

Research Paper

Influence of Personal Relationships on Perception of Idealized Romance: Impact of Attachment Figures and Romantic Figures on Romantic Beliefs in Adolescents in India

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Research indicates that attachment figures and internal working models of attachment play a major role in the development of relationships. The present study aimed to assess whether self-perceived working models of attachment of adolescents with their mother, father, best friend and romantic partner influenced their romantic beliefs. The paper further explored which component of the internal working model and attachment figure contributed the most in development of idealized perceptions of love during adolescence.

Method: The attachment framework used (Bartholomew, 1990) includes two components: a model of self and a model of other for each attachment figure. The sample consisted of 112 adolescents (80 female, 32 male) from India between the age of 13 to 18 years. The tools used for data collected included the Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprecher and Metts, 1989) and the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Data was analyzed through multiple hierarchical and stepwise regression. **Results and conclusion:** The results reflected that the model of other as a whole significantly predicted romantic beliefs and the model of other- best friend, model of other- romantic partner and the model of other- mother were significant predictors. These findings were discussed in the context of a collectivist society like India. The study also found that neither biological sex nor romantic experience were significant in the development of romantic beliefs.

Keywords: Attachment, Internal Working Model, Prevalence of Romantic Beliefs, Adolescence

Attachment theory, as first explained by John Bowlby (1969, 1982, 1973, 1980), states a biologically based system of specific behaviors which is organized to maintain or restore safety through proximity to a special and preferred attachment

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figure. The benefit of adequate attachment relationships is that they provide the child with a secure 'home base' to further explore the external environment (Mahler et al., 1975). The quality of these relationships will depend on the quality of care that the infant has experienced, especially during childhood, which ultimately shape our attachment styles and working models which persist through childhood, adolescence, and in adulthood (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Kobak and Sceery, 1988; Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Attachment during adolescence has been found to be especially volatile, as extra-familial relationships like peer friendships and romantic relationships become a significant component of one's life during this time. Drawing on the theoretical framework of Bartholomew and Horowitz' theory of attachment, this paper seeks to focus on romantic relationships in a collectivist culture and the prevalence of romantic relationships during adolescence.

Bartholomew and Horowitz, (1991) suggested that attachment is derived from two dimensions: the model of self and the model of other. The model of self as positive or negative (worthy of love and support versus not) and the model of other as positive or negative (trustworthy and available versus unreliable and rejecting). Four categories of attachment may then be identified: (a) secure (positive self, positive other), (b) preoccupied (negative self, positive other), (c) fearful-avoidant (negative self, negative other), and (d) dismissing-avoidant (positive self, negative other). These dimensions and associated combinations determine the cognition, affect, and behavior in relationships as well as guide emotion regulation and shape self-image (Bowlby, 1973; Bretherton and Munholland, 1999). Thus, maladaptive early parent-child interactions may serve as a template for negative interpersonal patterns and expectancies in later relationships.

These working models become more organized and complex with development, and their influence becomes more habitual and automatic (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby (1973) described attachment patterns laid down in infancy and childhood as becoming more resistant to change by adolescence, and as generalizing to other close relationships. Multiple studies have found evidence of attachment's influence on adolescents' behavior and well-being. In a retrospective study, Cindy Hazan and Philip Shaver (1987) found that young adults who reported being securely attached in their romantic relationships were more likely to describe their early relationship with their parents as securely attached. It has also been found, securely attached adults are more likely to provide support when they are distressed and more likely to give support when their partner is distressed than insecurely attached adults (Rholes & Simpson, 2010).

Looking from an attachment-informed approach, adolescence is a period of greater change in attachment style due to the rapidity of maturational change and stressful life events (Crittenden, 2000). Several researchers have postulated that the physical and environmental changes of adolescence, which require re-negotiation of relationships, result in decreased attachment security (Ammaniti et al., 2000). The presence of multiple attachment relationships in adolescence raises questions concerning similarity in the quality of these different relationships (Thompson & Raikes, 2003). Working models established in the early attachment relationship with the mother serve as a prototype and influence later close relationships (Ainsworth, 1989).

Thus, children securely attached to their mother are expected to develop positive relationships with close friends and romantic partners as adolescents (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Waters & Cummings, 2000). In adolescence, however, self-reported security with

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father has been found to be lower than security with mother (Buistet al., 2002). There are a significant number of studies, however, where father–child attachment was a better predictor of social functioning (e.g., Suess, Grossmann, & Sroufe, 1992).

Moderate concurrent associations have been found between attachment in family of origin and romantic attachments (Crowell, Fraley, & Shaver, 1999). Stronger associations have been found between each of these relationships and relationships with friends (Furman et al., 2002). It has been postulated that secure attachment in family of origin first provides behavioral and emotional skills for close friendships, and that skills learned in these friendships then enable the adolescent to establish positive and increasingly intimate romantic relationships (Collins & Sroufe, 1999; Scharf & Mayseless, 2001).

Culture and Attachment

There is rich data available that points at culture being a circumstantial factor which can affect mother-infant attachment. It is so because cultural beliefs permeate into parenting patterns that govern how a primary caregiver, typically mothers, respond to their child thereby affecting sensitive caregiving behaviour (Zaidman-Mograbi et al., 2020). Based on this, the internal working model of a child gets formed which drives the nature of the relationships of a child during adulthood. That said, many scholars show divergent views on the universal applicability of this fundamental proposition of attachment theory to maternal caregiving (Mesman et al., 2018). Prior studies have upheld that the basic principles of attachment theory like availability, sensitive and prompt responses along with proximity constitute universal maternal responses to children (Mesman et al., 2016). On the other hand, data also suggests that factors constituting caregiver quality and practices are culturally embedded. They are based on ecologically justifiable child-nurturing practice. Thus, denying the universal applicability of sensitive responsiveness of mothers (Keller et al., 2018).

Building on the strong evidence of culture affecting parenting practices, it is important to understand attachment theory from a culture-sensitive lens (García Coll & Magnuson, 2000).

Recent research reveals various culturally diverse populations that are still largely understudied, which further raises questions on the applicability of the basic tenets of the attachment theory (Vicedo, 2017). Existing literature on attachment also highlights considerable differences in parenting practices between Western and non-Western contexts (Robinson, 2007). Since most of research in testing the universality of attachment theory has been done in western contexts, even though majority of the world population belongs to non-Western societies, the present study aims to re-evaluate the attachment theory from an Indian context, that is representative of diverse lifestyles, ethnicities, values and cultures (Keller, 2013).

Attachment in adolescence

Adolescence is a time of great change for individuals. A drastic number of transformations happen during this time, from physical, to biological to cognitive. Changes in levels of neurotransmitters, transformations in the prefrontal cortex, increasing one's ability for abstract thinking and problem solving; as well as rapid hormonal changes (Sharma et al., 2013). Along with such changes come the introduction of the individual to a new phase of psychosocial functioning, bringing along with it a shift in the attachment hierarchy from

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parents to peers. For adolescents with an insecure attachment style, this transition can also lead to mental health issues. A large amount of research has shown that adolescents' use of preoccupied strategies puts them at risk of internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety disorders (Bakermans-Kranenburg & Van IJzendoorn, 2009; Bernier et al., 2005). Teens with a preoccupied state of mind are also at risk for some externalising behaviours, such as sexual risk-taking and levels of aggression, both of which tend to increase over time (Dawson, Allen, Marston, Hafen, & Schad, 2014; Kobak, Zajac, & Smith, 2009). Adolescents with dismissing strategies, on the other hand, are much more likely to engage in externalizing behaviors as well as have difficulty in seeking help from peers and teachers, and tend to withdraw (Bakermans-Kranenburg & Van IJzendoorn, 2009; Larose & Bernier, 2001).

Adolescence and parental attachment

A central attachment dilemma adolescent children and their parents often face at this time, is one of balancing the attachment needs and exploratory behaviors. As an adolescent's competencies increase, it is natural for them to start exploring more of the world around them. During this time, the attachment hierarchy also broadens and they decrease their dependency on their parents, turning gradually instead to their peers and further on, romantic partners. The role of the parents at this time also adapts, becoming less about meeting the adolescent's needs and more about helping them become autonomous and self-sufficient (Kobak and Duemmler, 1994).

Adolescence, romantic partners, friendship and attachment

Greenberg et. al. (1983) were one of the first to examine attachment in the context of peer relations. Work before that had largely focused on attachment of infants with primary caregivers. Gradually, attachment literature started focusing on the influence of peers through friendship and later on romantic partners' influence on the attachment system.

Peers gradually increase in importance through one's middle and late adolescent years. They serve many important functions in the adolescents life, helping them navigate the social framework, providing sources of intimacy, and later on, even becoming sources of sexual relationships and lifelong partnerships (Collins & Laursen, 2004; Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009). However, parental attachment still plays an important role, with parents being the ones adolescents will turn to in situations of danger or separation distress (Rosenthal & Kobak, 2010).

A large body of research has looked at how adolescents' attachment styles have an effect on their psychosocial functioning. Adolescents with a secure attachment style have been found to be more competent in friendships, perhaps due to their comfort with intimate emotional interactions (Allen et al., 2007; Sroufe et al., 2005; Weimer, Kerns, & Oldenberg, 2004; Zimmermann, 2004). Attachment security has also been linked to higher-quality friendships and less stress in peer relationships, in general (Seiffge-Krenke, 2006; Shomaker & Furman, 2009).

In contrast, adolescents with anxious-ambivalent attachment and those with preoccupied attachment were more prone to interpersonal hostility and greater stress in peer relationships (Cooper, Shaver, & Collins, 1998; Seiffge-Krenke, 2006).

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Adolescence, Internal Working Model and Prevalence of Romantic Beliefs

Considerable research has focused on attachment in adolescence in the last few decades.

Despite the growing attention, several aspects of changes in attachment during adolescence remain unclarified. One of the prime aspects that become the highlight during adolescence is the prominence of romantic relationships and beliefs around it. Individuals enter with pre-existing beliefs about what relationships should be like, what features make them satisfying and rewarding, what rules should guide the behavior of relational partners and so forth.

Another important aspect being the emergence of most psychiatric disorders and mental health concerns during adolescence (Paus et al., 2008). Pointing at the timing of these two aspects, it can be highlighted how romantic relationships and idealised perceptions of love are rich sources to understand childhood emotional trauma resulting from neglecting, absent or abusive parents or unsafe home environments, that surfaces during adolescence.

Adolescents' understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationship characteristics may be a function of their attachment style and social needs (Brar et al., 2022). Gaining a better understanding of how adolescents perceive signs of healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships may improve current relationship education and emotional stability. Much has been studied about romantic beliefs in adolescents from parasocial interactions. However, little to no research has been conducted to study the role internal working models play in the development of romanticized perceptions of love in this developmental stage.

Research aims and objectives

Given the influence that culture could have on child-rearing and adolescence at a precarious stage of development, this paper aims to explore the influence of internal working models developed from parental attachment during adolescence on extra-familial relationships in the multicultural Indian context. This article proposes to reconceptualize attachment theory as a culture-sensitive framework. With this in consideration and based on the research presented above, this study aims to explore:

1. The influence of internal working models of the self and others developed from parental attachment on the internal working models developed from romantic partners that become of prime importance for an adolescent.
2. Which component of the internal working model and attachment figure contributed the most in the development of idealised perceptions of love during adolescence.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 112 participants who were in the age range of 13 to 18 years old. 32 (28%) participants from the sample were male, while the other 80 (72%) were female. The participants were mostly from middle and upper class households who had access to the internet and social media from all over India. Of these participants 49 (43%) had experience with romantic relationships. All the participants were recruited through non-probability convenience sampling.

Measures

The Relationship Questionnaire: Developed by Bartholomew, K. & Horowitz, L. M. (1991), this questionnaire is a self-report measure of attachment and constitutes four paragraphs. Each paragraph describes the four attachment styles: secure, dismissing,

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preoccupied, and fearful. The participants were asked to rate each paragraph on a 7 point Likert scale four times with respect to each attachment figure: mother, father, best friend, or a current, former, or imagined romantic partner. They had to rate in accordance with the extent to which each paragraph described the quality of their relationship with each of the aforementioned attachment figures. This measure has been found to correlate significantly with attachment styles determined by interview (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). With moderate stability of attachment patterns, test–retest correlations on the RQ over an 8-month period were found to average .51 (Scharfe and Bartholomew, 1994).

The ratings filled out by the participants were combined together to get the scores for their internal working models of attachment. This was done by first adding the responses for the secure style and dismissing style (the positive models of self) and then subtracting the sum of the responses for anxious and fearful styles (the negative models of self) to get the Model of Self for each attachment figure. The Model of Other was calculated by subtracting the sum of the fearful and dismissing styles (the negative models of other) from the sum of secure and anxious styles (the positive models of other).

Romantic Beliefs Scale: This scale was developed by Sprecher and Metts (1989) and is divided into four subscales: Love Finds a Way, One and Only, Idealization and Love at First Sight. This scale measures the beliefs that have been identified as constituting an ideology of romanticism. A 7-point Likert response scale was used to answer the fifteen items that this tool consists of in total where 7=strongly agree and 1=strongly disagree. Only one item was reverse coded in this scale, which was the first item itself. All responses are added and the highest score indicates the romanticisation. The Cronbach Alpha value for the scale in question is 0.80 and the test-retest reliability 0.75.

Procedure

Data was collected from participants through circulating a form online on multiple social media platforms. The form consisted of a consent form to be filled by the parents/guardians and the participants and questions pertaining to demographic information of the participants. The form also held information about the purposes of the study along with assurance that the participants will remain anonymous and that their responses will remain confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. The responses filled by the participants in the Romantic Beliefs Scale were first added individually to get the total score. Following this, the data that was received through the Relationship Questionnaire was then sorted into Models of Self and Models of Other. The sex and the romantic experiences of the participants were then coded. Here, the coding of the latter was done keeping in mind if the participant had any self-reported romantic experiences at all which included having a proper relationship, seeing someone casually, intensely liking someone, etc. The data was entered into SPSS 20.0, and the results were interpreted.

Statistical Analysis

1. Shapiro-Wilk test was used to determine normality of the sample collected.
2. Pearson's correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the variables - models of self for mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, and models of other for mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner.
3. Hierarchical regression was run to determine the individual effect of models of self for mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, models of other for mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner on romantic beliefs.

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4. A stepwise regression was conducted to determine whether the model of other mother or model of other best friend contributes the most to the variance in romantic beliefs.
5. Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was conducted to determine the equality of variance of the sub sample male and female, and romantic experience and no romantic experience.
6. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine the effect of biological sex on romantic beliefs, romantic experience on romantic beliefs, and the interrelationship of biological sex and romantic experience on romantic beliefs.
7. A hierarchical regression was conducted to determine the individual effects of biological sex, romantic experience, models of self for mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, and models of other for mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner on romantic beliefs.

RESULTS

The sample included 112 participants with 32 male and 80 female participants. Out of the total 49 of the sample have had a romantic experience. The descriptive statistics of all the variables were calculated first (table 1). After normality assumption was satisfied a Pearson's correlation was used to answer the first objective to determine significant relationships between models of self mother and father, and models of other mother and father, on models of self and models of other for romantic partner (table 2). A weak correlation was found between models of self - mother, father, and model of other father with the model of self romantic partner, and model of other father with model of other romantic partner.

After homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied an ANOVA test was conducted for the variables biological sex and romantic experience on romantic beliefs (table 3). No significant effect was found of the variables on idealized romantic beliefs, either independently or combined.

The second objective was answered by the following statistical analysis procedures. A multiple regression was conducted with romantic beliefs as the dependent variable and the variables models of self and other for all four attachment figures. The statistics for this regression are in table 4. Models of other from mother (24.9%) and romantic partner (21.2%) were found to significantly predict variations in romantic beliefs. Along with this model of other from best friend was excluded from the model. As the model of other best friend is significantly correlated with the models of other - mother, father and romantic partner, this exclusion may be due to collinearity present within the variables (refer table 2). From the insights gained from the literature we followed this with an investigation of the contribution of each component of models of self and other towards variation in romantic beliefs. Towards this, first two multiple regressions were conducted. The first multiple regression had all the models of self for all four attachment figures as its independent variables and romantic beliefs as the dependent variable.

The second multiple regression had all four models of other as the independent variables and the dependent variable remained the same. The regression statistics (table 5 and 6) showed that while models of self were not significant in adolescents' romantic beliefs, the models of other contributed a total of 12% to its variation.

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In order to explore which attachment figures' model of other in particular were contributing the most in the variation of romantic beliefs of adolescents, a stepwise regression was finally conducted for models of other with romantic beliefs as the dependent variable. It was found (refer to table 7) that the best friend's model of other contributed the most (6.1%) in the variation of romantic beliefs. The mother's model of other was also found to be significant, and together the best friend and mother's models of other contributed a total of 9.6% in the variation of romantic beliefs in adolescents.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics - Models of Self for Mother, Father, Bestfriend, and Romantic Partner and Models of Others for Mother, Father, Best Friend, and Romantic Partner, and Romantic Beliefs

Factors	Minimum	Maximum	Range	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
						SE=.228	SE=.453
Model of Self- Mother	-7.00	12.00	19.00	4.1250	4.02498	-0.729	0.061
Model of Self- Father	-7.00	10.00	17.00	2.3750	4.03392	-0.175	-0.886
Model of Self- Best Friend	-5.00	12.00	17.00	3.7679	3.79896	-0.227	-0.280
Model of Self- Romantic Partner	-10.00	12.00	22.00	1.1518	4.41172	0.337	-0.242
Model of Other- Mother	-10.00	10.00	20.00	0.6161	3.93470	-0.327	-0.271
Model of Other- Father	-12.00	6.00	18.00	0.6429	3.97256	-0.894	0.433
Model of Other- Best Friend	-6.00	11.00	17.00	2.3571	3.19588	0.169	-0.214
Model of Other- Romantic Partner	-9.00	12.00	21.00	0.5089	4.19566	0.253	-0.121
Romantic Beliefs	30.00	93.00	63.00	65.000	13.46333	0.094	-0.505

Note. N = 112

Table 1 demonstrates the mean difference, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values of the variables models of self - mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, models of other - mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, and romantic beliefs. The mean difference and standard deviation for the same were 4.12(4.02), 2.37(4.03), 3.76(3.79), 1.15(4.41), 0.61(3.93), 0.64(3.97), 2.35(3.19), 0.5(4.19) and 65(13.4) respectively.

Table 2 Correlation table for Models of self - Mother, Father, Best Friend and Romantic Partner, and Models of other - Mother, Father, Best Friend, and Romantic Partner

Factor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Model of Self- Mother	1.00	0.479**	0.196*	0.299**	0.309**	0.237**	-0.005	-0.149	-0.041
2. Model of Self- Father		1.00	0.213*	0.335**	0.076	0.468**	-0.031	-0.070	-0.033
3. Model of Self- Best Friend			1.00	0.290**	-0.138	0.002	-0.026	0.024	-0.069
4. Model of Self- Romantic Partner				1.00	-0.017	0.186*	-0.105	0.101	-0.005

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Romantic Partner					
5. Model of Other- Mother	1.00	0.406**	0.217*	0.037	0.233**
6. Model of Other- Father		1.00	0.193*	0.207*	0.127
7. Model of Other- Best Friend			1.00	0.349**	0.242**
8. Model of Other- Romantic Partner				1.00	0.233**
Romantic Beliefs					1.00

Note. $N = 112$ *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (one-tailed) **Correlation is significant at the .01 level (one-tailed)

Table 2 depicts the correlation value of the variables models of self - mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, models of other - mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner and romantic beliefs.

Model of Self for Romantic Partner and Model of Other for Romantic Partner

Models of self for mother and father show weak positive correlation ($r = 0.299$, $r = 0.335$ respectively, $p < 0.01$) with model of self for romantic partner. Model of self for romantic partner shows a weak correlation ($r = 0.186$, $p < 0.05$) with the model of other for father. Model of other for mother is found to have no significant correlation with the model of self for romantic partner.

Model of other for father is found to have a statistically significant weak positive correlation ($r = 0.207$, $p < 0.05$) with the model of other romantic partner. No significant correlation was found between model of other for mother, models of self for mother and father, and model of other for romantic partner.

Model of Self for Best friend and Models of Other for Best Friend

Models of self for mother and father have a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.196$, $r = 0.213$ respectively, $p < 0.05$) with model of self for best friend. Models of other for mother and father show no correlation with the model of self for best friend.

Models of other for mother and father show weak positive correlation ($r = 0.217$, $r = 0.193$ respectively, $p < 0.05$) with model of other for best friend that is statistically significant.

No statistically significant correlation has been found between model of self for mother and father with the model of other best friend.

Models of Self and Other for Mother, Father, Best Friend, Romantic Partner and Romantic Beliefs

Romantic beliefs was found to have a weak correlation with the model of other for best friend ($r = 0.242$, $p < 0.01$), model of other for mother ($r = 0.233$, $p < 0.01$), and model of other for romantic partner ($r = 0.233$, $p < 0.01$). No significant correlation was found between

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romantic belief and the model of self for mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, and model of other for father.

Table 3 Means, Standard Deviation, and Two-Way ANOVA Statistics for Biological Sex and Romantic Experience on Romantic Beliefs

Variable	Romantic Experience		Single		Analysis of Variance			
	M	SD	M	SD	Effect	F ratio	df	η^2
Romantic Belief					RE	.600	1,111	.006
Female	64.29	16.04	64.53	14.04	BS	.602	1,111	.006
Male	69.25	11.60	66.15	12.01	RExBS	.862	1,111	.008

Note N=112; RE = Romantic Experience, BS = Biological Sex

Means, standard deviation and F ratio for romantic beliefs are shown in table 6. The mean difference of romantic belief on romantic experience ($F(1,111) = .60$, $MSE= 184$, $p= .44$, $\eta^2= .006$), on biological sex ($F(1,111) = .602$, $MSE= 184$, $p= .44$, $\eta^2= .006$), and on romantic experience with biological sex ($F(1,111) = .862$, $MSE= 184$, $p= .355$, $\eta^2= .008$) is statistically non-significant. However, the mean of romantic belief among male adolescents with and without romantic experience ($M = 69.25$; $M = 66.15$) is seen to be relatively higher compared to female adolescents with and without romantic experience ($M=64.29$, $M=64.53$). Further Mean difference of romantic beliefs among adolescents with romantic experience ($M=66.8$) is seen to be relatively higher compared to that of adolescents without the experience ($M=64.52$).

Table 4 Multiple Regression results for Romantic Beliefs

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	R ²	ΔR^2	Adj. R ²
	B	SE	β (Beta)					
Model 1					.081	.112	.112	.052
Model of Self- Mother	-.291	.389	-.087	-.748	.456			
Model of Self- Father	.033	.414	.010	.079	.937			
Model of Self- Best Friend	-.098	.353	-.028	-.278	.781			
Model of Self- Romantic Partner	.027	.316	.009	.085	.932			
Model of Other- Mother	.852	.378	.249	2.252	.026			
Model of Other- Father	-.012	.410	-.004	-.030	.976			
Model of Other- Romantic Partner	.680	.316	.212	2.150	.034			

Note, N=112

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Table 4 illustrates the results of multiple regression with the variables models of self-mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner, and models of other- mother, father, and romantic partner, predicting romantic beliefs. The model with all 8 variables was found to not explain the variation in romantic beliefs. The variables model of other from mother ($p=.026$) and model of other from romantic partner ($p=.034$) are found to contribute 24.9%, and 21.2% to the variation in romantic beliefs.

Table 5 Multiple Regression Results between Model of Self - Mother, Father, Best Friend, and Romantic Partner, and Romantic Beliefs

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p	R ²	ΔR ²	Adj. R ²
	B	SE	β (Beta)					
Model 1					.954	.006	.006	-.031
Model of Self-Mother	-.097	.373	-.029	-.261	.795			
Model of Self-Father	-.045	.378	-.013	-.118	.906			
Model of Self-Best Friend	-.244	.361	-.069	-.677	.500			
Model of Self-Romantic Partner	.085	.325	.028	.262	.794			

Note, N= 112

In table 5 the R - squared values of models of self - mother, father, best friend, and romantic partner predicting romantic beliefs are depicted. According to the table, the model of the four predictors can not explain the change in romantic beliefs ($p = 0.954$), and all the four variables model of self for mother ($\beta = -.029$, $p>0.05$), father ($\beta = -.013$, $p>0.05$), best friend ($\beta = -.069$, $p>0.05$), and romantic partner ($\beta = 0.28$, $p>0.05$), independently have a non-significant effect on romantic beliefs.

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Table 6 Multiple Regression Results between Model of Other - Mother, Father, Best Friend, and Romantic Partner, and Romantic Beliefs

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	R ²	ΔR ²	Adj. R ²
	B	SE	β (Beta)					
Model 1					.008	.120	.120	.087
Model of Other-Mother	.702	.346	.206	2.028	.045			
Model of Other-Father	-.064	.345	-.019	-.187	.852			
Model of Other-Best Friend	.615	.421	.146	1.462	.147			
Model of Other-Romantic Partner	.544	.320	.169	1.699	.092			

Note. N = 112

Table 6 depicts the R² values for the predictors model of other - mother, father, best friend and romantic experience. The model contributed a total of 12% to the variation in romantic beliefs among the adolescents (p=.008). The table also illustrates a unit change in the model of other - mother (p=.045), romantic partner (p=.092), and best friend (p=.147) leads to an increase in romantic beliefs by 20.6%, 16.9%, and 14.6% respectively. However, the effect of the model of other - romantic partner, and best friend is shown to be statistically non-significant.

Table 7 Stepwise Regression results between Model of Other Mother and Model of Other Best friend

Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients	t	Sig	R ²	ΔR ²	Adj. R ²
	B	SE	β (Beta)					
Model 1					.009	.061	.061	.053
Model of Other-Best Friend	1.040	.390	.247	2.665	.009			
Model 2					.043	.096	.035	.080
Model of Other-Best Friend	.866	.394	.206	2.199	.030			
Model of Other-Mother	.656	.320	.192	2.051	.043			

Note, N=112

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Results of stepwise regression predicting romantic beliefs is depicted in table 7. Model of other best friend ($p=.009$), and the model of other best friend and mother together ($p=.043$) can predict romantic beliefs among adolescents. It contributes 6.1% and 9.6% respectively. In the model with predictors models of other best friend and mother, a unit change in best friend ($p=.030$) and mother ($p=.43$) leads to 20.6% and 19.2% increase in romantic beliefs respectively.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to explore the influence of internal working models of the self and other developed from parental attachment on the internal working models developed from romantic partners. The paper further explored which component of the internal working model and attachment figure contributed the most in development of idealised perceptions of love during adolescence. Data was collected from 112 participants of ages 13 to 18. 32 (28%) of these participants were male, while the other 80 (72%) were female. The Relationship Questionnaire, developed by Bartholomew, K. & Horowitz, L. M. (1991) and Romantic Beliefs Scale, developed by Sprecher and Metts (1989) were used for data collection. The participants' responses in the Romantic Beliefs Scale were first added individually to get the total score.

Following this, the data collected through the Relationship Questionnaire was sorted into Models of Self and Models of Other. Coding of the sex and the romantic experiences of the participants was done. Finally, the data was entered into SPSS 20.0, and analyzed through a series of regressions including hierarchical regression, multiple regressions, and stepwise regression.

Upon analysis of data it was found that the model of other determined romantic beliefs more than the model of self in the present sample. The models of other of mother, romantic partner and best friend were found to be significant in the development of romantic beliefs. The models of others of father didn't show significant influence on romantic beliefs of participants.

The results predicted that in a sample from a collectivist society like that of India, the model of other would play a more significant role in the development of romantic beliefs during adolescence. As for the four attachment figures that were taken into account to find the working models of other from relationships with/working models of attachment, relationships with best friend, mother, and romantic partner was found to be significant. Apart from this the models of self stemming from the four attachment figures were found to be most prominent. In addition to attachment figures, biological sex and romantic experience was also studied to find if they played any contributory role in the development of romantic beliefs during adolescence. It was found that neither sex nor romantic experience were significant in the progression of romantic beliefs. However, the test revealed there is a small difference in idealized romantic beliefs between males with romantic experience and those without. The same was true for females as well.

The internal working models of attachment can be dichotomized into positive and negative for both the model of self and the model of other. A negative model of others implies that the other is perceived to be uncaring, distant, and rejecting whereas a positive model of others suggests that the attachment figure is viewed by the person as trustworthy, caring and available. As mentioned, the findings of our study show that the model of others was found

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to be a significant predictor in the variation of romantic beliefs. An explanation for this could be that romantic beliefs are impacted by how much trust people put in others to fulfill their attachment needs in a collective culture like India. The emphasis on how trusting we see other people to be, more than a trusting relationship with our own selves, in the Indian culture is explainable, considering how family systems promote cohesion and interdependence (Chadda & Deb, 2013).

Past literature that has focused on studying how romantic beliefs are impacted by the attachment styles of people, has found that people with preoccupied or anxious attachment styles tend to hold idealistic romantic beliefs (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hart, Hung, Glick, & Dinero, 2012). On the other hand, it is less likely for people who have an avoidant attachment to believe in idealized romantic relationships (Jin & Kim, 2015; Hart, Hung, Glick, & Dinero, 2012). Since people with anxious attachment styles and those with avoidant attachment styles have positive and negative models of others respectively, it further confirms the strong role of the model of others in explaining idealized perception of love during adolescence, which is inline with previous studies as well (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Jin & Kim, 2015; Hart, Hung, Glick, & Dinero, 2012). Given the relationship between attachment styles and the models of others, it would be necessary to look at the relationship between all three variables i.e., the relationship between models of others, attachment styles and their relationship with idealized romantic beliefs.

Furthermore, we studied the model of others in more detail to see which attachment figure impacted the romantic beliefs the most. It was found that out of all four attachment figures, the mother, the best friend and the romantic partner played the most significant role in the variation of romantic beliefs of our sample. Interestingly, the model of other developed from best friends, specifically, was found to be the most significant predictor of romantic beliefs. It was more significant than that of the model of other developed from the attachment with mother, who is the primary caregiver and a pivotal form of secure base across the adolescent years and for young adults (Markiewicz et al., 2006). This could be explained by the finding that best friends can also take the role of primary caregiver for young adults, especially for people who are not in a long term stable romantic relationship (Fraley & Davis, 1997).

As the data from our sample points towards a neutral trend of being in romantic relationships, it can be suggested that the attachment with best friends is a more prominent extra-familial relationship during adolescence in the Indian culture. At the same time, attachment with a romantic partner is beginning to show increased influence on romantic beliefs of the participants and may become more influential than attachment with best friends and mother with age. With respect to attachment with father, past research shows that adolescents and young adults choose their father less than best friend and mother for all attachment functions (Markiewicz et al., 2006). While it has been found that with increasing age the romantic partner starts acting as a secure base, our sample consisted of adolescents with limited romantic experience (Markiewicz et al., 2006). Thus, it can be strongly assumed that the role of romantic partner plays a crucial role in the fulfillment of an individual's attachment needs. With the role of different attachment figures in the lives of adolescents as acting as a secure base for attachment, we can infer that romantic beliefs of adolescents are impacted the most by those attachment figures who they perceive as a secure base for attachment.

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This research also studied the role of sex as a contributory factor towards development of idealistic perception of love. The impact of sex on romanticism is consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Cunningham and Antill (1981). Given the unequal and small sample size the ANOVA test predicted minor differences between the romantic beliefs between male and female participants, wherein males were found to have relatively more idealized romantic beliefs. This is in line with previous research findings, which indicate that it is gender-role orientation that plays a more important role in romanticism of romance than the biological sex itself. The functionalist perspective is a prospective explanation for the same. As early research studying the effect of gender on romantic beliefs have shown men to be more romantic than women (Fengler, 1974; Heiger & Troll, 1973; Hobart, 1958; Kephart, 1967; Knox & Sporakowski, 1968), the functionalist perspective positioned that men are likely to be more romantic than women because of greater financial independence, which leads them to be in a better position to select a partner on the basis of love alone which is more idealistic (Dion & Dion, 1985). However, with time and more economic empowerment of women, such differences are expected to decrease as well. This is consistent with recent studies (Cunningham & Antill, 1981; Simpson et al., 1986). The functionalist perspective, thus, supports the results of this study since the sample used belonged to upper middle-class households. As per our knowledge, the variable of romantic experience and its relationship with romantic beliefs is sparsely studied, especially for adolescents. Particularly, no studies were found which compared the differences in romantic beliefs of people who have had no romantic experience with people who have had romantic experiences. While it was hypothesized that romantic experience would prove to be a significant contributor owing to people's tendency to form future expectations based on prior experience, the results did not support the hypothesis. Only minor differences in means of romantic beliefs were found between participants with and without romantic experience. Differences in romantic beliefs of males with romantic experience and those without romantic experiences were larger than differences in romantic beliefs of females with romantic experience and those without romantic experience.

In our sample, 43% of the participants had reported having prior romantic experience. This included people who were currently in a relationship (11 participants), people who had been in a relationship previously and were currently single (36 participants), and people who admitted to having informal romantic experiences (5 participants). Previous literature has indicated that the endorsement of romantic beliefs decreases with time that one spends in a relationship (Sprecher & Metts, 1999) and it has also been found that people usually show a decline in endorsement of romantic beliefs after the termination of a romantic relationship (Sprecher & Metts, 1999), which led us to hypothesize that the second group with romantic experience would show lesser romanticization of love. This is against the findings of the study that indicate that romantic shows more inclination towards romanticisation.

In a prior study done on Indian youth, it was found that people who had romantic experiences, had higher levels of romantic inclination (Ganth, 2013). Romantic inclination here reflects a degree of desire to fall in love and enjoy being in a loving relationship and being loved. This could show that a probable cause for why in our sample people with no romantic experience, which is 57% of our sample, did not show a higher romanticization of love is that they could be less inclined towards romantic relationships to start with. This would lead to less rumination about romance in general as well. However, the sample shows minor differences between the two and this would have to be further studied.

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It should also be noted that this is the first time as per our knowledge that romantic experience is being studied as a contributor to romanticized beliefs about romance in Indian adolescents. That said, it must also be reported that owing to the taboo associated with getting involved romantically at a young age and because parental consent was taken, participants may have given responses as per larger societal appeasement.

Implications

The study's findings show that having information about which attachment figure and which aspect of the internal working model contributes most towards development of idealistic beliefs of love can help counselors/psychotherapists in psycho-educating their clients in understanding themselves better and improving their mental health. The findings of this study will also serve helpful in the process of exploration in therapy especially in culturally-informed spaces for psychotherapists using an attachment-informed approach.

Limitations

The data for the study was collected from adolescents in the age range of 13-18 years, due to the younger demographic social desirability in responses may be present. There were disproportionate responses in terms of gender with female participants making up the major chunk of the database. The sample size was small so less generalisability was present. As less than half the sample (43%) had prior experience of being in a romantic dynamic and because of stigma around talking about romance/romantic beliefs, the influence of romantic partners on the internal working model of self and others might have been unreported. The wide range of communities that reside in India and the differences among them were not considered in the study.

Future Directions

Further studies can be conducted on media and impact of social media on romantic beliefs. In depth interviews to study personal experiences of the younger population regarding experiences around romantic relationships and romantic beliefs and to what extent they feel parental attachment contributes to it will help collect meaningful data and may lead to new insights. There has been scanty research in the Indian context in relation to attachment figures, so more cross-cultural research needs to be done in this area. The impact of romantic relationships during adolescence on parental attachment in adolescents can be investigated. Furthermore, looking at the skewed representation of men and women in the sample, with women significantly outnumbering men, it will be interesting to study the association of gender orientation with romantic beliefs in an Indian context.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to explore the influence of internal working models developed from parental attachment during adolescence on extra-familial relationships in the multicultural Indian context. The data that was subsequently collected indicated that model of other determines romantic beliefs more than model of self, model of other of mother, romantic partner and best friend was found to be significant in development of romantic beliefs and that sex doesn't determine romantic beliefs.

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Conflict of Interest

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