ATTACHMENT STYLES, SOCIAL MEDIA COMPARISON, AND RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION IN YOUNG ADULTS WITH DATING RELATIONSHIP

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Dedication

Alhamdulillah, all praise is due to Allah (SWT), the Most Merciful and the Most Compassionate, for granting me the strength, patience, and guidance to complete this work. I dedicate this thesis to my family, whose values, love, and prayers continue to guide me. To my beloved husband, whose sacrifices, unwavering support, and endless encouragement have been the foundation of my journey, who has stood by me with care, motivation, and understanding this accomplishment is as much him as it is mine**.** To the Department of Psychology, Bahria University Lahore Campus, for providing a supportive academic environment and the knowledge that shaped the foundation of this research. Finally, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my respected supervisor, Dr. Rehana Mushtaq whose guidance, patience, and invaluable insights have been instrumental in bringing this research to completion.

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ABSTRACT

Young adults' romantic relationships are increasingly influenced by digital interactions, yet limited research has examined how attachment styles and social media comparison affect relationship satisfaction. The main objective of the present study investigated the relationship between attachment styles, social media comparison, and couple satisfaction among young adults in dating relationships. A purposive sample of 255 participants (144 males, 111 females) aged 18–27 years was taken using scales; Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ), Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM) and Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI).. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent samples *t*-tests, one-way ANOVA, and hierarchical multiple regression were employed to analyze the data. Results revealed that avoidant and anxious attachment styles were negatively associated with relationship satisfaction, while higher engagement in ability-based and opinion-based social media comparison also predicted lower satisfaction. Regression findings highlighted avoidant attachment and ability-based comparisons as significant negative predictors of couple satisfaction. Gender differences indicated that males reported higher couple satisfaction compared to females, while relationship duration was found to significantly influence satisfaction levels. These findings underscore the psychological and relational risks posed by insecure attachment and excessive social comparison in the digital era, offering insights for future research and potential intervention development.

Keywords: Attachment styles, social media comparison, relationship satisfaction, young adults, dating relationships

Table of Contents

APPROVAL FOR EXAMINATION ii

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION iii

PLAGIARISM UNDERTAKING iv

DEDICATION v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT vi

ABSTRACT vii

CHAPTER I 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.2 Research Gap and Rationale 9

1.3 Problem Statement 11

1.4 Research Question 12

1.5 Objectives 12

1.6 Significance of the Study 12

CHAPTER II 14

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORATICAL FRAMEWORK 14

2.1 Romantic Relationships in Young Adults 14

2.2 Relationship Satisfaction in the Digital Age 18

2.3 Attachment Styles and Relationship Dynamics 20

2.4 Social Media and Romantic Relationships 23

2.5 Hypotheses 24

2.5.1 Primary Hypotheses 24

2.5.2 Secondary Hypothesis 25

2.6 Gap in Literature 25

CHAPTER III 27

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 27

3.1 Research Strategy 27

3.2 Population and Sampling 27

3.3 Data Collection 28

3.3.1 Measures *28*

3.4 Procedure 30

3.5 Data Analysis 30

3.6 Ethical Considerations 31

CHAPTER IV 32

RESULTS 32

CHAPTER V 50

DISCUSSION 50

5.1 Implications of Findings 55

5.2 Limitations of the Study 56

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research 56

5.4 Conclusion 57

6. References 58

7. Appendices 66

List of Tables

Table No.	Title	Page
Table 4.1	Frequency Distribution of Demographics Questionnaire (N=255)	34
Table 4.2	Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics of all Scales (N=255)	38
Table 4.3	Correlation among all variables (N=255)	40
Table 4.4	Multiple Regression	42
Table 4.5	Independent Sample t-test	45
Table 4.6	One-way Anova	46

List of Symbols

Symbol	Abbreviation
A	Alpha Cronbach's Index
B	Standardized Coefficient
F	Frequency
M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
%	Percentage
R	Correlation Coefficient

List of Abbreviations

Short Form	Abbreviations
APA	American Psychological Association
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
AAQ	Adult Attachment Questionnaire
AVOIDT	Avoidant Scale
ANXIT	Anxiety Scale
ABIT	Ability Scale
OPIT	Opinion Scale
SCST	Social Comparison Scale
CSI	Couple Satisfaction Index
INCOM	Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure

List of Appendices

Appendices	Title
Appendix A	Permissions from Authors
Appendix B	Consent Form
Appendix C	Demographic Information
Appendix D	Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ)
Appendix E	Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure (INCOM)
Appendix F	Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-16)
Appendix G	Plagiarism Report
Appendix H	AI Report