

How Does the Mother-Child Bond Reflect in Adult Romantic Relationships?-An Indian Perspective

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Abstract

Early attachment history with the attachment figure has been linked to the attachment style used in adulthood, especially in romantic relationships. The current study aimed to examine the role of parenting styles of mothers and mother-child attachment security in the development of attachment styles and how these attachment styles work as prototypes in adulthood impacting romantic relationships. The sample consisted of young Indian participants (n=156) with an equal number of males and females ranging from ages 18-25. An online survey form was distributed consisting of three tools- Parental Authority Questionnaire, on mothers (PAQ; Buri, 1991), Experiences in Close Relationships - Revised Questionnaire (ECR; Fraley, Waller & Brennan 2000), and Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden and Greenberg, 1987). The results revealed a significant negative association between insecure attachment styles (anxious and avoidant) and both authoritative parenting style and mother-child attachment security and a significant positive correlation with authoritarian parenting style. The permissive parenting style was seen to have a significant negative correlation with the avoidant-attachment style. Furthermore, the stepwise regression analysis indicated that certain factors can predict insecure attachment styles. Gender differences are to some extent relevant to the Indian context. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future prospects have also been discussed.

Keywords: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, mother-child attachment, anxious-attachment, avoidant-attachment, gender

1. Introduction

Human beings are said to be unique in the characteristics they own, however, the innate strong desire for love and nurturance from the attachment figures remains the same for everyone. Every child, in early childhood, needs their mothers for physical & psychological needs to survive. Consequently, they indulge in certain behaviors, triggered by survival instincts. Similarly, in adulthood, the attachment figure changes from the parent to the romantic partner, and thus, for the survival of the romantic relationship and healthy life the individual requires the love and support of their romantic partner. A multitude of research studies has found that the attachment style formed in early childhood is more likely to be carried into adulthood.

1.1. Parenting Styles

Baumrind's theory of parenting styles is based on two dimensions responsiveness and demandingness.

These include authoritative (high on responsiveness & demandingness), authoritarian (low on responsiveness & high on demandingness), and permissive (high on responsiveness & low on demandingness) parenting styles. A significant association was found between the parents' styles of child-rearing and the influence of these on their children's behavior & psychology (Baumrind, 1967; 1971).

Early studies suggest that the optimal style of parenting is the authoritative style, among others, as they are responsive to the needs of their child making them less sensitive to rejection (Du, 2020), is affectionate, warm, encourage psychological autonomy, and exercise reasonable parental control (Hong and Park, 2012; Karavasilis, 2003). Moreover, children develop higher self-esteem & can self-regulate distressing emotions using active coping strategies (e.g. problem-solving) unlike children of authoritarian parents who exhibit low self-esteem & resort to passive coping strategies such as avoiding the stressor or withdrawing (Anwer, 2017; Hong and Park, 2012; Wolfradt, 2003). Moreover, authoritarian parents are less accepting & more strict, prefer to constantly monitor children's activities, and harshly punish or threaten for incorrect behavior. They

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demand unquestioning obedience, are emotionally distant, and restrict psychological autonomy. Their children are likely to develop symptoms of depression and anxiety as well as indulge in risky behaviors (e.g., drug use) because of constant criticism and unhealthy parenting style (Calafat, 2014; King, 2016; Maccoby, 1992). Lastly, permissive mothers are extremely affectionate but prefer neither to monitor nor positively discipline children's behavior. The lack of structure and inconsistency in providing psychological independence engenders indecisiveness and unhealthy reliance which in turn develops impulsivity (Estevez et al., 2018; Akhtar, 2012; Du, 2020). Similarly, On the contrary, some literature has evidence that permissiveness leads to better psychosocial adjustment and employment of active coping strategies (Wolfradt, 2003).

1.2. Attachment Theory and Internal Working Models

Bowlby (1973) proposed the attachment theory stating that the relationship between the infant and the mother (primary caregiver) plays a significant role in the development of the infant's internal working models of self and others, and emotional regulation.

According to evolutionary studies, the child requires the mother for survival and the mother plays the role of the protector and nurturer of the child. Therefore, the need to stay close to the mother becomes a vital set-goal, which is achieved with the help of certain attachment behaviors namely, sucking, clinging, following, crying, and smiling. As the infant grows the attachment behaviors become more sophisticated. This theory is called the control theory of attachment (Bowlby, 1958).

This attachment behavior is common to every infant, however, the attachment figure's behavior, especially the mother's response to the calls and demands of the infant determines the type of attachment style. The mother-child attachment is healthy when the mother is able to provide security to the child and as a result, the child feels safe to proceed to explore the environment knowing s/he can seek comfort when needed and the mother is going to be available. On the contrary, if attachment security is absent where the mother is unavailable for the needs of the child then there is a likelihood of developing an unhealthy attachment style. This attachment pattern formed in childhood works as a prototype for future relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Collins & Read, 1990; Griffith, 2004; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

1.3. Attachment Styles and Mother-Child Attachment Security

The early infant-parent (mother) relationship was studied by Mary Ainsworth in 1969 (Ainsworth, 1978; Karen, 1998) whose famous Baltimore Lab study helped discover three distinct attachment patterns based on human babies' (aged 12 months) reactions to their mother's separation and reunion, namely- secure, anxious and avoidant.

Mother-child attachment security produces securely attached children who have healthy emotional development and acquire effective interpersonal communication skills (Anwer, 2017; Phang et al., 2020) as their mothers spend an adequate amount of time with them (Runcan, 2011). They have high self-esteem and can trust others (Boutelle et al., 2009). On the contrary, insecurely attached children lack a sense of security as instances of communication and trust are rare. Such children are quite defensive in showing their emotions (avoidantly attached) and are hyperactive (anxiously attached) in their social interactions leading to unstable relationships. They are more likely to receive fewer opportunities to develop socially and emotionally as they frequently experience negative emotions, thus leaving less scope for the full development of their potential and stable personality (Abbasi, 2016; Bowlby, 1973; Hong and Park, 2012; Curran, 2016).

Moreover, it has been found that these attachment styles are moderately stable for the first 19 or 21 years of life and are most likely to continue further in adulthood (Fraley, 2002; Waters et al., 2000). However, there is a likelihood of the attachment style changing due to a major life event (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2007). In fact, it has been found that insecurely attached individuals are able to form a secure attachment style in adulthood (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2007).

Empirical research (Hazan & Shaver 1987; Del, 2012; Millings et al., 2013) suggests that there is a significant link between early attachment patterns and attachment styles manifested in adult romantic relationships. This link has not been studied widely in the Indian context in comparison to the western context, thus the present study provides the first empirical evidence, to the author's knowledge.

The present study aims to investigate how parenting styles of Indian mothers and mother-child attachment security contribute to the formation of attachment styles in early childhood and how these play a crucial role later in adult romantic relationships.

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample

The sample was selected based on a convenient sampling method. This consists of 157 Indian participants between the ages of 18-25 who either were currently studying or had just completed their education in the same year the study was conducted. The inclusion criteria consisted that the participants were unmarried, had been in a romantic relationship at least once in the last 3 years, and lasted for at least 6 months.

2.2. Tools used

The sample was collected by using an online survey method. The following questionnaires were used to collect the data

2.2.1. Demographic questionnaire

Demographic information such as name, age, gender, educational qualification, and current city & state of residence was collected using a questionnaire containing.

2.2.2 Parenting Styles

Parenting styles of mothers were measured using Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri,1991). It measures Baumrind's (1971) three parenting prototypes with 10 questions for each on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The PAQ produces authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative scores for the parent. Test-retest reliability for mother's permissiveness (0.81), authoritarianism (0.86), and authoritative (0.78). Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) for Mother's permissiveness was 0.75, authoritarianism 0.85, and authoritative 0.82.

2.2.3 The mother-child attachment security

It was measured using the Inventory of parent & Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) where only parent attachment was measured to assess individuals' perceptions of the positive and negative affective/cognitive dimension of relationships with their parents. Three broad dimensions are assessed: degree of mutual trust; quality of communication; and extent of anger and alienation on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Almost never or Never true to 5= Almost always or Always true). The original version consists of 28 items for parents, yielding two attachment scores. Test-retest reliability is 0.93 for parent attachment.

2.2.4. Attachment style

It was measured using the Revised Experiences in Close Relationships- Revised Questionnaire (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000). ECR was developed to measure levels of relationship anxiety and/or avoidance experienced by individuals in romantic relationships. The ECR consists of 36 items producing a score for attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), where higher scores reflect a higher prevalence of attachment anxiety or attachment avoidance. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.90.

2.3. Procedure

A Google survey form consisting of all the mentioned standardized questionnaires was distributed to participants by employing the convenient and snowball sampling method. The first page of the survey form was the consent form consisting of some basic details of the researcher and the study without revealing the actual purpose of the research. Then, the nature of participation, confidentiality, and contact information of

the researcher was mentioned. Each questionnaire had standardized instructions to be followed along with that they were also informed that there were no right or wrong answers and that their honest answers were the requirement of this study. Once the form had been submitted, they were thanked for their patience and participation.

2.4. Data Analysis

The SPSS (Version 36.1) was employed for all the statistical analyses. After preliminary analyses for checking outliers, descriptive statistics were computed for demographic variables, predictors, and outcome variables. An independent t-test was run to check for gender differences. Further, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis was run among all the variables. Lastly, stepwise regression analyses were computed using parenting styles and mother-child attachment security (and its subscales) as predictors of attachment styles.

3.Results

Table 1.1: Descriptive Statistics for Demographics

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Skewness
Age	21.83	22.00	1.948	-.093
Gender	1.50	1.50	.502	.000
Education Background	2.28	2.00	.717	.056
City & State	3.38	1.00	5.341	2.571

The descriptive statistics for demographic variables have been summarized in Table 1.1.

In Table 1.2. the mean and median of all the predictor and outcome variables were fairly close to each other with their respective standard deviations. Among parenting, the authoritative style has the highest mean (M=35.90, SD=5.90) followed by permissive (M=32.16, SD=5.37) and the lowest is authoritarian (M=29.85, SD=7.65). Among the attachment styles, anxious-attachment has the highest mean (M=65.86, SD=18.36) and avoidant-attachment has the lowest mean (M=59.26, SD=16.25). Overall, among all the variables the mother-child attachment scale as a whole has the highest mean (M=98.40, SD=19.01).

The skewness for all the predictor and outcome variables was between -0.5 to 0.5 indicating that the data for all variables was fairly symmetrical.

Males have slightly higher means for Permissive (M=32.83) and authoritative (M=36.01) parenting styles, whereas females have a slightly higher mean (M=30.38) for the authoritarian parenting style.

For the mother-child attachment variable, it is observed that males have a higher mean (M=101.14) compared to females (M=95.65).

Females have a higher mean of anxious- attachment (M=66.81) and avoidant-attachment (M=59.27) compared to males (M= 64.91 and M= 59.24, respectively).

Table 1.2: Descriptive Statistics for predictor & outcome variables

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Skewness
Permissive parenting style	32.16	33.00	5.377	-0.197
Female	31.49		5.754	
Male	32.83		4.916	
Authoritarian parenting style	29.85	30.00	7.651	0.039
Female	30.38		8.065	
Male	29.31		7.226	
Authoritative Parenting Style	35.90	36.00	5.907	-0.248
Female	35.78		6.373	
Male	36.01		5.440	
Mother-Child Attachment	98.40	99.00	19.01	-0.223
Female	95.65		20.329	
Male	101.14		17.296	
Anxious-Attachment Style	65.86	69.00	18.365	-0.225
Female	66.81		19.197	
Male	64.91		17.567	
Avoidant-Attachment Style	59.26	58.00	16.258	-0.080
Female	59.27		17.212	
Male	59.24		15.357	

Table 2: Pearson’s Product Moment correlation

Variable	PERM	ATR	ATT	MCA	ANX	AVO
Permissive	1.00					
Authoritarian	-0.154	1.00				
Authoritative	0.565**	-0.329**	1.00			
Mother-child Attachment	0.426**	-0.513**	0.585**	1.00		
Anxious	-0.037	0.326**	-0.312**	-0.367**	1.00	
Avoidant	-0.204*	0.252**	-0.374**	-0.398**	0.704**	1.00

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

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

PERM= Permissive parenting style, ATR=Authoritarian parenting style, ATT= Authoritative parenting style, MCA= Mother-child attachment, ANX=anxious-attachment style, AVO=avoidant-attachment style

Pearson’s Correlation was computed, after checking for the normality assumption, to check for significant relationships between the variables and to check for the general hypotheses (Table 2).

According to the results obtained, there is a negative correlation between Permissive parenting style and insecure attachment styles [(anxious-attachment style $\rho = -0.037$, n.s.) and (avoidant-attachment style $\rho = -0.204$, $p < 0.05$)]; and positive correlation between Authoritarian parenting style and insecure attachment styles [(anxious-attachment style $\rho = 0.326$, $p < 0.01$) and (avoidant-attachment style $\rho = 0.252$, $p < 0.01$)].

Furthermore, significant negative correlation was found between authoritative and parenting style style $\rho = -0.312$, $p < 0.01$) and (avoidant-attachment style $\rho = -0.374$, $p < 0.01$).

There is a significant negative correlation found between Mother-child attachment and insecure attachment styles [(anxious-attachment style $\rho = -0.367$, $p < 0.01$) and (avoidant-attachment style $\rho = -0.398$, $p < 0.01$)].

Thus, this analysis provided evidence to support the general hypothesis as well as the first two (completely) and the third hypothesis (partially) out of the three specific hypotheses.

The below data indicates the predictor variables- mother-child attachment, permissive parenting style, and authoritative parenting style, as significant predictors of anxious-attachment style (criterion variable) while authoritarian parenting style was found to be a non-significant predictor. In all the four variables only these three variables were upheld as significant predictors.

Furthermore, multiple correlations for mother-child attachment, permissive parenting style, and authoritative parenting styles are $R = 0.457$. The adjusted R square is 0.188 which represents the actual contribution of the Predictor variables to the criterion variable. Hence the real covariance of the magnitude of the independent variables which contributed to the dependent variable (anxious-attachment style) came out as 20.8% for all three predictor variables.

Table 3.1: Stepwise multiple regression analysis (Anxious-Attachment style)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics R Square Change
1	0.457	0.208	0.188	0.208

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mother-child attachment, Permissive parenting style, Authoritarian parenting style, Authoritative parenting style

Table 3.2: Details of coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig	Correlation Partial
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	79.915	13.725		5.822	<0.001	
Permissive	0.788	0.305	0.231	2.585	0.011	0.206
Authoritarian	0.377	0.204	0.157	1.850	0.066	0.149
Authoritative	-0.780	0.309	-0.251	-2.526	0.013	-0.201
Mother-child attachment	-0.230	0.096	-0.238	-2.386	0.018	-0.191

Dependent variable: anxious-attachment style

The above data illustrates that permissive parenting style, authoritative parenting style, and mother-child attachment (Predictors) influence anxiety (criterion). The statistical values of t, given in the table, are- permissive parenting style (t= 2.585, p=0.011), while for authoritative parenting style (t= -2.526, p=0.013) and for mother-child attachment (t=-2.386, p=0.018), which indicate that all three t values are significant for the above-mentioned predictors providing enough evidence for the relationship between predictors and the criterion variable (anxious-attachment style).

According to the beta values, it is evident that when authoritative parenting style and mother-child attachment decreases anxious-attachment increases while the increase in permissive parenting results in an increase in anxious attachment. The correlation partial for permissive parenting is r= 0.206, for authoritative parenting style it is r= -0.201 and for mother-child attachment, it is r=-0.191 thus indicating that these

variables significantly influence the degree of anxiety. However, the authoritarian parenting style is not significant (t=1.850, n.s.)

The above data indicates the predictor variables- authoritative parenting style and mother child attachment, as significant predictors of avoidant-attachment style (criterion variable). However, permissive and authoritarian parenting styles were found to be non-significant. In all four variables only these two variables were upheld as significant predictors.

Furthermore, multiple correlations between authoritative parenting style and mother-child attachment are R=0.439. The adjusted R square is

0.171 which represents the actual contribution of the Predictor variables to the criterion variable. Hence, the real covariance of the magnitude of the independent variable which contributed to the dependent variable (avoidant-attachment style) came out as 19.3% for both predictor variables.

Table 4.1: Stepwise multiple regression analysis (Avoidant-Attachment style)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Change Statistics R Square Change
1	0.439	0.193	0.171	0.193

a. Predictors: (Constant), mother-child attachment, permissive, authoritarian, authoritative

Table 4.2: Shows details of coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig	Correlation Partial
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	96.152	12.272		7.835	<0.001	
Permissive	0.132	0.273	0.044	0.486	0.628	0.040
Authoritarian	0.110	0.182	0.052	0.603	0.548	0.049
Authoritative	-0.643	0.276	-0.234	-2.329	0.021	-0.186
Mother-child attachment	-0.217	0.086	-0.254	-2.516	0.013	-0.201

Dependent variable: avoidant-attachment style

The data indicate that authoritative parenting and mother-child attachment (Predictors) influence avoidance (criterion variable). The statistical values of t for authoritative parenting style ($t = -2.329, p = 0.021$) and for mother-child attachment ($t = -2.516, p = 0.013$), indicate that both the t values are significant for the above-mentioned predictors providing enough evidence for the relationship between predictors and the criterion variable (avoidant-attachment style). According to the beta values, it is evident that when authoritative parenting and mother-child attachment decreases, avoidant-attachment increases. The correlation partial for authoritative parenting style is $r = -0.186$ and for mother-child attachment is $r = -0.201$. thus, indicating that these variables significantly influence the degree of avoidance. However, permissive ($t = 0.486, n.s.$) and authoritarian ($t = 0.603, n.s.$) parenting styles were found to be non-significant.

4. Discussion

Prior research on how mothers' parenting styles and mother-child attachment security impact adult romantic relationships have not specifically focused on the Indian perspective on these variables. Thus, the present study provides the first empirical evidence, to the author's knowledge.

4.1. Parenting styles, attachment security, and attachment styles

The present study, in line with the hypotheses (1 & 2) and previous research, found that authoritative parenting and mother-child attachment security had a negative association with insecure (anxious and avoidant) attachment styles indicating that there is a strong likelihood of the presence of secure attachment style. Similarly, authoritarian parenting has shown to have a positive association with insecurely attached individuals, decreasing their possibility of having a secure attachment.

On the contrary to the expectation, permissive parenting has shown a negative association with anxiety-attachment and avoidant-attachment. However, the nonsignificant negative association indicates a likelihood of a positive association between permissiveness and anxious-attachment style.

There is a likelihood that this sample of individuals experiences some anxious attachment because of permissive parenting (Doinita et al., 2015). Characteristically, it may be due to low demand in maturity, inconsistency and lack of structure in parenting, and no provision of set norms or clear boundaries since early childhood (Akhtar, 2012; Karasavasilis, 2003; Millings et al., 2013).

This, collectively, results in a state of confusion; children become indecisive, lack psychological autonomy, and engage in impulsive behavior to gain their mother's attention (Akhtar, 2012). Unfortunately, this causes

distress that is internalized and increases the possibility of developing depressive and anxiety symptoms (King, 2016). Furthermore, the significant negative association with avoidant attachment can be supported by the fact that India is an honor-based collectivist country, thus, it promotes psychological dependence on parents instead of strict suppression of emotions (Agishtein et al., 2013) consequently, leading the children to become dependent rather than detached from their permissive mothers.

4.2. Influence on Romantic relationships

The stepwise regression analysis has shown that the absence of both authoritative parenting and mother-child attachment security, and the presence of permissive parenting were factors predictive of anxious-attachment style. While in the case of avoidant-attachment style, only the absence of both authoritative parenting style and mother-child attachment were the predictive factors. These findings provide evidence in concurring with previous research (Del, 2012; Millings et al., 2013) that individuals who do not have a healthy relationship with parents consequently develop negative internal working models of self and/or others and tend to manifest the same anxiety and/or avoidance in their romantic relationships.

Anxiously-attached individuals tend to use the same prototypical attachment pattern with their romantic partners. They are likely to find themselves having the same unhealthy strong desire for commitment in the relationship (Feeney & Collins, 2003) similar to their strong need for maternal attachment in childhood. This leads them to become obsessed with their partner, extremely emotionally dependent, lack trust & self-confidence (Feeny & Collins, 2003), and are excessively sensitive to the signs of both their partner's love and their possible rejection. Hence, they typically require constant reassurance to feel secure (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996; Marks 2016) and resort to detrimental ways to gain their partner's attention and at times just to see if they care for them. This tendency of indulging in such behaviors is the result of the insecure attachment they had with their mother where both her affection and presence were inconsistent and this subsequently led to the feeling of insecurity and the development of negative internal working models of self and others (Estevez et al. 2018).

Avoidantly attached individuals, known characteristically for being emotionally distant from attachment figures and having fear of intimacy, are uncomfortable in romantic relationships which demand expressions of love, affection, and healthy communication especially when their partners need their support (Millings et al., 2013). Therefore, children who have constantly conditioned themselves to suppress strong emotions, not trust their mother and resort to passive coping strategies to avoid feeling frequent negative emotions (eg. fear of abandonment) are likely to

use the same strategies in their adulthood with their romantic partners unless there is a change due to a life-changing event or psychological interventions (Doiniata et al., 2015).

They have poor interpersonal functioning skills and are less likely to seek emotional support in romantic relationships under stressful conditions which is unhealthy for themselves and their romantic relationship (Simpson & Overall, 2014; Simpson & Rholes, 2017).

Securely attached individuals, typically, report their experience in their romantic relationships as secure and healthy (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). This is because their early childhood relationship with their parents is usually affectionate, positive, trustworthy, caring, and accepting. Thus, they are likely to be responsive in caregiving to their partners just like their mothers did (Millings et al., 2013; Doiniata et al., 2015). Unlike insecurely attached individuals, securely attached individuals are effective in interpersonal relationships, such as romantic relationships, because their own attachment needs do not overwhelm them and perceive their partners as responsive and caring (Feeny & Collins, 2003; Curran, 2016; Dandurand et al., 2013).

However, the author of the present study recommends that it is important to take note of a different perspective where having anxiety or avoidance and making use of the coping/defense mechanisms is not always detrimental and harmful for the survival of a romantic relationship. Eg. It has been empirically observed that avoidantly attached couples reported having higher levels of contentment in the relationship when experiencing low levels of emotional intimacy compared to couples having lower attachment avoidance. Thus, having a partner with a similar attachment style might, in fact, be beneficial for the couple and it won't necessarily lead to instability. In this way, such couples can have a fulfilling relationship (Dandurand et al., 2013).

4.3. Gender differences

Another notable finding is that, in this sample, the majority of females receive more authoritarian parenting, while the majority of males enjoy permissive as well as authoritative parenting styles which are relatively better forms of parenting styles than the nonoptimal authoritarian parenting style. Firstly, the reason can be that India still harbors patriarchy where females are confined to strict rules and codes of conduct while boys are allowed more freedom and less supervision as they are valued more than females, which allows them better treatment (Nkosi & Daniels, 2007; Kausar and Shafique, 2008).

Consequently, they develop insecure attachment styles which hamper their romantic relationships.

Males too have scored almost equal on the avoidant attachment style, this was slightly unexpected. Although their mother-child attachment is secure, there is a possibility that men use avoidance in their romantic

relationships. There can be various reasons for this such as external influence or certain life experiences, or the mere patriarchal influence, where emotional distance to some extent is the norm. In the case of romantic attachment, these attachment styles can be more pronounced as males are not expected to be emotionally involved in relationships as much as females are expected to be. Moreover, a reason for females to be more insecurely attached to their romantic partners can be the result of the avoidant attachment style of males and the overall patriarchal influence on both males and females.

4.4. Limitations

This research is not without limitations. It is crucial to understand that attachment theory has been developed in the west, indicating a greater influence of the western culture on the theory. Thus, there is a higher possibility that despite the author's efforts the important aspects and the subtleties of Indian culture might not be accurately justified under the westernized theory. Moreover, most of the previous studies and research taken for support in the present study, have also been conducted in western countries and East Asian countries, and only a few in India. Thus, there is a lack of support from the Indian perspective in the results.

Attachment theory was developed in the west, and the complexities of Indian Culture may not accurately be justified, excluding the lack of support from the Indian perspective in the results.

The subjects were from the 18-25 Age Group based around Mumbai and a few other states. The research is a product of self-reported answers, and thus not immune to biases. The survey was conducted on an online platform, and there is no way to establish the engagement of the audience, and whether the participants filled it in one go or not.

Lastly, the father's parenting style was not taken into account in this study, due to several reasons, two prominent ones are - firstly, in Indian culture, the mother is the primary attachment figure and is the most influential in the life of an individual, at least in early childhood. Secondly, the number of questions would have been impossible for the participants to attempt resulting in fatigue and response bias, as the survey was online and there was no one to monitor the participants.

4.5. Future research prospects

India is home to diverse cultures which can at times be conflicting. It is necessary to investigate them to understand their role in the development of attachment styles. Future studies need to also focus on the father's parenting style, as studies show a correlation between the parents' behavior and how the differences influence the child. Moreover, parental influence is just as integral as past experiences when planning therapeutic intervention for young adults, thus necessitating more

similar studies. Additionally, this study can also help mental health professionals to enlighten parents about their influence on their children's later (adult) romantic lives and consequently encourage them to monitor their own behavior and make a difference in the child's life.

Furthermore, it is recommended that future researchers consider other factors that possibly influence the parent-child relationship such as the parent's/family's background such as socioeconomic status, parents' age, educational level, or any history of mental illness or substance abuse, and more.

Conclusion

The previous literature and the present findings suggest that there is a considerable amount of overlap of both the attachment style and the felt security, in the romantic and parental realms in adulthood. Individuals who have had a healthy bond with their mothers since early childhood are more likely to have a strong bond with their romantic partners in adulthood. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that individuals overcome their early childhood insecurities and become better partners and parents in the future for everybody's well-being.

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