

Relationship and Impact of Attachment Patterns on Depression Within Both Parental and Peer Relationships During the Transition from Late Adolescence to Early Adulthood

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ABSTRACT

Depression, often referred to as sadness, is a pervasive mood disorder characterized by persistent feelings of sadness and disinterest, affecting an individual's thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. It can lead to various emotional and physical complications and is influenced by attachment patterns with parents, peers, and partners. While research has extensively explored this relationship during adolescence, there is a gap in understanding its impact across the lifespan. This study aims to investigate the relationship and impact of attachment patterns on depression during the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood. A sample of 120 participants, evenly distributed between genders, underwent assessment of attachment patterns using the ECR-RS and depressive levels using the BDI. Statistical analyses including correlation, t-tests, and regression were employed to analyze the data. The findings revealed significant correlations and impacts of attachment styles with both parents and peers on depression, highlighting the importance of attachment dynamics in understanding and addressing depression across the lifespan.

Keywords: *Relationship, Impact of Attachment Patterns, Depression, Parental and Peer Relationships, Late Adolescence, Early Adulthood*

Depression as a disorder

Depression or Sadness is a mood disorder characterized by enduring feelings of sadness and disinterest, impacting one's thoughts, behaviors, and emotions, potentially resulting in various emotional and physical complications. Symptoms may include changes in appetite or weight, disrupted sleep patterns, fatigue, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, difficulty concentrating, and thoughts of death or suicide. It's crucial for individuals experiencing these symptoms to seek assistance from mental health professionals, as effective treatments like therapy, medication, and lifestyle changes are accessible.

It is categorized and outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), a guide employed by mental health practitioners for diagnosing and categorizing mental health issues. In its fifth edition, known as DSM-5, depression falls under the umbrella term "depressive disorders,".

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Depressive episodes can vary in severity, ranging from mild to moderate or severe, depending on the number and intensity of symptoms and their impact on daily functioning in which the types of episode may include:

- Single episode depressive disorder: This occurs when an individual experiences their first and only depressive episode.
- Recurrent depressive disorder: Individuals with this condition have a history of experiencing at least two depressive episodes.
- Bipolar disorder: This disorder involves alternating depressive episodes with periods of manic symptoms. Manic symptoms can include feelings of euphoria or irritability, increased energy or activity levels, racing thoughts/speech, inflated self-esteem, reduced need for sleep, engaging in impulsive or reckless behaviors etc.

Depression arises from a multifaceted interplay of social, psychological, and biological factors. Conversely, depression can exacerbate stress and dysfunction, perpetuating a cycle that worsens both the individual's circumstances and their depression. Furthermore, depression is closely linked to physical health. Consequently, individuals grappling with these illnesses may also experience depression due to the challenges associated with managing their health. Preventive measures have proven effective in mitigating depression.

Parents and Children

The parent-child relationship is a unique bond between a caregiver and their child, encompassing emotional connection, communication, support, guidance, and nurturing. This connection profoundly influences the child's growth across various aspects, including emotional management, social skills, cognitive development, acquisition of skills, and behavioral control contributing to a positive self-identity. Parenting styles, introduced by psychologist Diana Baumrind, describe the overall approach parents use to raise their children, with four main styles identified in research.

- I. Authoritative parenting is characterized by parents showing warmth and responsiveness while also setting clear boundaries and expectations. While generally beneficial, this style may sometimes lead to stress and conflicts over high expectations and boundaries within the family.
- II. Authoritarian parenting entails strictness and demands from parents, emphasizing obedience and discipline over emotional responsiveness. Punishment is often favored over communication or negotiation. While this style may enforce compliance, it can lead to resentment and lower self-esteem in children.
- III. Permissive parenting is characterized by parents displaying warmth and responsiveness while exercising minimal control and discipline that allows their children considerable freedom without establishing clear boundaries or expectations. Although permissive parents may cultivate a strong bond with their children, this approach can result in behavioral issues and difficulties with self-regulation.
- IV. Uninvolved parenting is identified by parents' lack of responsiveness and expectations for their children. These caregivers are emotionally distant and neglectful, providing minimal guidance, support, or supervision. As a result, children raised in such households may face attachment challenges, low self-esteem, and difficulties managing their emotions.

Attachment refers to the emotional bond formed between a child and their primary caregiver, typically during infancy and early childhood. This connection is influenced by the caregiver's responsiveness, consistency, and sensitivity to the child's emotional signals. The quality of

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attachment depends on the caregiver's ability to offer comfort, security, and support while consistently meeting the child's physical and emotional needs over time. This bond establishes the child's feelings of safety, trust, and security, shaping their social and emotional development across their lifespan.

Attachment theory, stemming from John Bowlby in the 1950s and expanded upon by psychologist Mary Ainsworth and others, explores the importance of early relationships in shaping human development. This theory identifies three main attachment styles:

- I. **Secure attachment:** Children who develop secure attachment bonds with their caregivers experience a deep sense of security, affection, and encouragement. They feel confident in their caregivers' availability and responsiveness, allowing them to freely explore their environment and engage with others. When distressed or in need of reassurance, these children seek comfort from their caregivers, knowing that their emotional needs will be met.
- II. **Insecure-avoidant attachment:** Children exhibiting insecure-avoidant attachment patterns often demonstrate a reluctance to rely on their caregivers for emotional support or comfort. They may appear independent and self-sufficient, showing little distress when separated from their caregivers. However, beneath this facade of self-reliance, these children may suppress their emotional needs and struggle to trust others.
- III. **Insecure-ambivalent/resistant attachment:** Children with insecure-ambivalent/resistant attachment styles typically display a mixed pattern of behaviors characterized by both clinginess and resistance towards their caregivers. They may seek proximity and reassurance from their caregivers but exhibit anger or frustration upon separation. Despite their desire for comfort and support, these children may harbor doubts about their caregivers' reliability and responsiveness.

Peers and relationships

The importance of peer relationships lies in their ability to provide emotional support, companionship, and a sense of belonging. Peers offer opportunities for socialization, learning, and skill development, such as communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution. They serve as a source of validation, feedback, and encouragement, contributing to self-esteem and confidence building. Moreover, peer relationships facilitate the exploration of diverse perspectives, experiences, and interests, fostering personal growth and cultural understanding.

In summary, peer relationships are vital for individuals' social, emotional, and cognitive development, impacting their overall well-being and sense of belonging within their social networks and communities.

On a mental level, friendships offer crucial emotional support, serving as pillars during times of stress, anxiety, or depression. Through empathetic listening, understanding, and companionship, friends provide a safe outlet for expressing feelings and thoughts, thereby alleviating emotional burdens and promoting overall well-being which contributes to a positive self-image and improved self-esteem, buffering against feelings of loneliness and isolation. Moreover, the social interactions and engagements facilitated by friendships have tangible benefits for our physical health. Engaging in activities with friends often encourages and promotes healthy lifestyle habits. Additionally, the social support provided by friends can

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act as a protective factor against various physical health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, by reducing the harmful effects of chronic stress on the body.

Relationship between depression and parent peer attachment

During the early adult years and late adolescence, individuals face significant transitions and obstacles as they navigate both personal and professional aspects of their lives. Among the various factors influencing mental well-being during this period, the connection between depression and attachment style stands out as an essential area of investigation.

According to attachment theory, the quality of early relationships shapes individuals' attachment styles, subsequently impacting how they interact with others and regulate their emotions. Understanding the intersection of attachment styles and depression in early adulthood provides valuable insights for prevention, intervention, and overall mental health promotion. In this developmental stage, individuals may exhibit a range of attachment styles, including secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant, influenced by their experiences during childhood and adolescence.

Early adulthood is often characterized by heightened susceptibility to depression due to various stressors such as academic pressures, career uncertainties, financial strains, and interpersonal difficulties. Conversely, those with insecure attachment styles, are more prone to depression due to challenges in forming and maintaining healthy relationships, regulating emotions, and seeking assistance when needed. Multiple factors contribute to this relationship, including feelings of loneliness, rejection, and social isolation among insecurely attached individuals, as well as maladaptive coping mechanisms like emotional suppression or withdrawal.

Peer interactions are vital for young adults, impacting their emotional health and offering crucial social backing. Attachment styles influence how these relationships unfold, affecting individuals' ability to cope with challenges and access support. Studies have revealed a connection between attachment styles, peer dynamics, and depression among early adults. These findings emphasize the significance of recognizing attachment dynamics in comprehending mental health outcomes in this demographic. Additionally, research indicates a link between attachment styles and vulnerability to depression during early adulthood. Those with insecure attachment patterns may face heightened risks of depressive symptoms due to challenges in establishing and sustaining supportive relationships.

Objective

The aim of the study is to assess the relationship and impact of attachment patterns on depression within both parental and peer relationships during the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood.

Rationale of the Study

The concept of Psychological or Mental health has become a significant focus of research in recent years, encompassing various concepts such as personality traits, disorders, coping strategies, and other related areas. Depression, which is a prevalent mental health disorder, significantly affects an individual's life, often resulting in deterioration of physical health, emotional distress, impaired functioning, and, in severe cases, self-harm.

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One of the most influential factors contributing to the development and exacerbation of depression is the quality of one's relationship with their parents. Parents serve as the primary caregivers and protective figures during childhood, shaping individuals' attachment styles – the patterns of emotional connection and reliance on others. These attachment styles, whether avoidant, anxious, or neutral, can significantly influence an individual's vulnerability to depression. While there has been extensive research on the association between attachment styles and depression during early and late adolescence, there is a notable gap in understanding how parental and peer attachment styles continue to influence depression levels in adulthood. Despite the enduring significance of attachment figures throughout the lifespan, few studies have explored this relationship in adult populations.

Understanding the impact of parental and peer attachment styles on adult depression levels is crucial for several reasons. First, it acknowledges the enduring influence of early relationships on mental health outcomes beyond adolescence. Second, it recognizes the dynamic nature of attachment relationships, which may continue to evolve and exert effects into adulthood. Third, it highlights the importance of considering multiple sources of attachment support – both parental and peer – in assessing an individual's risk for depression.

Research Questions

1. Is there a correlation between avoidant attachment style and depression?
2. Is there a correlation between anxious attachment style and depression?
3. Are there significant gender differences in avoidant attachment patterns?
4. Are there significant gender differences in anxious attachment patterns?
5. Are there significant gender differences in depression levels?
6. Does anxious attachment style have an impact on depression levels?
7. Does avoidant attachment style have an impact on depression levels?

Hypothesis

1. There exists a positive correlation between Avoidant style and depression
2. There exists a positive correlation between Anxious style and depression
3. There are gender based differences in anxious patterns
4. There are gender based differences in avoidant patterns
5. There are gender based differences in depression levels
6. Anxious and Avoidant attachment styles are significant predictors of depression

Plan of the Study

The plan of the study is to evaluate the influence and connection of attachment patterns on depression within parental and peer relationships during the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood. In order to determine the same the participants were assessed on the basis of their attachment patterns (anxious and avoidant) and their recent depression levels. In order to quantify the data, Experiences in Close Relationships—Revised (ECR-RS; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) and Beck's Depression Inventory (Aaron T Beck, 1961) was used. Statistical analyses, including correlation and regression, were employed to evaluate the influence and impact of attachment patterns on depression and differences in avoidance/anxiousness and depression levels between males and females. The sample consisted of 120 participants with an equal gender ratio (60 males and 60 females).

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Research Gap

Lack of research specifically in respect to early adulthood and late adulthood involving how parental and peer attachment patterns influence depression.

Methodological Issues

- While the study aims to evaluate differences between males and females, the binary gender categorization overlooks non-binary or gender non-conforming individuals. Additionally, the study may not adequately capture the complexities of gender identity and its interaction with attachment patterns and depression.
- The population includes people of Delhi NCR which includes Delhi, New Delhi, Noida, and Gurugram only, and are limited to the same.
- Restricting the age range to 20-30 years in order to make it more specifiable may limit the generalizability of findings to other age groups within the broader late adolescent and early adult population.
- Longitudinal studies would offer stronger evidence regarding the temporal associations between these variables.
- The study focuses solely on parent and peer relationships, without considering romantic relationships.

Limitations

- The study concentrates on analyzing the dynamics within parent and peer relationships, excluding consideration of romantic relationships.
- The study's population comprises individuals residing in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR), encompassing Delhi, New Delhi, Noida, and Gurugram exclusively.
- The exact extent of the correlation is not depicted in qualitative terms but rather just an idea of what
- It can be by looking at the quantitative value of the correlation determined by statistical analysis.
- The participants comes from various economic backgrounds and religions which can be an influential factor

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dagnino et al. (2017) researched upon the influence of personality styles and social support on the relation between depression and attachment. The factors were examined in a sample of seventy clinically depressed outpatients, predominantly women. Assessment methods included the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale for adult attachment, Beck Depression Inventory for depressive symptoms, the Social Support Questionnaire for social support, and the Depressive Experiences Questionnaire for dependency and self-criticism. Regression analyses were utilized to explore mediation and moderation effects. Results indicate that self-criticism partially mediates the relationship between attachment dimensions which are anxiety and avoidance, with depression. Additionally, the study revealed the moderating effect of social support, stating that low satisfaction with social support and high anxiety levels in attachment are associated with increased depressive symptoms when avoidance is elevated.

Miniati et al (2017) researched upon review of literature examining the relationship between attachment style and suicidality. Results suggest that insecure attachment styles, particularly anxious attachment, and unresolved traumas are correlated with an increased risk of suicide. However, few studies have prospectively examined factors such as clinical course, comorbid psychiatric disorders, familial suicidality, or other psychosocial factors. It is posited that suicidal ideation and attempts may stem from the interplay between emerging psychiatric symptoms and long-standing patterns of inadequate attachment. The inclusion of Separation Anxiety Disorder in the DSM-5, not limited to childhood but recognized as an anxiety disorder throughout life, may offer insight into this link. Additionally, the role of oxytocin in this context remains uncertain from a neurobiological perspective.

Ebrahimi et al. (2017) researched upon the relation between attachment style, depression, and parenting. A total of one hundred and twenty-two graduate students from Zanjan University were randomly selected from a population of 845 students. Participants completed the Diana Baumrind Parenting Style questionnaire, the Collins and Reid Attachment Style (RAAS) questionnaire, and the Beck Depression Inventory. Results revealed a noteworthy negative association between authoritative parenting style and student depression, as well as between secure and ambivalent attachment styles of parents and student depression. Conversely, a positive and significant relationship was observed between permissive and authoritarian parenting styles of parents and student depression. Additionally, a positive and significant correlation was found between parents' avoidant attachment style and student depression.

Heinze et al. (2018) conducted research on the moderating role of friendship attachment style in the relationship between exposure to violence and its impact on adult depression trajectories. Utilizing growth curve modeling, the researchers analyzed data from a longitudinal study spanning 12 waves (1994–2012) involving 676 urban high school students, of whom 54% were female. The findings revealed significant positive associations between exposure to violence during adolescence and self-reported symptoms of depression and anxiety in later years. Interestingly, securely attached adolescents exhibited faster declines in mental health symptoms in response to violence compared to their insecurely attached peers as they transitioned into adulthood.

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Scheffold et al. (2018) aimed to investigate the relationship between attachment styles and psychological distress in patients with advanced cancer. Key outcome measures included assessments of attachment insecurity using the Experience in Close Relationships Scale, along with measures of psychological distress such as depression, death anxiety, and physical symptoms. Results indicated that a considerable proportion of patients (64%) exhibited insecure attachment styles, with fearful-avoidant, dismissing, and preoccupied attachment styles being prevalent. Dismissing attachment was associated with increased physical symptoms, while fearful-avoidant attachment predicted higher levels of death anxiety and depression. Preoccupied attachment was linked to higher death anxiety levels.

Weisskirch et al. (2018) focused on the formation of psychosocial intimacy among emerging adults. A cohort of 232 college students in the emerging adult stage participated in the study. The results revealed that factors such as identity development, low attachment avoidance, and self-efficacy in romantic relationships played crucial roles in predicting the development of intimacy. Moreover, individuals with higher levels of intimacy reported lower levels of loneliness, greater self-esteem, and increased happiness compared to those with lower levels of intimacy.

Allan et al. (2018) utilized various methods, including self-reports, interviews, observational data, and peer reports. The participants were followed from ages 14 to 24. The findings revealed that early maternal supportive behavior was associated/correlated with increases in attachment security from adolescence to adulthood. Conversely, interparental hostile and psychological control conflict were linked to decreases in attachment security over the same period. Regarding peer relationships, autonomous and collaborative behaviors, along with the absence of hostile interactions, predicted increases in attachment security. These peer-related predictions became more robust for relationships evaluated at later ages.

Heather et al. (2019) researched depression and attachment in college undergraduate students. The objective of this study was to explore if self-differentiation acts as a mediator between insecure attachment in romantic relationships and depressive symptoms in a group of 175 college undergraduates. Participants filled out surveys assessing self-differentiation, attachment styles, and depressive symptoms. Preacher and Hayes' (2008) approach was employed to analyze indirect effects in the mediation model. As expected, insecure attachment levels were linked to depressive symptoms through affect regulation.

Fraley and Roisman (2019) researched upon the reasons behind why some adults develop secure attachments while others develop insecure attachments in their relationships. Firstly, although early caregiving experiences are believed to influence adult attachment, the associations between them are often weak and inconsistent across different measures. Secondly, attachment styles are more susceptible to change during childhood and adolescence compared to adulthood, resulting in variations in socialization and selection processes. Thirdly, while early experiences play a role, they do not solely determine adult outcomes in attachment. Lastly, there remains much to be understood, and future research should focus on exploring attachment patterns specific to different relationships, distinguishing between distal and proximal factors, and investigating the interplay between relational and genetic vulnerabilities.

Philips et al. (2019) conducted an analysis involving 239 couples, majorly from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, who participated in a randomized controlled

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trial evaluating the effectiveness of the Supporting Father Involvement couples group intervention and sought to determine whether reductions in couple conflict following the intervention were linked to decreases in anxious or harsh parenting, and if differences in parents' attachment insecurity, depression, or anxiety levels mediated this relationship. The findings indicated that both mothers' attachment security and parenting behaviors significantly contributed to understanding children's internalizing and externalizing problems, alongside fathers' measures. Furthermore, fathers' anxious attachment style and levels of depression or anxiety served as mediators in the relationship between decreases in harsh or anxious parenting and post-intervention reductions in maternal conflict. Enhancements in attachment security were the only factors explaining these relationships among mothers.

Horner (2019) studied attachment disorders in which the ability to establish attachments with others is a fundamental skill that typically commences early in life. Children who form secure bonds with their caregivers tend to exhibit fewer internalizing and externalizing behaviors, possess higher social competence, and foster better-quality friendships. Conversely, those with attachment disorders demonstrate challenges in forming and maintaining relationships, display emotional depth variability, and often experience heightened conflict with peers. Insecurely attached children are at an increased risk of physical health complications and face difficulties in social, psychological, and neurobiological functioning that can persist into adulthood. It is imperative for pediatric nurse practitioners to adopt practices aimed at identifying children susceptible to attachment disorders and facilitating appropriate interventions.

Freudeman et al. (2020) aimed to examine whether attachment style moderates the association between social support and depressive symptoms, drawing from Mikulincer and Shaver's model of attachment system activation and functioning in adulthood. Analyzing the data, the study found that both avoidant and anxious attachment styles were significantly associated with depressive symptoms. However, the interaction between social support and insecure attachment varied: higher social support was linked to lower depressive symptoms among anxiously attached individuals, but this effect was not observed among those with avoidant attachment. These findings support the model, suggesting that attachment style moderates the relationship between social support and depressive symptoms, and highlight differences between anxiously and avoidantly attached individuals.

Zheng et al. (2020) studied the influence of anxiety and avoidance on depressive symptoms. The results revealed significant associations between both attachment dimensions and depressive symptoms. Further analysis indicated that attachment anxiety exhibited a stronger correlation with depressive symptoms compared to attachment avoidance, which showed a weaker association. The relationship between attachment anxiety and depressive symptoms was found to be moderated by cultural orientation and sex, while age played a significant moderating role in the relationships between both attachment anxiety and avoidance and depressive symptoms.

Golm et al (2020) aimed to examine a developmental sequence mediated by the functional consequences of early neurodevelopmental challenges on later adolescent functioning, and to investigate an alternative pathway involving sensitization to stress. The study revealed that the link between early institutional deprivation and adult emotional issues was influenced by the impact of early neurodevelopmental challenges on friendship difficulties

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and unemployment during the transition to adulthood. However, findings regarding early deprivation, later life stress, emotional problems, and reactivity were inconclusive. The analysis suggested that the risk for adult depression and anxiety after extreme institutional deprivation stemmed from the effects of early neurodevelopmental issues on subsequent social and vocational functioning.

Clear et al. (2020) examined a model positing specific associations between emerging adults' anxious and avoidant attachment styles and dysregulation and suppression of sadness and anger, as well as their unique correlations with emotional and behavioral problems. Results from a path model indicated that higher levels of anxious attachment were linked to increased emotion dysregulation, while greater avoidant attachment was associated with heightened emotion suppression. Moreover, greater dysregulation of sadness was uniquely and significantly linked to depression and social anxiety, whereas greater dysregulation of anger was associated with aggressive behavior. Participants reporting elevated attachment insecurities also reported more pronounced emotional and behavioral problems. Anxious attachment exhibited the most pervasive impact on all symptom domains, either directly or indirectly through emotion dysregulation. However, findings also suggested that focusing on the regulation of sadness, compared to anger, revealed distinct connections with depression and social anxiety as opposed to aggressive behavior.

Shen et al. (2021) explored the interconnections among childhood attachment, adult attachment, self-esteem, and psychological distress. As anticipated, childhood attachment demonstrated significant associations with self-esteem, adult attachment, and psychological distress. Moreover, self-esteem emerged as a significant mediator in the relationship between childhood attachment and adult attachment. Furthermore, adult attachment played a significant mediating role in the association between self-esteem and psychological distress which offer valuable insights for counseling interventions aimed at enhancing adults' self-esteem and attachment security while mitigating the adverse effects of insecure childhood attachment on psychological distress.

Gökdağ (2021) studies and underscores the interpersonal dimension of emotion regulation, alongside its intrapersonal aspects. Survey data were collected from 444 adults, evaluating IER, attachment patterns, perceived social support, and psychological symptoms. Findings revealed significant positive correlations between IER dimensions and anxious attachment, while negative correlations were observed with avoidant attachment. Notably, the strongest correlation was found between anxious attachment and the soothing strategy within IER. Structural equation modeling further indicated that attachment anxiety significantly predicted symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress, mediated by both soothing and social support.

Chernia et al. (2021) studied and delved into the Attachment Theory, which elucidates the development and intricacies of interpersonal emotional connections. Moreover, it offers a framework for comprehending individuals' relationships with the divine, which holds a pivotal role in religious contexts. The review encompasses fundamental principles of attachment theory and scrutinizes research investigating religion through the lens of normative attachment processes and individual attachment differences. Drawing from a range of studies including cross-sectional, experimental, and longitudinal inquiries, the analysis reveals that numerous religious individuals perceive God as a source of resilience,

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serving as a secure base and safe haven. Additionally, the study outlines proposed developmental pathways linking attachment to religion and with mental health.

Bishop et al. (2022) aimed to synthesize existing research concerning the correlation between Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMS) and depression. Employing systematic review and meta-analysis methodologies in accordance with PRISMA guidelines, data were sourced from PubMed, CINAHL, and PsycINFO databases. Analysis of 51 studies, encompassing a total of 17,830 participants, indicated a consistent positive relationship between all 18 EMS examined and depression, with effect sizes varying from small to large. Particularly, individuals reporting feelings of isolation or perceiving themselves as flawed, unworthy, or unlovable tended to exhibit elevated levels of depression. Nevertheless, the prevalence of cross-sectional study designs underscores the need for further longitudinal investigations to clarify the causal direction of the EMS-depression association.

Chopwig et al. (2022) investigated the links between relationship satisfaction in various familial contexts and adjustment indicators among 572 emerging adults aged 18 to 25. Results revealed that satisfaction with relationships with both mothers and fathers correlated with higher levels of adjustment. Moreover, the associations between relationship-specific satisfaction and adjustment were moderated by attachment anxiety and avoidance.

Cordella et al. (2022) explored how attachment styles shape individuals' experiences of social support, particularly investigating their moderating effect on the relationship between social support and depression. Findings indicated that positive social interactions emerged as the most crucial dimension of social support associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms. Additionally, the study revealed that individuals' attachment strategies play a moderating role in the relationship between social support and depression, with insecure attachment styles diminishing the beneficial impact of social support on depression. In conclusion, it suggests that exploring specific attachment strategies could serve as a valuable approach to safeguarding mental well-being.

Taylor et al. (2022) aimed to investigate how anxious and avoidant attachment to parents and best friends relates to depression and resilience in emerging adults who have experienced trauma. Through a battery of self-report measures, the study examined the unique contributions of anxious and avoidant attachment to mothers, fathers, and best friends to the variance in depression and resilience. The results from hierarchical linear regression analyses indicated that anxious and avoidant attachment to best friends was associated with decreased resilience, whereas only anxious attachment to a best friend correlated with higher levels of depressive symptoms which underscore the significance of nurturing positive peer relationships within the university environment as a means to promote secure attachments among emerging adults navigating challenging circumstances.

LoParo et al. (2023) conducted a longitudinal analyses in which the primary focus was to investigate the average levels and stability of peer rejection over time, alongside exploring its simultaneous relationships with demographic variables and psychopathological outcomes across development. Findings revealed relatively consistent mean levels of peer rejection over the study period, with peer rejection scores demonstrating moderate correlations at closer measurement intervals but attenuating over longer timeframes. Additionally, age, parental socioeconomic status (SES), and educational level were identified as associated with peer rejection at specific timepoints. Furthermore, peer rejection displayed concurrent

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links with depression, anxiety, and externalizing problems at each assessment point, with correlation coefficients ranging from approximately 0.3 to 0.5.

Martínez et al. (2023) conducted and studied a cross-sectional study in which the objective was to examine the relationships between early adverse stress, , pathological personality styles (self-criticism and dependency), attachment insecurity in adulthood (anxious and avoidant), difficulties in emotion regulation, and depression severity. The study found that anxious attachment in adulthood and self-criticism mediated the association between early adverse stress and depression severity by influencing difficulties in emotion regulation. However, early adverse stress was not directly associated with avoidant attachment in adulthood or dependency; instead, these variables were indirectly linked to depression severity. Furthermore, difficulties in emotion regulation were directly related to depression severity, mediating the effects of the preceding variables.

Wang et al. (2023) explored the complex interaction between attachment styles, depression, and anxiety, emphasizing their coexistence and profound effects on individuals' overall well-being. Different attachment types, including secure, preoccupied, fearful avoidant, and dismissive-avoidant, are examined for their implications on emotion regulation and psychological health. While secure attachment fosters positive self-perception and healthy relationships, insecure attachment styles may result in challenges in emotional regulation, heightening susceptibility to depression and anxiety. Additionally, the review discusses societal and environmental factors that may exacerbate mental health issues among adolescents, emphasizing the intertwined nature of attachment styles with mental health outcomes such as depression, social phobia, and suicidal ideation. Furthermore, it highlights social anxiety's role in moderating the relationship between attachment style and depression.

Dupéré et al. (2024) in which the research aims to investigate the role of close relationships in shaping risk and resilience among this demographic. Findings from a Canadian sample, predominantly comprising youth without postsecondary credentials, indicate that possessing strong abilities to maintain supportive relationships correlates with reduced depressive and substance-related symptoms. Additionally, the study reveals that support and minimal strain in relationships with parents and friends are associated with fewer depressive symptoms in early and mid-20s, while the significance of romantic relationships in this regard becomes more pronounced as individuals transition into their mid-20s. Strains in friendships, on the other hand, emerge as a significant predictor of substance-related problems during both early and mid-20s. These results underscore the multifaceted nature of relationships in influencing the development of diseases of despair in early adulthood. Therefore, fostering meaningful social connections and mitigating relationship strains could potentially aid in preventing diseases of despair among youth.

Seong et al. (2024) used a cross-lagged panel design and investigated the reciprocal relationship between interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) strategies, perceived social support, and their impact on depressive symptoms among 213 emerging adults in Korea. Results revealed that employing enhancing positive affect as an upregulation strategy for positive emotions predicted an increase in perceived social support and subsequently led to a reduction in depressive symptoms. Conversely, soothing strategies were directly associated with an increase in depressive symptoms. However, other IER strategies aimed at down regulating negative emotions did not show significant effects on perceived social support or

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depressive symptoms. Additionally, perceived social support did not predict longitudinal changes in the tendency to utilize IER strategies.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This research follows a quantitative correlational research design which aimed to assess the connection and influence of variables: attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) and depression. The sample population was selected using purposive sampling technique based on the age range which was 20 to 30 years of age. The form consisted of two questionnaires which included ECR-R and Beck's Depression Inventory. The ECR-RS questionnaire which consists of 9 items included the participants answering the same 9 items in respect to the maternal parent, paternal parent, and close friends. The data was collected physically and the ethics were adhered to.

Sample

The sample size included 120 participants of 1:1 ratio (60 males and 60 females). The age range of the participants included that of 20 - 30 years of age.

Instruments used

The standardized measures/tools included

- *Experiences in Close Relationships—Revised (ECR-RS; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000)*: which is a 9 item questionnaire used to measure the attachment style of the individual (anxious and avoidance). This follows a 7 Item Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items 1-4 have reverse scoring. The ECR-RS questionnaire which consists of 9 items included the participants answering the same 9 items in respect to the maternal parent, paternal parent, and close friends.
- *Beck's Depression Inventory (Aaron T Beck, 1961)*: which is used as a self report measure to give a quantitative analysis of the level of depression in an individual includes 27 items. Each item consists of 4 statements which required the participant to choose one which they identify with the most

Procedure

The study began by acquiring theoretical insights and reviewing research conducted over the past eight years to inform the research purpose while hypotheses and research objectives were formulated based on this background knowledge. The target population was identified through purposive sampling, and a sample of 120 volunteers was selected to participate in the research. Participants underwent assessments of their attachment styles and levels of depression. Statistical analysis techniques, including correlation, t-tests, and regression, were then employed to analyze the data and draw conclusions from the results.

Ethics

- Confidentiality protocols were strictly upheld throughout the study.
- Participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the research. Findings were shared with participants upon request.
- Participants were informed of their rights to participate and withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable or preferred not to continue.
- All participant inquiries, concerns, and questions were promptly addressed and resolved with care and efficiency.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULT, AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis according to demographic details

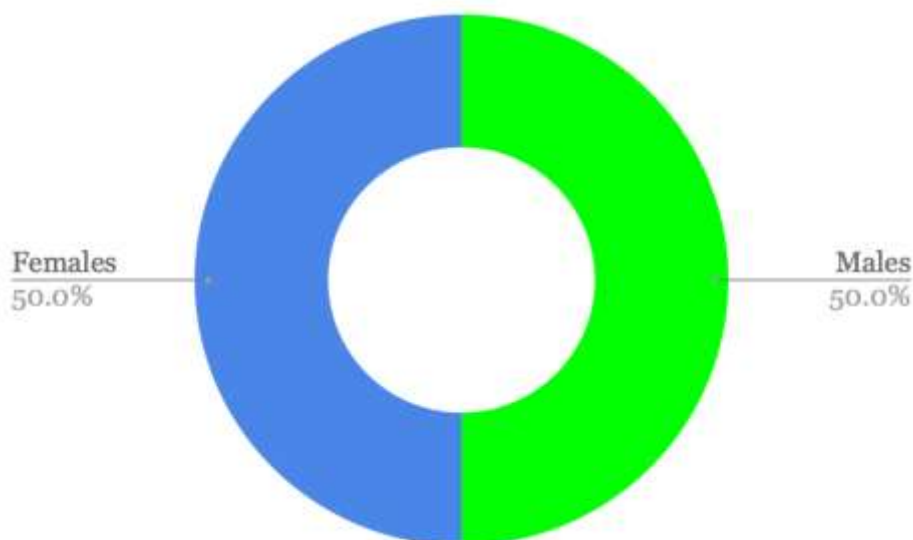
Demographic analysis according to gender

Table 1 presents the classification of participants based on gender, while Figure 1 provides a visual depiction of this categorization. The data reveals an equal distribution between male and female participants, with 60 individuals identified as male and an equivalent number identified as female.

Table 1 Gender of participants

Sno.	Gender	Frequency
1	Males	60
2	Females	60
Total		120

Figure 1 Graphical representation of the gender of participants



Demographic analysis according to age

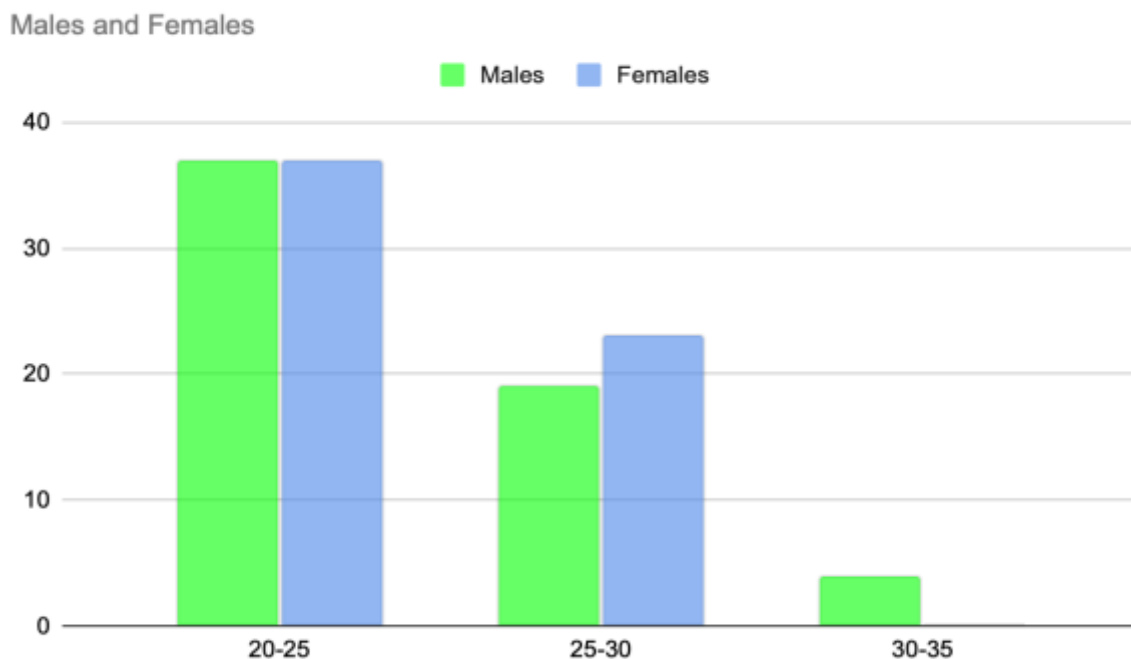
Table 2 illustrates the categorization of data based on participants' age, while Figure 2 presents a graphical representation of this data. The data collection process employed a purposive sampling technique, targeting individuals in their late adolescence and early adulthood stages. Specifically, participants aged between 20 to 30 years were included, portrayed in three distinct age brackets: 20 to 25, 25 to 30, and 30 to 35 years. Individuals up to 30 years old were eligible for participation in the research which was also the maximum age limit.

Table 2 Age of the participants

Sno.	Age intervals	Males	Females
1	20 - 25	37	37
2	25 - 30	19	23
3	30 - 35	4	0
Total		60	60

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Figure 2 Graphical representation of the distinct ages of participants



Correlation between attachment styles and depression

Table 3 Descriptive statistics and correlation of the study variables

Sno	Variable	n	M	SD	1	2
1	Depression	120	12.16	9.36	—	—
2	Avoidant attachment (maternal parent)	120	17.02	6.96	0.31*	—
3	Anxious attachment (maternal parent)	120	7.11	4.54	0.21*	—
4	Avoidant attachment (paternal parent)	120	20.27	8.21	0.25*	—
5	Anxious attachment (paternal parent)	120	7.98	4.89	0.29*	—
6	Avoidant attachment (peers and friends)	120	17.26	7.32	0.30*	—
7	Anxious attachment (peers and friends)	120	8.91	4.87	0.29*	—

The table delineates the correlation between avoidant and anxious attachment styles and depression concerning the maternal parent, paternal parent and close friends.

Considering the maternal parent, the calculated correlation coefficient (r) between avoidant attachment style and depression which is 0.31 and 0.21 respectively, which means that there is a positive correlation between avoidance and depression, and anxiety and depression but the level of correlation is low. Focusing on the paternal parent, the calculated correlation coefficient (r) between avoidant attachment style and depression which is 0.25 and 0.29 respectively, which signifies a positive but weak correlation. In respect to friends/peers the calculated correlation coefficient (r) between avoidant attachment style and depression which is 0.30 and 0.29 which signifies a positive but low correlation between the variables.

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Gender based differences in attachment styles and depression

Table 4 Descriptive statistics and t test between the study variables

Sno	Parameters	Males		Females		t stat	p (T<=t)	Cohen's d
		M	SD	M	SD			
1	Avoidance (maternal parent)	16.11	6.78	17.93	7.08	1.43	0.15	0.26
2	Anxiousness (maternal parent)	5.35	2.83	8.83	5.21	3.60	0.03	0.83
3	Avoidance (paternal parent)	20.11	8.49	20.43	7.99	0.21	0.83	0.03
4	Anxiousness (paternal parent)	6.6	4.42	9.36	4.98	3.21	0.001	0.58
5	Avoidance (peers/friends)	16.21	7.32	18.31	7.24	1.57	0.11	0.28
6	Anxiousness (peers/friends)	8.18	4.65	9.65	5.00	1.66	0.09	0.30
7	Depression	11	8.56	13.33	10.02	1.37	0.17	0.25

There exists a notable statistical contrast in anxious tendencies between males and females concerning their interactions with maternal parents, paternal parents, and close friends. Females exhibit a greater inclination towards anxiousness as compared to males. The p-values of 0.03 for maternal parents, 0.001 for paternal parents, and 0.09 for close friends, all three of the values falls below the threshold of 0.05, indicate significant differences with a 95% confidence level while in respect to paternal parent coincides with confidence level of 99% as well. There exists no significant difference in respect to the avoidance tendencies in all respects between males and females nor is there a difference between the depressive levels of males and females as the values of p falls above the threshold of 0.05. This suggests a lack of statistically significant difference between the genders in these two aspects.

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Table 5 Multiple regression table with the various attachment styles as predictors of depression

Predictors	S.E.	B	R	R sq.	Adj R sq.	a	F value
Avoidant style (Maternal parent)	6.65	0.23	0.31	0.10	0.09	14.22	0.001
Avoidant style (Paternal parent)	7.99	0.22	0.25	0.06	0.06	17.59	0.01
Avoidant style (peer/friends)	7.02	0.24	0.30	0.09	0.08	14.40	0.001
Anxious style (Maternal parent)	4.46	0.10	0.21	0.04	0.03	5.91	0.02
Anxious style (Paternal parent)	4.71	0.15	0.29	0.08	0.08	6.15	0.001
Anxious style (peer/friends)	4.69	0.15	0.29	0.08	0.08	7.09	0.001

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In respect to the maternal parent, with a percentage of 9.57% in avoidance style our significance F value 0.001 is lesser than 0.05 and 0.01, it shows a statistically significant impact of the variables on one another at 95% and 99% confidence level. This table depicts a positive impact of one variable on the other. Similarly in the table depicting impact of anxious patterns with a percentage of 4.20%, our significance F value 0.02 is lesser than 0.05, shows a statistically significant impact of the variables on one another at 95% confidence level. This table also depicts a positive impact of one variable on the other.

Considering the paternal parent, in avoidance style we get the percentage impact of 6.31% by multiplying R square by 100. With a significant F value of 0.01 which falls below 0.05, respectively, the statistical analysis demonstrates a significant relationship between the variables at the 95% confidence level. The table illustrates a positive influence of one variable on the other. Similarly, in the table illustrating the impact of anxious patterns with a percentage of 8.28%, our Significant F value 0.001 falls below 0.05 and 0.01, which confirm a statistically significant relationship between the variables at the 95% and 99% confidence levels. This table also highlights a positive association between the variables.

Focusing on friends/peers with a percentage of 9.05% in avoidance style, our significance F value 0.001 is lesser than 0.05 and 0.01, it shows a statistically significant impact of the variables on one another at 95% and 99% confidence level. This table depicts a positive impact of one variable on the other. Similarly in the table depicting impact of anxious patterns in friends/peers with a percentage of 8.31%, our significance F value 0.001 is lesser than 0.05 and 0.01 level of confidence, shows a statistically significant impact of the variables on one another at 95% and 99% confidence level. This table also depicts a positive impact of one variable on the other.

DISCUSSION

In recent years, psychological or mental health has garnered significant attention in research, covering various aspects such as personality traits, disorders, and coping strategies. Depression, a prevalent mental health disorder, profoundly impacts individuals' lives, leading to emotional distress, impaired functioning, and self-harm. The quality of one's relationship with their parents plays a crucial role in the development and exacerbation of depression, as parents serve as primary caregivers and shape individuals' attachment styles. While extensive research exists on the link between attachment styles and depression during adolescence, there is a notable gap in understanding how parental and peer attachment styles continue to influence depression levels in adulthood.

This research focused on exploring the relationship and impact of attachment patterns on depression within parental and peer relationships during the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood. Employing a quantitative correlational research design, the study aimed to assess the connection and influence of attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) on depression levels. The sample population, selected through purposive sampling, consisted of individuals aged 20 to 30 years. Data collection involved the administration of two questionnaires: the ECR-RS and Beck's Depression Inventory, which assessed attachment styles and depression levels, respectively. The research commenced with a thorough analysis of theoretical frameworks and existing literature to shape the research objectives and hypotheses. Following this, a sample of 120 participants participated in assessments measuring attachment styles and depression levels. Statistical techniques such as t-tests, correlation, and regression were employed to analyze the collected data. The research

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meticulously adhered to ethical standards by ensuring confidentiality, obtaining informed consent from participants, and promptly addressing any concerns raised. Participants were fully informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any repercussions. Furthermore, the study's findings were transparently shared with participants upon their request, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the research process.

In summary, this research offers valuable insights into the correlation between attachment patterns and depression as individuals transition into adulthood which paves the way for the development and implementation of effective interventions which are crucial for fostering healthier attachment relationships and alleviating the burden of depression among individuals.

The results of the correlation analysis reveal interesting insights into the relationship between attachment styles and depression across different relational domains, namely maternal parent, paternal parent, and close friends. When considering the maternal parent, there is a positive but low correlation between both avoidant and anxious attachment styles with depression. Similar patterns are observed with the paternal parent and close friends, indicating a consistent but weak association between attachment styles and depression across these relationships.

Notably, significant gender differences emerge in anxious tendencies across interactions with maternal and paternal parents, as well as close friends. Females demonstrate a higher inclination towards anxiousness compared to males in these relational contexts, as evidenced by the p-values falling below the threshold of 0.05, indicating significant differences with a 95% confidence level. However, no significant differences are observed between males and females concerning avoidance tendencies or depressive levels. This suggests a lack of statistically significant gender variation in these aspects of attachment and depression. Moving on to the regression analysis, the findings indicate a statistically significant impact of attachment styles on depression within the maternal parent, paternal parent, and close friends relationships. For instance, in the case of the maternal parent, both avoidant and anxious attachment styles demonstrate a significant positive impact on depression levels, as indicated by the F values falling below the threshold of 0.05, demonstrating significance at a 95% confidence level. Similar results are observed in the analysis of paternal parent and close friends relationships, highlighting the influential role of attachment dynamics in shaping individuals' depressive symptoms across various social contexts.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of considering attachment patterns in understanding and addressing depression, particularly within the context of different relational domains. The results also emphasize the need for gender-sensitive approaches in mental health interventions, given the observed differences in anxious tendencies between males and females across various attachment relationships. Further research in this area could provide valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying these associations and inform targeted intervention strategies aimed at promoting healthier attachment relationships and reducing the burden of depression.

The hypothesis that there exists a positive correlation between Avoidant style and depression, as well as between Anxious style and depression, has been accepted based on the analysis of the data. This finding indicates that individuals who exhibit higher levels of

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Avoidant or Anxious attachment styles are more likely to experience increased levels of depression. Furthermore, the hypothesis regarding gender-based differences in anxious patterns has also been accepted, suggesting that there are significant variations in anxious attachment patterns between males and females. However, the hypothesis regarding gender-based differences in avoidant patterns and depression levels has been rejected, indicating that there are no substantial differences between males and females in avoidant attachment patterns or depression levels. Additionally, the hypothesis that Anxious and Avoidant attachment styles are significant predictors of depression has been accepted, highlighting the importance of these attachment styles in influencing depression levels. Overall, these findings underscore the relevance of attachment styles in understanding and predicting depression, as well as the importance of considering gender differences in anxious attachment patterns.

While the correlation and regression analyses provide valuable insights, it's important to recognize the nuanced nature of these associations.

Firstly, attachment dynamics are influenced by a myriad of factors, including early caregiving experiences, social support networks, and individual differences. These factors can interact in complex ways to shape individuals' attachment styles and subsequent mental health outcomes.

Moreover, the relationship between attachment styles and depression may vary across different relational contexts. For example, the impact of attachment patterns on depression within the parent-child relationship may differ from that within peer relationships.

Additionally, the observed gender differences in anxious tendencies underscore the complexity of attachment dynamics and their implications for mental health. Factors such as socialization processes, cultural norms, and interpersonal experiences may contribute to these gender variations and warrant further investigation. Furthermore, while the correlation and regression analyses provide valuable statistical evidence, they cannot capture the full complexity of human relationships and psychological processes. Qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews or narrative analysis, may offer complementary insights into the subjective experiences and meanings attributed to attachment and depression.

Overall, navigating the complexity of the relationship between attachment styles and depression requires a holistic approach that considers individual differences, relational dynamics, and socio-cultural influences which can help in productive understandings and effective interventions to support individuals' mental health and well-being.

Additionally, the findings highlight the association between insecure attachment styles, notably anxious attachment, and unresolved traumas with an increased risk of suicide. Moreover, the study identifies significant relationships between parenting styles, parental attachment styles, and student depression, indicating both positive and negative associations. These results underscore the importance of considering familial dynamics and early attachment experiences in understanding mental health outcomes among adolescents and young adults.

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Moreover, the study suggests avenues for future research, including longitudinal and intervention-based designs, to further elucidate the mechanisms underlying these relationships and inform targeted preventive measures and interventions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study shed light on the complex relationship between attachment styles and depression across different relational domains. The positive but weak correlations observed between avoidant and anxious attachment styles with depression underscore the significance of attachment dynamics in shaping individuals' mental health outcomes. Moreover, significant gender differences in anxious tendencies highlight the need for gender-sensitive approaches in mental health interventions. While no substantial differences were found in avoidant attachment patterns or depression levels between males and females, the impact of attachment styles on depression remains evident across various social contexts. These results emphasize the importance of considering attachment patterns in understanding and addressing depression, as well as the need for further research to elucidate the mechanisms underlying these

Future Implications

There is a big research gap in studying the relationship between attachment style and depression in adults/older adults. There are many underlying causes of impact it serves in the later life of an individual and how they are affected by it. This topic needs to be researched more thoroughly not just concept wise but from a longitudinal perspective as well.

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Conflict of Interest

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