

REVIEWING THE PREDICTORS OF DYADIC SATISFACTION. THE CASE OF EMOTION RECOGNITION AND EMOTION REGULATION

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Abstract

This article is a review of research on dyadic satisfaction's predictors, emphasizing emotion recognition and emotion regulation's role. A short overview of dyadic satisfaction and its associated variable and predictors is firstly presented. Secondly, some conceptual clarifications related to emotional processes and models are discussed. Thirdly, recent research on emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction links are presented. Fourthly, the relations between emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction are highlighted. Fifthly, we integrate the findings for presenting a possible link between all three variables. Finally, we suggest some clinical implications and we make some recommendations on theoretical and methodological issues which may enhance further understanding of emotional dynamics in romantic relationships.

Cuvinte-cheie: predictor, satisfacție dyadică, recunoașterea emoțiilor, reglarea emoțiilor, relații romantice.

Keywords: predictors, dyadic satisfaction, emotion recognition, emotion regulation, romantic relationships.

1. INTRODUCTION

Dyadic satisfaction has been studied for several decades, being probably the most widely and influential concept in romantic relationships area. However, there are still some inconsistencies related to this concept. Concepts as marital satisfaction, couple satisfaction, relationship satisfaction, quality, adjustment, stability are often used in the romantic relationship research (Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994). The wide variety of terms used for assessing the overall quality of a romantic relationship suggests a lack of consensus over what each concept means (Vaughn & Baier, 1999). In addition, in the last decades, these concepts were studied as per se concepts, were considered same concepts (being used synonymously) or forming different umbrella concepts (Cohen, 1985; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). In this review, we present studies which focus on dyadic satisfaction or partner's (partners)' subjective

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global evaluation of their satisfaction within their (marital or non-marital) relationship (Schumm *et al.*, 1983).

Additionally, we use dyadic satisfaction rather than marital satisfaction due to the former's holistic character which suggests the diverse type of modern romantic relationships.

When examining dyadic satisfaction, researchers found that higher levels of dyadic satisfaction were associated with a large number of personal, relationship and family levels variables. At individual level, it was associated with better mental health (Simon & Barrett, 2010), optimal levels of well-being (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007), higher levels of life's satisfaction (Freudiger, 1983), greater relationship stability, and higher maintenance of relationships (Gottman & Levenson, 1992), and higher work performance (Renick, Blumberg, & Markman, 1992). On the other hand, at relationship level, dyadic satisfaction was associated with partner's higher reports of global happiness (Glenn & Weaver, 1981), and less involvement in risky behavior (Braithwaite, Delevi, & Fincham, 2010). Finally, at family level, dyadic satisfaction was associated with overall family functioning, higher children school achievement, and children self-control development (Feldman *et al.*, 1990), and more parenting satisfaction (Rogers & White, 1998).

A step further was the analysis of the dyadic satisfaction's predictors, which have been the focus of a considerable number of empirical studies. For example, it was found that many relationship variables predict dyadic satisfaction, such as relational expectations (Kelley & Burgoon, 1991), attachment style (Jones & Cunningham, 1996; Feeney, 1999), intimacy (Hassebrauck & Fehr, 2002), spousal support (Patrick *et al.*, 2007), forgiveness and self-compassion (Fahimdanesh, Noferesti, & Tavakol, 2020; Fincham, 2009), dyadic interactions (Schmitt, Kliegel, & Shapiro, 2007), partners' demand-withdraw pattern (Caughlin, 2002), sexual satisfaction, satisfaction with household labor division and spousal communication (Yucel & Koydemir, 2015), dyadic coping (for a review see, Falconier *et al.*, 2015), dyadic empathy (Kimmes *et al.*, 2014), empathic accuracy (for a review see, Sened *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, individual variables such as personality traits (for a review see, Malouff *et al.*, 2010), religiosity level (Olson, *et al.*, 2016), emotion expression (Waldinger *et al.*, 2004), balance model of positive-negative affect (Gottman *et al.*, 1998), emotion skills (Mirgain & Cordova, 2007), emotion recognition (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002) and emotion regulation (Rick, Falconier, & Wittenborn, 2017) also predict dyadic satisfaction.

Although previous studies addressing variables related to emotional processes as predictors of dyadic satisfaction are numerous, the specific processes of emotion recognition and emotion regulation were rarely studied in this context. Even the lesser number of studies that have examined these links, we aim at (a) bringing some conceptual clarification regarding the two emotional processes, at summarizing (b) the key findings on the emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction link, (c) the emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction link, emphasizing (d) the future directions for studying this relationship, such as the possible link between emotion recognition,

emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction altogether, and conclude with (e) the needed lines of theoretical and empirical inquiry to create a more complete understanding of the relation between these three variables and other potential variables, such as moderators and mediators.

2. EMOTIONAL PROCESSES: SOME CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

In the past decades, many different terms have been used to refer to emotion recognition and regulation. Moreover, these concepts have been studied as *per se* concepts, or as forming umbrella concepts.

2.1. EMOTION RECOGNITION

For example, *nonverbal sensitivity* (Hall & Bernieri, 2001) and *empathy accuracy* (Ickes, 1993) are defined as ability to recognize, understand or interpret emotions or interpersonal attitudes from nonverbal cues. At the same time, researchers which studied *emotion recognition* defined it such as the particular ability to recognize nonverbal expression in face, voice, or body (Schlegel, Grandjean, & Scherer, 2014; Scherer & Scherer, 2011; Bänziger, Grandjean, & Scherer, 2009). However, researchers were also interested in the difficulty of recognizing one's own emotions which defined *alexithymia* (Lumley *et al.*, 1996). In addition, researchers have also proposed umbrella concepts such as *emotional skillfulness*, defined as the ability of effective identification and communication of emotions within romantic dyads (Cordova, Gee, & Warren, 2005); and *communication of emotions* as the ability of encoding (expressing emotions) and decoding (recognizing others' emotions) emotions (Hess, 2001).

Another line of emotion recognition research is represented by gender differences. Even, if it has a long tradition in psychology, the results are still mixed. There are studies which suggested a female superiority at decoding facial expressions (Rotter & Rotter, 1988; Schlegel *et al.*, 2014; Thomas & Fletcher, 2003; for a review see, Thompson & Voyer, 2014; Trommsdorff & John, 1992), while others have suggested no differences between men and women for negative and neutral affect, anger and happiness (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Schlegel *et al.*, 2012). However, there are also results which suggested a male superiority for decoding male anger (Rotter & Rotter, 1988) and positive affect (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002).

In addition, researchers were interested in the universality or specificity of emotion recognition ability. Research suggested that emotion recognition accuracy level increases when both persons (the encoder and the decoder) are members of the same cultural group (for a review see, Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). This might be explained by the congruence of displaying and decoding rules between the two persons and by the match of social, cultural norms and backgrounds of the encoder and decoder. Several studies have also documented the link between the relationship type between decoder and encoder, and emotion recognition accuracy.

Traditionally, it was suggested that friends and intimate partners recognize each other emotions better than strangers do due to advantages of familiarity (Colvin, Vogt, & Ickes, 1997, Morris *et al.*, 2016). However, some exceptions were also suggested. For example, intimate partners do not recognize each other emotions better than strangers in the early stages of the romantic relationships (knowledge related to the each other emotional expression is limited), as well in the later stages of relationships. One possible explanation for the low level of recognizing emotions in long term committed relationships is related to the fact that partners just assume what the other one feels or express and not actually paying attention or looking to the significant other (Hess, 2001). On the other hand, research shows that partners in distressed relationships have a lower level of emotion recognition accuracy (Noller, 1981).

2.2. EMOTION REGULATION

Just like emotion recognition, emotion regulation has also been studied as *per se* concept and as umbrella concept. The most known *emotion regulation*' definition is proposed by Gross (1998b) referring to the processes used by individuals for selecting which emotions they have, when and how they experience or express those emotions. *Interpersonal emotion regulation* has been defined as processes used by individuals to pursuit a regulatory goal which occurs in the context of a live social interaction (Zaki & Williams, 2013), while *co-regulation* has been defined as a type of interpersonal emotion regulation referring to "a bidirectional linkage of oscillating emotional channels (subjective experience, expressive behavior, and autonomic physiology) between partners, which contributes to emotional and physiological stability for both partners in a close relationship" (Butler & Randall, 2013, p. 203).

By time, it was suggested different modalities to conceptualize and classify emotion regulation strategies. For example, Augustine and Hemenover (2009) reviewed the affect regulation strategies and they found six superordinate categories: behavioral, cognitive, engagement, avoidance, antecedent-focused, response-focused. Gross and Jazaieri (2014) suggested that emotion regulation may be intrinsic/ intrapersonal (regulating one's own emotions) or extrinsic/ interpersonal (regulating others' emotions), while Niven and colleagues (2011) suggested that emotion regulation may be extrinsic or intrinsic with the aim to worsen or to improve one's own emotions or others' emotions. Emotion regulation can be either adaptive (reappraisal, acceptance) or maladaptive (rumination, suppression) (for a review see, Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010) and they can either down-regulate or up-regulate emotions. In addition, Zaki and Williams' model (2013) identifies two types of processes intrinsic versus extrinsic processes and response-dependent and response-independent processes and suggests four types of interpersonal emotion regulation.

Recently, Gross (2015) also proposed an umbrella concept, namely *affect regulation*, which includes coping, emotion regulation and mood regulation.

2.3. EMOTION RECOGNITION AND EMOTION REGULATION: UMBRELLA CONCEPTS

Another line of research was on umbrella concepts which include both emotional processes. For instance, emotion perception, emotion regulation, and emotion production are the three components of *emotional competence* (Scherer, 2007), while appraising and expressing emotions, regulating emotions and using it in adaptive ways form *emotional intelligence* (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Scherer (2007) defines emotion perception as the ability to accurately perceive and interpret others' emotions during social interactions, and emotion regulation as individual ability to monitor and manipulate one's own emotions in accordance with socio-cultural norms, strategic intentions, expectations for maintaining homeostasis. On the other hand, Salovey and Mayer (1990) define appraising and expressing emotions abilities as accurately perceive of emotions in self or others from verbal or nonverbal cues. Regulation of emotions represents the willingness and ability to monitor, evaluate and alter one's own and others' emotional reactions with the aim of meeting a particular goal (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

After presenting this short overview of emotion recognition and emotion regulation at conceptual level, in the following, we will present the results of empirical studies on the link between these two emotional processes and dyadic satisfaction. We included in this review articles which have assess the direct relationship between (a) recognition of one's own emotions and dyadic satisfaction; (b) recognition of partner's emotions and dyadic satisfaction; and (c) emotion regulation strategies and dyadic satisfaction. The links have been studied in marital or non-marital young or older relationships.

3. EMOTION RECOGNITION AND DYADIC SATISFACTION

Emotion recognition supposes the accurate identification of emotional meaning from non-verbal cues (facial expressions, vocal cues, posture, gesture or body movement) (for a review see, Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Scherer & Scherer, 2011). Till now, this concept was studied at personal level (recognition of one's own emotions) or dyadic level (recognition of other's emotions).

Although the ability to recognize emotions is fundamental to human social interactions as it is a precondition of understanding, anticipating and reacting in a proper way to other's emotions or behavior, researchers were rarely interested in studying the link between emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction. Previous research on family and friendship provides support for the link between emotion recognition and relational outcomes. For example, abilities to recognize others' emotions were positively correlated with having better relationship with friends or family (Carton, Kessler, & Pape, 1999; Hall, Andrzejewski, & Yopchick, 2009). However, researchers wanted to ask the question whether recognizing others emotions' benefits extends beyond family and friends relationships to other communal relationships. To date, there are few studies that suggest that this may be the case

for romantic relationships. For instance, it was found that men ability to recognize women' emotions influence his own and his partner's dyadic satisfaction, while women ability to recognize men' emotions influence only her partner's satisfaction, but not her own dyadic satisfaction in young, middle age and older non-marital and marital couples (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). In addition, Cohen and colleagues (2012) found similar results, with similar samples. Men's ability to recognize women's negative emotions leads to higher women's dyadic satisfaction, while women's ability to recognize men's negative emotions influence men's dyadic satisfaction. However, contrary to Koerner & Fitzpatrick's study (2002), they also found that men's ability to recognize his partner's negative emotions does not influence his own satisfaction, while women's ability to recognize her partner's negative emotions does influence her own satisfaction. From these two studies, it can be seen that the results are mixed at actor effects level (men's scores for the independent variable do (not) influence men's scores for dependent variable), while the results at partner effects (men's scores for the independent variable do (not) influence women's scores for dependent variable) present the same pattern. In addition, one recent study found that recognition of negative facial expressions predicted greater dyadic satisfaction in young couples (Yoo & Noyes, 2016). However, although this study did not have results from both partners, it added new knowledge to the area of emotion recognition and its effects on dyadic satisfaction by using specific negative facial expressions.

In an effort to extend the understanding of emotional processes in the field of romantic relationships, researchers turned specifically to the study of difficulties of recognizing one's own emotions. Studies on alexithymic predispositions found that people with low abilities to recognize their own emotions tend to have less satisfying relationships. For example, Yelsma and Marrow (2003) found that man's and woman's low abilities in recognizing their own emotions influence their partner's dyadic satisfaction in marital and non-marital couples. Another study, found the same pattern for difficulty in recognizing their own emotions and dyadic adjustment for young, middle age and older married couples (Cordova *et al.*, 2005). More precisely, low level of recognizing their own emotions predicted low level of partner's dyadic adjustment. Although, the effects of emotion recognition on dyadic satisfaction were not isolated, we presented the results on dyadic adjustment because this broader concept consists of dyadic satisfaction along other two dimensions.

From the above studies presented it can be observed a unidirectional relation between emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction. However, there are researchers which examined different directions. More precisely, they suggested that dyadic satisfaction predicted later emotion recognition accuracy, mainly for men (Noller & Feeney, 1994). Contrary to the unidirectional aspect of emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction link, there are several researchers which suggested a bidirectional relation between these two concepts. For instance, it was suggested that individuals in satisfied relationships may have more opportunities to practice and improve their recognition skills. In turn, their improved emotion recognition skills may help them to make their relationships more satisfying (Carton, Kessle, & Pape, 1999).

4. EMOTIONS REGULATION AND DYADIC SATISFACTION

Interactions between intimate partners represent the contexts in which the majority of individuals experience the most intense emotions. Thus, people abilities to regulate emotions help them to navigate this landscape effectively and escape from negative states as engaging in less effectively communication, demand-withdraw patterns of behaviors or criticizing each other in harsh, contemptuous ways (Christensen & Heavy, 1993; Gottman, 1993).

Even if it was suggested that emotion regulation is pivotal to understanding romantic relationships dynamics (Ben-Naim *et al.*, 2013; Gottman & Notarius, 2004), and to predicting dyadic satisfaction (Bloch, Haase, & Levenson, 2014), only a few studies have actually examining the link between emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction. The most common emotion regulation strategies studied in the context of non-clinical romantic relationships have been cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. In general, cognitive reappraisal was positively associated with dyadic satisfaction in young, middle-age and older married couples (Finkel *et al.*, 2013; Mazzuca *et al.*, 2018), and young newly married couples (Velotti *et al.*, 2016), while expressive suppression was negatively associated with dyadic satisfaction in young newly married couples (Velotti *et al.*, 2016), in young, middle-age and older non-marital and marital couples (Impett, *et al.*, 2012, Vater & Schroder-Abe, 2015; Cameron & Overall, 2018). However, Mazzuca and colleagues (2018) found no influence of partners' expressive suppression on either one's own or their partner's satisfaction.

Other emotion regulation strategies such as downregulation of emotions, cognitive emotion regulation strategies, perspective taking, aggressive externalization and emotional expression were also used to study this link in non-clinical romantic relationships. Bloch and colleagues (2014) found that behavior downregulation of women in middle age and older married couples influence both her own, but also her partner's satisfaction, while Rusu, Bodenmann and Kayser (2018) found that putting into perspective, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, planning refocusing (cognitive emotion regulation strategies) influence dyadic satisfaction through positive dyadic coping in young and middle age married couples. Additionally, it was found that perspective taking and aggressive externalization were positively and negatively associated with satisfaction (Vater & Schröder-Abé, 2015), while emotional expressive was positively related to dyadic satisfaction (Cameron & Overall, 2018).

As far as we know, the first study on the link between emotion regulation and relational satisfaction in clinical couples found that men and women's perceived access to emotion regulation strategies was positively associated with their own level of dyadic satisfaction, while women's higher impulse to control emotions was related to men's higher dyadic satisfaction in non-marital and marital young and older couples (Rick, Falconier, & Wittenborn, 2017). However, it was also found that women's low level of emotions' acceptance increased the likelihood of her own level of satisfaction, while low level of men's emotions awareness increased the likelihood of having a higher level of satisfaction.

5. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

5.1. EMOTION RECOGNITION, EMOTION REGULATION, AND DYADIC SATISFACTION

We have attempted to place many lines of research on the separate links of emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction, and emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction, respectively. In this section, we discuss about the possible relation between emotion recognition, emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction. Most generally, we believed that we should have a broader view by studying the dynamics between these two emotional processes and their impact on one important relational outcome, dyadic satisfaction.

When people recognize their own emotions elicited within their romantic relationships, they respond to them faster, they identify their causes and express them more easily to their partners (Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). When they express emotions verbally or non-verbally (facial expression, voice tone, gesture, body movement cues), actually they present more openly their needs which have been signaled by those emotions (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 2011). This in turn may positively influence which emotion regulation strategy is used. For instance, it was found that labeling affective states may reduce the ambiguity of affective states and stimulate coping (Kircanski, Lieberman, & Craske, 2012; Lieberman *et al.*, 2011). In the romantic relational context, we can find that recognizing your anger (most probably elicited by a perceived wrong done it by your intimate partner) may enable you to choose distraction for regulating anger in order to de-escalate a possible conflict situation. Distraction used when the emotion has a high arousal level, help to decrease the intensity (for a review see, Webb, Miles, & Sheeran, 2012) and to be more available to hear partner's explanations. This in turn may have a positive impact on both partners' dyadic satisfaction because they will be more available to present the emotions underneath anger, such as hurt or fear (L'Abate, 1977). Emotions as fear and hurt have a positive role because it elicits empathy, understanding from the partners, suppress the fighting impulse and facilitates the elimination of negative communication, which is a repairing behavior (Sanford & Rowatt, 2004).

Well communicating emotions is the ability relevant to both partners during their interactions, because the encoder wants to be understood, while the decoder strives to understand their partners' emotions, needs or desires (Hess, 2001). Recognizing others' emotions enable individuals to choose adaptive behavioral responses which contribute to interpersonal relationships quality (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000). Couples experience negative and positive emotions daily during their interactions. Recognizing those emotions offers not just a feedback to continue or to stop a behavior, to respond in appropriate and constructive ways towards their partner and situation (Yoo & Noyes, 2016), to choose an adaptive emotion regulation strategy (Cordova *et al.*, 2005), but also is the precondition of understanding and anticipating one's behavior (Schlegel *et al.*, 2014). For example, being aware of

partner's anger or sadness guides the decoder to regulate his or her actions for apologizing to the angry person or to comfort the sad one in order to obtain their personal goal (Gross, 2015; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In addition, communicating negative events in more appropriate ways and using adaptative emotion regulation after recognizing partner's emotions may influence partner's dyadic satisfaction because he or she is feeling validated, understood or cared for (Cordova *et al.*, 2005)

Recently, it was suggested that both emotional processes (emotion recognition and emotion regulation) have a positive effect on romantic relationships' initiation and maintenance. It was found that individuals who recognize and regulate their own and partner's emotions have more pleasant and mutually satisfying relationships (Malouff, Schutte, & Thorsteinsson, 2014). However, the researchers have not observed the direct influence of each emotional process, but they observed the influence on emotional intelligence which is the supraordinate concept consisting of emotion recognition, emotion regulation and emotion understanding (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In sum, the expansion of studies from one level of emotional processes to the dynamics between emotional processes points to promising lines of research that may lead to a better understanding of emotions' effects on romantic relational outcomes.

In the following section, we will present other future research directions.

5.2. MEDIATORS

Mediational analyses would provide a better understanding of the processes by which several independent variables affect relationship outcomes such as dyadic satisfaction. This type of studies would be especially valuable for highlighting how personal variables as emotion regulation individual strategies come to affect the link between emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction. In the following, we will present the few works undertaken in these directions.

Emotion regulation as mediator between emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction

Two studies have examined mediators of the association between experiencing emotions and different relational outcomes, one showing that rumination mediates the relation between actual experience and expressions of jealousy and relational dissatisfaction (Elphinston *et al.*, 2013) and the second showing that extrinsic improving emotion regulation strategy partially mediated the association between anger experience and dyadic satisfaction (Ursu & Turliuc, in press). In addition, one study found that constructive responses to conflict full mediate the relation between facial expression recognition of negative emotions and relationship satisfaction (Yoo & Noyes, 2016). These studies mark important first steps towards understanding the underlying processes between experiencing emotions and dyadic satisfaction. However, as far as we know, none study has examining if emotion

regulation mediates the associations between emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction. Thus, studying if emotion regulation mediates the link between emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction may be an interesting research objective with clinical implications due to the fact that recognizing one's own and partner's emotions may help choosing more adaptive emotion regulation strategies for regulating one's own or partner's emotion, which in turn may affect dyadic satisfaction.

More is needed to be done for understanding the emotional dynamics within romantic relationships by connecting intrapersonal processes (emotion recognition abilities and emotion regulation strategies) with interpersonal processes (relational outcomes: dyadic satisfaction or dissatisfaction).

5.3. MODERATORS

Research on the variables that moderate the relation between dyadic satisfaction and various independent variables related to emotional processes is also needed. Research examining moderators can enable us to know the contexts under which these associations occur.

Gender

Gender may moderate the relationship between emotion recognition (see inconsistent results on emotion recognition ability) and dyadic satisfaction, but also emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction. Women tend to use more maladaptive emotion regulation strategies comparing to men (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012) who in turn may affect not just their own dyadic satisfaction, but also their partner's dyadic satisfaction.

Participants' age, relationship length, relationship's type and relationship stage

Related to *age*, research show that emotion recognition and emotion regulation may improve during the lifespan, having low levels in the emerging adulthood and late adulthood, while during, late emerging adulthood, adulthood and middle-adulthood they have higher levels (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999; Olderbak *et al.*, 2019).

For each personal development stage it can be associated a *relationship's specific type and stage*. For example, during emerging adulthood, the romantic relationships are characterized by dating behaviors emphasizing the initiation and formation of short-term relationships. At the end of this personal developmental stage, we can observe individuals motivated to enter in relationships which mostly are long-term committed non-marital (characterized by cohabitating and maybe having children). Individuals are motivated to maintain their committed relationship, which in time leads to marriages.

Emotion abilities and emotional dynamics between partners in emerging adulthood, adulthood, middle and late adulthood may be different because individuals face different developmental challenges at personal, dyadic and family level. For

example, during emerging adulthood they learn how to recognize and regulate their own emotions due to self-focused character of this stage (self-identity exploration and development) (Arnett, 2000), but also others' emotions due to the fact that the initiation and formation of romantic relationships is a fundamental task of this period (Clark & Beck, 2011).

It is widely accepted that young individuals experience more intense, positive and negative emotions comparing with other age groups. For example, it was found that younger individuals experience higher level of anger, lesser level of interest and have a decreased emotional control level comparing to other age groups (Gross *et al.*, 1997, Sorkin *et al.*, 2009). Thus, by time, they learn how to recognize their own emotions and to control them for the good sake of their relationship, but also due to familiarity and interactions between them. They also learn how to recognize their partner's emotions from non-verbal emotional cues and how to help their partner to regulate their emotions for maintaining satisfying relationships. However, although it was found that older individuals have lower abilities to recognize amusement, joy, pride and anger, disgust, irritation, fear, despair and anxiety comparing to younger individuals (Schlegel *et al.*, 2014), we suspect that these results do not apply to middle-age individuals involved in long-term relationships. Firstly, in their study, Schlegel and colleagues (2014) used professional actors for eliciting emotions using different modalities (images, audio, audio-video), thus, they did not assess the effect of familiarity in recognizing emotions. Second, it was already showed that friends and intimate partners recognize emotions better than strangers do (Colvin, Vogt, & Ickes, 1997; Morris *et al.*, 2016).

We believe that emotion recognition and emotion regulation are relevant skills in all developmental relationship stages because during initiation and formation stages people learn how to recognize and regulate both their own and partner's emotions, while during maintenance stages, people use emotion recognition and emotion regulation skills specifically for having satisfying relationships (Cameron & Overall, 2018; Cordova *et al.*, 2005; Mazzuca *et al.*, 2018; Rusu *et al.*, 2018; Velotti *et al.*, 2018; Yelsma & Marrow, 2003; Yoo & Noyes, 2016).

We suggest that *relationship type* may moderate the associations between emotion recognition, emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction, not only because of the development of these abilities during personal lifespan and relationship stages, but also because each relationship type (non-marital - marital; short-term - long-term) is different per se and this may influence the emotional dynamics between partners who in turn affect their satisfaction.

Examining these moderators can be also useful not only because it will tell us the contexts in which the relation between emotion recognition, emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction is valid, but also for clarifying inconsistent findings (see inconsistent results about the impact of emotion recognition on dyadic satisfaction and about expressive suppression role on dyadic satisfaction).

Culture

Culture shapes emotion elicitation, experience, recognition and regulation processes. For example, values, meaning, practices, norms and rules of socio-cultural context in which emotions occurred influence the emotional experience (Boiger & Mesquita, 2012; Mesquita & Boiger, 2014). The same emotion can be functional and acceptable in one context, while in others unacceptable. For example, expressing sadness to an intimate partner is acceptable, while expressing the same emotion to a superior is it not (Clark & Taraban, 1991). However, from the four studies which have assess the link between emotion recognition and dyadic satisfaction, all of them used US samples (Cohen *et al.*, 2012; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Yelsma & Marrow, 2003; Yoo & Noyes, 2016). The pattern for emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction is a little bit different. Four out of eight studies have used US samples (Bloch *et al.*, 2014; Finkel *et al.*, 2013; Impett *et al.*, 2012; Rick *et al.*, 2017), one used a New Zealand sample (Cameron & Overall, 2018), while the rest used European samples as it follows: one Greek sample (Mazzuca *et al.*, 2018), one Romanian sample (Rusu *et al.*, 2018), and one Italian sample (Velotti *et al.*, 2016). It is encouraging to see the cultural diversity of samples in which emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction link was assessed.

However, more is needed to be done in order to know the dynamics between emotional processes, such as emotion recognition and emotion regulation within romantic relationships. For example, it will be interesting to see the link between emotion recognition, emotion regulation and dyadic satisfaction within different cultural contexts. Or which is the impact of emotion recognition on relational outcomes in European cultural contexts. In addition, it will be interesting to see which strategies are used to regulate specific emotions experienced within romantic relationships and what is their impact on relational outcomes in different cultural contexts.

6. CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Interventions to help intimate partners modify or develop specific skills related to emotion expression, emotion recognition and emotion regulation processes are key elements of several approaches to couple therapy (Christensen, Jacobson, & Babcock, 1995; Gottman, 1999; Greenberg, 2010). The studies' results presented in this review point to the central elements of emotional processes that couple therapists may want to consider in their work. Specifically, they emphasize the rational for developing and implementing a comprehensive partner and couple oriented interventions in helping to promote therapeutic change.

Firstly, it was suggested that partners which have problems in recognizing their own and each other's emotions are involved in more distressed relationships. Secondly, it was suggested that some individual emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal, cognitive emotion regulation, emotion expression) have a positive

influence on dyadic satisfaction, making romantic partners to feel more satisfied with their relationship, while others have a negative impact on it (suppression). Hence, it may be important to teach (a) intimate partners to be aware of their own emotions and the needs aroused by them, (b) how to check if they recognized correctly their partners' emotions and (c) to develop abilities related to emotion recognition and emotion regulation (adaptive strategies) in programs of prevention or during couple therapy sessions. Checking if they understood correctly their own and partner's emotions and intentions, and developing abilities related to recognizing emotions may make them better able to understand how they and their partners are feeling, why they are feeling in that way, which is the need or desire aroused by those emotions and how to behave. Likewise, they would avoid behaviors that may contribute to a decrease in dyadic satisfaction. Moreover, it is important to teach romantic partners to use adaptive emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal, cognitive emotion regulation, emotion expression) for regulating those emotions recognized. In other words, we suppose that teaching individuals to check and developing abilities related to emotion recognition may help them to choose more appropriate emotion regulation strategies in order to maintain their satisfying relationships. These abilities may protect them from the negative effects of a poorly emotion recognition and emotion regulation.

Much progress has been made in better understanding the predictors of dyadic satisfaction and these findings suggest exciting future research on emotional processes link and their impact on romantic relational outcomes such as dyadic satisfaction. This review offers a starting point for this research area, with the hope of continuing to advance the study of emotional dynamics within romantic relationships.

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REZUMAT

Articolul de față prezintă o analiză a predictorilor satisfacției diadice, punând accentul pe două procese emoționale: recunoașterea și reglarea emoțiilor. Începem printr-o scurtă prezentare a predictorilor și variabilelor asociate cu satisfacția diadică. Continuăm cu prezentarea unor clarificări conceptuale pentru cele două procese emoționale, ca mai departe să prezentăm studii recente ale legăturii dintre recunoașterea emoțiilor și satisfacția diadică și respectiv a relației dintre reglarea emoțiilor și satisfacția diadică. În următoarea secțiune, se aduc argumente pentru o posibilă relație între toate cele trei variabile (recunoașterea emoțiilor, reglarea lor și satisfacția diadică a partenerilor). În final, sugerăm anumite implicații clinice ale recunoașterii și reglării emoționale pentru psihoterapia de cuplu și recomandăm aspecte teoretice și metodologice care pot fi studiate în viitor pentru a înțelege mai bine dinamica emoțională a relațiile romantice.