



Impact of Parent-Child attachment on Mental Health among Early Young Adults: An Empirical Study

Tamali Sarkar¹ & Dr. Pankaj Kumar Paul²

1. Post Graduate (M.Sc.) Student in Psychology, The University of Burdwan, Burdwan, W.B., India, tamalisarkar68@gmail.com
2. Mentor & Corresponding Author, Assistant Professor & HoD, Department of Education, Gourav Guin Memorial College (VU), Chandrakona Road, Paschim Medinipur & Guest Lecturer, Faculty of Psychology, Burdwan University, Purba Burdwan, W.B., India, pankajpaul50976@gmail.com

Abstract:

Purpose: An endeavour was made to investigate the effect of parent-child connection on mental healthiness among early young people. The study was carried out on 102 participants (22 men and 80 women) comprising of ages in 22-34 years. **Tools/Techniques:** This study used the **SSDP** questionnaire to measure attachment to parents and the **MHQoL-7D** to assess mental health across seven dimensions. Apart from this, product moment correlation and students' *t* test have been used as statistical techniques in the analysis of the study. **Findings:** Found no significant differences in attitude among the respondents on mental health based on gender, social class and socio-economic status with little variation of mean scores. However, a modest but considerable positive association ($r = 0.41$, $p = 0.18$) was observed between parent-child attachment and mental health. **Comments:** A positive correlation exists between parent-child attachment and mental health among the early young adults. This means that parent-child attachment has positive effect on mental health and vice-versa.

Keywords: Parent-Child Connection, Mental Wellbeing, Early Young Adults, Attitude, *t*-test,

Introduction:

Attachment is a unique type of emotional relationship that involves the exchange of delight, soothe, and caring. According to John Bowlby, who studied attachment extensively, it is a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings." Different ways of interacting and acting in relationships are indicative of different attachment styles. These attachment types are primarily concerned with the communications between parents and offspring throughout their early years of life. The patterns of attachment in romantic relationships are characterized by adult attachment types. In the 1960s and 1970s, attachment theory and related research led to the development of attachment styles. The four main attachment styles recognized by psychologists today are disordered, avoidant, ambivalent, and secure.

Significance of the Study:

Early adulthood is a significant developmental stage characterized by changes in a variety of life areas, including education, career, relationships, and identity formation. During this period, people usually fight to achieve autonomy while maintaining links with family. As children get older, their interactions with their

parents become more nuanced in terms of value system, attachment, and relationship. They feel distant from their parents and frequently struggle to express their emotions and points of view. These factors typically contribute to mental health issues in young adults. Understanding how parent-child relationships influence mental health during this critical era may aid in predicting long-term psychological well-being.

Review of Related Literature:

In terms of relationship impacts, there were clear correlations between a parent's connection safety and a child's relational happiness. Angela G. La Valley and Laura K. Guerrero (2010) undertook a cross-sectional study (Kathryn Bourne, Katherine Berry, and Lisa Jones 2013) to look into the relationships between parent-child bonding and mental wellbeing. The study suggests that more research is needed to confirm these findings in clinical samples and to look into other factors influencing psychological mindedness. Guerrero, Kelsi A. (2015) employed a 308-person sample to study the links between perceived parenting styles, current connection styles, and emotion deregulations in young adults aged 18-25. Attachment was examined using the Close Relationships Scale-Revised (ECR-R), while parenting styles were evaluated using the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI). Parenting practices were found to be more strongly linked to anxious attachment than avoidant attachment. The study endorses the use of these metrics in clinical settings and encourages future research. Lorenza Di Pentima, Alessandro Toni, and Antonio Roazzi studied parenting styles and attachment experiences in May 2023, but gave little attention to moral development components. The study looked at the connection between parent-child bonding and mental healthiness in 307 young adults aged 19 to 25. It used the PSDQ to evaluate parenting styles, the ECR for attachment styles, and the MDS for moral disengagement. The study discovered a inverse relationship between dictatorial parenting style and attachment anxiety, attachment averting, and moral disengagement. Attachment anxiety, avoidance, and moral disengagement are all positively associated with authoritarian and permissive parenting approaches, respectively.

Statement of the Problem:

Attachment patterns in families have a significant impact on people's interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, and coping methods. According to research, secure attachment and effective communication improve mental health outcomes, whereas insecure attachment styles and dysfunctional communication patterns can cause psychological distress, increasing vulnerability to mental health issues such as disquiet, gloominess, and substance misuse. As a result, it is vital to grasp the root reasons of this idea. Thus, the current problem of the study might be expressed as, **"Impact of Parent-Child attachment on Mental Health among Early Young Adults: An Empirical Study"**.

Objectives

1. To analyse demographic details of the participants (Gender, Locality, Social class, Educational qualification, and Socio economic status).
2. To measure the demographic details of the respondents through descriptive statistics.
3. To discuss about the attitudinal difference of the respondents towards mental health according to gender.
4. To find out the effect of social class on studied participants according to mental health.
5. To study the impact of socio - economic status of the participants and its effect on mental health.
6. To determine the parent – child attachment and repercussion of this on mental health of young adults.
7. To measure the correlation between parent-child connection and mental healthiness of the studied respondents.

Hypothesis

H₀1: No significant differences exist about the attitudinal difference of the respondents towards mental health according to gender.

H₀2: No significant relation exists between social class and sound mental health of the respondents.

H₀3: No significant relation exists between socio-economic standing and mental healthiness of the respondents.

H₀4: No significant differences exist between parent-child connection and mental wellbeing of the participants.

H₀5: No significant correlation exists between parent-child connection and mental healthiness of the studied respondents.

Here participants demographic profile was assessed on the basis of following factors such as- Age (22-34 years), Gender (Male/Female), Locality (Urban/Rural), Social class (General/Others), Educational qualification (Moderately educated- high school/Highly educated- graduate and post graduate), and Socio-economic status (APL- income more than Rs. 15000 per month per household and BPL- income less than Rs.15000 per month per household).

Method:

Collection of Data:

Firstly, the process of collection of data was conducted through online google form. The informed consent column was added in the google form for better understanding about the process. Data were collected by using following scales: **Attachment to parents (ATP-SSDP)**, **Mental health quality of life 7D (MHQoL - 7D)**. Individuals were given 15 days to complete the form, with reminders sent out periodically to increase response rates. Total 102 data were collected and data was analysed using statistical software such as “Microsoft Excel (2021)” to calculate t-test and identify correlations between variables.

Population and Sample:

102 early young adult participants (M=22, F=80) were participated in this study. Data were collected on the basis of specific characteristics and criteria (Purposive Sampling) relevant to the research.

Description of Tools

- **Attachment to parents (ATP- Seattle social development project):** This scale was designed by M. Wayne Arthur, J. David Hawkins, J. Andrew Pollard, Richard F. Catalano, and A. James Baglioni. This easy tool measures a child's closeness to their parents. It also looks at how comfortable the youngster is communicating their thoughts and feelings with each parent. This tool contains four items, each of which is rated on a four-point scale (YES! = 4, yes = 3, no = 2, NO! = 1).
- **Mental health Quality of life – 7D (MHQoL-7D):** The Mental Health Quality of Life questionnaire (MHQoL) is a standardized evaluate of quality of life created to help people in assessing their mental health complications. The MHQoL-7D consists of seven questions covering seven different dimensions (self-image, independence, mood, relationships, daily activities, physical health, and future), each with four response options. The MHQoL - 7D index score spans between 0 and 21, with higher scores suggesting better quality of life.

- **Statistical methods used for Analysis of Data:** Collected data was analysed by using Student paired t-test (Microsoft Excel 2021), and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Analysis of Data:

Table –1: Particulars Showing Demographic Profile of Sample

MEASURES	GENDER		LOCALITY		SOCIAL CLASS		EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS	
N	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	General	Others	Moderately educated	Highly educated	APL	BPL
	22	80	98	4	75	27	5	97	57	45
Percentage	21.57	78.43	96.08	3.92	73.53	26.47	4.90	95.09	55.88	44.12

Source: Field survey, 2024

Analysis pertaining to H_01 : No significant differences exist about the attitudinal difference of the respondents towards mental health according to gender

Table – 2: Comparing Mean, SD and t-value of studied respondents according to gender

GENDER	N	MEAN	SD	t- value	df	CRITICAL VALUE (P>0.01)	REMARKS
MALE	22	176.81	21.66	1.08	100	2.626	Not Significant
FEMALE	80	171.23	20.94				

Source: Field survey, 2024

Note: $P>0.01$

It appears from table 2 that the null proposition is accepted and another hypothesis is rejected with no significant difference according to gender.

Analysis pertaining to H_02 : No significant relation exist between social class and sound mental health of the respondents

Table – 3: Comparing Mean, SD and t-value of studied respondents according to social class

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	t-value	df	CRITICAL VALUE (P>0.01)	REMARKS
GENERAL	75	173.19	21.64	0.62	100	2.626	Not Significant
OTHERS	27	170.37	19.82				

Source: Field survey, 2024

Note: $P>0.01$

It appears from table 3 that the null proposition is accepted and another hypothesis is rejected with no significant difference according to social class.

Analysis pertaining to H₀₃: No significant relation exist between socio economic status and mental health of the respondents

Table – 4: Comparing Mean, SD and t-value of studied respondents according to socio economic status

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS	N	MEAN	SD	t-value	df	CRITICAL VALUE (P>0.01)	REMARKS
APL	57	175.15	18.82	1.43	100	2.626	Not Significant
BPL	45	169	23.47				

Source: Field survey, 2024

Note: P>0.01

It appears from table 4 that the null proposition is accepted and another hypothesis is rejected with no significant difference according to socio economic status.

Analysis pertaining to H₀₄: No significant differences exist between parent-child connection and sound mental healthiness of the respondents

Table – 5: Particulars showing Mean, SD and t-values of variables according to gender

VARIABLES	MALE		FEMALE		df	t-value	CRITICAL VALUE (P>0.01)	DECISION	
MENTAL HEALTH	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	100	1.82	2.626	H ₀ Accepted	Not Significant
	14.82	3.89	13.13	3.88					
PARENTAL ATTACHMENT	11.64	2.66	11.25	2.70	100	0.61	2.626	H ₀ Accepted	Not Significant

Source: Author's calculation based on field survey, 2024

Analysis pertaining to H₀₅: There is no significant correlation exist between parent-child attachment and mental health of the studied respondents

Table – 6: Particulars for finding out the interrelationship between parental connection and mental healthiness

VARIABLES	N	MEAN	SD	r-value	df	CRITICAL VALUE (P<0.01)	DECISION	REMARKS
PARENT-CHILD ATTACHMENT	102	11.33	2.68	0.41	202	0.181	Low Positive correlation	Significant
MENTAL HEALTH	102	13.49	3.93					

Source: Field survey, 2024

Note: $P < 0.01$

The null proposition (H_05) is discarded, whereas the substitute hypothesis is established. This means a positive but low association between these two factors. This suggests that there is a link between parent-child connection and young adults' mental health.

Discussion of the Study:

H₀₁ reveals no considerable variation in the mental health of children based on gender. This suggests that while gender may influence other aspects, the total impact on mental health shows no significant gender differences. Based on **H₀₂**, we can conclude that there is no significant difference between socioeconomic class and young adults' mental health. Research has demonstrated that the relationship between attachment and social class has no substantial effects. While social class may change communication patterns and the resources available to families, the overall impact on mental health remains consistent. **H₀₃** plainly states that there is no relationship between respondents' socioeconomic position and their mental health. The breadth of constructs investigated in the literature, diverse assessment methods, and a lack of solid statistical analyses make it difficult to draw firm conclusions. **H₀₄** indicated that there are no significant variations between parent-child connection and respondents' mental healthiness. However, the quality of evidence differs due to varied techniques of measuring attachment and mental health. Addressing these constraints will progress attachment-related research and inform clinical therapies. Based on the above-mentioned **H₀₅**, we can conclude that the connection between parent-child attachment and young adult mental health is relatively low, yet these two variables are favorably associated. This absence of link or correlation between parental attachment and mental health in early adults may be seen because early adulthood is characterized by increasing independence and autonomy. As people form their own personalities and social networks, the impact of parental connection may lessen. In such circumstances, peer relationships, romantic relationships, and other social factors may have a greater influence on mental health than parental attachment (**Li, Liu, Fei, et al.2024**). These new relationships can provide emotional support and security that parents may not have provided, reducing the impact of parental attachment on mental health (**Tan, Yang, Huang, Lin, Gao 2023**).

Precincts:

1. This analysis is confined within a specific age range, which are early young adults.
2. The methods could have produced biases or inaccuracies.
3. The study was limited to a certain population.
4. More research is needed to explore emergent issues.
5. Proposal for a strong longitudinal investigation.

Recommendations and Policy Suggestions:

1. Promoting parenting programs.
2. Incorporate mental health education.
3. Reducing stigma and improving access to assistance.
4. Promoting parental leave policies and flexible work options to help and engage with families.
5. Addressing socio-economic inequities.

Conclusion:

Socioeconomic status does not directly predict mental health, albeit there are measurement issues. Evidence suggests that there are no significant differences in mental health outcomes based on parent-child attachment, although better evaluation methods may increase knowledge. While there is a link between parent-child attachment and mental health, it is not always statistically significant and may vary depending

on the context. As young people gain independence and diverse social connections, these factors may have a stronger impact on their mental health than parental attachment.

References

- Beate Schwarz, Gisela Trommsdorff, Isabelle Albert, Boris Mayer (2005). Adult Parent–Child Relationships: Relationship Quality, Support, and Reciprocity First published: 05 July 2005 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2005.00217.x> Attachment Styles: How They Form and Their Effects (verywellmind.com)
- Baumrind, D. (1971). Current patterns of parental authority. *Developmental Psychology Monograph*, 4, 1–103.
- Di Pentima, L., Toni, A., & Roazzi, A. (2023). Parenting style and Moral Disengagement in Young adults: The Mediating role of Attachment Experiences. *The journal of Genetic psychology*, 184(5), 322-338
- Guerrero, Kelsi. A (2015) Parenting style experienced, current attachment style, and the relationship to emotion regulation in young adults.
- La Valley, A. G., & Guerrero, L. K. (2012). Perceptions of Conflict Behaviour and Relational Satisfaction in Adult Parent–Child Relationships: A Dyadic Analysis From an Attachment Perspective. *Communication Research*, 39(1), 48-78
- Li, H., Liu, K., Fei, J. et al. Association of early parent–child separation with depression, social and academic performance in adolescence and early adulthood: a prospective cohort study. *Psychiatry Ment Health* 18, 78 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-024-00769-1>
- Parent–child attachment and mental health: a moderated mediation analysis, RongTan, Yizhi Yang, Tao Huang, Xuanxuan Lin, Hua Gao (2023) Vol 14
- Perceptions of Conflict Behaviour and Relational Satisfaction in Adult Parent–Child Relationships: A Dyadic Analysis From an Attachment Perspective Angela G. LaValley and Laura K. Guerrero et al <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210391655>
- The relationships between psychological mindedness, parental bonding and adult attachment Kathryn Bourne, Katherine Berry, Lisa Jones, First published: 19 March 2013, Vol 87, Issue 2, Pages 167-177

Citation: Sarkar. T. & Paul. Dr. P. K., (2024) “Impact of Parent-Child attachment on Mental Health among Early Young Adults: An Empirical Study”, *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-2, Issue-8, September-2024.