

Attachment Style:

A predictor of Romantic Relationship

tendencies and Interpersonal Trust in male and female Emerging

Adults and Adults.

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Abstract

This research paper explores romantic relationships and interpersonal trust as an attachment process – a biosocial process by which affectional bonds are formed in romantic relationships and trust in other people just as the affectional bonds formed in the early preverbal stage among infant and their primary caregiver. Secure, worry-ambivalent, avoidant attachment, relational-esteem, relational-depression, relational preoccupation and Interpersonal trust in both emerging adults and adults .Gender differences were also explored. Results showed significant relationships between relational-esteem in emerging adults but not in adults. There was a significant relationship between relational-esteem and attachment-avoidant. A significant relationship between interpersonal trust and relational-esteem was found. There was no gender differences found in romantic relationship tendencies.

Introduction

Attachment Theory as developed by John Bowlby (1907- 1990) postulates the notion of epigenetic compromise between a child's attachment needs and a carer who fails to respond or who responds inappropriately (Holmes, 1993). Underpinning Bowlby's conceptual framework is the notion that human beings are born with an innate psychobiological system that motivates them to seek proximity to significant others in times of threat. Successful proximity seeking is understood to be fundamental to the anxiety buffering and physical protection functions of close relationships, which in turn is considered to promote individual capacity for affect regulation: protection from threats and alleviation of distress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). Under these conditions the child will perceive themselves to feel loved safe and secure and as a consequence according to Bowlby will exhibit confident behaviours thus being more likely to explore their environment, play with others and be sociable. It is considered that a trust / bond of a particular calibre developed between baby and parent allowing for these specific type of behaviour(s). Conversely where the primary caregiver fails to adequately meet the child's needs in times of threat i.e. attachment figure(s) are not reliably available, proximity seeking will fail to relieve perceived dangers / threats, leading to a perceived lack of physical and psychological safety being experienced by the child. Perceived unavailability of the attachment figure results in attachment insecurity with the child being unable to use other people to help them regulate their distress and arousal or to re-establish equilibrium (Bowlby, 1980).

Ainsworth (1970) expanded our understanding of Attachment Theory dynamics through reference to her seminal work on the laboratory experiment "The Strange Situation" (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) where distinct patterns or styles

of attachment were first reported. This research added substantially to the original Attachment Theory in-so-far as it provided structure and a rationale for the existence of three attachment styles capable of providing us a model to understand more about our later adult behaviours in significant relationships. The identified attachment styles fell into one of three possible categories:

Secure Attachment (Type B):

In this scenario the child is observed as being visibly upset when separated from the parent but is easily soothed upon the return greeting the parent with positive behaviour. The child is seen as being confident in exploring their environment in the presence of the parent. Parents are observed as reacting rapidly and more responsive to their children's needs. A crucial trust was seen to have been established which later studies will show to be vital in the infants future significant relationships.

Insecure Avoidant Attachment (Type A):

Here the child is seen as being both physically and emotionally independent of their attachment figures. They do not orientate to their attachment figure while discovering and investigating their surroundings. These children are likely to have a caregiver who shows characteristics of insensitivity and often rejecting the child's needs (Ainsworth, 1979) The attachment figure may withdraw from helping the child during difficult tasks (Stevenson-Hinde & Versheren, 2002).

Insecure Resistant (ambivalent) (Type C):

In this instance the child exhibits clingy and overly dependent reliance on their caregiver but will be rejecting of the attachment figure when they engage in interaction. The child often fails to develop any sort of security from the attachment figure and accordingly finds it difficult to explore their environment as they are overly preoccupied with primary caregiver. The infant is observed as being difficult to

soothe when distressed. It is theorised that this attachment style is a result of an inconsistent level of response to the needs of the infant from the primary caregiver (Howe, 2005).

A particular interest for this study is the magnitude of empirical evidence that supports the precept that infant attachment style is a reliable predictor of personal behaviour patterns in later “significant relationships”. Central to these predictive formulations is Bowlby’s (1973) concept of “Internal Working Models” of self and relationships, based on Object Relations Theory. He proposed that early experiences of sensitive or insensitive care contribute to the growth of broader representations concerning a caregiver’s accessibility and responsiveness, as well as to ones deservingness of such care (Thompson, 1999). Bowlby (1979) claimed that mental representations or schemas of the self and others formed in the context of the child-caregiver relationship carry forward to influence thoughts, and behaviours in relationships throughout the life-span.

It is hypothesised that such expectations guide future relational choices and expectations. Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first researchers to explore Bowlby’s ideas in the context of romantic relationships. Their research proposed that the emotional bond between infants and their caregivers paralleled that of adult romantic partners in that both shared feelings of being safe and secure when the other is nearby and responsive and equally both felt insecure when the other was inaccessible. On the basis of these similarities Hazan and Shaver (year) argued that romantic love is a property of the attachment behavioural system. Similar studies from Collins, (1996) showed that an individual’s perception of romantic relationships corresponded with

their respective attachment style. A study by Collins et al, (2006) showed that individuals with attachment-related anxiety responded to their partner's hypothetical negative behaviours by experiencing emotional distress and displaying negative behaviours that were likely to result in conflict. The study confirmed that feelings of anxiety and distress were attributed to attachment related needs and that attachment style predicted emotional responses.

While a large amount of research exists to describe how attachment styles can relate to adult relationships, little if any of this research was conducted using the "Emerging Adult" population.

A study by (Chappell & Davis, 1998) showed that attachment processes can influence partner choice. The participants - 282 students - had been previously classified into one of the four **[three]** attachment styles. They were then presented with scenarios that depicted a relationship with the opposite sex. The results showed that secure partners displayed more positive and less negative emotions than avoidant type attachment and when given a choice of romantic partner, secure partners were preferred to all insecure attachments. Participants with established dismissive and preoccupied attachment styles saw partners similar to themselves as more secure than did the other participants. (Bartholomew, Horowitz & Leonard, 1991) showed that attachment styles with peers were correlated with pre-existing assessment of family attachment ratings. A similar study by (Fraley & Davis, 1997) showed that attachment styles correlated with a young adults peer attachment claiming that it is these early relationships that mould how we, as adults interact and conduct ourselves in day to day interactions. Research in The Overview of Adult Attachment Theory (Shaver,

Mikulincer, 2003) lend further support to the notion of linkage between attachment style and the utility of social interaction through their findings that suggested that during adolescents and adulthood other relationships feed our need for emotional support including friends and romantic partners.

Expanding the concept of the romantic relationship is a challenge as it can be quite a different experience from person to person, from one relationship to another, gender, and age of the person. (Stenberg, 1986) suggested that broadly speaking, a romantic relationship has three components. Passion, intimacy and commitment (trust) that can vary in degree in different relationships. When these components are sustained, romantic commitments are formed, from a developmental perspective, a feeling of trust or bond is developed which is arguably a parallel condition of the bond once formed as infants with the primary caregiver but is now motivated to satisfy adult needs. Romantic attachment theorist believe that ‘the function of romantic relationships is to provide adolescents and adults with the safe haven and secure base that was first experienced as infants with their primary caregivers’ (Hazen & Shaver, 1987) though this is often outside our conscious awareness. As with adult relationships adolescent relationships may differ in the type of attachments they will form with their romantic partners (Collins & Sroufe, 1999) in that adolescents may seek a more friendship based romantic relationship while adults seek a more secure base in their romantic relationships. The quality of the emotional bond between adolescents and their parents should be a predictor of the closeness, trust and support the individual experiences in the romantic partnership. A longitudinal study by (Maysless & Sharf, 2007) showed that attachment styles can reflect an individual’s capacity for romantic intimacy and in predicting romantic intimacy in young adults.

When discussing romantic relationships it's important to look at the differences between adolescents and adult perception of relationships (Connolly & Johnson, 1996) showed that there is a significant increase in the duration of a relationship as we get older. It is suggested that this may be due to an increased capacity to maintain intimate relationships, however (Carver et al, 2003) argued that this could also be because of the difficulty of tracking the official beginning of these relationships. Language is also important to consider. Teenagers tend to use more casual, constantly changing and somewhat informal language when discussing about their personal lives, while adults tend to use less changeable and localized language. There is a vast amount of research carried out on the differences between adolescents and adults however very little research has been carried out to investigate any possible difference in relationship perspectives between emerging adults and adults. For the purposes of this research emerging adults will be classified as aged between eighteen and twenty-five years. Emerging adults differ to adolescents in they are seen as being more independent from their caregivers. They may attend college, be financially independent and have developed their own identity independent of their peers. Munsey's (2006) showed that emerging adults shared a perception of feeling "in between" knowing they were leaving the struggles of adolescent and starting to feel responsible for themselves, but still closely tied with their caregivers.

Research has suggested that men and women perceive and act differently in romantic relationships. The work of Jessie Bernard (1972) argued that men and women hold very different beliefs in relationship commitment. Similar studies (Schmidt, 2002) highlighted the different ways that men and women think and feel about relationships arguing that personality traits such agreeableness and

conscientiousness scores are much higher in women than in men resulting in the main difference in the perception of their relationship. Contrasting research suggests that while men and women may behave differently in relationships, their underlying needs and wants such as communication, passion and friendship remained the same in both genders, especially for those couples in committed relationships. (Hendrick, Hendrick & Adler, 1988) This research is consistent with the findings of attachment theory and the dynamic of internal working models suggesting that gender differences are not what determine a person's perception of their romantic relationship but rather their predisposed attachment style qualities.

In conclusion the available research surrounding Attachment Theory and its operating dynamics as explained through Internal Working Models would collectively support the notion that childhood, adolescent and initial emerging adult experiences are the important components in the later development of the individual's sense of personal safety or security in relationships generally or life-partnerships particularly. A specific goal of this research will be to uncover if the internal working models remain consistent for individuals in terms of their stability and durability as they transition from emerging adult to adult stages in the life-span.

In order to develop sound measures of what characteristics might change three measures of romantic relationships were devised and used from the wide variety of relationship questionnaires available to assess elements of romantic relationships. This research selected the use of the *Relational Assessment Questionnaire*. The purpose of this questionnaire is to measure relational aspects of the self in three different areas, *relational esteem, relational depression and relational*

preoccupation. Self-esteem is a term used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. It can involve a variety of beliefs about the self, such as appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions and behaviours. (Branden & Archibald, 1982) suggested three key components of self-esteem. The first was that self-esteem is an essential human need that is vital for survival and normal healthy development. Self-esteem arises automatically from within based on a person's beliefs and consciousness and finally, that self-esteem occurs in conjunction with a person's thoughts, behaviours, feelings and actions. This would suggest that early relationships significantly influence how we see ourselves and carry on through our lifetime. When the caregiver gives love and security to the child schemes or mental representations are formed on how they should perceive themselves and others and therefore developing healthy self-esteem and positive behaviours. Relational-esteem can therefore be defined as how favourable a person evaluates themselves within their romantic relationship. (Baumeister, Campbell & Kreuger, 2003) A study by (Murray et al, 2003) showed that those who felt appreciated by their partner were able to overcome days of acute self-doubt when compared to those who felt negatively regarded by their partner. These people were seen to internalize acute experiences of rejection resulting in feeling worse about themselves upon experiencing their partner's disaffection. This longitudinal study showed that those who value relational sources of self-esteem are more open to and affected by partner feedback. (Brennan & Bosson, 1998) completed a similar study showing how attachment style differences can predict how a person reacts to a romantic partner's feedback based on their self-esteem. Results confirmed that attachment style and relational esteem are significantly correlated.

Depression is a widely studied disorder and attracts an enormous amount of attention. It is often described as intense feelings of helplessness, worthlessness and deep sadness which are closely associated with low self-esteem. Relational depression can be defined as a tendency to evaluate ones relationship potential in a negative fashion and to feel depressed about ones capability to relate in an intimate way to a close partner (Snell & Finney, 2013) In keeping with the research a high score of relational depression should correlate with a type A attachment style exhibiting feelings of disappointment in themselves as a romantic partner. This may be attributed to insensitivity shown by their partner towards them or that they experience very low self esteem. There may also be an association between those who have a type C attachment style also. It is theorised that those who have a type C attachment style rarely experienced security from their caregiver. Empirical research by Mikulincer & Shaver (2005) showed that people with different attachment styles are likely to react emotionally to relevant events therefore it is likely to observe those with strong association with type A and C attachments will have significantly higher scores in relational depression than those who have type B attachment patterns.

Anxious or preoccupied attachment style is recognised as an infant's intense need to be in close proximity of the caregiver, requiring their full attention at all times for reassurance. A person with a working model of a anxious or preoccupied attachment feels that in order to get close to someone and have their needs met you need to be with your partner at all times. Relationship preoccupation is defined as the tendency to become absorbed in, obsessed with, and engrossed with intimate relationships, to the extent that one virtually excludes from ones mind thoughts of other matters. (Snell & Finney, 2013) In keeping with the past research, a correlation between those who

have preoccupied attachment tendencies will also score highly in relational preoccupation in both age categories and genders. There is little evidence available to suggest that gender may influence relational-esteem, relational-depression and relational-preoccupation.

Arguably a fundamental and key component in the formation of a secure attachment in any relationship is *trust*, paralleling the love and bonds established in early childhood in securely attached infants. Trust is one of the essential human values that everyone understands until they are asked to define or display it. Trust is a component that is studied in a wide variety of disciplines outside psychology such as philosophy and sociology and within psychology for example psychoanalysis, behavioural and developmental psychology. Sociologist (Lewis & Weigert, 1985) believed that trust was an internal action much like choosing, judgement, attitudes to money, family exchange and lying have central roles as a sociological reality. McKnight & Chervany (2000) viewed trust as a more a behavioural intention. A Freudian approach would believe that trust is a psychical representation in our unconscious which has been given a meaning through the binding of language or word presentation. While it is clear that there is difficulty in defining trust most disciplines would agree fundamentally with (Rousseau et al 1998) definition that trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another. This definition highlights that trust is not a behaviour or a choice, but an underlying psychological condition that can cause and result from our actions. Rotters (1967) Interpersonal Trust Scale is designed to measure ones expectations that the behaviour, promise or (verbal or written) statements of other individuals can be relied upon. (Robinson,

Shaver and Wrightsman, 1991) offer an interesting view on trust considering it to be a facet of personality that develops early in life and remains relatively stable through adolescence and adult life circumstances permitting. This theory is strengthened when we look at basic attachments and the strange situation experiment. Trust is something that we are predisposed to have if the environment allows. In Rotters (1980) paper “Interpersonal trust, trustworthiness and gullibility” he suggests that those who trust more are more likely to be happy. The high trustees are seen as less conflicted or maladjusted and are more likely to be sought out as friend. These characteristics are correlated with the characteristics of relationships we once developed as infants. It is anticipated that this research will show a correlation between relational esteem and high levels of interpersonal trust in those with a type B attachment styles. An interesting study by (Chariss et al, 2014) aimed to investigate whether gender and adult attachment styles influenced ones tendency to commit dating infidelity. It was found that those with avoidant attachment style were the most likely to commit all types of infidelity compared to those with secure or anxious attachments. It is possible therefore that those with type A attachment dispositions will score much lower in the interpersonal trust but score high in relational-depression. There is very little research carried out into investigating if interpersonal trust remains consistence in all stages of our life.

Although Bowlby’s internal working models propose that schemas as developed in early childhood interactions directly influence how we relate to other people and in future romantic relationships later in life, nevertheless there is a paucity of research to elucidate the relationship between interpersonal trust can and the prevailing attachment style and how might trust, attachment and romantic relationships be

related to one another. The aim of this research is to investigate the relationships between these three variables and how they are related to one another.

Methodology

Participants: The sample is selected using a convenience sample method.

All students attend the same college. Students are asked to identify whether they are male or female and their corresponding age bracket. This information is later used to identify any common or reoccurring themes in both groups. The sample is obtained from both full-time and part-time students. The emerging adult group age ranged from eighteen to twenty-five. (Emerging adult's n=, Male n= 26, female n= 20) The participants older than twenty-five are placed in the adult group. (Adult group n= 45, Male n= 28, Female n=17)

Group 1: 18-26 years (Emerging Adults)

Group 2: 26+ years (Adult)

Design: A between groups quantitative correlational design.

The Criterion Variable: Gender and Age

The Predictor Variable: Measure of Attachment Qualities, The Relational Assessment Questionnaire and The Interpersonal Trust Scale.

A between-group correlational is employed when looking at gender differences.

Correlation is employed when looking at the relationships between the variables.

Independent T-Test is employed when looking at gender differences in Relationship variables.

Materials: Relational Assessment Questionnaire, Interpersonal Trust Scale, and Measure of Attachment Qualities,

Relational Assessment Questionnaire: Snell, W. E., Jr., & Finney, P. D. (1993)
(Refer to Appendix 1)

The purpose of this measure is to obtain an understanding of the three relational aspects of the self. Relational-esteem, relational-depression and relational-preoccupation. Relational-esteem can be described as a subject's ability to positively determine their ability to be intimate with another person. Relational-depression is described as feeling down or depressed when reflecting on their relationship and the final aspect. Relational-preoccupation is the tendency to be highly obsessed with thoughts about intimate relationships. There are thirty-one questions to be answered. With a likert scale of A to E. 'A' being "not at all characteristic of me" and 'E' referring to "very characteristic of me" All participants are encouraged to answer every question even if they are unsure and to answer them with complete honesty. Questions such as "I am a good partner for an intimate relationship" aim to assess the participants relational esteem whereas questions such as "I don't daydream much about intimate relationships" aim to assess a subject's relational-preoccupation. The reliability analysis provided evidence for each scale's internal consistency and stability. The convergent and discriminant validity of the RAQ was indicated through results showing that relational-esteem, relational-depression, and relational-preoccupation were related in predictable ways to interpersonal involvement and attraction. The scoring of the relational assessment questionnaire is as follows. A = 0, B = 1, C = 2, D = 3 and E = 4. Items number 9,21,24,27 and 30 are reverse coded.

Items are added according to the questionnaires instructions to give the subscale scores.

The Interpersonal Trust Scale: Rotter J.B (1967) (Refer to Appendix 2)

Rotter described a scale for interpersonal trust as “an expectancy held by an individual or group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon” (pg 651). The components of this scale aim to measure trust towards institutions, perceived sincerity of others and need to be cautious of others. This scale includes twenty-five questions all of which are answered using a 1-5 likert scale.

Questions such as “parents are likely to keep their promises” and “One is better off being cautious when dealing with strangers until they have provided evidence that they are trustworthy” aim to measure a persons level of trust in others. Test-retest reliability across an average time interval of 7 months, is .56 ($p > .01$) across a three month interval, the test retest figure is .68. Studies have provided evidence for the scales construct validity reflecting family background, social class and religion. Items are recoded and scores are totalled to give the interpersonal trust score. Higher scores indicate greater Interpersonal Trust.

Measure of Attachment Qualities: Carver, C. S. (1997) (Refer to Appendix 3)

This is a measure of adult attachment patterns. This scales within this questionnaire aim to assess three attachment style tendencies. Secure attachment tendencies, avoidant tendencies and aspects of anxious ambivalent patterns. For example, qualities of ambivalence will score higher in worry than those with qualities of a secure attachment. There are fourteen questions all of which are answered using a 1-4

likert scale. Questions include “When I’m close to someone, it gives me a sense of comfort about life in general” “It feels relaxing and good to be close to someone” Both of these questions would suggest a secure attachment style.

Participants are asked to complete the questionnaire with honesty by expressing how much they agree or disagree with each statement. Predictor of Avoidance .80, Ambivalence- Worry .69, Ambivalence-Merger .69, and Security .61

Items 4,8,and 9 are reverse coded. The scores are added up according the questionnaire instructions to give the total score for each subscale.

Apparatus: All groups required a quiet classroom equipped with a desk and a pen needed to complete the information packs.

A coversheet providing a brief summary of the survey. (Refer to appendix 4)

A debriefing form was attached to each information pack. (Refer to appendix 5)

SPSS is used to complete statistical analysis.

Procedure: Piloting of the questionnaires is carried out to provide an estimation on how long it will take to complete the questionnaire pack and to eliminate any possible procedure questions that may arise during the data collection.

Permission to carry out research by the respective lectures is obtained before the information packs were issued via student email. Student courses were selected by sample convenience methods excluding any psychology courses. This is to obtain results that are not influenced by their course work.

A verbal introduction is given to each group before issuing the questionnaires and an opportunity to ask questions before and after the completion of the information packs are provided. The questionnaires are arranged to avoid priming. Adult Attachment Questionnaire is placed last. The sequences of information packs issued to both full time and part-time students were as followed.

1. Permission for consent and a cover sheet.
2. Relational assessment Questionnaire, The Impersonal Trust Scale and The Measure of Attachment Qualities.
3. Debrief Form.

The study requires the completion of the questionnaires described in the above materials section. Both sessions are conducted in similar classroom conditions. The students are instructed to

1. Complete the questionnaires in the order in which they are presented in the pack
2. Questions on points of clarification are allowed.
3. Answers should be based on initial thoughts
4. Request no talking or conferring.

The information is collected and analysed for statistical analysis.

SPSS participants are identified as follows..

Males are identified as 1

Females are identified as 2

Emerging adults are identified as 1

Adults are identified as 2.

Results

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the Gender of participants

Gender	Frequency
Male	55
Female	37
Total	92

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Age of participants

Age	Frequency
Emerging Adults (18-25 years)	46
Adults (26+)	49
Total	92

The frequency tables 1 and 2 show the number of males and females who participated and how their corresponding age category. (Emerging adult's n = 46, males, n = 26, females n = 20) (Adult group n = 49, Males n = 28, Females n = 17)

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Measures in Emerging Adults

Variable	N	Mean	Std.Dev
ITS Sum	46	88.07	10.63
RAQ Esteem	46	15.13	4.49
RAQ Depression	46	13.56	7.61
RAQ Preoccupation	46	16.52	5.91
MAQ Securely	46	9.93	1.85
MAQ Amb Worry	46	7.30	2.32
MAQ Amb Merger	46	4.50	2.08
MAQ Avoidance	46	10.74	13.01

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Measures in Adults

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
ITS Sum	45	82.40	9.59
RAQ Esteem	45	15.76	4.21
RAQ Depression	45	9.62	8.24
RAQ Preocc	45	16.18	6.37

MAQ Securely	45	9.6	2.05
MAQ Amb Worry	45	6.02	2.23
MAQ Amb Merger	45	6.58	1.70
MAQ Avoidance	45	11.16	3.29

The descriptive statistics show that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the emerging adult and adult group for all psychological measures.

Table 5 An Independent Samples T-test on Gender, Relational Esteem, Depression and Preoccupation.

Variable	Groups	Mean	SD	t	df	P
RAQ Esteem	Male	16.33	4.59	2.47	89	.009
	Female	14.14	3.67	2.54	89	.007
RAQ Depression	Male	12.30	8.86	.95	89	.173
	Female	10.65	6.92	.99	89	.162
RAQ Preoccupation	Male	13.94	5.53	1.92	89	.029
	Female	11.65	5.71	1.91	89	.03

The mean of relational esteem in males ($M = 16.33$, $SD = 4.49$) is not significantly higher ($t = 2.47$, $DF = 89$, one-tailed $p = .009$) than that of females ($M = 14.14$, $SD = 4.59$)

Relational depression in males ($M = 12.30$, $SD = 8.86$) is not significantly higher ($t = 8.86$, $DF = 89$, one-tailed $p = .173$) than that of females ($M = 10.65$, $SD = 6.92$)

The mean of relational preoccupation in females ($M = 11.65$, $SD = 5.71$) is not significantly higher ($t = 1.91$, $DF = 89$, one-tailed $p = .03$)

The hypothesis predicted that there is no significant difference in Relational Assessment scores between genders is accepted.

Table 7 A Pearson's Correlation between Relational Esteem, Secure, Ambivalent Worry and Avoidance Attachment scores in Emerging Adults

Variable	Variable name	Variable name	Variable name	Variable name
	RAQ Esteem	MAQ Securely	MAQ Worry	MAQ Avoid
RAQ Esteem	1	.289	-.145	-.424
MAQ Securely	.289	1	.284	-.619
MAQ Worry	-.145	.284	1	.063
MAQ Avoidance	-.424	-.619	0.63	1

There is significant positive relationship between relational esteem and secure attachment ($r = .29$, $DF = 44$, $p = 0.026$). Participants who exhibited a higher level of relational esteem also exhibited higher levels of attachment security. The hypothesis

that those who score high in relational esteem will also obtain high scores in attachment security is accepted in the emerging adult group.

There is no significant negative relationship between relational esteem and ambivalent worry attachment style. ($r = -.15$, $DF = 44$, $p = .169$) The hypothesis is rejected that those with high scores of relational esteem will score low in ambivalent worry attachment style in the emerging adult group.

There is a significant negative relationship between relational esteem and avoidant attachment style at the 0.001 significance level. ($r = -.42$, $DF = 44$, $p = .002$) Participants who exhibited high relational esteem showed significantly lower scores of avoidant attachment. The hypothesis that participants who score highly in relational esteem will score lower in avoidant attachment is accepted in the emerging adult group.

Table 8. A Pearson's Correlation between Relational Esteem and Secure, Ambivalence Worry, and Avoidance Attachment scores in Adults

Variable	Variable name	Variable name	Variable name	Variable name
	RAQ Esteem	MAQ Securely	MAQ Worry	MAQ Avoid
RAQ Esteem	1	.104	.025	-.323
MAQ Securely	.104	1	-.202	-.362
MAQ Worry	.025	-.202	1	.170
MAQ Avoid	-.323	-.362	.170	1

There is not a significant relationship between relational esteem and secure attachment in adults ($r = .104$, $DF = 43$, $p = .248$). Participants who exhibited a higher level of relational esteem did not exhibit high levels of attachment security. The hypothesis that those who score high in relational esteem will also obtain high scores in attachment security is rejected in the adult participants.

A significant relationship between relational esteem and ambivalent-worry attachment was not found in the adult group. ($r = .025$, $DF = 43$, $p = .436$) The hypothesis that those with high scores of relational esteem will score low in ambivalent-worry attachment is rejected in the adult participants.

There was a significant negative relationship between relational esteem and those who obtained higher scores in avoidant-attachment. ($r = -.323$, $DF = 43$, $p = .015$). The hypothesis that those who score high in relational esteem will score low in avoidant attachment style is accepted.

Table 9 A Pearson's Correlation between Relational-Esteem, Relational-Depression, Relational-Preoccupation, Secure Attachment, Worry-Ambivalent Attachment, Avoidant Attachment and Interpersonal Trust in Emerging Adults.

Variable	Variable Names						
	ITS Sum	RAQ Esteem	RAQ Depre	RAQ Preocc	MAQ Securely	MAQ worry	MAQ Avoid
ITS Sum	1	-.049	.007	.026	.165	.024	-.053
RAQ Esteem	-.049	1	-.492	.108	.289	-.145	-.422
RAQ Depression	.007	-.492	1	.076	-.216	.367	.461
RAQ Preocc	.026	.108	.076	1	.378	.514	.292
MAQ Securely	.165	.289	-.216	.378	1	.284	-.619
MAQ Worry	.024	-.145	.367	.514	.284	1	.063
Avoidance	-.053	-.424	.461	-.292	-.619	.063	1

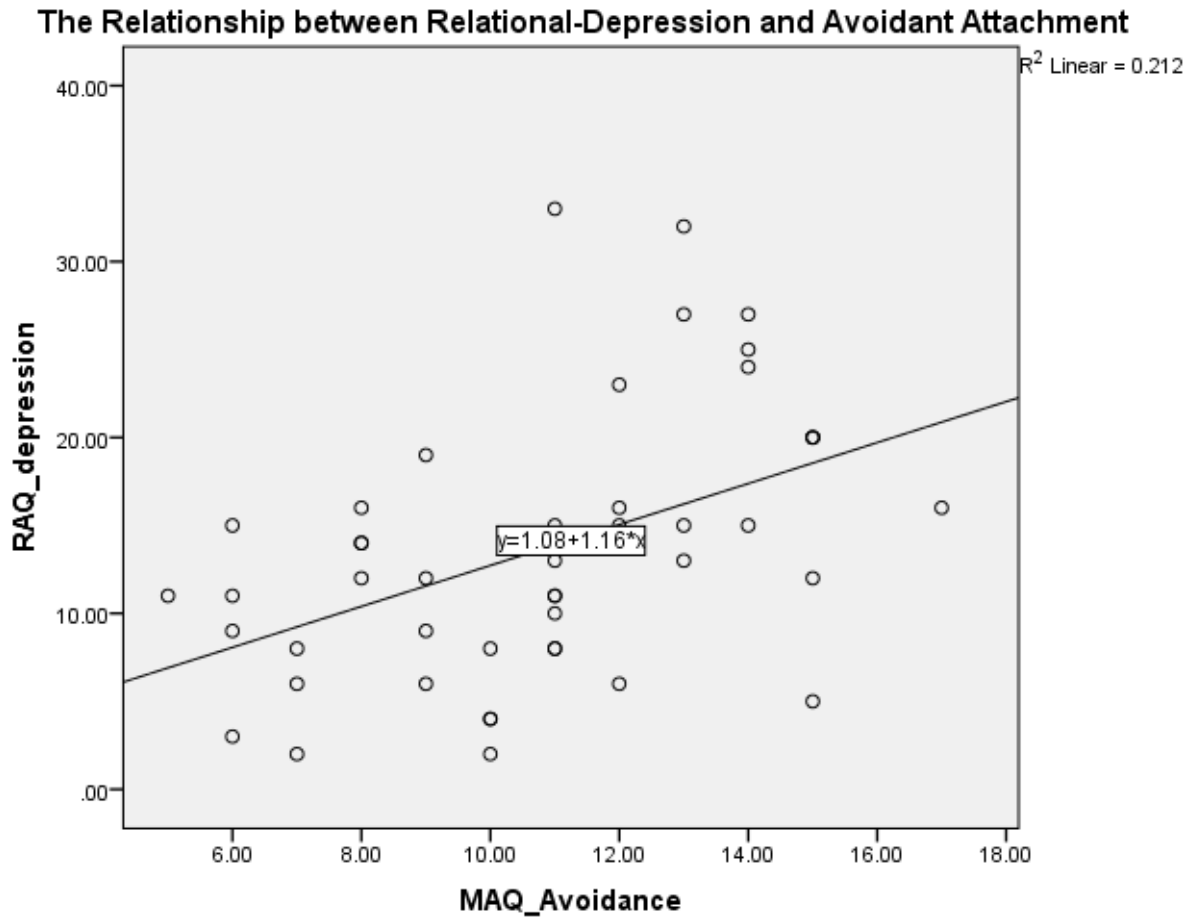
There was a significant positive relationship found in relational depression and avoidant attachment at the 0.01 significance level. ($r = .461$, $DF = 44$, $p = 0.001$) Those who exhibit high levels of relational depression will score high in avoidant attachment styles in emerging adults. The hypothesis that there is a relationship between type A attachment and relational depression is accepted.

A Pearson's correlation showed that there is no significant relationship between interpersonal trust and relational esteem ($r = -.049$, $DF = 44$, $p = .746$). The hypothesis that there is a relationship between interpersonal trust and relational esteem is rejected in the emerging adult age bracket.

There was no significant relationship found between interpersonal trust and avoidant attachment styles in emerging adults ($r = .052$, $DF = 44$, $p = .727$). The hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between interpersonal trust and avoidant attachment is rejected.

There was no significant correlation found between interpersonal trust and relational depression. ($r = .007$, $DF = 44$, $p = .964$) The hypothesis predicts a significant relationship between interpersonal trust and relational-depression is rejected.

Figure 1 A Scatter-plot graph to show the relationship between Relational-Depression and Avoidant Attachment in Emerging Adults



The scatter-plot shows the significant relationship between Relational Depression and Avoidant Attachment in emerging adults.

Table 10 A Pearson's Correlation between Relational-Esteem, Relational-Depression, Relational-Preoccupation, Secure Attachment, Worry-Ambivalent Attachment, Avoidant Attachment and Interpersonal Trust in Adults.

Variable	Variable Names						
	ITS Sum	RAQ Esteem	RAQ Depre	RAQ Preocc	MAQ Securely	MAQ worry	MAQ Avoid
ITS Sum	1	-.353	.168	-.160	-.012	.093	.331
RAQ Esteem	-.352	1	-.223	.047	.104	.025	-.323
RAQ Depression	.163	-.223	1	.168	-.017	.443	.268
RAQ Preoccu	-.160	.047	.168	1	.288	.161	-.104
MAQ Securely	-.012	.104	-.017	.288	1	-.202	-.362
MAQ Worry	.093	.025	.443	.161	-.202	1	.170
Avoidance	.331	-.322	.268	-.104	-.363	.170	1

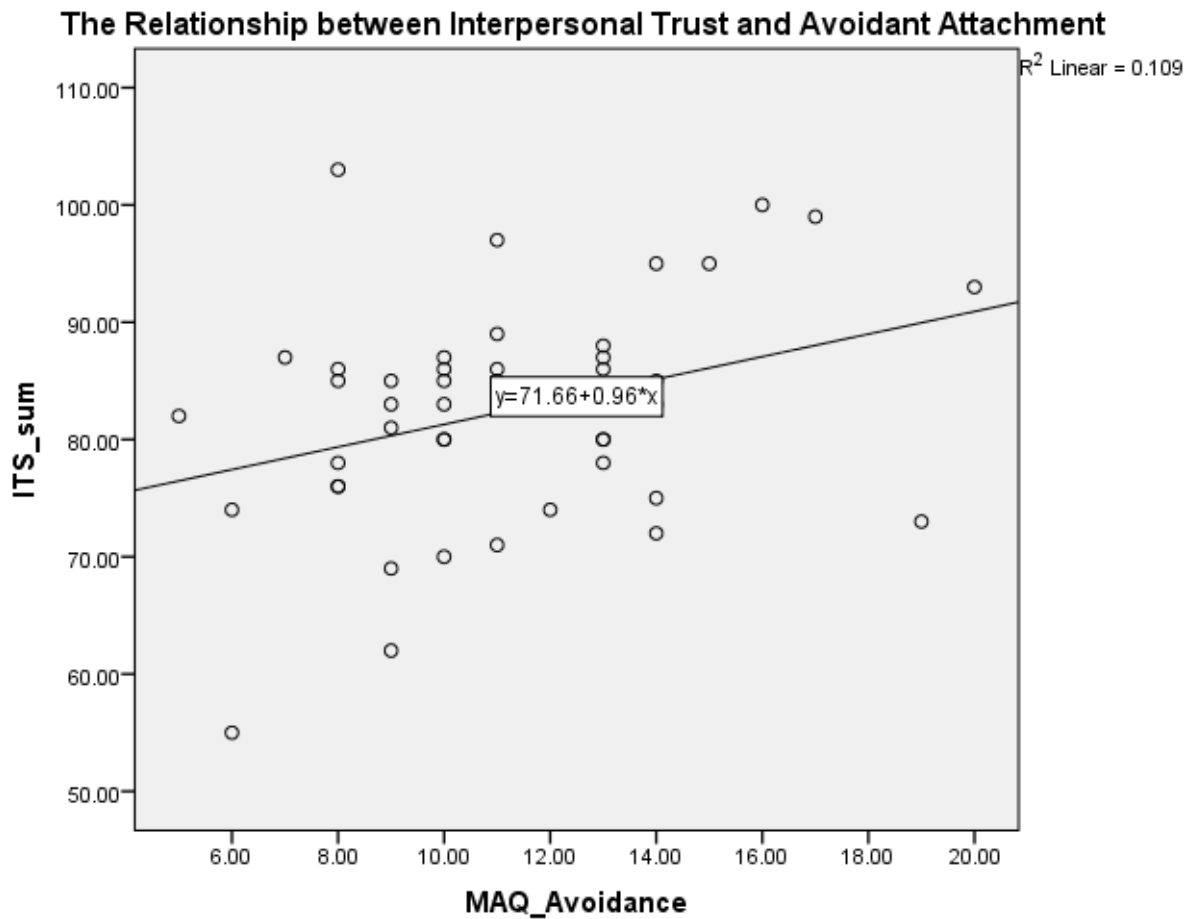
A Pearson's Correlation found there was a significant negative relationship between interpersonal trust and relational esteem. ($r = -.352$, $DF = 43$, $p = .018$) The hypothesis that there is a relationship between relational esteem and interpersonal trust is accepted.

There was a significant relationship found between interpersonal trust and type A attachment (avoidant) ($r = .331$, $DF = 43$, $p = .026$) Those with a high interpersonal trust score will score high in avoidant attachment style. The hypothesis that there is a relationship between interpersonal trust and type A attachment is accepted.

There was no significant relationship found in the adult group between avoidant attachment and relational depression. ($r = .268$, $DF = 43$, $p = .030$) The hypothesis that there is a relationship between type A attachment and relational depression is rejected on the adult group.

There was no significant correlation found between interpersonal trust and relational depression. ($r = .163$, $DF = 43$, $p = .285$). The hypothesis predicted a significant relationship between interpersonal trust and relational-depression is rejected.

Figure 2 A Scatter-plot graph to show the Relationship between Interpersonal Trust and Avoidant Attachment in Adult group.



The scatter-plot shows the positive correlation between Interpersonal Trust and Avoidant Attachment styles in adults.

Discussion

The primary focus of this research was to identify if there was a relationship between attachment styles, romantic relationship tendencies and the ability to trust other people and to investigate if these relationships remained consistent in emerging adults and adults. The second aim was to identify any differences in romantic relationship tendencies between males and females. By conducting the study in correlational conditions this study yielded several significant relationships between the groups in question and confirmed several hypotheses mentioned in this research.

Previous research by (Hendrick, Hendrick & Adler, 1988) had hypothesised that gender did not affect ones relationship tendencies. Conducting an independent sample T-test (table 5) confirmed that the hypothesis pertaining to gender did not influence ones relation-esteem, relational-depression and relational-preoccupation in emerging adults and adults. Bowlby's (1973) concept of internal working models could offer an explanation for this result that the schemas developed between infant and primary caregiver had a more significant role in the participants relationship tendencies. Research by (Barrett & Feldman, 2000) showed how internal working models can have a significant affect on ones relational variables. A Pearson's correlation (table 7) was carried out to identify if perhaps attachment tendencies were more influential in determining ones relationship variables. The results showed a significant relationship between relational-esteem and secure attachment confirming the hypothesis that there is a relationship between attachment and relational esteem. Those who perceive themselves as being favourable in their romantic relationship were significantly associated with secure attachment. The hypothesis is further supported when a

Pearson's correlation (table 7) showed a significant negative relationship between relational-esteem and ones measure of avoidant attachment. A study by (Feeney & Noller, 1990) showed that avoidant and worry ambivalent attached subjects were more likely to show less desirable relational beliefs than those who were securely attached. The results of this research did not show a significant relationship between relational-esteem and worry-ambivalent attachment. The hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between ambivalent-worry attachment and relational-esteem is rejected. This may be because of the Relational Assessment Questionnaire used in this research measures for two different types of attachment ambivalence. (Ambivalence-worry and ambivalence-merger) These two attachments have very similar characteristics. Both attachments are related to anxiety (Carver, 1997) however ambivalent merger attachment is an anxiety based on an intense desire for romantic relationships. Perhaps a single measure for attachment anxiety would have confirmed a significant relationship attachment and relational-esteem. There was no significant relationship found in relational-esteem and attachment security in the adult age group. In keeping with research by (Connolly & Johnson, 1996) the duration of romantic relationships in adults tends to be longer than that of the younger age bracket. Most adult participants reported that they were in a current relationship in the Relational Assessment Questionnaire. Perhaps relational esteem does not remain consistent in adult long-term relationships as is does in emerging adults despite their attachment tendencies. Further qualitative research is recommended to investigate this more. Qualitative research could provide a clearer understand into these results and help establish what other variables may have influenced this result.

Table 9 showed a significant positive relationship between relation-depression and avoidant-attachment. Bowlby suggested that infants who do not feel physically or

psychologically close to their primary caregiver can experience feelings of depression or despair. The relationship between relational-depression and avoidant-attachment would support the theory that adult attachment can affect romantic relationship tendencies. This research supports the hypothesis that there is significant relationship between relational-depression and avoidant-attachment scores in emerging adults. A similar result was not found in the adult group. Perhaps an explanation for this is that perceived feelings are expressed in a more intensified manner at a younger age as explained by (Carver et al, 2003). Another explanation may be that attachment tendencies do not remain constant throughout the life span contrary to past research. A longitudinal study is recommended to investigate if the emerging adults of an avoidant-attachment tendency will obtain similar results when retested. The hypothesis predicted a correlation between interpersonal trust and relational-esteem. There was no relationship between these two variables in the emerging adult group suggesting that how one evaluates themselves in their romantic relationship does not affect how they trust people of authority, peers and their parents. Rotter's claims in his (1980) "Interpersonal Trust, trustworthiness and gullibility" that those who trust more are more likely to be happy. Possible explanation for these results may be that the happiness felt does not apply to one romantic relationships. A trust scale that is more specific to romantic relationships is recommended to investigate if trust and relational-esteem are positively correlated. It is also recommended that a scale measuring parental trust should be used to investigate any correlations between relational-esteem and trust based on their attachment style. In the adult group a negative correlation between interpersonal trust and relational esteem was found. This suggests that as interpersonal trust increases, relational-esteem decreases. This result would suggest that attachment has a more significant role in ones relationship

tendencies than it would in their ability to trust. Further qualitative research is recommended into investigating how adults evaluate themselves in romantic relationships to identify any reoccurring themes that can explain why it does not affect their ability to trust other people.

(Chariss et al, 2014) conducted studies that showing a significant relationship between those with avoidant-attachment styles are more likely to commit all types of relationship infidelity. It was hypothesised that avoidant-attachment and relational depression would have a significant positive relationship. This hypothesis is accepted in the adult group but not in the emerging adult group. A possible explanation for this is that most adults based their answering of the Relational Assessment Questionnaire on their current relationships while the more emerging adults based their answers on imagined relationships. It is possible that the adult results gave the research a more realistic result than the imagined experiences in the emerging adult group. Further research is needed in the emerging adult age group to identify any other factors that may influence these results.

There was no significant correlation found between relational-depression and interpersonal trust in both age groups. The prediction that a relationship would be found between these two variables is rejected. The research suggests that although one may feel depressed about their romantic relationship it does not influence their ability to trust other people. A questionnaire that measures relational trust is recommended to identify if relational depression and relational are significantly correlated. Further qualitative research may provide more clues as to why these results were found and a better understanding of how these variables are related to one another.

Some important hypothesis predictions were accepted in this research, others were found to be rejected despite extensive research based on past studies. A detailed examination of the research limitations could offer some reasons as to why some of the findings were unsuccessful. The Relational Assessment Questionnaire offers the participant to answer if they have based their answers on a current, past or imagined romantic relationship. It was difficult to control for this question and answers may have influenced the participants results. Future application of this questionnaire should consider placing all those in current, past and imagined relationship into separate categories before statistical analysis is carried out. Alternatively, participants could be asked to answer the questionnaire on three occasions based on a current, past and imagined relationship before analysing any possible correlations with other variables.

The Interpersonal Trust Scale is a scale that aims to measure one's trust in authority figures, peers and family members. This scale was developed in 1967. The introduction for a more modern scale is recommended to include questions that are more relative to modern day society but still measuring the variable in question.

The Measure of Attachment Questionnaire measured two types of anxiety related attachments, worry-ambivalent attachment and merger-ambivalent attachment. It is possible that if the combination of these two attachments into one anxiety attachment variable may have shown more favourable results. It is recommended that an adult attachment scale that measures secure attachment, anxiety attachment and avoidant attachment is used in the future replication of this research.

All Ninety-two participants were third level students attending the same college. This convenience sample may have attributed to unfavourable results. A wider variety of participants from different backgrounds within the required age brackets is

recommended to control for this limitation. A larger sample size may have also given this research a more significant result.

There was difficulty in maintaining no discussion amongst the participants in both age categories. Conferring amongst the participants may have influenced the results on each questionnaire in the questionnaire pack. Participants who provided their age and gender but did not complete any of the questionnaires were excluded for the research.

This research provided a quantitative understanding of the relationship between measures of attachment, relational tendencies and interpersonal trust. It did not control for external influences such as adverse life experiences. The introduction of qualitative questions and the option to offer more information to any of the above mentioned questionnaire is recommended to identify any reoccurring themes that may have influenced the participant's results.

The majority of the past research on adult attachment, relationship tendencies and their interaction were completed in America, Australia or England. This research offers an insight into how these relate to one another in Irish third level students. Similarly, there is an extensive amount of past research completed on adults and adolescents in this area of psychology. This research provides us with a better understand of how attachment frameworks interact with relational tendencies and interpersonal trust in the emerging adult category.

Research into the validity and reliability of all questionnaires before selecting them was carried out to obtain accurate results. Questionnaires were carefully selected to ensure they measured what was required for this research. For example, the selection of the Relational Assessment Questionnaire measured for similar characteristics found

in The Measure of Attachment questionnaire. The Measure of Attachment questionnaire was placed last in the questionnaire pack to avoid priming.

All psychology students were avoided in the selection of participants. This was to control for biased answers based on their knowledge of Attachment Theory and Internal Working Models giving this research more accurate results. The gender and age of the sample were evenly distributed to avoid any bias results.

All participants answered the questionnaire pack in similar classroom conditions. This was to control for any environmental influences that may have affected the participant's answers. Piloting of the questionnaire pack was carried out to provide the lecturer with an accurate estimation of the time needed to complete the surveys. Time was allocated for any points of clarification and to allow students ask any questions.

Empirical evidence has shown the importance of attachment in the development of internal working models and how they affect later relationships. The Psychological Society of Ireland has recently set up attachment based work shops to provide people with an understanding of its importance of attachment in family based therapy as well as in psychotherapy. This research could be used in the possible development of workshops to equip parents with the skills to form secure attachment with their infant and to demonstrate the implications of attachment styles on relational tendencies and interpersonal trust. An awareness of relational tendencies may also lead to relationship improvements. This research identified that there is a need for more research on emerging adults. It is hoped that more research will be carried out in the future to explain the interaction of attachment, relationship tendencies and interpersonal trust.

Although trust is fundamentally important in the development of a secure attachment this research shows that it may not be as influential in the development of trust in other people in later life.

Descriptive statistics and an Independent Samples T-test identified that there are no mean differences found in all psychological measures in male or female, emerging adults and adult age group. Further correlational analysis found that there is a significant relationship found between relational-esteem and secure attachment, relation-esteem and avoidant attachment and finally relational-depression and avoidant-attachment in emerging adults. Significant correlations were found in relational esteem and worry-ambivalent attachment, relational-esteem and avoidant-attachment, relational-depression and avoidant attachment, and interpersonal trust and avoidant attachment style. This shows that attachment significantly influences aspects of our romantic relationships in both emerging adults and adults and how attachment can relate to interpersonal trust in adults suggesting that there are differences in relational tendencies and ability to trust in emerging adults and adults.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Instrument Title: The Relational Assessment Questionnaire (RAQ)

Instrument Author: Snell, W. E., Jr., & Finney, P. D.

Cite instrument as: Snell, W. E., Jr., & Finney, P. D. . (2013) . The

Relational Assessment Questionnaire (RAQ). Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Science. Retrieved from www.midss.ie

Relationship Survey Instructions: Please read each item carefully and decide to what extent it is characteristics of your feelings and behaviours. Give each item a rating of how much it applies to you by using the following scale:

A = Not at all characteristic of me.

B = Slightly characteristic of me.

C = Somewhat characteristic of me.

D = Moderately characteristic of me.

E = Very characteristic of me.

1. I am a good partner for an intimate relationship.

2. I am depressed about the relationship aspects of my life.
3. I think about intimate relationships all the time.
4. I am better at intimate relationships than most other people.
5. I feel good about myself as an intimate partner.
6. I think about close relationships more than anything else.
7. I sometimes have doubts about my relationship competence.
8. I am disappointed about the quality of my close relationship.
9. I don't daydream very much about intimate relationships.
10. I am not very sure of myself in close relationships.
11. I cannot seem to be happy in intimate relationships.
12. I tend to be preoccupied with close relationships.
13. I think of myself as an excellent intimate partner.
14. I am less than happy with my ability to sustain an intimate relationship.
15. I'm constantly thinking about being in an intimate relationship.
16. I would rate myself as a "poor" partner for a close relationship.
17. I feel down about myself as an intimate partner.
18. I think about intimate relationships a great deal of the time.

19. I am confident about myself as a relationship partner.
20. I feel unhappy about my interpersonal relationships.
21. I seldom think about being involved in a close relationship.
22. I am not very confident about my potential as an intimate partner.
23. I feel pleased with my love relationships.
24. I hardly ever fantasize about highly intimate relationships.
25. I sometimes doubt my ability to maintain a close relationship.
26. I feel sad when I think about my intimate experiences.
27. I probably think about love relationships less often than most people.
28. I have few doubts about my capacity to relate to an intimate partner.
29. I am not discouraged about myself as a loving partner.
30. I don't think about intimate relationships very often.
31. I have responded to the above based on
 - (A) A current relationship
 - (B) A past relationship
 - (C) An imagined relationship

Scoring Instructions for The Relational Assessment Questionnaire (RAQ):

The Relational Assessment Questionnaire consists of the following three scales:

1. Relational Esteem (Items 1, 4, 5, 13, 19, 28, 29)
2. Relational-Depression: (Items 2, 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 20, 22, 25, 26)
3. Relational-Preoccupation: (Items 3, 6, 9, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30)

Each scale is added to give total score.

Coding Instructions for RAQ

First, the items designated with (R) are reverse-coded (A=E; B=D; C=C; D=B; E=A).

Then, the items are coded so that A = 0, B = 1, C = 2, D = 3, and E = 4; and next the items listed on each scale are summed, so that higher scores on the RAS subscales correspond to greater relational-esteem, relational-depression, and relational-preoccupation.

Appendix 2

Interpersonal Trust Scale

Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by the following scale:

1 = strongly agree

2 = mildly agree

3 = agree and disagree equally

4 = mildly disagree

5 = strongly disagree

1. Hypocrisy is on the increase in our society.
2. One is better off being cautious when dealing with strangers until they have provided evidence that they are trustworthy.
3. This country has a dark future unless we can attract better people into politics.
4. Fear and social disgrace or punishment rather than conscience prevents most people from breaking the law.
5. An honour system in which teachers would not be present during exams would probably result in increased cheating.
6. Parents usually can be relied on to keep their promises.
7. The United Nations will never be an effective force in keeping world peace.
8. The judiciary is a place where we can all get unbiased treatment.

9. Most people would be horrified if they knew how much of the news that the public hears and sees is distorted.
10. It is safe to believe that in spite of what people say most people are primarily interested in their own welfare.
11. Even though we have reports in newspapers, radio, TV, and the Internet, it is hard to get objective accounts of public events.
12. The future seems very promising.
13. If we really knew what was going on in international politics, the public would have reason to be more frightened than they now seem to be.
14. Most elected officials are really sincere in their campaign promises.
15. Many major national sports contests are fixed in one way or another.
16. Most experts can be relied upon to tell the truth about the limits of their knowledge.
17. Most parents can be relied upon to carry out their threats of punishments.
18. Most people can be counted on to do what they say they will do.
19. In these competitive times one has to be alert or someone is likely to take advantage of you.
20. Most idealists are sincere and usually practice what they preach.
21. Most salesmen are honest in describing their products.
22. Most students in school would not cheat even if they were sure they could get away with it.
23. Most repairmen will not overcharge, even if they think you are ignorant of their specialty.
24. A large share of accident claims filed against insurance companies are phony.
25. Most people answer public opinion polls honestly.

Scoring key:

1. For the following items, use the recorded response as the score: Items 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 25.
2. For the remaining items, take the recorded response and convert it. If a 1 score it a 5, if a 2 score it a 4, if a 3 keep it at 3, if a 4 score it a 2 and if it's a 5 score it a 1. Do this for the following items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19 and 24.
3. Add up each item. This is the total score.
4. Higher scores indicate greater Interpersonal Trust.

Appendix 3

Instrument Title: Measure of Attachment (MAQ)

The Instrument Author: Carver, C. S.

Cite instrument as: Measure of attachment Qualities (MAQ). Measurement Instrument Database for the Social Science. Retrieved from www.midss.ie

Measure of Attachment Qualities

Respond to each of the following statements by expressing how much you agree with it or how much you disagree with it Try not to let your answer to any one item influence your answer to any other item. Treat each one as though it is completely unrelated to the others. There are no right or wrong answers, you are simply asked to express your ownpersonal feelings and opinions. Choose from these response options:

1 = I DISagree with the statement a lot

2 = I DISagree with the statement a little

3 = I agree with the statement a little

4 = I agree with the statement a lot

1. When I'm close to someone, it gives me a sense of comfort about life in general.
2. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.

3. I have trouble getting others to be as close as I want them to be.
4. I find it easy to be close to others.
5. I often worry my partner will not want to stay with me.
6. Others want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.
7. It feels relaxing and good to be close to someone.
8. I am very comfortable being close to others.
9. I don't worry about others abandoning me.
10. My desire to merge sometimes scares people away.
11. I prefer not to be too close to others.
12. I find others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.
13. I get uncomfortable when someone wants to be very close.
14. Being close to someone gives me a source of strength for other activities.

Scoring Instructions

Items 4,8 and 9 are reverse coded

Security = Items 1, 7, and 14.

Avoidance = Items 4, 6, 8, 11, and 13.

Ambivalence Worry = Items 2, 5, and 9

Ambivalence Merger = Items 3, 10, and 12

Appendix 4

Cover Sheet

Attachment Theory as developed by John Bowlby postulated that the quality and character of the emotional bond developed between infants and their primary caregivers is of profound importance in an individual's ability to establish and maintain a robust network of relationships through the life-span. This study investigates the relationship between attachment styles and psychological adjustment in emerging adulthood and subsequent stages in the lifespan.

I would greatly appreciate if you could participate in the research. Please answer all of the questions- using the initial response that best describes how you feel. In the interest of confidentiality, **all participation is anonymous**. Responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. The questionnaires will be securely stored and data from the questionnaires will be transferred from the paper record to an electrical format and stored on a password protected computer.

Please answer the following demographic information:

Are you between the ages of?

18- 25

26+

Are you...

Male

Female

Appendix 4:

Debrief:

Thank you for your cooperation.

Whom to contact for more Information: My email if you have any questions or a summary of the results on the research is 1755549@mydbs.ie

If you feel you have experienced adverse consequences from this study:

<http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/samaritans-work-ireland>

Call Samaritans at 116 123

If you wish to learn more about this topic of this research you may contact:

████████████████████

Thank you again for you participation.