

Relationship Between Emotional Abuse & Attachment Styles

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ABSTRACT

Emotional abuse is any act which involves mental harassment, name calling, invalidation, blaming, criticizing, verbal abuse, insulting controlling your partner & manipulation involved which often results in lowered self-esteem, anxiety & depression in the individuals. 80% of the population in India experiences emotional abuse conferring to the research & articles. Attachment styles are how an individual connects or bonds emotionally with other individuals. It is long lasting connection between the individuals. Attachment styles are important for the growth of one's personality. The aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between emotional abuse & attachment style. The sample size of the study was 103 young adults. The tools used for this study were Emotional Abuse Scale by Neil Jacobson and John Gottmanh & Measure of Attachment Style by Naseem Ahmed, A. Jahan & Imtiaz N. The nature and implication of the relationship between the two variables has been discussed in the paper.

Keywords: *Emotional abuse, Attachment Styles, Secure, Avoidant Insecure, Ambivalent Insecure, Disorganized Insecure Attachment*

Emotions are subjective states of feelings that are by biological and psychological changes which influence our thoughts and behaviors. All emotions teach us something about ourselves, our history or our current situation. Our emotions tell and tries to convey us what we want or what we need or what are we experiencing.

Emotional abuse is also defined as “any treatment which includes mental harassment, loneliness, verbal attack, shame, bullying, or any other act that can reduce the sense of self, self-respect, and self-worth, self-confidence” Emotional abuse is also recognized as mental or as “long-lasting verbal hostility” by scholars. Persons who experience emotional abuse have a tendency to have very low self-esteem, show personality & behavior changes (like becoming withdrawn, quite) and could even turn out to be depressed, anxious or suicidal. The emotional abuse most commonly seen in in dating and married relationships, also generally in between friends, family members, and co-workers. The victim of emotional abuse start feeling as they've been trapped. They are usually too injured to bear the relationship any longer, but also feel scared to leave which is why the cycle keeps on rotating until something is done.

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Prevalence of emotional Abuse in India

According to the articles and researches, It has been noted that the prevalence rate of emotional abuse is average about 80%, with 40% of females and 32% of males broadcasting high aggression (i.e., verbal abuse or emotional violence in reply to some disturbing or bad circumstance) and 41% of women and 43% of men reporting some form of bullying control.

On the report of Hindustan times, The Supreme court stated the cases of mental abuse have become so frequent and complex lately. recently, earlier this year, the Delhi High Court mentioned that "mental cruelty is not as easy to develop as physical cruelty, the influence of it has to be imitated upon. As claimed by Delhi court, recently there was a case where a husband got divorce from his wife in a trial because she used to insult him for being a counter clerk and argued with him over minor matters. The Delhi High Court ruled that "an annoyed look, an arbitrary argument, a sugar-coated insult or a criticism cannot lead the law court to allowance a verdict of separation/divorce.

Attachment can be referred to as an enduring and deep emotional connect between individuals. It involves a certain amount of exchange of comfort, care and pleasure. Attachment styles are defined as how an individual connects or bonds emotionally with other individuals. Bowlby defined attachment as the lasting connectedness between humans. he believed that the connections formed in the childhood have a lasting effect/ impact that continues throughout one's life. He said that infants were born with the innate tendency to form connectedness/attachment to caregivers/parental figures.

Ainsworth further extended the work of Bowlby. She researched on children and their mothers, wherein they were left alone for a while and then reunited. Through this research she gave out 3 distinctive attachment styles which were:

- 1. Secure attachment style:** People who adapt to the secure attachment styles seem to be comfortable showing interest and intimacy. They're also not troubled with being left alone, they adjust to the environment and are okay with being by themselves. They manage to cut out clear boundaries and prioritize their relationships at the level it stands for them. They cope up with acceptance and rejection without much hassle and tend to move on despite the pain better than other individuals.
- 2. Ambivalent attachment style:** People who tend to engage in the ambivalent attachment style need constant reassurance and affection in their relations. They tend to stress and overthink every detail of their relations and seek clarity. People with this attachment style are more likely to succumb to abusive, unhealthy and oppressive relationships. They become quite irrational and overly emotional over little things. They have a hard time believing and trusting people even after constant reassurance.
- 3. Avoidant Insecure attachment style:** People who engage in the avoidant attachment style are often uncomfortable with intimacy. They're dismissing and distant in nature. They tend to rationalize their relationships. They extremely value their independence and freedom and feel like they're being crowded when surrounded even by one or two people. They're emotionally very closed and self-directed. They're not worried about their partners presence at all and are fearful of commitment.

There is a fourth type of attachment style that is said to be the Anxious-Avoidant attachment style. It basically involves people who score high on both avoidant and anxious attachment style. It is also known as the fearful type. Anxious-avoidants are not only afraid of intimacy

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and commitment, but they distrust and lash out emotionally at anyone who tries to get close to them. Anxious-avoidants often spend much of their time alone and miserable, or in abusive or dysfunctional relationships.

Attachment has a massive effect on an individual's life. The number of studies in the area of attachment styles ties its importance on the growth of the personality. Researchers propose that attachment has straight impact on personality. Psychologist John Bowlby was the first attachment theorist, relating attachment as a "lasting psychological connectedness between individuals. "Bowlby (1969) thought that the initial ties formed by kids with their caregivers have a great impact that lasts throughout life. He proposed that attachment also helps to keep the child close to the mother, therefore refining the kid's probabilities of survival.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bellivier, Leboyer, Germain, Roy, Raust, Henry, Mathieu & Etain (2010) proposed a study on Preferential association between childhood emotional abuse and bipolar disorder. The data was collected from 206 bipolar patients and 94 control participants. The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire was administered on them. The results displayed that the score of CTQ was higher for bipolar patients in comparison to controls which concluded that emotional abuse was related with bipolar disorder with a sensitive amount.

Riggs & Kaminski (2010) conducted research on the contributions of early emotional abuse, adult attachment, and depression to several aspects of romantic relationship functioning. The data was collected from the college students in dating relationships. The method of data collection was by conducting online survey to measure the childhood emotional maltreatment, adult attachment style, psychological distress, and romantic relationships. The findings showed that childhood emotional maltreatment directly projected insecure adult attachment.

Geyimcia, Cavusoglu & Yumbul (2010) conducted a study on the The effect of childhood trauma on adult attachment styles, infidelity tendency, romantic jealousy and self-esteem. The aim of the research was to evaluate how people's childhood problems (emotional, physical, sexual abuse; emotional and physical negligence) disturb their attachment styles, adultery tendency, romantic jealousy and self-esteem. The sample size consisted of 150 people (91 women, 59 men) with married people, people having relationship and singles. The study verified a central variance in childhood disturbance notches in relations of adult attachment styles in addition a noteworthy positive link among trauma scores & adultery. The study did prove no link between childhood trauma, romantic jealousy & self-esteem.

Mega, Hare, Allen & Manning (2010) examined a study on "The relation of insecure attachment states of mind and romantic attachment styles to adolescent aggression in romantic relationships". The sample size consists of 93 adolescents. This has been noted that partners romantic attachment anxiety was related to both psychological and physical aggression perpetration in romantic relationships. The Outcomes stated as signifying the rate of measuring aggression in adolescent romantic relationships in the framework of larger forms of guideline of affect & behavior by the attachment system.

Maioraino & Baker (2010) conducted a research on assessment of emotional abuse & neglect with the CTQ. The aim of the study was to analysis the experiential study using the 28-item Childhood Trauma Questionnaire & find operational issues affecting to use of the amount linked to the emotional abuse and emotional neglect scales & to determine the levels

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of emotional abuse and emotional neglect in in cooperation medical, communal, and target samples. The method size of the data collection was 69 studies North America. The findings revealed that higher level of the communal samples stated severe to extreme emotional abuse and lower level stated severe to extreme emotional neglect in comparison to emotional abuse. In the medical samples the rates were highly for severe to extreme emotional abuse and less severe to extreme emotional negligence.

Burns, Jackson & Harding (2010) conducting a study on the topic of Child Maltreatment, Emotion Regulation, and Posttraumatic Stress & The Impact of Emotional Abuse. The aim of the study was to examine the connection of emotion regulation to many methods of kid abuse and consequent posttraumatic stress where mainly attention was given to emotional abuse. The data was collected from 912 female college students. The findings revealed that female who reported a history of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse recognized larger emotion regulation problems as compared to women short of abuse pasts. It was also noted that Intrusion studies showed that emotion dysregulation incompletely described the association amid physical and emotional abuse and signs of posttraumatic stress.

Nicolino Rossi, Ornella Montebanocci, Bruno Baldaro (2010) conducted a research on attachment styles and mental health. The study was aimed at examining the differences in anxiety and depression in relation to the attachment styles. The results indicate that differences of anxiety and depression remained significant across attachment styles. Secure attachment style was positively correlated with better mental health, whereas, on the other hand insecure attachment styles were highly correlated with high anxiety and depression among individuals.

Kabitsis, Kabitsis, Theoklitou (2011) proposed a study on “Physical and emotional abuse of primary children by teachers”. The aim of the research was to the examiner abuse in the school setting and gender effect and school score of kids, also the gender of tutors on the many methods of abuse. The method used in the study was a 5-point rating scale questionnaire, with questions of physical abuse, emotional abuse and negligence. The sample size contained of 1,339 pupils in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade of primary school in the Republic of Cyprus, who lived in both urban and rural areas.

Ana Conde, Bárbara Figueiredo (2011) conducted a research on attachment styles and psychological adjustment in couples. The results indicate that higher anxiety and depression symptoms in both partners was related to insecure attachment styles. A combined effect of partner's support and attachment style on temporal changes of anxiety symptoms was observed differently for women and men.

Riggs, Cusimano, Benson (2011) conducted a study on Childhood emotional abuse and attachment processes in the dyadic adjustment of dating couples. The aim of the study was to examine the mediation effects of adult attachment methods on the links among childhood emotional abuse & romantic relations among heterosexual couples later. The data was collected from college students and their partners. The method of data collection was Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, along with Close Relationship Scale, and Dyadic Adjustment Scale conduction done on the participants. The findings depicted remembrances of childhood emotional abuse described by students and their partners were related with attachment approaches, along with romantic bond value. Hypothesized intervention effects of attachment anxiety and avoidance also were supported by the conclusions.

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Karakus (2012) directed a research on Childhood abuse & attachment styles of adolescents. The purpose of the research was to test the link between the childhood abuse & Attachment styles. The data was collected from 490 freshman studying in diverse services of Selcuk university. The findings suggested that people exposed to abuse in their families, particularly the ones exposed to physical and emotional are less able to develop a secure attachment style conferring to the attachment theory.

Ramchandani, George, Hommer, Heiling, Schwandlt (2012) conducted a research Childhood Trauma Exposure and Alcohol Dependence Severity in Adulthood Mediation by Emotional Abuse Severity and Neuroticism. The purpose of the research was to examine the occurrence of several kinds of childhood trauma in dealing-looking for alcohol-dependent patients, & the relations among childhood trauma and AD strictness via several mediation analysis. The method of data collection conducting CTQ test. The finding showed that childhood trauma was dominant and high in the alcohol-dependent participants also childhood trauma was disclosing to effect AD severity, a result that was refereed by neuroticism. It was concluded that emotional abuse was found to be the main predictor of AD severity, together directly and through the mediating effects of the impulsivity surface of neuroticism.

Fraley, R. C., Roisman (2012) conducted a study on the topic interpersonal and genetic origins of adult attachment styles. The results of this research indicated that individual differences of attachment are correlated with the environment one is brought up in and the amount of care available in that environment.

Adriano Schimmenti, Antonia Bifulco (2013) aimed to link lack of care in childhood and role of attachment styles in the development of anxiety disorders in young adults/teens. It was noted that individuals with anxious ambivalent attachment style were more like to develop anxiety disorders.

Sagrario Yáñez-Yaben (2013) conducted a study on the relevance of attachment styles with the adjustment to divorce. This study showed that peoples with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles indicate poor adjustment to the adjustment to divorce and positive affectivity was related to secure attachment and dismissing attachment style whereas on the other hand negative affectivity was related to the preoccupied attachment.

Ömer Şenormancı, Güliz Şenormancı (2013) conducted a research on attachment styles, family functioning in individuals with addiction to the internet. The results suggest that individuals with internet addiction have prominent disruptions in the family functioning and usually adopt the anxious attachment styles.

Bifulco & Schimmenti (2013) conducted a study on role of attachments linking lack of care in childhood to anxiety disorders in emerging adulthood. The research studied the Childhood experience of negligence and abuse, with antipathy (unemotional, serious parenting), attachment styles, and anxiety disorders the data was collected from 160 adolescents and young adults which assessment was conducted by means of interview measures. The results showed that in the sample Antipathy was related with 12-month rate of anxiety disorders. The scores of Anxious-ambivalent attachment disclosed the relationship among antipathy and anxiety disorders. This concludes that emotional disregard in childhood in the way of antipathy can result to anxious-ambivalent inner working models working as distress of rejection and distress of separation.

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Williams (2013) conducted a study on “Bullying behaviors & attachment styles”. The findings depicted that women were to be physically violent at time they had complex stages of attachment avoidance to their moms and higher point of attachment concern with their dads. It was also observed at time of examining peer abuse, subjects broadcasting higher levels of anxiety of their motherly relations account being a victim of peer violence in childhood.

Karakurt & Günnur (2013) conducted a research on emotional abuse in intimate relationships, The role of age and gender. The aim of the study was to examine the moderating roles of gender and age on emotional abuse in intimate relationships. The data for the study was gathered from 250 participants with an average range of 27 years. The Emotional Abuse Questionnaire was conducted participants male and female for the multigroup analysis to check the the moderation effect. The findings showed that younger males stated facing higher levels of emotional abuse, which decreased with age. Older women stated facing a reduced amount of emotional abuse than older males. This concludes that in younger participants emotional abuse was more common whereas. higher rates of isolation were experienced by younger females, & women’s general involvement of property damage was higher than that of men also improved with age.

Hatice Odacı, Özkan Çıkrıkçı (2014) aimed to study Problematic internet use in terms of gender, attachment “styles and subjective well-being in university “students. The results of this research indicated that dismissing attachment style is positively correlated with problematic internet usage and problematic internet usage varied across different styles and genders.

Craparro, Gori, Petruccelli, Cannella & Simonelli (2014) conducted a research on ““the relationship between alexithymia, adult attachment styles, depression, and coping strategies in a group of female victims of IPV and a control group”. The sample size was 80 female victims of IPV with an age range from 18 years to 54 years whereas the control group involved 80 women with no history of IPV with an age range from 19 years to 37years. The administration was done on Self report questionnaire included Toronto Alexithymia Scale (20 Item) Coping Orientation Problems Experienced; Beck Depression Inventory & Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ). The results were compared with IVP group and control group, which showed that IPV group scored higher mean scores on TAS-20 & BDI-II. Contrarily from the control group, in the IPV group, social support interrelated meaningfully and completely with the dimension concern with relations on ASQ, but then not with the secure attachment style. This concludes that, Alexithymia, depressive signs, and an insecure attachment style were certainly linked with the capacity to deal with stress for women in the IPV group.

Luca & Unger (2014) conducted a research on the relationship between childhood Physical abuse & adult attachment style. The aim of the study was to find the insecure adult attachment style linked through infantile physical exploitation. The data was collected from 552 females and 294 males of the university. The assessment was taken down by calculating the scores of the completed questionnaire on child abuse in past, adult attachment style, and other variables including regression. The findings showed that A past of physical abuse was related with attachment avoidance whereas monitoring for other types of juvenile abuse. The evidences were also found for a linkage among physical abuse and attachment anxiety where it is presented that social support, as a control variable, was known to be a vital explainer of attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety. This

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concludes that a past of childhood physical exploitation has vital and definite influences on intimate adult relations with societal support acting as a likely caring aspect.

Michael P. Leiter, Arla Day (2015) aimed to study attachment styles and the workplace. Their study showed that individuals with avoidance attachment styles were low on positive social construct. The individuals with anxious attachment style were positively correlated with experienced and instigated workplace incivility, exhaustion, and cynicism Miller, Warner, Sutton & Oshri (2015) investigated the relations among various forms of maltreatment and risk behaviors (e.g., substance use; risky sex). The aim of the study was to test if attachment styles and emotion dysregulation may cause these relations. Emotional, and sexual but not verbal abuse (even if verbal abuse was directly linked to alcohol use), were related to anxious in addition avoidant attachment styles, emotion dysregulation, and a variation of risk behaviors. The results portrayed that the emotion regulation dimensions, impulsivity displayed the indirect result from kid abuse to risk behaviors. The Consequences supported a link between child maltreatment and risk behavior results through attachment styles and emotion regulation.

Marta Komorowska-Pudło (2016) studied stress and attachment styles in men and women. The aim of this was to study how individuals react to stressful situations as are result of their lifetime attachments. The results correlated a secure attachment style with active coping positively. Individuals with an insecure attachment style displayed traits like helplessness.

Vidoourek (2016) directed a research on Emotional Abuse correlates to abuse among college students. The data was collected from 777 students via survey. The findings suggest that it possibly will be significant to shade high-risk students for emotional abuse as share of mental health dealing or other screening of medical.

Rationale

The purpose of conducting this study was to understand the variables in young adults. There has not been much research in this area. Emotional abuse is a vital part of our society & has been on the rise. Thus, this research aims to acknowledge & study the impact it has on the relationships of individuals in the present. There have not been many researches in this area specially in relationships. Despite these factors plays a major role in our lives, the two variables have not been studied together much.

METHODOLOGY

Aim- To study the relationship between emotional abuse relating with attachment styles in relationships among young adults.

Objective

- To assess relationship between emotional abuse & Secure Attachment Style.
- To assess relationship between emotional abuse Ambivalent Attachment Style.
- To assess relationship between emotional abuse & Avoidant Insecure Attachment Style

Hypothesis

- There is a significant relationship between emotional abuse & Secure Attachment Style.

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- There is a significant relationship between emotional abuse & Ambivalent Attachment Style.
- There is a significant relationship between emotional abuse & Avoidant Insecure Attachment Style.

Variables

Emotional Abuse & Attachment styles

Sample

The sample for this research mainly consisted of young adults. The age range taken for it was from 18 to 27 years. The total population for the research consisted of 103 samples. There were 28 males and 75 females. All 103 participants were asked to fill the self-report measure questionnaire to the best of their knowledge & their details will be kept confidential.

Sample design	Male	Female	Total
Young adults (18-25)	28	75	103

Locale of study: India

Description of tools

- Emotional Abuse Scale: The scale was developed by Neil Jacobson, Ph.D. and John Gottman, Ph.D. both experts in the field of domestic violence. It consists of 28 items. It adopts a 4 pointer Likert scale consisting of 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 4 (Occasionally), & 5 (Very Often). The lowest possible score is 15 and the highest possible score is 140.
- Measure of attachment style: The scale was developed by Naseem Ahmed, A. Jahan & Imtiaz N which consists of 27 questions. This scale adopts a 5 pointer Likert scale where 1 is strongly disagree & 5 is strongly agree. This questionnaire measures a total of 3 attachment styles i.e., secure attachment style, ambivalent attachment style & avoidant attachment style.

Procedure

Prior to the survey, the participants were provided with the consent information and consent to participate in the study. They were asked to verify that they aged between 18 to 27 years. Once the consent was given, the participants were given a set of close-ended questionnaire. They were allowed to not participate if they found questions too personal. It took around 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Participants were then thanked for participating in the study.

Research Design

This research follows a correlation research design & studies two variable.

Rationale

Emotional abuse is on rise in our society. It attacks one of an ability to hope, and to dream and plan those dreams can be attained. Emotional abuse robs those who bear it of an ability to know how to find other dreams when some are not within one's hold, are gone, or, as vital, verify to be dreams that will convert into nightmares. The purpose of conducting this study was to understand the variables in young adults. Although, there has been not so many

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researches have been done in this area. Thus, this research aims to acknowledge & study the impact it has on the relationships of individuals in the present.

RESULT

To study the variables of this study, the results have been analyzed by the use of mean, , frequency and Pearson's Correlation.

The findings are discussed further.

Table 1 Mean of the variables in young adults

Variable	N	Mean
Emotional Abuse	103	40.91
Secure Attachment Style	103	2.77
Ambivalent Attachment Style	103	2.85
Avoidant Insecure Attachment Style	103	2.84

Table 2 Pearson's Correlation between variables

Variable	Pearson's Correlation
Emotional abuse & Secure Attachment Style	-0.12
Emotional abuse & Ambivalent Attachment Style	0.28
Emotional abuse & Avoidant Insecure Attachment Style	0.18

DISCUSSION

Emotional abuse is any act that involves mental harassment, loneliness, verbal attack, shame, bullying, or any other act that can reduce the sense of self, self-respect, and self-worth, self-confidence.

The emotional abuse most commonly seen in in dating and married relationships, also generally in between friends, family members, and co-workers. The victim of emotional abuse start feeling as they've been trapped. They are usually too injured to bear the relationship any longer, but also feel scared to leave which is why the cycle keeps on rotating until something is done. The effect of emotional abuse in long run can become negative & can include mental disorders.

On the other hand, Attachment is a unique emotional bond which includes an exchange of well-being, attention, and pleasure, care & comfort. Attachment styles are formed during the early childhood & the dominant experiences between infancy to adult plays a huge role in adult attachment styles. It is noticed that individuals labeled as ambivalent or avoidant during childhood may convert securely attached as adults, whereas individuals with a secure attachment in childhood can display insecure attachment styles in adulthood & even the basic temperament of an individual to play a part in attachment.

The aim of this was to study the relationship between Emotional Abuse Relating with Attachment Styles in Relationships Among Young Adults.

The hypothesis of the research paper is, there exist a co-relationship between emotional abuse & Attachment Style.

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The population of this study consisted of 103 participants in which 28 were males & 73 were females, all falling in the age group of 18-27.

The tools used for the purpose of this research were Emotional Abuse Questionnaire & Measure of Attachment styles.

It was seen that 92% of the population were low risk of emotional abuse whereas 8% of the population were at high risk of emotional abuse.

The first analysis showed that there is no significant relationship between the two variables which states that the co-relation between the variables was negligent. Although, it has been seen that 17% of the population was falling in the category of avoidant attachment styles whereas the secure attachment styles consisted of 7.76% & 15% percentage of people were relying with ambivalent insecure attachment style that means participants with avoidant attachment style tend to avoid their parents or caregivers as parents & as adults may deal with problems of intimacy, invest little time & effort in their relationship & may face difficulty in sharing their problems and issues with their partners. They may feel hesitant to talk about their things with their partners. They may feel little distress when their relationship ends. The Study has revealed that people with an avoidant attachment style are very accepting and expected to engage in casual sex, a failure to support partners during stressful times and an inability to share feelings, thoughts, and emotions with partners.

According to Simpson, J. A (1990) the ambivalent and avoidant styles were related with less common positive emotions and more common negative emotions in the relationship whereas for both men and women, the secure attachment style was connected with larger relationship interconnection, assurance, faith, and satisfaction than were the ambivalent or avoidant attachment styles.

The analysis further revealed that High percentage of the population i.e., 56% were falling in the group of low secure attachment style and 48% of the population lied in the category of ambivalent an insecure attachment style & nearly 47% of the population adopted in the avoidant insecure attachment style. The researches shows that people with a secure attachment style have healthier & long-lasting relationships.

Additionally, this concludes that maximum number of the population was under low secure attachment style i.e., 56% & only 7.76 % of the population lied in the high secure attachment style which clears that 17% of the population is lying under avoidant insecure attachment style & 15% of the population is under ambivalent insecure attachment style.

The people with the ambivalent are tend to be feel unwilling about getting close to others and worry that their companion does not respond their feelings that leads to regular breakups, basically because the relationship feels emotionless and cold.

Ana, Conde, Bárbara, Figueiredo (2011) conducted a research on attachment styles and psychological adjustment in couples where they found out that higher anxiety and depression symptoms in both partners was related to insecure attachment styles.

The interpretation of the result overall concludes that there is no sufficient co relation between both the variables which opens many factors such the size of the study was concise, Emotional abuse is not people can report freely. It is also cannot be avoided that the research

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was done online that led to less of interaction & contact with the participants regarding the area of this paper. In the research, there was not any remarkable correlation was found but then there could have been a chance if more mediating factors was were taken into account. The study has been conducted on overall population which can noted for no co-relation found in the paper.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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