Attachment insecurities, life satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction from a dyadic perspective: The role of positive and negative affect

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RESUMEN (ENGLISH)

The purpose of this research is to examine the association between attachment insecurities (anxiety and avoidance) and both subjective well-being (positive affect [PA] and negative affect [NA] and life satisfaction) and relationship satisfaction. There were 174 Spanish heterosexual couples with a mean length of relationship of 13.9 years who participated in the study. The hypotheses were tested according to the actor-partner interdependence model. We proposed a model in which PA and NA could mediate the association between attachment insecurities and life and relationship satisfaction. Results show that (1) actor effects are more frequent than partner effects; (2) anxious attachment tends to be related to NA and avoidant attachment to PA; (3) avoidance is more detrimental than anxiety for relationship satisfaction at individual and dyadic levels, and (4) there are some mediational effects of NA and PA in the association between attachment insecurities and life and relationship satisfaction.

DETALLES

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Attachment insecurities, life satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction from a dyadic perspective: The role of positive and negative affect

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the association between attachment insecurities (anxiety and avoidance) and both subjective well-being (positive affect [PA] and negative affect [NA] and life satisfaction) and relationship satisfaction. There were 174 Spanish heterosexual couples with a mean length of relationship of 13.9 years who participated in the study. The hypotheses were tested according to the actor–partner interdependence model. We proposed a model in which PA and NA could mediate the association between attachment insecurities and life and relationship satisfaction. Results show that (1) actor effects are more frequent than partner effects; (2) anxious attachment tends to be related to NA and avoidant attachment to PA; (3) avoidance is more detrimental than anxiety for relationship satisfaction at individual and dyadic levels, and (4) there are some mediational effects of NA and PA in the association between attachment insecurities and life and relationship satisfaction.

The study of well-being and the factors that influence it has been an important area of psychological research for the past two decades (see for example reviews by David, Boniwell, & Conley Ayers, 2013; Fischer & Boer, 2011; Luhmann, Hofmann, Eid, & Lucas, 2012). In the present research, we explore, from a dyadic perspective, the association between attachment insecurities (the subject of one of the dominant research paradigms in the study of interpersonal relationships), the cognitive and affective aspects of subjective well-being (SWB), and relationship satisfaction.

Attachment theory was initially formulated by Bowlby (1969/1982) to describe and explain the emotional bonds that children establish with their caregivers in the first years of life. Some years later, Hazan and Shaver (1987) proposed applying Bowlby's (1969/1982) theory to the study of adult romantic relationships. From this perspective have come hundreds of studies in the past two decades (for a review, see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Results show that attachment insecurities of two kinds, anxiety (characterized by concerns about abandonment) and avoidance (characterized by discomfort with closeness and interdependence, and with a preference for self-reliance), are related to many other psychological processes, such as self-representation and affect regulation, and to dyadic processes such as conflict and forgiveness. Until the last decade of the last century, the majority of

research on personal relationships was conducted at the individual level of analysis. However, because of the work of Kenny and colleagues (Kashy & Kenny, 1999; Kenny, 1996; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006), researchers have incorporated the dyadic perspective with increasing frequency. It takes into account the mutual influences of both couple members.

In the present research, we use dyadic analyses to explore the associations between attachment insecurities, the cognitive (life satisfaction) and affective aspects of SWB, and relationship satisfaction. As far as we know, the association between attachment and these important variables has not been studied previously using dyadic analyses. We use the actor–partner interdependence model (APIM; Kashy & Kenny, 1999; Kenny, 1996) to test associations between variables and propose a model in which affect (positive and negative) are considered as possible mediators of the connection between attachment insecurities (anxiety and avoidance) and both life and relationship satisfaction.

Subjective Well-being

There are different traditions in the study of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In the present research, we adopt the hedonic perspective, which focuses on experiences

of pleasure and displeasure and on judgments concerning the positive and negative aspects of life. According to Diener (2012, p. 590), SWB includes people's beliefs and feelings about whether they are leading a desirable and rewarding life. Research has identified two main aspects of SWB: an affective component, reflecting an individual's predominant affective state (positive or negative), and a cognitive component, an overall assessment called life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Regarding the affective component of SWB, research (e.g., Schimmack, 2008) shows that positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) are clearly separable components of SWB. Moreover, there is evidence that PA and NA have different associations with personality variables (implying some independence of PA and NA). For example, Costa and McCrae (1980) and Diener and Emmons (1984), among others, report that neuroticism is more strongly related to NA than to PA and extraversion is often a better predictor of PA than of NA. Regarding the cognitive component of SWB, life satisfaction, research shows that satisfaction in specific life domains (i.e., income and marital satisfaction) is related to global life satisfaction and changes in domain satisfaction are likely to produce changes in overall life satisfaction (Schimmack, 2008). Some studies show that, although affective and cognitive components of SWB are positively correlated, the magnitude of the correlation varies widely from .1 to .8 depending on methodological and cultural factors (Schimmack, 2008). According to Miao, Koo, and Oishi (2013), a person with high SWB experiences many positive and few negative emotions and moods and reports high life and domain-specific satisfaction. Self-report measures of SWB show high convergent and discriminant validity.

In the realm of interpersonal relationships, although there is some dyadic research involving heterosexual couples showing that different aspects of men's SWB are related to women's SWB and vice versa (Bookwala & Schulz, 1996; Hoppmann, Gerstorf, Willis, & Schaie, 2011; Walker, Luszcz, Gerstorff, & Hoppmann, 2011), these studies do not examine, as we do in this study, the extent to which one person's variables (attachment insecurities) are related (or not) to those of the person's partner.

Attachment Insecurities and Positive and Negative Affect

The literature reviewed by Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) shows that attachment insecurities are related to forms of emotion regulation. Secure adults (those scoring low on measures of attachment anxiety and avoidance) are able to experience, express, and acknowledge emotions with minimal distortion and without becoming overwhelmed by them. They are generally able to regulate emotions by themselves but are also able comfortably to seek emotional and social support from others when desired. People who score high on attachment anxiety are vigilant with respect to possible injuries, slights, and threats and tend to amplify their negative reactions to threats. They are often in conflict, wanting to be loved, soothed, and attended to but fearing that this desire will burden their relationship partners and result in rejection. Avoidant individuals, in contrast, downplay threats and vulnerabilities, deny negative emotions, and attempt to suppress or repress negative memories. Several studies using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule have found that both attachment anxiety and avoidance are negatively associated with PA scores and positively with NA scores (e.g., Barry, Lakey, & Orehek, 2007; Wearden, Lamberton, Crook, & Walsh, 2005), but the correlations differ in size.

According to the previous research, we expected that both men's and women's anxiety would be associated negatively with their own scores on PA (Hypothesis 1a) and positively with their own scores on NA (Hypothesis 1b). The same pattern is expected regarding avoidance: men's and women's avoidance will be associated negatively with their own scores on PA (Hypothesis 2a) and positively with their own scores on NA (Hypothesis 2b).

With respect to the existence of partner effects, as Mikulincer and Shaver (2013) state, an important part of close relationships is the sharing of good feelings between partners, and attachment insecurities interfere with this process. For example, Clark, Fitness, and Brissette (2001) found that anxious and avoidant individuals did not feel particularly good when the other partner attained positive outcomes outside the relationship. Reasoning along these lines, although we could not find specific studies on this topic in the attachment literature, we expected that the attachment anxiety of one partner would reduce the PA of the other (Hypothesis 3a) and would increase their NA (Hypothesis 3b). The same pattern was expected for avoidance: one partner's avoidance will reduce the PA of the other (Hypothesis 4a) and increase their NA (Hypothesis 4b).

Adult Attachment Insecurities and Life Satisfaction

Several studies have explored associations between attachment insecurities and aspects of life satisfaction (Galinha, Oishi, Pereira, Wirtz, & Esteves, 2013; Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012; Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2011; Li & Fung, 2014; Sadava, Busseri, Molnar, Perrier, & DeCourville, 2009). In general, the results show that both forms of insecure attachment (attachment anxiety and avoidance) are inversely related to life satisfaction. These results have been obtained in a wide range of samples using cross-sectional, prospective, longitudinal, and cross-cultural designs (Shaver, Mikulincer, Alonso-Arbiol, & Lavy, 2010).

Based on the existing research, we hypothesized that there would be a negative association between, on one hand, both men's and women's attachment anxiety (Hypothesis 5) and avoidance (Hypothesis 6) and, on the other, their own life satisfaction (actor effects). Regarding partner's effects, as in the case of Hypotheses 3

and 4, there is no previous evidence that attachment insecurities of one partner affect the life satisfaction of the other. However, according to Mikulincer and Shaver's (2013) review, when a person's behavior benefits a partner, it often increases the partner's happiness, gratitude, and satisfaction, and the opposite may occur when one partner's negative behaviors, which may be related to attachment anxiety or avoidance, reduce the other partner's well-being. We therefore expected that one partner's attachment anxiety would be related negatively to the partner's life satisfaction (Hypothesis 7) and that one partner's avoidance would be negatively related to the other partner's life satisfaction (Hypothesis 8).

Attachment Insecurities and Relationship Satisfaction

There are numerous studies showing that attachment insecurities are detrimental to relationship adjustment. The review by Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) shows that attachment insecurities (both attachment anxiety and avoidance) and relationship satisfaction are negatively correlated in samples of both women and men. However, whereas anxiety and avoidance are roughly equally predictive of women's dissatisfaction, avoidance has been more consistently associated with relationship dissatisfaction in men. In a recent meta-analysis of 73 studies, Li and Chan (2012) found that anxiety and avoidance were detrimental to different aspects of relationship quality. Avoidance, compared with anxiety, was more negatively associated with general satisfaction, connectedness, and general social support provision. Anxiety was more strongly associated than avoidance with relational conflict. The moderating effect of gender was generally weak.

Although the majority of studies have focused on the association between one person's attachment insecurities and his or her own relationship satisfaction, there are a few studies of the effects of both partners' insecurities. This research generally shows that partners of relatively anxious or avoidant individuals have lower relationship satisfaction than partners of relatively secure people (Banse, 2004; Feeney, 2002; Kachadourian, Fincham, & Davila, 2004; Molero, Shaver, Ferrer, Cuadrado, & Alonso-Arbiol, 2011; Shaver, Schachner, & Mikulincer, 2005). In a recent study, Erol and Orth (2013) found that attachment-related anxiety and avoidance mediated both the actor and partner effects of self-esteem on relationship satisfaction.

On the basis of that research, we predicted that there would be a negative association between both attachment anxiety and avoidance, on one hand, and a person's own relationship satisfaction on the other hand (Hypotheses 9 and 10). Moreover, we also expected partner effects: we expected that one partner's attachment anxiety would be associated negatively with the other partner's relationship satisfaction (Hypothesis 11) and that one partner's avoidance would also be associated negatively with the other partner's relationship satisfaction (Hypothesis 12).

Positive and Negative Affect, Life Satisfaction, and Relationship Satisfaction

There is abundant research (Schimmack, 2008) showing that PA and NA (the affective component of SWB) and life satisfaction (the cognitive component of SWB) are correlated (positively with PA and negatively with NA). In the present study, we analyzed actor and partner effects in the relationship between affect and life satisfaction. According to the literature, we expected actor effects—that is, a positive association between men's and women's PA and their own life satisfaction (Hypothesis 13a) and a negative association between men's and women's NA and their own life satisfaction (Hypothesis 13b).

We also expected partner effects. As already noted, there is evidence that the SWB of one member of the couple is associated with the SWB of the other member (e.g., Bookwala & Schulz, 1996; Hoppmann et al., 2011). For this reason, we expected that the PA of one couple member would be positively associated with the life satisfaction of the other (Hypothesis 14a) and that the NA of one partner would be negatively associated with the other partner's life satisfaction (Hypothesis 14b).

Regarding the association between PA and NA and relationship satisfaction, research shows that SWB and relationship quality are positively related. For example, Kamp Dush and Amato (2005) examined the link between relationship quality and a composite measure of SWB. They found that married people reported the highest level of SWB and, in general, that people in satisfying relationships reported higher levels of SWB than individuals in dissatisfying relationships, whether married or cohabiting.

We therefore expected actor and partner effects of PA and NA on relationship satisfaction (a domain of overall life satisfaction). That is, we expected a positive association between men's and women's PA and their own relationship satisfaction (Hypothesis 15a) and a negative relationship between men's and women's NA and their own relationship satisfaction (Hypothesis 15b). We also expected that one partner's PA would be associated positively with the other partner's relationship satisfaction (Hypothesis 16a) and that one partner's NA would be negatively associated with the partner's relationship satisfaction (Hypothesis 16b).

The Proposed Model

The hypotheses were tested according to the APIM, which examines both actor (within person) and partner (across partners) effects. We tested a model in which PA and NA could mediate the association between attachment insecurities and life and relationship satisfaction. There is some support in the literature for affect's mediating role. For example, Schimmack, Diener, and Oishi (2002) found that personality traits, such as extraversion and neuroticism, influence the affective component of SWB, which in turn influences the way people

evaluate their lives (life satisfaction). In the same vein, Schimmack (2008) reported that the relation between personality and the cognitive component of SWB is often mediated by the affective component because people rely on the affective component when assessing their lives (in our case also their relationship satisfaction). Similarly, in our model, we proposed that attachment insecurities, which are known to be fairly stable (trait like; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016), would be negatively associated with life and relationship satisfaction because they increase NA and/or decrease PA.

The hypothesized model is shown in Figure 1. This model allows us to estimate the effects of the antecedent variables (attachment anxiety and avoidance) on the outcome variables, namely, the men's and women's life satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, and the role of PA and NA as mediators between attachment insecurities and life and relationship satisfaction. Actor and partner effects and mediation effects were calculated. Actor effects estimate the degree to which one partner's antecedent variable influences his or her own outcomes, whereas partner effects measure the extent to which one partner's antecedent variable influences his or her partner's outcomes.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The participants, 174 heterosexual couples, were recruited by undergraduate psychology students at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) who received practicum credits for participating. Each student contacted at least three participant couples and explained the general objectives of

the research and the instructions for completing the questionnaire. Participant couples went to a website where the questionnaire could be completed online. Their participation was voluntary, and their responses were anonymous. Partners were asked to complete the questionnaire independently, and each partner had an identification code that allowed us to link the data from both members of a couple. Participant couples came from widely distributed regions of Spain, mainly Madrid (23%), Andalucía (11.4%), and Cataluña (6%). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 79 years ($M = 38.6$, $SD = 11.1$). Relationship length ranged from 6 months to 51 years, with a mean of 13.9 years and a standard deviation of 11.19 years. About 20% of the participants were dating, 28% were cohabiting, and the rest, 52%, were married.

Instruments

Romantic attachment. Participants answered a Spanish version (Alonso-Arbiol, Balluerka, & Shaver, 2007) of the Experiences in Close Relationships measure of attachment insecurities (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). The Experiences in Close Relationships contains two 18-item scales that measure attachment-related anxiety and avoidance. Ratings were made on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater attachment anxiety or avoidance. The measure has been used since 1998 in many studies conducted in a variety of countries and languages (see Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016, for a review). In the present study, the internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) of the Spanish versions of the scales were .87 and .89 for anxiety and avoidance, respectively.
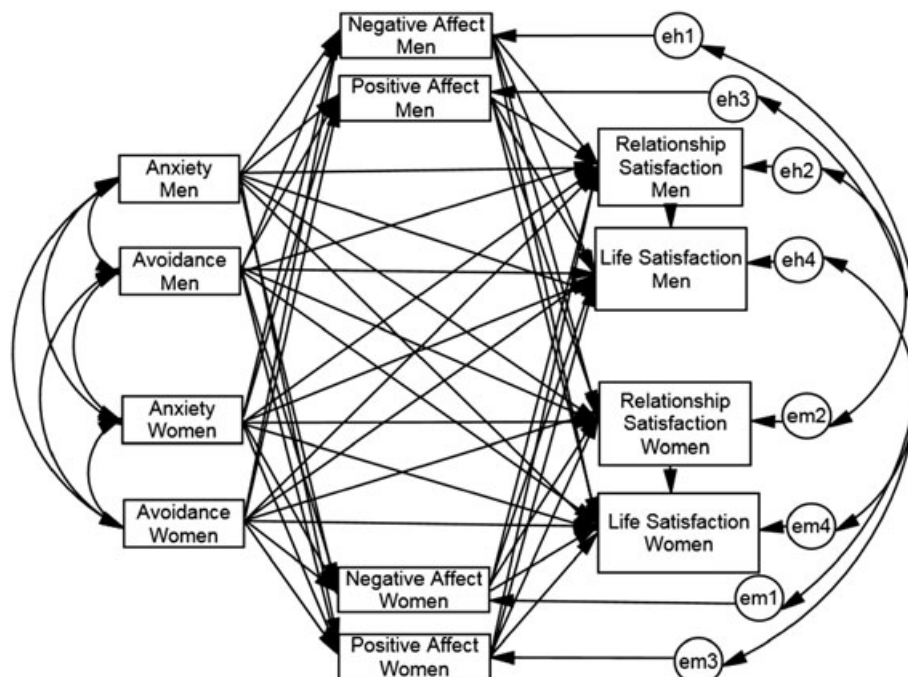

Fig. 1: Hypothesized model of associations among all variables. The terms "Anxiety" and "Avoidance" in this table refer to attachment related anxiety and avoidance

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). This 20-item measure assesses PA (with 10 items) and NA (with 10 items). Participants were asked to report how they usually felt using 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (*I rarely or never feel this*) to 5 (*I feel this frequently*). PA and NA scores were computed by averaging item scores for the appropriate items. In the present study, the internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) of the Spanish versions of the scales were .88 and .85 for PA and NA, respectively. The Spanish version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule has been used extensively, always with excellent reliability (e.g., Sandín et al., 1999; Sanjuán, 2011).

Life satisfaction. To assess life satisfaction, we used the Spanish version (Atienza, Pons, Balaguer, & García-Merita, 2000) of the 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993), which participants completed by selecting one of 7 points on a response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This scale assesses the degree to which a participant is satisfied with life, views his or her life as close to ideal, and views his or her life conditions as excellent. The reliability of the scale (Cronbach's alpha) in this study was .79.

Relationship satisfaction. We used Hendrick's (1988) 8-item Relationship Assessment Scale to measure participants' satisfaction with their relationship. This instrument was validated in Spanish by Moral (2008). The scale contains items such as "To what extent has your relationship met your original expectation?" The items are rated on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*a great deal*). Higher scores on this scale reflect greater relationship satisfaction. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the Spanish version of the scale in the present study was .90.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The means and standard deviations for all variables are shown in Table 1, broken down by gender. There were no significant gender differences except for the

avoidance scale, on which men scored higher than women.

Correlations between study variables are shown, broken down by gender, in Table 2.

As can be seen, the pattern of correlations between variables is quite similar for men and women.

Dyadic Analysis

In Table 3, we report Pearson correlations between men's and women's variables. The diagonal contains the intraclass correlations. There are significant correlations between partners' anxiety, avoidance, life satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, and PA and NA scores. The pattern of associations is similar for men and women.

To test the hypotheses, we used an extended version of the APIM. The APIM was designed to estimate the impact of a person's independent variables on his or her own dependent variables (actor effects) and on the dependent variables of the partner (partner effects). The model is compatible with the expected nonindependence of dyad members' variables.

Three statistical modeling techniques can be used to estimate the APIM: pooled regression modeling, multilevel modeling, and structural equation modeling (SEM). We used SEM because, according to Kenny et al. (2006), SEM with distinguishable dyads is the simplest and most straightforward analytic method for estimating the APIM. SEM assumes multinormality. Eight outliers were identified using the Mahalanobis distance statistic (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). Following Bollen (1989), these eight outliers were deleted. Mardia's coefficient of multivariate kurtosis was satisfactory with the deletion of these outliers.

The hypothesized model shown in Figure 1 was tested (with all paths being estimated simultaneously) with AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012), using maximum likelihood estimation. Notice that the error variances of couple members' corresponding endogenous variables were correlated in the figure in order to account for their nonindependence. We used chi-squared as one measure of goodness of fit, but because it is highly sensitive to sample size and to deviations from normality in the data (Barrett, 2007), we also computed the comparative fit index (CFI; Hu & Bentler, 1999), which should be

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for all variables, broken down by gender

Variables	Men ($N = 174$)		Women ($N = 174$)			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	Cohen's *d*
Anxiety	3.76	1.04	3.81	1.12	−0.44	−0.05
Avoidance	2.44	0.95	2.09	0.85	3.58***	0.39
Life satisfaction	4.96	0.93	5.05	0.95	−0.95	−0.09
Relationship satisfaction	5.89	1.01	5.88	1.03	0.12	0.01
Positive affect	3.05	0.68	3.13	0.72	−1.06	−0.08
Negative affect	1.81	0.57	1.86	0.56	−0.81	−0.05

Note: Scores could range from 1 to 7, except on positive and negative affect, which range from 1 to 5. ***$p < .001$. The terms "anxiety" and "avoidance" in this table refer to attachment-related anxiety and avoidance.

Table 2. Pearson correlations among variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Anxiety	—	.29**	−.20*	−.20*	.01	.29**
2. Avoidance	.24**	—	−.37**	−.61**	−.38**	.21**
3. Life satisfaction	−.34**	−.46**	—	.56**	.52**	−.30**
4. Relationship satisfaction	−.23**	−.64**	.51**	—	.43**	−.27**
5. Positive affect	−.07	−.40**	.31**	.29	—	−.09
6. Negative affect	.32**	.15	−.34**	−.24**	−.11	—

Note: Women's coefficients are above the diagonal; men's coefficients are below the diagonal. *p* < .05. **p* < .01. The terms "anxiety" and "avoidance" in this table refer to attachment-related anxiety and avoidance.

Table 3. Pearson correlations between men's and women's variables

Variables	1 (W)	2 (W)	3 (W)	4 (W)	5 (W)	6 (W)
1. Anxiety (M)	**.38**	.27**	−.30**	−.20**	−.10	.01
2. Avoidance (M)	.26**	**.43**	−.25**	−.43**	−.17*	.02
3. Life satisfaction (M)	−.20**	−.31**	**.46**	.47**	.21**	−.07
4. Relationship satisfaction (M)	−.19*	−.43**	.27**	**.56**	.16*	−.05
5. Positive affect (M)	−.03	−.26**	.23**	.31**	**.46**	−.02
6. Negative affect (M)	.09	.09	−.14	−.08	−.01	**.17***

Note: The diagonal, in boldface type, contains intraclass correlation coefficients; W = women; M = men. *p* < .05. **p* < .01. The terms "anxiety" and "avoidance" in this table refer to attachment-related anxiety and avoidance.

above 0.90 for a good fit, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; Hu & Bentler, 1999), which should be below 0.10 for a good fit. Finally, we computed critical ratios to test the significance of specific paths in the model. The obtained χ^2 was nonsignificant ($\chi^2 = 10.2$, *df* = 6, *p* = .115); CFI was 0.993, well above 0.90; and the RMSEA fit was 0.065, indicating an adequate fit to the data.

Results of the APIM analyses are displayed in Table 4. As recommended by Kenny et al. (2006), unstandardized coefficients are reported, complemented with standard errors. For each model, actor effects for men and women are reported, as well as partner effects running from men to women, and partner effects running from women to men.

Actor Effects

The results did not support Hypothesis 1a (Table 4), because men's anxiety did not predict their own scores on PA (*b* = −0.02, *SE* = 0.05, *p* = .662) and women's anxiety was associated with their own scores on PA, but in the opposite of the expected direction (*b* = 0.10, *SE* = 0.05, *p* = .044). Hypothesis 1b was supported, because anxious attachment was positively related to NA for both men (*b* = 0.16, *SE* = 0.04, *p* < .001) and women (*b* = 0.14, *SE* = 0.04, *p* < .001).

As predicted in Hypothesis 2a, we found that attachment-related avoidance was negatively associated with PA for both men (*b* = −0.27, *SE* = 0.06, *p* < .001) and women (*b* = −0.31, *SE* = 0.07, *p* < .001). Hypothesis 2b was supported only for women: the greater the avoidance, the greater the NA (*b* = 0.13, *SE* = 0.06, *p* < .033). Hypotheses 5 and 6 were supported, but only for men. Their life satisfaction was

negatively associated with their own anxiety (*b* = −0.15, *SE* = 0.06, *p* = .020) and avoidance (*b* = −0.19, *SE* = 0.08, *p* = .025).

Hypothesis 9 was not supported: men's anxiety did not predict their own relationship dissatisfaction (*b* = −0.03, *SE* = 0.06, *p* = .667), and women's anxiety did not predict their own relationship dissatisfaction (*b* = 0.02, *SE* = 0.06, *p* = .791). Hypothesis 10 was supported because men's (*b* = −0.55, *SE* = 0.07, *p* < .001) and women's (*b* = −0.45, *SE* = 0.08, *p* < .001) avoidant attachment predicted their own relationship dissatisfaction. We found partial support for Hypothesis 13a: there was a positive association between women's PA and their own life satisfaction (*b* = 0.49, *SE* = 0.09, *p* < .001), but this was not the case for men (*b* = 0.06, *SE* = 0.10, *p* = .590). We found support for Hypothesis 13b; there was a negative association between men's NA and their own life satisfaction (*b* = −0.30, *SE* = 0.11, *p* < .007) and between women's NA and their own life satisfaction (*b* = −0.28, *SE* = 0.10, *p* < .007) NA.

Hypotheses 15a and 15b were partially supported: there was a positive association between women's PA and their own relationship satisfaction (*b* = 0.21, *SE* = 0.09, *p* = .017), but not for men (*b* = 0.01; *SE* = 0.10, *p* = .907). We found the expected negative association between men's NA and their own relationship satisfaction (*b* = −0.23, *SE* = 0.11, *p* = .035), but not for women (*b* = 0.14, *SE* = 0.10, *p* = .173).

Partner Effects

There were only three significant partner effects, which provided support for Hypotheses 7 (partially) and 12 (totally). This means that Hypotheses 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, 8, 11, 14a, 14b, 16a, and 16b were not supported.

Table 4. Results of actor–partner interdependence model: effect estimates for dyad members

	Positive affect			Negative affect			Life satisfaction			Relationship satisfaction		
	b	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*	*b*	*SE*	*p*
Anxiety												
M (actor)	0.02	0.05	.662	**0.16**	**0.04**	**<.001**	**−0.15**	**0.06**	**.020**	−0.03	0.06	.667
W (actor)	**0.10**	**0.05**	**.044**	**0.14**	**0.04**	**<.001**	−0.07	0.06	.206	0.02	0.06	.791
M ➜ W (partner)	−0.02	0.05	.676	−0.08	0.04	.067	**−0.16**	**0.06**	**.008**	−0.01	0.06	.894
W ➜ M (partner)	0.07	0.05	.136	−0.04	0.04	.392	0.00	0.06	.990	0.04	0.06	.515
Avoidance												
M (actor)	**−0.27**	**0.06**	**<.001**	0.07	0.05	.201	**−0.19**	**0.08**	**.025**	**−0.55**	**0.07**	**<.001**
W (actor)	**−0.31**	**0.07**	**<.001**	**0.13**	**0.06**	**.033**	0.13	0.09	.145	**−0.45**	**0.08**	**<.001**
M ➜ W (partner)	−0.05	0.06	.440	−0.04	0.05	.440	−0.11	0.07	.144	**−0.33**	**0.07**	**<.001**
W ➜ M (partner)	−0.11	0.07	.122	−0.01	0.06	.810	0.01	0.09	.965	**−0.25**	**0.09**	**.006**
Positive affect												
M (actor)							0.06	0.10	.590	0.01	0.10	.907
W (actor)							**0.49**	**0.09**	**<.001**	**0.21**	**0.09**	**.017**
M ➜ W (partner)							−0.08	0.09	.364	−0.04	0.09	.649
W ➜ M (partner)							0.13	0.10	.171	−0.01	0.10	.886
Negative affect												
M (actor)							**−0.30**	**0.11**	**.007**	**−0.23**	**0.11**	**.035**
W (actor)							**−0.28**	**0.10**	**.007**	0.14	0.10	.173
M ➜ W (partner)							−0.09	0.10	.390	0.04	0.10	.658
W ➜ M (partner)							0.02	0.11	.883	0.05	0.11	.657

Note: W = women; M = men. Significant effects are shown in bold. The terms "anxiety" and "avoidance" in this table refer to attachment-related anxiety and avoidance.

Regarding Hypothesis 7, the partner effect was an association between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction: men's attachment anxiety negatively predicted women's life satisfaction ($b = −0.16$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .008$). However, the same was not true for women's attachment anxiety and men's dissatisfaction ($b = 0.00$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .990$).

Hypothesis 12 was supported because men's avoidance negatively predicted women's relationship satisfaction ($b = −0.33$, $SE = 0.07$, $p < .001$), and women's avoidance negatively predicted men's relationship satisfaction ($b = −0.25$, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .006$).

Mediation Analysis

We tested for mediation in three steps (Ledermann, Bodenmann, Rudaz, & Bradbury, 2010). First, we began with a general model (Figure 1) that predicts partial mediation. The model fit was good, as discussed in the preceding section. Secondly, we tested whether the estimated structural coefficients were statistically different from zero in the selected model. Possible indirect effects involving one of the nonsignificant paths between the antecedents and mediators or between the mediators and the outcomes were not tested for mediation (Ledermann & Macho, 2009). Next we compared the fit of the model under two conditions: (i) when the paths from antecedent to mediator and from mediator to outcome were constrained to zero and (ii) when those paths were not constrained. The improvement in fit was assessed by comparing the chi-squared

values for the two models. So that a mediation effect can be concluded, the differences in values of chi-squared must be significant. Finally, we tested the indirect (mediating) effects for significance. In this work, we used *z*-statistics and Sobel's formula.

To investigate the type of mediation, we determined whether the direct path coefficients from the antecedents to the criterion significantly decreased (for partial mediation) or vanished completely (for complete mediation).

Figure 2 shows the three significant mediations. There was a direct negative relationship between men's anxiety and their own life satisfaction ($b = −0.15$, $p = .020$) and an indirect effect through NA: men's attachment anxiety was positively related to their own NA ($b = 0.16$, $p < .001$), which in turn was related to their own life satisfaction ($b = −0.30$, $p = .007$). In order to test the significance of the mediation, we constrained the paths from "anxiety men" to "NA men" and from "NA men" to "life satisfaction men" to be 0 in the direct model ($\chi^2 = 29.831$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$). The direct relation between men's anxiety and their own life satisfaction was −.20 ($p = .002$), which decreased to −.15 ($p = .020$) when NA was introduced into the model (partial mediation). The $\Delta\chi^2$ difference test showed that the decrease in model fit was significant, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 19.59$, $p < .01$, implying mediation of the association between men's anxiety and their life satisfaction by NA. In addition, the Sobel test indicated that the indirect effect was statistically different from zero ($z = −2.18$, $p < .05$).
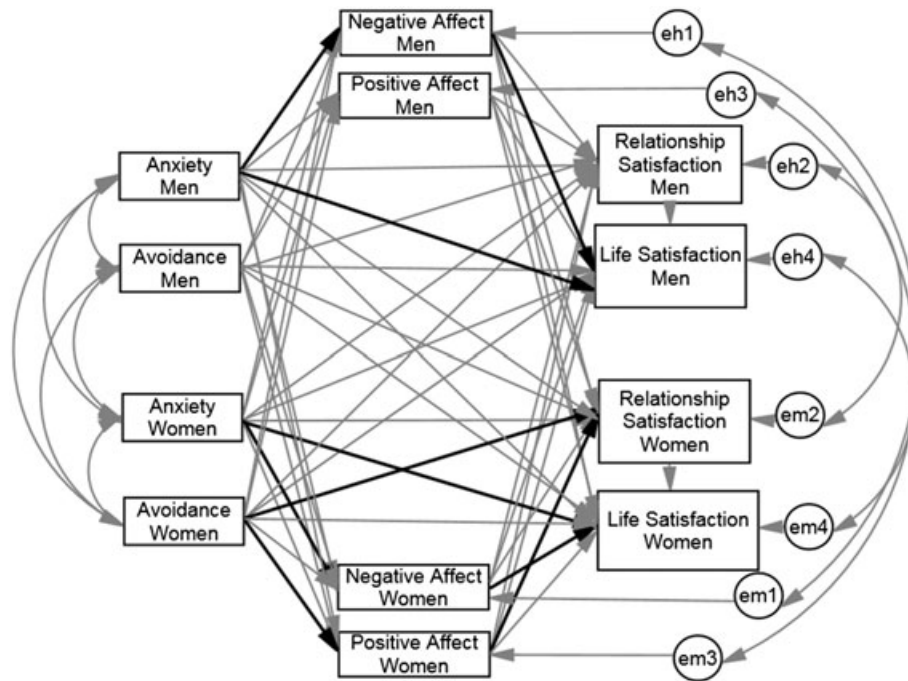
Fig. 2: APIM mediation model. The three significant mediations are in boldface type. The terms "Anxiety" and "Avoidance" in this table refer to attachment related anxiety and avoidance

For women, the results were similar. There was a direct relationship between women's anxiety and their own life satisfaction ($b = -0.07$, $p = .206$) and an indirect effect through NA: women's attachment anxiety was positively related to their NA ($b = 0.14$, $p < .001$), which in turn was related to their life satisfaction ($b = -0.28$, $p = .007$). When we constrained the paths to be 0 in the direct model ($\chi^2 = 28.159$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$), the direct relation between women's anxiety and their own life satisfaction was $-.11$ ($p = .044$), which decreased to $-.07$ ($p = .206$) when NA was introduced into the model (total mediation). The $\Delta\chi^2$ difference test showed that the decrease in model fit was significant, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 17.92$, $p < .01$. The Sobel test indicated that the indirect effect was statistically significant ($z = -2.19$, $p < .05$).

Regarding attachment-related avoidance, there was a direct negative relation between women's avoidance and their own relationship satisfaction ($b = -0.45$, $p < .001$) and an indirect effect through their own PA: women's avoidance was negatively related to their own PA ($b = -0.31$, $p < .001$), which in turn was related to their relationship satisfaction ($b = 0.21$, $p = .017$). To test the type of mediation, we constrained the paths from "avoidance women" to "PA women" and from "PA women" to "relationship satisfaction women" to be 0 in the direct model ($\chi^2 = 31.636$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$). The direct relation between women's avoidance and their own relationship satisfaction was $-.51$ ($p < .001$), which decreased to $-.45$ ($p < .001$) when PA was introduced into the model (weak partial mediation). The $\Delta\chi^2$ difference test showed that the decrease in model fit was significant, $\Delta\chi^2(2) = 21.4$, $p < .001$, implying mediation of the association between women's avoidance and their relationship satisfaction by PA [$\Delta\chi^2 (2) = 21.4$; $p < .001$]. Furthermore, the Sobel

test indicated that the indirect effect was statistically different from zero ($z = -2.06$, $p < .05$).

Discussion

This study addresses the links between attachment insecurities (anxiety and avoidance) and variables related to SWB (PA, NA, and life satisfaction) and relationship satisfaction. We analyzed the association between these variables using the APIM considering PA and NA as mediational variables.

Overall, our results indicate that anxious attachment tends to be related positively to NA and avoidant attachment tends to be related negatively to PA. These results suggest the existence of some of what Schimmack (2008) called "causal independence" between the two kinds of affect. This means that PA and NA may be related to (or caused by) different psychological variables. In our case, anxiety increases NA and avoidance decreases PA. This result is congruent with studies finding that neuroticism (which, according to the review by Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016, is a trait significantly related to attachment anxiety) is more strongly associated with NA than with PA (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1980; Diener & Emmons, 1984).

There were some gender differences in the way attachment insecurities related to life satisfaction. For men, attachment anxiety and avoidance are associated negatively with life satisfaction. However, for women, their partner's anxiety is associated negatively with the women's own life satisfaction. Although this result is new to the attachment literature, the meta-analyses by Steel, Schmidt, and Shultz (2008) had already shown that the association between life satisfaction and some personality variables, such as extraversion

or neuroticism, can be different for men and women. In this study, we found that women's life satisfaction was more dependent on their partner's attachment anxiety whereas men's life satisfaction was based more on their own attachment insecurities. This difference deserves further study, including cross-cultural research. Our sample came from Spain, which may have somewhat different gender and relationship norms than other societies.

Another finding of this study is that attachment-related avoidance is more detrimental than attachment anxiety for satisfaction with relationships (in this case, we found both actor and partner effects). This result is similar to the one obtained previously by Molero et al. (2011) in Spain and is congruent with the cultural fit hypothesis (Friedman et al., 2010), which predicts that individual differences in personality will be associated with relationship problems if they encourage patterns of behavior that are incongruent with cultural norms. For this reason, it would be expected that avoidant attachment, which emphasizes emotional distance and independence, would be more strongly associated with relationship problems in collectivistic than in individualist societies. According to Hofstede (2001), Spain is situated near the middle of the cultural dimension of individualism–collectivism, but when compared with the majority of European countries and the United States (where the majority of research on attachment has been conducted), Spain is clearly collectivist.

Regarding the mediational role of PA and NA in the association between attachment insecurities and both life and relationship satisfaction, we found three mediations: NA mediated the association between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction for both women (totally) and men (partially). Moreover, PA partially mediated the effect of avoidant attachment on relationship satisfaction, but only in the case of women. Although there is no previous research in the attachment literature related to these findings, our results are congruent with those obtained by Schimmack et al. (2002) who found that the influence of personality traits on the cognitive aspect of SWB (life satisfaction) was mediated by the affective aspects of SWB (PA and NA), because people often rely on affect when evaluating life satisfaction (and in our case, relationship satisfaction as well).

A clearer mediational effect concerned the role of NA in the association between attachment anxiety and life satisfaction. This finding may have practical applications: if we seek to improve the life satisfaction of people who are anxious with respect to attachment, we will have to decrease their more general NA. The absence of mediational effects of NA in the association between attachment anxiety and relationship satisfaction may be due, as we explained before, to the fact that in Spain anxiety is not as detrimental for relationship satisfaction as it is in other countries. Regarding relationship satisfaction, we found that increasing PA may reduce the negative effects of avoidance on relationship satisfaction but we found this to be true only for women. More research is needed to explore the mediational role

of PA in the relationship between attachment insecurities and life satisfaction.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that actor effects are more frequent than partner effects (only 3 out of 24 analyzed partner effects were significant). This means that a person's own independent variables tend to be more related to his or her own dependent variables than to a partner's dependent variables. These results are in line with other dyadic studies, which have generally found actor effects to be stronger than partner effects, especially when self-report variables are studied (Butzer & Campbell, 2008; Molero et al., 2011; Orth, 2013).

Our results contribute to the understanding of the association between attachment insecurities and SWB and have both theoretical and practical implications. With respect to theory, we have confirmed the following: (1) that anxious attachment tends to be related to NA and avoidant attachment to PA; (2) that avoidance is more detrimental than anxiety for relationship satisfaction at individual and dyadic levels, at least in Spain; and (3) that there are some mediational effects of NA and PA in the association between attachment insecurities and life and relationship satisfaction. Practically, and clinically, our results suggest that in order to increase the life satisfaction of people with an anxious attachment style it will be important to decrease their level of general NA. In order to improve the relationship satisfaction of avoidant women, it will be important to increase their experience and expression of positive emotions such as enthusiasm, inspiration, and interest.

Although this study contributes to a better understanding of the role played by attachment insecurities in eroding well-being and relationship satisfaction, it is limited in certain respects. First, it is based solely on self-report measures. Second, although the final model fits the data well, other patterns of association between the variables are possible given that all data were collected at one time point; the causal directions need to be determined by longitudinal and experimental studies (Maxwell & Cole, 2007; Maxwell, Cole, & Mitchel, 2011). Additionally, more cross-cultural research is needed to probe possible differences in relationship dynamics and standards for emotional expression and regulation between Spain and other countries. Finally, future studies should determine whether the effects of attachment insecurities on life satisfaction, and the mediational pathways involved, generalize to other outcome variables such as physical or mental health, or other kinds of well-being such as psychological or eudaimonic well-being.

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