



Personality Risk and Protective Factors Moderate Associations of Relationship Contingent Self-Esteem with Mental Health and Relationship Outcomes

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Introduction

- Relationship Contingent Self-Esteem (RCSE) involves one basing their self-regard on the nature and outcome of their relationship (Knee, Canevello, Bush, & Cook, 2008).
- RCSE is said to occur from a thwarting of basic psychological needs, which are competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Knee et al., 2008).
- Thwarting of the needs can lead to problems feeling mastery, control, and cared for within the relationship (Hadden, Rodriguez, Knee, & Porter, 2015).
- Those high in RCSE can have lower relationship satisfaction and experience higher levels of negative emotion felt (Knee et al., 2008).
- The basic psychological needs and their correlates may have an effect on RCSE's negative influence.
- Balanced authenticity can lead to greater feelings of autonomy and relatedness (Wang, 2016).
- High self-compassion related to greater sense of functional competence (Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005).
- High anxious attachment related to low autonomy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Current Study

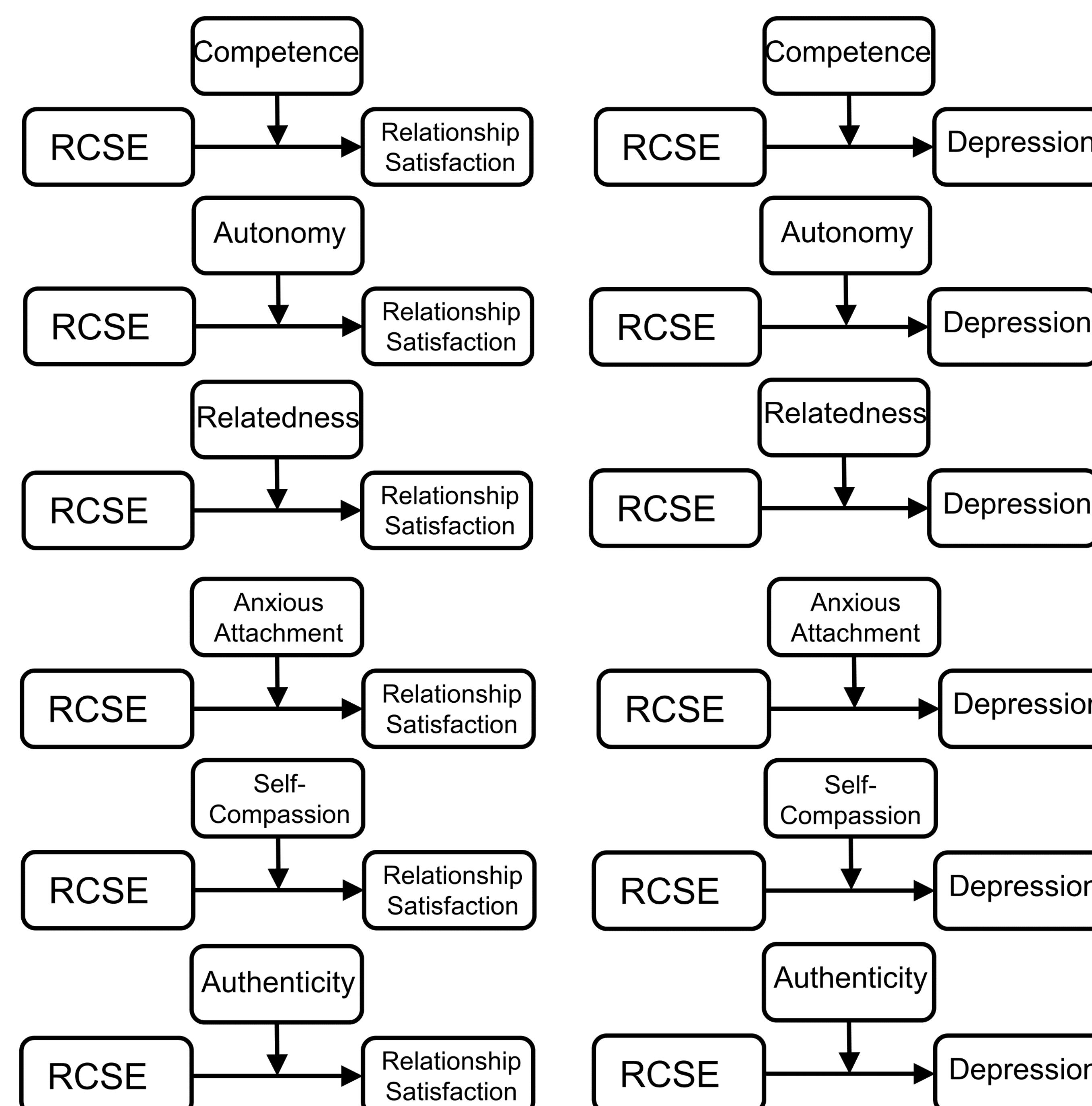
- The study examines the moderating influences of one's basic psychological needs and their correlates on the association between RCSE and depression and relationship satisfaction

Participants

Married participants ($N = 1687$; 916 females; 758 males; 5 other; 8 missing) ranging in age from 22 to 90 years old ($M = 48.7$), taken from a large sample of alumni from a private Midwestern US university.

Measures

- *Basic Psychological Needs Scale*
- *Satisfaction with Life Scale*
- *Relationship Contingent Self-Esteem Scale*
- *CES-D Scale*
- *Authenticity Scale*
- *ECR-RS General*
- *Self-Compassion Scale*



Results

- Positive association between RCSE and relationship satisfaction that becomes stronger as competence decreases (Male)
- Positive association between RCSE and depression that becomes stronger as relatedness and authentic living decrease, and as acceptance of external influences increases (Female)
- Positive association between RCSE and depression for those low in competence (Female), relatedness (Male), and autonomy
- Positive association between RCSE and depression for those high in anxious attachment and self-alienation
- Positive association between RCSE and depression for females low in self-compassion and for males high in acceptance of external influences

Discussion/Limitations/Future Directions

- As long as the basic psychological needs and their correlates are not thwarted, RCSE does not seem to influence mental health outcomes.
- Levels of RCSE do not seem to detrimentally impact relationship satisfaction.
- This study is correlational, so one cannot determine causal impact; it also may not reflect how personality factors impact other cultures, genders, and SES populations.
- Future research may test the influence of cultural differences on RCSE and the degree to which each factor influences RCSE and mental health outcomes.