Correlation Between Internal Working Model of Attachment and Marital Satisfaction of Young Adult

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Abstract— Marital satisfaction can be influenced by attachments that are formed at an early age and represented in adulthood, which are better known as internal working model. This research was conducted to determine the importance of marital satisfaction in married couples and knowing more about their partner. The participants of the study were 105 young adult individuals, using convenience sampling. Quantitative research methods, using a Likert scale questionnaire. Data distribution is not normal (non-parametric), so it is analyzed using the Spearman correlation method. The results of the analysis show that individuals who have secure attachments tend to be more satisfied with their marriages than individuals who have preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful attachments. In detail, the results of the study show that, (a) there is a positive relationship between secure dimension and marital satisfaction ($r = 0.490$, $p = 0.000$), (b) a negative relationship between the preoccupied dimension and marital satisfaction ($r = -0.603$, $p = 0.000$), (c) a negative relationship between dismissing dimension and marital satisfaction ($r = -0.210$, $p = 0.031$), and (d) a negative relationship between fearful dimension and marital satisfaction ($r = -0.551$, $p = 0.000$).

Keywords: marital satisfaction, internal working model, attachment

I. INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction is a mental state that represents the benefits and sacrifices in marriage that are different for each individual. The level of marital satisfaction in newly married couples tends to be high, in the following years it began to decrease, and will increase again after the marriage took place years later [1] Imbalance between individuals in a marriage can lead to pressure which causes the marriage to not function properly. In addition, it is also known that there are two aspects that play a strong role in marriage life, namely aspects of interaction between two individuals and internal aspects of each individual, such as rules, beliefs, attribution, model, and marriage fantasies commonly known as ‘Internal Working Model’ or mental representation [2]

Internal Working Model (IWM) is reconstructed memory and is influenced by several factors, such as experience in building relationships, personality, and life satisfaction that is being lived [3]. According to Bowlby [2] IWM is an individual's experience with caregivers stored in memory, which becomes an understanding of self-worth and also individual expectations of the attention and support of others. That way, Bartholomew compiled Bowlby's concept of IWM by defining differences in adult attachment, namely, the intersection of two dimensions (positivity of the model of self and positivity of the model of others) and each dimension has a positive or negative form of four attachments, divided into secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful[2]

Many research have examined the relationship between adult attachment and marital satisfaction. Banse [4], states that there is a positive relationship between secure attachment and marital satisfaction, while fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing attachments
have a negative relationship with marital satisfaction. Research by Moller, Hwang, and Wickberg [5] shows that secure attachment has a positive relationship with marital satisfaction, while insecure attachment has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction. On the other hand, Mohammadi et al. [6] stated that there was no significant relationship between secure attachment and marital satisfaction, even though the study before stated there was a positive relationship.

Seeing the following two explanations, a gap was found from the results of the study by Mohammadi et al. [6] who said that there was no significant relationship between secure attachment and marital satisfaction. In addition, there is not much research that discusses internal working model in the results of the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction. John Bowlby [7], introduces the internal working model in attachment theory to explain the phenomenon of individual attachment in developing plans and predicting how the attachment can be achieved in adulthood. Researcher interested in finding the relationship between internal working model and marital satisfaction, because there is not much research discusses about internal working model and marital satisfaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Marital Satisfaction

Stone and Shackelford [1] explain marital satisfaction as a mental state that represents the benefits and sacrifices in marriage that are different for each individual. The amount of sacrifice or loss by a person in marriage can reduce their satisfaction of marriage and partner. On the other hand, if there are more benefits they get, their satisfaction of marriage and partners will increase [1].

According to Villa and Del Prette's research [8], marriage relations are affective, interrelated relations between two individuals who are committed to living together, and enjoying sexual relations. On the other hand, some cultures and religions do not allow living together or having sexual relations before the marriage is lawful and legal. Mosmann, Wagner, and Fres-Carneiro, [8] say that although marriage often shows a crisis situation at the institution of marriage, it will still be ideal to be achieved by individuals who have not married or have been married to find relationships which can increase satisfaction and happiness.

Papalia and Martorell [9] say that men and women have different expectations about marriage, especially in marital satisfaction. According to Lavee and Ben-Ari [9] women are more likely to prioritize emotional expression of themselves and their husband than men. According to Wilcox and Nock [9] men try to express positive emotions towards their wife, to get attention in dynamic relationships, and provide time to focus on activities that build relationships that are important to the perception of the quality of women's marriages.

Olson, DeFrain, and Skogrand [10] say that some previous studies show that marital satisfaction tends to decrease with time or increasing age. In a long-term study, Lawrence Kurder [10] found that in the first four years, marital satisfaction for both men and women will begin to decrease each year and will be at the same level. Decreasing marital satisfaction is also known to increase depression quite severely, especially for women [10].

From a number of statements above, it is known that marital satisfaction is a mental state of individuals that represent their marriages. Marital satisfaction can be seen from the benefits and sacrifices in marriage, also by fulfilling the needs of the partner. The main needs include the cost of living, affective, communication, and positive emotions from the partner. That way, marital satisfaction will have a different level, the more benefits they get from each other, the higher level of marital satisfaction for each individual.

B. Internal Working Model

In attachment theory, the secure of attachment can be influenced by internal working model that are owned by individuals in terms of emotional, social, and cognitive competencies [9] The more secure the attachment between child and the caregiver, the child's ability to build good relationships with others will be greater [9]. Secure attachment in infancy can affect the quality of attachment with romantic partner in early adulthood [9]. But keep in mind, cases of attachment styles do not always determine the attachment of individuals when they are adults and also do not a permanent destiny. Not all individuals who have unpleasant relationships with the caregiver, always experience unpleasant adult relationships [11]. There is a research says that 25% to 30% of participants who experience unpleasant relationships with caregivers or parents, experience
changes in attachment styles from one to another [11].

Some studies have found that adult individuals recalling their past experiences with parents or caregivers related to emotional well-being and can influence how individuals respond to their children later [9]. The attachment from parents can influence the perceptions of adult individuals on the temperament of children, and can also affect relations between parents and children [9].

The attachment theory explains that the attachment styles that child got during infancy, forms a working model or schema (individual mental structures used to compile knowledge about the world around or subjects that affect information, thought, and memory) that explain how and what relationships are about. This schema of relationships is permanent in individuals for life and generalizes adult relations with others [11].

This working model or schema is known as the internal working model (IWM) that guide and shape the behavior of intimate relationships for life [12]. IWM is believed to be very resistant to changes, because it is better to unite new information with old information that is related, even though there is a distortion, rather than accommodating information that is contrary to expectations. In addition, IWM also shows that the experience of childhood care affects, at least some individuals, how individuals behave in romantic relationships in adulthood [12].

Aronson et al. [11] stated that some researchers found similar results; first, individuals with secure attachments are the individuals who can survive the most in romantic relationships, have high commitment, and also have high satisfaction with their relationships. Second, anxious/ambivently attached individuals are who have the shortest romantic relationships, easily fall in love even though they do not know their partner fully, and are very sensitive if their love is unresponsive. Third, individuals with avoidant attachment are individuals who never fall in love, maintain emotional distance, and have low commitment.

Internal working model (IWM) is also known as the mental representation of self or other people in interaction, including expectations, beliefs, and individual attribution of themself and their partner [13]. IWM is a restructured memory that can be influenced by several factors, such as experiences related to life, individual personality, and life satisfaction that is being lived [3].

In interacting with other people, individuals need to have a good attachment relationship and able to fulfill the functions of secure base. Changes do not only occur in the pair's attachment behavior, but also in the meaning of the interaction into a representation that Bowlby called as "Internal working model". IWM consists of a model of self and a model of others in attachment relations. Bowlby concludes, IWM can help in two-way relationships or individuals (dyadic -parents and children, or adult couples) to anticipate, interpret, and guide interactions with partners. In the development of baby sensorimotor, IWM helps children's affective become more complex and mentally manipulated, not only for simple short-term predictions, but also reflections on current, past, and future relationships, using internal stimulation [14].

The attachment figure that meets the baby's needs for temporary, comfort and protection, as well as an independent exploration of the environment, allows the child to develop a valuable and reliable internal working model. Conversely, if the baby's needs are often rejected by parents to provide comfort or exploration, children tend to build an internal working model that inadequate or incompetent. With the help of a working model, children can predict behavior and plan responses to attachment figures, because the type of model that is built is a major consequence. The stability of attachment (IWM) comes from two sources: (a) the development of patterns of interaction, difficult to access by consciousness, because it becomes habitual and automatic; and (b) two-way communication patterns, more resistant to changes than individual patterns, because there are reciprocal expectations [15].

Internal working model has special relevance to memory for social-emotional interactions. Mental representation will be formed from caregiver behavior, as long as relevant events with attachment occur between infants and caregivers [16]. The IWM develops since young age by how individuals see themselves, their relationships, and allows individuals to predict other people's actions whether right or wrong [17]. The IWM is able to predict individual concepts of self and the quality of intimate relations. Seeing the importance of IWM and the environment that can affect individuals, experts and
parents must see and know how parent relations can influence the attachment that children have [17].

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the internal working model (IWM) is an individual mental representation that is influenced by attachment when the individual is still a baby or still small. Not only early childhood attachments with caregivers or parents, but attachment between parents can also form an internal working model in the form of memory that can affect intimate relations and attachment of individuals in the future.

The IWM is formed by how individuals see themselves, others, relationships with themselves, and relationships with others. The stability of relations between parents, and relations between parents and children can also predict the formation of relations between children and later partner, based on the internal working model that formed at an early age. That way, the more stable relations between parents and the relationship between parents and children, the better internal working model will be formed by individuals in themselves, to build relationships when they grow up.

1. Internal Working Model Dimensions

Extending Bowlby's definition of IWM, Bartholomew [18] compiles from three attachment categories into four attachment dimensions; (a) secure, individuals who are comfortable with intimate and interdependent emotions; (b) preoccupied (anxious), individuals who are very attached, possessive, seek more intimacy and certainty than is generally given by others; (c) dismissing (avoidance), individuals who feel that intimate relations with others are not comparable to their problems, refuse to depend on each other, and do not care about other people thought; and (d) fearful (avoidance), individuals who remembering the past and rejecting intimate interactions with others because fear of being rejected [18].

Bartholomew also defines two dimensions underlying IWM such as (a) anxious attachment can be conceptualized as a model of self (positive- negative); and (b) avoidance attachment or rejection, can be conceptualized into model of others (positive- negative). Bartholomew also said that the combination of these two dimensions could be four patterns of attachment that are better than the three types of attachment [19].

With the positives and negatives of each dimension, four different attachment styles can be defined. The high positivity of the model of self will refer to the individual internalization of self-esteem while the high negativity of the model of self will be related to self-blame [18].

Four styles of adult attachment according to Bartholomew can be explained through figure 1 that, individuals who have a positive model of self and others, are called secure attachments. Individuals who have a positive model of self but negative model of others, called dismissing. Individuals who have a negative model of self but model of others positive, called preoccupied. Individuals who have a model of self and negative model of others are called fearful [20].

![Figure 1: Internal working model dimensions [21]](image)

From the explanation above, it is known that the IWM concept was built by Bartholomew who conceptualized the model of self and model of others in positive and negative, so this concept forming four types of internal working model. From figure 1, the characteristics of the four types of internal working model are seen. First, individuals who have secure attachment (positive model of self, model of others positive), are usually comfortable with intimacy and autonomy, intimate relationships, and self-confidence. Second, individuals with preoccupied attachment (negative model of self, model of others positive), usually overly intimate relationships, self-worth depends on others, demands, and makes others guideline. Third, individuals who have dismissing attachment (positive model of self, model of others negative), are usually very independent,
and do not consider intimate relationships important. Fourth, individuals with fearful attachment (negative model of self, negative model of others), usually depend on others, rejecting intimacy or fear of rejection, low self-confidence, and anxiety about high attachment [21].

C. Young Adulthood

According to Erikson’s developmental stage, early adulthood enters the 6th stage of development namely intimacy vs. isolation. Intimacy and isolation are seen from the formation of individual relationships from infancy to adolescence and begin to build relationships in adulthood with basic values such as love, that formed between individuals and partner or other people [9]. Intimacy between two individuals can be achieved by knowing oneself and knowing self needs, so that partner can assess and provide what is needed, so they can achieve commitment in relationships. In addition, by becoming more familiar with and knowing their own needs, individuals become more prepared to have intimate friendships, romantic relationships with others, and develop a sense of independence. If this stage does not reach needs or intimacy, then the individual will have difficulty building personal commitments with others and risking isolating themselves excessively [9].

D. Hypothesis

The research hypothesis is divided into; (a) there is a positive relationship between the dimensions of secure attachment and marital satisfaction; (b) there is a negative relationship between the dimensions of preoccupied attachment and marital satisfaction; (c) there is a negative relationship between dimension dismissing attachment and marital satisfaction; and (d) there is a negative relationship between dimensions of fearful attachment and marital satisfaction.

III. METHODS

A. Participants

Research participants are early adulthood who have been married for a maximum period of 10 years, have children, and lived in Jakarta. The researcher added criteria lived in Jakarta, because there are data that say that divorce occurs more in large cities and developing countries [10] and Jakarta is the Capital City of Indonesia.

According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun [22], correlational research requires a minimum of 50 participants. The method of taking participants is done by non-probability sampling, where not all populations get the same opportunity to become participants. Sampling uses convenience sampling techniques, participants are obtained through friends, relatives, relatives, or acquaintances who meet the criteria and are willing to become participants.

B. Instruments

1. Marital Satisfaction Instrument

Marital satisfaction is measured by using The Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-32). CSI-32 is a composite measurement tool or summary of several marital satisfaction measures used in the study of Funk and Rogge [23]. This measuring instrument consists of 32 items of statements and questions that can measure individual satisfaction with a partner. The level of satisfaction is seen from the number of points measured by the Likert Scale. The points generated are in the range of 0 to 161, are considered satisfied if above 104.5 points, and are considered not satisfied if it is lower than 104.5 points.

2. Internal Working Model Instrument

The internal working model is a mental representation that is formed from the attachment of individuals that are built between individuals and caregivers when they are young. IWM can be measured by measuring adult attachments that measure the relationship between individuals and partner in adulthood. One measure that can measure IWM is the Relationship Style Questionnaire (RSQ) compiled by Griffin and Bartholomew in 1994. RSQ is structured to measure close relationships that can be seen from individual attachments. The four types of adult attachment, known as the four categories of model, originated from Bowlby’s thinking about IWM and Bartholomew discovered the concept of IWM by identifying the concept of adult attachment [2]. RSQ was compiled by Griffin and Bartholomew [2] based on the theory of Hazan and Shaver [24] regarding the measurement of deep attachment in adult attachments, Relationship Questionnaire from Bartholomew and Horowitz and also Adult Attachment Scale (AAS)
from Collins and Read (1990). RSQ has 30 items (consisting of 27 positive points and 3 negative points) which can measure the dimensions or model categories of internal working model. These items are measured using a 5-Likert Scale, which consists of 1 (Strongly does not describe me) to 5 (Strongly describes me). These items have also been adapted to the characteristics or categories of model, so they can measure according to the theory [2] RSQ scoring is divided into four dimensions which can be separated into, items 3, 9, 10, 15, 28 measuring secure attachments; items 6, 8, 16, 25 measure preoccupied attachments; points 2, 6, 19, 22, 26 measure dismissing attachments; and items 1, 5, 12, 24 measure fearful attachment [19] Griffin and Batholomew have 30 items in RSQ, but only 17 items are used to measure 4 dimensions. That way, the researchers decided to make modifications and adaptations by including 13 unused items to measure each dimension. After testing the measuring instrument, researchers found items from each dimension used by Griffin and Bartholomew had low reliability, so researchers used modified items. The items modified by the researchers are as follows, item number 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 15, 27, 28, 30 measure secure attachment; item number 6, 8, 11, 13, 16, 18, 25 measure preoccupied attachment; item number 2, 6, 17, 19, 22, 26, 29 measure dismissing attachments; and item number 1, 5, 7, 12, 20, 21, 23, 24 measure fearful attachment.

C. Procedure

Data collection was conducted from April 10 to May 7, 2019, with 105 participants participating, consisting of 80 women (76.2%) and 25 men (23.8%). Distribution of questionnaires is done via online, using special links that can be accessed directly by participants through smartphones or other devices. Researchers do not make direct contact or eye contact with participants, so that the confidentiality of participants can be better maintained. The researcher spreads the questionnaire by approaching directly through the WhatsApp application, on several participants who fit the criteria. Researchers also ask for help from relatives and friends, who are fit with the criteria and willing to become participants of the study, also help the distribution of questionnaires to other prospective participants who fit the criteria. The researcher also distributed the questionnaire link through several social media such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Data analysis using SPSS software for windows version 24.0 program. Processing and data analysis was conducted to find the relationship between dimensions of internal working model and marital satisfaction in early adulthood.

The researcher tested reliability and construct validity to ensure the items used were good, and the reliability of the measuring instruments were good. The researcher also conducted data normality tests using the Kolmogorov- Smirnov method, to find out the distribution of data received normally or abnormally distributed. The researcher analyzed the data using the Spearman correlation technique, because the data distribution was not normal.

IV. RESULTS

According to data from 105 participants, it is found that data distribution was not normal. Correlational quantitative research, data analysis using SPSS, with Spearman correlation techniques. The researcher measured the relationship between each dimension of internal working model to marital satisfaction in early adulthood, so the results of this study had four correlation results.

First, the correlation test between secure dimensions and marital satisfaction, has a positive relationship (r = 0.490, p = 0.000 <0.05). Positive relationships can be explained by the higher the participant's secure score, the higher the level of satisfaction of participants' marriages. Conversely, the lower the secure participant, the lower the level of satisfaction of the participant's marriage. Second, the correlation test between the preoccupied dimensions and marital satisfaction, has a negative relationship (r = - 0.603, p = 0.000 <0.05.). A negative relationship indicates the existence of an opposing relationship so that the higher the preoccupied score of participants, the lower the level of satisfaction of participant marriages. Vice versa, the lower the
participant's preoccupied score, the higher the level of participants' marital satisfaction.

Third, the correlation test between dimension dismissing and marital satisfaction showed a negative relationship ($r = -0.210$, $p = 0.031 < 0.05$). Thus, it is known that the higher the participant dismissing score, the lower the level of satisfaction of participant marriages. Conversely, the lower the participant dismissing score, the higher the level of participants' marital satisfaction. Fourth, the correlation test between the dimensions of fearfulness and marital satisfaction, found a negative relationship ($r = -0.551$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). That way, it is known that the higher the score of fearful participants, the lower the level of satisfaction of participant marriages. Likewise, on the contrary, the lower the fearful score of participants, the higher the level of marital satisfaction of participants should be properly numbered, font size 9-point and no bold or italic font style should be used. Captions with one line should be centered and if it has more than one line should be set to justified.

V. DISCUSSION

The result of this research shows that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of internal working model and marital satisfaction, in the form of: (a) secure attachment dimension has a significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction; (b) preoccupied attachment dimension has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction; (c) dismissing attachment dimension has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction; and (d) fearful attachment dimension has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction.

These results support the research from Banse [4], and Moller, Hwang, and Wickberg [5] which states that secure attachment has a positive relationship with marital satisfaction, and insecure attachment (preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful) has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction. Research shows that secure attachment is an attachment style that is good to apply and quite influential on marital satisfaction.

In the internal working model, individuals with secure attachment show the most dominantly in item 4 (I want to merge completely with my partner) and item 14 (I want an emotionally close relationship). This data shows that individuals with secure attachment wants interdependent relationships and emotional needs are also fulfilled. In marital satisfaction, participants answer most dominantly in item 19 (How valuable is your relationship with your partner?) and item 24 (Do you enjoy being with your partner?). This shows that marital satisfaction can be determined by how valuable or the quality of a relationship, also how the relationship can be enjoyed or pleasant to live.

Secure attachment and marital satisfaction have a positive relationship, so it can be concluded that relationships that are valuable and pleasant are relationships that can be interdependent and emotional needs are also fulfilled. The fulfillment of emotional needs and interdependence, make individuals can enjoy the relationship and achieve marital satisfaction which is the main goal of marriage.

On the other hand, the results of this study contradict with the results of Mohammadi et al. [6], which said that there was no significant relationship between secure attachment and marital satisfaction. Mohammadi et al. [6], concluded that differences in expectations and patterns of communication between men and women in marriage can affect the satisfaction of the marriage that owned. Seeing the differences in factors that affect marital satisfaction between this study and the study of Mohammadi et al. [6] the differences should be in the measuring instruments that being used and the diversity of data regarding marital satisfaction.

The internal working model according to Bartholomew [18] has 4 dimensions composed of 2 models, namely the model of self and the model of others. Secure dimensions have a positive relationship with marital satisfaction which consists of positive model of self and positive model of others, so individuals who are secure attachment dominant tend to be satisfied with their marriages related to feeling comfortable with intimate emotions and can be interdependent. With mutual dependence and comfort, individual needs can be more easily fulfilled and achieve better marital satisfaction.

Preoccupied attachment has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction, consisting of a negative model of self and a positive model of others. Individuals with dominant preoccupied attachments tend to be dissatisfied with their marriage. These individuals are possessive enough, easy to worry, and want more intimacy than others.

[18] Feeling easy to worry, possessive, and compare with others, shows that individuals are dissatisfied
with relationships that are owned and always want more than they have. That way, it is difficult to achieve satisfaction in marriage because of excessive desire that is difficult to fulfill.

Dismissing attachments that have a negative relationship with marital satisfaction consist of positive model of self and negative model of others. Individuals with dominant dismissing attachments tend to be dissatisfied with their marriage. These individuals feel they don't need help, very independent, and don't think too much about others [18] Individuals who feel they do not need help and very independent tend to be dissatisfied because they do not depend on their partners, and their needs are fulfilled without the help of a partner.

Fearful attachment has a negative relationship with marital satisfaction consisting of negative model of self and negative model of others. Individuals with dominant fearful attachments tend to be dissatisfied with their marriage. These individuals usually avoid interaction or communication with others, not confident, and fear of rejection [18]. The fearful individual is not satisfied with themself, so that it can influence their satisfaction of self and their partner satisfaction.

According to Villa and Del Prette's research [8], marriage relations are affective and interrelated relations between two individuals who are committed to living together, and enjoying sexual relations. With this theory, it is known that individuals with secure attachments tend to be satisfied with being interdependent and their needs are mutually influential and fulfilled. It is different from preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful attachments that show individuals who are insecure with themselves, or their partners. This shows that if there is a negative model whether model of self or model of others, the individual will have a tendency to be dissatisfied with their marriage life.

Internal working model has been shown to have a significant relationship with marital satisfaction. However, internal working model is only one factor that can affect marital satisfaction. Research from Lawrence et al. [9] says marital satisfaction can be different for each pair. That way, marital satisfaction is also important to see from various other factors, so the data that received can be generalized and improve the quality of marriage between husband and wife.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Participants of the study were 105 people, consisting of 80 female participants (76.2%) and 25 male participants (23.8%). The data obtained is not normally distributed so the researcher analyzed a correlation test using Spearman correlation techniques. The results of the correlation test showed a significant relationship in each dimension of internal working model to marital satisfaction. This relationship includes; the secure dimension has a positive relationship with marital satisfaction, while the preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful dimensions have a negative relationship with marital satisfaction. From the statement above, it is known that all research hypotheses can be accepted and proven, so that this research can also be used to support the results of previous studies regarding adult attachment, internal working model, and marriage satisfaction.

From the results of the relationship between dimensions of internal working model and marital satisfaction, it was found that individuals with secure attachment tended to be more satisfied with their relationships and marriages. Thus, secure attachment is known as the best attachment style to be applied in the family. Secure attachment are important to be applied in the style of parenting, so they can predict the relationship that they will have when they are adults.

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