



**A STUDY ON AFFECT OF ATTACHMENT STYLES ON MENTAL HEALTH
AMONG YOUNG ADULTS**

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Abstract

This study posits understanding that there is an impact of attachment styles on mental health among adults. The study was of quantitative nature with a sample size of 100 young adults. It is important to understand the types of attachments style of adults and the relationship between the attachment style and mental health. The study shows that there is no meaningful association between adult attachment types and mental health of adults. This study also suggests that adult attachment patterns have no discernible influence on young adults' mental health. Furthermore, the study relied upon self-reported data, which was unable to adequately reflect participants'

true attachment patterns and mental health and could be influenced by social desirability bias. Additionally, the study shows that attachment styles can influence teenage mental health but they might not be the only one reason. It can also be influenced by additional reasons such as peer pressure, family issues, childhood traumas etc.

Keywords: *Adult Attachment styles, mental health, young adults etc.*

Introduction

In recent decades, the investigation of human well-being has garnered increasing attention across various academic disciplines. Subjective well-being refers to the assessment individuals make regarding their own lives. These evaluations encompass individuals' emotional views and feelings, as well as their assessments of their overall contentment and achievement in specific areas such as interpersonal connections and work environment.

The vulnerability of human babies during birth is a distinctive characteristic of our species, as we come into existence with underdeveloped abilities for fundamental functions such as movement, nourishment, and self-defense. However, according to scholars, we have been bestowed with a complex psychobiological system by nature, commonly known as the attachment behavioral system. This inherent mechanism drives infants to seek closeness to attachment figures, usually caregivers, to satisfy their essential needs. This innate instinct also plays a vital role in guaranteeing the survival of human infants, providing them with protection from fears, reducing suffering, and alleviating pain.

As human development advances, adolescence arises as a phase of complex change, involving not only physical alterations caused by hormonal fluctuations but also substantial shifts in cognitive, social, and behavioral aspects. This transitional phase is characterized by the

development of advanced reasoning and decision-making abilities, as well as an improved emotional comprehension. While parents continue to play a significant role in the lives of adolescents, there is a discernible change in the dynamics of their social relationships. Peer interactions become paramount, taking on a central role in the adolescent experience.

Adolescence

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the phase of human growth and development that takes place between childhood and adulthood, encompassing the ages of 10 to 19. Adolescence is a significant period of development marked by rapid growth and change, second only to infancy in terms of speed.

Adolescence is a period characterized by significant transformations in one's sense of self and an increasing aspiration for freedom and self-governance. The previously dominant bond with parents now coexists with a growing desire for self-exploration and social interaction with peers. This time is characterized by significant changes in close relationships with both parents and peers. The distancing observed during adolescence is an inherent and transitory phenomenon, indicating the desire for independence rather than a complete termination of emotional connection with parents.

Adolescence is a critical period of development characterized by a delicate balance between emotional distress and the ability to adapt and thrive. The occurrence of symptoms associated with emotional distress and instability during this period is especially noteworthy, as adolescents confront the numerous challenges and transformative changes that define this crucial phase. The need to face unfamiliar situations and navigate through a complex series of new experiences naturally creates stress, thus increasing adolescents' vulnerability to emotional distress.

Mental Health

Mental health is a fundamental component of our holistic well-being, encompassing more than just the absence of mental illnesses. The concept encompasses a constantly changing range, where individuals navigate their own experiences with different levels of strength and susceptibility. The complex interplay of mental well-being is intricately integrated into the core of our lives, impacting our capacity to navigate the intricacies of existence, harness our capabilities, and make meaningful contributions to the communities we belong to.

Essentially, mental health is a fundamental basis for individual, communal, and socioeconomic progress. It is not a fixed condition, but rather a dynamic and developing element of our existence, influencing our cognition, feelings, and actions. Mental health, fundamentally, enables individuals to effectively manage the unavoidable pressures of life, promoting resilience and flexibility when confronted with difficulties.

Acknowledging and protecting mental health is an essential entitlement of every individual, constituting an inherent component of our overall physical and psychological welfare. It has a wide-ranging impact that goes beyond the individual, shaping the collective mindset of communities and societies.

Attachment

Attachment styles, based on attachment theory, are essential frameworks that influence how individuals behave and interact in relationships. The roots of these attachment styles can be linked to early childhood, where the interactions between children and their parents establish lasting patterns of connection. As people grow into adulthood, their attachment styles naturally change and result in specific ways of interacting within romantic relationships.

As people mature into adulthood, the attachment styles developed in early stages manifest in romantic relationships. Psychologists commonly identify four primary attachment styles that describe the various ways individuals interact with their romantic partners: secure, ambivalent, avoidant, and disorganized.

Secure Attachment

Secure attachment is the most common and beneficial attachment style, where individuals have a strong belief in their ability to meet their own needs and the needs of others. Individuals with a secure attachment style possess emotional stability, allowing them to manage relationships with a blend of self-confidence and empathy.

People with secure attachment demonstrate competence in emotional intelligence and relationship dynamics. Their proficiency in emotional regulation, the skill to effectively manage and control their emotions, contributes to a stable and harmonious interpersonal environment.

Furthermore, individuals with secure attachment exhibit a strong awareness of the emotional needs of themselves and their partners. This awareness includes identifying when they are upset and seeking solace from their partners, which is vital for establishing and preserving intimate relationships.

The high occurrence of secure attachment in the population highlights its adaptive quality and the numerous advantages it provides to individuals. These people are prone to developing long-lasting and fulfilling relationships marked by mutual assistance, efficient communication, and a common feeling of emotional stability. Securely attached individuals' positive perspectives enhance their mental well-being, enabling them to face life's obstacles with resilience and optimism.

Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment

Anxious/ambivalent attachment, classified as an insecure attachment style, involves an intricate combination of emotions and behaviors that can greatly influence an individual's relationships. People with this attachment style frequently face various difficulties due to a profound feeling of insecurity and fear of rejection.

Individuals with high levels of anxiety in this attachment framework often struggle with negative self-perceptions, doubting their intrinsic value, and experiencing feelings of being unwanted. This internal dialogue can lead to a strong feeling of emotional unrest, prompting a persistent pursuit of intimacy in relationships and seeking solace from their partners to alleviate their insecurities.

Anxious attachment is characterized by a persistent concern that partners will lose interest, abandon them, or not reciprocate their emotional intensity. The fear of rejection can lead to challenges in trusting and depending on their partner, causing the anxious person to constantly seek reassurance and validation. Constantly seeking validation can cause individuals to perceive their partner's behaviors in a negative light, seeing innocent actions as possible indications of rejection or lack of interest.

Avoidant/Dismissive Attachment:

Avoidant attachment, also known as dismissive attachment, is an insecure attachment style that greatly impacts individuals' interactions and experiences in relationships. People with avoidant attachment patterns typically display a series of beliefs and behavior that make it difficult to establish and sustain close relationships.

Avoidant individuals often have a positive self-image that can be fragile and act to deal with challenges. Having a self-inflating perspective can shield against vulnerability but may hinder genuine intimacy by keeping an emotional distance from others.

Avoidant individuals tend to seek less comfort and support from their partners when upset and are less inclined to reciprocate such support. This pattern can lead to a relational dynamic characterized by unmet emotional needs, resulting in feelings of isolation and detachment.

Fearful-Avoidant/Disordered Attachment:

Fearful attachment, also known as fearful-avoidant or disordered attachment, is the third category in the range of insecure attachment styles. People with fearful attachment display an intricate combination of anxiety and avoidance, which creates distinct difficulties in managing interpersonal connections.

Fearful attachment is characterized by a strong yearning for close relationships, but it is also marked by a profound sense of insecurity and lack of trust in oneself, partners, and relationships. Their emotional duality results in a perpetual internal conflict, hindering their ability to form and sustain positive relationships with others.

Individuals who are fearful tend to hold a pessimistic opinion of themselves and others, leading to feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness. This unfavorable self-image obstructs the formation of meaningful relationships, impeding their capacity to engage positively and satisfactorily with others.

Review of literature

Researcher observed that in a nutshell, attachment theory is a framework for studying human interaction. Though attachment style has been associated with a wide range of physiological and psychological outcomes, studies investigating its role in adult suicidal ideation and behavior are few and far between (Genc & Arslan, 2023). The National Comorbidity Survey Replication data set, which includes 5692 records from adults aged 18 and above, was utilized to investigate these connections via multiple logistic regression analyses. Those who exhibited unfavorable attachment patterns were more likely to have mental illness, have suicidal thoughts, and have attempted suicide while the likelihood of having secure attachment patterns was lower among those who had less suicidal thoughts or behaviors and no anxiety disease.

A study by Sagone et al. (2023) said in his study the connections between adult attachment patterns and psychological well-being by comparing participants based on age (adults vs. young adults) and relationship status (single vs. intimate partnerships). Research Methods: 393 Italian adults and youths (ranging in age from 18 to 62) were surveyed. Of this group, 174 were classed as single and 219 were in committed partnerships. To gauge emotional and psychological health in adults, we administered the Attachment Style Questionnaire and the Psychological Well-Being Scale. Having close, stable connections was associated with higher levels of psychological well-being, while being lonely was associated with lower levels. Those who aren't in committed relationships also tend to have an attachment style that makes them uncomfortable being close to others, averse to intimacy, and less valuable in relationships overall. As a last point, when it comes to individuals living alone, an attachment style defined by confidence was somewhat predictive of psychological well-being, but an attachment style defined by the desire for acceptance was significantly predictive of adverse psychological outcomes. The attachment type that is marked by the desire for acceptance was revealed to be

a strong and negative predictor of psychological well-being in those who are in stable marriages. In terms of adult attachment patterns, intimate partnerships may be considered as a shield against long-term emotional instability and mental health difficulties.

Bhakat (2023) stated the India's mental health has suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic's human toll. This article discusses how the second COVID-19 epidemic affected the mental health of Indian college and university students. For this study, we surveyed students online to get their demographic and housing information. To analyze the adjusted and uncorrected marginal effects of the predictor variables, we used binary and multivariate logistic regression. The data showed that mental health difficulties increased significantly in the second pandemic year. Due to the new educational model's challenges, worries about families' financial security, the absence of face-to-face engagement, and increased screen time during the epidemic, anxiety, despair, and stress have grown. This research contains sample selection restrictions due to its online survey. The research also ignored pre-pandemic mental health issues and students' self-reported mental health. Mental health interventions including therapy and coping methods are recommended by the study. Future study is needed to assess the long-term mental health implications of a lengthy home quarantine on students.

Tan & Yang (2023) in his study said that Parent-child relationship affects teenagers' mental health. The impact of psychological qualities and coping techniques on this link is unclear. This research looked at the link between teenage mental health and parent-child attachment, as well as how coping mechanisms and psychological quality moderated that association. A total of 633 young people Provided their informed consent to participate in this research. According to the moderated mediation model, (a) the quality of the parent child relationship, (b) the adolescent's psychological well-being, and (c) the adolescent's ability to concentrate on tasks

at hand were major predictors of their mental health. The fact that this moderating factor had a greater impact on students without task-focused coping methods provides support for the “exclusionary hypothesis” theory. The impact of parent child bonding on mental health may be explained by both internal and external variables. These results are noteworthy in relation to adolescent mental health.

De Sanctis and Mesurado (2022) said in this study that attachment is essential to empathy, which enhances social engagement and lowers aggression. Some feel strong connections improve empathy. However, the relationship between insecure attachment and empathy is uncertain. This is why researchers did a meta-analysis to better understand attachment types and empathy over the lifespan (9-47 years). There were 14 secure attachment studies with 11542 people, 7 avoidant studies with 3115 participants, and 8 anxious-ambivalent studies with 3479 participants. The data showed that empathy was positively associated with secure attachment, adversely correlated with avoidant attachment, and unclearly linked to anxious-ambivalent attachment. The secure and avoidant attachment patterns with empathy results match previous research. Anxious-ambivalent people have a great need for approval and a weak desire to avoid feeling terrible, which may explain their inconsistent findings. We suggest expanding the age limitation, evaluating empathy’s directionality, controlling for gender, and studying additional attachments (parents, spouses, etc.) in future research

Methodology

Research Gap

The study has several limitations that impact its generalizability and accuracy. Firstly, selecting participants from a specific demographic may introduce sample bias, limiting the

findings' applicability to other groups. The use of self-report measures can also lead to response bias, as participants might not accurately recall their experiences or may give socially desirable answers. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of the study restricts the ability to establish causality between attachment styles and mental health outcomes. A longitudinal study would be better suited to examine these relationships over time. The focus on a specific demographic also means the results may not apply in different socioeconomic or cultural contexts. Moreover, the study might not have fully considered confounding factors such as family dynamics, socioeconomic status, or past traumas, which could influence the observed relationships. These limitations highlight the need for further, more diverse research to address these gaps.

Purpose

The purpose is to study the impact of attachment styles on mental wellbeing among young adults.

Hypothesis

- There is no significant impact of attachment styles on mental wellbeing among young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between attachment styles and mental wellbeing among young adults.

Sample

A total sample of 100 participants was randomly collected with the majority of participants belonging to the age range of 15-18. The sample consisted of both males and females.

Measures

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) has eighteen items that assess several forms of adult attachment, including avoidant, concerned, and safe attachments. The scale is divided into three subscales, each with six items, and is scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Each item is rated by the participants on a 5-point rating system, where 1 represents "not at all characteristic" and 5 represents "very characteristic."

The Mental Health Inventory (MHI) created by Jagdish and Srivastava (1995), MHI is a self-report assessment of mental health in people. The 56-item measure examines six factors of mental health.

Procedure

The study's objectives were described to participants, who then received a package of questionnaires containing information about the study, privacy concerns, the researcher's contact details, and other measurements. Subsequently, participants were invited to take part in the research. Standardized tests were administered, and data was collected.

Analysis Of Data

Table 1*N, Mean and Standard Deviation*

	<i>Adult Attachment</i>	<i>Mental Well being</i>
Mean	56.97561	144.2683
Standard Deviation	8.289478	15.17881
N	100	100

The above table displays descriptive data for the following two variables: Adult Attachment & Mental Well-being. These variables were tested on 100 individuals. Adult Attachment scores ranged from around 57 on average, with a standard deviation of 8.29, and a mean of 56.98.

Participants' scores varied by about 8 points around the mean. Similarly, the average value for mental health was 144.27, and a standard deviation of 15.18. This indicates that participants' reports of their mental well-being ranged from 144 on average, with values deviating from the mean by about 15 points. The study's variables' distribution & central tendency can be better understood with the use of these statistics.

Table 2*Pearson correlation analysis between adult attachment styles and mental wellbeing*

	<i>Adult Attachment</i>	<i>Mental Well being</i>
Adult Attachment	1	
Mental Well being	-0.13015	1

The association between young people' mental health and their adult attachment patterns is investigated using the Pearson correlation analysis, which is shown in Table 2. It was shown that there is a -0.13015 link between adult attachment as well as mental well-being. There may be a weak, inverse association between these variables based on the negative correlation observed. Therefore, at least within the confines of this study, the null hypothesis (H0) may be rejected in this analysis, indicating that there is no meaningful association between adult attachment types and young people' mental wellness.

Table 3*Regression analysis of impact of adult attachment styles on mental wellbeing*

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.13015
R Square	0.016939
Adjusted R Square	0.004651
Standard Error	15.14347
Observations	100

Table 4*ANOVA table*

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	316.1194	316.1194	1.378479	0.243844
Residual	80	18345.98	229.3247		
Total	81	18662.1			

The influence of adult attachment patterns on the mental health of young adults is investigated using the regression analysis shown in Table 3. The F-statistic of 1.378479 and the accompanying p-value of 0.243844 are shown in the ANOVA table. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected due to inadequate evidence, as the p-value exceeds the significance level of 0.05. As a result, **the Null Hypothesis (H₀) may be accepted** in this study. This implies that, at least in the context of this study, there is no discernible relationship between adult attachment types and young adults' mental wellness.

Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to look at the connection between young adults' mental health and adult attachment types. The data analysis results indicate that there may be no statistically significant correlation between the participants' mental wellness and their adult attachment types.

Adult attachment and mental wellness have a modest, adverse association, according to the Pearson correlation analysis ($r = -0.13015$). Nevertheless, since $p > 0.05$, this association was not statistically significant. In a similar vein, the regression analysis was unable to produce enough data to refute the null hypothesis, which suggests that adult attachment patterns have no discernible influence on young people's mental health.

Some prior research findings are contradicted by the lack of a substantial association between adult attachment types and mental wellness among young people in this study. It is important to acknowledge that the present investigation was not without limits. The very small sample size of this study may be one of its weaknesses. A greater sample size could have offered greater statistical strength to identify significant associations, even if it was sufficient for the studies done. Furthermore, the study relied upon self-reported data, which was unable to adequately reflect the participants' true attachment patterns and mental health and could be influenced by social desirability bias.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the research adds to the body of knowledge already available upon attachment theory as well as mental health. The current study implies that, at least among young people, the association between attachment patterns and mental health effects may not be as clear-cut as previously believed, despite the suggestion of a link between the two in earlier studies.

The intricate association between attachment types and young adult mental health outcomes requires greater investigation using bigger and more diversified sample sizes as well as longitudinal investigations. Future research may also examine additional variables including social support, coping mechanisms, and life events which could mediate or modify the association between attachment types and mental health. Comprehending these variables may

facilitate the creation of more efficacious therapies aimed at enhancing mental wellness in young adults.

Conclusion

The present study looked into the connection between young people' mental health and adult attachment types. It was shown that there is no meaningful correlation between young adults' mental health and their adult attachment types after 100 people's data were analyzed. These results imply that whereas attachment types could influence teenage mental health, they might not be the only one. Adolescent mental health may also be greatly influenced by additional elements including peer connections, family dynamics, and personal coping strategies. To fully comprehend the intricate interactions between young people' mental health outcomes and their attachment types, more study is required.

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