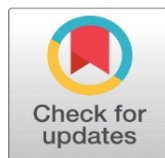


ATTACHMENT STYLE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

The well-being of an individual depends on many factors; emotional intelligence is one of these factors and affected by different attachment styles. Emotional Intelligence is the capability to recognize and understand own emotions as well as the emotions of others whom an individual interacted. Attachment style defines the identification of consistent and observable emotional and behavioural responses in close relationships. The purpose of present study is to find out the effect of different attachment styles on emotional intelligence among young adults. Emotional Intelligence and Attachment style of 96 young adults of age group of 18-30 years (45 males and 51 females) were assessed by Adult Attachment Scale (ASS) and The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT). Digital survey method was adopted to reach out to the young adult population and Pearson correlation coefficient method used to establish functional correlation between independent variables and dependent variables. The degree of influence of the variables on emotional intelligence was determined using linear regression, and a regression equation was derived. The results of the questionnaire-based survey suggest that different attachment styles are significantly correlated with emotional intelligence. Regression analysis also shows that secure attachment style successfully predicts emotional intelligence. These findings indicate that an individual with secure attachment is able to aware and deal with his/her emotions yet maintain control over difficult situations.

Keywords: Attachment Style, Emotional Intelligence, Secure Attachment Style, Anxious Attachment Style, Avoidant Attachment Style, Mental Wellbeing



1. INTRODUCTION

Attachment style and emotional intelligence are two interconnected constructs that have a substantial impact on an individual's well-being and relationships. Attachment style is defined as the distinct manner in which people interact with others in close relationships, which is significantly impacted by self-esteem and interpersonal trust. Ainsworth, 1973 & Bowlby, 1969, define attachment as "A strong emotional connection that endures over time and distance between two people." Theoretically, adults' attachment security is directly proportional to how well they bonded with others as children. Attachment orientations are thought to stem from infants' experiences with their primary caregivers and are associated with a variety of cognitions, emotions, and behaviors, such as the interpretation of emotional experiences, the use of coping mechanisms, and affect regulation strategies to deal with stressful events, and thus are closely related to emotional experiences and the broader concept of emotional intelligence. An individual may not be able to change genetic makeup or personality, but he can certainly learn from others to foster more healthy relationships.

The ability to recognize, utilize, understand, regulate, and control emotions is referred to as emotional intelligence (EI). Mayer and Salovey (1990) introduced the concept of emotional intelligence in their scholarly work. People with high emotional intelligence are able to recognize their own emotions and those of others, it includes the ability to perceive, manage and evaluate emotions.

- 1) Emotional intelligence encompasses qualities like emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and effective communication, which allow people to navigate social encounters, form healthy relationships, and make sound judgments based on emotional cues. It is essential for both interpersonal and intrapersonal competence, promoting overall well-being and success.

Studies have consistently found that attachment styles predict levels of emotional intelligence (Samadia et al, 2013). According to research, those who have a secure attachment style report higher levels of emotional intelligence and life happiness. They are more likely to have satisfying relationships, a positive self-image, and have effective emotion regulation skills. Individuals with insecure attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidance, may struggle to establish fulfilling relationships and achieve high life satisfaction. They may struggle with emotion regulation, understanding, and expression, and their overall well-being may suffer (Garg et.al, 2023). Adolescents who are insecure tend to have lower self-esteem, anxiety, and hostility than their secure peers. They have lower happy and more negative emotions in their interactions with others. According to Feeney (1995), insecure spouses experience more negative emotions and repress them more than secure relationships. Suppressing emotions might increase vulnerability to psychological pain and lead to a lack of appreciation and emotional regulation. Research indicates that people who ignore emotions pay less attention to them (Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995; Fraley, Garner & Shaver, 2000). Anxious persons focus on unpleasant feelings (Collins, 1996; Fraley & Shaver, 1997).

Research suggests that attachment orientation correlates with emotional intelligence (Bringen & Robinson, 1991; Magi, Distel & Liker, 1995). According to Magi and associates (1995), comfortable individuals were better at deciphering negative facial signals than avoidant persons. Anxious/ambivalent people exhibited faulty anger decoding, indicating a link between emotional decoding and attachment orientation. A meta-analysis was carried out by Walker, Double, Kunst, Zhang, and MacCann (2022) to determine the association between attachment styles and emotional intelligence (EI) in adult non-clinical populations. They comprised 26 investigations with 6,914 participants in total that employed attachment types and EI using validated psychometric tests. The authors used subgroup analysis and meta-regression to investigate the kind of EI (ability versus rating scales) as a moderator. The findings demonstrated that, whereas secure attachment was only significantly linked with EI rating scales, lower levels of anxious and avoidant attachment were strongly connected with both ability EI and EI rating scales. Patricia Luciana Runcan and Mihai-Bogdan Iovu (2013) explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among Romanian undergraduate students and found that self-esteem and social support partially mediate the relationship. An investigation of the relationship between adult attachment styles, emotional intelligence, and marital satisfaction was carried out by Power, Orlaith (2019). The results of the study indicated a negative correlation between anxious attachment and marital satisfaction, whereas a positive correlation was found between avoidant attachment and marital satisfaction. The study also revealed that emotional intelligence and secure attachment style significantly predicted marital satisfaction, with emotional intelligence being the strongest predictor. M. Engin Deniz and Erkan Işık (2010) investigated the relationship between attachment styles and positive and negative affect, life satisfaction, and coping with stress in Turkish undergraduate students. They discovered that while fearful and preoccupied attachment styles strongly predicted negative affect, secure attachment types were the only ones that could predict positive affect.

The present research studies the influence of attachment styles on emotional intelligence among young adults and also studies the effect of age on both the variables. The researcher is aiming to study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and different Attachment Styles (Secure, Anxious, Avoidant) and also to examine if attachment styles predict emotional intelligence.

The objectives of the research as selected by researchers were:

- 1) To study the effect of age on Emotional Intelligence and different Attachment Styles among young adults.
- 2) To study the relationship of Emotional Intelligence and different Attachment Styles among young adults.
- 3) To study the impact of different Attachment Styles on Emotional Intelligence.

2. HYPOTHESES

- **H01:** There will be no significant difference of age on Emotional Intelligence.
- **H02:** There will be no significant difference of age on different Attachment styles.
- **HA1:** There will be a significant correlation between Emotional Intelligence and different Attachment styles

- **HA2:** There will be a significant influence of Secure attachment style on Emotional Intelligence of an individual.
- **HA3:** There will be a significant influence of Anxious attachment style on Emotional Intelligence of an individual.
- **HA4:** There will be a significant influence of Avoidant attachment style on Emotional Intelligence of an individual.

3. METHODOLOGY

Sample

A sample of 96 young adults were selected through random sampling. The age range of respondents was 18 to 30 years.

Tools Used:

1) Adult Attachment Scale by Collins & Read (1990)

A sample of college students was used to design the 18-item Adult Attachment Scale, which measures several forms of adult attachment, such as comfort and proximity. close to others (Closed subscale), comfortable depending on others (Dependent subscale), and worried about not being loved or rejected (Anxiety subscale). Each item is rated on a 5-point rating system, where 1 is no feature and 5 is a strong feature. Collins and Read (1990) found Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .69 for closeness, .75 for dependent, and .72 for anxiety. The scale developers identified the following types of attachment:

- **Secure:** closure and dependency scores are high, and anxiety is low.
- **Anxious:** low scores on dependence and withdrawal, high on anxiety
- **Avoidant:** low scores on dependence, anxiety and closeness.

2) The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) is a method for measuring general emotional intelligence (EI) using four subscales: perception of emotions, use of emotions, self-control. significant emotions and managing the emotions of others. The SSEIT is based on the model of EI by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The SSEIT model is closely related to the EQ-I model of emotional intelligence. The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) consists of a 33-item self-rating that uses a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each subtest score is scored and then summed to obtain a participant's total score. Schutte and his institution reported a reliability rating of 0.90 for the emotional intelligence scale. In general, the EI score is quite reliable in adults and young people.

Variables:

IV: Attachment Style (Secure, Anxious, Avoidant)

DV: Emotional Intelligence

Procedure

The scales for assessing the attachment styles and emotional Intelligence were introduced to the participants through online mode (google forms), while informing them that they are participating in a research study. The participation was done on a voluntary basis. Respondents were asked to fill out a consent form before filling out the questionnaires and were informed that any information they shared would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The present research investigation aimed to study the effect of age on both the variables (Emotional Intelligence and Attachment styles) among the young adults as well as to analyse the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and different Attachment Styles (Secure, Anxious, Avoidant) and also to examine if attachment styles predict emotional intelligence.

Table 1 't' test of Age on Emotional Intelligence and Different Attachment Styles

Variables	Age	N	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Emotional Intelligence	18-23	67	115.03	13.234	2.145	0.038
	24- 30	29	107.07	17.994		

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Attachment Style_Total	18-23	67	56.1194	7.55289	0.048	0.962
	24- 30	29	56.0345	8.93022		
Secure Attachment Style	18-23	67	18.78	2.735	0.113	0.910
	24- 30	29	18.69	4.706		
Anxious Attachment Style	18-23	67	18.60	2.887	-0.779	0.438
	24- 30	29	19.14	3.623		
Avoidant Attachment Style	18-23	67	18.75	4.986	0.504	0.615
	24- 30	29	18.21	4.370		

The result, in Table 1, depicts the comparison of mean scores on the basis of Age. The results showed that age is significantly affect Emotional Intelligence and there is no significant effect of age found on different Attachment Styles among young adults.

The correlation was computed using Pearson correlation formula on 96 responses filled by young adults. Table 2 and Table 3 are showing the results of correlation.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Between the Total Score of Emotional Intelligence and Attachment Style

S.No.	Variable	N	M	SD	1	2
1	Emotional Intelligence	96	112.63	15.186	1	
2	Attachment Style_Total	96	56.09	7.94	0.375**	1

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

Table 2 is showing that there is a positive corelation between Emotional Intelligence and Attachment Style

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations to Study Variables

S.No.	Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Emotional Intelligence	96	112.63	15.186	1			
2	Secure Attachment Style	96	18.75	3.424	.376**	1		
3	Anxious Attachment Style	96	18.76	3.118	.320**	.091	1	
4	Avoidant Attachment Style	96	18.58	4.792	.145	.393**	.130	1

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

Table 3 is representing the significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Secure and Anxious Attachment style. It is also showing that Anxious and Avoidant Attachment style is also have a significant relation.

Table 4 Regression Analyses Predicting Scores of Attachment Styles on Emotional Intelligence

Model	Variables									
	Dependent	Predictors	R	R ²	F	P	B	β	t	p
1	Emotional Intelligence	Constant					81.386		10.075***	0.001
		Stepwise Regression Secure Attachment Style	.376 ^a	.141	15.448	<.001 ^a	1.666	.376	3.930***	0.001
2	Emotional Intelligence	Constant					57.249		5.253***	0.001
		Stepwise Regression Secure Attachment style	.473 ^b	.223	13.376	<.001 ^b	1.550	.349	3.809***	0.001
		Anxious Attachment style					1.403	.288	3.138**	0.002

Table 4 shows that secure attachment styles predict emotional intelligence among young adults. A value of Durbin-Watson (on the current sample is 1.361: normal range lower than one and above 3) indicates that the current data met

the assumptions of stepwise regression analysis. The findings of model 1 illustrates that $R^2 = .141$, $F = 15.448$, $P < .001$ and for model 2 values of $R^2 = .223$, $F = 13.376$, $p < .001$. The model's overall fit has retained two models, which collectively accounted for 14% of the variances, which means 86 % of unknown other factors that can predict the Emotional Intelligence among young adults.

Attachment style and emotional intelligence are interrelated concepts that can significantly impact an individual's interpersonal relationship and mental well-being. The present study conducted to find out the relationship between the Emotional Intelligence and Attachment style among young adults and also to find out that which attachment style is predicting the Emotional intelligence significantly by using liner regression analysis method.

The present research concentrated on the effect of age on the Emotional Intelligence and Attachment Style among young adults. The null hypothesis is rejected as the scores are showing that age is one of the significant factors which positively affect Emotional Intelligence of a young adult. Emotional Intelligence can develop with the age and it can be taught and learned. Chen Y. et al (2016) conducted research on the 360 Chinese adults (age range 20- 79 years) and found that older adults may use their increased emotional intelligence to enhance their SWB. A study conducted by Sharma D. (2017) showing the similar results that indicated significant impact of age on the Emotional Intelligence and its components. There is no significant effect of age is on different attachment style (Secure, Anxious, Avoidant). The study by Segal D.L. et al. (2009) on younger and older adults found that there were no age differences regarding secure, avoidant, and dismissing attachment style.

The result of Pearson corelation is showing significant correlation between the Emotional Intelligence and Attachment Style (Secure, Anxious, Avoidant). Research also suggests that secure attachment styles and Anxious attachment styles are significantly relate with emotional intelligence. People who have secure attachment types typically have better emotional intelligence scores. They are more likely to experience fulfilling relationships, and possess effective emotional regulation skills. The current research's findings are corroborated by numerous studies that show people with secure attachment styles have better levels of self-esteem than people with scared, dismissive, and preoccupied attachment styles (Bartholomew and Horowitz,1991, Brenna and Bosson,1998, Brenna and Morris,1997). Individuals with anxious attachment patterns are lacking the love or attention by their caregivers in childhood, becomes an expert in reading other people and adjusting their needs and emotional states to accommodate others. Deep down, these individuals feel emotional starvation and a constant need to connect because they never received this as children. This is maybe the reason of developing Emotional Intelligence in such individuals. The first alternative hypothesis accepted partial because present study found the positive significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Total score of Attachment style and also secure and anxious attachment style but there is no significant relationship found between Emotional Intelligence and Avoidant Attachment Style. The individuals with Avoidant attachment styles may face challenges in maintaining satisfying relationships and may struggle with emotional regulation, and have difficulties understanding and expressing emotions.

Research results also indicate that secure attachment styles predict emotional intelligence and anxious attachment style also partial predict emotional intelligence. This finding suggests that those with secure attachment types are more likely to exhibit positive traits including interpersonal abilities like self-awareness, self-esteem, self-consciousness, and self-actualization than those with anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Intrapersonal skilled people are more independent, self-assured, and capable of handling challenges (Turkum, 2002; Goleman, 2000; Stein, & Book, 2003), are aware of their emotions (Goleman, 2000), and more self-actualized (Bar-On, 2006). Many studies report that individuals with secure attachment style have higher level of self-esteem than those with Anxious and Avoidant attachment styles support the result of present research. Research conducted on undergraduate students by Samadi G.R. et al. (2013) showed that attachment styles significantly explain emotional intelligence and secure attachment style predict all sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence.

5. CONCLUSION

The results showed a positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Attachment Styles. The age of an individual is an important factor in term of emotional intelligence. The secure and anxious Attachment style are closely related to Emotional Intelligence. Secure attachment style predicts the emotional intelligence and also influence EI.

6. LIMITATIONS

The research is based on only 96 sample size which is small. The results could have been different if conducted on a larger population. The questionnaire was lengthy which makes the responses of the participants questionable. The participants might not have given genuine response as they may lose interest after some point. There was time constraint in conducting the research study because of which limited sample size was chosen for the study. This study is conducted on Indian population so therefore the study cannot be used for other countries and culture because culture does play a crucial role in developing attachment style and their perception towards romantic relationship which in turn affect the kind of love every couple have between them.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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