

**An examination of jealousy and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships**

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**Abstract**

This study has been conducted to examine the relation between attachment styles, romantic jealousy and relationship satisfaction. Moreover, how these mentioned variables differ in terms of sex and relationship types is also explained. Study group of this study consist of totally 500 participants, 250 males and 250 female participants, who live within İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality district. Personal Information Form, Romantic Jealousy Scale, The Experiences in Close Relationship Scale-II, Relationship Satisfaction Sub-Scale of Relationship Stability Scale have been used as data collection tools in this study.

Results of analysis show that there is a positive correlation between relationship satisfaction and romantic jealousy. Results show that attachment styles are considerable predictors of romantic jealousy level; that jealousy increases as anxious attachment increases; that jealousy decreases as avoidant attachment increases; and also that there is a weak positive relation between avoidance and anxiety dimensions of attachment. Moreover, there has been a negative relation between avoidant attachment and relationship satisfaction. Findings show that sex and relationship type have significant roles in jealousy, that women are more jealous than men, especially those who are flirting are more jealous than those who are married. It has been seen that relationship type is effective in attachment and those who are flirting are more anxiously attached than those who are married.

**Keywords:** Relationship satisfaction, jealousy, anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, relations, attachment styles



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## Introduction

Romantic relationship; between married people or other couples who are dating, a process of togetherness that is established, preferred by individuals with their own free will, and in which bonding, passion and closeness are at the forefront. It is conceptualized as.

Couples often begin a romantic relationship with the expectation of a happy and lasting relationship. However, this does not always result as people want; Because the healthy continuation of the romantic relationship process, its continuity, and the happiness of the couple are affected by the satisfaction received from the relationship (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988).

As the relationship satisfaction of couples increases, the duration of their relationship and the happiness rate increase; However, if the relational satisfaction is not at a sufficient level, it is thought that problems may begin to occur in the relationship and may even lead to the termination of the relationship.

Relational satisfaction is so important in romantic relationships, has led to the need to conduct research to determine the variables associated with relational satisfaction. Romantic relationship process and one of these important variables affecting relational satisfaction It is thought that romantic jealousy causes problems in romantic relationships and divorce in marriage (Amato & Rogers, 1997).

Jealousy is a reaction to the feeling of a danger that may cause problems in an important relationship or loss of the relationship. is explained (Pines, 1998). According to the theory of evolution, jealousy is a very old concept and helps people adapt to life. It is a helping emotion (Buss, 2000).

In general, jealousy is one of the most important sources of unhappiness in romantic relationships (Pines & Friedman, 1998). The unhappiness experienced by couples in their relationship directly negatively affects the satisfaction they receive from the relationship.

While some researchers say that jealousy is an important variable in relationship satisfaction, they have addressed the relationship between romantic jealousy and relationship satisfaction. Many of these studies show that jealousy decreases as relational satisfaction increases (Andersen, Eloy, Guerrero, & Spitzberg, 1995; Guerrero & Eloy, 1992; Güngör-Houser, 2009; Pines & Aronson, 1983). However, there are also studies that reach different results (Curun and Çapkın, 2014; Demirtaş and Dönmez, 2006; Dugosh, 2000; Hansen, 1983).

Since there is no full consistency among the research findings, we think that conducting new research will both increase our knowledge and contribute to our perspective on relationships. Attachment problems in adulthood are one of the most emphasized variables in the context of romantic relationships. According to most research; These are attachment styles that affect a person's feelings, thoughts and behaviors positively or negatively in romantic relationships.

The concept of attachment is the process that occurs between the baby and its mother or caregiver, making the baby feel emotionally safe. It is conceptualized as a strong emotional bond that enables love to develop (Bowlby, 1969).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) defined attachment behavior in romantic relationships and examined attachment styles developed during childhood. For adulthood; They stated that there are similarities between attachment behavior and attachment styles in romantic relationships and that romantic relationships can be explained in many ways.

When we look at the characteristics of these attachment styles in bilateral relationships, Hazan and Shaver (1987) found that securely attached individuals are more likely to form close relationships. They stated that they had no difficulty in viewing other people as trustworthy. They stated that they saw that they had no fear of abandonment.

Individuals with anxious-ambivalent attachment are in romantic relationships. They feel uncomfortable having a close relationship with the person they are with, and they have thoughts that the people they are with do not want to continue their relationship and do not love them.

They stated that they had ups and downs and that they were jealous in their relationships. People with an avoidant attachment style, on the other hand, stated that they have the idea that the people they are with are trying to be more close to them than they would like, and that they feel uncomfortable having too close relationships.

In later life, the importance of childhood experiences in romantic relationships is more realized through internal working models. Internal working models begin to develop in the early years of a person's life and take on a more continuous and structured form as time passes. Internal working models guide a person's actions and feelings about relationships (Collins and Read, 1990). Internal working models; It consists of the self model, which expresses the individual's beliefs about the extent to which he finds himself worthy of being loved and valued, and the others model, which expresses the individual's beliefs about the extent to which his partner is accessible and able to help when he needs it (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby (1973) stated that individuals' thoughts about themselves and others may be positive or negative as a function of their experiences with their mother or caregiver.

According to Bartholomew (1990), quadruple attachment styles can be discussed in the context of the self and others model, as well as based on "anxiety" and "avoidance of closeness" dimensions. With the combination of these dimensions, the different attachment styles given above has been created.

The anxiety dimension, one of the dimensions that make up these styles, is the need for individuals to be accepted or rejected by other people. The dimension related to rejection is avoidance dimension which is the individual's establishing or avoiding close relationships with other people.

Literature studies mostly describe attachment as given above. They discussed it categorically as; but Fraley and Shaver (2000) measured attachment as a dimension rather than measuring it categorically. They stated that more consistent results were obtained as a result of the measurement. Some measurement validity studies on this subject categorically as a result of measuring attachment as a dimension. It shows that a

higher level of measurement validity is achieved compared to measurement (Feeney, 2002). In the light of the study findings in the literature, in this study, attachment was discussed as anxiety and avoidance dimensions.

As mentioned above, looking at the relationship between attachment styles and relational satisfaction, which has a significant impact on romantic relationships. It was thought that information could be obtained about the relationship process. Moreover refers to a person's subjective evaluation of his or her relationship. Cognitive models that shape the individual's thoughts about both himself and others have an important place in relationship satisfaction. (Sari, 2008). Whether cognitive models are positive or negative affects the extent to which the individual perceives the reactions of the environment in his/her relationships with the social environment as reliable and consistent and to what extent the individual finds himself/herself worthy of being loved.

These changing perceptions also determine the relative attachment style (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). From this perspective, it can be said that differences in attachment style also lead to differences in satisfaction from the relationship. Researchers have also investigated the relationship between attachment styles and relationship satisfaction, based on the idea that individuals with different attachment styles show different characteristics in relationships. When the results of research conducted in our country and abroad are examined, it is seen that the studies on this subject are inconsistent.

Research generally shows that securely attached people are more satisfied with their relationships (Feeney and Noller, 1991; Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Meyers and Landsberger, 2002; Simpson, 1990; Stackert and Bursik, 2003). However, there are also studies that reach different conclusions that there is no relationship between secure attachment and relationship satisfaction (Beştav, 2007; Möller, Hwang, & Wickberg, 2006). Since there are few studies examining the relationships between attachment styles and romantic relationship satisfaction in our country, it was thought that there was a need for research to test the accuracy of these findings, which are controversial in the literature.

Attachment is one of the important variables in romantic relationships. The relationship between attachment styles and many variables has been investigated for romantic jealousy, which is the subject of this study. When the results of the studies in the literature examining the relationship between romantic jealousy and attachment styles are examined, it is seen that there is a relationship between jealousy and attachment (Çapkın, 2012; Guerrero, 1998; Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Karakurt, 2001; Knobloch, Solomon and Cruz, 2001; Marazziti and al., 2010; Sharpsteen and Kirkpatrick, 1997; Yeter, 2016).

Similarities between attachment styles and jealousy can be varied varies for different reasons. Therefore, in this regard Conducting new research will contribute to knowledge that has been considered. When related studies are examined, the variables of this study romantic jealousy, relationship satisfaction, and attachment styles included in the studies; however, there are no studies about considering these three variables together. When looking at the relationship between attachment styles and romantic jealousy; attachment and jealousy being the process that sustains the relationship; an actual or potential separation from a loved one; It has some common features such as being a

mental model of self and relationships stated by researchers (Sharpsteen and Kirkpatrick, 1997). From this perspective, by considering these variables, are frequently mentioned in the literature, thought that a study examining this would be important.

#### Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this research is to examine attachment styles in romantic relationships and the relationship between romantic jealousy & relationship satisfaction. In addition, in the light of theoretical approaches that point to differences between men and women in these relationships, how these relationships differ between genders and how the type of relationship affects these relationships are also discussed.

In line with this general purpose, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. Do romantic relationship satisfaction and attachment styles predict the level of romantic jealousy?
2. Are there differences between genders in terms of romantic relationship satisfaction, attachment styles, and romantic jealousy?
3. Satisfaction from romantic relationships, attachment styles, and romantic jealousy were examined according to relationship type (dating couples, verbal/ Are there any differences between engaged couples and married couples?

## Method

### Participants

The population of this research consists of people who live within the borders of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and have a romantic relationship. It consists of adults between the ages of 18-65 (married, engaged/engaged, dating). The sample consists of 250 men and 250 women (n=500) who agreed to participate in this research voluntarily, who could be reached during the application period, and who were in a romantic relationship. Appropriate and purposeful sampling technique was used in sample selection.

### Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form is prepared by researcher to get information about participant's gender, age, education level, marital status, whether he or she has a romantic relationship, the number of romantic relationships he or she has had, the duration and type of relationship.

### Relationship Stability Scale (RPS)

The Scale ECI is developed by Rusbult, Martz and Agnew (1998), "Relationship Satisfaction", "Evaluating the Quality of Options" consists of three subscales: and "Relationship Investment". There are also a total of thirty items in the scale. First five of the subscales has a four-level rating (1=completely false, 2=very false, 3= very true, 4 = completely true). The last five items are on a Likert scale, are ranging from 1 (completely false) to 9 (completely true). It is scored on a type scale. In this study, the Relationship Satisfaction Subscale (RASS) was used to measure relationship

satisfaction. There are no reverse coded items in the scale. The increase in the score obtained from the scales increases the score of the measured dimension shows that it is increasing. Three different studies were conducted to test the validity and reliability of the scale (Rusbult et al., 1998). Cronbach's alpha values of the subscales obtained from all three studies; for relationship satisfaction .92 to .95, .82 to .84 for relationship investment, and .84 for the nature of options for the evaluation subscale ranges from .82 to .88. (Rusbult et al., 1998). İİÖ, Büyükşahin, Hasta and Hovardaoğlu (2005) adapted to the culture. To examine the criterion validity of the original form of the scale, "Attitudes Towards Love Scale: Short Form" (LAS)" was used. Values ranged from-.47 to .67 has been detected. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients of the scale are .84 for evaluating the quality of options and .90 for relationship satisfaction and .84 for relationship investment. Additionally, for each subscale split half reliability coefficients were calculated and these coefficients were calculated respectively. It was found to be .71, .84 and .78 (Büyükşahin et al., 2005).

#### Romantic Jealousy Scale (RCS)

Pines and Aronson (1983) found that RKÖ, jealousy has different It was developed to measure dimensions. The Scale RKÖ consists of "Jealousy Triggers", "Reactions in Case of Jealousy", "Causes of Jealousy", "Methods to Cope with Jealousy" and five subscales, including "Effects of Jealousy", and a total of 129 items. The scale is Likert type and the scale items are Value between 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree) is taking. Demirtaş (2004) adapted the scale into Turkish.

#### Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory-II (IYE-II)

Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) wanted describe attachment in close relationships. And they developed EPI-II to measure it. The scale consists of two dimensions: avoidance and anxiety, with 18 items for avoidance and 18 items. The scale is a 7-point Likert type inventory and there are reverse coded items. Adaptation of YİYE-II to Turkish culture Selçuk, Günaydın, Sümer and Uysal (2005). Analysis results of the scale It shows that, as in the original scale, it consists of two dimensions: avoidance and anxiety. Factor values, anxiety dimension It varies between .57 and .80 for the dimension, and between .56 and .87 for the avoidance dimension. These dimensions explained 38% of the total variance. The result in the scale is two points. An increase in the score obtained from any of the dimensions indicates an increase in anxious attachment or avoidant attachment. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the anxious and avoidant dimensions was determined as .86 and .90, respectively. Test-retest reliability was found to be .82 for the anxiety dimension and .81 for the avoidance dimension (Selçuk et al., 2005).

#### Process

Data collection for the study took place between January 2022 and December 2022. Volunteers who can be easily reached in the environment and meet the conditions for inclusion in the research are included in the research. The data collection tools mentioned above were collected in a booklet were combined and applied individually to

the participants by the researcher. It took the participants approximately 25 minutes to answer the form and scales.

## Results

Firstly, "romantic relationship satisfaction and attachment styles" Does it predict the level of romantic jealousy? multiple to the question The answer was sought by regression analysis. Before starting analyzes on predictors of romantic jealousy level, whether the relationship between the predictor variables and the dependent variable is linear or not and whether the scores are normally distributed for this the histogram and distribution curves created for the standardized residual values were examined with scatter diagrams. It was understood that the histogram and distribution curves showed normal distribution. Multiple regression analysis has been made after examining the suitability of datas. RCS is total score according to the correlation values between the predicted (dependent) variable and the predictive (independent) variables. Low level and negative between avoidant attachment ( $r = -.11, p < .05$ ), moderate and positive with anxious attachment ( $r = .59, p < .01$ ), low and positive ( $r = .10, p < .05$ ) relationship with relationship satisfaction has been found. Between avoidant attachment and anxious attachment, a low and positive relationship was found with relationship satisfaction ( $r = .14, p < .01$ ), while a moderate and negative relationship was found with relationship satisfaction ( $r = -.52, p < .01$ ).

According to the results of the regression analysis, it was found that attachment types were a significant predictor of the level of romantic jealousy. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), anxious attachment ranks first in the order of importance of the variables predicting the level of romantic jealousy ( $\beta = .61, t = 16.38, p < .01$ ).

## Argument

The results of the analysis are related to the avoidance dimension of attachment. It shows that there is a negative relationship between relationship satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. This finding is an expected result considering the theoretical properties of the avoidance dimension.

Avoidance refers to a person's desire to remain distant in his/her relationships with other people and to be independent both physically and emotionally (Rholes, Simpson, Campell, & Grich, 2001).

It is expected that people who avoid closeness in relationships and keep emotional and physical distance from their partners will have low relational satisfaction, considering that their needs that increase relational satisfaction, such as sharing thoughts and secrets with their partners and feeling emotional commitment are not met. Similar to our research, Sari (2008), who considered attachment as a dimension, found that as the scores from the avoidance dimension of attachment increased, relational satisfaction decreased.

Analysis results show that there is no correlation between relationship satisfaction and romantic jealousy. According to Pines (1998) Jealousy is the reaction given when felt the presence of a danger that may cause problems or loss of an important relationship.

Considering that a relationship with high relational satisfaction is a valued relationship and that the person does not want to lose the relationship he values, finding a positive relationship between jealousy and relational satisfaction is a meaningful result. In his study examining the relationship between marital satisfaction and jealousy, Hansen (1983) revealed that there was a positive relationship between marital satisfaction and jealousy, supporting our research findings.

The results obtained showed that the avoidance and anxiety dimensions of attachment It shows that there is a low level positive relationship between Sığırcı (2010) also reached the same conclusion in his study, stating that a positive relationship between avoidance and anxiety dimensions is consistent. With the theoretical explanation that these two attachment dimensions are two separate dimensions of insecure attachment style; in between he stated that the low degree of positive relationship can be explained by the theoretical knowledge that avoidant and anxious attachment styles contain different strategies, as opposed to insecure attachment styles.

The analysis results show that the anxiety dimension of attachment positively predicts romantic jealousy. It can be said that such a finding is meaningful considering that anxiety is one of the internal elements of jealousy (Pines, 1998), that is, it is a part of jealousy itself. At the same time, the anxiety dimension of attachment is also related to self-models (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

People who score high on the anxiety dimension have a negative self-perception. People with negative self-model disorder have thoughts that they are not truly loved by others because they do not see themselves as worthy of being loved (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

From these thoughts, in case of any threat to the relationship due to they experience more jealousy because of their anxious, obsessive and suspicious thoughts. In this sense, it can be said that as anxiety increases, jealousy also increases because the person's negative self-perception increases. This finding is consistent with the research findings of Guerrero (1998), Knobloch et al. (2001) and Marazziti et al. (2010), who concluded that there is a positive relationship between romantic jealousy and anxious attachment.

Finally, the results of analysis shows that the avoidance dimension of attachment is negatively predicts romantic jealousy. Intimacy avoidance is a limited experience in one's relationships with other people.

Establishing closeness indicates the desire to be emotionally and physically independent (Rholes et al., 2001). It can be said that the increased desire for limited closeness and emotional independence in a person's romantic relationship contributes to the person not obsessing over his relationship and not thinking obsessively in case of any threat to his relationship, thus contributing to not experiencing too much jealousy.

As a result, our findings on romantic jealousy and attachment indicate that attachment dimensions affect the level of romantic jealousy. It is a significant predictor. Flirtatious (2012) and Karakurt (2001) also found that attachment predicts jealousy. Many study



findings show that women's jealousy levels are higher than men's. Buunk (1981) also found in his study that women are more jealous than men.

Concluding that men in romantic relationships prioritize sexuality, whereas women prioritize emotionality, that men are polygamous, and that they may prefer to be with another woman in the face of a problem that may affect the relationship. Men may not care about the relationship the woman they broke up with will have with someone else, so their level of jealousy is low. However, women are monogamous and have relationships in which they invest emotionally and work hard. If there is a high probability that the relation will end because of another woman, they may exhibit a level of jealousy.

There are studies in the literature that support our research and conclude that jealousy is at a higher level in women. As in (Buunk, 1981; Yeter, 2016), jealousy is related to gender. (Demirtaş, 2004 and Güngör Houser, 2009), and found that men experience more jealousy in the face of sexual triggers, and women experience more jealousy in the face of emotional triggers (Buss et al., 1999; Cramer et al., 2001).

In general, this study is different from most studies in the literature. The finding that women experience more jealousy thought could also be explained by cultural differences.

According to this; in a society with a traditional culture such as Istanbul/Turkey, which is the sample of our research, women, regardless of whether they are single or married, have different relationship experiences or marriages. If they experience any problems, their divorce will be pleasant but these women may be exposed to social pressure, their chances of having a new relationship in the face of any threat to their relationships are less than women in other cultures, they are more afraid of losing their relationships for these reasons, and this situation causes women to experience more jealousy.

Considering the results obtained, relationship satisfaction differs depending on gender. It is understood that there is no significant difference. Many studies in the literature will support the findings of our research. It was concluded that there was no significant relationship between relationship satisfaction and gender (Beştav, 2007; Baltacıoğlu, 2016; Budak, 2011; Büyüksahin, 2006; Çınar, 2008; Güven, 2005; Fışıloğlu, 1992; Hamamcı, 2005). Tufan Çetin, 2010; Wilkie and Ferree, 1998); However, there are also studies that conclude that relationship satisfaction differs according to gender (Benin and Agostinelli, 1988; Debord, Romans and Krieshok, 1996; Sari, 2008).

Findings show that attachment styles do not differ according to gender. Similar findings were found in other studies (Açık, 2008; Baltacıoğlu, 2016; Büyüksahin, 2006; Grabill and Kerns, 2000; Marchand, 2004; Shi, 2003 and Sığırcı, 2010; Tuta rel-Kışlak and Çavuşoğlu, 2006).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) also concluded that attachment styles do not differ according to gender, and they stated that the results of studies on this subject vary. Gender roles are affected by social pressure, the formation of gender roles is due to the development of attachment styles.

Therefore, there is a biological gender in attachment. Stating that there is no need to explain the difference, these findings they explained. Attachment styles differ according

to gender There are also studies that reach this finding (Beştav, 2007; Sümer and Güngör, 1999).

The findings indicate that those who are in a dating relationship are more likely to be jealous than those who are in a marriage relationship. By emphasizing that they are more jealous than others, it shows that the type of relationship has a determining role in jealousy. Buunk da (1981) found that unmarried women were more likely than married women, finding that they experience higher levels of jealousy; because marriage is a type of relationship that gives confidence to women, so married people experience less jealousy.

Marriage is more formal and more complex than a dating relationship, and a type of relationship in which effort is given; therefore when there is a problem in marriage, it is more difficult to lose a spouse and end a relationship.

In this case, married people's relationships are more secure than those who are dating. Since there is less fear of losing in a relationship, It can be said that there is little jealousy.

According to the analysis results, finding was obtained that those in dating relationships had higher levels of anxious attachment than those in marital relationships but Baltacıoğlu (2016) differs from this study. As a result, we reached the conclusion that, there is no relationship between anxious attachment and relationship type. However, marriage sometimes may not make one feel safe. (Buunk, 1981), married couples know each other better than dating couples, therefore considering that their fear of abandonment is less; anxiety that occurs due to fear of abandonment in relationships, it is an expected result that attachment is less in married people.

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