



Personality, Trust and Attachment among Young Adults

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Abstract

Young adulthood is a stage of life characterized by significant personal growth and professional development. Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics behaviour and thought, personality dimensions are extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Trust is the state involving confident positive expectations about another's motives regarding oneself in situations of risk. Attachment is the deep emotional connection between two people, the dimensions of attachment are close, depend and anxiety. The objectives of the study were to examine the connection between personality, trust and attachment among young adults. 200 young adults of age 18-25 made up the sample, which included both males and females. Short version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10), Trust in Close Relationships Scale and Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) were the instruments employed. The data was examined using the Spearman's correlation test. According to the study, there is no significant correlation between personality dimensions and trust in romantic relationship. And there exists a positive correlation between personality factor extroversion and attachment subscale close and there exist a negative correlation between personality factor neuroticism and attachment subscale close. And there exist a positive correlation between personality factors extroversion and agreeableness with attachment subscale depend, also there exist a negative correlation between personality factor neuroticism and attachment subscale depend. And also there exist a positive correlation between the personality factor depend and trust.

Keywords: Personality, Trust, Attachment.

1. Introduction

Young adulthood is a unique developmental period that occurs between the age of 18 and 25 years, during which there are key developmental tasks that allow the young adult to participate in self-exploration and identity formation [1]. Most recently, Jeffery Arnett (2000) developed the theory of young adulthood. He argued that this timeframe is a distinct phase of transition for those aged 18 to 25 years, who are neither adolescents nor adults. Young adulthood is characterized by individual variability, semi-autonomy, identity exploration, and changing worldviews. The transition from young adulthood to adulthood occurs when young people obtain stable housing, complete schooling, establish a career, form a committed romantic relationship, accept responsibility for oneself, and gain financial

independence. During early adulthood stage an individual reaches physical maturity. At the age of maturation, the individual has the changes in physical, emotional, and cognitive activities. Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psycho-physical systems that determine his unique adjustment to his environment (Gorden Allport, 1961). It means that personality "resides" within the individual and these systems are woven into an organization. The person was evaluated in by their behaviour, attitude, characteristics, perspectives and thoughts. The five basic traits of personality were coined by D. W. Fiske in 1949. Big-5 personality theory, also called OCEAN model of personality explains five basic traits of personality such as Openness to experience,



Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism. Trust is a state involving confident positive expectations about another's motives regarding oneself in situations of risk (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995). These expectations may be based on the rewards or punishments that guide the others' behaviour. According to the theory of trust in close relationship, predictability, dependability and faith are the three stages of trust. It allows people to have confidence in their partner's future, while minimizing their past mistakes. Trust is a central part of all human relationships, including romantic partnerships, family life, business operations, politics, and medical practices [2]. Attachment is the deep emotional connection between two people (John Bowlby 1907 – 1990). John Bowlby's theory of attachment supports the idea that children are born with an innate need for secure and meaningful relationships with their mothers. This relationship will encourage positive cognitive and emotional development that help them survive into adulthood. Bowlby's theory of attachment (Bowlby, 1969; 1973; 1980) proposes that early Internalized to form an internal working model of the self and of others. The internal working model provides a template for future interactions, both with the primary caregiver and with others [3].

1.1. Need and Significance of the Study

Studying personality, trust, and attachment among young adults is important for understanding their psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, and overall development. The study focuses on how the personality factors interplay during personal and social growth. By understanding the relationship between personality, trust and attachment will give more understanding and valuable insights about oneself [4]. As we know young adults is a period of drastic physical and mental change, so by getting ideas of particular personality characteristics in relation with trust will enhance the interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, and overall wellbeing of an individual. Trust is a fundamental component of interpersonal relationships. It helps to identify connection between personality traits and trust in romantic relationships. This research can foster the positive social interactions. Attachment, a key aspect of emotional

bonds, plays an important role in shaping relationships during early adulthood [5]. Examining attachment patterns among young adults helps identify the dynamics of their connections with peers, romantic partners, and family. Insights into attachment styles contribute to the development of strategies for building secure and supportive relationships. Overall, the study's significance lies in its potential to enhance our understanding of the connections between personality, trust, and attachment among young adults. This knowledge not only informs academic research but also holds practical implications for educational institutions, mental health professionals, and anyone involved in supporting the well-being of the human relations [6].

2. Review of Literature

Lyndsay, David, & Jesse (2022) conducted a study "The Contribution of Attachment Styles and Reassurance Seeking to Trust in Romantic Couples". It examined the moderating impact of attachment style in association between excessive reassurance seeking (ERS) behaviour and trust in romantic dyads. 110 heterosexual couples age between 16 to 68 from London, Ontario, Canada are participated in this study. The study results shows that the anxious people have more ERS behaviour and avoidant people has low ERS behaviour also the higher ERS behaviour associated with lower trust. It supports the idea that attachment styles play an important role in determining whether or not ERS leads to negative interpersonal consequences [7]. Richter, Schlegel, Thomas, & Troche (2022) conducted a study on the topic "Adult Attachment and Personality as predictors of jealousy in Romantic Relationships" The purpose of the study was to compare the Big Five personality traits and attachment as predictors of jealousy, and assessing gender, relationship status, and infidelity experience as moderators of the relationships between jealousy, personality traits, and attachment dimensions. The sample consist of 509 women and 38 men ranging in age from 18 to 63. The findings of the study was higher neuroticism, lower agreeableness, and lower openness predicted higher romantic jealousy. And the attachment dimension anxiety and depend partly mediated the effect of neuroticism, and fully



mediated the effect of agreeableness on romantic jealousy. Josee, & Marie-France (2017) conducted a study on “Attachment, trust, and satisfaction in relationships: Investigating actor, partner, and mediating effects”. The purpose of the study was to assess dyadic trust as a possible mediator of the relation between insecure romantic attachment and relationship satisfaction within a Canadian community sample of 199 heterosexual couples [8]. Results revealed significant actor and partner effects. Specifically, male and female attachment avoidance, as well as male attachment anxiety, predicted lower dyadic trust, which in turn predicted lower relationship satisfaction. Marusic, Kamenov, & Jelić (2011) conducted a study “Personality and attachment to friends” on 352 university students from the Zagreb. Participants were 216 females and 136 males whose age ranged from 18 to 33 years. The purpose of the study was to examine the relations of attachment and personality dimensions in young adults. The Results demonstrate a variety of relations between two dimensions of attachment to friends and personality traits, both at the domain and facet level. Anxious attachment to friends is primarily related to neuroticism, while avoidance in friendships is mainly characterized by lower results in two interpersonal domains, extraversion and agreeableness. Jelena, & Janko (2011) conducted a study “Romantic Adult Attachment and Basic Personality Structure.” on 203 university-educated respondents from Serbia. The purpose of the study was to examine relations between attachment and basic personality structure [9]. The results indicate that the attachment dimensions should be considered as an expression of basic personality traits in romantic adult’s relationships.

3. Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to find out the relationship between personality, trust and attachment among young adults.

3.1.Objectives

- To find out the relationship between Personality and Trust among Young Adults.
- To find out the relationship between personality and Attachment among Young Adults.

- To find out the relationship between Trust and Attachment among Young Adults [10].

3.2.Hypothesis

- There will be no significant relationship between personality and trust among young adults.
- There will be no significant relationship between personality and attachment among young adults.
- There will be no significant relationship between attachment and trust among young adults [11].

3.3.Sample

The population of the study consist of young adults between the age of 18 to 25 and the sample size of the study was 200 young adults. The data collected from college students in Idukki, Kottayam and Ernakulam districts of Kerala. The sample was selected through convenient sampling method and the data collected in offline mode.

3.3.1. Inclusion Criteria

- The study encompasses young adults who are presently involved in a romantic relationship.
- The study includes both sexual orientations.
- The participants should be Keralite.

3.3.2. Exclusion Criteria

- The study excluded young adults who do not have a current romantic partner.
- The study excluded the married couples aged between 18 to 25.
- Exclude individuals who have previously participated in similar studies to avoid biased results.

4. Measures

4.1.Socio-Demographic Data Sheet

The socio-demographic sheet developed by the researcher was used to collect data such as age, gender, education, religion, etc. A socio-demographic sheet is defined as a set of social and demographic characteristics that help to characterize individuals. The sociodemographic sheet helps to know about the cultural variations that may affect the result of the study. In this study, the sociodemographic sheet includes name, age, gender, education, family type, socio-economic status,



relationship status, marital status and area of residence.

4.2. Big Five Inventory-10 (BFI-10)

The 10-Item Big Five Inventory (BFI-10) is a short version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by Rammstedt and John (2007). The BFI is a self-report scale that measures the Big Five personality traits: Openness to experience, extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The test-retest correlations between $r=0.65$ and $r=.79$. Factorial validity ranging from $r=0.08$ to $r=0.13$. Construct validity with the NEO-PI-R domain and facets scales show substantial convergent and discriminant validity. It uses a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It has the reverse scoring in 1,3,4,5,7 items. 1 and 6 for extroversion, 2 and 7 for agreeableness, 3 and 8 for conscientiousness, 4 and 9 for the neuroticism, 5 and 10 for openness to experience. To take the sum of each subscale. Interpretation of the test was the higher subscale scores indicate higher trait levels.

4.3. Trust in Close Relationship Scale

Trust in Close Relationships Scale is a tool that measures the level of trust in romantic relationships. It was developed by Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna in 1985 and is made up of two parts: the Trust Scale and the Dependability Scale. The trust scale distinguishes between three different dimensions of trust, including predictability, dependability and faith. The internal consistency of the trust scale found to be high with Cronbach's coefficient of alpha ranging from 0.85 to 0.95 for the Trust Scale and 0.80, 0.72, and 0.70 for the faith, dependability and predictability respectively. The scale's convergent validity was determined on a sample of 100 participants by finding its correlation with the Trust Scale ($r = 0.72$, $p < .001$). The scale is a 17-item measure that assesses levels of trust in a relationship partner. Each item is answered based on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from -3 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree). The scale consists of 3 subscales. Predictability (P) that emphasizes the consistency and stability of a partner's specific behaviours based on past experience, Dependability (D) that concentrates on the dispositional qualities of the partner which

warrant confidence in the face of risk and potential hurt, and Faith (F) that centers on feelings of confidence in the relationship and the responsiveness and caring expected from the partner in the face of an uncertain future. The total Trust measure is the sum of the 3 subscale totals. Interpretation of the test was a high score on the Trust in Close Relationships Scale may indicate strong confidence in a partner's pro-relationship attitudes.

4.4. Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS)

The Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) developed by Nancy L. Collins (1996). It measures relationship attachment. It has three subscales, each made up of six items: CLOSE: Measures how comfortable a person is with closeness and intimacy DEPEND: Measures how comfortable a person is with depending on others ANXIETY: Measures how worried a person is about being rejected or unloved anxiety. The scale's reliability and validity are 0.81 for close, 0.78 for depend, and 0.85 for anxiety. It has a high construct validity. In close scale involves the items 1, 6,8,12,13,17 In depend scale involves the items 2,5,7,14,16,18 In anxiety scale involves the items 3,4,9,10,11,15 It has the reverse scoring in items 8, 13,17,2,7,16,18.

4.5. Procedures

The present study conducted on the young adults between the age of 18 to 25. Request forms were prepared and permission were taken for data collection to provide principals from various colleges. After establishing the rapport, the questionnaires were provided and data were taken. The survey was conducted based on the consent taken from the participating individuals. The first sheet of the survey consisted of socio-demographic details like name, age, gender, socio-economic status etc. The participants were also given assurance about the confidentiality of the survey. The collected data was analyzed for drawing conclusions based on the study.

4.6. Statistical Technique

In this present study inferential statistics methods were used. Descriptive statistics are brief descriptive coefficients that summarize a given data set, which can be either a representation of the entire or a



sample of population. Under descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation are used. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, they form the basis of virtually every quantitative analysis of data. Inferential statistics is the branch of statistics which is concerned with using the probability concept to deal with uncertainty in decision making. It refers to the process of selecting and using a sample statistic to draw inference about a population parameter based on a subset of the sample

drawn from the population. Statistical inference is a method of making decisions about the parameters of a population, based on random sampling. The statistical analysis was done using SPSS statistics 28. SPSS statistic is a software package for social science. This package can perform highly complex data manipulation and analysis with simple instructions. It was originally launched in 1968 by SPSS Inc., and was later acquired by IBM in 2009.

5. Result

Table 1 Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient and p-value of Personality and Trust

	Variables Correlation	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness to experience
Trust	r-value	.061	-.046	.062	.116	.025
	p-value	.392	.519	.381	.103	.729

The value is significance at the 0.01 level

The value is significant at the 0.05 level

The table (1) shows the relationship between the personality factors and trust among young adults with a romantic relationship. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor extraversion and trust are 0.061 and 0.392 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor agreeableness and trust are -0.046 and 0.519 respectively. The corresponding p-value and r-value

of personality factor conscientiousness and trust are 0.062 and 0.381 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor neuroticism and trust are 0.116 and 0.103 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor openness to experience and trust are 0.025 and 0.729 respectively.

Table 2 Spearman’s Correlation Coefficient and p-value of Personality and Attachment

	Variables Correlation	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness to Experience
Close	r-value	.291**	-.003	.126	-.213*	-.026
	p-value	.000	.970	.076	.002	.716
Depend	r-value	.191**	.144*	.024	-.156*	-.035
	p-value	.007	.042	.734	.027	.622
Anxiety	r-value	-.061	-.121	-.059	.177*	.033
	p-value	.389	.089	.410	.012	.640

The value is significance at the 0.01 level

The value is significant at the 0.05 level

The table (2) shows the relationship between the personality factors and the attachment factors among

young adults. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor extraversion and close



attachment are 0.291 and 0.000 respectively. The value is significant at 0.01 levels. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor extraversion and depend attachment are 0.191 and 0.007 respectively. The value is significant at 0.01 levels. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor extraversion and anxiety attachment are -0.061 and 0.389 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor agreeableness and close attachment are -0.003 and 0.970 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor agreeableness and depend attachment are 0.144 and 0.042 respectively. The value is significant at 0.05 levels. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor agreeableness and anxiety attachment are -0.121 and 0.089 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor conscientiousness and close attachment are 0.126 and 0.076 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor conscientiousness and depend attachment are 0.024 and 0.734 respectively. The corresponding r-value

and p-value of personality factor conscientiousness and anxiety attachment are -0.059 and 0.510 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor neuroticism and close attachment are -0.213 and 0.002 respectively. The value is significant at 0.01 levels. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor neuroticism and depend attachment are -0.156 and 0.027 respectively. The value is significant at 0.05 levels. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor neuroticism and anxiety attachment are 0.177 and 0.012 respectively. The value is significant at 0.05 levels. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor openness to experience and close attachment are -0.026 and 0.716 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor openness to experience and depend attachment are -0.035 and 0.622 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of personality factor openness to experience and anxiety attachment are 0.033 and 0.640 respectively.

Table 3 Spearman's Correlation Coefficient and p-value of Attachment and Trust

Table with 5 columns: Variables, Correlation, Close, Depend, Anxiety. Row 1: Trust, r-value, .009, .195**, .020. Row 2: Trust, p-value, .899, .006, .777.

the value is significance at the 0.01 level
the value is significant at the 0.05 level

The table (3) shows the relationship between the attachment styles and trust among young adults with romantic relationship. The corresponding r-value and p-value of close attachment and trust are 0.009 and 0.899 respectively. The corresponding r-value and p-value of depend attachment and trust are 0.195 and 0.006, which is significant at 0.01 level. The corresponding r-value and p-value of anxiety attachment and trust are 0.020 and 0.777 respectively.

5.1.Discussion

The aim of the study is to find out the relationship between personality, trust and attachment among young adults with a romantic relationship. The correlational method was used for the study. Correlational study used to examine the relationship between two or more variables. From table 1 There is

no significant relationship between personality types extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience and trust among young adults in their romantic relationship. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, that means the active and sociable persons does not have any significant influence on the trust building in romantic relationship. The persons who consider others feelings and emotions does not influence the trust in their romantic relationship. The person with self-disciplined and diligent that does not influence their trust in their romantic relationship. The person with low self-regulation and fear-based emotions does not influence their romantic relationship. Also, the person with complex ideas and explore the new



things does not influence their romantic relationship. From table 2, it is clear that there exists a significant positive correlation between the personality factor extraversion and close attachment at 0.01 level of significance. That is the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. When an extraverted person are very active on social interactions and close to the people around them. And there is no significant correlation between the agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience with close attachment in young adults, so the null hypothesis was accepted. That means the person who are consider other's emotions and feelings does not influence their close social attachment style. The person with self-disciplined and diligent that does not influence their close social interactions and also the people with self-disciplined and diligent that does not influence their social closeness and interactions. There is a significant negative correlation between neuroticism and close attachment at the significant level of 0.01. That is the neurotic personality influence the closeness with the others related to them. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The young adults with neurotic trait there might be a difficulty to close with the people around them. The anxiety and fear-based emotions might be affect the interactions and public relations of the young adults. From the table 2, shows that there is a significant relationship between the personality factor extroversion and depend attachment. so the extraversion and depend are positively correlated at 0.01 level of significance. That is the extraverted people are more dependable to others related to them. The active extraverted or sociable behaviour might be influencing the dependance to the people close to them. So, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. And also, there is a significant relationship between the personality factor agreeableness and depend attachment. so there is a positive correlation between agreeableness and depend at 0.05 level of significance. That is the people with high agreeableness are make people more depend to others. The dependent persons are highly empathetic and consider the people around them and always respect the dignity and decisions

made by others. So, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. There is no significant relationship between the personality factor conscientiousness and depend attachment, it means the person with self-disciplined and diligent that does not influence their depend attachment. The neuroticism and depend are negatively correlated with each other at 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis was rejected, and alternative hypothesis was accepted. That is the young adults with high neurotic trait they might be experience difficulty to depend on others. There is no significant correlation between personality factor openness to experience and depend attachment style among young adults, so the null hypothesis was accepted. There is no significant correlation between the extraversion and anxiety attachment among young adults, so the null hypothesis was accepted. That means the active and sociable behavior does not influence their anxiety attachment with social situations. There is no significant correlation between the agreeableness and anxiety attachment among young adults, that means the personality trait to consider others' emotions and feelings does not influence their anxiety attachment in social interactions. And there is no significant correlation between the conscientiousness and anxiety attachment among young adults, that means the person who are self-disciplined and diligent does not influence their anxiety attachment. The neuroticism and anxiety are positively correlated at 0.05 level of significance. So, the null hypothesis was rejected, and alternative hypothesis was accepted. That is the young adults with high neurotic trait then they might be experience anxiety to communicate with people around them. And also, there is no significant correlation between the personality trait openness to experience and anxiety attachment among young adults, which means the person with complex ideas and explore the new things does not influence their anxiety to social interactions. From table 3, it is clear that there is no significant relationship between close attachment and trust among young adults, so the null hypothesis was accepted, which means the close attachment in social interactions does not influence the trust



building in their romantic relationship. And also, the study shows that there exists a positive correlation between depend and trust among young adults in their romantic relationship at 0.01 level of significance. That is the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis was accepted. The trust in romantic relationship influences the dependability of the people around them. There is no significant relationship between anxiety attachment and trust among young adults with romantic relationship, that means the anxiety of the person to interact with social situations does not affect their trust in romantic relationship. From these results indicate that there is a relationship between some personality factors and some of the attachment factors among young adults. And also, some attachment factor influences the trust among young adults in their romantic relationships.

Conclusion

From the Study we can conclude that there is no significant relationship between personality factors, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience and trust among young adults with romantic relationship. There is a positive correlation between personality factors extraversion and neuroticism with close attachment style, and negative correlation between neuroticism and close. There exists a positive correlation between extraversion and agreeableness with depend attachment, and a negative correlation between neuroticism and depend attachment. There is a positive correlation between neuroticism and anxiety. There is a positive correlation between depend attachment and trust among young adults.

Implications

The study on the relationship between personality, trust and attachment among young adults likely suggests several implications. It may shed light on that the personality factors such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience do not make an influence on trust development among young adults in their romantic relationships. The study may provide insights into which personality factors affects attachments in social interactions particularly among young adults who are committed to a romantic relationship by examining the correlation between

personality factors, trust and attachment. The study could identify key factors that contribute to trust and attachment in young adulthood. Findings could inform interventions or counseling approaches aimed at improving relationship dynamics and also make plans by consider the social attachment among young adults, especially those struggling with attachment issues or interpersonal relationship difficulties. Understanding the relationship between personality factors and attachment may help in developing more effective interaction methods in social situations and manage the romantic relationships and social functioning in young adulthood. Policymakers and mental health practitioners may use the study's findings to develop policies and programs that support healthy attachment formation and foster positive interpersonal relationships among young adults.

Limitations

- The study was conducted within a small sample; therefore, the study may lack generalizability.
- The self-reports of the variables may not always be accurate.
- The convenient sampling technique was used to collect data so that the sample may not be representative of the greater population
- The study was conducted only among those who are in romantic relationship in the district of Idukki, Kottayam, Ernakulam of Kerala.

Suggestions

- Future studies can include larger and wider sample.
- Other research methods such as interview, observation can be used to collect more in-depth and detailed data.
- Further studies could use random sampling for better sample data.
- Further research can address the same research problem in a new context or culture and in different population.
- Assessment tools with robust psychometric properties can be used.

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