

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study analysed the association between the two insecure adult attachment styles, which are Anxious and Avoidant and trust dimensions, namely Dependability, Faith and Predictability, with a motive to address the gap in research within the Indian cultural context. The study was conducted on the population of university students between 18 to 25 years from Kolkata. A correlational research design was incorporated alongside 80 participants who are currently in a romantic relationship. This research utilised standardised tools, which are the Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) by Collins (1996) and the Trust Scale by Rempel, Holmes & Zanna (1985), for data collection. The results of the study indicate a significant positive correlation between anxious attachment and faith. Anxious attachment and dependability share a positive association, though the results were not statistically significant and predictability shares a significant negative correlation, showing that such individuals view their partners as inconsistent, unstable and unpredictable. On the other hand, the findings for avoidantly attached individuals highlight a negative relationship with both dependability and faith. The results for both were statistically significant. Interestingly, no association was found between avoidant attachment and predictability. This study adds to the limited Indian literature by showing how attachment styles shape trust in young adults' relationships, offering culturally relevant insights. The findings can shed light on the significance of promoting secure bonds for healthy relationship dynamics among young adults, guide therapeutic strategies, relationship education, and future research on digital-age relational challenges.

Keywords: *Anxious attachment, Avoidant attachment, Trust, Dependability, Faith, Predictability, Romantic relationships and young adults*

Aristotle's statement, "Man is a social animal," is still relevant today. Since ancient times, human beings have been wired to seek connection, emotional support, reassurance, companionship, and a sense of belongingness. Therefore, interpersonal relationships have become a significant part of every individual's life. Amongst many forms of interpersonal relationships, romantic relationships are considered to be the most significant yet meaningful social ties. Such bonds provide a deeper sense of emotional security and belongingness. However, such is the case that people, especially in today's world, are alone

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A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

and miserable, and some are distressed simply due to their inability to form and maintain proper romantic relationships. This could often be due to deep-rooted psychological patterns that resulted from early childhood interactions with the caregivers.

Attachment styles, as outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2018), as “the characteristic way people relate to others in the context of intimate relationships, which is heavily influenced by self-worth and interpersonal trust. Theoretically, the degree of attachment security in adults is related directly to how well they are bonded to others as children.”

Bowlby, Ainsworth's and Hazen & Shaver's theoretical frameworks are the ways to understand, as they delve deep into the interactive patterns, the development of love, and the influence of early life experiences with their parents to produce different relationship styles and behavioural patterns in their relationships.

Bowlby (1969, 1988) was inspired by the ethological theory, particularly Lorenz's study of imprinting, which demonstrated that “attachment is innate and has survival value”. According to him, the child and the mother may have evolved an innate biological drive to maintain close physical contact, as those who remained close to their caregivers were more likely to survive. He believed attachment behaviours, such as the drive to seek closeness, are innate and triggered in response to specific situations like separation or fear. Babies exhibit innate behaviours, or "social releases" (e.g., crying, smiling), that ensure proximity to their caregivers. In the attachment, the crucial element is not just food but the provision of consistent care, attentiveness and emotional responsiveness. According to him, “attachment” bonds are formed between the primary caregiver and infant to make “the child feel a sense of security” (Collins & Read, 1990). He was regarded as “the founder of attachment theory.”

Ainsworth (1970), based on her research, the Strange Situation Procedure, documented how toddlers respond to the absence and subsequent return of their caregivers. It was on these observations, Ainsworth categorised attachment behaviours into three primary styles, namely Secure, Insecure ambivalent / Resistant and Insecure avoidant attachment style.

Hazen & Shaver (1987) had originally identified three attachment styles in their study, which are as follows:

1. *Secure Attachment*: Securely attached individuals are likely to enjoy intimacy and can feel that they can depend on their partner.
2. *Anxious Attachment*: Anxiously attached individuals are likely to seek higher levels of intimacy and validation from their counterparts. They are also likely to become overly dependent and worry excessively about how their partner responds to them
3. *Avoidant Attachment*: Avoidantly attached individuals tend to value their autonomy and self-sufficiency, often feeling uncomfortable with closeness. They may downplay the importance of relationships and prefer to maintain emotional distance.

The American Psychological Association (APA, 2018) defined Trust as “the reliance on or confidence in the dependability of someone or something. In interpersonal relationships, trust refers to the confidence that a person or group of people has in the reliability of another person or group; specifically, it is the degree to which each party feels that they can depend on the other party to do what they say they will do. The key factor is not the intrinsic honesty of the other people but their predictability. Trust is considered by most psychologists to be a primary

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

component in mature relationships with others, whether intimate, social, or therapeutic. Campbell and Stanton (2019) state that Trust refers to “the perceptions of partners’ dependability and faith in the future of the relationship. In addition to attachment styles, feelings of trust also relate to the success and satisfaction of any relationship” (Mikulincer & Arad, 1999).

The Dyadic Model of Trust (Rempel & Holmes, 1985) states that behaviour and perceptions of each partner in situations where their actions can either help or harm the relationship (referred to as diagnostic situations) are key in determining the trust between partners. In the long term, these actions and views determine whether a partner can be relied upon, predicting the overall stability of the relationship.

The rationale behind this study comes from the lack of research on this topic, especially in the Indian context. Although this has been widely researched in Western countries, not much has been done to understand these relationships in India, where cultural and social factors can make a big difference. As relationships in India, particularly among young adults, are becoming more complex, this study aims to fill that gap. By focusing on university students in Kolkata, aged 18-25, who are in committed relationships, this research delves into how different attachment styles can affect the levels of trust in their romantic relationships. This study is especially relevant today because relationships are changing rapidly due to social changes, increased independence, and technology. Young people today face different challenges and expectations in their relationships, and understanding the role of attachment and trust can help improve relationship satisfaction, self-awareness, and personal growth.

Several studies, both from a *Western and Indian perspective*, shed light on the contribution of attachment styles in shaping trust and overall relational dynamics.

Attachment styles:

Monteoliva, García-Martínez, & Calvo-Salguero (2016) assessed how young adults with varied attachment styles view the positive and negative outcomes of investing their time in their partners. Furthermore, it also aimed to identify if their views align with their inner mental frameworks linked to their attachment styles. It was revealed that securely attached individuals experienced more gains than expenses, while individuals with dismissive and fearful attachment styles viewed more expenses as more than gains in committed relationships. Moreover, secure and preoccupied attachment-styled individuals ranked behavioural outcomes that increase intimacy and closeness as favourable in contrast to avoidantly attached individuals. However, individuals with dismissive attachment styles ranked more outcomes that lead to loss of autonomy as unfavourable. Thus, the findings validate that there exists a consistency between the views related to the behaviour being assessed and the inner mental frameworks linked to the attachment styles of young adults. A study on sexuality and romantic relationships was conducted where the researchers explored the effect of anxious and avoidant attachment on sexual communication, gender roles ideology, sexual satisfaction, and the associations between the aforementioned constructs. The findings of the study state that gender role ideology and sexual communication played a significant role in the direct link between anxiety in relationships and sexual satisfaction, while sexual communication partly shaped the association between avoidant attachment and sexual satisfaction in women. However, lower levels of sexual communication were associated with anxious and avoidant attachment styles within men. (Goldsmith, Dunkley, Dang, & Gorzalka, 2016). Extending this line of inquiry to adolescent development, Denman, McMahon & Wilkinson (2005) tried to

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

“examine whether romantic relationships modify the impact of other attachment relationships on adolescent psychological health.” Regression analyses showed that “romantic relationships did not significantly reduce the influence of other attachment styles in predicting depression”. However, they did “significantly reduce the effect of peer attachment on self-esteem.” These findings suggest that while romantic relationships play a meaningful role in adolescent adjustment, they have limited influence on the predictive power of existing attachment relationships regarding psychological health.

Within the Indian context, attachment styles have also been shown to play an integral role in shaping the quality of romantic relationships and associated psychological outcomes. One such study by Baruah & Sutar (2024), exploring “the correlation between attachment style dynamics and well-being” in romantic relationships among young adults in the Indian framework, wherein the findings of the study highlighted that attachment styles and well-being impacted styles of communication, conflict resolution, and emotional expression, while childhood emotional deprivation weakened trust and reciprocity during adulthood. Similarly, a significant relationship was observed between attachment styles and conflict management styles. There was a positive association between attachment anxiety and avoidance, “with avoiding conflict management styles,” whereas “a negative correlation was found with collaboration”. Moreover, it was reported that females obtained an increased score in collaboration and a decreased score in competing, in contrast to males. (Das & Bhatt, 2024). Adding further nuance, Hira & Bhogal (2020) examine the contributions of individuals in romantic jealousy in the socio-cultural landscapes of India. The present research suggests that attachment styles are a predictor of romantic jealousy. It was found that anxiously attached individuals displayed elevated romantic jealousy, in contrast to avoidant individuals, who showed reduced jealousy levels. It was also revealed that attachment anxiety was a significant contributor to the prediction of romantic jealousy. Additionally, it was observed that trust and attachment avoidance are negatively correlated with Facebook jealousy.

Trust:

Uysal, Lin, and Bush (2012) in their work examined “the interplay between perceived partner concealment, self-concealment from one's partner, and trust within romantic relationships.” The results of this research highlighted that when a partner was perceived to be hiding information, it was associated with a decrease in trust. Multilevel analyses indicated that when self-concealment was higher, partners reported lower trust, while lower trust from partners was also associated with greater self-concealment, emphasising that in romantic relationships, it can create a feedback loop, where trust decreases and self-concealment rises, potentially undermining the health of the relationship over time.

Within the Indian context, a study by Jain (2022) examined “the correlation between Trust, Intimacy, and Relationship satisfaction among young adults” from an Indian perspective. It aimed to explore the links between “trust and relationship satisfaction, intimacy and relationship satisfaction, and the connection between trust and intimacy”. It also seeks to determine if there are any differences concerning the three variables, respectively, between the two sexes, males and females. The key findings revealed “a significant positive correlation between trust and relationship satisfaction, intimacy and relationship satisfaction, as well as trust and intimacy,” all at the 0.01 level of significance. Additionally, the t-test results showed “no significant differences between males and females regarding trust, intimacy, or relationship satisfaction”.

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

Attachment & Trust:

Both attachment styles and trust have consistently emerged as central factors in the quality and functioning of romantic relationships. One such empirical work that supports this is by Çimen & Ersanlı (2024), who examined the interaction between trust and the quality of adult romantic relationships amongst married individuals. It was seen that trust strongly predicted the quality of relationship among married Turkish couples, while the sociodemographic parameters such as sex, age, employment status, educational qualification, and duration of marriage also shaped these dynamics. Along similar lines, Yılmaz, Lajunen, & Sullman (2023) reported that individuals with anxious attachment styles impact trust through “relationship beliefs while avoidant attachment style displayed “a first-hand effect” and a weaker impact through beliefs. Evraire, Dozois & Wilde (2022) studied that attachment moderated the relation between excessive reassurance-seeking (ERS) and trust in Canadian couples. The study contributed to the existing research by showing anxiously attached individuals engaged in higher ERS and often reported lower trust. However, anxiously attached women reported higher trust when their male counterparts sought reassurance. In the case of men with avoidant attachment, an opposite pattern was observed. Furthermore, the possible risks of individuals with insecure attachment patterns were highlighted by Rodriguez, DiBello, Øverup, & Neighbors (2015), and revealed that attachment anxiety affects the association between trust & jealousy. Individuals with high attachment anxiety are likely to feel envious and indulge in behaviours such as snooping and controlling their partner, especially when their trust levels are low. Attachment anxiety also shares an association between interest and non-physical violence in a committed relationship. Additionally, the results suggest that when one experiences distress yet wants to be attached to their partner, they are likely to become envious, thereby trying to invade their partner’s privacy or show physical or psychological abuse. Adding to these findings, Holt and Fallon (2004) showed that individuals with secure attachment reported higher levels of trust across the dimensions of “faith,” “dependability,” “responsiveness,” “conflict resolution,” and “relationship concern”, with women with insecure attachment struggling with trust and conflict resolution in comparison to their male counterparts.

Chaturvedi & Arya (2018) examined the factors that indirectly influence the link “between childhood trauma” and “adult romantic attachment in India.” The “study utilised a correlational and cross-sectional design.” The key findings of the study concluded that participants had higher trauma levels and insecure attachment styles, followed by lower levels of trust. The findings indicated that self-esteem was negatively associated with romantic attachment; however, it did not serve as a mediator “in the link between childhood trauma and romantic attachment.” In contrast, “trust” also showed “a negative correlation with romantic attachment and did mediate the relationship between childhood trauma and romantic attachment”, from the Indian perspective.

METHODOLOGY

Aim: The aim of the present study is to explore the relationship between insecure attachment styles, namely Anxious and Avoidant and dimensions of trust, specifically Dependability, Faith, and Predictability in romantic relationships across university students.

Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant relationship between Anxious attachment and Dependability.
2. There is no significant relationship between Anxious attachment and Faith.
3. There is no significant relationship between Anxious attachment and Predictability.

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

4. There is no significant relationship between Avoidant attachment and Dependability.
5. There is no significant relationship between Avoidant attachment and Faith.
6. There is no significant relationship between Avoidant attachment and Predictability.

Research design:

A cross-sectional correlational research design was adopted to study the association between insecure attachment styles and trust among university students. Moreover, a quantitative methodology is utilised to test the hypothesis and systematically perform the statistical analysis.

Description of the sample:

Inclusion criteria:

- University students between the age range of 18- 25,
- University students who are currently in a committed relationship,
- University students who consent to participate.

Exclusion criteria:

In addition to the inclusion criteria, the study specified the following exclusion criteria wherein individuals:

- Not enrolled as university students within the age range of 18–25 years
- Not currently in a committed romantic relationship (e.g., single, in a situationship, or casually dating without any commitment)
- Did not provide informed consent to participate in the study.
- With a diagnosed mental or physical illness.
- With a physical disability or cognitive impairment.

Sample:

A sample size of 80 participants who were currently in a committed relationship of age 18-25, was included, out of which 37 participants were males (46.25%) and 43 were females (53.75%).

Sample selection:

A convenience sampling technique was incorporated, wherein the participants were recruited, taking into account the ease of access.

Tools used in the study:

1. **Participant consent form**
2. **Socio-demographic data sheet**
3. **Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996):** The Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) by Collins (1996) was incorporated as a measure to get an insight into the participants' attachment styles. The "Revised Adult Attachment Scale" was derived from the "Adult Attachment Scale" (AAS) by Collins and Read (1990), which was intended to evaluate the variations existing in attachment styles among different individuals. "The scale consists of 18 items," each "evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale," where 1 represents "not at all characteristic of me" and 5 represents "very characteristic." It also includes three distinct subscales, with each containing six items:
 - i. The close subscale assesses one's ease with "closeness and intimacy."

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

- ii. “The depend subscale measures” a one’s tendency to rely on others and expectations of receiving support
- iii. The anxiety subscale evaluates concerns about rejection and fears of abandonment by others.

An **alternative scoring method** for measuring attachment, based on two dimensions, avoidance and anxiety, has been proposed by Collins (1996).

- i. Attachment anxiety accesses the model of self
- ii. Attachment avoidance accesses others' models.

The **current study employs alternative scoring** since it emphasises “the two dimensions of attachment,” i.e. “attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance”, which aligns with the objectives of the study, making it more relevant.

4. Trust Scale (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985): “The Trust Scale, developed by Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna in 1985,” is a psychological instrument designed to assess “trust within close interpersonal relationships.” The scale evaluates “three key components” of trust:

- i. “Dependability”: Focuses on the partner's reliability and honesty, especially in situations involving risk or potential harm.
- ii. “Faith”: Centres on the belief in the partner's responsiveness and care, particularly when facing an uncertain future.
- iii. “Predictability”: Assesses the “consistency & stability of a partner's behaviour based on past experiences.”

The measure includes 17 items that assess both partner traits and conduct toward others. Each statement employed in this study contains “a 7-point Likert-type scale” that measures agreement “from -3 (strong disagreement) to 3 (strong agreement)” on a continuous scale. The author included modifications to certain statements as a way to prevent unintentional response misdirection.

Procedure:

The current study involved distributing questionnaires to participants using both offline and online methods. For the offline data collection, participants were approached directly and requested to sign a consent form before participating in the research. The consent form was then followed by a socio-demographic data sheet and two questionnaires, i.e. Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996) & Trust Scale (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985). In the case of the online method, a Google Form link was generated. Upon obtaining the consent, the link to the Google Form was shared with them. Upon completion of the data collection, the responses received from the participants through both methods were segregated and organised. Only the survey responses from participants who are currently in a romantic relationship were considered, as they were directly relevant to the study. After the completion of data sorting, the responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet and then scored as per the standardised norms provided in each of the scale manuals. These scores were then entered into statistical software (JAMOVI) for further data analysis, interpretation and discussion.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics wherein Mean (*M*) and Standard Deviation (*SD*) were computed. Furthermore, under Inferential statistics, Pearson’s product-moment correlation Coefficient

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

was incorporated. This analysis was conducted using JAMOMI (Version 2.6.24) to determine the correlations between the variables considered in the study.

RESULTS

To investigate the association between the two insecure attachment styles and dimensions of trust, both descriptive and inferential statistics (Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient) were incorporated. The statistical analyses were conducted using JAMOMI software.

Descriptive Statistics:

Table 1 highlights the Mean (M) and Standard deviation (SD) for the variables taken into account for the study.

Variables	M	SD
Anxious attachment	33.5	8.75
Avoidant attachment	19.1	10.3
Dependability	3.98	7.12
Faith	7.34	11.5
Predictability	2.66	7.20

The corresponding **Result Table 1** highlights the descriptive statistics, i.e. Mean (*M*) and Standard deviation (*SD*) scores of different attachment styles and dimensions of trust in a sample of 80 participants. The mean score for anxious attachment is 33.5, and for avoidant attachment is 19.1. It could be seen that the mean values for the anxious attachment ($M = 33.5$) are higher than those of the avoidant attachment style ($M = 19.1$).

The table also consists of the standard deviation scores for each of the different attachment styles, wherein the score for anxious attachment is 8.75 and for avoidant attachment, it is 10.3. The mean scores for the different dimensions of trust, namely Dependability, Faith and Predictability, are 3.98, 7.34 & 2.66, respectively. The mean values are seen to be higher for faith ($M = 7.34$) in comparison to dependability ($M = 3.98$) and predictability ($M = 2.66$). The standard deviation scores for dependability, faith and predictability are 7.12, 11.5 & 7.20, respectively.

Correlation Analysis:

Table 2 shows the summary of Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation for Anxious attachment, Dependability, Faith and Predictability among university students.

		Dependability	Faith	Predictability
Anxious Attachment	<i>r</i>	0.187	0.518***	-0.247*
	<i>p</i> -value	0.097	<0.001	0.028

*Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$*

The **Result Table 2** displays the association between the variables in romantic relationships from 80 participants. It shows that Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between Anxious Attachment and Dependability is 0.187, denoting that there is a slight

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

(almost negligible) positive linear correlation between them. Despite the negligible association, the obtained correlation is statistically non-significant as the obtained p -value is 0.097, which is greater than the standard 0.05 level of significance ($p > 0.05$, two-tailed) taken into account by the researcher.

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between Anxious attachment and Faith is 0.518, denoting a moderate positive linear correlation between the two variables. This correlation is statistically significant as the obtained p -value is < 0.05 (two-tailed).

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between Anxious Attachment and Predictability is -0.247, denoting a weak negative linear correlation between the two variables. This correlation is statistically significant as the obtained p -value is 0.028, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed).

Table 3 shows the summary of Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation for Avoidant attachment, Dependability, Faith and Predictability among university students.

		Dependability	Faith	Predictability
Avoidant Attachment	<i>r</i>	-0.475***	-0.300**	0.137
	<i>p</i> -value	< 0.001	0.007	0.227

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

The results in **Table 3** explain that Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between Avoidant Attachment and Dependability is -0.475, denoting that there is a moderate negative linear correlation between them. Despite the negligible association, the obtained correlation is statistically significant as the obtained p -value is < 0.001 , which is less than the standard 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed) taken into account by the researcher.

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between Avoidant Attachment and Faith is -0.300, denoting a weak negative linear correlation between the two variables. This correlation is statistically significant as the obtained p -value is 0.007, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed).

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient between Avoidant Attachment and Predictability is 0.137, denoting a weak positive linear correlation between the two variables. This correlation is statistically not significant as the obtained p -value is 0.227, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance ($p > 0.05$, two-tailed).

Hence, from the above results, we can conclude that there exists a significant association between the two attachment styles, namely Anxious and Avoidant attachments, and the dimensions of trust, i.e. Dependability, Faith & Predictability.

DISCUSSION

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between Anxious attachment and Avoidant attachment with the dimensions of Trust, namely Dependability, Faith, and Predictability, in university students from Kolkata who are currently in romantic relationships. Data collection was done using two tools: The Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS) and the Trust Scale, which were then administered to 80 participants, ranging in age from 18 to 25.

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

The findings of the present study suggest that there exists a slight (almost negligible) positive correlation between Anxious attachment and Dependability. However, this association is statistically not significant. As a result, the null hypothesis (H01), which states that there is no significant relationship between Anxious attachment and Dependability in trust, is accepted. This indicates that anxiously attached individuals may not consistently depend on their partners. This could be so because they jump to conclusions very quickly and their trust levels are based on momentary emotional states, for example, if their partner is busy and unable to reply to their text promptly, the anxiously attached may assume that the partner is “ignoring” them or they “do not love” them or is “cheating” on them and will in turn “leave” them (Levine & Heller, 2010). As a result, this could lead to inconsistent patterns of dependability.

Anxiously attached individuals also show a strong desire for closeness and reassurance stemming from their insecurities. This leads them to place hope in their partner’s response to assurance, affection, and care. They might do so by holding on to the belief that their partner possesses the necessary qualities for a healthy, long-lasting relationship. This increases their faith in their partner’s support and care. It is also found that there is an increased engagement in excessive reassurance seeking (ERS) by anxiously attached individuals, which is associated with lower levels of trust in romantic relationships (Evraire et al., 2022). Thus, our findings suggest that there exists a moderate positive correlation between Anxious attachment and Faith. This association is statistically significant. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha2), which states that there is a significant relationship between Anxious attachment and Faith in trust, is accepted.

Anxious attachment is likely to perceive their partners as unpredictable. This could be so because of their deep-rooted fears of rejection and abandonment, wherein a mere shift in their partner’s temperament or engagement can be viewed as potential signs of neglect or rejection, leading them to perceive their partners as unpredictable and inconsistent. This states that there exists a weak negative correlation between Anxious attachment and Predictability. This association is statistically significant. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha3) is accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between Anxious attachment and Predictability in trust.

Just like anxious attachment, Avoidant attachment was correlated with the dimensions of Trust, namely Dependability, Faith, & Predictability. The findings of the present study suggest that there exists a moderate negative correlation between Avoidant attachment and Dependability. However, this association is statistically significant. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha4), which states there is a significant relationship between Avoidant attachment and Dependability in trust, is accepted. Avoidantly attached individuals find it difficult to trust and open up to their partners. During tough times when they are in distress or hurt, such individuals are likely to withdraw and cope with the situation themselves rather than seek help, as they place a high value on independence and autonomy. This coping by withdrawal is their attempt to protect themselves from vulnerability and getting hurt in the future, in turn making them perceive their partners as less reliable (Campbell et al., 2019). They also resort to fleeing the situation through avoidance during times of arguments or conflict with their partner rather than communicating healthily and resolving the problem (Bretaña, Alonso-Arbiol, Recio, & Molero, 2022).

Additionally, people with an Avoidant attachment are very uncomfortable and unsettled when forming close and intimate connections with others. They have a strong tendency to repress

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

and avoid emotional connections and find it difficult to place their trust in others, even if it's their partner. This emotional detachment makes it difficult to have faith in their partner and view them as someone incapable, unreliable, and not worthy of their trust. In fact, their patterns of resorting to constant avoidance and withdrawal rather than opening up healthily to their partner also create long-term relationship problems concerning faith. Moreover, they could experience an extreme sense of discomfort. When their partner tries to establish a connection, tries to be affectionate with them, seeks closeness, offers support, and practices intimacy. They might view their partner's affectionate actions as an intrusion of privacy or perceive them as controlling (Delisle, 2025). Doubts could arise in their mind about their partner's intentions, leading to the erosion of faith in the partner and their relationship. Thus, there exists a weak negative correlation between Avoidant attachment and Faith. This association is statistically significant. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (H_{a5}) is accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between Avoidant attachment and Faith in trust.

For the interpretation of results, it could be understood that there exists a slight (almost negligible) positive correlation between Avoidant attachment and Predictability. This association is not statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_{06}) is accepted, which states that there is no significant relationship between Avoidant attachment and Predictability in trust. The findings indicate that people with an avoidant attachment do not engage with connections that involve emotional depth. They might only focus on and encourage those actions that match their need for independence. Moreover, such individuals are also less likely to engage in self-disclosure, which is an integral component in the maintenance of closeness and predictability in relationships (Keelan, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The present study explored the relationship between insecure attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) and dimensions of trust, which are dependability, faith, and predictability in romantic relationships among university students. Findings revealed that anxious attachment was positively correlated with faith, which is in line with the existing literature, as such individuals seek reassurance and believe their partners will meet their needs. Although anxious attachment also showed a positive but no significant association with dependability, it was negatively and significantly related to predictability, indicating that anxiously attached individuals often perceive their partners as inconsistent and unstable. In contrast, avoidant attachment displayed significant negative associations with both dependability and faith, reflecting the emotional detachment and distrust characteristic of this style, while no association were seen to emerge with predictability, possibly due to avoidant individuals' preference for independence and reduced reliance on relational stability.

Limitations:

1. The participant pool consisted mainly of individuals from the urban population of Kolkata, which may influence the generalizability of the findings.
2. While the study primarily focused on insecure attachment styles, specifically anxious and avoidant, the inclusion of secure attachment could have offered a more balanced and comparative view of the broader spectrum of attachment patterns.
3. Data was collected from individuals of different genders; the study could not examine gender-based variations in attachment and trust, largely due to time constraints.
4. Due to feasibility considerations, the study focused on heterosexual romantic relationships.

A Correlational Study on Insecure Attachment Styles and Dimensions of Trust in Romantic Relationships among University Students

5. Additionally, the study only captured participants' present experiences in their romantic relationships.

Future directions:

1. Broadening the demographic scope to include participants from varied geographic locations, socio-economic backgrounds, and age groups could contribute to a more comprehensive perspective on attachment and trust in romantic relationships.
2. Inclusion of secure attachment.
3. Inclusion of a wider range of relationship orientations.
4. Incorporation of qualitative approaches.

Implications of the study:

Attachment theory has been widely studied and researched in Western cultures, but this study provides insights into how university students who are born and brought up in the Indian culture experience attachment styles and trust, contributing widely to Indian contextual research. As the study focuses on Indian university students, it contributes to the limited body of literature in this cultural setting. It further opens avenues for more culturally nuanced research and emphasises the need to develop region-specific tools and interventions for romantic relationship health.

The results of the study can provide insights into the maladaptive patterns and several issues encountered by individuals with either of the attachment styles and help create an awareness of how to develop healthy relational patterns in close relationships. Professionals working with individuals with insecure attachment styles can incorporate these findings to create different therapeutic strategies that will benefit them in the long run. It can also be incorporated into various relationship development lessons for young adults at both a school and university level to foster empathy, emotional intelligence, and strengthen relational bonds with their partners.

Research identifying how anxious and avoidant attachment expressions appear in online and digital communication (including texting anxiety, ghosting, FOMO or persistent dependence) enables the development of relationship competencies for digital interactions among young adults. The findings provide a base of knowledge about human attachment that supports upcoming psychological investigations.

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Conflict of Interest

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