

Impact of Fearful-Avoidant Attachment Styles on Emotional Maturity Among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Attachment, in general, is an emotional bond which one develops during his early years of life, a typical bond between the infant and the caregiver, between the parent and the child where the child gets his primary needs met. Attachment in psychology, as clarified by Bowlby (1969), is the enduring mental connectedness between individuals, which is accepted to be resolved in the early years of life. The present study aims to investigate the impact of fearful avoidant attachment styles on emotional maturity on young adults. Sample in the present study included 120 young adults from different parts of Uttar Pradesh. After analysis of the data, findings revealed that there is a level of significance at 0.01 level (2-tailed) between emotional maturity and fearful avoidant attachment style.

Keywords: *Emotional Maturity, Attachment, and Fearful Attachment Styles.*

Attachment, also known as the attachment bond, is the emotional bond you formed as an infant with your primary caregiver, most likely your mother. According to attachment theory, which was developed by British psychiatrist John Bowlby and American psychologist Mary Ainsworth, the quality of bonding you experienced during your first relationship often determines how well you relate to and respond to other people. Attachment can further be divided into four type namely secure attachment, dismissing attachment style, Preoccupied attachment style, Fearful avoidant attachment style. Individuals who have Secure attachment style are low on avoidance, low on anxiety. Alright with closeness, not stressed over dismissal with the relationship. Comfortable in a warm, cherishing and sincerely cozy relationship. Trusting, empathic, lenient of contrasts, and excusing. Communicates feelings, manages feelings well; not excessively steamed about relationship issues. Individuals who have Dismissing attachment style are high on avoidance, low on nervousness. Awkward with closeness and principally values autonomy and opportunity; not stressed over accomplice's accessibility Emotionally removed and dismissing in a personal connection; avoids accomplice as much as possible; accomplice continually needing more closeness; "deactivates" connection needs, sentiments, and practices. Communication is scholarly, not open to discussing feelings. Individuals with

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Preoccupied attachment style are Low on avoidance, high on nervousness. Ache for closeness and closeness, exceptionally uncertain about the relationship. Insecure in personal connections; continually stressed over dismissal and surrender; engrossed with relationship; Needy; requires continuous consolation; need to "converge" with accomplice, which frightens accomplice off. Individuals with Fearful avoidant attachment style generally is high on avoidance, high on anxiety. Uncomfortable with closeness and stressed over accomplice's dedication and love. Cannot endure enthusiastic closeness in a relationship; factious, seethes, unfit to manage feelings; damaging and broken connections reproduce past examples. Antisocial; absence of compassion and regret; forceful and correctional; narcissistic, no respect for rules; substance misuse and culpability. One of the most popular areas of adult attachment research has been the study of attachment patterns, or what many social and personality psychologists refer to as attachment styles (e.g., Levy & Davis, 1988). Over the last four decades, the way attachment styles have been conceptualized and measured has evolved significantly; modern researchers rarely study the three attachment types that Hazan and Shaver (1987) emphasised in their early research. These four attachment styles are frequently represented in terms of two major dimensions, which modern researchers refer to as attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance (e.g., Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Attachment anxiety is characterized by low self-esteem as well as a fear of abandonment and rejection (Brennan et al., 1998; Karantzas, Feeney, & Wilkinson, 2010). People who score high on the attachment anxiety scale tend to rely on hyperactivating attachment strategies (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007a). As a result, they are hypersensitive to signs of love (Eastwick & Finkel, 2008) or rejection threats (Mikulincer, Gillath, & Shaver, 2002). When confronted with such threats, they experience cognitions and emotions that reflect increased distress and intensify their efforts to be near an attachment figure (Gillath, Bunge, Shaver, Wendelken, & Mikulincer, 2005). Walgito (2000) defines emotional maturity as the ability to control emotions, think clearly, and see difficulties objectively (Prastuti, 2021). According to Murray (2003), emotional maturity is linked to cognitive maturity and chronological development. However, emotional maturity does not necessarily come with age. An immature person's behaviors are usually based on emotion and are irresponsible (Harwandha K.G; Prastuti E – International conference of psychology- 2020).

Present study

The aim of the present research was to investigate the impact of attachment styles on emotional maturity in young adults. Adult attachment style is often thought of as a theory explaining strategies used to navigate personal social relationships, but the connection of attachment style to emotional regulation is often overlooked. The sole purpose of conducting research on attachment was to explore more about how attachment affects one's relationships, how emotional maturity can impact our attachment styles. Objective of the research was to study the relationship between fearful avoidant attachment style impacting emotional maturity in young adults. Hypothesis stated that there would be a positive significant relationship in the level of fearful avoidant attachment styles impacting emotional maturity. However, Independent Variable for the study is fearful attachment style and dependent variable is emotional maturity.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and its selection

Samples in the present study will include 120 young adults from different parts of Uttar Pradesh as the data was collected through online mode. Inclusion Criteria for this test was that the participant must have completed class 12 and the age group of the participant must

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be not less than 18 years and should not exceed than 31 years. However, the exclusion criteria were that the subject's age should not be below 18 years and that Individuals dealing with any mental issues shall not be considered for this research.

Description of tools employed

The study was conducted using two tools, relationship scales questionnaire (Griffin & Bartholomew 1994) and emotional maturity scale (Singh & Bhargava 2010).

- **Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ):** There are 30 products in total. It measures four dimensions: Stable, Fearful, Dismissive, and Preoccupied, and provides a continuous measure of one's subjective characteristic style in close relationship. Items 3, 9 (reverse), 10, 15, and 28 make up the stable scale (Reverse). Items 1, 5, 12, and 24 make up the fearful scale. Things 6 (Reverse), 8, 16, and 25 make up the preoccupied scale. Items 2, 6, 19, 22, and 26 make up the dismissing scale. Internal continuity of the two dimensions have been shown to range from .85 to .90 for both avoidance and anxiety, respectively. Reliability of different areas of relationship scale is as follows, secure $r = 0.69$ preoccupied $r = 0.86$, dismissing $r = 0.85$, fearful $r = 0.88$
- **Emotional Maturity Scale (2010):** For having an idea about the levels of emotional maturity of school principals, Emotional Maturity Scale (2010) developed by Yashvir Singh, and Mahesh Bhargava was used. EMS has a total of 48 items. EMS is based on five broad factors of emotional maturity under the five categories namely Emotional instability (Total no of items (10), $r = 0.75$), Emotional regression (Total no of items (10), $r = 0.63$), social maladjustment (Total no of items (10), $r = 0.58$), Personality disintegration (Total no of items (10), $r = 0.86$), Lack of Independence (Total no of items (8), $r = 0.42$). The scale was validated against external criteria, i.e., the area of the adjustment inventory by Sinha and Singh. The number of items of this area is 21. Product moment correlation obtained was .64 ($N = 46$). The items are so stated that if the answer is very much a score of '5'; is given; for much '4'; for undecided '3'; for probably '2'; and for a negative answer never, a score of '1' is to be awarded. All the statements are negatively worded, therefore the higher the score on the scale, greater the degree of emotional immaturity and vice-versa. Individuals who scored between from 50-80 have extremely stable emotional maturity, individuals who scores between 81-88 have moderately stable emotional maturity, individuals who scores between 89-106 have unstable emotional maturity and individuals scores ranging from 107- 240 have extremely unstable emotional maturity.

Procedure

The scales for assessing the attachment styles, emotional maturity was introduced to the participants through online mode (google forms), while informing them that they are participating in a study about young adults (age range 18-30). The participation was done on a voluntary basis.

Statistical Analyses

Statistical analysis was conducted by using IBM- SPSS. To analyze the data, Mean and Pearson correlation were used between the attachment styles and emotional maturity.

RESULTS

Table 1.1 showing the correlation of fearful avoidant attachment style and emotional maturity.

		Correlation	
Emotional Maturity	Pearson Correlation	Emotional Maturity	Fearful Avoidance
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	1	.408**
	N	120	120
Fearful Avoidance	Pearson Correlation	.408**	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

***. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 - tailed).*

After analysis of the data, the findings revealed that, there is significance between fearful avoidant attachment style and emotional maturity at 0.01 level (2 tailed), indicating that having secure attachment does not always imply having high emotional maturity. Similarly, an insecure attachment does not imply a lack of emotional maturity. A study in 2016 (BHAR P 2016) stated that Individuals with insecure attachment styles had much more trusting and spontaneous partnerships than those with secure attachment style. This study helped to debunk the misconception that insecure attachment is often bad for relationships; rather, it can be beneficial.

Table 1.2 showing the T and level of significance between emotional maturity, attachment style and gender.

	t	Sig.
Emotional maturity	16.981	.000
Attachment style	-0.837	.404
Gender	.020	.984

Table 1.2 explains that the level of significance in gender is 0.984 which indicates that the relationship between attachment styles and emotional maturity is not gender specific and that it affects both the genders equally.

DISCUSSION

Attachment, an idea given by John Bowlby yet his attachment hypothesis, just as Mary Ainsworth's thoughts regarding attachment styles, generally centered around the attachment between a newborn child and a grown-up parental figure." According to Magoun (1934), "Emotional maturity is reframed and developed ability to understand and to use all emotions in a personality-controlled way."

Hypothesis claimed that the degree of fearful avoidant attachment styles would have a positive level of significance on emotional maturity. According to the results, fearful avoidant attachment style and emotional maturity have a significant relationship at the 0.01 level (.408). A previous study confirmed the aforementioned hypothesis. In recent years, the percentage of adults with Secure attachment styles has declined (1988: 48.98 percent; 2011: 41.62 percent), while the percentage of students with Insecure attachment styles (sum of Dismissing, Preoccupied, and Fearful) has increased (1988: 51.02 percent; 2011: 58.38 percent (Sara H. Konrath, 2014). Previous research has found a link between attachment

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avoidance and emotional down regulation methods. Adults with an avoidant attachment preferred less social support in stressful situations from romantic partners and friends and family (Holmberg, 2011). Empirical investigations show a link between attachment avoidance and more strict and behaviorally avoidant control mechanisms across the literature. While most studies on the relationship between fearful avoidant attachment and emotional maturity in college students and adolescents show a negative relationship between the two, there is not much research in this field for young adults.

In a study done by Favez Nicolas and Tissot Herve in 2019, it was investigated the sexual outcomes in individuals presenting fearful-avoidant attachment, that is, those who have both high avoidant and anxious attachment tendencies are reluctant to engage in a close relationship and a dire need to be loved by others (Tissot, 2019). A community sample of men and women (N = 600; 25–45 years) completed self-reported questionnaires related to attachment, sexuality, and control variables. Moreover, fearful avoidance or disorganization has also been shown to be linked with borderline personality disorders or dissociative symptoms, both of which have negative consequences for the interpersonal skills of the individual (L. Alan Sroufe, 2010) (Lissa Dutra, 2009)

The majority of previous studies revealed attachment in intimate relationships and parent-child relationships and a few of them showed the level of attachment in adults. The disparity in attachment style and emotional maturity between males and females can be shown that there is no such difference, and if there is, it is just a minor difference between the two variables.

CONCLUSION

The sole purpose of conducting a research on attachment was to explore more about how attachment affects one's relationships how emotional maturity can impact our attachment styles. Significance seen between emotional maturity and fearful avoidant attachment style. However more research is required in this field. The results contribute additional support to the literature documenting insecure attachment styles and their connection with emotional regulation functions, highlighting the importance of understanding the limited emotional regulation strategies accessible for individuals with less secure attachment styles.

Limitations

The present research should have concentrated more on whether attachment is gender-specific and on the relationship between attachment and emotional maturity of working and nonworking individuals. Lastly the sample was collected online.

Implications

It can help in improving dysfunctions in any attachment style. It builds the bridge in understanding the impact of attachment styles as an independent variable and not just with psychological ailments. Less research focused on the impact of attachment on emotional maturity, this research might add on more clarity.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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