

## **Attachment Style and Self-esteem as Predictors of Psychopathic Behaviour among Male Prison Inmates**

**Maria Chidi C. Onyedibe**

Department of Psychology  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

### **Abstract**

*The study investigated the predictive relationships of attachment style and self-esteem with psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates. Three hundred and two (302) male prison inmates drawn from Enugu prisons participated in the study. They comprised both awaiting trial and convicted persons who were aged 16-65 years. Cross-sectional design was adopted for the study. Wei and colleagues (2001) Experiences in Close Relationship Scale - short version (ECR-S) was used as a measure of attachment style; Rosenberg (1965) Self esteem Scale was used to measure self esteem; and Psychoticism scale of the Eysencks Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was adopted as a measure of psychopathic behaviour. The result of the analysis indicated a significant positive relationship between attachment style and psychopathic behaviour ( $p = .35$ ,  $t = 6.74$ ,  $P < .001$ ). Self esteem was also shown to have a significant negative relationship with psychopathic behaviour ( $P = -.19$ ,  $t = -.19$ ,  $P < .001$ ). The findings evidenced that insecure attachment style increased the psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates and low self esteem also predicted psychopathic behaviour. Implications of these findings to psychotherapy were discussed.*

In our contemporary society, there is prevalence of various kinds of crime and antisocial behaviour. A report given by Antisocial Behaviour Unit (ASBU) in England and Wales in September 2003 indicated that over 66,000 report of antisocial behaviour were made to agencies on one day (Harradine, Kodz, Lemeti & [ones, 2004). The Overseas Security Advisory Council (2008) reported that indiscriminate violent crime is common throughout our country Nigeria. They noted that confrontation do not deter criminals, as they are often armed in the event that they do meet resistance. Hence criminals will not hesitate to use violence if they perceive resistance on the part of their victim. Sadly, the police in their effort to confront them loose their lives in the process. The Nigerian Police statistics showed that between August 2002 and May 2003, criminals killed 273 civilians, 84 policemen and 133 policemen injured (Olukoya, 2003). At present, kidnapping and raiding of the banks are talk of the day. The geometrical

increase of different variations of crime in all its ramifications is so alarming that one may begin to wonder the personality development of the individuals who indulge in these crimes. According to Robert and Indermaur (2009), there is evidence of growing public perception that crime and antisocial behaviour particularly among young people, is becoming worse. Antisocial behaviour is a serious concern to the government, non-governmental organizations, private sector, communities, families and individuals. As a result of the proliferation of different kinds of crime and antisocial behaviour in our contemporary Nigerian society, the present researcher deems it fit to consider the concept of psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates.

Psychopaths are known to engage in different kinds of criminal and antisocial behaviour. However, it is not every individual who commits crime and antisocial behaviour who is viewed as a psychopath. Psychopaths are people who use charisma, manipulation, intimidation, sexual intercourse and violence to control others and satisfy their own needs (Forth, Cooke, & Hare, 1998; Kirk, 2003; Harris, Rice, & Lalumiere, 2001). Lacking in conscience and empathy, they take what they want and do as they please, violating social norms and expectations without guilt or remorse (Hare, 1995). What is most striking about psychopaths is that they appear extremely at ease with themselves (Pitchford, 2001). They can be articulate, are often highly intelligent, and are regularly described as "charming" and "convincing". While many criminals are psychopaths, majority are not. Copley (2005) noted that the primary difference between psychopaths and other criminals is that, psychopaths are incapable of experiencing guilt, empathy or remorse. As a result, psychopaths commit far more acts of violence than other criminals. Because they feel no guilt about their crimes and have difficulty controlling their impulses, psychopaths have a higher recidivism rate than regular criminals. Hare (1993) estimated that psychopaths are responsible for more than 50% of serious crimes committed. Scientists estimate that 15-20% of men and 7-15% of women in U.S. prisons display psychopathic behaviour (Nauort, 1992). However, the condition is not restricted to the prison system. Research indicates that about 1% of the general population could be described as psychopathic. Lykken (1995) contends that some psychopaths may include certain incarcerated leaders of commerce and industry, some police officers or other members of criminal justice systems, certain artists, politicians and statesmen.

Cleckley (1941) in his classic work "The Mask of Sanity" listed about sixteen characteristics of psychopathy which provided the foundation for the current diagnostic criteria. Cleckley's (1976) characteristics of psychopathy include, among others, lack of remorse or shame for harmful acts committed to others, poor judgment and failure to learn from experience, lack of emotional responsiveness to others, impulsivity and others. Building on Cleckley's notion

of psychopathy, Hare (1997) maintained that psychopaths have additional qualities such as lack of empathy, a glib and superficial demeanour and a distorted sense of their own self-importance that makes them arrogant. He also developed one of the widely used assessment instrument known as the psychopathic checklist which has two factors: core psychopathic personality trait and the antisocial lifestyle. It will be noted that substance abuse has been associated with psychopathy (Kantor, 2006) most especially with factor 2 (antisocial behaviour).

The fourth text-revised edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2000) classified psychopathy, sociopathy and dissocial personality disorders under antisocial personality disorders. The antisocial personality disorder (APD) according to the DSM IV- TR is a pattern of disregard for and violation of the right of others that begin in childhood and early adolescence and continue into adulthood. It will be indicated by some of the following characteristics among others: failure to conform to social norm, failure to show constancy and responsibility in work, sexual relationships, parenthood or financial obligations, irritability and aggressiveness, reckless and impulsive behaviour, disregard for truth and others.

Furthermore, psychopathic behaviour seems to be related to psychoticism dimension of Eysenck (1975) personality theory. Psychoticism is an index of individual tough mindedness and also an index of rebelliousness. Eysenck (1982) opined that people with high levels of psychoticism are egocentric, aggressive, impersonal, cold, lacking in concern for others and generally unconcerned about the rights and welfare of others. These qualities correspond closely to the qualities commonly found among psychopaths. Research (Howarth, 1986) has found that higher psychoticism scores were reported among psychopaths and criminals. Hare, (2002) found that psychopathy correlated with the psychoticism scale of Eysenck personality questionnaire (EPQ). Also, in the words of Digman (1999) 11 despite its name, the EPQ psychoticism scale is better viewed as a measure of psychopathy". In this study therefore, the psychoticism scale of the EPQ will be used as a measure of psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates. Several factors have been identified to impact on psychopathic behaviour. These include attachment style, self esteem, locus of control and others. This study considered the impact of attachment style and self esteem on psychopathic behaviour.

The concept of attachment in humans was originally described as the process by which an infant have inborn biological need to maintain close contact with its mother or other main care taker (Bowlby, 1980). Attachment between parent and child is clearly one of the many love relationships that human being

experience. Both parents and infants play a role in the development of attachment relationship (Crider, Ceothal, Kavanaugh & Solomon, 1983). Santrock (2006) defined it as a close emotional bond between the infant and primary care giver. In a broader sense, attachment is an intense emotional relationship that is specific to two people, that endures over time and in which prolong separation from the partner is accompanied by stress and sorrow (Kagan, Kearsley, & Zelazo, 1978).

Bowlby (1951) maintained that the basic determinant of adult personality is attachment, the affectional bond between the child and its primary caretaker. To grow mentally healthy, he wrote "the infant and the young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment". Attachment system plays a significant role in maintaining proximity between the infant and its care givers so as to ward off danger and threat and thus increase the chances of survival (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). The care giver provides a secure and dependable base for the child to explore the world. In Bowlby's maternal deprivation hypothesis, he believed that a child's emotional care was as important for development as physical care. He opined that the best way to achieve emotional care was for them to have a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with the mother. According to him, if the child did not get this continuous care because of frequent and/ or prolonged separation (without a suitable mother substitute), they may become emotionally disturbed. Emotional disturbances could include disturbed behaviour, delinquency, intellectual and growth retardation, depression and in severe case psychopathy. Many researchers (Bowlby, 1969; Erikson, 1968) have always maintained that the first year of life is the key time frame for the development of attachment hence the importance of attachment and responsiveness of the care giver at this stage.

Although Bowlby and Ainsworth (1991) founded modern attachment theory on studies of children and their primary caregiver, Hazan and Shaver (1987, 1990, 1994) applied attachment theory to adult romantic relationships. Hazan and Shaver noticed that interactions between adult romantic partners share similarities with the interactions between the child and care givers. For example romantic partner feel comforted when their partners are present and anxious or lonely when their partners are absent. Thus romantic partner serve as a secure base that help partners face the surprises, opportunities and challenges life present. Other researchers (eg. Bartholomew, 1997; Hatfield & Rapson, 1994) have also adopted the concept of infant attachment style to the ways that individuals relate as adult to significant figures in their lives, such as romantic partner.

People differ in the nature of their attachment and so attachment styles are broadly divided into two major categories: secure and insecure attachment style. The concept of secure and insecure attachment continues to be used to describe attachment relationships in adulthood (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999; Main, 2000; Ryff & Singer, 2000; Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Bowlby maintained that the type of attachment that a child forms has long term consequences on many aspects of the child's development and adult life. People who have secure attachment style have parents who are emotionally available and responsive to their needs as infants. (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978). People with secure attachment style find it easy to relate to others in close relationships, are comfortable with emotional interdependence (Halgin & Whitebourn, 2007). They provide realistic coherent descriptions of their childhood and appear to understand how past experiences affects their current lives as adult (Sanrock, 2002). On the other hand, people who have insecure attachment style have parents who are emotionally unavailable to their needs as infants, tend to intrude their own state of mind onto their children, show frightening and disoriented behaviour towards their children (Khetrapal, 2009). Individuals who have such parents end up developing insecure attachment style as adult.

There are some empirical studies that explain the way in which attachment style influences psychopathic behaviour. Bowlby (1944) devoted extensive research to the concept of attachment, describing it as a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings. He shared with the psychoanalytic view that early experiences in childhood have an important influence on the development and behaviour in later life. The underlying assumption of Bowlby's (1951) maternal deprivation hypothesis is that continual disruption of the attachment between infant and the primary care giver could result in long term cognitive, social and emotional difficulties for that infant. According to him, long term consequences of maternal deprivation might include the following: delinquency, affectionless psychopathy among others. To support this, Bowlby (1944) studied some adolescent who were referred to a child protection program in London because of stealing. Bowlby selected another 44 children to act as control. He interviewed the parents from both groups to state whether their children had experienced separation during the critical period and for how long. He found that more than half of the juvenile thieves had been separated from their mother for longer than six months during their first five years. He also discovered that several of the young thieves (32%) showed affectionless psychopathy. None of the control groups were affectionless psychopaths. The affectionless psychopaths showed little concern for others and are unable to form relationships. Bowlby, concluded that the reason for the antisocial behaviour and emotionless problems in the first group was due to maternal deprivation.

Frodi, Dernevik, Sepa, Philipson and Bragesi (2001), conducted a research on current representations of incarcerated offenders in varying degrees of psychopathy. In their study they sought to examine the current mental representations of early attachment relationship on 24 psychopathic criminal offenders, incarcerated in a forensic psychiatric hospital or a medium-security prison. The participant according to the study had been assessed on Hare's psychopathic checklist, revised, screening version (PCL-R, SV, 1997) and scored either high or low. The result pointed to an extensive over representations of individuals who have insecure (dismissing) attachment style and attachment related experiences. No secure individuals and with the remainder being either unclassified or unresolved with regard to severe early abuse / trauma.

More so, a study of criminal offenders admitted to forensic psychiatric hospital in the Netherlands that was aimed at finding out the pattern of participant's attachment style was conducted by Van Ijzendoorn and colleagues (in press). They found that 95% of the subject were insecure, with 53% unresolved/ can't classify, and 20% preoccupied. The nature of the crime was unrelated to classification, although preoccupied men tended to be more violent and more likely to have personality disorder diagnosis. Subjects designated "can't classify" were more likely to be raised in institutions.

Furthermore, self esteem can be a factor in the development of psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates. Self esteem reflects self evaluation, how worthy a person think he/ she is (Santrock, 2000). Self esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with one's basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness (Branden, 1993). Self esteem according to Branden (1993) has two essential components: self efficacy and self respect. Self efficacy refers to the confidence in the ability to cope with life's challenges. Self efficacy leads to a sense of control over one's life while self respect involves experiencing oneself as deserving happiness and achievement. Self respect makes possible a sense of community with others. Self esteem according to Branden is self reinforcing. When one has confidence in one's ability to think and act effectively, one can persevere when faced with difficult challenges. Also, when one has more confidence in one's ability, one succeeds more often than one fails. The individual forms more nourishing relationships and expect more from life and oneself. On the contrary, when a person lacks confidence, he/ she gives up easily, fails more often and aspires less to what one wants.

Cripe (1999), have distinguished between high and low self esteem. For him, a person with high self-esteem believes strongly in certain principles and values, is capable of acting in his/her best judgment, feels equal to others, resist peer influence, feels confident about ability to handle challenges, even when he/ she has had failure or setbacks in the past, sensitive to the needs of others, flexible

and can adapt to change, happy and energetic and loves life. Whereas low self esteem is characterised by being overly sensitive to criticism, afraid to make mistake, blaming others, often feels persecuted, fear of competition, afraid to try new things, over responsive to praise, shy, timid or withdrawn, uncertain of his own values, jealous or possessive and difficulty maintaining loving relationships. From the above distinction, it seems obvious that high self esteem is more desirable and adaptive than low self esteem. However, some other researchers have found that high self esteem is a factor in some behavioural problems e.g. violence and aggression (Baumeister, Smart & Boden, 1996).

Some researchers (Lim, Saulsman & Nathan, 2005) contend that self esteem is usually developed during childhood. According to them, self esteem is determined by one's experiences in childhood, family of origin, the society in which one lives, experiences with one's peers among others. They stressed that when children are maltreated, punished frequently in an extreme or unpredicted manner, rejected, abandoned or abused, the child may develop low self esteem. On the contrary, when a child's experience is positive, warm and loving, the child will develop a positive and high self esteem or views about himself/herself and the world around him/her.

Leary (1999) has shown that low self esteem is related to a variety of psychological difficulties and personal problems, including depression, loneliness, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, academic failure and criminal behaviour. Strictly speaking, there seems to be dearth of empirical studies on the predictive relationship of self esteem and psychopathic behaviour. However, some researchers have linked other attributes of psychopathic behaviour to self esteem. There are elements of externalizing problems in psychopathic personality such as aggression, antisocial behaviour and delinquency. On this basis, the controversial link between global self esteem and externalizing problems has been explored. In three studies, Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt and Caspi (2005) found a robust relation between self esteem and externalizing problems. This relationship held for measures of self esteem and externalizing problems based on self report, teacher's rating, and parent's ratings and for participants from different nationalities and age groups.

Some other researchers (Baumeister, Smart & Boden, 1996) have found that high self-esteem and threatened egotism is an important cause of aggression, violence, crime and antisocial behaviour. According to them, an interdisciplinary review of evidence about aggression, crime and violence contradicted the view that low self esteem is an important cause. Instead violence appears to be most commonly a result of threatened egotism - that is highly favourable views of self that are disputed by some persons or circumstances. Inflated, unstable or tentative beliefs in self's superiority may be most prone to encouraging threats

and hence to causing violence. In another study, Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) contend that high self esteem does not prevent children from smoking, drinking, taking drugs or engaging in early sex/ rather, high self esteem fosters experimentation, which may increase early sexual activity or drug abuse.

The present study was aimed at investigating whether attachment style of the prison inmate would have a significant relationship with their psychopathic behaviour. It also investigated whether self esteem would have a significant relationship with psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates.

Two hypotheses were tested in this study: Attachment style will not significantly predict psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates. Self-esteem will not significantly predict psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants were male prison inmates drawn from Enugu prison. A total of three hundred and two (302) participants volunteered to participate in this study. They comprised 254 (84.1) awaiting trial persons and 43 (14.2) convicted persons. The age range of the participants was 16-65 years, with a mean age of 29 years. In terms of their educational attainment, 55 (18.2) indicated not having any formal education, 42 (13.9) had primary education, 130 (43.3) had secondary education, while 67 (22.2) had tertiary education, 8 (2.6) did not indicate their educational attainment.

### **Instruments**

Three instruments were used in this study namely: Experiences in Close Relationship short version (ECR-S) scale (Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt & Vogel, 2007) which assesses adult attachment style, Rosenberg (1965) Self esteem Scale (RSES) and psychoticism scale of Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire which was used in this study as a measure of psychopathic behaviour.

The experiences in close relationship -short version (ECR-S) scale is a 12 item measure of adult attachment style developed by Wei and colleagues (2007). The ECR-S scale was developed from the original 36 item of the experiences in close relationship (ECR) scale by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998). The author maintained that the 12 item ECR-S when administered alone or as part of the original 36 item version, retains the psychometric properties similar to those of the original 36 item ECR. The ECR-S scale has two subscale namely anxiety subscale and avoidant subscale, with the coefficient alphas of .86 for anxiety



subscale and .88 for avoidant subscale. The scale measures attachment anxiety which is defined as involving a fear of interpersonal rejection or abandonment, an excessive need of approval from others and distress when one's partner is unavailable or unresponsive; while attachment avoidance involves fear of dependence and interpersonal intimacy, an excessive need for self reliance and reluctance to self disclosure. People who score high on either or both of these dimensions are assumed to have an insecure attachment orientation. By contrast, people with low levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance can be viewed as having a secure adult attachment orientation (Brennan et al 1998; Lopez & Brennan, 2000; Mallinckrodt, 2000). The ECR-R has a 7 point Likert response format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Examples of the items in ECR-s include the following among others: I try to avoid getting too close to my partner. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back. The items which are scored in reversed direction are items 4, 7, 8 and 9. The result of the pilot study conducted by the present researcher with 67 participants drawn from Nsukka prisons indicated a Cronbach alpha's coefficient of internal consistency  $r = .55$ .

The Rosenbergs (1965) Self-esteem Scale (RSES) was used as a unidimensional measure of global self esteem. It consists of 10 statements related to overall feelings of self worth or self acceptance. The item is made up of five (5) positive statements and five (5) negative statements about self. The RSES items are scored on a four- point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Some of the items in RSES include the following among others: On the whole, I am satisfied with myself, I certainly feel useless at times. The items which are scored in reversed direction are items 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9. The score ranges from 0-30. Score between 15 and 25 are within normal range, while scores below 15 suggest low self esteem. However, in this study, the norms provided are not being used since the variable is considered to be continuous. Hence in this study, higher scores are considered to indicate a higher self esteem whereas lower scores indicate low self esteem. The Cronbach alpha's coefficients of internal consistency as provided by Rosenberg (1965) is  $r = .78$  (or English version). However, the pilot study conducted by the present researcher with 67 male prison inmates drawn from Nsukka prisons indicated a Cronbach alpha coefficient internal consistency of  $r = .88$ .

In this study, the psychoticism (p) scale of the Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was used as a measure of psychopathic behaviour. The P scale of the EPQ has 25 items in a yes or no format. In terms of its reliability and validity, Eysenck et al (1978) provided the test re test reliability of the scale in a month interval as follows: male,  $r = 0.76$ , and female,  $r = 0.51$ . Some of the items

include: Do you stop to think things over before doing anything, would being in debt worry you.

### **Procedure**

Having obtained the required permission from the controller of prisons, Enugu state, the researcher was directed to the warder in charge of welfare services who agreed to give assistance and support to the researcher. The welfare officer who served as research assistant helped in getting some inmates volunteers who willingly participated in the study. They were 380 male prison inmates. The researcher and the research assistant distributed the questionnaire in groups of twenty or twenty five at a time. The venue was the welfare department in the prison for space and convenience. The participants were solicited to fill the questionnaire honestly as their responses will not be used to incriminate them. They were advised to read the instruction carefully before responding to any question. The researcher also answered the question that arose. It took a maximum of two weeks for the questionnaire to be completed. However, 78 copies of the questionnaires were discarded due to wrong completion.

### **Design/Statistics**

The design of this study was cross-sectional research design. The statistical analysis employed was hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis. Attachment style was regressed on psychopathic behaviour. Also, self esteem was regressed on psychopathic behaviour.

### **Results**

Hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was applied to test the hypotheses of this study on whether attachment style and self esteem could significantly predict psychopathic behaviour. Probable contaminating effects of the demographic variables, participant's age and education, were controlled for in the analysis by extracting their effect first before building the main predictors into the regression model.

**Table 1: Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Results.**

**Table 1: Summary of Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Results.**

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	F value
<b>Model 1</b>					
Age	-.02	.02	-.06	.06	F (2, 287) = 9.12**
Education	-.72	.17	-.24**		
<b>Model 2</b>					
Attachment Style	.12	.02	.35**	.22	F (2, 285) = 20.57**
Self Esteem	-.14	.04	-.19**		

Note: R<sup>2</sup> = .06 for model 1, R<sup>2</sup> = .22 for model 2. F value = 9.12 for model 1, F value = 20.57 for model 2. \*\* = p < .001

Note: R<sup>2</sup> = .06 for model 1, R<sup>2</sup> = .22 for model 2. F value = 9.12 for model 1, F value = 20.57 for model 2. \*\* = P < .001

The result indicated that attachment style and self esteem are significantly related to psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates. Attachment style had significant positive relationship with psychopathic behaviour; the standardized regression coefficient  $\beta = .35$ , indicating that attachment style accounted for about 35% of the variance in psychopathic behaviour.

Self esteem has a significant negative relationship with psychopathic behaviour: the standardized regression coefficient  $\beta = -.19$ , indicating that self esteem accounted for about 19% of the variance in psychopathic behaviour. However, the results also indicate that one of the demographic variables (education) is significantly and negatively related to psychopathic behaviour. The standardized regression coefficient; beta = -.24. This indicates that education accounted for 24% of the variance in psychopathic behaviour.

## Discussion

This study investigated the prediction of attachment style and self esteem on psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates in Enugu state. The result of the findings showed that attachment style had a significant positive relationship with psychopathic behaviour. The result indicates that for everyone unit increase in attachment style, the slope (B) of psychopathic behaviour increases by .12. It also shows that for everyone standard deviation increase in attachment style, psychopathic behaviour increases by .35 ( $\beta$ ) of a standard deviation. This therefore implies that the higher the attachment style score (insecure attachment), the higher the psychopathic behaviour. This implies that attachment style is a major predictor of psychopathic behaviour. Thus, the first hypothesis which stated that attachment style would not have a significant relationship with psychopathic behaviour was rejected. The finding supports the previous research which reported that 95% of inmates who manifested

psychopathic behaviour had insecure attachment style (Van Ijzendoorn et al, in press). This brings to mind the importance of attachment style in the development of an individual Bowlby (1951) contend that attachment is one of the basic determinants of adult personality. Thus for a child to grow up mentally healthy, the infant should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with the mother (or permanent mother substitute) in whom both finds satisfaction and enjoyment. Therefore a child who experiences the above positive description tends to develop a secure attachment style and may be less likely to display psychopathic behaviour. On the contrary, a child who did not get this continuous care because of frequent or prolonged separation (without a suitable mother substitute) may become emotionally disturbed, and hence may tend to develop an insecure attachment style which may predispose the person to psychopathic behaviour.

The study also shows that self esteem had significant negative relationship with psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates ( $\beta = -.19$ ). The multiple linear regression results shows that for every one unit increase in self esteem, the slope (B) of psychopathic behaviour decreases by  $-.14$  and for every standard deviation increase in self esteem, psychopathic behaviour decrease by  $-.19$  (P). This implies that the higher the self esteem of an inmate, the lower the psychopathic behaviour. This also indicates that low self esteem is a strong predictor of psychopathic behaviour. Thus hypothesis 2 which stated that self esteem would not have a significant relationship with psychopathic behaviour among prison inmates was rejected. This finding is consistent with the findings of Donnellan and colleagues (2005) which indicated that self esteem is related to some externalizing problems like aggression, antisocial behaviour and delinquency. These externalizing problems are dramatically displayed by psychopathic individuals. Similarly, Branden (1994) maintained that most psychological problems are traceable to low self esteem.

In addition to the main findings, an interesting discovery at the beginning of the analysis shows that education had very strong negative relationship with psychopathic behaviour ( $\beta = -.24$ ). This means that education accounted for 24 variance in psychopathic behaviour. The negative relationship indicated that the higher the education attainment, the lower the psychopathic behaviour. The findings therefore implies that, individuals who are advanced in education seems to be less inclined to psychopathic behaviour compared to individuals who are of low educational status. This could be as a result of sound education acquisition, knowledge, learning and experience as opposed to the individuals who have not been exposed to these learning opportunities.

As already stated in this study, psychopaths have a terrible personality disposition because of their reckless, aggressive, callous, impulsive and

remorseless attitude and behaviour that usually leave a big scar on their victims and cause social unrest and disharmony in the society. The awful nature of the problems associated with psychopathic behaviour should be of greater concern to any meaningful individual, institutions, and government in the contemporary society, where so many kinds of violent crimes are committed. The study therefore has a far reaching implication on parenting style and child care. This is very fundamental because insecure attachment style and low self esteem according to this study are strong predictors of psychopathic behaviour. It is to be noted that the development of attachment style and self esteem could be traced to an individual's early child development. Some researcher (Bowlby 1968; Erickson, 1968), have maintained that the first few years of life are very critical for an individual; and the experiences during these years ultimately determine an individual's personality. Since insecure attachment style is developed as a result of unresponsiveness of the mother or primary care giver, parents and care givers should endeavour to be emotionally available and responsive to their children especially at those critical periods of their lives. Also some researchers (Lim et al. 2005) have supported the fact that a person's self esteem or the views about oneself are determined by the person's experiences in childhood, family of origin, the society one live in, one's peers and others. According to them, if children are maltreated, punished frequently in an extreme or unpredictable manner, neglected, abandoned or abused, the child will end up developing low self-esteem. Positive parenting style and childcare are therefore necessary for a healthy and positive self-esteem which could lead to a well-adjusted human being devoid of all sorts of antisocial and psychopathic behaviour.

The study also has some implication for psychotherapy. Psychologist should endeavour to develop some programmes that will benefit some individuals in developing more enhancing and positive lifestyle especially among prison inmates. Although some researchers have shown that psychopathic individual hardly benefit from psychotherapy, some could be helped especially at a tender age.

The study also has some implication for education. The result indicated that the higher the educational attainment the lower the psychopathic behaviour. This seems to highlight the importance and value of education in our society. The role of education in shaping one's life as well as building up of the society cannot be overemphasized. It is also said that the success of any civil society depends much more on the level of literacy. Education is therefore, of paramount importance for people to become citizens who are patriotic, thoughtful, enterprising and responsible. With good and proper education, one is capable of building a very strong foundation that will enable one to achieve all the

essential and productive personal goals one set for oneself. This will help to lessen the degree of psychopathic behaviour that pollutes the society with their unpatriotic and antisocial behaviours. Consequently, government is therefore enjoined to provide basic and qualitative education to the citizens. Free education for the citizens especially individuals who may not afford to finance their studies are also encouraged.

Although the study has several implications, the generalizability of the results is limited. The study was carried out only with male prison inmates. This was as a result of very few numbers of women/ girls in prison. Secondly the study was carried out only in Enugu and Nsukka prisons, thus generalization of the findings to the entire prison population may be limited. Future researchers should attempt to use more than two or more prisons from different states to enable a wider generalization to the entire prison population. Secondly, since psychopathic behaviour is not restricted to the prison population, future researchers should endeavour to extend this area of research to the general population.

### **References**

- American Psychiatric Association (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed.) Washington, DC: Author.
- Ainsworth, M.D., & Bowlby, J. (1991). An ethological approach to personality development. *American Psychologist*, *46*, 331-341.
- Ainsworth, M.D., Blchar, M., Waters, E., & Wall, S. (1978) *Patterns of attachment*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bartholomew, K. (1997). Adult attachment processes: Individual and couple perspectives. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, *70*, 249-263.
- Baumeister, R.F., Campbell, J.D., Krueger, J.I., & Yohs, K.D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness or heather life styles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, *4*(1), 1-44.
- Baumeister, RF., Smart, L., & Boden, J.M. (1996). Relations of threatened egotism violence and aggression: The dark side of self- esteem. *Psychological Review*, *103*, 5- 33.
- Bowlby J. (1944). Forty-four juvenile thieves: their characters and home life. *International Journal of Psychologies*, *25*, 19-52.
- Bowlby, J. (1951). *Maternal care and mental health world health*. World Health Organization Monograph. (Serial No. 2).
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and Loss: Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss separation, anxiety and anger*. New York: Basic Books.

- Bowlby J. (1980). *Attachment and loss. Loss, Sadness and depression*. New York: Basic Books.
- Branden, N. (1993). *The art of self discovery*. New York: Batman Books
- Brennan, K. A., Lark, C. L., & Shaver, P. R (1998). *Self-report measurement of adult romantic attachment: an integrative overview*. In Simpson, J.A., & Rholes W.S. (eds.), *Attachment theory and close relationships*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Carson, RC, Butcher, J.N., & Mineka, S. (2000). *Abnormal psychology and modern life*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Cassidy, J., & Shaver. P. R (1999). *Handbook of attachment*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Cleckley, H. (1941). *The mask of sanity*. St Louis: C.V. Mosby.
- Cleckley, H. (1976). *The mask of sanity*. (5th ed.), St Louis: C.V. Mosby.
- Cleckley, M.D., & Hervey, M. (1982). *The mask of sanity*. (revised ed.). Mosby: Medical Library.
- Copley, J. (2005). How psychopaths differ from other criminals in personality/Anxiety / mood disorder. <http://personalitydisorders.suite101.com/article.cfm/>.
- Crider. AB., Goenthals, G.R., Kavanaugh, R.D., & Solomon, P. (1983). *Psychology*. Glenview: Scott, Foreman
- Cripe, B. (1999). *Building self-esteem*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.
- Digman, J. M. (1990). Personality structure: emergence of the five factor model. *Annual Review of Psychology, 41*, 417-410.
- Donnellan, M.D., Trzesniewski, K.H., Robins, R.N., Moffitt, T.E. & Caspi, A. (2005). Low self-esteem is related to aggression, antisocial behaviour; and delinquency. *Psychological Science, 16* (4), 328-335.
- Erikson. E. H. (1965). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Eysenck, H.J. & Eysenck, S.B.G. (1975). *Manual of the Eysenck personality questionnaire*. London: Hodder and Stoughton
- Eysenck, H.J. (1982). *Personality, genetics and behaviour*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Forth, E. A., Cooke, D. C. & Hare, R. R. (1998). *Psychopathy: theory, research and implications for society*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic.
- Frodi, A., Dernevik, M, Sepa, A., Philipson, J., & Bragesi, M (2001). Current attachment representations of incarcerated offenders varying in degree of psychopathy. *Attachment & Human development, 3*, 269-283.
- Cccr, S. (1961). Study of potential loss in neurotics and sociopaths. *Arch. Gen. Psychiatry, 11*(2), 177-80.
- Halgin, R.P. & Whitbourne, S.K. (2007). *Abnormal Psychology: Clinical perspectives on psychological Disorders*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Harradine, S., Kodz, J., Lemetti, F & [ones, B. (2001) Anti Social Behaviour Research Team, *Research Development and Statistics Directories*.

- Hare, R.D. (1993). *Without Conscience: The disturbing world of the psychopath among us*. New York: NY Simon of Schuter (Pocket Books).
- Hare, K D, (1995). Psychopaths:New trends in research. *Harvard mental health letter*, 12,4-5.
- Hare, R. D. (1997). The NATO advanced Study Institute on Psychopathy, Alvor Portugal, 1995. *Journal of personality disorder*, 11,301-303.
- Hare, R.D. (1970). *Psychopathy: Theory and research*. New York: Wiley.
- Harris, G. T., Rice, M. E., Lalumiere, M. (2001). Criminal violence: The roles of psychopathy, neurodevelopmental insults, and antisocial parenting. *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, 28: 402.
- Hatfield, E., & Rapson, R. (1994). *Love and attachment processes*. In M. Lewis & J.M. Haviland (Eds), *Handbook of emotions* (pp.595-604). New York: Guilford Press.
- Hazan, C, & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 52, 511-524.
- Hazan, C, & Shaver, P.R. (1990). Love and work: An attachment theoretical perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59, 270-280.
- Hazan, C, & Shaver, P.R. (1994). Attachment as an organizational framework for research on close relationships. *Psychological Inquiry*, 5, 1-22.
- Howarth, E. (1986). What does Eysenck's Psychoticism scale really measure? *British Journal of psychology*, 77,223-227.
- Kagan, J., Kearsley, R.B., & Zelazo, P.R (1978) *Infancy: A place in human development*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Kantor, M.M. (2006). *The psychopathy of everyday life: How antisocial personality disorders affects all of us*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Khetrapal, N. (2009). The early attachment experiences are the roots of psychopathy. *Interpersonal*, 3 (1), 1-13.
- Kirk, H. (2003). Violence risk: Prom prediction to management. In J. Wiley & Sons, *Handbook of psychology in legal con texts* (2nd ed).
- Leary, M.R. (1999). Making sense of self esteem. *Current Directions in psychological science*. pp 32-35.
- Lim, L., Saulsman, L., & Nathan, P, (2005). *Improving self esteem*. Perth, Western Australia: Centre for Clinical Interventions.
- Lopez, P.G., & Brennan, K. A. (2000). Dynamic process underlying adult attachment organization: Toward an attachment theoretical perspective on the healthy and effective self. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 47,283 - 301.
- Luntz, U.K., & Wisdom, C.S. (1994). Antisocial personality disorder in abused and neglected children grown up. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 151, 670-674.
- Lykken, D.T. (1995). *The Antisocial Personalities*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.



- Main, M (2000). *Attachment theory*. In A. Kazdin (Ed), Encyclopedia of psychology. Washington, DC & New York: American Psychological Association and Oxford University Press.
- Mallinckrodt, U. (2000). Attachment, social competencies, social support, and interpersonal process in psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy Research, 10*, 239-266.
- Nauort, R. (1992). *A better definition of psychopath*. Madison: University of Wisconsin (Reviewed by Grohol, J.M (2006).
- Olukoya, S. (2003) Crime War rages in Nigeria. B.U.C News World edition. <http://www.new.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/Africa/1443902>.
- Overseas Security Advisory council (2008). *Nigeria 2008 Crime & Safety Report*. Lagos: Crime and Safety.
- Pitchford, 1. (2001). The Origins of Violence: Is Psychopathy an adaptation? *Human Nature Review, 1*, 28-36.
- Roberts, I. & Indermaur, D. (2009). *What Australians think about crime and justice: results from the 2007 Survey of Social Attitudes*. Research and Public Policy. Serial no. 101. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Ryff, C.D, & Singer, B. (2000). Interpersonal flourishing. A positive health agenda for Attachment Style Self esteem and Psychopathic Behaviour the new millennium. *Personality and social psychology review*.
- Santrock, J. W., (2006). *Psychology Essentials 2*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Santrock, J.W. (2002). *A tropical approach to life-span development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Santrock. J.W. (2000). *Psychology: an introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Van Ijendoorn, M., Feldbrügge, J., Derk, F., deRuiter, C., Vertagen, M., Philipse, M., vanderstark, C. & Riksen-warlaven, M. *Attachment, personality disorder and staff-patient interactions in mentally disturbed offenders (in press)*.
- Wei, M., Russell, D. W., Mallinckrodt, B., & Vogel, D. L. (2007). The experiences in close relationship scale (ECR) - short form: Reliability, validity, and factor structure. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 88* (2), 187-204.