



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT
STYLE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN
SHAPING SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AMONG
TRAINEE COUNSELLORS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
MALAYSIA SARAWAK (UNIMAS)**

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Bachelor of Counselling with Honours

2025

The Relationship Between Attachment Style and Emotional Intelligence in Shaping Social Relationships Among Trainee Counsellors at The University Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas)

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This project is submitted
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for a Bachelor of
Counselling with Honours

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human
Development

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
(2025)

The project entitled The Relationship Between Attachment Style and Emotional Intelligence in Shaping Social Relationships Among Trainee Counsellors at The University Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Counselling with Honours.

Received for examination by:

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Date:

Grade

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to explore how attachment styles and emotional intelligence contribute to shaping social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The main purpose of this research was to examine the levels of attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and social relationships among the respondents. More specifically, the study looked into the relationships between four types of attachment styles—secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized, and social relationships. It also aimed to investigate the relationship between five components of emotional intelligence, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, with social relationships.

A quantitative research approach was used in this study, involving trainee counsellors from UNIMAS as the sample. Data were collected using a set of standardised questionnaires and analysed using Pearson's correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables.

The findings showed that secure attachment style had a strong positive correlation with social relationships, suggesting that individuals with secure bonds tend to form healthier and more effective connections with others. On the other hand, anxious and avoidant attachment styles were negatively correlated, indicating potential difficulties in maintaining close relationships. Disorganised attachment style showed a weak and less significant relationship. For emotional intelligence, all five components were positively related to social relationships, with empathy and social skills standing out as the most significant factors in building strong interpersonal connections.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of understanding personal emotional traits and attachment history in the development of social relationships, particularly in a counselling setting. These findings can benefit educators, supervisors, and future counsellors by encouraging emotional growth, self-awareness, and healthier interpersonal dynamics in both academic and professional environments.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini dijalankan bagi meneroka peranan gaya keterikatan dan kecerdasan emosi dalam membentuk hubungan sosial dalam kalangan kaunselor pelatih di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti tahap gaya keterikatan, kecerdasan emosi, dan hubungan sosial dalam kalangan responden. Secara lebih khusus, kajian ini meneliti hubungan antara empat jenis gaya keterikatan—selamat (secure), cemas (anxious), mengelak (avoidant), dan tidak teratur (disorganized), dengan hubungan sosial. Kajian ini turut menumpukan perhatian kepada lima komponen kecerdasan emosi, iaitu kesedaran diri, pengurusan diri, motivasi, empati, dan kemahiran sosial, serta hubungannya dengan hubungan sosial.

Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk kuantitatif dan melibatkan kaunselor pelatih UNIMAS sebagai sampel kajian. Data telah dikumpul melalui soal selidik standard dan dianalisis menggunakan ujian Pearson correlation bagi melihat kekuatan serta arah hubungan antara pembolehubah yang terlibat.

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa gaya keterikatan selamat mempunyai hubungan positif yang kuat dengan hubungan sosial, menandakan bahawa individu yang mempunyai ikatan yang sihat cenderung untuk membina hubungan yang lebih baik dengan orang sekeliling. Sebaliknya, gaya keterikatan cemas dan mengelak menunjukkan hubungan negatif dengan hubungan sosial, manakala gaya keterikatan tidak teratur menunjukkan hubungan yang lebih lemah dan kurang signifikan. Bagi kecerdasan emosi, kelima-lima komponen didapati mempunyai hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan hubungan sosial. Empati dan kemahiran sosial dikenal pasti sebagai penyumbang utama dalam membina hubungan yang berkesan.

Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini memberi gambaran yang lebih jelas tentang kepentingan memahami aspek emosi dan latar belakang keterikatan dalam membentuk hubungan sosial yang sihat, terutamanya dalam bidang kaunseling. Dapatan ini diharap dapat dimanfaatkan oleh pelatih kaunselor, pensyarah, dan pihak berkepentingan dalam usaha meningkatkan kemahiran interpersonal dan kesedaran sendiri dalam kalangan individu yang bakal bergelar kaunselor profesional.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the quiet moments between pages, sleepless nights, and long hours of reflection, I found myself growing, slowly but surely.

Alhamdulillah, I begin by thanking Allah SWT for the strength and peace that carried me through this journey. This research may carry my name, but I didn't walk this path alone.

To my supervisor, En. Shahrul bin Kamaruddin, thank you for being more than just a guide, you were patient when I was unsure, encouraging when I was overwhelmed, and honest when I needed direction. Your words stayed with me long after our meetings ended, and for that, I'm truly grateful.

To the counselling lecturers, thank you for the lessons, not just in theory, but in life. Every discussion, every class, and every bit of guidance has shaped me into a better version of myself. I carry your teachings with me as I step into the future.

To all the trainee counsellors who participated in this study, thank you for your time and honesty. Your willingness to be part of something that mattered to me means more than you know.

To my parents, no words will ever be enough. Thank you for your prayers whispered in silence, your quiet strength, and the love that I've always felt, even when I didn't say a word. You are my safe place, and every step I take is built on your sacrifices.

To my partner and friends, thank you for the late-night voice notes, the shared stress, and the way you made me laugh when I needed it most. This journey would have been so much harder without you beside me.

And finally, to the version of me who kept going even when it got hard, you made it. This isn't just a submission, it's proof that you're capable of more than you think.

Here's to growth, to grace, and to all the quiet battles that brought me here.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study and its key components. It begins with an introduction to the topic, highlighting the main concepts and their importance in the research context. Following this, the background of the study explains the context and relevance of the research, leading to the problem statement, which outlines the issues or gaps that the study aims to address. The chapter also presents the research objectives and questions, providing a clear focus on what the study seeks to achieve. Additionally, the significance of the study is discussed, emphasizing its potential contributions to knowledge and practice. The scope of the research is then outlined to clarify its boundaries, followed by definitions of key terms to ensure an understanding of the concepts used throughout the study. This chapter sets the foundation for the entire research project and guides the reader through the rationale and direction of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

Attachment styles and emotional intelligence are particularly relevant for trainee counsellors, who rely heavily on interpersonal skills to build therapeutic alliances (Schutte et al., 2024). Counselling involves establishing rapport, fostering trust, and engaging in meaningful communication with clients, which requires skills underpinned by secure attachment and high emotional intelligence (Kim et al., 2023). Trainee counsellors with insecure attachment styles or low emotional intelligence may struggle with aspects of client interaction, such as empathy or managing emotional boundaries, potentially affecting their professional effectiveness (Schoe, 2023). Conversely, those with secure attachment and strong emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle the relational complexities of counselling, promoting positive outcomes for both themselves and their clients (Schutte et al., 2024).

Attachment styles and emotional intelligence are widely recognized as significant factors influencing the quality of social relationships, as they play a critical role in shaping how individuals interact, communicate, and resolve conflicts (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019). Social relationships are complex and multifaceted, needing trust, empathy, and effective communication, all of which are influenced by one's early attachment experiences and emotional competencies (Li & Chan, 2023). Research suggests that attachment styles, rooted in early caregiver-child interactions, act as a blueprint for future relational patterns (Sroufe, 2023). Individuals with insecure attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidant attachment, often encounter challenges in maintaining close relationships due to maladaptive behaviors (Cassidy et al., 2023). For instance, those with anxious attachment may show excessive dependency, fear of abandonment, or clinginess, which can strain relationships. Similarly, individuals with an avoidant attachment may struggle with emotional intimacy, opting for self-reliance and detachment as coping mechanisms (Fraley et al., 2023).

Conversely, a secure attachment style fosters a sense of emotional stability, trust, and flexibility, enabling individuals to form and sustain positive and fulfilling social connections (Kim et al., 2023). Securely attached individuals are more likely to demonstrate empathy, adaptability, and effective communication, which are essential components of healthy interpersonal interactions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019). These qualities enhance personal relationships and contribute significantly to professional environments, such as counselling, where relational skills are fundamental (Schoe, 2023).

Parallel to attachment styles, emotional intelligence is another critical factor that shapes social relationships. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate one's emotions while effectively navigating the feelings of others (Brackett & Mayer, 2022). Key dimensions of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, empathy, social awareness, and emotion regulation, are directly linked to relationship quality (Petrides et al., 2023). High emotional intelligence equips individuals with the skills to manage conflicts constructively, understand diverse perspectives, and foster trust and emotional closeness in their relationships (Mayer et al., 2023). Studies have shown that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit greater resilience in social contexts, as they can effectively balance emotional demands and maintain harmonious interactions (Brackett et al., 2023).

Given the pivotal roles of attachment and emotional intelligence in shaping interpersonal dynamics, it becomes essential to understand how these factors jointly influence social relationships among counselling students (Li & Chan, 2023). By examining the relationship between attachment styles and emotional intelligence, this research seeks to identify key areas for intervention and support, ultimately enhancing counselling students' readiness to establish effective and meaningful therapeutic relationships (Schoe, 2023).

1.2 Problem Statement

Trainee counsellors must develop strong interpersonal skills to form effective therapeutic relationships with clients. However, those with insecure attachment styles or low emotional intelligence may struggle to establish these essential connections, ultimately affecting their effectiveness as counsellors (Schore, 2023). Insecure attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidant patterns, can interfere with trust-building and emotional connection (Cassidy et al., 2023), while low emotional intelligence, which includes difficulties in recognizing and managing emotions, can hinder vital counselling skills such as empathy and emotional regulation (Petrides et al., 2023). Developing secure attachment patterns and high emotional intelligence is thus crucial for fostering effective therapeutic alliances (Kim et al., 2023). Therefore, research related to attachment style and emotional intelligence among trainee counsellors needs to be studied because trainee counsellors are individuals who will become professionals and prove that attachment style and emotional intelligence are closely related.

While attachment theory and emotional intelligence have been widely studied, their combined influence on the social relationships of trainee counsellors remains underexplored (Schutte et al., 2024). Research conducted Cassidy et. al. (2023) has largely addressed attachment styles and emotional intelligence as separate constructs, with limited attention given to their interplay in shaping interpersonal relationships, particularly within the context of counselling education (Cassidy et al., 2023). Understanding how these two factors work together is essential for uncovering their role in the social and professional dynamics of trainee counsellors (Mayer et al., 2023).

In addition, existing theories such as Bowlby's Attachment Theory and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model, often fail to integrate these two constructs in a way that explains their combined influence within the specific context of counselling (Schore, 2023). Bowlby's Attachment Theory

emphasizes how early relationships with caregivers shape lifelong patterns of trust, emotional regulation, and interpersonal behaviour, while Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model highlights the importance of self-awareness, empathy, and social skills in managing emotions and building relationships. However, these frameworks are predominantly based on broader populations and general social interactions, without adaptation to the unique relational demands faced by trainee counsellors (Li & Chan, 2023). Consequently, they do not fully address how attachment styles and emotional intelligence interact to shape the social relationships and professional development of trainee counsellors, who require distinct relational competencies to succeed in their roles (Petrides et al., 2023).

On the other hand, findings from the study on adult attachment and parenting styles underscore the importance of these relationships. For example, the strong correlations between attachment styles specifically from parenting approaches provide a foundation for exploring how these dynamics shape one's emotional intelligence and subsequent behaviour. This is particularly relevant as the study also emphasises the role of attachment in forming future emotional patterns and behaviours in children (Yahya et al., 2019)

Most studies on attachment and emotional intelligence have looked at general populations or professional environments that don't reflect the specific needs of counselling training (Brackett & Mayer, 2022). However, it's important to understand how these factors impact social relationships in the unique setting of counselling education, where strong interpersonal skills are the key (Siegel, 2022). Without this focus, it's difficult to fully grasp how trainee counsellors build their professional abilities and handle relationship dynamics in their training. This highlights the need for research that looks specifically at these interactions within counselling education (Zeidner et al., 2022).

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

- To examine the level of attachment style, emotional intelligence and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To study the relationship between attachment style (secure) and social relationship among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- ii. To study the relationship between attachment style (anxious) and social relationship among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- iii. To study the relationship between attachment style (avoidant) and social relationship among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- iv. To study the relationship between attachment style (disorganized) and social relationship among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- v. To study the relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- vi. To study the relationship between emotional intelligence (self-regulations) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- vii. To study the relationship between emotional intelligence (motivation) and social relationship among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- viii. To study the relationship between emotional intelligence (empathy) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- ix. To study the relationship between emotional intelligence (social skills) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How does an attachment style (secure) influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- ii. How does an attachment style (anxious) influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- iii. How does an attachment style (avoidant) influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- iv. How does an attachment style (disorganized) influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- v. How does self-awareness as an aspect of emotional intelligence influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- vi. How does self-regulation as an aspect of emotional intelligence influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- vii. How does motivations as an aspect of emotional intelligence influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- viii. How does empathy as an aspect of emotional intelligence influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?
- ix. How do social skills as an aspect of emotional intelligence influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

- i. There is a significant relationship between the attachment style (secure) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- ii. There is a significant relationship between the attachment style (anxious) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- iii. There is a significant relationship between the attachment style (avoidant) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- iv. There is a significant relationship between the attachment style (disorganized) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- v. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- vi. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (self-regulations) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- vii. There is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence (motivations) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- viii. There is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence (empathy) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- ix. There is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence (social skills) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

1.6 Definition of Terms

1.7.1 Social Relationships

Conceptual Definition: Social relationships encompass the connections and interactions individuals have within their social networks, involving dimensions such as emotional support, companionship, and social distress (Cyranowski et al., 2013). However, It operates under the assumption that it is not just about the presence of relationships but how individuals perceive the quality and functionality of those relationships (Cutrona & Russel, 1987). These relationships are characterised by the availability of empathy, trust, and practical assistance (emotional and instrumental support), the presence of meaningful companionship and friendships, and the absence of negative interactions such as rejection or hostility (Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2010). As measured in this study, social relationships reflect the quality of interpersonal connections and their influence on emotional and psychological well-being (Glaser et al., 2010).

Operational Definition: The Social Provisions Scale (SPS), developed by Cutrona and Russell (1987), measures the perceived quality and availability of social support within interpersonal relationships, capturing six dimensions such as attachment, social integration, reassurance of worth, reliable alliance, guidance, and opportunity for nurturance. These provisions reflect how relationships fulfil emotional, informational, and instrumental needs, which are vital for psychological well-being and stress adaptation (Cutrona & Russell, 1987). The scale aligns with the stress-buffering model, where perceived social support can mitigate the harmful effects of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Uchino, 2004).

1.7.2 Emotional Intelligence

Conceptual Definition: Emotional intelligence involves an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate their own emotions, as well as recognize and influence the emotions of others (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). These competencies contribute to effective communication, conflict resolution, and leadership in various contexts (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2009; Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011).

Operational Definition: Emotional intelligence is measured using the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q), introduced by Daniel Goleman in his 1995 book, *Emotional Intelligence*. This tool is designed for personal reflection and development. It helps individuals identify strengths and areas for growth in emotional intelligence. The results encourage actionable steps to enhance EI and integrate improvements into a personal well-being plan.

1.7.3 Attachment styles

Conceptual definition: Attachment style refers to patterns of emotional and social behaviour in relationships, shaped by early caregiver interactions (Bowlby, 1982; Ainsworth et al., 1978). These styles which are secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized, reflect approaches to intimacy, trust, and emotional regulation (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019). They influence how individuals form and maintain relationships across various life contexts (Sroufe et al., 2023).

Operational Definition: Attachment styles are measured using the Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ), adapted by Kyle D. Killian (2018) and draws from the work of Collins (1996) and Griffin & Bartholomew (1994). The questionnaire is used to assess individuals' attachment behaviours and perceptions in romantic and interpersonal relationships (Bowlby, 1982; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019). The attachment styles questionnaire includes questions that evaluate respondents' comfort with

emotional closeness, dependency, trust, and intimacy (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). It provides a score categorising individuals into secure, anxious, or avoidant attachment styles based on their responses (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

1.8 Conceptual Framework

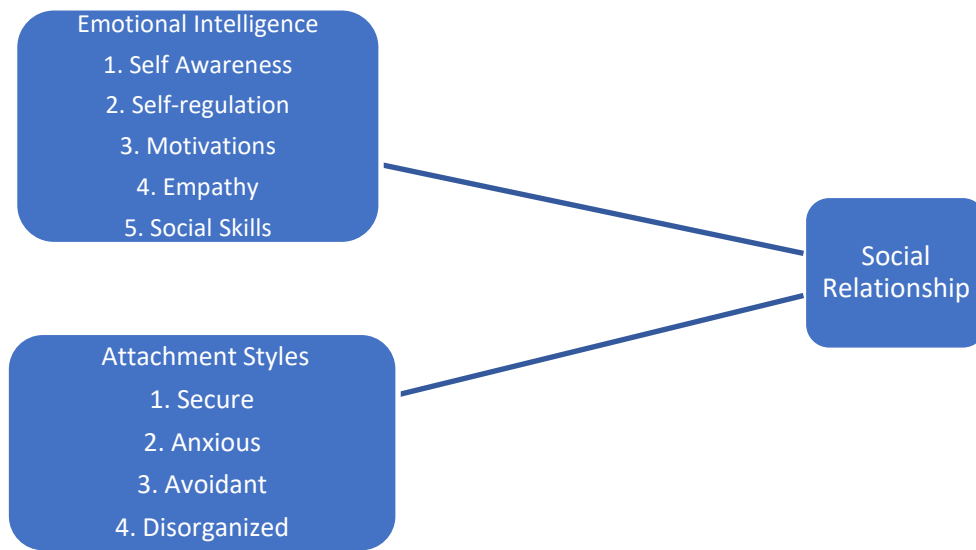


Figure 1: The relationship between attachment style, emotional intelligence in shaping social relationships.

Figure 1 above shows the conceptual framework for the relationship between attachment style and emotional intelligence in shaping social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Secure attachment style and emotional intelligence are the independent variables in this study, while social relationships are the dependent variable.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

1.9.1 Attachment Styles by John Bowlby

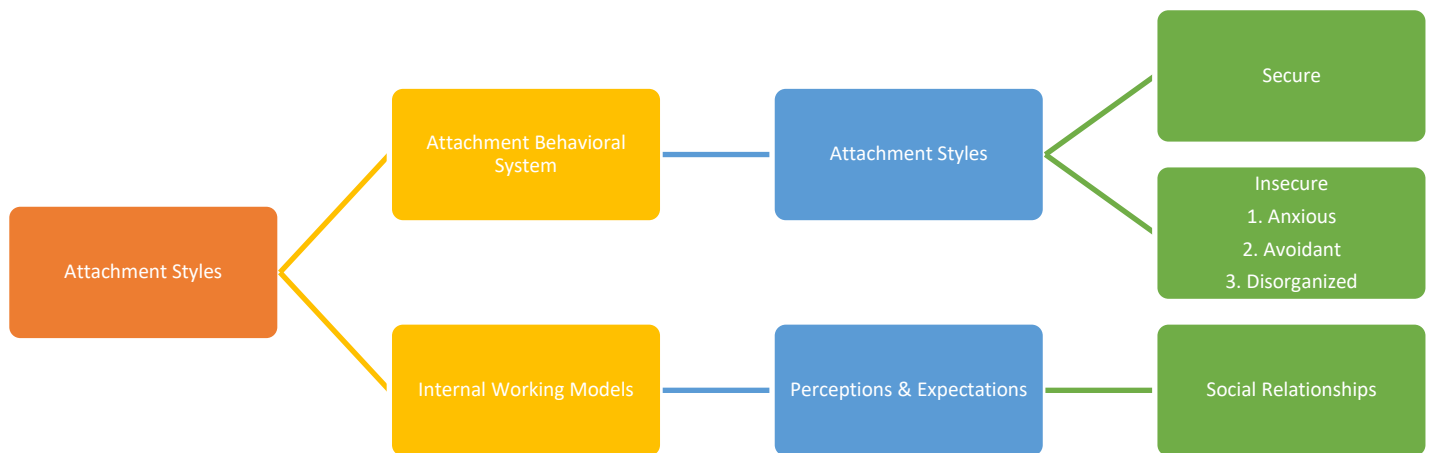


Figure 2: Theoretical Framework of Attachment Styles by John Bowlby

Attachment Theory, initially developed by John Bowlby, emphasizes the crucial role that early bonds with caregivers play in shaping our emotional, social, and cognitive development (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby argued that humans are biologically programmed to seek comfort and safety from caregivers, especially during stressful situations, as part of an Attachment Behavioural System designed to ensure survival. This system encourages infants to stay close to their caregivers for protection and security, which is vital for their emotional and psychological well-being (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

As children interact with their caregivers over time, they form Internal Working Models (IWMs), mental frameworks that shape how they view themselves, others, and relationships (Bretherton & Munholland, 2016). For instance, a child who experiences consistent care may develop a positive sense of self-worth and view others as trustworthy. However, children who experience neglect or inconsistency in caregiving may develop negative self-concepts or expect others to be unreliable (Dozier et al., 2017).

From these early experiences, children develop different attachment styles which the patterns of emotional responses and behaviors that are largely influenced by the type of care they receive. These styles can be secure or insecure, with secure attachment developing when caregivers are consistently responsive and emotionally available (Bretherton, 2018). A child with secure attachment typically grows up with healthy self-esteem, is emotionally resilient, and has the ability to form trusting and intimate relationships (Fraley et al., 2015).

In contrast, insecure attachment arises when caregiving is inconsistent, emotionally distant, or overly intrusive. Children with anxious attachment may feel clingy and fearful of abandonment, while those with avoidant attachment may appear distant and emotionally detached from others (Brennan et al., 2015). Disorganized attachment, often resulting from traumatic or frightening caregiving experiences, may cause contradictory behaviors—such as seeking comfort from a caregiver while simultaneously being afraid of them (Main et al., 2011).

These early attachment patterns influence how we regulate emotions and interact with others throughout our lives. Individuals with secure attachment typically have an easier time handling emotional challenges, communicating effectively, and building healthy relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 2016). On the other hand, those with insecure attachment styles may struggle with emotional regulation, trust, and intimacy. For example, individuals with anxious attachment

may become overly dependent, while avoidant individuals may push others away or avoid close emotional connections (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019).

The influence of attachment extends into adulthood, affecting romantic relationships, friendships, and even workplace interactions. Securely attached individuals often develop healthier, more satisfying relationships, while those with insecure attachment may experience anxiety or difficulty forming meaningful connections (Zhao et al., 2019). In therapeutic settings, understanding an individual's attachment style can provide valuable insights into their emotional and social challenges, guiding interventions that promote healthier attachment patterns (Karreman et al., 2020).

Ultimately, Attachment Theory highlights the profound impact that early relationships have on the course of our lives. By understanding the role of attachment, we can better address emotional and social challenges and work towards fostering stronger, more secure relationships, both personally and in therapeutic settings (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2017).

1.9.2 Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman



Figure 3: Theoretical Framework of Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman

Daniel Goleman's Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence (EI) remains a widely acknowledged framework for understanding and measuring emotional intelligence, combining cognitive abilities with emotional and social competencies to explain how individuals navigate personal and social environments (Goleman, 1995; Bradberry & Greaves, 2021). This model emphasizes that emotional intelligence is not limited to recognizing emotions but also involves managing them effectively and using them to build and maintain strong interpersonal relationships (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

The five components of Goleman's model which are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are pivotal for personal and professional success (Goleman, 1995). Self-awareness involves recognizing one's emotions and understanding their impact on behaviours and interactions, fostering self-confidence and realistic self-assessment (Bradberry &

Greaves, 2021). Self-regulation focuses on managing emotional responses, particularly in challenging situations, enabling adaptability and resilience, and preventing emotions from negatively influencing decisions (Mayer et al., 2016). Motivation is the ability to harness emotions to pursue goals with determination, driven by intrinsic satisfaction rather than external rewards, maintaining optimism and persistence despite setbacks (Goleman, 1995; Bradberry & Greaves, 2021). Empathy is essential for understanding and sharing others' feelings, enhancing communication and relationships through active listening and sensitivity to emotional cues (Mayer et al., 2016). Social skills encompass the ability to manage relationships effectively, resolve conflicts, influence others positively, and collaborate within diverse groups, contributing to leadership and teamwork (Goleman, 1995; Bradberry & Greaves, 2021).

By integrating these elements, the mixed model highlights the interconnectedness of emotional and social intelligence, demonstrating how these skills enable individuals to excel in personal and professional contexts, particularly in roles that require high emotional competence such as leadership and counseling (Mayer et al., 2016).

1.10 Significance of Study

This study will help counselling students, educators, and practitioners understand how attachment styles and emotional intelligence affect in shaping social relationships among counselling students. By identifying how these styles influence interactions, professionals can create programs to improve relational skills and dynamics. The findings will help develop support systems and training tailored to students' needs, enhancing their personal and professional growth. This research will fill a gap in Malaysian counselling studies, providing a foundation for future research and improving counselling education and practice. The insights will directly benefit local educators and students, leading to more effective and empathetic counsellors.

1.11 Limitations of Study

This study has several limitations. The first one is sample generalizability. The study focuses solely on trainee counsellors at UNIMAS, which limits its applicability to other populations. Furthermore, it relies on self-report instruments like the Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q), which may be influenced by participant biases and subjective perceptions. Additionally, while these tools are well-established, their cultural and contextual validity for Malaysian trainee counsellors has not been fully validated, potentially affecting the reliability of the findings.

1.12 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the research study, outlining the significance of exploring the interaction between attachment style and emotional intelligence in shaping social relationships among counselling students. The introduction established the importance of interpersonal relationships in the counselling profession, while the background emphasized how insecure attachment styles and low emotional intelligence can hinder effective relationship-building. The definitions of key terms clarified the conceptual and operational aspects of attachment style, emotional intelligence, and social relationships, setting the groundwork for understanding their impact within the context of this study. By addressing these constructs, this research aims to contribute to the development of strategies that enhance counselling training programs and support the relational competencies of future counsellors.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the key concepts and theories related to the study. It reviews existing research on attachment styles and emotional intelligence, focusing on their definitions, theoretical frameworks, and relevance to social relationships. The chapter also examines previous studies that have explored the connection between these constructs and their implications in the context of counselling students. Additionally, it identifies gaps in the existing literature and highlights the need for further research, forming the foundation for the current study.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Social Relationships among Trainee Counsellors

Social relationships refer to the connections and interactions individuals establish with others, including friendships, family ties, and professional networks (Holt-Lunstad, 2021). These relationships are characterized by trust, emotional support, and communication, which are critical for overall well-being and mental health (Umberson & Karas Montez, 2020). Positive social relationships contribute to improved psychological health, reduced stress, and higher life satisfaction (Haslam et al., 2019). Conversely, a lack of quality relationships has been linked to loneliness and poor mental health outcomes (Cacioppo et al., 2018). In the counselling profession, social relationships are vital for personal and professional development. Trainee counsellors rely on meaningful relationships to enhance interpersonal skills, build client rapport, and develop strong working alliances (Wampold & Imel, 2015). Effective relationships with supervisors and colleagues offer emotional support and constructive feedback, fostering skill development and confidence among trainees (Hill & Knox, 2021).

Social relationships play a central role in counselling, particularly in establishing trust, empathy,

and open communication with clients (Norcross & Wampold, 2018). A positive therapeutic relationship significantly influences client outcomes, as trust and emotional safety are essential for effective counselling interventions (Flückiger et al., 2020). For trainee counsellors, the ability to form strong social relationships with clients, supervisors, and peers is a cornerstone of professional success (Hill & Knox, 2021). Supportive relationships with supervisors provide guidance, constructive criticism, and emotional reassurance, helping trainees build their counselling competencies (Borders et al., 2021). Peer relationships, meanwhile, foster a collaborative and supportive learning environment that enhances interpersonal skills and reduces professional isolation (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2013). Such supportive relationships are associated with greater trainee confidence and lower rates of burnout (Lee et al., 2020).

Dagang et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and resilience among trainee counsellors, emphasising the critical role of emotional intelligence in fostering effective counselling and building strong social relationships. Emotional intelligence, which facilitates understanding and managing emotions, is foundational for counsellors to establish trust and rapport with clients (Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey, 1997). While resilience was not found to moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, its importance in social adaptability and coping with challenges in professional settings remains significant (Kinman & Grant, 2011). These findings highlight the need for counsellor training programs to prioritise emotional intelligence, as it enhances both professional efficacy and the capacity to build meaningful social connections, which are integral to the counselling process (Dagang et al., 2020).

Conversely, strained or weak social relationships may hinder professional growth, leading to emotional exhaustion, stress, and decreased motivation (Rupert et al., 2020). Recognizing the importance of social relationships allows trainee counsellors to navigate challenges effectively and enhance their interpersonal and professional skills.

2.1.2 Emotional Intelligence in trainee counsellors

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate one's emotions while also recognizing and influencing the emotions of others (Mayer et al., 2016). Emotional intelligence is composed of core components, including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Petrides et al., 2018). Emotional intelligence is a vital attribute for counsellors, as it enhances their ability to establish and maintain strong therapeutic relationships (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Counsellors with high emotional intelligence can regulate their own emotional responses while demonstrating empathy and understanding toward clients, which fosters trust and strengthens the therapeutic alliance (Taylor et al., 2015).

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotional state, which allows individuals to respond effectively to challenges (Brackett et al., 2019). Self-regulation involves managing emotions and adapting to situational demands to avoid impulsive behaviour (Zeidner et al., 2020). Motivation within emotional intelligence reflects an individual's internal drive and perseverance to achieve goals, even under pressure (Schutte et al., 2013). Empathy, a cornerstone of emotional intelligence, enables individuals to recognize and understand the emotional experiences of others, a skill particularly valuable in counselling (Goleman, 2020). Lastly, social skills pertain to effective communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution, which are essential for building and maintaining relationships (Brackett et al., 2019).

Research has consistently shown that counsellors with high emotional intelligence achieve better client outcomes due to their ability to navigate challenging emotional interactions effectively (Lee et al., 2020). For trainee counsellors, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in managing stress, receiving constructive feedback, and fostering professional growth (Brackett et al., 2019). High levels of self-awareness and emotional regulation enable trainees to remain calm, composed, and focused during challenging counselling sessions, thereby creating a supportive environment for clients (Taylor et al.,

2015). Additionally, empathy and social skills equip counsellors with the tools needed to address diverse client needs while fostering meaningful therapeutic relationships (Goleman, 2020).

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in shaping the abilities of trainee counsellors, as highlighted by Yaakob et al. (2022). It equips counsellors with the tools to effectively manage their own emotions, build resilience, and provide high-quality support to clients, even in challenging situations. Key aspects of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulations, motivations, empathy, and social skills, are crucial not only for managing stress but also for handling diverse client needs and maintaining professionalism during sessions. The study emphasizes the value of building emotional intelligence through practical strategies like self-reflection, incorporating client feedback, and seeking guidance from supervisors. These skills don't just improve a counsellor's professional capabilities but also enhance their ability to form meaningful, supportive relationships, creating a positive ripple effect for both clients and counsellors (Gutierrez & Mullen, 2016). Furthermore, emotional intelligence has been linked to reduced burnout and enhanced resilience among counselling trainees (Yang & Hayes, 2022). By effectively managing their emotions, counsellors can maintain their well-being and deliver high-quality care to their clients, reinforcing the critical role of EI in professional success (Zeidner et al., 2020).

2.1.3 Attachment Styles in trainee counsellors

Attachment styles refer to patterns of interpersonal behaviour and emotional bonds that individuals form with others, stemming from early life experiences with caregivers (Bowlby, 1982). These attachment styles influence how individuals perceive and respond to relationships throughout their lives (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Attachment theory categorizes attachment styles into three primary types: secure, anxious, avoidant and disorganized (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

A secure attachment style is characterized by trust, comfort with intimacy, and effective emotional regulation, allowing individuals to form healthy relationships (Fraley & Roisman, 2019). Anxious attachment is marked by heightened sensitivity to relationship dynamics, fear of abandonment, and emotional dependence (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Avoidant attachment involves discomfort with emotional closeness, a preference for independence, and suppression of emotional expression (Fraley & Roisman, 2019). These styles serve as internal working models that guide interpersonal behaviours and expectations in adulthood (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Secure attachment styles are essential for building resilience, especially for young adults navigating life's challenges. When people feel securely connected to others, they're better equipped to manage their emotions and tackle stress with constructive strategies. Recent studies by Muiyang et al. (2023) have reinforced this connection, highlighting that individuals with secure attachments are better at regulating emotions and maintaining resilience. For instance, young adults found that secure attachment significantly predicted higher resilience, emphasising its protective role in well-being (Muiyang et al., 2023). Similarly, findings have shown that secure attachment enhances mindfulness and coping abilities, further strengthening emotional and relational health (Kriplani & Vijayan, 2023).

Attachment styles play a critical role in the counselling process, influencing both the counsellor-client relationship and counsellor development (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Securely attached counsellors are more likely to form trusting and empathetic relationships with clients, fostering a strong

therapeutic alliance that enhances positive outcomes (Riggs & Bretz, 2006). This is particularly beneficial as secure attachment equips counsellors with a sense of emotional stability, enabling them to be present and attuned to clients' needs (Mohr et al., 2005). Moreover, secure attachment fosters greater emotional regulation and self-awareness, which are critical for managing complex or emotionally charged sessions (Hughes & Ahern, 2020). Such qualities create a supportive and safe environment, facilitating client trust and deeper therapeutic engagement (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Secure attachment enables counsellors to manage emotional challenges effectively, maintain self-awareness, and provide a supportive environment for clients (Hughes & Ahern, 2020).

Conversely, insecure attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidant attachment, can present challenges in counselling contexts. Anxious attachment may cause counsellors to become overly dependent on client approval, struggle with maintaining boundaries, or experience heightened anxiety when providing feedback (Mikulincer et al., 2013). Avoidant attachment, on the other hand, can lead to emotional disengagement, difficulties in building rapport, and a reluctance to address clients' emotional needs (Hughes & Ahern, 2020). Specific interventions, such as attachment-based supervision, mindfulness practices, and emotional regulation training, have been shown to help counsellors with insecure attachment styles improve self-awareness and manage relational challenges more effectively (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). These strategies foster emotional growth, enhance interpersonal skills, and promote healthier counsellor-client dynamics. Anxiously attached counsellors may struggle with boundary-setting, emotional over-involvement, or a heightened need for validation, which can impact the counselling process (Hughes & Ahern, 2020). Avoidantly attached counsellors may find it difficult to engage in emotional closeness with clients, potentially hindering the development of trust and rapport (Mikulincer et al., 2013). In supervision and peer relationships, attachment styles also influence how trainee counsellors seek and respond to feedback. Secure attachment fosters open communication, acceptance of constructive criticism, and greater resilience in the face of challenges (Riggs & Bretz, 2006).

In contrast, insecure attachment may lead to defensive responses or difficulties in forming collaborative relationships (Hughes & Ahern, 2020).

Recognizing and addressing attachment styles in trainee counsellors is essential for fostering professional growth and improving therapeutic outcomes. Training programs that incorporate attachment-based interventions can help counsellors develop secure attachment behaviours, enhance emotional regulation, and strengthen interpersonal skills (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

2.1.4 The relationship between the attachment style (secure) and social relationships

Secure attachment, considered by trust and comfort in close relationships, is widely linked to positive social interactions and emotional well-being. Individuals with secure attachment styles typically exhibit healthy emotional regulation and effective communication skills, which are essential for fostering strong interpersonal relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). For trainee counselors, possessing a secure attachment style can enhance peer interactions and facilitate the development of robust therapeutic bonds with clients. This perspective aligns with the understanding that secure attachment contributes to positive professional relationships and enables individuals to navigate social and emotional challenges with greater ease.

Consequently, cultivating secure attachment is likely beneficial in creating a supportive, collaborative environment among trainee counselors. A study from Aranda et al. (2021) found that securely attached therapists are more likely to form positive therapeutic alliances, providing a secure base from which clients can explore and reflect on their experiences. This ability to create a secure base is crucial for effective therapy and underscores the importance of secure attachment in therapeutic settings.

Additionally, Rizou and Giannouli (2020) explored the experiences of trainee integrative psychotherapists and found that those with secure attachment styles were better able to offer a secure base for their clients. In contrast, therapists with insecure attachment styles faced challenges in their therapeutic relationships, particularly when working with clients who also had insecure attachment styles.

2.1.5 The relationship between the attachment style (anxious) and social relationships

Anxious attachment is characterized by emotional instability and an increased need for reassurance in relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Individuals with this attachment style often experience heightened sensitivity to interpersonal threats, leading to excessive worry about relationships and fear of rejection, which can result in difficulties in social interactions (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). This heightened sensitivity may also contribute to social anxiety, as individuals with anxious attachment may perceive social situations as more threatening, leading to avoidance behaviors and further social difficulties (Lee & Hankin, 2009).

For trainee counselors, anxiety about interpersonal dynamics can manifest as overdependence on peers or supervisors, making it challenging to establish balanced, effective relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). However, anxious individuals may also possess a heightened sensitivity to others' emotions, which can enhance their ability to empathize and build rapport with clients, offering a potential strength in the counseling field despite challenges in social relationships (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008).

2.1.6 The relationship between the attachment style (avoidant) and social relationships

Avoidant attachment, considered by emotional distance and discomfort with closeness, often poses significant challenges in establishing and maintaining intimate relationships (Nihal, 2024). Individuals with this attachment style tend to suppress emotions and exhibit reluctance to seek support from others, hindering the development of close social bonds and contributing to interpersonal difficulties (Aranda et al., 2021). This emotional suppression may lead to a pattern of self-reliance that discourages engagement in meaningful relationships, reinforcing a cycle of detachment (Shaffer, 2015).

For trainee counselors, avoidant attachment can manifest as a reluctance to engage with peers and supervisors, potentially resulting in professional isolation and difficulty collaborating effectively in group settings (Shaffer, 2015). Such tendencies may impair teamwork and limit opportunities for professional growth, as effective counseling practice often relies on peer discussions, supervision, and shared experiences (Aranda et al., 2021). Furthermore, the avoidance of vulnerability can significantly impact the ability to build rapport with clients. Since therapeutic relationships require trust, openness, and empathy, an avoidant attachment style may create barriers to meaningful client engagement, ultimately affecting counseling effectiveness (Nihal, 2024).

2.1.7 The relationship between the attachment style (disorganized) and social relationships

Disorganized attachment, also known as fearful attachment, can be seen as a contradictory combination of anxious and avoidant traits, leading to conflicting behaviors in relationships. Individuals with this attachment style exhibit a strong desire for intimacy while simultaneously fearing emotional closeness, which results in relationship instability and difficulty in trust formation (Paetzold et al., 2023). This attachment style is often linked to early experiences of inconsistent caregiving, trauma, or neglect, which contribute to heightened emotional dysregulation and an increased likelihood of experiencing anxiety and avoidance simultaneously (Dagan et al., 2022).

As for trainee counselors, this attachment pattern can be particularly challenging as it affects their ability to establish secure and effective relationships with peers, supervisors, and clients. Fear of rejection or negative evaluation may lead to emotional withdrawal, inconsistent communication, or overcompensatory behaviors that affect collaboration and professional growth (Brugnoli et al., 2021). These challenges may result in difficulties in supervision, reluctance to seek feedback, and challenges in forming therapeutic alliances with clients, ultimately impacting counseling effectiveness (Slade & Holmes, 2023). Research by Zamzur and Yahya (2019) examined the relationship between adult attachment and self-concept among counseling students, emphasizing the importance of positive self-concept for professional competence. These studies underscore the relevance of understanding attachment styles in the Malaysian context, particularly for trainee counselors.

2.1.8 The relationship between the emotional intelligence (self-awareness) and social relationships

Self-awareness plays a pivotal role in shaping social relationships. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions. It serves as the foundation for effectively managing emotions and empathizing with others. This heightened self-perception enables individuals to navigate social interactions more easily and authentically (Goleman, 1995).

Recent studies by Tartakovsky (2014) highlight that self-aware individuals are better equipped to manage their emotions, leading to improved communication and stronger relationships. By understanding their emotional triggers, they can respond to social cues more appropriately, enhancing relational dynamics. Furthermore, emotional intelligence contributes to the development of empathy, a crucial component in building and maintaining social bonds. Self-awareness allows individuals to recognize their own emotional states, which in turn facilitates a deeper understanding of others' emotions. This empathetic engagement promotes trust and intimacy in relationships (Ventura, 2022)

In essence, cultivating self-awareness within the framework of emotional intelligence enhances one's ability to form and sustain meaningful social relationships. By being attuned to their own emotions, individuals can communicate more effectively, empathize with others, and navigate the complexities of social interactions with greater competence.

2.1.9 The relationship between emotional intelligence (self-regulations) and social relationships

Self-regulations, another critical aspect of emotional intelligence, refers to regulating one's emotional reactions in various situations (Goleman, 1995). Those who can manage their emotions effectively tend to have more positive social interactions, as they can handle stress and conflicts more constructively (Mayer et al., 2004). For trainee counsellors, the ability to manage emotions is particularly important in maintaining professional composure in emotionally charged situations, both in training and clinical practice (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotion regulation also strengthens interpersonal relationships, as individuals who manage their emotions well are more likely to foster calm, supportive, and productive social environments (Gross, 2002).

Recent research from Sanfey et al. (2010) underscores the importance of emotion regulation in social contexts. A study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* found that adequate emotion regulation is essential in everyday life, especially in social interactions, influencing decision-making in socially interactive contexts.

In the context of counsellor training, a grounded theory study highlighted by Prikhidko et al. (2020) says that counsellors-in-training need emotion regulation training specifically focused on coping with emotions connected to their vulnerabilities when working with clients. Furthermore, emotion regulation abilities are associated with interpersonal sensitivity, prosocial tendencies, and reciprocal interactions, all of which contribute to the quality of social interactions.

2.1.10 The relationship between the emotional intelligence (motivations) and social relationships

Self-motivation, the ability to remain focused on goals and persevere through challenges, is a key aspect of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Studies show that individuals with strong self-motivation tend to exhibit persistence, optimism, and resilience, all of which contribute to better social interactions (Bar-On, 2006). For trainee counsellors, motivation is essential for professional growth, as it encourages engagement in learning and collaboration with others (Mayer et al., 2004). Motivated individuals often create a positive atmosphere, inspiring others and fostering a supportive network, which is essential for success both in academic and professional settings (Schutte et al., 2001).

Research from Tang and He (2023) found that emotional intelligence positively predicts learning motivation, with self-efficacy and social support playing mediating roles. This suggests that enhancing emotional intelligence can boost motivation and academic performance.

In the realm of counselling, personal therapy has been shown to increase self-awareness and motivation among counsellors-in-training, contributing to their professional development (Bevly & Prosek, 2024). Furthermore, emotional intelligence, encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, is crucial for effective leadership in healthcare settings. Leaders with high emotional intelligence can manage their emotions and understand others', fostering a positive and productive environment. (Cavaness et al., 2020)

2.1.11 The relationship between emotional intelligence (empathy) and social relationships

Empathy, another part of emotional intelligence, involves understanding and sharing the feelings of others (Goleman, 1995). Research has consistently shown that empathy plays a vital role in fostering positive social interactions and emotional connections (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). For trainee counsellors, empathy is especially crucial, as it enhances their ability to build trust and rapport with clients, while also strengthening relationships with peers and supervisors (Bar-On, 2006). Empathetic individuals are more likely to be attuned to the emotional needs of others, leading to more effective communication and conflict resolution in both personal and professional settings (Davis, 1994).

Empathy has been identified as a critical characteristic for facilitating positive client outcomes in the context of counsellor training. Research by Bloom et al. (2018) comparing empathy levels between counsellors-in-training and their non-counselling academic peers emphasized the necessity of fostering empathy in counsellor education to meet competency standards. Empathy plays an integral role in facilitating therapeutic relationships and promoting positive client outcomes (Bloom et al., 2018). Furthermore, empathy contributes to effective communication and conflict resolution. Empathetic individuals are better equipped to understand others' perspectives, leading to improved interpersonal relationships and a supportive environment.

2.1.12 The relationship between the emotional intelligence (social skills) and social relationships

Social skills, another key component of emotional intelligence, refer to the ability to navigate and manage social interactions effectively (Goleman, 1995). Individuals with strong social skills are better at forming positive relationships, resolving conflicts, and building trust in interpersonal settings (Mayer et al., 2004). For trainee counsellors, effective social skills are essential for professional success, as they allow individuals to communicate clearly, collaborate with colleagues, and establish productive working relationships (Bar-On, 2006). Enhancing social skills also contributes to a supportive learning environment, where trainees can engage with one another and develop the interpersonal competencies required in the counselling profession (Schutte et al., 2001).

Recent research by Adade et al. (2024) underscores the importance of social skills in counsellor training. The study found that counsellor trainees with high emotional intelligence levels, which encompass social skills, exhibited lower stress levels and higher empathetic dispositions, suggesting that emotional intelligence is crucial for effective counseling practice.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for social-emotional skills development. A study examining first-year college students reported declines in social-emotional skills post-lockdown, emphasizing the necessity for targeted interventions to rebuild these competencies in educational settings (Cerutti et al., 2024)

2.1.13 The relationship between attachment styles, emotional intelligence and social relationships

The connection between attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and social relationships is crucial in shaping how individuals interact with others. Attachment styles, developed from early caregiver relationships, influence how people approach trust, intimacy, and emotional availability in relationships (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Secure attachment fosters emotional regulation and stability, while insecure attachment styles such as anxious, avoidant, and disorganized often create difficulties in maintaining stable relationships due to issues like fear of abandonment or emotional distancing (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions, plays a vital role in how people navigate social interactions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle conflicts, communicate effectively, and build meaningful relationships (Bar-On, 2006). Securely attached individuals tend to have higher emotional intelligence, which enhances their ability to form healthy and stable social connections (Schutte et al., 2001; Kafetsios & Nezlek, 2002). In contrast, those with insecure attachment styles may struggle with emotional regulation, leading to difficulties in social interactions and the maintenance of positive relationships (Sutton & Harper, 2020).

The relationship between attachment styles and emotional intelligence significantly impacts the quality of social relationships. Secure attachment promotes the development of emotional intelligence, which in turn helps individuals navigate social challenges with empathy, effective communication, and conflict resolution (Chen & McDowell, 2021). In contrast, insecure attachment patterns can limit emotional intelligence, leading to difficulties in forming trusting, stable relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). These dynamic underscores the importance of addressing both attachment styles and emotional intelligence to foster healthier social interactions across various contexts.

2.2 Summary

In conclusion, this chapter has reviewed the significant body of literature surrounding attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and their combined influence on social relationships, particularly in the context of trainee counsellors. Attachment theory highlights how early bonding experiences shape interpersonal relationships throughout life, with secure attachment promoting healthy social interactions and emotional regulation. Emotional intelligence, as discussed, is a crucial skill for counsellors, impacting their ability to navigate complex emotional dynamics in both personal and professional relationships. Furthermore, the literature indicates that both attachment styles and emotional intelligence play vital roles in shaping the social interactions and relationships of counseling students, influencing their capacity to collaborate with peers, manage client relationships, and cope with the emotional demands of their profession. However, there remains a gap in research specifically focusing on how these two factors interact among trainee counsellors in Malaysia, which presents an opportunity for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods used to explore the relationship between secure attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). It describes the research design, the participants involved, and how they were selected for the study. The tools and techniques used to gather data are explained in detail, along with the steps taken to analyse the findings. Special attention is given to the reliability and accuracy of the instruments used to measure the key variables. Additionally, the chapter discusses the ethical considerations that guided the study, ensuring that it was conducted responsibly and fairly. Through this chapter, readers understand how the research was carried out and how the results were obtained.

3.1 Research Design

This quantitative study used descriptive and correlational design to explore how secure attachment styles and emotional intelligence influence social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The focus was on understanding the different dimensions of attachment styles, including secure as well as the role of emotional intelligence including self-awareness, self-regulations, motivations, empathy and social skills in shaping interpersonal connections. The study aimed to uncover how these factors impact the quality of social relationships, particularly in the context of counselling trainees' interactions and connections with others. By examining these relationships, the research provides insights into the social and emotional dynamics that trainee counsellors experience.

3.2 Research Sampling

This study included 270 trainee counsellors from University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), with the 159-sample size determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table (KENPRO, 2012). Krejcie and Morgan table is particularly useful when the population size is known. The table accommodates a range of population sizes, making it flexible for this study. The participants were selected through convenience sampling, a nonprobability method based on practical considerations such as accessibility, availability during the study period, and willingness to participate (Etikan et al., 2016). Data collection was facilitated by distributing a Google Form questionnaire via social networking platforms, ensuring ease of participation at the time. Only trainee counsellors from UNIMAS were eligible to take part in the study.

3.3 Instruments

This study used three instruments: the Attachment Style Questionnaire, the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q), and the Social Provisions Scale (SPS).

Data was collected from the students through a Google Form, which was divided into four sections. The first section gave an overview of the research. Section A gathered demographic details such as age, gender, year of study, program, and faculty. Section B included the Attachment Style Quiz, Section C featured the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q), and Section D contained the Social Provisions Scale (SPS).

3.3.1 Instrument Structure

Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ)

The Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ), adapted by Killian (2018) from the work of Collins (1996) and Griffin & Bartholomew (1994), is a validated tool designed to assess attachment styles across 4 categories: secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized. The questionnaire consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 0=Not at All Characteristic of Me to 4=Very Characteristic of Me. Some items in the Attachment Styles Questionnaire are reverse-keyed to reduce response bias and ensure the scale's reliability. In this study, the reverse-keyed items identified were Item 10, 14, 15 and 20. These items were reverse-scored by inverting the scale. For example, a response of 0 was scored as 4, a response of 1 as 3, and so on before calculating the subscale totals. This reverse-scoring ensures consistency in the interpretation of results and aligns the responses with the theoretical constructs of attachment styles. By including both direct and reverse-keyed items, the Attachment Styles Questionnaire provides a strong measure of attachment styles in adult relationships. For the purpose of this study, only the secure attachment subscale was utilized. This decision was based on the study's specific focus on understanding the characteristics, prevalence, and implications of secure attachment in shaping social relationships. The secure attachment subscale comprises four items that reflect key characteristics of secure attachment: ease of closeness, comfort with dependency, confidence in relationships, and trust in others' availability. These items are item 3, 8, 13 and 18. Scores for the secure attachment subscale are calculated by summing the responses to these four items. Higher scores indicate a stronger secure attachment. A score of 11 or higher is considered significant, as per the scoring guidelines.

Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q)

The Emotional Intelligence (EI) Questionnaire used in this study is based on the framework developed by Daniel Goleman, which outlines five key dimensions of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivations, empathy, and social skills. This self-assessment tool consists 50 statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where participants rate how much each statement applies to them (1 = “Does not apply at all,” 3 = “Applies about half the time,” 5 = “Always applies”). Higher scores indicate greater strength in the specific dimension, while lower scores suggest areas for development. Reverse-keyed items identified in this study include Item 7, 12 and 47. In this study, the questionnaire's scores were used to examine participants' emotional intelligence across its five dimensions, with particular attention paid to ensuring accurate representation through the inclusion of reverse-scored items.

Social Provisions Scale (SPS)

The Social Provisions Scale (SPS), developed by Cutrona and Russell (1987), is a 24-item instrument designed to assess individuals' perceptions of the quality and availability of social support in their relationships. It measures six key types of social provisions: attachment, social integration, reassurance of worth, reliable alliance, guidance, and opportunity for nurturance, each of which plays a critical role in psychological well-being and stress adaptation. The scale uses a 4-point Likert scale for responses, with higher scores indicating stronger perceptions of social support. It includes reverse-keyed items to ensure careful attention in responses which are statement 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 24. The SPS is widely used in research to explore how perceived social support impacts mental health, stress coping, and resilience, providing a multidimensional measure of the role of social relationships in well-being.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The validity of the content of the Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q), and Social Provisions Scale (SPS) was obtained through ratings from the counselling expert. The expert role is to check the relevance of questions in the Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q), and Social Provisions Scale (SPS) to ensure that the content of the questionnaires is appropriate for undergraduate University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) students.

3.5 Ethics of Study

Research ethics refers to the set of principles that guide researchers in conducting studies responsibly and ethically. These principles are essential to maintaining the integrity of research and safeguarding the rights of participants. A key ethical consideration in this study was respecting the autonomy and dignity of participants. This involves ensuring that participants are neither coerced nor exploited and that their confidentiality and anonymity are protected throughout the research process.

Another fundamental ethical principle adhered to in this research was obtaining informed consent. Participants were provided with clear information about the purpose of the study, along with any potential risks and benefits, enabling them to make an informed decision about their participation.

3.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative methods of data analysis were employed in this study. The data was coded, cleaned, and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26, for statistical software (Creswell, 2014). The relationship between the dependents and independent variables was determined using Pearson Correlation. The data analysis procedure of this study is summarised in Table 3 below:

Table 1: Data Analysis

No.	Hypothesis	Test
1.	There is a significant relationship between the attachment style (secure) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).	Pearson Correlation
2.	There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (self-awareness) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).	Pearson Correlation
3.	There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (self-regulations) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).	Pearson Correlation
4.	There is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence (motivations) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).	Pearson Correlation
5.	There is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence (empathy) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).	Pearson Correlation
6.	There is a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence (social skills) and social relationships among trainee counsellors at University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).	Pearson Correlation

3.7 Data Collection

According to Kabir (2016), the data collection procedure involved systematic gathering and analysis of information on variables of interest, enabling researchers to address specific research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes.

Firstly, the problems were identified, and access to trainee counsellors at UNIMAS was obtained, who served as the target populations. Secondly, questionnaires were distributed through Google Forms. The entire research process took ten weeks to complete. The data collection procedure of this study is summarized in Table 4 below:

Table 2: Research schedule plan

Task Plan	Week									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Identifying problems										
Formulate research design										
Formulate research strategy, research design and select methods										
Write research proposal										
Literature review										
Data collection										
Data analysis										
Write first draft										
Write second draft										
Write final draft										
Writing due										

3.8 Summary

This chapter outlines the methodology used to examine the relationship between secure attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and social relationships among trainee counsellors at the University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational design to explore how various secure attachment styles and components of emotional intelligence influence social relationships. The research design, participant selection, data collection tools, and analysis methods are detailed, focusing on ensuring the instruments' reliability and accuracy. Ethical considerations were also addressed to ensure the study was conducted responsibly. Through this chapter, readers gain a clear understanding of the research process and how the findings were derived.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's findings, based on data collected and analyzed using SPSS. The results include descriptive statistics on respondents' demographic background, attachment style, emotional intelligence, and social relationships. It also covers reliability testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to address each research objective.

4.1 Frequency of Analysis

The questionnaire was distributed to all students in the University of Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) by hand (hard copy) and online (Google Form). A total of 156 questionnaires were collected. The descriptive analysis provides an overview of the respondents' profiles.

4.1.1 Gender

This section presents the demographic breakdown of respondents, beginning with the distribution by gender. Out of 156 respondents, 114 (73.08%) were female and 42 (26.92%) were male.

This indicates that the majority of the trainee counsellors in this study were female. This gender imbalance is reflective of broader trends in the counselling and psychology fields, where female participation is significantly higher than male participation. Female students often dominate these helping professions due to social and cultural expectations regarding emotional expressiveness and caregiving roles (Charleson et al., 2020). Similarly, OECD data highlights that women are more inclined to enter education and psychology-related disciplines compared to men (OECD, 2021).

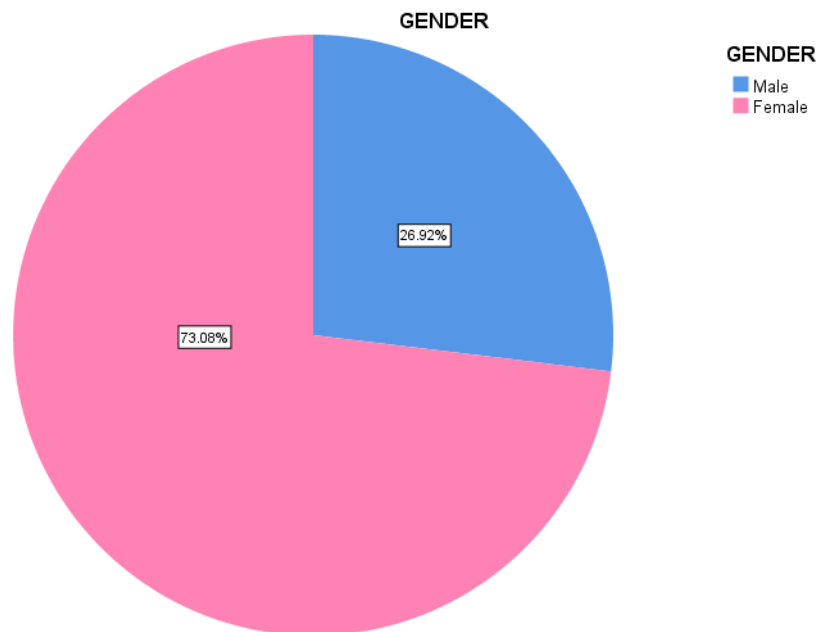


Figure 4.1 Percentage of Respondents' Gender

4.1.2 Age

The age distribution of the respondents revealed that the majority, 109 participants (69.87%), were aged 22–25 years, followed by 39 participants (25.00%) in the 18–21 age group. A smaller portion, 8 participants (5.13%), fell into the 26–29 age group, while no participants were aged 30 and above.

This reflects the typical age profile of undergraduate trainee counsellors in Malaysian public universities, who generally fall within the early adulthood stage. According to Erikson's psychosocial development theory, individuals in this age range are typically navigating the “intimacy vs. isolation” stage, where social relationships become particularly meaningful (Erikson, 1968). Furthermore, the age composition aligns with findings by Mustaffa et al. (2020), who reported that most counselling undergraduates in Malaysia are between the ages of 21 and 25.

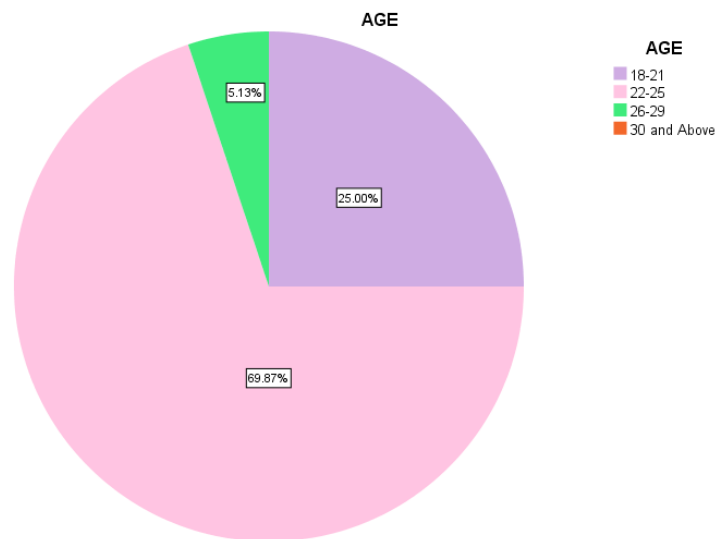


Figure 4.2 Percentage of Respondents' Age

4.1.3 Race

The racial composition of the 156 respondents comprised 65 Malays, 9 Chinese, 3 Indians, 3 Bumiputera Sarawak, 7 Bumiputera Sabah, and 70 respondents from other ethnic backgrounds.

This diverse racial distribution reflects Malaysia's multicultural demographic and supports the notion that public university settings, particularly in East Malaysia, often consist of a high proportion of Bumiputera and ethnically mixed students (Idris et al., 2021). The large number of respondents categorized under "Other" may include those with mixed heritage or ethnicities not listed in the main categories.

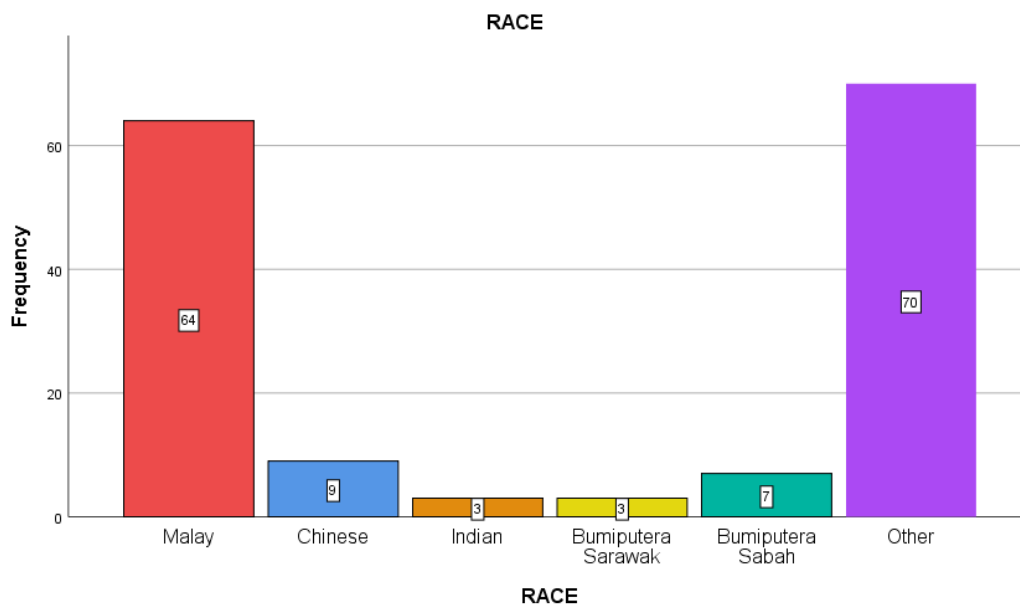


Figure 4.3 Number of Respondents for each Race

4.1.4 Birth Order

In terms of birth order, the majority of respondents were middle-born children, representing 43.59% of the total sample. This was followed by last-born children at 30.77%, and first-born children at 25.64%. No participants reported being only children.

Birth order is often considered a variable that may influence personality traits, social behaviours, and even career preferences. According to Sulloway (1996), middle-born individuals often develop strong negotiation and social skills as they navigate between older and younger siblings. In the context of counselling, these skills may contribute positively to their interpersonal competence and peer relationships.

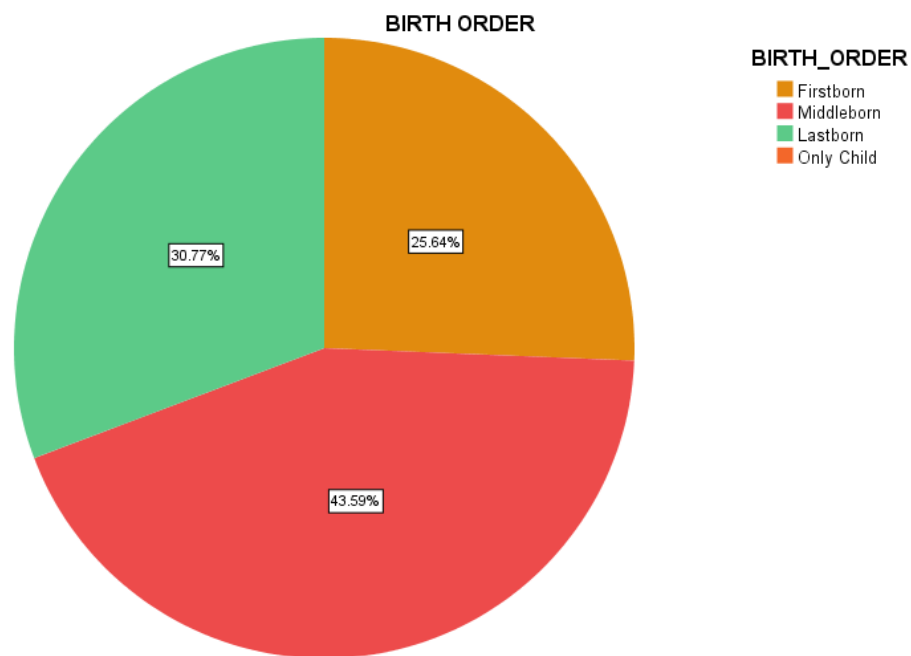


Figure 4.4 Percentage of Respondents' Birth Order

4.1.5 Parental Marital Status

With regard to parental marital status, a majority of the respondents (61.54%) reported that their parents were married, followed by 26.92% who indicated that their parents were single. A smaller percentage (11.54%) had parents who were separated, divorced, or widowed.

Parental marital status is often regarded as an influential background factor in the development of social and emotional adjustment among young adults. According to Amato (2000), individuals from intact family structures tend to display higher levels of well-being and social competence. However, children from single-parent or divorced households may also develop resilience and adaptive coping strategies that shape their interpersonal skills differently.

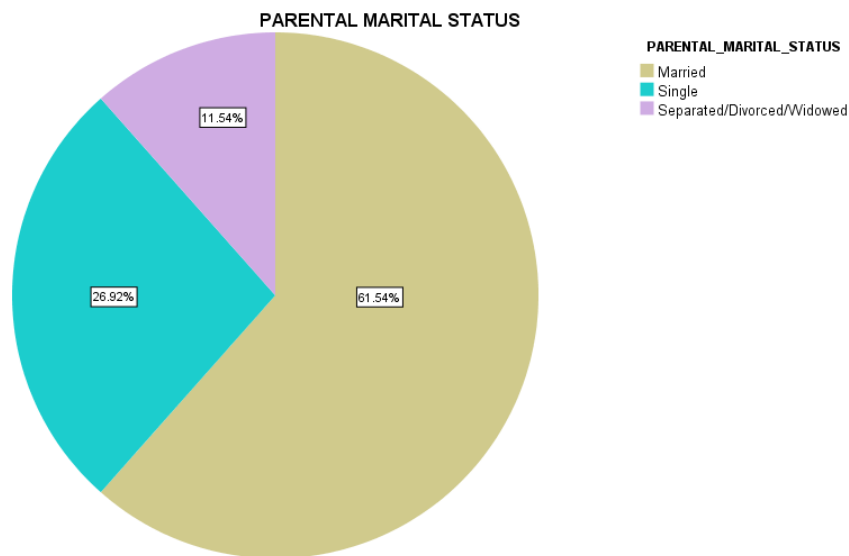


Figure 4.5 Percentage of Respondents' Parental Marital Status

4.1.6 Parents' Employment Status

Based on the findings, a majority of 117 of the respondents reported that at least one of their parents was presently employed, while 39 respondents indicated that their parents were not presently employed.

Parental employment status plays an essential role in shaping a student's social development and access to resources. Employed parents are more likely to provide financial stability, which can positively impact the child's educational experience and emotional well-being (Conger & Donnellan, 2007). Conversely, students from households with unemployed parents may face different forms of psychosocial challenges but may also develop higher levels of independence and emotional maturity.

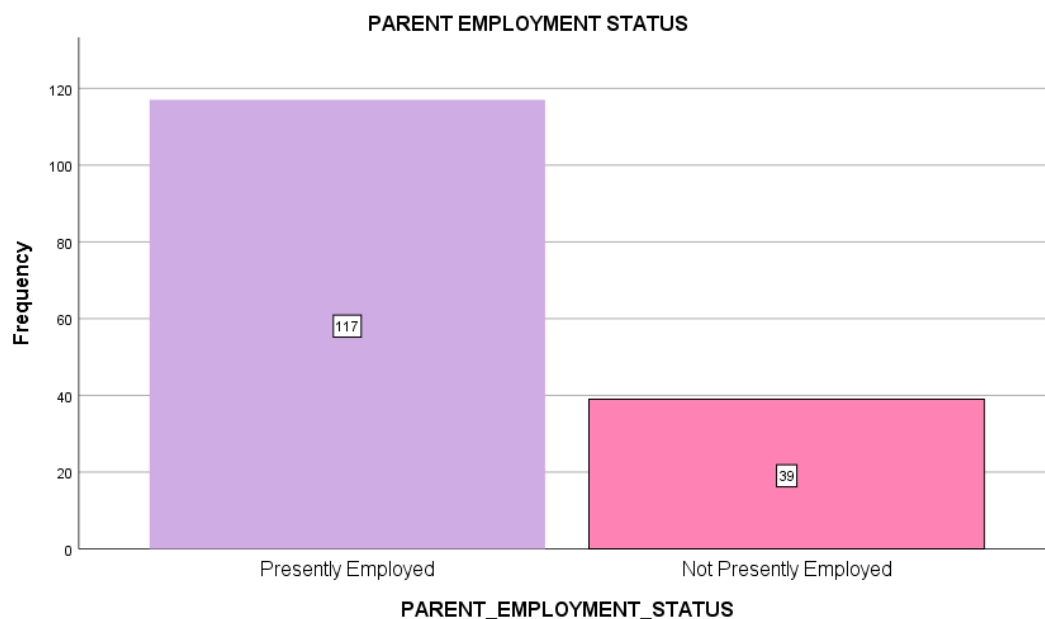


Figure 4.6 Number of Respondents for Parents Employment Status

4.1.7 Parent Income

In terms of parental income classification, the highest number of respondents ($n = 94$) reported coming from the B40 income group, followed by 53 respondents from the M40 group, and only 6 from the T20 group.

Income level is widely recognised as a factor that influences educational opportunities and social development. Students from lower-income families, such as those in the B40 group, may encounter financial constraints that can affect their access to resources, social exposure, and support systems. According to Siraj (2019), socioeconomic background, particularly parental income, plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic achievements and social adjustment.

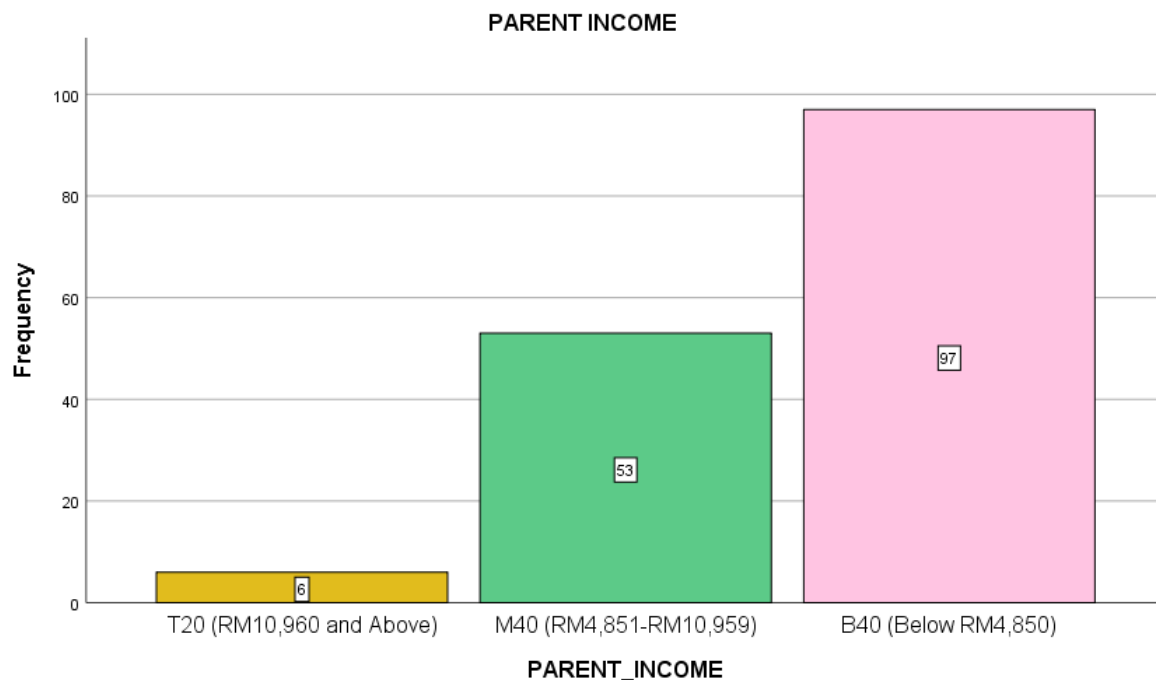


Figure 4.7 Number of Respondents for Parents' Income

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 4.1 displays the descriptive statistics for the study's main variables, including the four types of attachment styles, five dimensions of emotional intelligence, and overall social relationships among trainee counsellors at UNIMAS.

Among the attachment styles, *Avoidant Attachment* had the highest mean score ($M = 15.21$, $SD = 2.48$), while *Disorganized Attachment* had the lowest ($M = 12.14$, $SD = 2.89$). For emotional intelligence components, *Self-Awareness* showed the highest average ($M = 40.25$, $SD = 4.93$), and *Self-Regulation* the lowest ($M = 33.97$, $SD = 6.08$).

The total mean score for social relationship was 79.44 ($SD = 12.28$), indicating a relatively high level of social interaction and relational capacity among the respondents.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total_Secure	156	8.00	20.00	12.8397	2.73919
Total_Anxious	156	4.00	20.00	13.2692	4.10090
Total_Avoidant	156	9.00	20.00	15.2115	2.47571
Total_Disorganized	156	4.00	18.00	12.1410	2.89036
Total_SelfAwareness	156	28.00	50.00	40.2500	4.92738
Total_SelfRegulation	156	15.00	50.00	33.9679	6.08480
Total_Motivation	156	22.00	50.00	35.1603	5.89204
Total_Empathy	156	21.00	50.00	38.3590	5.78312
Total_SocialSkills	156	25.00	50.00	37.0833	5.38092
Total_SR	156	61.00	120.00	79.4423	12.27756
Valid N (listwise)	156				

Table 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

4.3 Pearson Correlation Analysis

This section presents the findings of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variables, which are attachment styles (secure, anxious, avoidant, disorganized) and emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) with the dependent variable, which is social relationship.

Pearson correlation was chosen as it is suitable for determining the strength and direction of linear relationships between two continuous variables (Field, 2013). The results are discussed based on the nine specific objectives stated in Chapter 1.

4.3.1 Relationship Between Secure Attachment Style and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total_Secure	Total_SR
Total_Secure	Pearson Correlation	1	.220**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	.220**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	
	N	156	156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.2 Relationship Between Secure Attachment Style and Social Relationships

The analysis revealed that secure attachment style had a positive and significant relationship with social relationships among trainee counsellors. The correlation value was moderate ($r = 0.220$, $p = 0.006$), indicating that individuals with higher levels of secure attachment are more likely to form stronger and healthier social connections. This finding supports the idea that individuals who are securely attached tend to be more trusting, emotionally available, and responsive in their interpersonal interactions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016), which in turn enhances the quality of their social relationships.

4.3.2 Relationship Between Anxious Attachment Style and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total_Anxious	Total_SR
Total_Anxious	Pearson Correlation	1	-.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.749
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	-.026	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.749	
	N	156	156

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.3 Relationship Between Anxious Attachment Style and Social Relationships

The findings showed no significant relationship between anxious attachment style and social relationships among trainee counsellors. Although the correlation coefficient was slightly negative ($r = -0.026$), the result was not statistically significant ($p = 0.749$). This suggests that levels of anxious attachment do not appear to have a meaningful impact on how trainee counsellors form or maintain their social connections. One possible explanation could be that individuals with anxious attachment may experience internal distress (e.g., fear of abandonment), but still attempt to engage socially, leading to mixed outcomes in relationship quality (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

4.3.3 Relationship Between Avoidant Attachment Style and Social Relationships

Correlations		Total	Avoidant	Total	SR
Total_Avoidant	Pearson Correlation		1		.265**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.001
	N		156		156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation		.265**		1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001		
	N		156		156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.4 Relationship Between Avoidant Attachment Style and Social Relationships

The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between avoidant attachment style and social relationships among trainee counsellors ($r = 0.265$, $p = 0.001$). This result is somewhat unexpected, as avoidant individuals are typically characterised by emotional distancing and discomfort with closeness (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). However, in the context of trainee counsellors, it's possible that professional training and counselling practice may help individuals with avoidant tendencies to still foster functional social interactions, especially in academic or structured environments.

4.3.4 Relationship Between Disorganized Attachment Style and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total_Disorganized	Total_SR
Total_Disorganized	Pearson Correlation	1	.172*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	.172*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
	N	156	156

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.5 Relationship Between Disorganized Attachment Style and Social Relationships

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between disorganised attachment style and social relationships ($r = 0.172$, $p = 0.031$). Although the correlation is relatively weak, the finding indicates that even individuals with disorganized attachment patterns, typically marked by confusion in social connections and inconsistent behaviour, may still maintain moderate levels of social interaction. This could be due to the support systems available in a university setting or the development of interpersonal skills through their counselling training (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

4.3.5 Relationship Between Self-Awareness and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total_SelfAwareness	Total_SR
Total_SelfAwareness	Pearson Correlation	1	.296**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	.296**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	156	156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.6 Relationship Between Self-Awareness and Social Relationships

The result of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between self-awareness and social relationships ($r = 0.296$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that the more self-aware a person is being able to understand their own emotions, thoughts, and reactions, the more likely they are to build and maintain healthy social relationships. This is consistent with Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence theory, which highlights self-awareness as a core component facilitating effective interpersonal interactions (MacCann et al., 2020)

4.3.6 Relationship Between Self-Regulation and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total_SelfRegulation	Total_SR
Total_SelfRegulation	Pearson Correlation	1	.562**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	.562**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	156	156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.7 Relationship Between Self-Regulation and Social Relationships

The Pearson correlation result indicated a strong, significant positive relationship between self-regulation and social relationships ($r = 0.562$, $p = 0.000$). This means that individuals who are better at managing their emotions, staying calm under pressure, and controlling impulsive behaviours tend to have better quality social interactions. These findings are aligned with past studies that self-regulation is critical to maintaining emotional well-being and relationship satisfaction (Shcherbatykh, 2023)

4.3.7 Relationship Between Motivation and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total Motivation	Total SR
Total_Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	.547**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	.547**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	156	156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.8 Relationship Between Motivation and Social Relationships

The analysis revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between motivation and social relationships ($r = 0.547$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that individuals who possess higher levels of intrinsic drive, goal orientation, and persistence are more likely to maintain meaningful and effective interpersonal connections. This supports research suggesting higher emotional intelligence (including motivation) correlates with better social outcomes and relationship satisfaction (MacCann et al., 2020).

4.3.8 Relationship Between Empathy and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total_Empathy	Total_SR
Total_Empathy	Pearson Correlation	1	.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	.479**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	156	156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.9 Relationship Between Empathy and Social Relationships

The findings indicate a moderate and statistically significant positive correlation between empathy and social relationships ($r = 0.479$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that trainee counsellors who score higher on empathy also tend to report more meaningful and supportive social connections. This aligns with a recent meta-analytic review, which found that secure attachment promotes the development of empathy across all ages and that empathy is a crucial mediator between attachment and relational competence (De Sanctis & Mesurado, 2022).

4.3.9 Relationship Between Social Skills and Social Relationships

Correlations			
		Total_SocialSkills	Total_SR
Total_SocialSkills	Pearson Correlation	1	.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	156	156
Total_SR	Pearson Correlation	.507**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	156	156

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.10 Relationship Between Social Skills and Social Relationships

There was a strong, positive, and significant correlation between social skills and social relationship scores ($r = 0.507$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that trainee counsellors with well-developed social competencies like communication, cooperation, and emotional regulation are more likely to form satisfying and effective social relationships. This result reflects recent findings that early attachment quality shapes social competence later in life, and that social skills developed through emotional awareness improve peer interaction (Zayia et al., 2022).

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

This section aims to examine the predictive strength of attachment styles and emotional intelligence components on social relationships among trainee counsellors at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Multiple regression analysis was employed as it allows the researcher to assess how well a set of independent variables predicts the dependent variable, which in this case is the level of social relationships. This analysis provides insights into the relative contribution of each attachment style and emotional intelligence component towards the quality of social relationships.

4.4.1 Multiple Regression Analysis of Attachment Styles and Social Relationships

To determine whether different attachment styles significantly predict the level of social relationships among trainee counsellors, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The four types of attachment styles, which are secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized, were entered as independent variables, while social relationship served as the dependent variable.

As shown in the **Model Summary** table, the value of R is 0.430, indicating a moderate relationship between the four attachment styles and social relationships. The R² value is 0.185, which suggests that approximately 18.5% of the variance in social relationship scores can be explained by the combined influence of the four attachment styles.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.430 ^a	.185	.163	11.23305
a. Predictors: (Constant), Total_Disorganized, Total_Secure, Total_Avoidant, Total_Anxious				

Table 4.10 Modal Summary of Attachment Style and Social Relationships

The **ANOVA** results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant, $F(4, 151) = 8.541, p < 0.001$. This implies that the model provides a better fit than a model with no predictors and that at least one of the attachment styles significantly predicts social relationships.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4311.083	4	1077.771	8.541	.000 ^b
	Residual	19053.398	151	126.181		
	Total	23364.481	155			

a. Dependent Variable: Total_SR

b. Predictors: (Constant), Total_Disorganized, Total_Secure, Total_Avoidant, Total_Anxious

Table 4.11 ANOVA of Attachment Style and Social Relationships

The **Coefficients** table provides more detailed insights into the individual contribution of each attachment style:

- **Secure attachment** had a significant positive effect on social relationships ($B = 1.530, p < .001$), suggesting that individuals with secure attachment tend to have stronger social relationships.
- **Avoidant attachment** also showed a significant positive relationship ($B = 1.269, p = .001$), which may indicate that avoidantly attached individuals may still maintain certain forms of functional social interactions.
- **Disorganized attachment** significantly predicted social relationships as well ($B = 0.956, p = .009$), albeit to a lesser extent.
- However, **Anxious attachment** did not significantly predict social relationships ($B = -0.319, p = .185$), indicating that this attachment style may not be a strong determinant of social relationship quality among the participants.

		Coefficients^a				
		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	33.123	8.761		3.781	.000
	Total_Secure	1.530	.351	.341	4.360	.000
	Total_Anxious	-.319	.240	-.106	-1.331	.185
	Total_Avoidant	1.269	.389	.256	3.257	.001
	Total_Disorganized	.956	.363	.225	2.635	.009

a. Dependent Variable: Total_SR

Table 4.12 Coefficient of Attachment Style and Social Relationships

These findings indicate that secure, avoidant, and disorganized attachment styles are significant predictors of social relationships, with secure attachment being the strongest contributor. Anxious attachment, however, did not show a statistically significant contribution.

4.4.2 Multiple Regression Analysis of Emotional Intelligence and Social Relationships

To examine how the five components of emotional intelligence (EI), which are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, predict social relationships among trainee counsellors, a multiple regression analysis was carried out.

The model summary table shows that the five predictors explain a significant proportion of variance in social relationships. The R value of .663 indicates a moderate to strong correlation between the predictors and the outcome variable. The R² value of .440 suggests that 44.0% of the variance in social relationships can be explained by the five components of emotional intelligence.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.663 ^a	.440	.421	9.34315

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total_SocialSkills, Total_SelfRegulation, Total_SelfAwareness, Total_Motivation, Total_Empathy

Table 4.13 Modal Summary of Emotional Intelligence and Social Relationships

ANOVA

As indicated in Table 4.15, the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(5, 150) = 23.530$, $p < .001$. This implies that the set of predictors reliably predicts the dependent variable, social relationships.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10270.314	5	2054.063	23.530	.000 ^b
	Residual	13094.167	150	87.294		
	Total	23364.481	155			

a. Dependent Variable: Total_SR

b. Predictors: (Constant), Total_SocialSkills, Total_SelfRegulation, Total_SelfAwareness, Total_Motivation, Total_Empathy

Table 4.14 ANOVA of Emotional Intelligence and Social Relationships

Coefficients

Table 4.15 presents the coefficients for each predictor. The results indicate that self-regulation ($B = .742$, $p < .001$) and social skills ($B = .624$, $p = .013$) were significant positive predictors of social relationships. However, self-awareness ($B = -.131$, $p = .538$), motivation ($B = .330$, $p = .094$), and empathy ($B = .104$, $p = .657$) did not significantly predict social relationships.

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	20.804	6.929		3.003
	Total_SelfAwareness	-.131	.211	-.052	-.618
	Total_SelfRegulation	.742	.172	.368	4.308
	Total_Motivation	.330	.196	.158	1.686
	Total_Empathy	.104	.233	.049	.445
	Total_SocialSkills	.624	.248	.273	2.519

a. Dependent Variable: Total_SR

Table 4.15 Coefficient of Emotional Intelligence and Social Relationships

These findings suggest that trainee counsellors who exhibit higher self-regulation and stronger social skills are more likely to report better social relationships. This is consistent with the theoretical understanding that effective self-management and interpersonal skills are critical in forming and maintaining social bonds (Goleman, 2001; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004).

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the data analysis in alignment with the research objectives. The descriptive analysis provided an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and summarized the distribution of key variables, including attachment styles, emotional intelligence components, and social relationships. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed several significant relationships, particularly between secure, avoidant, and disorganized attachment styles with social relationships, as well as between emotional intelligence components such as self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills with social relationships. Furthermore, the multiple regression analyses identified that secure attachment, avoidant attachment, and disorganized attachment were significant predictors of social relationships, while among the emotional intelligence components, self-regulation and social skills emerged as the strongest predictors. The following chapter will discuss these findings in greater depth, relate them to previous research, highlight implications, and suggest directions for future studies.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the final component of the study, focusing on discussing the research findings in relation to the objectives and existing literature. The chapter begins with an in-depth discussion of the results obtained from the Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses conducted in Chapter 4. These findings are interpreted and discussed in alignment with previous studies and relevant theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the implications of the study for future practice and research, highlights the limitations faced during the research process, and provides several recommendations for future researchers. The chapter concludes by summarizing the key findings and reinforcing the significance of the study in the context of trainee counsellors' social relationships.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 To Examine the Relationship Between Secure Attachment and Social Relationships Among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between secure attachment style and social relationships among trainee counsellors ($r = .220, p = .006$), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of secure attachment are more likely to develop and maintain stronger, healthier interpersonal bonds. This aligns with the theoretical propositions of Bowlby's attachment theory (1982), which posits that securely attached individuals possess a stable internal working model of self and others, fostering confidence and trust in relational contexts. The regression analysis further substantiated this finding, showing that secure attachment significantly predicted social relationships ($\beta = .341, p < .001$), underscoring its central role in shaping social functioning.

A possible explanation for this finding lies in the emotional security, self-worth, and responsiveness that are characteristic of securely attached individuals (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019). These attributes may enhance the individual's capacity to communicate effectively, empathize with others, and resolve interpersonal conflicts, all of which are vital for sustaining positive social relationships, especially within the context of counselling training, where collaboration and interpersonal sensitivity are crucial (Wei et al., 2022). Moreover, securely attached individuals are less likely to exhibit relational anxiety or avoidance, which reduces barriers to connection and promotes mutual respect and openness in interactions. Given the relational nature of the helping profession, this finding reinforces the view that secure attachment serves as a foundational resource for nurturing healthy counsellor-client dynamics as well as peer support networks within training environments.

5.1.2 To Examine the Relationship Between Anxious Attachment and Social Relationships Among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

Interestingly, the results demonstrated no significant correlation between anxious attachment and social relationships ($r = -.026, p = .749$), indicating that, within this group of trainee counsellors, higher levels of attachment-related anxiety do not necessarily impair their ability to form or maintain social connections. This finding diverges from the conventional perspective, which suggests that individuals with anxious attachment tend to experience relational difficulties due to their heightened sensitivity to rejection and excessive dependence on others for validation (Cassidy & Berlin, 2022). However, the context of this study provides a plausible explanation. As counselling trainees, participants are actively engaged in educational environments that emphasize self-reflection, emotional regulation, and interpersonal skill development, which are factors that may buffer the impact of insecure attachment tendencies.

The non-significant regression coefficient ($\beta = -.106, p = .185$) further reinforces this interpretation, suggesting that anxious attachment is not a strong predictor of social relationship outcomes in this population. It is conceivable that through their training, these individuals are acquiring compensatory strategies such as increased emotional self-awareness, empathy, and communication skills, which allow them to manage relational anxiety more effectively. Previous literature also acknowledges that the impact of attachment styles may be context-dependent and moderated by personal development factors (Gillath et al., 2016). Thus, while anxious attachment is often associated with social difficulties, the supportive and skills-oriented environment of counselling education may mitigate its influence, resulting in a more adaptive social functioning profile among the trainees.

5.1.3 To Examine the Relationship Between Avoidant Attachment and Social Relationships Among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

Contrary to traditional attachment theory, the analysis revealed a moderate and significant positive correlation between avoidant attachment and social relationships ($r = .265, p = .001$). This finding initially appears counterintuitive, as avoidant individuals are typically characterised by emotional distance, self-reliance, and discomfort with closeness in interpersonal interactions (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 2021). However, in the context of this study where participants are trainee counsellors, it is reasonable that their educational and professional environment moderates the expression of avoidant tendencies. The structured and skill-based nature of counselling training may enable these individuals to engage in socially appropriate behaviours, such as maintaining boundaries, practising active listening, and expressing empathy, even if emotional intimacy is limited on a deeper level.

The regression analysis further confirms the predictive role of avoidant attachment in social relationship outcomes ($\beta = .256, p = .001$), suggesting that this attachment style may not uniformly hinder social functioning. Instead, it may shape the style of engagement. Avoidantly attached individuals might excel in maintaining professionalism, autonomy, and clear interpersonal boundaries, which are traits that are often beneficial in formal and helping relationships (Wei et al., 2020). This interpretation aligns with recent perspectives that emphasise the adaptive potential of certain attachment-related behaviours in specific contexts (Fraley & Roisman, 2019). Thus, while avoidant attachment is generally seen as socially limiting, in this sample, it may reflect a more measured, boundary-conscious approach to social interactions, particularly in environments that value emotional regulation and clarity.

5.1.4 To Examine the Relationship Between Disorganized Attachment and Social Relationships Among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

The study identified a weak yet statistically significant positive relationship between disorganized attachment and social relationships ($r = .172, p = .031$), suggesting that individuals with disorganized tendencies are still capable of forming social connections, albeit potentially inconsistent or conflicted. Disorganized attachment is often associated with unresolved trauma, fear of closeness, and changeable emotional responses, which typically hinder the development of stable relationships (Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2016). Nonetheless, this finding may indicate that within the context of a structured and supportive educational environment such as a counselling program where these individuals have access to resources and social modelling that mitigate the adverse effects of their attachment style.

The regression analysis further reinforces this interpretation, as disorganized attachment emerged as a significant predictor of social relationship quality ($\beta = .225, p = .009$). Although its influence was not as pronounced as secure or avoidant attachment, the result highlights the complex and non-linear nature of relational development. It is plausible that trainee counsellors with disorganized attachment have benefited from reflective practices, mentorship, and peer interactions within their program, which can help them develop greater emotional awareness and interpersonal regulation (Paetzold et al., 2021). This aligns with emerging views that even individuals with maladaptive attachment orientations can achieve functional social outcomes when embedded in growth-oriented environments (Riggs, 2022). Ultimately, these findings challenge deterministic views of attachment and underscore the potential for resilience and social learning to buffer vulnerabilities.

5.1.5 To Examine the Relationship between Self-Awareness and Social Relationships among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

The analysis revealed a weak and statistically non-significant relationship between self-awareness and social relationships ($r = .296, p > .05; \beta = -0.052, p = .538$), suggesting that self-awareness alone may not substantially influence the quality of social connections among trainee counsellors. Although self-awareness is considered a foundational element of emotional intelligence, it appears insufficient in isolation to facilitate effective interpersonal engagement. This finding aligns with Miao et al. (2020), who emphasized that without the complementary skills of emotional regulation and expression, self-awareness may remain an internal process with limited outward impact.

One possible explanation for this outcome is the developmental context of the participants. As trainee counsellors, many may still be in the early stages of translating internal emotional insight into socially competent behaviour, which is a process that evolves through training, feedback, and practical exposure (Goleman, 2021). Additionally, cultural considerations may play a moderating role. In collectivist societies like Malaysia, noticeable emotional self-expression may be subdued in favour of group harmony and relational conformity (Ng, 2022), potentially diminishing the observable influence of self-awareness on social dynamics. These findings suggest that while self-awareness is crucial, it must be integrated with interpersonal competencies to yield significant social benefits.

5.1.6 To Examine the Relationship between Self-Regulation and Social Relationships among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

The findings demonstrated a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between self-regulation and social relationships ($r = .562, p < .01; \beta = .368, p = .000$), indicating that trainee counsellors with higher emotional self-regulation are more likely to cultivate effective, stable, and positive social relationships. Self-regulation enables individuals to manage their emotional reactions, especially in high-stress or emotionally charged situations, thereby fostering interpersonal trust and relational harmony (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

This result is consistent with extensive literature identifying self-regulation as a core predictor of social competence (Alvarez et al., 2020). Trainee counsellors who can regulate impulses and emotional responses are more likely to respond empathically, resolve conflicts peacefully, and maintain composure in challenging social interactions, as these are the traits that directly enhance the quality of their interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, in the context of counselling education, strong self-regulation is often viewed as a marker of professional maturity and readiness. Effective counsellors must be capable of managing their emotional states to remain objective and supportive in client interactions (Zhou & Ee, 2021). Therefore, this finding underscores the crucial role of self-regulation in both personal and professional relational development and highlights its importance in the training and evaluation of future counsellors.

5.1.7 To Examine the Relationship between Motivation and Social Relationships among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

The analysis revealed a moderate and statistically significant correlation between motivation and social relationships ($r = .547, p < .01$); however, the regression analysis indicated that motivation did not significantly predict social relationship outcomes ($\beta = .158, p = .094$). This contrast suggests that while a linear association exists between the two variables, motivation may not serve as a strong independent predictor when other components of emotional intelligence are accounted for in a multivariate model.

This finding aligns with Goleman's (2021) conceptualisation of motivation as a foundational but often indirect influence on interpersonal functioning. While intrinsically motivated individuals are more likely to engage actively and persistently in social settings (Petrides et al., 2016), their ability to translate this drive into meaningful social bonds may be dependent on other emotional competencies, particularly self-regulation and social skills, which showed stronger predictive power in this study.

In the context of trainee counsellors, motivation may play a supportive rather than central role in fostering social relationships, acting through mediating or moderating mechanisms that enhance emotional expression, perseverance, or social engagement. Future research could benefit from exploring these pathways using structural equation modelling to determine whether motivation exerts its effects indirectly within a broader emotional intelligence framework.

5.1.8 To Examine the Relationship between Empathy and Social Relationships among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

The results of this study indicated a significant positive correlation between empathy and social relationships ($r = .479, p < .01$), but the regression analysis revealed that empathy was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .049, p = .657$) of social relationships among trainee counsellors at UNIMAS.

This finding suggests that while empathy and social relationships are positively associated, empathy does not uniquely explain a substantial portion of variance in social relationship outcomes when other emotional intelligence components are accounted for. This is consistent with past findings by Schutte et al. (2021), who found that empathy tends to support relationship quality but is more effective when combined with other emotional competencies such as communication skills and emotional regulation.

One possible explanation is that although empathy enhances understanding and emotional attunement in interpersonal interactions, it may not be sufficient to initiate or maintain strong social bonds without supportive skills such as assertiveness or conflict resolution, often captured under social skills (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2016).

This also reinforces the idea that social relationships are complex and multifaceted, relying not only on emotional sensitivity but also on behavioral and cognitive skills. Therefore, in professional contexts like counselling, empathy serves as a necessary but not standalone competency.

5.1.9 To Examine the Relationship between Social Skills and Social Relationships among Trainee Counsellors At UNIMAS

The analysis showed a significant positive correlation between social skills and social relationships ($r = .507, p < .01$). Additionally, multiple regression analysis revealed that social skills were a significant predictor of social relationships among trainee counsellors ($\beta = .273, p = .013$).

This finding suggests that individuals with higher social skills are more likely to develop and maintain quality social relationships. This is strongly supported by contemporary literature, which highlights social skills as a core element in forming effective interpersonal connections, particularly in counselling professions (Goleman, 2020; Petrides et al., 2016).

In the context of trainee counsellors, strong social skills enable effective communication, conflict resolution, collaboration, and emotional engagement with others. These qualities contribute directly to the development of meaningful relationships with peers, lecturers, clients, and the broader community. Moreover, social skills often serve as an outward manifestation of other emotional intelligence dimensions, reinforcing their importance in practical relational settings (Bar-On, 2018).

This result supports the theoretical perspective that social intelligence is an essential tool in navigating complex social environments (Riggio, 2022), especially for those in helping professions such as counselling. Therefore, investing in the enhancement of social skills training in counselling programs can significantly strengthen students' relational outcomes.

5.2 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study provide meaningful implications for both the academic field and professional counselling practices, particularly in the Malaysian context.

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the growing body of literature that explores the role of attachment style and emotional intelligence in shaping social relationships. The study affirms that secure attachment style and emotional intelligence components, particularly self-regulation and social skills, are positively linked to the quality of social relationships among trainee counsellors.

These results align with and extend prior theories such as Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1988) and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Framework (1995; 2020), confirming that internal emotional processes and early attachment patterns influence interpersonal outcomes. Additionally, the use of both Pearson correlation and multiple regression provides a stronger statistical foundation for understanding how these psychological traits interact to influence relationship-building capacity.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, the results hold valuable implications for educational institutions, especially those involved in counselling education, such as Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The significant influence of emotional intelligence, especially self-regulation and social skills, suggests the need for explicit emotional intelligence development modules in counselling programs.

Counsellor educators and supervisors should prioritize the cultivation of emotional skills through experiential learning, reflective practices, and targeted training. The notable predictive power of secure attachment also implies that personal development workshops, self-awareness exercises, and psychoeducation about attachment styles could enhance relational capacity among students.

Furthermore, given the findings, it is recommended that counselling trainees receive early screening and ongoing support for attachment-related challenges. Doing so can improve not only their well-being but also their future effectiveness as professional helpers in relational settings.

5.2.3 Policy Implications

For broader policy application, stakeholders in higher education and professional counselling bodies may consider integrating social-emotional competencies as part of counsellor accreditation standards. This shift would support a more holistic, relationship-oriented approach to training future mental health professionals in Malaysia.

5.3 Limitations of Study

Despite its meaningful contributions, this study is not without limitations. Acknowledging these limitations allows for a more accurate interpretation of the findings and helps guide future research in this field.

5.3.1 Cross-Sectional Design

This study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to determine causal relationships between variables. Although the findings revealed significant associations between attachment styles, emotional intelligence components, and social relationships, the design does not allow for conclusions about directionality or changes over time. For example, while secure attachment was shown to influence social relationships, it is also possible that strong social networks contribute to the development of secure attachment traits. A longitudinal study would better capture the developmental nature of these constructs. Therefore, the cross-sectional design constrains the interpretation of the temporal and developmental aspects inherent in attachment and emotional intelligence among trainee counsellors.

5.3.2 Self-Report Measures

Another limitation lies in the reliance on self-report instruments to measure attachment style, emotional intelligence, and social relationships. Although self-report questionnaires are practical for large samples, they are subject to response bias, such as social desirability and inaccurate self-assessment (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In the context of counselling students, participants may overestimate their emotional intelligence or social functioning due to their awareness of ideal responses. This may lead to inflated scores and potentially distort the strength of relationships between variables. Incorporating observational methods or multi-informant reports in future research could enhance the accuracy and validity of the results.

5.3.3 Generalizability of Findings

The sample for this study consisted solely of trainee counsellors from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), which limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. The cultural, academic, and environmental factors unique to this institution may have influenced participants' attachment patterns and emotional competencies. For instance, students from other universities or different programs might demonstrate differing levels of emotional intelligence or social engagement due to variations in training or demographic diversity. Hence, future research should include a more diverse sample from multiple institutions and disciplines to enhance external validity.

5.3.4 Uneven Distribution of Demographic Variables

The demographic profile of respondents was uneven in certain categories, such as gender and ethnicity. For example, a large proportion of the sample were female (73.08%) and Malay, which may have biased the results, particularly in how attachment and emotional intelligence manifest across cultural or gender-based norms. Such an imbalance may affect the interpretation of group differences or reduce the sensitivity of the analysis to represent all perspectives fairly. Future studies should aim for a more balanced demographic representation to ensure the results are more inclusive and applicable to various subgroups.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Building on the limitations of the current study, several recommendations can be made for future research. Firstly, it is suggested that future studies adopt a **longitudinal research design** to examine the developmental trajectory and causal influence of attachment styles and emotional intelligence on social relationships over time. This would allow researchers to explore how these psychological constructs evolve throughout the counselling training process and whether interventions can enhance social relationship outcomes.

Secondly, future research should consider **employing mixed-method approaches**, integrating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus group discussions. This would provide richer insights into how trainee counsellors interpret and experience their emotional capabilities and interpersonal relationships. Qualitative data can complement quantitative findings by offering deeper context, especially in understanding the subtleties of disorganized attachment or empathy.

Thirdly, researchers are encouraged to **use multiple data sources**, such as peer evaluations, supervisor ratings, or behavioural assessments, to reduce reliance on self-report instruments. This triangulation can improve the validity and reliability of findings, particularly when assessing constructs that are prone to bias, like emotional intelligence and social behaviour.

Additionally, future studies should aim to **expand the sample beyond one institution and programme**. Including counselling students from various universities or even other helping professions like psychology or social work could improve the generalizability of findings. It would also allow for comparative analysis across different academic settings and training environments.

Lastly, it is recommended that future researchers **ensure a balanced demographic profile** when sampling participants. Particular attention should be given to gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic background to uncover potential moderating effects. This would not only increase inclusivity but also help researchers understand how cultural and social factors shape the development of secure attachments, emotional intelligence, and social relationships.

5.7 Summary

This study set out to examine the relationship between attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and social relationships among trainee counsellors at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Grounded in attachment theory and the emotional intelligence framework, the research sought to explore how secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized attachment styles, as well as the five emotional intelligence components (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) influence the development of social relationships in a counselling training context.

Descriptive statistics indicated that the majority of participants demonstrated moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence and social relationships, while Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between several attachment styles and emotional intelligence components with social relationship outcomes. Notably, secure attachment, avoidant attachment, disorganized attachment, self-regulation, and social skills emerged as significant predictors in the regression analyses. These findings highlight the importance of emotional competence and interpersonal security in shaping the relational abilities of future counsellors.

The implications of the study extend to both academic training and clinical practice, suggesting that counsellor education programs should incorporate structured interventions to strengthen emotional intelligence and encourage secure relational patterns. Although the study encountered certain limitations, such as its cross-sectional design and reliance on self-report measures, its contributions remain valuable in enriching the local understanding of how personal psychological constructs affect interpersonal development within professional helping roles.

In conclusion, this research has laid the groundwork for further exploration into how the inner emotional world of trainee counsellors interacts with their social functioning. It is hoped that the insights gained from this study will inform future educational strategies and support systems to cultivate more emotionally intelligent, socially adept, and resilient professionals in the counselling field

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APPENDICES

Section A: Demographic Background

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and mark (/) on your answer.

Gender/ Jantina	☐ Male / Lelaki ☐ Female/ Perempuan
Age/ Umur	☐ 18-21 ☐ 22-25 ☐ > 26
Race/ Kaum	☐ Malay/ Melayu ☐ Chinese/ Cina ☐ Indian/ India
Birth order/ Kedudukan kelahiran	☐ First child/ Anak sulung ☐ Second Child / Anak kedua ☐ Third and later child/ Anak ketiga dan seterusnya
Parental marital status/ Status perkahwinan ibu bapa	☐ Married/ Berkahwin ☐ Single/ Bujang ☐ Separated, divorced, or widowed/ Berceraai, Janda, Duda
Parent employment status/ Status pekerjaan ibu bapa	☐ Presently employed/ Sedang bekerja ☐ Not presently employed/ Tidak bekerja
Parent income/ Pendapatan ibu bapa	☐ < RM 1000 ☐ RM 1001-5000 ☐ RM 5000 >

Please circle a number that represents your degree of agreement for each item

1	2	3	4	5	6
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1 = Strongly Disagree

5 = Strongly Agree

1. Measuring Attachment Styles using Attachment Styles Questionnaire (ASQ), adapted by Kyle D. Killian

Variables	Items	Scores					Comments
Attachment Styles	I often worry that a partner will not want to stay with me. Saya sering bimbang bahawa pasangan tidak mahu tinggal bersama saya.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me. Saya gementar apabila ada orang yang terlalu dekat dengan saya.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I find it relatively easy to get close to people. Saya rasa agak mudah untuk dekat dengan orang.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. Saya sering mendapati bahawa orang lain keberatan untuk mendekati seperti yang saya mahu.	1	2	3	4	5	
	It is very important to me to	1	2	3	4	5	

	feel independent. Ia sangat penting bagi saya untuk rasa berdikari.						
	I often worry that partners do not really love me. Saya sering bimbang bahawa pasangan tidak benar-benar mencintai saya.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Partners often want to be closer or more intimate than I feel comfortable being. Pasangan selalunya mahu menjadi lebih rapat atau lebih intim daripada yang saya rasa selesa.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I am comfortable depending on others. Saya selesa bergantung pada orang lain.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I often want to get closer to others than they want to get to me. Saya sering mahu mendekati orang lain daripada mereka mahu mendekati saya.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I prefer not to depend on others. Saya lebih suka tidak bergantung pada orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
	I worry that partners don't	1	2	3	4	5	

value me as much as I value them. Saya bimbang rakan kongsi tidak menghargai saya sebagaimana saya menghargai mereka.						
I am uncomfortable when others want to be too emotionally close to me. Saya tidak selesa apabila orang lain mahu terlalu dekat secara emosi dengan saya.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am comfortable developing close relationships with others. Saya selesa membina hubungan rapat dengan orang lain.	1	2	3	4	5	
I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them. Saya tidak pasti bahawa saya sentiasa boleh bergantung kepada orang lain untuk berada di sana apabila saya memerlukannya.	1	2	3	4	5	
It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient. Adalah sangat penting bagi saya untuk berasa berdikari.	1	2	3	4	5	
I worry about others not accepting me.	1	2	3	4	5	

	Saya bimbang orang lain tidak menerima saya.						
	I often worry about someone getting too close to me. Saya sering bimbang tentang seseorang yang terlalu dekat dengan saya.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I know that people will be there when I need them. Saya tahu bahawa orang akan berada di sana apabila saya memerlukannya.	1	2	3	4	5	
	Sometimes people do not want to get close to me because I want so much to be close to them. Kadang-kadang orang tak nak dekat dengan saya sebab saya nak sangat dekat dengan mereka.	1	2	3	4	5	
	I do not want to feel like I need anyone or anything. Saya tidak mahu berasa seperti saya memerlukan sesiapa atau apa-apa.	1	2	3	4	5	

2. Measuring Emotional Intelligence using Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EI-Q), by Daniel Goleman

Variables	Items	Scores					Comments
Emotional Intelligence	I realise immediately when I lose my temper saya sedar serta merta apabila saya hilang sabar	1	2	3	4	5	
	I can 'reframe' bad situations quickly saya boleh 'merangka semula' situasi buruk dengan cepat	1	2	3	4	5	
	I am able to always motivate myself to do difficult tasks saya sentiasa mampu memotivasikan diri sendiri melakukan tugas yang sukar	1	2	3	4	5	
	I am always able to see things from the other person's viewpoint saya boleh melihat benda daripada sudut pandangan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
	I am an excellent listener Saya seorang pendengar yang baik	1	2	3	4	5	
	I know when I am happy Saya tahu bila saya gembira	1	2	3	4	5	
	I do not wear my 'heart on my sleeve'	1	2	3	4	5	

	Saya tidak mendedahkan perasaan saya secara terbuka						
	I am usually able to prioritise important activities at work and get on with them saya biasanya boleh mengutamakan kerja yang penting aktiviti di kerja dan menyiapkannya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I am excellent at empathising with someone else's problem Saya bagus dalam berasa empati terhadap masalah orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
	I never interrupt other people's conversations Saya tidak pernah mencelah perbualan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
	I usually recognise when I am stressed Saya selalunya tahu bila saya dalam keadaan tertekan	1	2	3	4	5	
	Others can rarely tell what kind of mood I am in Orang lain tak selalunya tahu keadaan semasa mood saya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I always meet deadlines Saya selalu menyiapkan kerja pada masa sebelum terlambat.	1	2	3	4	5	

I can tell if someone is not happy with me Saya boleh tahu sekiranya seseorang itu tidak menyukai saya	1	2	3	4	5	
I am good at adapting and mixing with a variety of people saya pandai menyesuaikan diri dan bergaul dengan pelbagai ragam manusia	1	2	3	4	5	
When I am being 'emotional' I am aware of this Saya akan sedar apabila saya sedang 'beremosi'	1	2	3	4	5	
I rarely 'fly off the handle' at other people Saya jarang hilang kawalan dengan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
I never waste time Saya tidak pernah membuang masa	1	2	3	4	5	
I can tell if a team of people are not getting along with each other saya boleh beritahu jika sesebuah pasukan itu tidak bersatu antara satu sama lain	1	2	3	4	5	
People are the most	1	2	3	4	5	

interesting thing in life for me Manusia ialah perkara yang paling menarik dalam hidup untuk saya						
When I feel anxious I usually can account for the reason(s) Apabila saya cemas, saya boleh tahu puncanya	1	2	3	4	5	
Difficult people do not annoy me Orang yang sukar tidak akan membuat saya marah	1	2	3	4	5	
I do not prevaricate Saya tidak berdusta	1	2	3	4	5	
I can usually understand why people are being difficult towards me saya selalunya boleh faham kenapa orang sering sukar ke arah saya	1	2	3	4	5	
I love to meet new people and get to know what makes them 'tick' Saya suka berjumpa dengan orang baru dan memahami kelakuan mereka	1	2	3	4	5	
I always know when I'm being unreasonable	1	2	3	4	5	

	saya sentiasa tahu apabila saya tidak munasabah						
	I can consciously alter my frame of mind or mood Saya boleh mengubah fikiran dan emosi saya dalam keadaan sedar	1	2	3	4	5	
	I believe you should do the difficult things first saya percaya awak patut buat yang sukar perkara dahulu	1	2	3	4	5	
	Other individuals are not 'difficult' just 'different' Setiap orang tidak susah, hanya berbeza sahaja	1	2	3	4	5	
	I need a variety of work colleagues to make my job interesting saya perlukan pelbagai rakan sekerja untuk menjadikan kerja saya menarik	1	2	3	4	5	
	Awareness of my own emotions is very important to me at all times Kesedaran tentang emosi saya sendiri adalah sangat penting bagi saya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I do not let stressful situations or people affect me once I have left work	1	2	3	4	5	

Saya tidak membiarkan suasana ataupun orang yang membuat saya tertekan memberi kesan kepada saya selepas saya meninggalkan kerja						
Delayed gratification is a virtue that I hold to Menangguhkan ganjaran adalah kebajikan yang saya pegang	1	2	3	4	5	
I can understand if I am being unreasonable saya boleh faham jika saya tidak munasabah	1	2	3	4	5	
I like to ask questions to find out what it is important to people Saya suka bertanya soalan untuk mencari tahu kenapa ianya penting untuk orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
I can tell if someone has upset or annoyed me saya boleh beritahu jika seseorang kecewa atau jengkel dengan saya	1	2	3	4	5	
I rarely worry about work or life in general saya jarang risau tentang	1	2	3	4	5	

kerja atau kehidupan secara umum						
I believe in 'Action this Day' saya percaya pada 'Tindakan hari ini'	1	2	3	4	5	
I can understand why my actions sometimes offend others saya boleh faham kenapa tindakan saya kadangkala menyinggung perasaan orang lain						
I see working with difficult people as simply a challenge to win them over Bekerja dengan orang yang sulit adalah sama seperti emencabar untuk mengatasi mereka	1	2	3	4	5	
I can let anger 'go' quickly so that it no longer affects me Saya boleh melepaskan kemarahan saya dengan cepat supaya ianya tak mengganggu saya	1	2	3	4	5	
I can suppress my emotions when I need to saya boleh menekan emosi saya apabila saya memerlukannya	1	2	3	4	5	
I can always motivate myself even when I feel low	1	2	3	4	5	

saya sentiasa boleh memberi motivasi diri sendiri bila saya rasa dibawah						
I can sometimes see things from others' point of view saya kadang-kadang boleh melihat perkara dari pandangan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
I am good at reconciling differences with other people saya baik dalam mendamaikan perbezaan dengan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
I know what makes me happy Saya tahu apa yang membuatkan saya gembira	1	2	3	4	5	
Others often do not know how I am feeling about things Orang lain selalunya tidak tahu apa perasaan saya terhadap sesuatu benda	1	2	3	4	5	
Motivations has been the key to my success Motiavasi adala kunci kepada kejayaan saya	1	2	3	4	5	
Reasons for disagreements are always clear to me Sebab sesuatu perselisihan	1	2	3	4	5	

	faham sentiasa jelas kepada saya						
	I generally build solid relationships with those I work with saya umumnya membina hubungan yang kukuh dengan rakan sekerja	1	2	3	4	5	

3. Measuring Social Relationships using Social Provisions Scale (SPS), developed by Cutrona and Russell

Variables	Items	Scores					Comments
Social Relationships	There are people I can depend on to help me if I really need it Ada orang yang boleh saya harapkan untuk membantu saya jika saya benar-benar memerlukannya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I feel that I do not have close personal relationships with other people Saya merasakan bahawa saya tidak mempunyai hubungan peribadi yang rapat dengan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
	There is no one I can turn to for guidance in times of stress Tiada sesiapa yang boleh saya rujuk untuk mendapatkan bimbingan di kala tertekan	1	2	3	4	5	
	There are people who depend	1	2	3	4	5	

	on me for help Ada orang yang bergantung kepada saya untuk mendapatkan bantuan						
	There are people who enjoy the same social activities I do Terdapat orang yang menikmati aktiviti sosial yang sama saya lakukan	1	2	3	4	5	
	Other people do not view me as competent Orang lain tidak melihat saya sebagai saingan	1	2	3	4	5	
	I feel personally responsible for the well-being of another person Saya berasa bertanggungjawab secara peribadi untuk kesejahteraan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
	I feel part of a group of people who share my attitudes and beliefs Saya berasa sebahagian daripada sekumpulan orang yang berkongsi sikap dan kepercayaan saya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I do not think other people respect my skills and abilities Saya tidak fikir orang lain menghormati kemahiran dan	1	2	3	4	5	

	kebolehan saya						
	If something went wrong, no one would come to my assistance Jika berlaku masalah, tiada siapa yang akan datang membantu saya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I have close relationships that provide me with a sense of emotional security and well-being Saya mempunyai hubungan rapat yang memberikan saya rasa selamat dan kesejahteraan emosi	1	2	3	4	5	
	There is someone I could talk to about important decisions in my life Ada seseorang yang boleh saya bincangkan tentang keputusan penting dalam hidup saya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I have relationships where my competence skill are recognized Saya mempunyai perhubungan di mana kemahiran kecekapan saya diiktiraf	1	2	3	4	5	
	There is no one who shares my interest and concerns Tidak ada sesiapa yang berkongsi minat dan	1	2	3	4	5	

	kebimbangan saya						
	There is no one who really relies on me for their well-being Tidak ada orang yang benar-benar bergantung pada saya untuk kesejahteraan mereka	1	2	3	4	5	
	There is a trustworthy person I could turn to for advice if I were having problems Ada orang yang boleh dipercayai yang boleh saya hubungi untuk mendapatkan nasihat jika saya menghadapi masalah	1	2	3	4	5	
	I feel a strong emotional bond with at least one other person Saya merasakan ikatan emosi yang kuat dengan sekurang-kurangnya seorang.	1	2	3	4	5	
	There is no one I can depend on for aid if I really need it Tiada sesiapa yang boleh saya harapkan untuk mendapatkan bantuan jika saya benar-benar memerlukannya	1	2	3	4	5	
	There is no one I feel comfortable talking about problems with Tiada sesiapa yang saya rasa selesa bercakap tentang	1	2	3	4	5	

	masalah						
	There are people who admire my talents and abilities Ada orang yang mengagumi bakat dan kebolehan saya	1	2	3	4	5	
	I lack a feeling of intimacy with another person Saya kurang perasaan keintiman dengan orang lain	1	2	3	4	5	
	There is no one who likes to do the things I do Tidak ada orang yang suka melakukan perkara yang saya lakukan	1	2	3	4	5	
	There are people who I can count on in an emergency Ada orang yang boleh saya harapkan dalam kecemasan	1	2	3	4	5	
	No one needs me to care for them Tiada siapa yang memerlukan saya untuk menjaga mereka	1	2	3	4	5	