

Relationship of Adult Attachment Styles, Self-Esteem and Satisfaction with Life among University Students

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Abstract--Attachment theory has provided broad vision and explanatory term for humans in understanding their performance during their childhood as well as their adulthood. The study aimed to determine the relationship of adult attachment styles, self-esteem and satisfaction with life among university students in Saudi Arabia. In this study, a survey research method and correlational research design was used. The primary data was used questionnaire and secondary data was collected through literature review. The study population were university students who living in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The sample sizes were 77 undergraduate students in Jeddah Saudi Arabia. The study had used measurement such as experiences in close relationship questionnaire-revised (ECR-R), Rosenberg self-esteem scale and the satisfaction with life style (SWLS).The data was analyzed with SPSS program. The result indicated there was negative relationship between attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance with self-esteem and satisfaction with life. In addition, there was positive relationship between self-esteem and satisfaction with life.

Keywords--Adult attachment; self-esteem; life satisfaction; students

I. INTRODUCTION

Human attachment having evolutionary basis and this attachment psychological to play a significant role in the children sense of security [1]. In addition, this attachment also defined deep emotional bond formed between infants and one or more adults which allows the infants to explore their environment, returning to the adult on distress periods [2].The attachment pattern an infant develops is depended on the nature of their caregiver's interaction with infant [3]. There are three different attachment styles including secure, anxious-amivalent and avoidant style [4].

Attachment theory has provided a broad vision and an explanatory term for humans in understanding their performance during their childhood as well as in their adulthood. This theory has led the researches in different areas of psychology, including social, developmental, and personality psychology. Relatively, adult attachment theory influences the human close relationships in general with parents, romantic partners, and friends. There are three main styles of attachment in adult attachment theory: secure, anxious, or avoidant. The individual with secure attachment tends to be trusting, confident, and having a positive self-image. In contrast, if a person's attachment was anxious, insecure and consistently has fears of rejection and abandonment of their attachment. Another insecure

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attachment is the avoidant style, in which the individual is characterized by feeling distrust in their relationships and prefers to maintain emotional distance.

Adult attachment types generally analogous to infant attachment styles which based on adult romantic or close relationships [5]. The individual with secure attachment tends to be trusting, confident and have positive self-image. In contrast, if individual attachment was anxious, he or she is insecure and consistently has fears of rejection and abandonment of their attachment. Another insecure attachment is avoidant style in which individual is characterized by feeling distrust in their relationship and prefers to maintain emotional distance. The normal and abnormal characteristics of individual are deeply impressed by their attachment patterns [6]. Adult attachment are classified as secure, preoccupied, fearful and dismissive [7].

Self-esteem is defined as positive or negative attitude toward themselves and also known as an individual's sense of self-worth [8]. Individual with high self-esteem have an important role to have formed tastes and able to communicate with the family, community and environment [9]. In general, self-esteem was approached as unidimensional construct and as personality trait stable across time within individuals but influenced between certain limits by several factors [10]. Self-esteem has always been a focus for many psychologists to research about its several factors. The self-esteem at the same time affects the psychological construction of the individual and the production of cognitive and social activities. Higher self-esteem is correlated to positive outcomes in the individual's relationships, while low self-esteem is correlated with negative outcomes in the individual's relationships.

The satisfaction with life was diverge into two streams included the "bottom-up" and "top-down" approaches [11]. Satisfaction with life is an indicator of health and general well being that contributed to general feeling of physical and mental health with correlated with greater longevity [12]. In addition, satisfaction with life also defined as satisfaction of an individual from their life which also defined as "emotional reaction of an individual to life, which is defined as work, leisure and other non-work time" [13].

Satisfaction with life also correlated with positive life outcomes such as health and longevity, hence France and the United Kingdom have begun to measure life satisfaction since 2010 and 2011, respectively to guide policy making [14]. People with high score in satisfaction with life feel live in meaningful life and shares goals and value that important for them [15]. Satisfaction with life refers to how each individual evaluate their satisfaction with life as a whole based on criterion. There are some factors that can affect one's satisfaction with life; social relationships, self-satisfaction, the performance a person plays in work or family. People who are satisfied with their life tend to have caring and supportive relationships and have a positive value of themselves, while people who are dissatisfied with their lives often experience negative effects in their relationships and their self-worth.

Kascakova et. al (2016) was conducted to a shorter Czech version of the experiences in close relationship revised scale and examine its' validation used back-translation procedure [16]. In the study, an interview was used to collect data form 1000 randomly selected Czech adolescents and adults age 15-90 years old. The short form of Czech version of the experiences in close relationship revised scale was valid to use in Czech population. The

findings indicated that participants with high scores of both the anxiety and the avoidance subscales on the ECR-R-16 tended to have lower scores on self-esteem scale.

Wongpakaran et al. (2011) had studied the validity and reliability of the experiences in close relationships questionnaire-revised (ECR-R scale) of the Thai version among 400 Thailand undergraduate students in the university of Chiang Mai [17]. In order to test the validity of Thai's ECR-R scale, the study used the extraversion scale, scale of the personality factor, trait anxiety, and self-esteem scales. For six weeks the test-retest reliability was examined using the intra-class correlation coefficient. The result concluded the correlation coefficient of the scale was 0.80. There was a negative relationship between self-esteem and anxiety subscales while a positive relationship between anxiety subscale and trait of anxiety. Besides, there was a negative relationship between avoidance subscale and extraversion.

Komitaki et al. (2015) had investigated the relationship between secure attachment style, self-efficacy, optimism, and life satisfaction [18]. There were 300 students from Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz were selected to answer questionnaire by multistage random cluster sample method. The scales of the questioner were adult attachment questionnaire, self-efficacy scale, attributional satisfaction questionnaire, and satisfaction with life scale. The result concluded that there is a multiple relationship 13 between secure attachment styles, self-efficacy and optimism and life satisfaction of students. Besides, the secure attachment is positively correlated with life satisfaction.

Moksnes et al. (2013) conducted study on the association between self-esteem and life satisfaction in Norwegian adolescents. The sample size was 1239 students aged between 13 and 18 years old. The participants were asked to respond to a survey that included the satisfaction with life scale, the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, and the adolescent stress questionnaire. The result showed that there is a positive relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction among adolescents [19].

These studies highlighted that adult attachment styles, self-esteem, and satisfaction with life are significantly correlated. These findings display that secure adult attachment positively correlated with high self-esteem and life satisfaction. Whereas, insecure adult attachment is negatively correlated with self-esteem and life satisfaction. In this study, the relationship between adult attachment styles, self-esteem and satisfaction with life among university students in Saudi Arabia was determined.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the study had used quantitative research method. The primary data was used questionnaire and secondary data was collected through literature review. The study population were university students who living in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Meanwhile, the study samples were 77 university students in Jeddah who from private and public universities. Besides, a survey research method and correlational research design was used in this study.

The measurement used to collect the data were demographic information, Rosenberg self-esteem scale, the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) and experiences in close relationships questionnaire-revised (ECR-R). The respondents were asked on age, gender, nationality and marriage status for demographic information.

Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used four point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A higher score on the scale equates with higher self-esteem. Meanwhile, SWLS was short 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgement of life judgements. The ECR-R measured individual on two subscales of attachment such as avoidance and anxiety. The data was analyzed used SPSS program.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

In Figure 1, 73 respondents (95%) were female and 4 respondents (5%) were male.

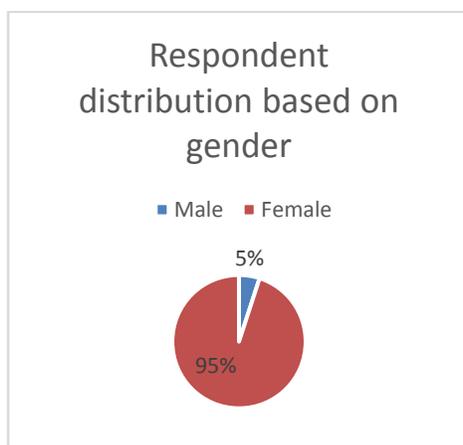


Figure 1: Respondent distribution based on gender.

In Figure 2, 10 respondents (13%) were married and 67 respondents (87%) were unmarried.

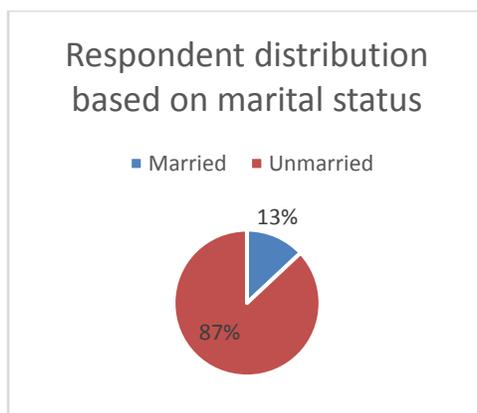


Figure 2: Respondent distribution based on marital status.

In Figure 3, 20 respondents (26%) were aged between 18 years old and 20 years old and 57 respondents (74%) were aged more than 21 years old.

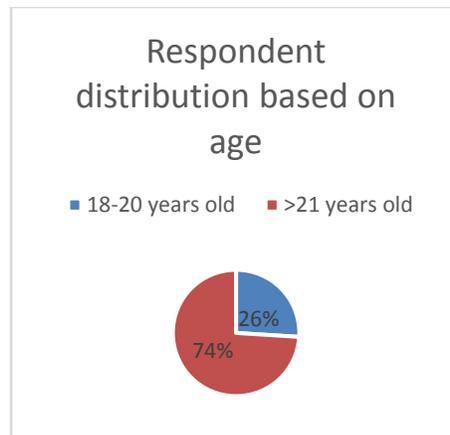


Figure 3: Respondent distribution based on age.

In Figure 4, 62 respondents (80%) were Saudi and 15 respondents (20%) were non-Saudi.

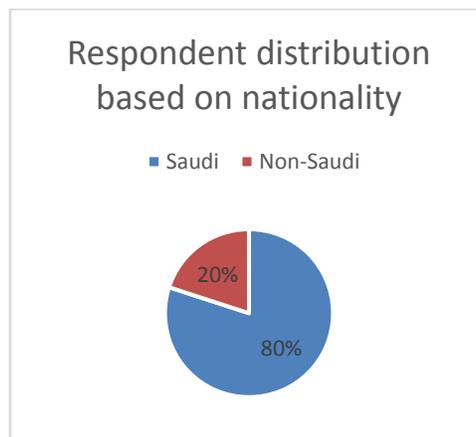


Figure4: Respondent distribution based on nationality.

In Table 1, the result indicated close relationship questionnaire-revised (ECR-R) with 36 items had a reliability of $\alpha=0.87$. Meanwhile, Rosenberg self-esteem scale contained number of 10 items displayed a reliability coefficient of $\alpha= 0.88$. In addition, reliability coefficient of satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) was $\alpha=0.83$.

Table 1:Psychometric properties of the scale (N=77)

Scale	Number of items	α
Close relationships questionnaire-revised (ECR-R)	36	0.87
Rosenberg self-esteem scale	10	0.88
Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS)	5	0.83

In Table 2, the result showed there was significant negative relationship ($p < 0.05$) between satisfaction with life and avoidance attachment. There was significant negative relationship ($p < 0.05$) between self-esteem and anxiety attachment. In addition, there was significant positive relationship ($p < 0.01$) between satisfaction with life and self-esteem. Besides, there was negative relationship between satisfaction with life and anxiety attachment. There was negative relationship between self-esteem and avoidance attachment.

Table 2: Inter-correlation of the study variable (N=77)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Attachment-related anxiety	65.57	19.55	-			
Attachment-related avoidance	54.68	17.48	0.12	-		
Satisfaction with life	19.81	7.26	-0.17	-0.24*	-	
Self-esteem	21.26	6.81	-0.25*	-0.14	0.58**	-

In Table 3, the result showed the score was higher for unmarried respondents in regard to attachment-related avoidance by $M=56.19$ compared to the score of married respondents by $M=44.50$.

Table 3: Group differences of marital status in study variables

	Married		Unmarried	
	M	SD	M	SD
Attachment-anxiety	60.80	19.81	66.38	19.56
Attachment-avoidance	44.50	15.11	56.19	17.40
Satisfaction with life	20.90	6.72	19.64	7.37
Self-esteem	22.50	6.13	21.07	6.93

Discussion

In this study, there was negative relationship between attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance with self esteem and satisfaction with life. In addition, there was positive relationship between self-esteem and satisfaction with life. The study also found unmarried respondents had more avoidant attachment than

married respondents. The people with avoidant attachment style might experienced uncomfortable with physical contact and attempt to be distance from any affectionate exchanges with their partner.

Therefore, unmarried respondents had experienced less physical contact than married respondents which more physical contact with their partner. Another finding that there was more significant negative relationship between anxiety attachment-related and self-esteem than avoidance attachment-related and self-esteem due to avoidant adults often had high positive self-esteem but negative toward others. Meanwhile, adults who characterized with anxiety attachment-related were intimacy hunger but uncertain on their worth.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the result showed there was negative relationship between anxiety and avoidance attachment-related with self-esteem and satisfaction with life. Besides, there was positive relationship between self-esteem and satisfaction with life. This study also found avoidance attachment-related score among unmarried students were higher than avoidance attachment-related score among married students. Moreover, avoidance attachment-related among the students were higher related to satisfaction with life. Meanwhile, anxiety attachment-related among the students were higher related to self-esteem.

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