

Relationships Among Self-Esteem, Parent Attachment, Peer Attachment, and Life  
Satisfaction in Thai Undergraduates

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### Abstract

Life satisfaction is an essential element for the wellbeing of humans. Several studies have found some common fundamental factors that affect people's life satisfaction, such as self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment. In this study, we focused on emerging adult group between the ages of 18 to 25 years old, which is the suggested age ranges for people to be experiencing life transition from adolescents to adulthood. During this transition, we suspect that this group of people might be more vulnerable to various threats to their level of life satisfaction. We aimed to find empirical evidences of how the three fundamental factors (self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment) are related to Thai undergraduates' life satisfaction. The results found strong positive relationships between life satisfaction and each fundamental variable, and the variance in life satisfaction was significantly explained by all three factors ( $R^2 = 0.423$ ). This concluded that self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment are the three important factors that determined emerging adults' life satisfaction, and the impact ranged from self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment, respectively. Limitations and implications of our findings and potential directions for future research will be discussed.

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## Chapter 1

### **Introduction**

Most research studies in the field of psychology seek to understand the underlying reasons behind people's thoughts and behavior. Life satisfaction can be considered as one of the topic of interest in which many researchers have been trying to explore elements that would contribute to the differences between people's degree of life satisfaction. According to Diener and Diener (1995), life satisfaction refers to individual's overall evaluation of their life qualities. It can also be referred as the proportion of individual's overall positive affect to negative affect, as people who are satisfy with their life would estimate themselves as experiencing more positive affect than negative affect.

The importance of people's level of life satisfaction can be seen in the context of family, workplace, and education. For example, research studies suggested a strong relationship between college students stress and life satisfaction (O'neill, 1981). The amount of perceived stress many college students experienced were found to be negatively correlated with their levels of life satisfaction. This indicates that the more stress they encountered, the less satisfied they would be with their lives (Chang, 1998; Alleyne, Alleyne & Greenidge, 2010). Not only that life satisfaction has been a controversial topic for many researchers, its decreasing trend in college students sample has also been a concerned issue. Sax (1997) suggested a globally increase in levels of stress among college students. These stress usually derived from academic stressors, such as studying, taking exams, competition, and time pressure in studying for exams or meeting the standards (Abouserie, 1994; Archer & Lamnin, 1985; Britton & Tesser, 1991; Kohn & Frazer, 1986). As perceived stress and life satisfaction were correlated, an increase trend among college students' academic stress would suggest a decrease trend of life satisfaction. This demonstrate the importance of this study to

investigate the predictors of life satisfaction in order to develop a way to increase college students' levels of life satisfaction, as well as decrease their level of stress.

Previous studies suggested self-esteem, family attachment, and peer relations, as the three common contributors to people's degree of life satisfaction (Campbell, 1981; Bowlby, 1969). According to Bowlby's (1969) Attachment Theory, attachment relationships impact people across their lifespans, starting from parental attachment that form as a fundamental indicator of later social relationships such as peer and romantic relations. Children with secure attachment style view their parents as a safe place to rely on. They feel comfortable when their parents are nearby. Those who were securely attached with parents were found to have higher self-esteem (Arbona & Power, 2003), better academic achievement (Cutrona et al., 1994), higher levels of social support seeking (Blain et al., 1993), and life satisfaction (Ma & Huebner, 2008; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004). Hence, it seemed like attachment played as a fundamental determinant of individuals' life satisfaction (Guarnieri, Smorti, & Tani, 2015).

Self-esteem is considered as individual's values toward themselves. People with high self-esteem value and feel good about themselves, which often results in the feelings of satisfaction with their life, as Diener and Diener (1995)'s study found a positive correlation between individual's level of self-esteem and life satisfaction. The major component of family relation, parental attachment was also found to be a crucial predictor of life satisfaction. It refers to a parent-child relationship that is perceived by the child as secure and consistent (Bowlby, 1982). A secure parental attachment has large influences on many factors contributing to life satisfaction, such as good mental health and transition problem solving skills for college students, better adjustment, academic achievement, higher self-esteem, higher relationship satisfaction, and less psychological distress (Kenny & Donaldson, 1991; Mattanah, Lopez, & Govern, 2011; Schnuk & Handal, 2011; Amitay, Mongrain, &

Fazaa, 2008; Wei, Shaffer, Young, & Zakalik, 2005). Lastly, peer relationship, relationship between two people who support and care for each other, is also found to have an effect on levels of life satisfaction. Similar results from various studies suggested that college students who have higher friendship quality, or being more active with their peers, are more likely to be happier than those who are less engaged with their peers or possess lower friendship quality (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Coccia & Darling, 2016). Considering these previous research suggestions, the current study aimed to examine relationships among self-esteem, parent attachment, peer attachment, and life satisfaction in Thai college students.

### **Life Satisfaction**

Life satisfaction is long known as a synonym of happiness, which generally means feeling good about one's life without particular specification of which part of life that is being satisfied (Veenhoven, 2006). Jeremy Bentham (1789 cited in Veenhoven, 2006) defined happiness as "the sum of pleasures and pains that results in affect balance". Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) later separated the terms of life satisfaction and happiness with the specific term called Subjective Well-Being (SWB). SWB consisted of three components: positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction. Positive and negative affects were considered as affective, emotional aspect and life satisfaction was considered as cognitive-judgmental aspect. Shin and Johnson (1978) suggested that life satisfaction could be considered as a global assessment of individual's quality of life depending on chosen criteria. Each individual had their own certain standards or criteria that were used to compare with their actual circumstances. When the gap between the chosen criteria and the actual life states was too large, individuals would perceive low quality of life and have less life satisfaction.

The theoretical framework for life satisfaction could be distinguished according to the way an individual evaluates his or her life because life satisfaction is based on individuals'



personal judgments. The first group of theories called the Set-point theories of happiness, which specifies evaluation as a constant attitude towards life that is maintained by mental processes. This theory believed that it was necessary for individuals to have stable conditions for happiness, which could define the level of happiness. The conditions could be external (livability of environment) or internal (life-ability of the person) (Veenhoven, 2000). This group of theories consisted of the Genetic disposition, Personality trait, and Cultural view. It all suggested that the indicators of happiness were predisposed since people were born. The genetic disposition claimed that those who were born with healthy physical health tended to have higher life satisfaction (Lykken, 1999). Many studies about the relationship between Big Five personality traits also agreed that extraversion and neuroticism were traits that could determine the perception of life's quality. For cultural view, few cross-national studies found differences in life satisfaction among cultures, as a result of distinct cultural norms (Inglehart, 1990; Veenhoven, 1995). Additionally, most empirical studies that supported set-point theory indicated that even there were changes in happiness among people, it tended to get back to the same stable level because those changes had only short lives (Veenhoven, 2006).

Another set of theories is the Cognitive theories of happiness, which conceptualized an evaluation of life satisfaction as a judgmental process involving continuous comparison between actual life and ideal life. This theory group viewed individuals' judgment of happiness as the process that kept changing all the time. Each standard in many aspects of life could change throughout the lifespan. It comprised of the Lifetime Comparison, Social Construction, and Reflected Appraisal. The Lifetime Comparison believed that each individual has his or her own different standards at different stages of lifetime. For instance, what could make a person satisfied with life when he was young might no longer function as the same when that person became an adult. The Social Construction considered the possibility of social comparison to occur among individuals. Most people did not evaluate

life only to themselves but also relative to the other people since people value and engage in socialisation. The Reflected Appraisal assumed that people also evaluate their lives through the other people's perspectives. People sometimes assess how they satisfied with life by estimating how others think they would be satisfied with their lives (Veenhoven, 2006).

The last theory group is the Affect theories of life satisfaction. This group of theories see the evaluation as an appraisal of how well one feels about their life in general. This kind of theory emphasises the method of inferring rather than calculating. For example, "I feel good most of the time, hence I must be happy" (Schwartz & Strack, 1991). The group involved Frequency of Affect, Mood as Informant, and Gratification of Needs. The Frequency of Affect proposed that most of people used salient and intense affective experiences along with their life-reviews to guide the evaluation of life satisfaction. Diener, Pavot, and Sandwick (1991) explained that in order to judge the affective experiences to be either positive or negative, the individuals had to match their experiences with the frequency of positive or negative affect that came after that certain experiences. The Mood as Informant viewed an assessment of life's quality as an evaluation that used mood to determine life satisfaction, in which good mood meant high life satisfaction. Positive mood required no single object or particular event to be a source of the mood, which was contrary to the Frequency of Affect that used past events to explain the causes of affective experiences.

The Gratification of Needs viewed the degree to which people are satisfied with life was a result of how well they satisfied their basic needs. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), human's basic needs involved physiological needs, safety needs, love or belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. In order to evaluate their overall life as being satisfied, most of the basic needs should be fulfilled, which would lead to a predominant of positive feelings over negative feelings.

The studies of life satisfaction are varied according to age groups, as each age group has different kind of pattern in giving meanings to factors in life. The children give importance to parental attachment while the elders consider about their entire life and successfulness (Erikson, 1997). Another period of life such as the adolescence includes peer attachment and other kinds of social support as its important factors of life. There is a huge amount of research that was done on adolescent group because it is a period that the children will take social factors into account because they spent more time in school and friends (Oberle, Reichi, & Zumbo, 2011). The theory of psychosocial development from Erikson (1998) explained that adolescence was a period that individuals were in need to find and re-establish their own identities, which could be derived from others around them as well (Stevens, 1983).

Since all those periods (toddler, adolescence, elder) of life were separated by developmental phases, they already had definite information about things that might affect their life satisfaction, which led many researchers to investigate life satisfaction on those phases. However, emerging adulthood is another group that evolved in between two developmental phases, which are adolescence (13 to 19 years) and early adulthood (20 to 39 years) (Erikson, 1997). This life period just got defined as a novel phase of development (Guarnieri, Smorti, & Tani, 2015). Arnett (2000) described it as a period of life when individuals aged between 18 to 25 years olds, in which they were neither settled nor well-established with adult roles. Regarding the global evaluation of satisfaction with life, people from emerging adulthood seemed to worsen more than other period of adult life span (Stone, Schwartz, Broderick, & Deaton, 2010). As a transition phase of life, it might introduce a novel combination of factors that affect individuals' quality of life (Allen & Land, 1999; Collins, Gleason, & Sesma, 1997). Emerging adults value relationship with parents as it functions as a base of their exploration of the world, other familiar relationships such as peers

and romantic partners, and also their inner self because they still need to balance between relatedness and autonomy in order to develop life satisfaction (Aquilino, 2006; Ma & Huebner, 2008; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005; Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011). Therefore, the study about life satisfaction in emerging adults has become more interested among scholars within this decade.

Guarnieri, Smorti, and Tani (2015) examined an effect from subtypes of social relationships on college students' life satisfactions. They divided relationships into friend attachment and romantic attachment. The study found that both kinds of attachment were positively related to life satisfaction in which the romantic attachment was considered as being a stronger predictor. A secure attachment in social relationships tended to generate positive affect that led to higher life satisfaction whereas an avoidance or anxious attachment in social relationship would result in negative affect, which significantly related to lower life satisfaction ( $\beta = -.41, p < .05$ ) (Torquati & Raffaelli, 2004; Ling, Jiang, & Xia, 2008; Van Buren & Cooley, 2002; Wearden, Lamberton, Crook, & Walsh, 2005).

Lane and Fink (2015) also did a study on similar area of interest. They investigated the relationships among attachment, social support satisfaction, and well-being in emerging adults from various cultures. The focus was on emerging adulthood due to the concern of being in transition period of life. They stated that it was very crucial for ones' well-being as it could generate distress, which could lead them to engage in risky behaviours such as impulsive drinking, drug use, and unsafe sexual behaviours (Gore & Aseltine, 2003; Bachman, Johnston, O'Malley, & Schulenberg, 1996). In this study, the terms "well-being" included life satisfaction, therefore, it seemed to be a research about satisfaction of life. The result of the study showed that having social support could mediate the relationship between anxious attachment and well-being.

Recent research from Lane (2016) focused on particular period of time within an emerging adulthood, which was a senior year of college. He interested in this subgroup because college seniors were suspected to have graduation transition concerns, which consisted of concerns about career, change, and loss. The finding pointed out that life satisfaction mediated the relationships among attachment styles, career-related concern, and change-related concern. This could be interpreted that individuals who had secure attachment would develop and maintain satisfying lives throughout their college years, which led them to have more confidence in their ability to work after leaving the college.

However, researchers from the field of health psychology suggested the possibility that there might be factors other than attachments and social relationships that were potentially affect emerging adults' life satisfaction. Maher et al. (2013) found that daily physical activity was another indicator of people's life satisfaction since it could reduce anxiety and improve self-esteem. The research suggested that as self-esteem was found to be a strong predictor of life satisfaction, hence it could be a reason why doing physical activity could heighten level of satisfaction with life. Additionally, doing physical activity daily could give people a feeling of fatigue, which indirectly reminded them that they were engaging in goal pursuit. In this period of life, goal pursuit appeared to be an important factor as emerging adults value personal responsibility and independence.

Another alternative factor that emerging adults' life satisfactions seemed to depend on was hope. Dwivedi and Rastogi (2017) did a study of the relationship between life satisfaction and hope based on the fact that they were both cognitive processes. The positive correlation was congruent with what Gilman, Dooley, and Florell (2006) once stated, in which young adults who reported high level of life satisfaction also reported high level of hope ( $r = .24, p < .01$ ). The reasons could be due to either the ability to reduce depression and increase people's emotional recovery of hope (Ong, Edward, & Bergeman, 2006) or the

potentiality that those who were hopeful would be more courage at taking up challenges and be more prepared for positive future (Thakre, 2013).

Thus, the research within the area of life satisfaction still need to be worked on more as there were many notions about its potential contributors. In this study, the chosen questionnaire is Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), which developed by Diener (1985). The scale appears to be applied with the Gratification of Needs Theory because all five items overall involve around human basic needs.

### **Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem refers to individual's judgment of his or her own worth (Skodol, 1998; Arslan, Hamarta, & Uslu, 2010). According to Rosenberg (1965), self-esteem can be considered as individual's positive feelings toward oneself. It consists of two dimensions, competence and worth (Gecas, 1982; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). Competence dimension refers to individual's perceived self-efficacy while worth dimension concerns with the degree to which individuals view themselves as valuable. People with high level of self-esteem value and accept themselves as they are. They like themselves, and view themselves positively as a person worth liking. Having high self-esteem often contributes to many positive outcomes, such as good mental health and higher levels of life satisfaction (Glaus, 1999; Cecen, 2008). On the other hand, people with low self-esteem possess little respect for themselves; they tend to be more critical of themselves as a result of not liking themselves, and often seek for reputation, respect, and acceptance from others (Poston, 2009).

Maslow (1954) includes self-esteem as one of the fundamental needs within the hierarchy of needs he established. His definition of esteem could be defined as being accepted and valued by others, as well as accepting themselves internally. Maslow suggested two levels of esteem: lower and higher. Lower levels indicated people's needs of respect and acceptance from others, which could be gained from fame, social status, recognition, or

prestige. The other level, higher level, indicated human's self-respect, which is more important than the lower level. Self-respect could be achieved through individual's accomplishment or experiences, strength, mastery, or self-confidence. Without this aspect, people may develop inferiority complex or helplessness.

The degree to which an individual possess high level of self-esteem can be explained through an extended identity theory, as Cast and Burke (2002) suggested that an increase in self-esteem could derive from successful identity verification. Successful identity verification happens when individual's ideal identity, or their expected identity, is consistent with the actual identity they perceived from environment. When individuals' self-verification is met, they were able to achieve their identity goal, which encourages a raise in self-esteem. Self-verification influences an increase in self-esteem through social feedbacks and self-attribution. As social exclusion is crucial in deteriorating individual's worth-based self-esteem, positive feedbacks from people within social context contribute to the feelings of acceptance and value, which reinforce the worth-based dimension of self-esteem (Leary & Downs, 1995). On the other hand, attributing the ability to achieve their ideal identity to their own action reinforces self-efficacy, or competence dimension of self-esteem.

The positive relationship between individual's levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction can be found in many research studies. Diener and Diener (1995)'s study found positive correlations between self-esteem and life satisfaction in their study on college students from 31 countries, indicating the effects of self-esteem on life satisfaction across cultures ( $r = .47$ ). They also found that this relationship seems to be stronger for people from individualist cultures more than collectivist cultures. Similar results were supported by Campbell (1981)'s study on American sample, which found that self-esteem is strongly correlated with life satisfaction, with a correlation of .55.

Arslan, Hamarta, and Uslu (2010) conducted a research study on the sample of Turkish University students. Participants' responses in the form of self-report questionnaires were collected and evaluated using The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSES). They found significant positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ), suggesting that the students' level of life satisfaction increases as their level of self-esteem increases. Moreover, Kwan, Bond, and Singelis (1997) examined the effects of relationship harmony and self-esteem, as potential predictors of life satisfaction among United States and Hong Kong students. Their results suggested that self-esteem ( $\beta = .63$ ) is more likely to predict life satisfaction of the United States students than relationship harmony ( $\beta = .23$ ). However, the effects of self-esteem ( $\beta = .45$ ) and relationship harmony ( $\beta = .37$ ) on life satisfaction are similar among Hong Kong students.

Another research by Chen, Cheung, Bond, and Leung (2006) also presented self-esteem as one of the major predictor of life satisfaction. Using the same SWLS and RSES scales, the results revealed self-esteem's significant contribution to the variance in life satisfaction among Chinese college students,  $R^2 = 0.16, F(3,315) = 20.57, p < .001$ , as well as a positive correlation in consistent with other studies,  $r(317) = 0.39, p < 0.001$ . These results suggest that individuals who evaluated themselves positively are more likely to also evaluate their life positively, or possess positive emotions toward their own life.

The mediation effect of self-esteem on the relationship between Big Five personality traits and life satisfaction was also found. In the sample of University students in Iran, self-esteem was found to have a strong correlation with life satisfaction as previous studies suggested ( $r = .50, p < .01$ ). Moreover, it was found to predict levels of life satisfaction over and above the effects of Big Five personality traits,  $R^2 = .083, p < .001$ . In this study, they found a complete mediation effect of self-esteem on the agreeableness and conscientiousness's influence on life satisfaction, suggesting that these two traits would not



predict life satisfaction in the absence of self-esteem. Self-esteem also partially mediated the influence of neuroticism and extraversion on life satisfaction (Joshani & Afshari, 2009).

In addition, self-esteem was also found to mediate the influences of extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness on life satisfaction on Chinese and American sample (Kwan et al., 1997). Similar effect was found by Furnham and Cheng (2000), as their study suggested that the effects of extraversion and neuroticism on happiness was mediated by self-esteem in British sample.

Even though various studies found a significant effect of self-esteem on life satisfaction, some studies suggested that the effects were weaker in collectivist countries, which are the focus of our studies. The strength of the correlations between self-esteem and life satisfaction in Chinese and Hong Kong sample were only moderate while there were high correlations among individualist samples, such as U.S.A. (Chen, Cheung, & Bond, 2006; Kwan et al., 1997). The weaker effect might be that people in collectivistic culture often value interpersonal relationship or social contexts more than individualistic culture, who tends to be more independent and focus on the self.

This study uses Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (the Thai version) in evaluating the participants' level of self-esteem. The scale is a widely used self-report questionnaire measuring individuals' positive and negative affect toward themselves with a 10-item scale.

### **Parent attachment**

Parent-child relationship has been found to significantly contribute to individual differences in adolescents' life satisfaction (Ma & Huebner, 2008). According to Dew and Huebner's research on American adolescents, perceived quality of relationships with parents was the strongest predictor of LS, compared to perceived physical appearance, general self-concept, and peer relations. Parental attachment can be defined as a connection that provides a sense of stability, safety, and security for the child (Bowlby, 1982). Once the attachment

system is completely organized by the second year of life, children will establish complex internal working models, or mental representations of the world, the people in it, and the self (Bretherton, 1992).

According to the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1978), early secure attachment relationships with parents provide the foundation for the development of psychosocial adjustment throughout adolescence and adulthood (Whittaker & Cornthwaite, 2000). It postulates that the construction of emotional attachments between children and their caregiver result in an internalization of working models that are used to represent the efficacy of self and others, which provides information about our attitudes towards help seeking and new learning in distress across life span (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969). During the transition from childhood to adulthood, attachment theory proposes that attachment representations are best understood in orthogonal dimensions of attachment anxiety, or the relative security of one's self-representations, and attachment avoidance, or the relative security of one's other-representations (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Increased attachment anxiety results in a belief that one is incapable of successfully controlling distressing situations, preserving interpersonal dependence. On the other hand, elevated attachment avoidance leads to the belief that others cannot be trusted in times of distress, contributing to the development of interpersonal isolation. As a result, adolescents with loving and supportive caregivers who possess a positive sense of self-worth will be likely to develop a secure attachment style that will enable them to sustain a sense of efficacy in relationships. When faced with developmental changes, individuals with positive sense of self-worth are less likely to be vulnerable to situational attacks on their self-worth (Kenny & Rice, 1995), and are more likely to be better at building supportive relationships with others (Berlin, Cassidy, & Appleyard, 2008; Kenny & Rice, 1995), which are shown to be significantly related to greater life satisfaction (Nickerson & Nagle, 2004).

The behaviorist theory of attachment (Dollard & Miller, 1950) suggests that attachment is a set of learned behaviors. It proposes that the provision of food is the basis for attachment learning, which infants typically learn to form attachment with those who feed and care for them. Infants develop the association between their feeders and the comfort of being fed, which they come to find tranquility in their contact with the caregivers through classical conditioning. Additionally, the infants learn to behave in certain ways to bring about desirable responses from others, such as smiling or crying to gain attention from their parents. Hence, through the process of operant conditioning, the infants learn to repeat the behaviors that they know would bring certain responses from others to acquire the things they want.

A longitudinal research by Schaffer and Emerson (1964) was conducted on 60 babies during the first 18 months of their lives. The babies were visited monthly at their home, and their interactions with caregivers were observed. Moreover, the caregivers were interviewed and asked to keep diaries as evidences for the identification of the pattern of attachment development. Schaffer and Emerson divide the stages of attachment development into four phases, including asocial (0-6 weeks), indiscriminate attachment (6 weeks to 7 months), specific attachment (7-9 months), and multiple attachment (10 months and onwards). They proposed that infants are initially born asocial to various stimuli, but start to slowly develop an enjoyment for human company and respond equally to any caregivers at the stage of indiscriminate attachment. Then, the infants form special preferences for a single attachment figure during specific attachment phase, particularly with people who provide them with comfort, security, and protection. At this stage, infants begin to show fear of strangers (stranger anxiety) and display sadness when they are separated from their attachment figure (separation anxiety), indicating that the infants have developed an attachment with their special persons. Finally, in multiple attachment stage, the babies become increasingly

independent and establish multiple attachments to different people, especially with those who responded accurately to their signals, but not necessarily the people who they spend most of their time with (sensitive responsiveness).

Several studies have found that parental attachment security yields various consistent and long-term benefits for psychological wellbeing, such that it promotes different aspects of social competence, including social adjustment (Rice et al., 1997), social support seeking (Blain et al, 1993) and interpersonal skills (Di Tommaso et al., 2003), as well as emotional functioning, life satisfaction, and a smoother balance of autonomy and attachment in older adolescents and college students (Paterson et al., 1994).

Kumar and Mattanah (2016) explored the relations between parent attachment and psychosocial adjustment in college students. In this study, the revised version of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) was employed to assess the attachment relationship of their students with their fathers and mothers, and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) was used to measure the students' life satisfaction. Through regression analyses, the study's results revealed that secure attachment relationship with parents were linked with positive adjustment outcomes. Specifically, secure patterns of attachment with mothers (life satisfaction:  $\beta = .264, p = .001$ ; overall distress:  $\beta = -.295, p = .0001$ ) and fathers (life satisfaction:  $\beta = .161, p = .036$ ; overall distress:  $\beta = -.191, p = .010$ ) significantly predicted greater satisfaction with life and less overall distress, especially when comparing students with secure parental attachment patterns to those with avoidant or anxious attachment patterns.

Based on Guarnieri, Smorti, and Tani (2015)'s research on Italian emerging adults, parental attachment was also found to have positive relationship with life satisfaction. The study employed structural equation modeling to examine the relationship between attachment with parents and life satisfaction, and an Italian version of the Inventory of Parent and Peer

Attachment (IPPA) was administered to evaluate the adolescents' perceptions of their attachment to their parents, as well as an Italian version of Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), to determine their subjective wellbeing and life satisfaction. The results of the study indicated a significant direct association between parental attachments and life satisfaction for the attachment to father ( $\beta = .26$ ), but not for the attachment to mother.

Similarly, Armsden and Greenberg (1987) studied the association between parent quality of attachment and its linkage to self-esteem, life satisfaction, and affective status in college students via two studies. The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) was used to assess the adolescent's quality of attachment with parents, and a hierarchical regression model was implemented to investigate the association between the variables. Results of the study revealed that perceived quality of parent attachment was significantly related to psychological wellbeing, particularly with self-esteem ( $r = .67$ ) and life satisfaction ( $r = .64$ ). Accordingly, the study indicated that highly securely attached adolescents were demonstrated to have greater satisfaction with life, increased social support seeking, and experienced less symptomatic response to stressful life events. Essentially, not only was the quality of attachment related to wellbeing, but also meaningfully contributed in predicting the depression and anxiety ( $r = -.53$ ), as well as resentment and alienation ( $r = -.56$ ) scores in adolescents. In addition, securely attached adolescents appeared to possess higher than average self-esteem, enjoy frequent and satisfactory communication with their families, and reported high quality relationship with peers, compared to low parental attachment security adolescents.

Nevertheless, a longitudinal study by Perrone, Webb, and Jackson (2007) examining the relationship between parental attachment, work and family roles, and life satisfaction through multiple regression analysis displayed no direct relationships between parental attachment and life satisfaction ( $\beta = -.23$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

In the present study, Armsden and Greenberg's Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) is selected to evaluate parental attachment, as it is developed based on Bowlby (1982)'s Attachment Theory, and is widely used for assessing the levels of parental attachment.

### **Peer attachment**

Many researchers attempted to define the terms friendship, peer relationships, or peer attachment. By doing an empirical literature review, there were substantial commonalities among the definitions. Peer attachment is a voluntary relationship between two individuals, which involves various types and degrees of qualitative aspects (Hinde, 1997). According to Parker and Asher (1993), there were six qualitative aspects. The first aspect was validation and caring, which was how the relationship was supported, cared, and interested. The second aspect was conflict and betrayal, which was how many arguments, mistrusts, and disagreements occurred in the relationship. The third aspect was companionship and recreation, which was how much an individual spent pleasant moments with the friends. The fourth aspect was help and guidance, which was how much the individual received assistances from the friends. The fifth aspect was intimate exchange, which was how much the individual and friends disclosed each other's personal information or feelings. The last aspect was conflict resolution, which was how fair and efficient the resolution were when there were conflicts. Therefore, peer attachment was reasonable to be known as facilitation in many aspects of life such as self-esteem and life satisfaction (Hays, 1988).

There are several theoretical frameworks that are used to support the concept of peer attachment. The Social Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988) explains a relationship with peer as an attachment that is generated with an expectation of benefits. The theory focuses on the benefits that one will get from exchanging the information with other individuals. Those advantages can be an access to important resources, in which at the end will place individuals

on a mutual obligation that can develop into friendships. This theory sees peer attachment as the way people make use of the relationships (Kao, 2004).

The Social Support Theory (Cohen, 2004) is another theory that suggests a rationale of friendship process. Friends under this theory served as supportive agents for the individuals who were facing stressful life events. Berndt (2002) found that individuals who had friends whom they could turn to for advice and comfort could cope more successfully with life stressors comparing to those who had no friends. What is more, people who were lack of social support such as friend tended to have lower level of life satisfaction (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976).

Peer attachment can be comprehended as a tool for validating self. The Self-Verification Theory (Swann, 1990; Swan et al., 1992) portrayed relationship with peers as a method that individuals use to confirm their self-views. The individuals will develop closer attachment with people that can validate their view of self.

Some theories explain peer attachment with particular concerns on the age of target group, which is emerging adulthood. The Erikson's stages of psychosocial development theory (Erikson, 1968) is one of them. The theory explained the concept of peer attachment as a result of being an emerging adult. The theory viewed individuals in an emerging adulthood as those who were experiencing later part of Fidelity (identity versus role confusion) stage and the early part of Love (intimacy versus isolation) stage. People in the Fidelity stage normally developed their identities, which was defined with not only individuals' ability but also incorporated a network of emotional support. For the Love stage, people would seek intimacy and social relationships. Thus, emerging adults would develop their identities from identity agents such as peers, which is why peer attachment exists in a meaningful way for people in this period of time.

Another theory is a recent work from Coccia and Darling (2014), the Family Ecosystem Framework. This framework emphasised an interaction between individuals, families, and multifaceted environments, which comprised of natural (NE), human-constructed (HCE), and human-behavioural environments (HBE) (Bristor, 2010; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993; Darling & Turkki, 2009). The natural environment (NE) was an environment that was generated by nature such as physical elements, biological elements, and space–time. The human-constructed (HCE) was man-made environment involving sociophysical, sociocultural, and sociobiological dimensions. The human-behavioural environment (HBE) was an environment that combined socialised human beings with their behaviours, which included psychological, biophysical, and social features of a person or a family. In the work of Coccia and Darling, the participants in their study were college students, which were emerging adults. People in this time of their life would engage in the process of exploring selves and expanding their supporting networks, which led them to spend more time in social interactions. According to the Family Ecosystem Framework, social interaction is a kind of HBE, therefore, peer attachment will be considered as a result of individuals engaging in HBE.

An abundance of researches that focuses on peer attachment and a group of emerging adults mostly found some impacts on life satisfaction. Emerging adulthood is a period of time that individuals have to face changes in various aspects of their life such as academic and environment (Arnett, 2000). For example, if a college that the individual gets an offer is located in another town, he has to face not only harder academic content but also his living environment. Having someone beyond family members to support or rely on can be a good determinant of young adults' quality of life (Glad & Ray, 1986; Swenson, Nordstrom, & Hiester, 2008; Azmitia, Syed, Radmacher, 2013). Diener and Seligman (2002) did investigations of very happy individuals to find behavioural and personality that correlate



with happiness, which means high degree of satisfaction with life. They discovered around factors that seemed to influence happiness, which included social relationships. The participants in their study were undergraduates; therefore, friendship could play as one contributor of their social relationships. The finding suggested that undergraduates with high happiness tended to have higher quality of relationship with peer ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ) than those with lower happiness. Similarly, a study from Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) also found that positive affect with peer could lead to success, which was a factor that correlated with happiness or life satisfaction. Having a good quality of friendship could act as a good resource for college students' success.

Demir and Weitekamp (2007) did a research as a follow-up study of Diener and Seligman (2002) and Lyubomirsky et al. (2006). They controlled for personality and number of friends in order to examine particular features of friendship quality that predict life satisfaction. The result came out that companionship and self-validation were two main features of friendship quality that could lead to life satisfaction. According to Mendelson and Aboud (1999), the companionship meant when individual shared joyful or exciting activities with their friends while self-validation indicated the degree that a friend could reassure individual's self-image. The study concluded that peer attachment, which mostly contained these two important indicators of life satisfaction, could explain 2 per cent of the variance in individuals' life satisfaction. This additional 2 per cent was considered as very high since there were plentiful numbers of factors that account for variance in life satisfaction.

Some findings took an account of an interaction between peer attachment and the third variable such as parents' education. An education of parents also affected the degree to which individuals would make friends in their college life. Emerging adults whose parents had no experience in higher education or the first-generation undergraduates were found to establish fewer social supports including friends. This led the first-generation students

accumulated more stresses and reported less life satisfaction (Jenkins, Belanger, Connally, Boals, & Durón, 2013).

In contrary, peer attachment could become no longer one of the predictors of life satisfaction when the students involved in romantic relationship. Although Demir (2010) found that there was a significant positive correlation between friendship quality and life satisfaction among emerging adults who had no romantic partner ( $\beta = .26, p < .05$ ), those who had romantic partner got a non-significant correlation instead ( $\beta = -.03, n.s.$ ).

Additionally, a later study from Coccia and Darling (2016) revealed another pattern of relationship between college student' happiness and interaction with peers. The report showed that with the influence of technology in these days, college students who engaged in relationship with peer via asynchronous communication or activities such as texting and social networking would result in being negatively correlated to life satisfaction ( $r = -.11, p .01$ ).

Hence, the fact that peer attachment correlates with life satisfaction still cannot be ensured completely. It is interesting to do further research about this relationship. In this study, the questionnaire that is chosen to measure peer attachment is from the inventory of parent and peer attachment (IPPA) developed by Armsden and Greenberg (2009). This questionnaire seems to be applied with the Cohen's (2004) Social Support Theory, as most items on the scale focus on emotional supporting.

### **The Present Study**

Life satisfaction is considered as significant indicator of individual's wellbeing, which found to be affected by three main factors: one internal factor (self-esteem) and two external factors (parent attachment and peer attachment). The studies about life satisfaction became more focused on emerging adulthood group since it was known as a transition period of life that people have to face various factors, which were potentially related to satisfaction with

life. However, majority of the researches was done based on Western samples. The present study aims to provide empirical evidence of how three main factors impact on Thai undergraduates' life satisfaction. The inventory will be four scales: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), inventory of parent and peer attachment (IPPA: parent attachment and peer attachment scales), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The study will be conducted with online survey design, in which the inventory will be distributed through social networking sites (SNS). The data will be collected to analyse correlation between three main factors and life satisfaction. Analysis of Multiple Regression will be used for predicting life satisfaction.

### **Research Questions**

How are self-esteem, parental attachment, and peer attachment related to life satisfaction in Thai undergraduates?

### **Aims**

The objective of the study is to explore the relationships among self-esteem, parent attachment, peer attachment and life satisfaction.

### **Variables**

3 Independent variables: Self-esteem (SE), Parental attachment, and Peer attachment

1 Dependent variable: Life satisfaction (LS)

### **Terms**

Self-esteem refers to individual's judgment of his or her own worth (Skodol, 1998; Arslan, Hamarta, & Uslu, 2010). The current study will use the Thai version of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, developed by Rosenberg (1965), which consists of 10 items, measuring global and personal self-esteem. Its reliability coefficient is .86 (Wongpakaran & Wongpakaran, 2011).

Parental attachment can be defined as a connection that provides a sense of stability, safety, and security for the child (Bowlby, 1982). The Inventory of Parent and Peer

Attachment by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) will be employed in a Thai version to assess the positive and negative affective and cognitive dimensions of adolescents' relationships with their parents, which composed of 25 items, with an internal consistency greater than .75.

Peer attachment is a voluntary relationship between two individuals, which involves various types and degrees of qualitative aspects (Hinde, 1997). In this study, peer attachment will be measured through the Thai version of Armsden and Greenberg (1987)'s Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, which includes 25 items for peer attachment and good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ).

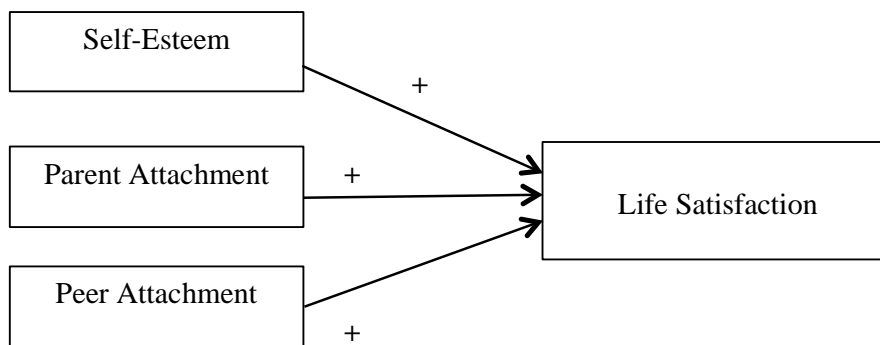
Life satisfaction refers to individual's overall evaluation of their life qualities (Diener and Diener, 1995). It can also be referred as the proportion of individual's overall positive affect to negative affect, as people who are satisfy with their life would estimate themselves as experiencing more positive affect than negative affect. It will be measured with the Satisfaction with Life Scale in Thai version (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), which comprises of five items assessing global life satisfaction with good reliability and validity.

### **Hypotheses**

There are four hypotheses in our study:

1. Self-esteem will be positively correlated with life satisfaction.
2. Parent attachment will have positive correlation with life satisfaction.
3. Peer attachment and life satisfaction will have positively correlated relationship.
4. It is expected that self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment, altogether, will predict life satisfaction.

### Area of Study



### Scope of Research

The objective of the current research is to study the relationship between self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment with life satisfaction in college students, which will be the sample of students from Chulalongkorn University between the ages of 18-25 years old for a total of 120 students.

### Prospective Benefits

1. Acknowledgement of the relationship between self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment with life satisfaction.
2. The results of the study will contribute to further understanding and awareness of how self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment can be employed to enhance life satisfaction in the population of college students.
3. The results of this study will contribute to a development of psychological intervention for promoting life satisfaction

## Chapter 2

### Method

#### Participants

120 undergraduates from Chulalongkorn University were purposively sampled in the study, as Hair (2010) suggested that for a study to be statistically and practically significant, each research variable should have at least 20 people and a sample size of no less than 100 participants. Therefore, the appropriate sample size of the present study was at 20 people x 4 variables, which equals to 80 participants. However, as Hair has specified that the sample size should have at least 100 participants, 120 participants were recruited for data collection to increase the effect size in the study. There were 90 female and 30 male participants, between the ages of 18 to 25 years old, and their participation to be a part of our study and complete the survey was voluntary.

#### Measures and Materials

1. Self-Esteem. *The Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale* is composed of 10 items, measuring global and personal self-esteem. Its average reliability coefficient is greater than .80 (Rosenberg, 1965), and the responses are based on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 indicating “totally disagree” and 4 “totally agree”). The negatively worded items were reversed scored, and higher scores indicate greater self-esteem.

2. Parent and Peer Attachment. *The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; 1987)* assess the positive and negative affective and cognitive dimensions of adolescents' relationships with their parents and close friends. There are 25 items evaluating parental attachment and 25 items for peer attachment, and each item is rated on a 5-point scale from “Almost Never or Never True” (1 point) to “Almost Always or Always True” (5 point). The items in each of the scales (parent, peer) are demonstrated through principal components

analysis to cluster into three subscales, including trust, communication, and anger and alienation. The IPPA reported good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging between 0.72 and 0.91 for the subscales across both the parent and peer scales. Good test-retest reliability was also reported with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.86 for peer attachment to 0.93 for parental attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Convergent validity has also been shown to correlate with other measures, including the Family Self-Concept subscale of the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale ( $r = 0.78$  with parent attachment;  $r = 0.28$  with peer attachment) and the Social Self-Concept sub-scale ( $r = 0.46$  with Parent attachment;  $r = 0.57$  with Peer attachment). Also, there were significant positive correlations between parent attachment and the Cohesion ( $r = 0.56$ ), Expressiveness ( $r = 0.52$ ) and Organization ( $r = 0.38$ ) subscales of the Family Environment Scale (FES) have been reported. In addition, significant negative correlations with the Conflict ( $r = -0.36$ ) and Control ( $r = -0.20$ ) subscales of the FES were reported (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

3. Life Satisfaction. *The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)* measures global life satisfaction with 5 items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Two-month test-retest reliability and internal consistency for the SWLS were .87 (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Concurrent validity was demonstrated through moderate correlations of the SWLS with 11 other measures of subjective wellbeing. Content validity was shown through correlations of the SWLS with interviewer estimates of life satisfaction. Discriminant validity was demonstrated through a low correlation between the SWLS and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Diener et al., 1985).

### **Procedure**

The researchers will distribute the online survey to Chulalongkorn University students via social networking sites, such as Facebook Messenger and Line. Detailed information of

the study and its objectives will be provided for the participants before they have to go through the survey. The participants will be ensured that their information will be kept confidential, and their information in the online survey will only be used in the research.

### **Data Analyses**

The data acquired from the study will be analyzed through Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis using the program *SPSS version 21*.

### **Confidentiality**

The contribution of participants in the current study will be voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the research anytime as they wish, and do not have to inform the reasons behind their withdrawal to the researchers. The withdrawal will not affect any data obtained from the participants in the research, and their information will be kept confidential, as the research will display only the general information acquired from the participants. No data in the study requires the identity of participants to be specified.



## Chapter 3

**Results****Preliminary Analyses**

Normal Distribution was conducted and the results indicated that the assumptions of normality were met for all variables. The skewness values were within an acceptable range of limits, with none of them higher than 2 or lower than -2, and the kurtosis cut-offs were satisfactory ( $<4$ ) (Boos & Hughes-Oliver, 2000).

**Correlations**

A series of Pearson's correlations were carried out to determine the zero-order relationship between our measures (Table 1).

The relationship between life satisfaction and self-esteem was positively correlated, with moderate/large effects. Life satisfaction was shown to be positively correlated with parent attachment and peer attachment, with low/moderate effect sizes. Additionally, there was a positive correlation between self-esteem and parent attachment at low effect size. Furthermore, low positive correlation was found between parent attachment and peer attachment. On the other hand, only correlation between self-esteem and peer attachment was not found by the analysis.

Table 1.

*Descriptive Statistics and Inter-correlations between Life Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Parent Attachment, and Peer Attachment.*

	<i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Life Satisfaction	4.53 (1.12)	1	.59*	.39*	.27*
2. Self-esteem	2.99 (.48)		1	.28*	.13

3. Parent Attachment	3.38 (.38)	1	.26*
4. Peer Attachment	3.73 (.37)		1

\* Correlation is significant at  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

### Multiple Regression Analysis

Tests to examine whether the data met the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern in this study. None of the VIF values were greater than 10, and the Tolerance for all predictor variables were more than 0.1, demonstrating that the inter-correlation between three predictor variables were within acceptable limits in the multiple regression (*Self-Esteem*,  $Tolerance = .92$ ,  $VIF = 1.09$ ; *Parent Attachment*,  $Tolerance = .87$ ,  $VIF = 1.15$ ; *Peer Attachment*,  $Tolerance = .93$ ,  $VIF = 1.08$ ).

A standard multiple regression analysis was conducted on life satisfaction. The predictors were self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment. The results suggested that 42.3% of variance in life satisfaction was explained by a combination of self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment,  $F(3,116) = 28.40$ ,  $p < .001$ . Self-esteem had significant positive relationship with life satisfaction and uniquely accounted for 24.6% of its variance,  $\beta = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ . Similarly, a significant positive relationship between life satisfaction and parent attachment was found, with parent attachment contributing to 3.6% of variance in life satisfaction,  $\beta = .20$ ,  $p = .008$ . Peer attachment also had a significant positive relationship associated with life satisfaction, uniquely accounted for 2% of its variance,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $p = .043$ . Therefore, 11% of the total variance in life satisfaction was attributed to the shared variance of three predictors. Additionally, the beta weights demonstrated that the most important predictor was self-esteem, followed by parent attachment, and peer attachment, respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2.

*Direct Effect of Self-Esteem, Parent Attachment, and Peer Attachment on Life Satisfaction (N = 120).*

	$\beta$	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant		.99	-2.81	.006
Self-Esteem	.52	.17	7.04	.000
Parent Attachment	.20	.22	2.69	.008
Peer Attachment	.15	.22	2.05	.043
	$R^2 = 0.423$			
	$F = 28.40,$			
	$p = .000$			

## Chapter 4

### **Discussion**

This study aimed to explore Thai undergraduate students' levels of life satisfaction through their perceived level of self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer relationships. The study included four hypotheses. First, self-esteem would positively predicted participants' level of life satisfaction. Second, parent attachment would also predict levels of life satisfaction. Third, peer attachment would have a positive relationship with life satisfaction. The final hypothesis stated that self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment would together predict the participants' level of life satisfaction.

As predicted, the results showed a positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction, which was consistent with the first hypothesis. This suggests that students, who possess high self-esteem, or positive view of self, would have a higher level of life satisfaction than students with low self-esteem. Maslow (1954) explained this idea through two levels of self-esteem: lower level and higher level. Lower level of self-esteem is gained through acceptance and respect from others, while higher levels indicated self-respect from one's internal state, which might be achieved through their experiences and accomplishments. People who possess higher levels of self-esteem might be more likely to have high levels of life satisfaction, as self-respect would last longer and stay with that person internally. On the other hand, people who only possess lower level of self-esteem would have to depend on external factors that are temporary and unstable, such as others' praises and acceptance, causing their overall levels of life satisfaction to be lower than people who had a stable high self-esteem over a long period of time. This finding also supports Diener and Diener (1995)'s findings on how self-esteem and life satisfaction were positively correlated among college students.

In consistent with the second hypothesis, the results of our study revealed a positive relationship between parental attachment and life satisfaction. The results indicated that people who develop positive or secure relationship with parents would more likely possess high levels of life satisfaction, consistent to Ma and Huebner (2008)'s findings, which suggested the importance of parent-child relationship in determining adolescents' life satisfaction. This can be explained by the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1978), which proposed that early secure attachment relationships with parents are the essential basis for the development of psychosocial adjustment throughout adolescence and adulthood (Whittaker & Cornthwaite, 2000). Several studies have shown that parental attachment security brings about various long-term benefits for psychological wellbeing, such as social adjustment (Rice et al., 1997), social support seeking (Blain et al, 1993), and interpersonal skills (Di Tommaso et al., 2003), altogether leading to greater levels of life satisfaction (Paterson et al., 1994). Additionally, securely attached adolescents were demonstrated to possess higher self-esteem, reported high quality relationship with peers, as well as experienced less symptomatic response to stressful life events (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). As a result, corresponding to previous literatures, the results of our study has demonstrated that the adolescents' perceived quality of relationship with parents could predict their levels of life satisfaction, with secure parent attachment style leading to greater satisfaction with life (Dew & Huebner, 1994; Kumar & Mattanah, 2016).

The results also supported the third hypothesis, which stated that peer attachment would be positively correlated with life satisfaction. This indicated that students who had supportive and positive peer relationship would be more satisfied with their lives. It could be explained through Berndt (2002)'s findings on how people found it easier to cope with life stressors if they had good friends to turn to and rely on, resulting in a higher level of life satisfaction. Especially among emerging adults, whose lives involves more significant others

than their parents. Erikson's stages of psychosocial development theory (1968) indicated that emerging adulthood is a period of time that stay in between Fidelity stage and Love stage, in which the first part focuses on discovering identity including emotional supports and the latter part focuses on intimacy that consists of social relationships. Therefore, peers become important agents for people in this stage of life in order to develop the more fulfilled lives, which leads the individuals to gain higher level of life satisfaction. Regarding to all theories, our result relating to this hypothesis is consistent to the work of Diener and Seligman (2002), in which investigated factors that had impacts on undergraduates' happiness and they found that having high quality of friendship played a huge role in discriminating between high in happiness and low in happiness groups.

The last hypothesis was also supported by the results, as it was found that variance in the participants' level of life satisfaction was explained by self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment. Therefore, these three factors altogether predicted degrees of life satisfaction, with self-esteem being the strongest predictor and peer attachment being the weakest. These data supported the research by Chen, Cheung, Bond, and Leung (2006), which suggested that self-esteem was the major predictor of life satisfaction.

This study could be considered as strong, since all hypotheses were confirmed with empirical evidences. All three independent variables reflected three crucial dimensions of people's lives: Intra-factor or self (self-esteem), family factor (parental attachment), and social factor (peer attachment). Three correlations were found among all independent variables and the dependent variable. All relationships were positive and were all in low to moderate effect sizes. Moreover, all of the three target independent variables could explain for almost half of the variance within life satisfaction, which is considered very high as contributors. Additionally, preliminary analyses also assured that all independent variables do

not explain the same variance. Therefore, self-esteem, parent attachment, and peer attachment contributed independently from each other in explaining variance in people's life satisfaction.

The current study produced several important findings. However, there are some limitations that need to be addressed. First, the study used self-report measures, which could be bias toward social desirability and more inclined to the common-method variance. Secondly, the study was done with majority of fourth year university students and there were more female than male participants. Therefore, there might be some possible bias that contributed to the results. Thirdly, some responders reported that the questionnaires were quite too straightforward, which created a certain amount of emotional impacts. Finally, since the questionnaires were not distributed in a randomized order, factors such as the order effect may impact the results of the study. In addition, we received a lot of complaints from the participants regarding the set of questionnaires being too long, which might make the results become bias as participants may experience fatigue effects or get bored while doing the questionnaires. Besides, the lowest contribution from peer attachment might be due to the fact that there was a variation of terms relating to close friends among the individuals even though the survey already provided the short definition of this term. Thus, the result from peer attachment test might not be effective enough. Another limitation that could be considered was that the findings were based on a cross-sectional design. Therefore, conclusions about temporal precedence could not be made. Future research could aim to expand the data collection beyond self-report measures by using other methods, such as behavioural assessments (e.g. self-monitoring of cognition and emotion through thought-and-mood-diaries).

This research will be really helpful to the counselors, therapists, or other people who have to deal with various kinds of people, especially those with low life satisfaction. By knowing which factors could affect individuals' satisfaction in life, it will lead people to the

solution of treatments or more appropriate ways to interact with that group of people. In this case, we could detect that self-esteem plays the biggest role in people's life satisfaction. Hence, we could decide to work on ways to increase or protect potential reduction in self-esteem to improve people's life satisfaction because, in real life, it is very hard to focus on multiple factors. Therefore, it will be more effective and easier to focus on just one factor the first start in order to elevate people's life satisfaction.

From the literature review and the results, the rest of the variance in life satisfaction might be accounted by other factors, such as genders, cultural influences, personality traits, living condition, parents' education, and romantic relationship. Chen et al. (2006) and Kwan et al. (1997) proposed the fact that cultures could change how self-esteem affects life satisfaction. Participants from collectivistic cultures were found to have less influence from self-esteem on life satisfaction compared to the participants from individualistic culture. Since collectivistic culture was known as a culture that value external factors such as social relationships, internal factor such as self-esteem might create less impactful effect on collectivistic people's life satisfaction. Relating research from Furnham and Cheng (2000) also explained about further impact from cultures. The study found that self-esteem could mediate the effect of neuroticism trait on people's happiness, which indicated that people from collectivistic culture with high neuroticism were more likely to have lower life satisfaction because neuroticism trait was found to be correlated with psychological distress and poor physical health (Gale, Booth, Mottus, Kuh, & Deary, 2013). Therefore, the results of our research might be affected a lot by cultural influences. The different living conditions among the participants were also suspected to be accountable for some unexplained part of the variance in life satisfaction because people tend to form different attachment style depending on their living conditions. For example, emerging adults who lives alone are likely to have less bonding time with their parents, which might lead them to have lower and poorer



attachment with their parents, compared to those who live with parents, indirectly affecting their life satisfaction. Similar concept could be applied on a classic third factor such as gender as well.

Additionally, the work from Jenkins et al. (2013) suggested that parents' education had impact on emerging adults' life satisfaction because being the first-generation to attend higher education requires higher effort for individuals to adjust themselves to the environment and that created more stress and less life satisfaction. There is also a study that recommended one possible reason why peer attachment seems to affect life satisfaction the least comparing to the other two factors. Demir (2010) found that the existence of romantic relationship tended to moderate the effect of peer attachment on emerging adults. The result from this study suggested that life satisfaction among emerging adults who had partners tended to be less likely affected by the relationship with peers. In our study, we did not ask the participants about their romantic statuses. Thus, It is interesting for future research to work on two groups of emerging adults: the group with romantic relationship and the group that does not have one. As a result, we believe that if future research includes a question about relationship statuses or includes another test about romantic attachment into the inventory, it will provide more insights in explaining the outcomes and better suggests for developing the future studies.

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## Appendix



แบบวัดความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความรู้สึกต่อตนเอง (self-esteem), ความสัมพันธ์กับผู้ปกครองและเพื่อนสนิท, และความพึงพอใจในชีวิต

แบบวัดนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของวิชาโครงงานวิจัยของคณะจิตวิทยา ชั้นปีที่ 4 จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

โดยแบบวัดจะทำการวัดระดับความรู้สึกต่อตนเองของคุณ, ความสัมพันธ์ของคุณกับบุคคลสำคัญในชีวิตของคุณ (พ่อ แม่ และเพื่อนสนิท\*\*),

และความพึงพอใจในชีวิตของคุณ

ซึ่งข้อมูลทั้งหมดในแบบสอบถามนี้จะเก็บเป็นความลับและไม่มีการนำเสนอข้อมูลที่สามารถนำไปสู่รายบุคคลได้

ทั้งนี้ กรุณาอ่านแนวทางการทำแบบสอบถามให้ละเอียด

\*\* เพื่อนสนิท ในที่นี้หมายถึงบุคคลที่ท่านรู้สึกว่าคุณสามารถแบ่งปันเรื่องราวทั้งความสุข และความทุกข์ได้อย่างสนิทใจ

คณะ: \_\_\_\_\_

ชั้นปี: \_\_\_\_\_

อายุ: \_\_\_\_\_

เพศ. ชาย/หญิง/อื่นๆ

ท่านอยู่อาศัยกับ:

- อยู่กับพ่อแม่ทั้งคู่
- อยู่กับพ่อคนเดียว
- อยู่กับแม่คนเดียว
- อยู่คนเดียว
- อื่นๆ \_\_\_\_\_

ท่านมีจำนวนเพื่อนสนิทเท่าไร

\_\_\_\_\_ คน

### แบบวัดความรู้สึกต่อตนเอง

ประโยคด้านล่างเกี่ยวข้องกับความรู้สึกทั่วไปของท่าน กรุณาเลือกหนึ่งคำตอบที่บ่งบอกความรู้สึกของท่านในตอนนี้มากที่สุด

โดยเลือกจากหมายเลข 1-4

1 = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

2 = ไม่เห็นด้วย

3 = เห็นด้วย

4= เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

1. โดยทั่วไปฉันรู้สึกพอใจตนเอง
2. บ่อยครั้งที่ฉันคิดว่าตัวเองไม่มีอะไรดีเลย
3. ฉันรู้สึกว่าตัวฉันเองก็มีอะไรดีเหมือนกัน
4. ฉันสามารถทำอะไรได้ดีเหมือนกับคนอื่น
5. ฉันรู้สึกว่าตนเองไม่มีอะไรน่าภาคภูมิใจมากนัก
6. ฉันรู้สึกบ่อยๆว่าตนเองไร้ค่า
7. ฉันรู้สึกว่าตนเองก็มีคุณค่าอย่างน้อยที่สุดก็เท่ากับคนอื่น
8. ฉันเชื่อว่าฉันสามารถให้ความนับถือตนเองได้มากกว่านี้
9. โดยรวมแล้วฉันมีแนวโน้มจะรู้สึกว่าตนเองล้มเหลว
10. ฉันมีความรู้สึกที่ดีกับตนเอง

### แบบวัดความพึงพอใจในชีวิต

ขอให้คุณพิจารณา คำถามด้านล่างทั้ง 5 ข้อ ซึ่งบางข้อคุณอาจจะเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วย

โดยขอให้คุณประเมินระดับความคิดเห็นต่อข้อความดังกล่าว ด้วยการระบุหมายเลขของคำตอบ จาก 1 - 7

1= ไม่เห็นด้วยมากที่สุด

2 = ไม่เห็นด้วย

3 = ค่อนข้างไม่เห็นด้วย

4 = เฉยๆ ไม่ใช่ทั้งเห็นด้วยหรือไม่เห็นด้วย

5 = ค่อนข้างเห็นด้วย

6 = เห็นด้วย

7 = เห็นด้วยมากที่สุด

ทั้งนี้ คำถามดังกล่าวไม่มีถูกหรือผิด เป็นเพียงการประเมินความคิดเห็นที่มีต่อสถานการณ์ของคุณ ณ ปัจจุบันเท่านั้น

1. โดยภาพรวมแล้ว ชีวิตของคุณใกล้เคียงกับอุดมคติที่ฉันทึกลงไว้
2. สภาพชีวิตต่างๆ ของคุณดีมาก
3. คุณมีความพึงพอใจในชีวิตที่เป็นอยู่
4. จวบจนกระทั่งปัจจุบันนี้ ฉันได้รับสิ่งที่สำคัญตามที่ฉันต้องการในชีวิตแล้ว
5. ถ้าฉันสามารถย้อนหวนกลับไปยังชีวิตในอดีตที่ผ่านมาได้ ฉันก็แทบจะไม่อยากแก้ไขอะไรมันเลย

#### แบบวัดความสัมพันธ์กับแม่

ประโยคดังต่อไปนี้จะถามถึงความรู้สึกของคุณที่มีต่อแม่ของคุณ หรือบุคคลที่เปรียบเสมือนแม่ของคุณ

หากคุณมีบุคคลที่เปรียบเสมือนแม่ของคุณมากกว่า 1 คน (เช่น แม่ที่ให้กำเนิด และแม่บุญธรรม)

กรุณาตอบคำถามโดยอิงความรู้สึกของคุณกับแม่ที่มีอิทธิพลกับคุณมากที่สุด

กรุณาอ่านแต่ละประโยคและเลือกเพียง 1 คำตอบที่บ่งบอกถึงความจริงในตอนนี้ของคุณที่สุด

(1 = ไม่เคยเป็นจริง, 2 = ไม่ค่อยเป็นจริง, 3 = บางครั้งเป็นจริง, 4 = บ่อยครั้งที่เป็นจริง, 5 = เป็นจริงตลอดเวลา)

1. แม่เคารพความรู้สึกของฉัน
2. ฉันรู้สึกว่าแม่ของฉันทำหน้าที่เป็นแม่ได้ดี
3. ฉันหวังว่าฉันจะมีแม่คนใหม่ที่ไม่เป็นแบบนี้
4. แม่ยอมรับในความเป็นฉัน

5. เมื่อฉันมีเรื่องกังวลใจ ฉันชอบรับฟังมุมมองของแม่ที่มีต่อเรื่องนั้นๆ
6. ฉันรู้สึกว่ามีประโยชน์อะไรที่จะแสดงความรู้สึกของฉันให้แม่ได้
7. เมื่อฉันอารมณ์เสียเกี่ยวกับเรื่องบางอย่าง แม่ของฉันก็สามารถรับรู้ได้
8. ฉันรู้สึกละอายใจหรือโง่เขลาเวลาพูดถึงปัญหาของฉันให้แม่ฟัง
9. แม่คาดหวังกับฉันเกินไป
10. ฉันอารมณ์เสียง่ายกับแม่
11. ฉันอารมณ์เสียบ่อยมากกว่าที่แม่ของฉันจะรับรู้ได้
12. เวลาสนทนาเกี่ยวกับอะไรก็ตาม แม่ใส่ใจความคิดเห็นของฉัน
13. แม่เชื่อการตัดสินใจของฉัน
14. แม่ก็มีปัญหาของแม่ ดังนั้นฉันจะไม่ให้ปัญหาของฉันไปกวนใจแม่เพิ่ม
15. แม่ช่วยฉันให้สามารถทำความเข้าใจตัวเองได้ดีขึ้น
16. ฉันบอกแม่เกี่ยวกับปัญหาและความกังวลใจ
17. ฉันรู้สึกโกรธแม่
18. ฉันไม่ได้รับความสนใจจากแม่เท่าไร
19. แม่ช่วยให้ฉันเข้าใจปัญหาของฉัน
20. แม่เข้าใจฉัน
21. เมื่อฉันโกรธเรื่องต่างๆ แม่จะพยายามเข้าใจฉัน
22. ฉันเชื่อใจแม่
23. แม่ไม่เข้าใจฉัน ว่าฉันต้องเจอกับอะไรบ้างในช่วงนี้
24. ฉันสามารถพึ่งพาแม่ได้ ในยามที่ฉันมีเรื่องหนักใจ
25. หากแม่รู้ว่ามึนบางอย่างที่กวนใจฉัน แม่จะถามฉันเกี่ยวกับสิ่งนั้น

### แบบวัดความสัมพันธ์กับพ่อ

ประโยคดังต่อไปนี้จะถามถึงความรู้สึกของคุณที่มีต่อพ่อของคุณ หรือบุคคลที่เปรียบเสมือนพ่อของคุณ

หากคุณมีบุคคลที่เปรียบเสมือนพ่อของคุณมากกว่า 1 คน (เช่น พ่อที่ให้กำเนิด และพ่อบุญธรรม)

กรุณาตอบคำถามโดยอิงความรู้สึกของคุณกับพ่อที่มีอิทธิพลกับคุณมากที่สุด

กรุณาอ่านแต่ละประโยคและเลือกเพียง 1 คำตอบที่บ่งบอกถึงความจริงในตอนนี้ของคุณที่สุด

(1 = ไม่เคยเป็นจริง, 2 = ไม่ค่อยเป็นจริง, 3 = บางครั้งเป็นจริง, 4 = บ่อยครั้งที่จริง, 5 = เป็นจริงตลอดเวลา)

1. พ่อเคารพความรู้สึกของฉัน
2. ฉันรู้สึกว่พ่อของฉันทำหน้าที่เป็นพ่อได้ดี
3. ฉันหวังว่าฉันจะมีพ่อคนใหม่ที่ไม่เป็นแบบนี้
4. พ่อยอมรับในความเป็นฉัน
5. เมื่อฉันมีเรื่องกังวลใจ ฉันชอบรับฟังมุมมองของพ่อที่มีต่อเรื่องนั้นๆ
6. ฉันรู้สึกว่ไม่มีประโยชน์อะไรที่จะแสดงความรู้สึกของฉันให้พ่อได้
7. เมื่อฉันอารมณ์เสียเกี่ยวกับเรื่องบางอย่าง พ่อของฉันก็สามารถรับรู้ได้
8. ฉันรู้สึกละอายใจหรือโง่เขลาเวลาพูดถึงปัญหาของฉันให้พ่อฟัง
9. พ่อคาดหวังกับฉันเกินไป
10. ฉันอารมณ์เสียง่ายกับพ่อ
11. ฉันอารมณ์เสียบ่อยมากกว่าที่พ่อของฉันจะรับรู้ได้
12. เวลาสนทนาเกี่ยวกับอะไรก็ตาม พ่อใส่ใจความคิดเห็นของฉัน
13. พ่อเชื่อการตัดสินใจของฉัน
14. พ่อก็มีปัญหาของพ่อ ดังนั้นฉันจะไม่ให้ปัญหาของฉันไปกวนใจพ่อเพิ่ม
15. พ่อช่วยฉันให้สามารถทำความเข้าใจตัวเองได้ดีขึ้น
16. ฉันบอกพ่อเกี่ยวกับปัญหาและความกังวลใจ
17. ฉันรู้สึกโกรธพ่อ
18. ฉันไม่ได้รับความสนใจจากพ่อเท่าไร



19. พ่อช่วยให้ฉันเข้าใจปัญหาของฉัน
20. พ่อเข้าใจฉัน
21. เมื่อฉันโกรธเรื่องต่างๆ พ่อจะพยายามเข้าใจฉัน
22. ฉันเชื่อใจพ่อ
23. พ่อไม่เข้าใจฉัน ว่าฉันต้องเจอกับอะไรบ้างในช่วงนี้
24. ฉันสามารถพึ่งพาพ่อได้ ในยามที่ฉันมีเรื่องหนักใจ
25. หากพ่อรู้ว่าฉันมีบางอย่างที่กวนใจฉัน พ่อจะถามฉันเกี่ยวกับสิ่งนั้น

**แบบวัดความสัมพันธ์กับเพื่อนสนิท\*\***

ประโยคดังต่อไปนี้จะถามถึงความรู้สึกของคุณที่มีต่อเหล่าเพื่อนสนิท\*\*ของคุณ

กรุณาอ่านแต่ละประโยคและเลือกเพียง 1 คำตอบที่บ่งบอกถึงความจริงในตอนนี้ของคุณที่สุด

(1 = ไม่เคยเป็นจริง, 2 = ไม่ค่อยเป็นจริง, 3 = บางครั้งเป็นจริง, 4 = บ่อยครั้งที่เป็นจริง, 5 = เป็นจริงตลอดเวลา)

\*\*เพื่อนสนิท ในที่นี้หมายถึงบุคคลที่ท่านรู้สึกว่าคุณสามารถแบ่งปันเรื่องราวทั้งความสุข และความทุกข์ได้อย่างสนิทใจ

1. เมื่อฉันมีเรื่องกังวลใจ ฉันชอบรับฟังมุมมองของเพื่อนที่มีต่อเรื่องนั้นๆ
2. เมื่อฉันอารมณ์เสียเกี่ยวกับเรื่องบางอย่าง เพื่อนของฉันสามารถรู้สึกได้
3. เวลาสนทนาเกี่ยวกับเรื่องต่างๆ เพื่อนของฉันจะใส่ใจความคิดเห็นของฉัน
4. ฉันรู้สึกละอายใจหรือโง่เขลาเวลาพูดถึงปัญหาของฉันให้เพื่อนของฉันฟัง
5. ฉันหวังว่าฉันจะมีเพื่อนคนใหม่ที่ไม่เป็นแบบนี้
6. เพื่อนของฉันเข้าใจฉัน
7. เพื่อนสนับสนุนให้ฉันพูดถึงความยากลำบากของฉัน
8. เพื่อนของฉันยอมรับในความเป็นฉัน
9. ฉันรู้สึกถึงความต้องการของตัวเองในการจะติดต่อกับเพื่อนให้มากขึ้น
10. เพื่อนไม่เข้าใจฉัน ว่าฉันต้องเจอกับอะไรบ้างในช่วงนี้
11. ฉันรู้สึกโดดเดี่ยวหรือแปลกแยกเวลาอยู่กับเพื่อนของฉัน

12. เพื่อนของฉันฟังในสิ่งที่ฉันพูด
13. ฉันรู้สึกว่าเป็นเพื่อนที่ดี
14. เพื่อนของฉันพูดคุยด้วยได้ง่าย
15. เมื่อฉันโกรธเรื่องต่างๆ เพื่อนจะพยายามเข้าใจฉัน
16. เพื่อนของฉันช่วยฉันให้สามารถทำความเข้าใจตัวเองได้มากขึ้น
17. เพื่อนของฉันใส่ใจว่าฉันรู้สึกอย่างไร
18. ฉันรู้สึกโกรธเพื่อนของฉัน
19. ฉันสามารถพึ่งพาเพื่อนได้ ในยามที่ฉันมีเรื่องหนักใจ
20. ฉันเชื่อใจเพื่อนของฉัน
21. เพื่อนของฉันเคารพความรู้สึกของฉัน
22. ฉันอารมณ์เสียบ่อยมากกว่าที่เพื่อนของฉันจะรับรู้ได้
23. เพื่อนของฉันดูเหมือนจะรำคาญฉันโดยไม่มีสาเหตุ
24. ฉันสามารถบอกเพื่อนของฉันเกี่ยวกับปัญหาและความกังวลใจได้
25. หากเพื่อนของฉันรู้ว่า มีบางอย่างที่กวนใจฉัน เขาจะถามฉันเกี่ยวกับสิ่งนั้น