Presentation Abstract

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Relational Needs Satisfaction Profiles: A Model-Based Clustering Study and Their Associations with Psychological Functioning

Abstract

Background and objectives Relational needs are central to Integrative Psychotherapy and closely connected to Transactional Analysis traditions concerned with relational patterns, attachment, and psychological functioning. However, their empirical organization at the person level, particularly in terms of relational configurations, remains underexplored. This study aimed to identify profiles of relational need satisfaction and examine whether these profiles were significantly associated with well-being, life satisfaction, neuroticism, psychological distress, internal working models of self and other, and dimensional attachment styles. Methods A model-based clustering approach was applied to a non-clinical adult sample (N = 417), using the five subscales of the Relational Needs Satisfaction Scale: authenticity, support/protection, having an impact, shared experience, and initiative from the other. Solutions from 3 to 8 clusters were compared. A five-profile solution was retained as a pragmatic balance between statistical fit, interpretability, and cluster quality (R^2 = .378; AIC = 1281; BIC = 1382; silhouette = .120). Stability was examined through split-sample validation. Key findings The five profiles showed heterogeneous sizes and partially overlapping boundaries, with modest separation indices and split-sample silhouettes of .160 and .090. The profiles included one globally high relational-needs satisfaction group, one globally low group, and three intermediate configurations. All RNSS dimensions significantly differentiated the profiles, with the strongest effect for support/protection (η^2 = .753), followed by shared experience (η^2 = .386), authenticity (η^2 = .350), initiative from the other (η^2 = .348), and having an impact (η^2 = .204). External validation analyses showed significant, although generally small-to-moderate associations with psychological and relational variables, including well-being, life satisfaction, neuroticism,

distress, models of self and other, and attachment styles. Conclusions / implications Relational needs appear to organize into empirically derived, partially overlapping configurations, reflecting a continuous and integrated structure. These findings support a dimensional, clinically nuanced understanding of relational functioning rather than a rigid categorical typology, with potential implications for assessment, case formulation, and patient-tailored interventions in integrative psychotherapy and TA-informed practice.

Professional Picture

