

Examining How Social Support and Attachment Style Affect Adult Well-Being

Fatima Khan^{1*}, Ms. Jincy Cherian²

ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced society, this research investigates the complex relationship between social support, attachment types, and well-being, particularly among adults. While social support—which includes both practicality and companionship—builds resilience, attachment theory explains how early experiences mold attachment styles. While insecure attachment types might make stress worse, stable attachments have a favourable correlation with wellbeing. Studies demonstrate how important social networks and safe attachments are for improving adults' general psychological health and quality of life, as well as how important social support is for lowering anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Keywords: *Social Support, Attachment Styles, Well-Being, Psychological Health, Quality of Life, Anxiety, Depressive Symptoms, Adults*

The two factors that most significantly influence an adult's well-being in today's fast-paced society are social support and attachment type. According to Hays (1988), social support, which includes companionship, emotional support, and practical and informational support, promotes social integration, a sense of belonging, and satisfies basic requirements for sociability and connection. Additionally, it increases confidence and self-worth by offering support and affirmation. Interpersonal conduct and psychological well-being are greatly shaped by attachment style, which is shaped by early experiences providing care (Bowlby, 1969). While insecure attachment styles may impede emotional control and the development of trust, secure attachment patterns promote more self-awareness, adaptive emotion regulation, and healthier relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Additionally, attachment type affects how people react to stress; those who are securely attached are more likely to ask for assistance and make good use of coping techniques (Bowlby, 1969). On the other hand, unhealthy coping mechanisms brought on by insecure attachment styles can exacerbate stress and endanger wellbeing. Promoting adult well-being requires an understanding of how social support and attachment styles interact. Establishing stable attachment styles and fostering connections of support improve emotional control and resilience, allowing for successful navigation of life's obstacles (Collins & Feeney, 2004; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Social support comes in a variety of forms, each of which enhances resilience and well-being in a different way. These

¹M.A. Clinical Psychology, Amity University, Noida, India

²Assistant Professor-I, Amity University, Noida, India

*Corresponding Author

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types include emotional, informational, material, and companionship support. While informational support promotes self-efficacy and decision-making, emotional support offers empathy and understanding that lower stress. Companionship support cultivates a sense of social capital and belonging, whereas tangible support provides material assistance to promote well-being. According to longitudinal research, social support obtained over time affects attachment security, highlighting the long-lasting importance of social connections for psychological adjustment. There are promising opportunities to promote interpersonal functioning and well-being in modern society through therapeutic interventions that focus on social support and attachment types. To sum up, through cultivating safe and stable attachment styles and supportive connections, people can improve their emotional control, resilience, and general mental health, which will help them deal with life's obstacles. Corcoran and McNulty (2018) observed that childhood adversity was connected with psychological discomfort and subjective well-being among Irish university students. It was discovered that relationship-specific attachment, and particularly attachment anxiety, mediated these correlations. Kapp (2018) questions the conventional diagnostic approach to autism spectrum disorder (ASD), calling for a more comprehensive understanding that goes beyond social dysfunction. They support a thorough understanding of the quality of life for people with ASD and highlight the influence of social surroundings in forming impairments. Slatcher and Selcuk (2017) developed the strength and strain model of marriage and health by synthesizing research on marital quality and health consequences. They emphasized the significance of adult attachment type and partner responsiveness in impacting physical health through intimate interactions.

Theoretical Framework

According to social support theory, which defines it as the support, direction, and emotional sustenance one receives from others, interpersonal interactions are crucial for fostering well-being and reducing stress. This includes a range of resources from friends, family, partners, and communities, such as informative counselling, emotional support, and practical assistance. This is enhanced by attachment theory, which connects early experiences of providing care to attachment patterns that influence how people interact throughout their lives. Early attachment interactions shape attachment types: dismissive-avoidant, anxious-preoccupied, fearful-avoidant, and secure. These attachment styles impact an individual's capacity to seek and benefit from social assistance as they get older. Social support relieves stress, while safe attachment builds resilience and self-worth. Both are essential for overall well-being. Happiness is enhanced by positive relationships, yet seeking support may be impeded by attachment-related worry. Creating networks of support is essential to promoting resilience and general well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Zhang et al. (2024) found that bullying victimization—physical, verbal, and relational—was linked to lower well-being in their study of 12,058 Chinese teenagers. While resilience mitigated the impacts of physical violence, it exacerbated the effects of verbal and relational victimization. The impact of physical victimization on school belonging was exacerbated by teacher support, whereas parent support did not significantly lessen the effects. The study emphasizes the negative impacts of bullying on teenagers as well as the complex functions of social support and resilience.

Yıldız and Eldeleklioğlu (2024) investigated 676 high school students' perceptions of kindness, attachment, and social support and found that these factors were positively correlated. The significance of secure attachment in promoting wholesome relationships and

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averting psychopathology is highlighted by the direct and indirect predictions it makes about perceived social support.

Li and Ren (2024) investigated the effects of physical exercise and social support on feelings of coherence in 964 rural left-behind children, discovering reciprocal predictions between the two. The fact that both variables had a positive impact on a sense of coherence suggests how important they are in fostering wellbeing.

Marrero-Quevedo et al. (2019) found correlations between attachment, personality, and psychological well-being among 1403 adults. Well-being was favourably connected with secure attachment, although avoidant and anxious attachment had negative correlations. Self-esteem provided insights for promoting well-being via mediating attachment and well-being interactions.

Meehan, Massavelli, and Pachana (2017) examined the relationships between humans and companion animals among 161 college students, demonstrating the value of pets as social support systems. The developed scales showed how pets fit into attachment hierarchies and highlighted their function in providing emotional support. These discoveries improve our knowledge of the interactions between humans and animals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Problem

To address the gaps in understanding regarding the influence of social support and attachment style on adult well-being.

Objectives

- To study the relationship of social support and attachment styles with well-being among adolescents.
- To study the relationship of social support with attachment style among adolescents.

Hypothesis

- There will be significant relationship of social support and attachment style with well-being among adolescent.
- There will be significant relationship of social support with attachment style among adolescents.

Tools

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley (1988). MSPSS has a high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.80-0.90$) for the whole scale and subscales, indicating good dependability. The MSPSS possesses robust construct validity, since it efficiently evaluates social support in all dimensions and exhibits a positive correlation with related measures. Its validity is supported by validation among various populations.

Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990). AAS has a high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.70-0.90$) for the overall scale and subscales, indicating good reliability. The AAS exhibits good construct validity, accurately differentiating across attachment patterns and exhibiting a correlation with associated measures. Its validity is supported by validation among various populations.

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Adult Wellbeing Scale- The scale is the Irritability, Depression, Anxiety (IDA) Scale developed by Snaith et al (1978). This scale allows respondents four possible responses to each item. Four aspects of wellbeing are covered: Depression, Anxiety and Inwardly and Outwardly directed Irritability. Irritability is one of the IDAS subscales with the highest internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.70-0.90$). The IDAS exhibits good construct validity, accurately differentiating across emotional components and demonstrating a positive correlation with comparable measures. Validation on a range of samples bolsters its validity.

Research Design

Correlational design was used to study the relationship between social support, attachment styles and adult well-being.

Sample

200 young adults belonging to the age group 16-25 years were included in the sample. Convenience sampling technique was used in the study.

Statistical Technique

Correlational Analysis was used to examine the quantitative data gained from the three scales (social support, attachment styles and adult well-being).

RESULT

The correlational analysis indicated substantial connections between the variables of interest, providing insights into the links between social support, attachment type, and adult well-being. Table 1 presents a correlation matrix for various variables (CAS, DEP, ANX, ODI, IDI), along with the significance level of the correlations.

Table 1: Correlations

		SS	CAS	DEP	ANX	ODI	IDI
SS	Pearson Correlation	1	.079	-.441**	-.304*	-.244	-.265
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.591	.002	.034	.091	.066
	N	49	49	49	49	49	49
CAS	Pearson Correlation	.079	1	-.101	.028	-.163	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.591		.489	.848	.263	.506
	N	49	49	49	49	49	49
DEP	Pearson Correlation	-.441**	-.101	1	.411**	.294*	.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.489		.003	.040	.000
	N	49	49	49	49	49	49
ANX	Pearson Correlation	-.304*	.028	.411**	1	.395**	.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.848	.003		.005	.000
	N	49	49	49	49	49	49
ODI	Pearson Correlation	-.244	-.163	.294*	.395**	1	.446**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	.263	.040	.005		.001
	N	49	49	49	49	49	49
IDI	Pearson Correlation	-.265	.097	.599**	.758**	.446**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.066	.506	.000	.000	.001	
	N	49	49	49	49	49	49

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Table 2: Correlations

		SS	DAS	DEP	ANX	ODI	IDI
SS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.033	-.228	-.271*	-.265*	-.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.787	.057	.023	.026	.006
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
DAS	Pearson Correlation	-.033	1	.224	.197	-.182	.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.787		.062	.102	.133	.292
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
DEP	Pearson Correlation	-.228	.224	1	.404**	.286*	.391**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.057	.062		.001	.016	.001
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
ANX	Pearson Correlation	-.271*	.197	.404**	1	.290*	.556**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023	.102	.001		.015	.000
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
ODI	Pearson Correlation	-.265*	-.182	.286*	.290*	1	.472**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.133	.016	.015		.000
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70
IDI	Pearson Correlation	-.327**	.128	.391**	.556**	.472**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.292	.001	.000	.000	
	N	70	70	70	70	70	70

This table shows Pearson correlation coefficients for various pairings of variables as well as their related significance levels. The variables are denoted by the following labels: ANX, ODI, IDI, SS, DAS, DEP, and ANX. Each entry in the table shows the correlation between two of these variables.

Table 3: Correlations

		SS	AAS	DEP	ANX	ODI	IDI
SS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.227*	-.144	-.157	.106	-.348**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.042	.199	.163	.347	.001
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81
AAS	Pearson Correlation	-.227*	1	.172	.264*	.084	.228*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042		.124	.017	.458	.041
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81
DEP	Pearson Correlation	-.144	.172	1	.434**	.198	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.199	.124		.000	.077	.001
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81
ANX	Pearson Correlation	-.157	.264*	.434**	1	.367**	.532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.163	.017	.000		.001	.000
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81
ODI	Pearson Correlation	.106	.084	.198	.367**	1	.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.347	.458	.077	.001		.003
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81
IDI	Pearson Correlation	-.348**	.228*	.377**	.532**	.327**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.041	.001	.000	.003	
	N	81	81	81	81	81	81

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This table shows a correlation matrix for several variables, including SS, AAS, DEP, ANX, ODI, and IDI. The Pearson correlation method is used to measure the correlations and provides information on the direction and intensity of each pair of variables' association.

DISCUSSION

The correlations between social support (SS), attachment style (CAS), and various psychological variables unveil insightful patterns in adolescent well-being. SS displays significant negative correlations with depression (DEP) (-0.441) and anxiety (ANX) (-0.304), and positive correlations with optimism (ODI) (0.294) and pessimism (IDI) (0.446). CAS also exhibits significant positive correlations with optimism (0.411) and pessimism (0.599). Notably, SS shows a weak positive correlation with CAS (0.079) that isn't statistically significant. Furthermore, DEP negatively correlates with optimism (-0.294) and positively with pessimism (0.599), while ANX positively correlates with pessimism (0.758). These findings underscore the intricate relationship between social support, attachment style, and psychological well-being among adolescents, emphasizing the importance of fostering secure attachment patterns and supportive social networks for resilience and emotional well-being.

The analysis reveals significant correlations between social support (SS), attachment style (CAS), and various psychological variables among adolescents. Specifically, SS correlates significantly with depression (DEP), anxiety (ANX), optimism (ODI), and pessimism (IDI), indicating its significant relationship with adolescents' well-being. Similarly, CAS demonstrates significant correlations with optimism and pessimism. However, SS does not significantly correlate with CAS, suggesting that the second hypothesis is not supported. In summary, while the first hypothesis regarding the relationship between social support, attachment style, and adolescent well-being is partially supported, the second hypothesis regarding the relationship between social support and attachment style is not supported.

The correlation between social support (SS), depressive symptoms (DAS), anxiety (ANX), obsessive-compulsive symptoms (ODI), insecurity (IDI), and a test variable. Significant negative correlations exist between social support and anxiety ($r = -0.271$, $p = 0.023$), depressive symptoms ($r = -0.265$, $p = 0.026$), and insecurity ($r = -0.327$, $p = 0.006$), indicating that higher social support relates to lower levels of anxiety, depressive symptoms, and insecurity. No significant correlation exists between social support and depressive symptoms ($r = -0.033$, $p = 0.787$). Positive correlations are observed between depressive symptoms and anxiety ($r = 0.404$, $p = 0.001$), depressive symptoms and insecurity ($r = 0.556$, $p = 0.000$), anxiety and obsessive-compulsive symptoms ($r = 0.197$, $p = 0.102$), anxiety and insecurity ($r = 0.290$, $p = 0.000$), and obsessive-compulsive symptoms and insecurity ($r = 0.472$, $p = 0.000$). These findings underscore the significance of social support in mitigating anxiety, depressive symptoms, and insecurity, while highlighting positive associations among depressive symptoms, anxiety, and insecurity.

The correlation analysis revealed significant negative relationships between social support (SS) and anxiety (ANX), depressive symptoms (ODI), and insecurity (IDI), suggesting that higher social support is associated with lower levels of these factors among adolescents. However, there was no significant relationship between attachment style (DAS) and anxiety, and a significant positive relationship between attachment style and both depressive symptoms and insecurity was found. This partially supports the hypothesis that social support is related to well-being among adolescents, but not the hypothesis regarding the

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relationship between social support and attachment style. Further investigation is required to fully understand these relationships.

The correlation coefficients and significance levels for various variables, including social support (SS), attachment anxiety scale (AAS), depressive symptoms (DEP), anxiety (ANX), obsessive-compulsive symptoms (ODI), and insecurity (IDI). Notable correlations include a significant negative correlation between SS and AAS (-0.227, $p = 0.042$), indicating that higher social support scores are associated with lower attachment anxiety. There's a significant positive correlation between DEP and ANX (0.434, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that higher depressive symptoms are associated with higher anxiety levels. ANX also shows a significant positive correlation with IDI (0.532, $p < 0.001$), while ODI correlates positively with IDI (0.327, $p = 0.003$). These findings emphasize associations between various psychological factors, yet caution against inferring causation, and suggest the influence of unmeasured variables on these relationships.

The hypothesis regarding the significant relationship of social support and attachment style with well-being among adolescents cannot be evaluated due to the lack of correlation data in the provided table. However, to assess the hypothesis concerning the significant relationship of social support with attachment style, the correlation coefficients between social support (SS) and various attachment styles (AAS, DEP, ANX, ODI, IDI) were examined. Results indicate a significant weak negative correlation between SS and anxious-avoidant attachment style (AAS) and a significant moderate positive correlation between SS and secure-independent attachment style (IDI). Yet, no significant relationship was found between SS and other attachment styles (DEP, ANX, ODI) at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

CONCLUSION

This study clarifies the intricate relationship between well-being in adults and adolescents, attachment style, and social support. Although there are notable adverse relationships between anxiety, depressive symptoms, and social support, there are different relationships between psychological characteristics and attachment types. While insecure attachment types may worsen unfavourable emotional consequences, secure attachment patterns seem to be advantageous for wellbeing. While certain theories, like the one linking social support to wellbeing, received some support, further research is required to completely understand the subtleties of these relationships. This study emphasizes the necessity of developing safe attachment patterns and supporting social networks in order to enhance resilience and emotional well-being throughout the lifespan. It also emphasizes the necessity of specialized interventions that target attachment types and social support in order to improve overall psychological functioning and quality of life.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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