

Relational Maturity in Emerging Adults will Result in Higher Levels of Subjective Well-Being

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Abstract

Having healthy cohesive relationships adds to our well-being and life satisfaction. Previous research shows a relationship between satisfying relationships and greater levels of well-being. The research presented in this research paper explores the relationship between measures of relational maturity and subjective well-being. Data were collected from the results provided from the Emerging Adulthood Measured at Multiple Institutions: 2(EAMMI2) survey. There was a total of 2,169 participants after 1,013 were excluded for various reasons, with the average age of 21. The present research found a significant relationship between relational maturity in emerging adults and subjective well-being which is supported by previous research. Moreover, reaching relational maturity in emerging adults is directly correlated with higher levels of subjective well-being. Future research is suggested to reach innovative approaches of assisting adolescents through emerging adulthood in gaining the skills and knowledge to acquire and maintain healthy relationships through meeting markers of adulthood in reaching subjective well-being.

Key words: emerging adulthood, measures of adulthood, effortful control, relational maturity, subjective well-being, well-being, life satisfaction

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During the COVID-19 pandemic it became apparent that isolation has an impact on people's mental health, particularly in young adults (Narita, 2023). Further research allows us to distinguish the connections between relationships and well-being leading to innovative ways of reaching greater levels of subjective well-being during emerging adulthood. This article explores the relationship between reaching relational maturity in emerging adulthood and higher levels of subjective well-being. Does reaching relational maturity in emerging adulthood lead to greater levels of subjective well-being? What constitutes relational maturity as an emerging adult? What defines subjective well-being?

To further define subjective well-being, it appears that many terms are used interchangeably through research to express this term. Through defining separate variables, it could be beneficial in future research in establishing further clarity. Within research subjective well-being is used as an example of life satisfaction (Proctor, 2014). Happiness is used interchangeably with subjective well-being in scientific literature (Buijs, 2020). It is important for emerging adults to reach relational maturity so that they may feel happier, leading to greater life satisfaction. Emerging adults who have healthy relationships with their parents, friends, and through romantic relationships have the potential to have a higher quality of life.

Previous research shows a relationship between relational maturity in emerging adults with greater levels of subjective well-being, aka life satisfaction. Greater subjective well-being was found in emerging adults from more cohesive families while also being at a lower risk level for emotional distress problems (Fosco, 2012). Chopik, found through the well-being measures established for subjective well-being that there was an association with self-control in predicting

higher life satisfaction as well as relationship satisfaction. It was found as a generalization in romantic relationships of emerging adults that benefits of well-being were associated with romantic relationships that held a dynamic to include space for personal development, to achieve personal and shared goals, while maintaining secure attachment (Chopik, 2022). Furthermore, Demir, found through participants in emerging adulthood that the quality of the relationship whether with parents, friends, or with a romantic partner was related to happiness (Demir, 2009). These findings show the importance of relational maturity through showing the need for strength within relationships in connection with greater well-being.

The role of maturity in relationships has been established through different studies in a variety of ways. Through effortful control, a dimension of self-regulation, in regulating emotion and behavior as well as effortful allocation, situational attention and the inhibition of behavior, can lead to stronger more cohesive relationships. Effortful control develops from adolescence into emerging adulthood, from cohesive and healthy familial relationships (Fosco, 2012). Another finding included the measure of psychological maturity in emerging adults, with the findings that secure attachment style and self-determination in direct association to well-being (Gómez-López, 2019). In another study regarding adulthood markers and well-being among emerging adults it was found that young adults with established relational maturity including equal relationships with parents and containing a greater consideration for others were markers of well-being (Sharon, 2016). Showing a connection between relational maturity and well-being in emerging adults.

Close relationships that are considered greatly satisfying are consistent predictors of subjective well-being. However, it is important to be aware that many of the relationship types are studied separately. It is suggested that further research explore any connection in the impact

relationships have on one relationship to another. For example, examine the impact of the emerging adult within the whole family system including parents and siblings vs just examining the relationship between one emerging adult and one parent. While it would also be important to explore the reason that some emerging adults benefit more from familial relationships than others (Chopik, 2022). Additionally, future research is suggested regarding the 21st century challenges that emerging adults encounter and how they can successfully manage these challenges (Sharon, 2016).

In the present study I examined the relationship between relational maturity in emerging adults and subjective well-being. I predicted a direct correlation between the two variables relational maturity and subjective well-being. My hypothesis expressed that reaching relational maturity in emerging adults will result in higher levels of subjective well-being for those emerging adults. The data for this correlational analysis and the demographic information was extracted from the results of the Emerging Adulthood Measured at Multiple Institutions: 2(EAMMI2) survey results.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Data were collected from the results provided from the Emerging Adulthood Measured at Multiple Institutions: 2(EAMMI2) survey. The collection procedures can be found in the introduction of the survey preceding the survey itself. The procedure for participants consists of first, reading the consent form. Once a participant agrees to participate, they are asked a series of questions through a Qualtrics form. The survey is estimated to take approximately 30 minutes and the participant is not permitted to leave the survey and return later. It must be completed in

one sitting. There are no known risks to participants. Participants were given the option to enter their email address into a drawing per every 50 participants, for a \$25 Amazon gift card. The personal information of the participants remained anonymous.

There were 2,169, total participants included after 1,013 were excluded for various reasons. The average age of participants was 21. Of the original 3182 participants 792 were male, 2332 female, 54 other, and 4 missing. The sample size was disproportionately White. The educational levels showed high school or less (1.9%) currently in college (80.5%) some college but not current (1.1%) completed a 2-year degree (5.7%) and completed a bachelor's degree (4.4%).

The following demographic variables were asked on the survey: school, gender, education, number of siblings, ethnicity, armed services, years armed services, current household income, US resident, years US resident, and country resident.

The outcome variable in my hypothesis is the variable, subjective well-being. For the scale of subjective well-being (SWB) on the survey it is suggested to be open and honest within the subject's responses. There are 6 statements in this category of the EAAMI2 survey. The following are two examples of these statements: In most ways my life is close to my ideal. I am satisfied with my life. For each statement within this category the subject may choose between the options of strongly disagree, disagree, slightly disagree, neither agree nor disagree, slightly agree, agree, or strongly agree (EAAMI2 survey). The scores are averaged. Ranging from 1-7 with higher scores indicating greater well-being.

The predictor variable in my hypothesis is the variable, relational maturity. Participants respond to statements in the Markers of Adulthood category that include the subscale of relational maturity in the, Emerging Adulthood Measured at Multiple Institutions: 2 (EAMMI2)

survey. Relational maturity includes four items to respond to. Two examples include establish a relationship with parents as an equal adult and learn always to have good control of your emotions. For this study the results from the category degree of achievement will be used. Within the degree of achievement section, the response choices are not, somewhat, or yes (EAMMI2 survey). The relational maturity sub-scale of the MOA within the description average score of achievement responses, scores are in the range of 1-3 with lower scores indicating greater degree of achievement.

Results

My hypothesis consisted of a direct correlation between the two variables relational maturity and subjective well-being. In that reaching relational maturity in emerging adults will result in higher levels of subjective well-being. Through the EAAMI2 survey results, data were collected from a sample of 3,165 emerging adult participants regarding the variable relational maturity, showing an average of mid-level results with a mean score of, $\bar{x} = 2.145$ ($s = .414$). Indicating a mid-range of achievement in reaching relational maturity. Data were also collected from a sample of 742 emerging adult participants regarding the variable subjective well-being showing results between mid-level and high with a mean score of, $\bar{x} = 4.506$ ($s = 1.336$). Indicating a level of subjective well-being that is above average. A Pearson's correlation test was conducted to test the relationship between the two variables relational maturity and subjective well-being. There is a significant relationship between relational maturity and subjective well-being with a weak, direct correlation, $r = .269$, $p < .001$. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the independent variable, relational maturity (MOA_RM_AA) and the dependent variable, subjective well-being (SWB) in the format of a scatter plot.

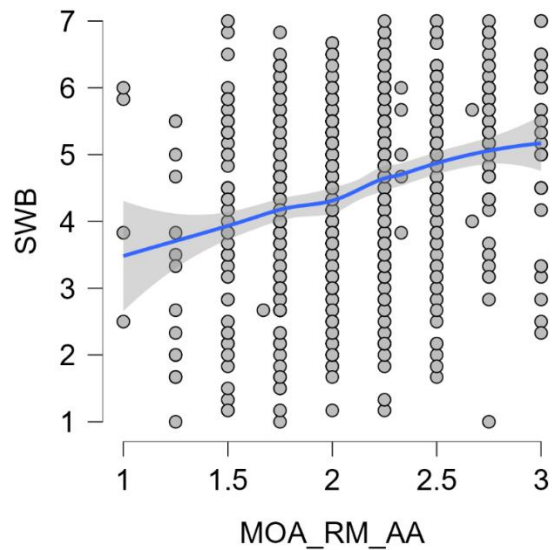


Figure 1. Scatter plot shows the correlation between relational maturity (MOA_RM_AA) and subjective well-being (SWB) according to the results of the EAAMI2 survey. There is a direct correlation between these two variables that increases marginally.

Discussion

The present research found a significant direct relationship between relational maturity in emerging adults and subjective well-being which is supported by previous research. Indicating support for the hypothesis, that relational maturity in emerging adults will result in higher levels of subjective well-being. Some limitations within this study included sample and survey constraints. The sample was disproportionately White and female. Leaving the results of this study as not being representative of the population. The findings within this study and the supporting previous research, are important to know so that innovative ways of helping emerging adults reach relational maturity could be found through further research, to support emerging adults in reaching and maintaining subjective well-being. Through previous research, Fosco's six-year longitudinal study found that adults within emerging adulthood from more cohesive families contained greater subjective well-being (Fosco, 2012). Moreover, it is suggested that through further research a framework for well-being could be established regarding romantic

relationships in stages of adolescence through emerging adulthood to create models to educate young adults in achieving healthy romantic relationships to promote health and well-being (Gómez-López, 2019). Through further research with a focus on specific relationship types a broader framework could be developed in ways to educate adolescence through emerging adulthood on ways to establish relational maturity to strengthen relationships in working toward a greater subjective well-being.

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