



Reliability analysis of the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) instrument in the Malaysian context

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 26 October 2014;

Received in revised form:

25 November 2014;

Accepted: 6 December 2014;

Keywords

Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS), Reliability Attachment.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this article is to discuss the reliability analysis of the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) instrument in the Malaysian context. This instrument was developed by Collins (1996) and has been used in western countries to measure the adult attachment style dimension. Items for RAAS were translated to the Malay language to suit the Malaysian adults' sample. The sample of this study comprised of Malay married couples. A preliminary test and real test were conducted to determine whether its coefficient reliability value achieved the standard. The results of preliminary test and real test showed that the value of coefficient reliability for each dimension in RAAS have fulfilled the standard ($p > .70$). Based on these findings, the RAAS is a reliable instrument to be used among Malaysian adults. Furthermore, this instrument can be used by marriage counselors to understand how does attachment between husbands and wives may be related to the couples' problem or it may serve as a resource for couples to build a great relationship.

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Introduction

Attachment is one of the factors contributing to the quality of marriage relationship. The role of attachment in marriage is important because it relates to many aspects of a couple's life and will affect couples' physical and psychological functioning. Attachment relationship is an "affectional bond" by which one individual seeks to maintain closeness to another (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Feeney & Noller, 1991). The idea about attachment was then extended by Hazan and Shaver (1987) in the context of romantic relationship. They suggested that adult affection is the process of attachment. It could be regarded as an affective relationship, similar to that seen between infants and their primary caregivers. It is based on the aim of attachment system in infancy and adulthood that is the same, which is to achieve a sense of protection, support, and comfort by maintaining proximity to attachment figures. The attachment figure in adult relationship is the pair bond (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), romantic partners, and close friends (Fraley & Davis, 1997; Feeney, 2004).

Three adult attachment styles were identified by Hazan and Shaver (1987). The styles are secure, anxious, and avoidant which corresponds to the three infant attachment styles. The 'secure' individual defines their love relationship as cheerful, pleasant, and trusting, and highlighted their aptitude to admit their spouse notwithstanding their mistakes. The 'avoidant' individual are characterized by fear of intimacy, discomfort with closeness and lack of trust, while the 'anxious' individual have a strong wish for intimacy with their partners, but lack confidence in their partners' responsiveness. Strong wish for intimacy with their partners, but lack confidence in their partners' responsiveness.

Previous research literature demonstrated that the style of adult attachment correlate positively with communication (Johnson, 2003; Domingue & Mollen, 2009), conflict resolution (Norman, Welbourne, & Calhoun, 2008), and relationship

satisfaction (Bippus & Rollin, 2003; Shi, 2003). Taking into account these studies and the important impact of attachment on marriage relationship, continued future studies on attachment is pertinent. Therefore, with the purpose to conduct future research involving the attachment element, a psychometric measurement of attachment is needed. In western countries, there are several instruments developed to measure styles of attachment in relationships such as the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994), Revised Experiences in Close Relationships (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000), Adult Romantic Attachment (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) and Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996). However, there is a question whether these instruments are internally consistent and suitable to measure adults' attachment in Malaysia. This is a frequently raised issue as most instruments were designed in western countries (Ahmad, Yusof, & Abdullah, 2009). For the purpose of this study, the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) instrument was chosen to discuss its reliability in the Malaysian context. In relation to this, the reliability analysis of RAAS was discussed based on the findings of preliminary and real tests.

Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS)

The RAAS is an instrument to measure adult attachment style dimension. This instrument was developed by Collins (1996). The RAAS since then has been revised from its original Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990) to increase the internal consistencies of its dimension. There are three dimensions; close, depend, and anxiety that underlie the three attachment styles. The internal consistency was improved in RAAS, with Cronbach alpha value of .81, .78, and .85 for close, depend and anxiety respectively (Collins, 1996). There are two different ways to use the dimension assessed by RAAS. First, the dimension of close, depend, and anxiety can be used as continuous measures. Second, through cluster analysis, the dimension can be utilized to classify individuals into discrete

attachment styles (secure, avoidant, or preoccupied) according to their profile of scores along all three dimensions. Therefore, the close, depend, and anxiety dimension can be utilized in combination to describe the discrete styles of attachment (Collins & Read, 1990).

The RAAS has 18 items. Each item is rated on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (very characteristic). The items that contain the word "people", was replaced by "spouse" in the present study. The close dimension comprises of items 1, 6, 8, 12, 13 and 17. This dimension assesses an individual's closeness and intimacy. The dimension of depend is signified by items 2, 5, 7, 14, 16 and 18. These items assess the extent to which an individual feels that he/she can rely on others when needed. The dimension of anxiety comprises of items 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 15. This dimension assesses the extent to which an individual feel anxious about being abandoned or unloved. Item 2, 7, 8, 13, 16, 17, and 18 are in reverse score. However, there is an alternative for a researcher to measure attachment based on two dimensions; avoidance and anxiety (Collins, 1996). There are 12 items for the avoidance dimension which are formed by items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, and 18 whereas the anxiety dimension is characterized by items 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 15. For the purpose of this article, the discussion of reliability analysis is based on these two dimensions.

Method

Sample

The preliminary test involved 20 married couples (20 males and 20 females) while the real test involved 38 married couples (38 males and 38 females). The samples' age was between 25 to 40 years. All the samples are Malay couples.

Procedure

After permission and a written consent from RAAS developer was obtained, the RAAS instrument was translated from English into Malay language by a Malay language teacher in CELPAD (Centre of Languages Department), International Islamic University Malaysia. Then, the content validity for this instrument was verified by two panel experts from University Putra Malaysia and University of Malaya. The panels judged the validity of the instrument according to the appropriateness of each item, and compared the Malay and English versions for accuracy. The questionnaire was then distributed among the married couples in September, 2012 (preliminary test) and January, 2013 (real test). The data for preliminary and real test was afterwards analysed using IBM Statistic 21.

Reliability analysis

In this study, the reliability of the RAAS was examined in terms of internal consistency (using coefficient alpha). This method was utilized to ensure that each test items in the instrument was measuring the same construct. The following section explains the result of RAAS reliability.

Reliability analysis for preliminary test

As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha value regarding internal consistency was .74 for the overall value for anxiety dimension. This result indicates that the 6 items for anxiety dimension is reliable ($p > .70$). However as stated in Table 2, the overall Cronbach's alpha value for 12 items in avoidance dimension is .62. This reliability is below than .70. According to Hassan and Ghazali (2012), the reliability minimum alpha is .70. To overcome this problem, the items that demonstrate negative correlation in corrected item-total correlation were excluded to increase the value of reliability (Othman Mohamed, 2008). This is because, this item do not contribute to the reliability of the instrument (Othman Mohamed, 2008). Therefore, based on this

preliminary study, item 5 and item 17 were excluded with the purpose to increase the value of reliability. As shown in Table 3, the overall Cronbach's Alpha value after these two items were deleted has increased to .78 which is considered a good reliability as suggested by DeVellis (1991).

Table 1: Alpha coefficient of reliability for each item for anxiety dimension in the RAAS

Item No.	Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item Deleted
3	... don't really love me	.456	.715
4	... as close as I would like	.475	.714
9	... won't want to stay with me.	.412	.733
10	... feel the same about me	.662	.649
11	... really care about me	.597	.671
15	... worry about being hurt	.336	.743

* Overall Cronbach's alpha for anxiety dimension is .74

Table 2: Alpha coefficient of reliability for each item for anxiety dimension in the RAAS

Item No.	Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item Deleted
1	... get close to people	.322	.606
2	... to depend on others	.309	.598
5	... depending on others-	.337	.728
6	... getting too close to me	.354	.604
7	... when you need them	.553	.536
8	... being close to others	.530	.544
12	... close relationship with others	.472	.593
13	... emotionally close to me	.302	.599
14	... when I need them	.391	.589
16	... trust others completely	.493	.551
17	... I feel comfortable being	-	.079
18	... when I need them	.535	.552

* Overall Cronbach's alpha for avoidance dimension is .62

Table 3: Alpha coefficient of reliability for each item for anxiety dimension in the RAAS

Item No.	Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if item Deleted
3	... get close to people	.302	.774
4	... to depend on others	.300	.778
6	... getting too close to me	.319	.773
7	... when you need them	.664	.723
8	... being close to others	.656	.724
12	... close relationship with others	.472	.764
13	... emotionally close to me	.313	.775
14	... when I need them	.432	.760
16	... trust others completely	.559	.742
18	... when I need them	.508	.749

* Overall Cronbach's alpha for avoidance dimension is .78

Reliability analysis for real test

To ensure that the items in RAAS are consistent for a certain period of time, the Cronbach's alpha value in preliminary test and real test was compared. As shown in Table 4, the overall Cronbach's alpha value for both dimensions in the real test is .71 (avoidance) and .72 (anxiety). As compared to the result from the preliminary test, the items for both dimensions in

RAAS were fairly stable over a 4-month period (the real test was administered 4 months after the preliminary test).

Table 4: Alpha coefficient of reliability in the preliminary test and real test for each dimension in RAAS

Sub dimension Items	No. of Items	No. of Index	Reliability	Reliability
			Preliminary Test (n=38)	Real Test (n=38)
Anxiety	6	6	.74	.72
Avoidance	10	10	.78	.71

Conclusion and implication

This study was carried out to determine the reliability of the RAAS, which could be used in the Malaysian population and would be useful for cross-cultural research. The preliminary and real test conducted has reached its objective. As the level of coefficient alpha for each dimension of the RAAS instrument are above .70, this instrument is reliable to be used among related researchers, marriage counselors, and for those who are interested in adults' attachment. However, because of the growing concern and research interest in the field of attachment, it is proposed that there is a need to develop an instrument for measuring adults' attachment based on the Malaysian culture and surroundings.

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