



# Asya Studies

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## Investigation of the Relationship Between Early Maladaptive Schemas and Attachment Styles in Adults with Life Satisfaction and the Ability to Express Emotions\* \*\*

*Yetiřkinlerde Erken Dönem Uyum Bozucu Őemaların ve Baęlanma Stillerinin Yařam Doyumu ve Duyguları İfade Edebilme Becerisi ile Arasındaki İliřkinin İncelenmesi*

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Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kahraman Güler  
Doęuř Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat  
Fakültesi, Psikoloji Bölümü  
[pskdrkahramanguler@gmail.com](mailto:pskdrkahramanguler@gmail.com)  
ORCID: 0000-0002-0049-0658

Klinik Psikolog Ayře Mine Tuncay  
[ayseminetuncay@gmail.com](mailto:ayseminetuncay@gmail.com)  
ORCID: 0000-0001-9506-8320

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### Abstract

The purpose of this research is to look at the connection between early maladaptive schemas, attachment styles, life satisfaction and emotional expression ability. Information such as the participants' age and gender was gathered on a voluntary basis for the study. There were 362 participants in the study, with 230 (63.5%) women and 132 (36.5%) males between the ages of 18 and 45. In the study, "Sociodemographic Form", "Young Schema Scale-Short Form-3", "Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale", "Life Satisfaction Scale" and "The Emotional Expression Questionnaire" were used. According to the findings of the study, there is a generally significant and negative correlation between Young Schema Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale. A significant and positive relationship was found between the Emotional Expression Questionnaire and the Satisfaction with Life Scale. The relationship between the secure attachment sub-dimension of the Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale and the Young Schema Scale was found to be negative, while the relationship between the avoidant attachment style and the anxious/ambivalent attachment style and the Young Schema Scale was found to be positive. It was concluded that the relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and secure attachment style was significant and positive, while the relationship between avoidant attachment style and anxious/ambivalent attachment style was significant and negative. A significant relationship was found between the Three-Dimensional Attachment Scale and the Emotional Expression Questionnaire. The findings revealed that there was a significant and positive relationship between expressing emotions and secure attachment, while there was a significant and negative relationship between expressing emotions and avoidant attachment and anxious-ambivalent attachment.

**Keywords:** Early Maladaptive Schemas, Attachment, Life Satisfaction, Emotions

### Öz

Bu arařtırmada, yetiřkinlerde erken dönem uyum bozucu Őemaların, baęlanma stillerinin, yařam doyumunun ve duyguları ifade etme becerisi arasındaki iliřkilerin incelenmesi amalanmıřtır. Arařtırmada katılımcıların yař, cinsiyet gibi bilgileri gönüllülük esasına dayalı olarak alınmıřtır. alıřmaya 18-45 yařları arasında 230 (%63,5) kadın ve 132 (%36,5) erkek olmak üzere 362 katılımcı katılmıřtır. Arařtırmada, arařtırmacılar tarafından geliřtirilen "Kiřisel Bilgi Formu" kullanılmıřtır. Dięer deęiřkenler iin kullanılan ölekler "Young Őema Öleęi-Kısa Form-3", "Ü Boyutlu Baęlanma Stilleri Öleęi", "Yařam Doyumu Öleęi" ve "Duyguları İfade Etme Öleęi" olarak belirlenmiřtir. Arařtırmanın sonularına göre Young Őema Öleęi ile Yařam Doyumu Öleęi arasında genel itibarıyla anlamlı ve negatif iliřki olduęu görülmüřtür. Duyguları İfade Etme Öleęi ile Yařam Doyumu Öleęi arasında ise anlamlı ve pozitif yönlü bir iliřki görülmüřtür. Ü Boyutlu Baęlanma Stilleri Öleęi'nin güvenli baęlanma alt boyutu ile Young Őema Öleęi arasındaki iliřki negatif yönlü olarak görülmüřken sonular, kaınan baęlanma ile kaygılı/kararsız baęlanma stili ve Young Őema Öleęi arasında pozitif yönlü iliřki olduęunu göstermiřtir. Yařam Doyumu Öleęi ile güvenli baęlanma stili arasındaki iliřki anlamlı ve pozitif yönlü olarak görülmüřken kaınan baęlanma stili ve kaygılı/kararsız baęlanma stili ile yařam doyumunu arasındaki iliřkinin anlamlı ve negatif yönlü olduęu görülmüřtür. Ü Boyutlu Baęlanma Stilleri Öleęi ve Duyguları İfade Etme Öleęi arasındaki iliřkinin de anlamlı olduęu görülmüřtür. Elde edilen sonulara göre, duyguları ifade etme ile güvenli baęlanma arasında anlamlı ve pozitif yönlü, duyguları ifade etme ile kaınan baęlanma ve kaygılı kararsız baęlanma arasında ise anlamlı ve negatif yönlü iliřki olduęu sonuu görülmüřtür.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Erken Dönem Uyum Bozucu Őemalar, Baęlanma, Yařam Doyumu, Duygular

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## INTRODUCTION

Bowlby's "Attachment Theory" begins at an early age and is influenced by the caregiver's support throughout life. The baby's ability to see the caregiver as a "safe haven" during this process also benefits to the process's healthy progression. The attachment established here also affects the quality of the relationships that a person will establish with his/her environment in the later years of life (Bowlby, 1973, 1980, 1982, as cited in Davis, Shaver & Vernon, 2003: 872).

Attachment styles, which can influence a person's self-perception, ability to form relationships, choices, decisions, and life expectations, can be negatively influenced by childhood neglect and abuse. The fact that a person's attachment style isn't secure might lead to personality issues, interpersonal issues, and parenting challenges (Güler & Gümüş, 2018: 382). At the same time, individuals who develop insecure attachment in their early relationship with their caregivers tend to enjoy life less than individuals who develop secure attachment relationships (Güler, 2022: 233).

Ainsworth and his friends, divided attachment into three dimensions as secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant attachment. Attachment types were analyzed in their studies based on the infant's reactions to separation from the caregiver. In this research, the child with secure attachment understands that the caregiver will return, and his or her fear disappears quickly when the caregiver returns. In the absence of their caregivers, children with anxious/ambivalent attachment experience excessive anxiety, tension, and rage. Children who are unable to calm down even after meeting with their caregiver, cling to them and refuse to let go. Children who have developed avoidant attachment are also not affected by separation much. When these children reunite with their caregivers, they remain unresponsive and avoid communication (Compos, Barrett, Lamb Goldsmith, & Stenberg, 1983, as cited in Sümer & Güngör, 1999: 74).

The person recognizes and makes sense of the world through the caregiver who has been with them since birth. Therefore, the quality of the relationship with the caregiver also affects the meaning attributed to the world. When the established bond is unhealthy and damaging, the healthy relationship that the individual should establish in the early period is neglected. This can play an effective role in the formation of schemas, which theorists accept that they begin to develop in the early stages of life and continue to develop throughout life.

The term of schema is considered as a tool for understanding, explaining, and reacting to life's events. Schemas that continue to develop throughout life can cause the individual to form automatic thoughts and lead to the display of dysfunctional behaviors. Although consistent behaviors coming from automatic thinking seem to be beneficial to the individual, the schemas formed as a result of the individual's negative life experiences are dangerous (Rafaeli, Bernstein & Young, 2012: 16).

Early experiences form the schemas that shape an individual's perspective on life, which are strengthened by possible similar experiences later in life. Negative assumptions such as "I am unworthy," "I am not loved" might come as a result of negative schemas that affect emotions, beliefs, and behaviors (Türkçapar & Işık, 2000: 46).

Young and their friends (2003) classified early maladaptive schemas into five domains. Disconnection schema area is one of these schema domains. Individuals with this schema may believe that they will face challenges and issues such as being determined, feeling safe, being cared for, feeling love, and belonging, and that their expectations will not be satisfied. For this reason, there may be problems in establishing a secure bond with other people where expectations are met. Even if a bond is established, they may have trouble maintaining it. This can lead to the continuation of life by avoiding established relationships (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2019). The other schema area is the Impaired Autonomy schema area. In this area, people may experience situations such as not being able to act alone, taking steps independently from the family or living apart from them, and therefore having trouble developing their own ideas. In the development of this situation, it is seen that parents either prevent the development of the ability to act alone by protecting the child more than they should, or fail to guide the child by being completely indifferent (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2019). Another schema area is the impaired limits schema area. The schemas in this area indicate that the person has problems in developing internal boundaries. These individuals are often people who run away from their responsibilities and see themselves above others. They may find it difficult to accept the boundaries of the people around them or find it difficult to cooperate. There are individuals in this area who have been brought up with too much tolerance by their parents. For this reason, the individual may have problems in obeying the rules or controlling themselves (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2019). Another schema area is the other-

directedness schema area. Individuals in this area are marked by thinking much more about other people. The basis of this situation is the desire to get approval. These people can put themselves in the background in the communication they develop with people. For this reason, it is possible that they cannot develop their self-awareness sufficiently (Güler & Gümüş, 2018: 382). In the development of schemas in this area, there are parents who conditionally show love and acceptance or put their children's needs behind their own (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2019). The last schema area is the impaired autonomy schema area. In this area, the child does not put his own feelings and thoughts, needs and expectations into the background and he/she suppresses it. When the individual does not act according to the internalized presuppositions, he or she experiences negative emotions such as fear, stress and pessimism. In the formation of this schema, there are parents who are harsh, pressure, act according to strict rules and put the rules before the happiness of their children (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2019).

There can be many reasons for the schemas that develop due to the need and deficiency of the individual in the early period. These are behaviors such as not fulfilling the need to feel safe, not approaching the decisions of the individual with respect in the early period, reminding the caregiver of the possibility of being constantly harmed, not appreciating their success, vilifying their social relations while their introverted attitudes are being praised, or constantly preventing their every attempt with pessimistic attitudes and disaster scenarios. In general, this scenario leads to a prejudiced view of life and difficulties in social relationships. The assertiveness and determination that an individual may need to realize his/her purpose in life may also be affected by the existence of schemas, and may negatively affect life satisfaction by preventing the individual from taking action in order to achieve the determined goals.

The term of life satisfaction is generally accepted as the primary goal that people seek in their lives. Life satisfaction emerges as a scenario related to what the aims and expectations in life are and how much of them are realized, which is affected by the perspective of the individual's life (Gündoğar et al., 2007: 15). This concept, which is about how satisfied people are with their lives, consists of different factors such as the individual's family structure, health status, marital status and personal skills (Güler & Usluca, 2021: 375). Furthermore, material power, which plays an essential role in meeting modern-day requirements, increases importance in terms of maintaining high standards in one's life and meeting the expectations that come with it. Studies in which the life satisfaction of people whose income levels decrease over time and who experience financial difficulties are negatively affected and they feel exhausted support this view (Güler, 2021: 276).

Life satisfaction, which is shaped by the individual's perspective on life, may also require communication with other people in order to maintain the determined goals. It is a common situation in life that a person communicates with other people in order to achieve their wishes most of the time. Established communication may also be necessary for solving a possible problem. Therefore, it is an important element for the individual to be able to express himself/herself correctly.

People need to communicate with other people in order to survive and meet their needs. The sentences we form are composed of our thoughts, and our emotions that shape our thoughts are also very important at this point. In other words, our emotions appear as one of the most necessary elements for the establishment and maintenance of healthy relationships. At this point, it is seen that human beings are differentiated from other living things as a being who is aware of their feelings and thoughts, can express them, and can maintain their life by communicating (Koçak, 2002: 183).

Emotions, which are effective in people's daily activities and decision mechanisms, can positively affect one's life if they can understand and control their emotions. However, it can also lead to negative consequences such as the individual experiencing difficulties in this regard and feeling lonely (Bozoğlan & Çankaya, 2012: 16). The ability of people to express their feelings positively affects the quality of communication, and this affects their psychological health positively (Çarkıt & Yalçın, 2018: 196).

There are studies indicating that emotion expression contributes to well-being. According to these studies, when the individual does not feel well, expressing his/her feelings and thoughts is beneficial for well-being. It is seen that actions such as speaking and writing while expressing the situation contribute to the increase of positive emotions and decrease of negative emotions. All these also help the individual to develop an objective point of view about himself/herself by expressing his/her feelings and to increase his insight (Kuzucu, 2011: 780).

As a result, this study aimed to explore the relationship between early maladaptive schemas, attachment styles, life satisfaction and emotional expression in adults.

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### **Main Points**

There is a significant and positive relationship between the ability to express emotions and life satisfaction. This shows that the ability to express emotions plays a role in increasing life satisfaction.

There was a connection discovered between life satisfaction and attachment styles. The findings show that secure attachment has a positive relationship with life satisfaction, whereas avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment has a negative relationship with life satisfaction. The findings highlight the harmful effects of insecure attachment on individuals.

The results reveal a significant relationship between life satisfaction and early maladaptive schemas with all schema domains except unrelenting standards and approval-seeking schemas. Life satisfaction was found to have a negative relationship with early maladaptive schemas. This result shows once again that schemas have a dysfunctional effect.

Looking at the relationship between Attachment Styles and early maladaptive schemas, the results show that all schemas significantly associated with secure attachment are negative. On the other hand, all schemas associated with avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment are positive. The positive correlation of schemas with insecure attachment styles indicates its destructive effect.

Researchers discovered a link between expressing emotions and attachment styles. The results show that there is a positive relationship between expressing emotions and secure attachment domain, while there is a negative relationship between expressing emotions and avoidant attachment and anxious/ambivalent attachment. This situation reveals that there is a relationship between the ability to express emotions and the healthy communication established with the caregiver in the past.

### **METHOD**

#### **Universe and Sample**

A total of 362 participants, 230 women and 132 men, took part in this study. The research was done entirely on a volunteer basis. Participants were selected using a simple random sampling method.

#### **Model of the Research**

This research was carried out using the relational screening model, which measures the change and/or the degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2012: 81).

#### **Data Collection**

Istanbul Aydın University's ethics committee gave its consent to this project. The data used in the research were collected in 2020. Sociodemographic Form, Young Schema Scale-Short Form-3, Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale and The Emotional Expression Questionnaire were transferred to Google Forms in order to apply the data collection tools. The forms were distributed to 362 people over the age of 18 who were selected by simple random sampling method. Simple random sampling method involves selecting sampling units at random from the universe list that has been constructed (Büyüköztürk vd., 2012). Without disclosing any of their personal information, Google Forms was used to contact every participant and ask how to contact them in case of issues. Data collection took approximately 30 minutes.

#### **Data Collection Tools**

##### ***Sociodemographic Data Form***

The personal information form in the study was developed by the researchers, and the participants were asked about their age and gender.

##### ***Young Schema Scale-Short Form-3***

Young (2003) developed the early maladaptive schema scale. 5 schema domains and eighteen 18 schema domains are included in the scale. The measure has 90 items and is scored on a 6-point Likert scale. After Soygut, Karaosmanoğlu and Cakır (2009) did a validity and reliability study on the scale, it was used in our country. The increase in the scales scores shows that the participants symptoms related to that schema have gotten worse. In the clinical field, 18 schema domains are used, however in the analysis process of research, schemas are handled in 14 domains (Soygut, Karaosmanoğlu & Cakır, 2009). The schema domains of the scale are impaired autonomy, disconnection, unrelenting standards, other-directedness, and impaired limits.

According to the factor analysis of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the schema domains are between  $\alpha = .53-.81$ . In the test-retest reliability analysis results for the schema domains, it was concluded that the Pearson correlation coefficients were between  $r = .66-.83$  ( $p < .01$ ). It is seen that there are significant results at an acceptable level in the study. The results reveal that the validity and reliability levels of the Young Schema Scale Short Form 3 are acceptable.

### **Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale**

Erzen (2016) developed the Three-Dimensional Attachment Styles Scale, a five-point Likert-type scale that divides attachment styles into three sub-dimensions: secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent attachment and has 18 items. Secure attachment type had a Cronbach Alpha acceptable reliability value of 0.69, avoidant attachment style had a Cronbach Alpha acceptable reliability value of 0.80, and anxious-ambivalent attachment style had a Cronbach Alpha acceptable reliability value of 0.71. The results show that the scale's validity and reliability are acceptable.

### **Life Satisfaction Scale**

Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) developed the Life Satisfaction Scale, which was translated into Turkish by Dağlı and Baysal (2016). The increase in the scores obtained from the scale, which has 5 items in total, indicates an increase in life satisfaction. The scale's Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was .88, and test-retest reliability was 0.97. The findings show that the scale is both valid and trustworthy.

### **The Emotional Expression Questionnaire**

The Emotional Expression Questionnaire was created by King and Emmons (1990), and following a validity and reliability assessment, Kuzucu (2011) adapted it to Turkish. The 7-point Likert scale has 15 items and 3 sub-dimensions. The 6th and 14th items of the scale are reverse scored, and there are three sub-dimensions: expression of intimacy, positive emotion expression and negative emotion expression.

Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the scale was determined to be .85. The expression of intimacy sub-dimension had an internal consistency coefficient of .68, the positive emotion expression sub-dimension had an internal consistency coefficient of .70, and the negative emotion expression sub-dimension had an internal consistency coefficient of .64. The findings show that the scale's validity and reliability are both acceptable.

### **Analysis of Data**

The data were analyzed with the SPSS 25 program. In the study in which the normality test was applied, the skewness and kurtosis values of the variables were evaluated, and almost all of the values were found to be between -2 and +2. Skewness and kurtosis values between -2 and +2 are deemed sufficient for a normal distribution, according to George and Mallery (2010). It is sufficient for a normal distribution to be between -3 and +3, according to Groeneveld and Meeden (1984), Moors (1986), Hopkins and Weeks (1990), and De Carlo (1997).

## **RESULTS**

**Table 1:** Comparison of Participants' Young Schema Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale, Emotional Expression Questionnaire and Three-Dimensional Attachment Scale Scores by Gender Variable

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>Ss.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sd.</b>	<b>p</b>
Enmeshment/Dependence	Female	230	15.30	5.76	2.35	360	.019*
	Male	132	13.92	4.75			
Abandonment	Female	230	8.31	3.26	2.23	360	.027*
	Male	132	7.54	3.01			
Vulnerability to harm and illness	Female	230	11.58	5.19	2.96	360	.003*
	Male	132	10.02	4.19			
Self sacrifice	Female	230	14.93	5.50	2.47	360	.014*
	Male	132	13.50	4.93			
Pessimism	Female	230	11.38	5.41	2.48	360	.014*
	Male	132	9.99	4.61			
Life satisfaction scale	Female	230	15.87	4.46	-0.06	360	.954

	Male	132	15.90	4.14			
The emotional expression questionnaire	Female	230	70.09	17.34	2.39	360	.018*
	Male	132	65.80	14.77			
Expression of intimacy	Female	230	28.22	7.72	2.45	360	.015*
	Male	132	26.23	6.79			
Positive emotion expression	Female	230	22.58	6.41	2.29	360	.022*
	Male	132	21.02	5.91			
Negative emotion expression	Female	230	19.29	5.64	1.26	360	.208
	Male	132	18.55	4.92			
Secure attachment	Female	230	19.30	4.21	1.47	360	.142
	Male	132	18.62	4.18			
Avoidant attachment	Female	230	14.39	5.20	0.28	360	.778
	Male	132	14.23	5.17			
Anxious/ambivalent attachment	Female	230	14.36	5.09	2.93	360	.004*
	Male	132	12.80	4.42			

\* $p < 0.05$  Used Test: Independent Samples T-Test

When we analyzed the findings, it was determined from the Enmeshment/Dependence domain ( $t(360)=2.35$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), from the Abandonment domain ( $t(360)=2.23$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), from the Vulnerability to harm and illness domain ( $t(360)$ ). The scores they got from the =0.96,  $p < 0.05$ ), the pessimism domain ( $t(360)=2.48$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and the Self-Sacrifice domain ( $t(360)=2.47$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) differ significantly according to the gender variable. When the averages are compared, it is seen that women score higher than men (Table 1).

When we analyzed the findings, it was determined that the Emotion Expression Questionnaire ( $t(360)=2.39$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), the Expression of Intimacy domain ( $t(360)=2.45$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), the Positive Emotion Expression domain ( $t(360)=2.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), the scores they got from the Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment Sub-Dimension ( $t(360)=2.93$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) differ significantly according to the gender variable. When the averages are compared, it is seen that women score higher than men (Table 1).

**Table 2:** Relationships Between the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Scale of Expressing Emotions

	Life Satisfaction Scale
The emotional expression questionnaire	.330**
Expression of intimacy	.393**
Positive emotion expression	.190**
Negative emotion expression	.249**

\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$  Used test: Pearson Correlation Test

When we analyzed the findings, we found a middle level and positive relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Expression of Emotions ( $r=.330$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, and middle level and positive correlation between Life Satisfaction Scale and expression of Intimacy ( $r=.393$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a weak and positive relationship between Satisfaction with Life Scale and Positive Emotion ( $r=.190$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, and a weak and positive relationship between Satisfaction with Life Scale and Negative Emotion ( $r=.249$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 2).

**Table 3:** Relationships Between the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Three-Dimensional Attachment Scale

	Life Satisfaction Scale
Secure attachment	.332**
Avoidant attachment	-.239**
Anxious/ambivalent attachment	-.269**

\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$  Used test: Pearson Correlation Test

When we analyzed the findings, we found a middle level and positive relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Secure Attachment ( $r=.332$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, weak and negative correlation between Life Satisfaction Scale and Avoidant Attachment ( $r=-.239$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores. There is a weak and negative correlation between the Life Satisfaction Scale and Anxious/ambivalent Attachment ( $r=-.269$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores (Table 3).

**Table 4:** Relationships Between the Life Satisfaction Scale and the Young Schema Scale

	Life Satisfaction Scale
Emotional deprivation	-.219**
Social isolation/mistrust	-.367**
Defectiveness/shame	-.222**
Emotional inhibition	-.232**
Enmeshment/Dependence	-.228**
Abandonment	-.163**
Vulnerability to harm and illness	-.280**
Failure	-.201**
Pessimism	-.295**
Insufficient self-control/self-discipline	-.160**
Self sacrifice	-.164**
Punitiveness	-.103*
Unrelenting standards	-.020
Approval-seeking	-.085

\*\* $p<0.01$ , \* $p<0.05$  Used test: Pearson Correlation Test

When we analyzed the findings, there was a weak and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Emotional Deprivation ( $r=-.219$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, and middle level relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Social Isolation/mistrust ( $r=-.367$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores. Negative correlation between Life Satisfaction Scale and defectiveness ( $r=-.222$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Emotion inhibition ( $r=-.232$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, weak and negative negative correlation between Life Satisfaction Scale and Enmeshment/Dependence ( $r=-.228$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Abandonment ( $r=-.163$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores weak and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Vulnerability to harm and illness ( $r=-.280$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, weak and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Failure ( $r=-.201$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, weak and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and pessimism ( $r=-.295$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, weak and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Insufficient self-control/self-discipline ( $r=-.160$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, and a weak and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Self Sacrifice ( $r=-.164$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). ) scores, there is a weak and negative relationship between Life Satisfaction Scale and Punitiveness ( $r=-.103$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores (Table 4).

**Table 5:** Relationships Between the Three-Dimensional Attachment Scale and the Young Schema Scale

	Secure Attachment	Avoidant Attachment	Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment
Emotional deprivation	-.184**	.290**	.344**
Social isolation/mistrust	-.250**	.217**	.433**
Defectiveness	-.294**	.405**	.363**
Emotional inhibition	-.138**	.315**	.358**
Enmeshment/Dependence	-.190**	.330**	.404**
Abandonment	-.182**	.267**	.418**
Vulnerability to the harm and illness	-.207**	.319**	.471**
Failure	-.216**	.242**	.296**

Pessimism	-.146**	.224**	.383**
Insufficient self-control/self-discipline	.041	.162**	.121*
Self sacrific	.015	.018	.252**
Punitiveness	-.030	.045	.195**
Unrelenting standarts	-.033	.177**	.122*
Approval seeking	.001	-.048	.068

\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$  Used test: Pearson Correlation Test

When we analyzed the findings, we found a weak and negative relationship between Emotional Deprivation and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.184$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, and a weak and positive relationship between Emotional Deprivation and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .290$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and positive correlation between Emotional Deprivation and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .344$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Weak and negative relationship between Social Isolation/Mistrust and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.250$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, weak and positive relationship between Social Isolation/Mistrust and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .217$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and positive relationship between Social Isolation/Mistrust and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .433$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Defectiveness and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.294$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores has a weak and negative relation, and a middle level and positive relationship between Defectiveness and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .405$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and positive correlation between Defectiveness and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .363$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Weak and negative relationship between Emotion İnhibition and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.138$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, middle level and positive relationship between Emotion İnhibition and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .315$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and positive relationship between Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .358$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Weak and negative relationship between Enmeshment/Dependence and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.190$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, middle level between Enmeshment/Dependence and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .330$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, and there is a middle level and positive relationship between the scores of Enmeshment/Dependence and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .404$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 5).

Abandonment and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.182$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores has a weak and negative relation, and a weak and positive relationship between Abandonment and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .267$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and positive relationship between abandonment and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .418$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Secure Attachment ( $r = -.207$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores has a weak and negative relation with Vulnerability to Harm and illness, and a middle level and positive relationship between Vulnerability to the harm and illness and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .319$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and positive relationship between Vulnerability to the harm and illness and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .471$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 5).

Failure and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.216$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores has a weak and negative relation, and a weak and positive relationship between Failure and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .242$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. Failure and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .296$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores has a weak and positive relation (Table 5).

Weak and negative relationship was found between pessimism and Secure Attachment ( $r = -.146$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores, and a weak and positive relationship between Pessimism and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .224$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and positive relationship between pessimism and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .383$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Weak and positive relationship was found between Insufficient self-control/self-discipline and Avoidant Attachment ( $r = .162$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores. There is a weak and positive relationship between Insufficient self-control/self-discipline and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .121$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Weak and positive relationship was found between Self Sacrifice and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .252$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Weak and positive relationship was found between between punitiveness and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r = .195$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

Weak and positive relationship was found between Unrelenting Standards and Avoidant Attachment ( $r=.177$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, and a weak and positive relationship between Unrelenting Standards and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r=.122$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores (Table 5).

**Table 6:** Relationships Between the Three-Dimensional Attachment Scale and the Emotional Expression Questionnaire

	Secure Attachment	Avoidant Attachment	Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment
Emotional Expression Questionnaire	.401**	-.280**	-.305**
Expression of intimacy	.439**	-.331**	-.303**
Positive emotion expression	.267**	-.177**	-.256**
Negative emotion expression	.316**	-.197**	-.221**

\*\* $p<0.01$ , \* $p<0.05$  Used test: Pearson Correlation Test

When we analyzed the findings, the positive relationship between the Emotion Expression Questionnaire and the Secure Attachment ( $r=.401$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores was middle level and the relationship between the Emotional Expression Questionnaire and the Avoidant Attachment ( $r=-.280$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores was weak. There is a middle level and negative relationship between the Emotional Expression Questionnaire and the Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r=-.305$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores (Table 6).

Expression of intimacy and Secure Attachment ( $r=.439$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores has a moderate and significant relation, and a middle level and negative relationship between Expression of Intimacy and Avoidant Attachment ( $r=-.331$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores. There is a middle level and negative relationship between Expression of intimacy and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r=-.303$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores (Table 6).

Weak and positive relationship was found between Positive emotion expression and Secure Attachment ( $r=.267$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, and a weak and negative relationship between Positive emotion expression and Avoidant Attachment ( $r=-.177$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores. Weak and negative relationship was found between Positive Emotion Expression and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r=-.256$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores (Table 6).

Middle level and positive relationship was found between Negative Emotion Expression and Secure Attachment ( $r=.316$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores, and a weak and negative relationship between Negative Emotion Expression and Avoidant Attachment ( $r=-.197$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores. Weak and negative relationship was found between Negative Emotion Expression and Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment ( $r=-.221$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) scores (Table 6).

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus of this study is to explore whether there is a relationship between life satisfaction, emotional expression, early maladaptive schemas and attachment styles in adults. Discussions regarding the findings are presented in this section of the study.

Considering the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and gender, there are schemas showing a significant relationship. The results say that women score higher than men. In a similar study, the relationship between gender and schemas was examined and it was observed that only the disconnection schema domain had a significant relationship with gender, and men scored higher than women (Boysan, 2012: 178). According to the researcher, this result is related to traditional gender roles. According to these roles, women are expected to be more skilled in communication skills, while men are expected to be more skilled in performance-related issues. This suggests that it is a possible outcome for men to display schemas that negatively affect communication in general. The results of our study show that the schemas in which women score higher are the schemas that are not related to gender in other studies. From this point of view, it is possible to say that the results obtained do not show a contrary result to our study.

It is fair to say that women are expected to be dependent on men in their gender roles and the lack of men in their lives is seen as a problem. Women are expected to be self-sacrificing in their relationships, and in this sense, they can be exposed to a patriarchal perspective (Kalav, 2012: 155). In this study, the dependence schema that can cause difficulties in self-sustaining, the abandonment schema that includes worrying about the abandonment of close people, the vulnerability schema that can cause

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fear of encountering disasters and not being able to cope with it, the pessimism schema that can cause a negative approach to problems, and the help of other people. It is estimated that the higher rate of self-sacrifice schema in women compared to men, which causes them to put their own needs into the background, is related to gender roles. It is thought that the commitment expected from women and the sacrifices to keep their families afloat may trigger these schemes.

Considering the relationship between life satisfaction and expressing emotions, the results indicate a significant relationship. A study examining the relationship between subjective well-being and negative emotions revealed a positive relationship between life satisfaction and positive emotions (Öztürk & Çetinkaya, 2015: 344). Similar results were obtained in our study.

The relationship between life satisfaction and secure attachment was found to be positive, and the relationship between life satisfaction and avoidant attachment and anxious/ambivalent attachment was negative. The fact that life satisfaction is higher in individuals with secure attachment and lower in individuals with insecure attachment gives results in line with similar studies in the literature (Doğan & Sapmaz, 2012: 592). A person is under the influence of a healthy or unhealthy relationship with her/his family in the early stages of her/his life. While positive life experiences enable the person to develop secure attachment, negative life experiences lead to the development of insecure attachment, causing the person to approach the world and people with a more prejudiced and negative perspective. Therefore, it is thought that the secure relationship, which enables the individual to see the world as a safe space, positively affects life satisfaction.

It has been observed that there is a significant and negative relationship between schemas and life satisfaction. In a study examining the effect of early maladaptive schemas on well-being, it was seen that schemas had a negative effect on subjective well-being. The negative effects of negative behaviors, such as neglect or abuse of the individual by the caregiver, cause negative emotions to emerge. Negative emotions that arise also negatively affect subjective well-being (Tutal & Yalçın, 2021: 133).

Schemas formed by early adaptation life experiences can negatively affect factors such as self-expression, perception of success, realistic approach to mistakes, developing healthy perspectives in relationships, relations with the outside world, developing reasonable expectations about their wishes, being forgiving towards mistakes made, and physical endurance. It is thought that the concept of life satisfaction, which is about what people expect from life and how much of it is realized, is negatively affected by the existence of schemas. Our study also supports this inference.

The researchers looked on the link between early maladaptive schemas and attachment styles. Results showed a negative significant relationship between secure attachment schemas. It is a predictable result that a negative relationship has been found between secure attachment, which is the positive sub-dimension of attachment styles, and early maladaptive schemas that have developed with early negative experiences and lead to unhealthy thoughts and behaviors. This result underlines the destructive effect of schemas on the person.

A positive relationship was observed between the anxious/ambivalent attachment and the avoidant attachment and most of the schemas. Considering that early maladaptive schemas are formed by negative life experiences and their potential to pave the way for unhealthy thoughts and behaviors in the person, there is a positive relationship between avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment, which can similarly develop with negative life experiences, but it indicates that generally healthy relationships are developed with the caregiver. The existence of a negative link between secure attachment and secure attachment does not contradict the predictable result of the research. It is possible to say that the attachment styles, which are affected by the relationship that the person establishes with the caregiver, are similar to the formation of the schemas that develop with their early experiences. In other words, negative life experiences can cause schemas as well as prevent the development of secure attachment.

When the relationship between attachment styles and expressing emotions was examined, a positive relationship was observed between expressing emotions and secure attachment, while there was a negative relationship between expressing emotions and avoidant attachment and anxious/ambivalent attachment. In another study, in which attachment styles were divided into secure, fearful, anxious and obsessive, the relationship between anger and attachment was examined. According to the study, while the anger and expression levels of securely attached individuals were significantly low, the anger and expression levels of indifferent and obsessive individuals were found to be significantly higher (Ayyıldız & Elkin, 2016: 60).

In the results of our study, we see that all sub-dimensions of the scales show a significant relationship with each other. However, while there was a positive relationship between secure attachment, which is the positive sub-dimension of attachment, and expressing emotions, there was a negative relationship between insecure attachment sub-dimensions. In order for attachment to develop positively, positive life experiences and generally a healthy relationship with the caregiver are expected. Considering that being able to express emotions progresses in parallel with these positive life experiences, it is thought that the result emphasizes the importance of the ability to express emotions.

Some suggestions can be made for this research as follows:

A participant group of 362 people has been chosen for the study as the universe. Researchers may be better equipped to explain the correlations between the variables by expanding the research population by increasing the number of participants in a potential study that may be done between the variables.

When the literature was searched, no study utilizing the Expression of Emotions Scale and the Young Schema Scale Short Form-3, which detects early maladaptive schemas, was discovered. It is believed that expanding the amount of investigations that concentrate on the connection between these two factors will benefit the current state of knowledge.

### **Limitations**

The population of this research is limited to the data collected randomly from 362 people.

In this study, early maladaptive schema data are limited to Young Schema Questionnaire Short Form 3, attachment styles data are limited to Three Dimensional Attachment Style Scale, life satisfaction levels are limited to The Satisfaction with Life Scale, and emotional expression data are limited to The Emotional Expression Questionnaire.

### **Authorship Contribution**

Assist. Prof. Kahraman Güler; contributed to the subject, design, statistical analysis of data, purpose, discussion and conclusions (50%). / Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kahraman Güler, konu, tasarım, verilerin analizi, amaç, tartışma ve sonuca (50%) katkı sağlamıştır.

Clinical Psychologist Ayşe Mine Tuncay; contributed to the subject, design, statistical analysis of data, purpose, discussion and conclusions (50%). Klinik Psikolog Ayşe Mine Tuncay; konu, tasarım, verilerin analizi, amaç, tartışma ve sonuca (50%) katkı sağlamıştır.

### **Ethics Committee Approval**

Kurul Adı: İstanbul Aydın University Ethics Committee / İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Etik Komisyonu

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