may also report your concerns or complaints anonymously through Ethicspoint by calling toll free at 1-866-293-3077. Ethicspoint is an independent organization that serves as a liaison between the University and the person bringing the complaint so that anonymity can be ensured.

Appendix C

Demographic Survey

1. What is your gender?
Female
Male

2. What is your race or ethnicity?
White
Black or African American
Asian
Hispanic or Latino
Middle Eastern or North African
Multiracial or Multiethnic
Native American or Alaska Native
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
Other

3. What year were you born?

4. What is your spiritual affiliation?
Christian
Buddhist
Hindu
Atheist
Other
No spiritual affiliation

5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
Elementary
Middle school
High school
Technical school
College
Graduate

6. How many years have you been married?

7. What year was your spouse born?

8. What is your spouse' race or ethnicity?
White
Black or African American
Asian

Hispanic or Latino
Middle Eastern or North African
Multiracial or Multiethnic
Native American or Alaska Native
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
Other

9. Did you cohabit with your spouse prior to getting married?
Yes
No

10. What is the most stressful contributing factor in your marital relationship?
Finances
Children
Job
Sexual intimacy
Technology (phone, internet, social media)
other: please specify.

11. What social media platforms are you most active on? (Choose as many as applicable)
    Facebook
    Twitter
    LinkedIn
    Instagram
    YouTube
    Tik Tok
    Snapchat
12. To what extent does social media influence your behavior and actions?
    To a large extent
    Seldomly
    Never
13. Has social media had any effect on your mental health?
    Yes
    No
14. How many hours do you spend on social media every day?
    1 hour
    2-3 hours
    3-5 hours
    More than 5 hours
15. What do you use social media for?
    Networking
    Business
    Learning
    Others. Please specify

Appendix D

THE EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE

RELATIONSHIPS QUESTIONNAIRE-Short Version

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

		QUESTION	1=Strongly Disagree……………7=Strongly agree						
1.		It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.		I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.		I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.		I find that my partner doesn't want to get as close as I would like.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.		I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.		My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.		I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.		I don't worry about being abandoned.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.		I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.		I get frustrated if my romantic partner is not available when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.		I am nervous when my partner gets too close to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.		I worry that a romantic partner won't care about me as much as I care about them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scoring Information: Anxiety = 2, 4, 6, 8 (reverse), 10, 12 Avoidance = 1 (reverse), 3, 5 (reverse), 7, 9 (reverse), 11

Appendix E

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale

EMS Scale comprises of two sub-scales: Marital Satisfaction and Idealistic Distortion scale. The scale is a 15-item scale comprising the Marital Satisfaction Scale (10 items) and Idealistic Distortion (5 items).

Respond to each statement by circling a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement

	QUESTION	1=Strongly Disagree 5=Strongly Agree				
	Marital Satisfaction Scale	5	4	3	2	1
1.	I am not pleased with the personality characteristics of my partner.	5	4	3	2	1
2.	I'm happy with how we handle role and responsibilities in our marriage.	5	4	3	2	1
3.	I'm not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me	5	4	3	2	1
4.	I'm very happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	I'm unhappy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	I'm very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	I'm very pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually.	5	4	3	2	1
8.	I'm not satisfied with the way we each handle our responsibilities as parents.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	I'm dissatisfied with our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and/or friends.	5	4	3	2	1
10.	I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.	5	4	3	2	1
	Idealistic Distortion Scale	5	4	3	2	1
11.	My partner and I understand each other perfectly.	5	4	3	2	1
12	My partner completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood.	5	4	3	2	1
13.	Our relationship is a perfect success.	5	4	3	2	1
14.	I have some needs that are not being met by our relationships	5	4	3	2	1
15.	I have never regretted my relationship with my partner, not even for a moment.	5	4	3	2	1

Scoring:

The items are coded as positive worded and negative worded and are presented on a scale of 5 (Strongly disagree, moderately disagree, neither agree nor disagree, moderately agree, and strongly agree). Strongly disagree was coded as 1, and strongly agree was coded as 5. The marking for positive worded was collected from 1 to 5, whereas, for negatively worded items, marking was done backward, which means response coded as 5 was marked as 1.

Appendix F

Social Media Use Integration Scale (SMUIS)

		QUESTION	1=Strongly Disagree 5=Strongly Agree				
		Marital Satisfaction Scale	5	4	3	2	1
1.		I am not pleased with the personality characteristics of my partner.	5	4	3	2	1
2.		I'm happy with how we handle role and responsibilities in our marriage.	5	4	3	2	1
3.		I'm not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me	5	4	3	2	1
4.		I'm very happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts.	5	4	3	2	1
5.		I'm unhappy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
6.		I'm very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together.	5	4	3	2	1
7.		I'm very pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually.	5	4	3	2	1
8.		I'm not satisfied with the way we each handle our responsibilities as parents.	5	4	3	2	1
9.		I'm dissatisfied with our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and/or friends.	5	4	3	2	1
10.		I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values.	5	4	3	2	1
		Idealistic Distortion Scale	5	4	3	2	1
11.		My partner and I understand each other perfectly.	5	4	3	2	1
12		My partner completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood.	5	4	3	2	1
13.		Our relationship is a perfect success.	5	4	3	2	1
14.		I have some needs that are not being met by our relationships	5	4	3	2	1
15.		I have never regretted my relationship with my partner, not even for a moment.	5	4	3	2	1

	QUESTION	1=Strongly Disagree………5=Strongly agree				
1.	I feel disconnected from friends when I have not logged into social media site/s	1	2	3	4	5

2.	I would like it if everyone used social media site/s to communicate	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I would be disappointed if I could not use social media site/s at all.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I get upset when I cannot log on to social media site/s	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I prefer to communicate with others mainly through social media site/s	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Social media site/s plays an important role in my social relationships	1	2	3	4	5
	ISR Questions					
7.	I enjoy checking my social media account/s.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I do not like to use social media sites	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Using social media site/s is part of my everyday routine	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I respond to content that others share using social media site/s	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring:

The Emotional Connection subscale consists of six items and the Social Routines subscale consists of four items, question 8 is reverse coded.
Total score and subscale scores are computed by averaging the scores, with results in a range from 1 to 5 for each. Higher scores represent a stronger emotional connection, more engaged use, and more integration of social media.

Appendix G

Permission to use the Enrich marital satisfaction scale

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Permission to use the SMUIS scale

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