

The Effect Of Childhood Trauma On Adult Attachment Styles

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ABSTRACT

Adult mental health and relationships are particularly vulnerable to the long-term effects of childhood trauma. This dissertation examines the intricate relationship between attachment types in adults and traumatic experiences in childhood, using the theory of attachment as a framework. This study intends to shed light on the particular kinds of childhood trauma which have the most profound effect on the formation of attachment patterns throughout adulthood by conducting a thorough literature review and empirical investigation. The psychological, cognitive, & neurobiological pathways by which traumatic experiences in childhood hinder the development of stable attachments are also the focus of this research. In order to promote healing, resilience, & relational well-being in persons who have suffered childhood trauma, this research aims to fill crucial gaps in information and guide tailored treatments.

Keywords: Childhood trauma, attachment theory, adult attachment styles, psychological mechanisms.

CHAPTER-1 INTRODUCTION

Our formative years are like threads in the complex tapestry of human development; they determine how we turn out as adults. Childhood trauma is one of these formative events that has a powerful impact, shaping attachment patterns and leaving permanent psychological traces. John Bowlby was an early proponent of attachment theory, and Mary Ainsworth along with others built on his work to suggest that a person's main caregiver interactions shape their internal models of relationships. A person's attachment style as an adult is determined by these models. This dissertation explores the complex web of connections between attachment types in adults and traumatic experiences in childhood. Although it has long been recognized that early unpleasant experiences might have psychological effects, the exact ways in which trauma in infancy influences attachment styles are still being studied and discussed. This research aims to provide invaluable insights for therapeutic treatment and intervention techniques by shedding light on the subtle interaction between previous trauma and contemporary marital dynamics via an exploration of this connection. This study is important because it has the ability to shed light on the lasting effects of childhood trauma - guide specific strategies to lessen those effects. To better understand the lifelong effects of early trauma, this research looks at how various types of trauma (such as abuse, neglect, and loss) affect attachment patterns. To further understand the complex relationship between trauma and attachment and its effects on psychological health and wellbeing, this study aims to account for individual variations in resilience, coping strategies, and social support networks.

This dissertation takes a holistic approach to investigating the complex dynamics to attachment formation & the function of childhood trauma by drawing using a multifaceted framework that incorporates findings from social work, neuroscience, and psychology. The goal of this study is to provide a more nuanced picture of how early trauma influences adult attachment styles and relationship patterns by combining data from longitudinal research, clinical observations, or theoretical viewpoints.

CHAPTER-2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The goal of this research is to find out how attachment patterns, propensity for infidelity, romantic jealousy, and self-esteem are impacted by traumatic experiences experienced as children, including emotional, physical, sexual, and neglectful abuse. One hundred fifty people, including married, dating, and single people, participated in the research (91 women and 59 men). The results showed that there was a positive association between trauma scores but adult infidelity, and that there was a substantial variation in the effects of childhood trauma on adult attachment patterns. There was no connection found between romantic jealousy, self-esteem, and early trauma in the research. **(Geyimci, B. (2010))**

In this study, researchers looked for evidence that somatization in adulthood might be facilitated by insecure attachment. One hundred and ten couples from the general public filled out a battery of self-report surveys, including those for relationship health, childhood trauma, physical symptoms, depression, and conflict tactics. Increased somatization & insecure attachment were shown to be connected with childhood trauma. Somatization was also more common in those with an insecure attachment style. After accounting for factors such as age, wealth, and the presence or absence of recent

assault by a partner, the results demonstrated that frightened attachment completely mediated the connection between somatization and childhood trauma in women. While this mediation did not hold for males, somatization levels were independently predicted by insecure attachment types and early trauma. The results back up the theory that trauma in childhood might cause insecure attachment in adulthood, which in turn affects a woman's somatization levels. The results indicate that attachment and trauma are significant independent factors that might predict the development of somatization in adult males. Researchers found that patients' responses to providers and the somatization process are influenced by the ways in which their childhood trauma impacts their patterns of responding to people in times of need. Health care practitioners may be able to better personalize treatment plans if they have data from attachment type screenings. (D. K. (2006)

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

AIM OF THE STUDY

The goal of the study was to investigate the relationship and impact between childhood trauma and attachment styles among young adults.

VARIABLE OF THE STUDY

Independent Variable

Childhood trauma: Adverse childhood experiences or events that are viewed as endangering, hurtful, or disturbing to a person's bodily, mental, or psychological well-being are referred to as childhood trauma. It might involve being the victim of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, seeing domestic violence, being cut off from caretakers, or experiencing a terrible loss. Childhood trauma can impact an individual's attachment style as an adult and have long-lasting impacts on relationships, mental health, and personal development. The independent variable in this study is childhood trauma, which stands for Indian adults' exposure to traumatic experiences as children.

Dependent Variable

Attachment Styles: The phrase "attachment styles" refers to the emotional and relational behaviors of individuals in close relationships. Their early interactions with caregivers have an impact on these behaviors. Common attachment types include avoidant, anxious, and secure attachment. In this research, attachment styles are additional dependent variables that reflect the unique ways in which young individuals form and maintain connections in reaction to their experiences with trauma during infancy.

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the relationship between childhood trauma and attachment styles among young adults.
- To examine the impact of childhood trauma on attachment styles among young adults.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is no significant relationship between childhood and adult attachment styles among young adults.
- There is no significant effect of childhood trauma on adult attachment styles among young adults.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The sample, which included 241 people, was deliberately chosen to consist of both male and female participants by random and selective selection. The group's majority of members were in the 18–25 age range.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The "**Childhood Trauma Questionnaire as well as Adult Attachment Scale**," in addition to a demographic questionnaire, were used to collect the data for this study.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Two questionnaires, the "**Childhood Trauma Questionnaire as well as Adult Attachment Scale**" were utilized to gather the information. After the study's objectives were described, participants received a package of questionnaires with information about the study, privacy concerns, the researcher's contact details, and other measurements. After then, participants were invited to take part in the research. It took 10 minutes to describe the instruments.

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA QUESTIONNAIRE

The Childhood Trauma Form-Short Form (CTQ-SF), a 28-item self-report form, has been used to figure out how common childhood trauma is. It is a shortened version of the seventy-odd item Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ). The CTQ-SF consists of 25 clinical items and three validity elements. The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire-Short Form (CTQ-SF)

has five subscales, each with five items on a 5-point Likert scale. One is for "never true" on the scale, while five is for "very often true."

RELIABILITY

The Cronbach's α value for the entire CTQ-SF for this test is 0.852. The scores for emotional neglect are 0.857, sexual abuse is 0.755, physical abuse is 0.713, emotional abuse is 0.666, and physical abuse is 0.491 for each of its five components.

ADULT ATTACHMENT SCALE

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) has eighteen items that assess several forms of adult attachment, including avoidant, concerned, and safe attachments. The scale is divided into three subscales, each with six items, and is scored on a 5-point Likert scale. Each item is rated by the participants on a 5-point rating system, where 1 represents "not at all characteristic" and 5 represents "very characteristic."

RELIABILITY

The AAS's Cronbach's alpha values were greater over 0.7 in the normal groups, showing adequate reliability.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

With the use of SPSS software, the investigation comprised regression analysis and the Pearson correlation approach.

CHAPTER 4

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Abuse, neglect, and dysfunctional families are examples of childhood trauma that can have long-lasting and significant consequences on an individual's attachment pattern as they grow into adulthood. According to attachment theory, people's inner functioning models of relationships are shaped by their early experiences with caregivers, and this has an ongoing impact on their attachment patterns. It is vital to comprehend the impact of childhood trauma upon adult attachment patterns in Indian adults in order to clarify the intricate relationship dynamics among early life experiences as well as adult relationships throughout the Indian cultural environment.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how adult attachment patterns among Indian people are impacted by childhood trauma. This study aims to shed light on the ways in which early life events impact adult attachment in the Indian cultural setting by investigating the correlations between various forms of childhood trauma and attachment patterns, including secure, insecure-avoidant, insecure-anxious, to disorganized.

Through the use of a thorough research technique that includes questionnaires and psychological evaluations, this study will explore the experiences of adult Indians who have suffered from childhood trauma as well as the attachment patterns that followed.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of all variables

	<i>Childhood trauma</i>	<i>Attachment Styles</i>
Mean	68.6722	53.21162
Standard Deviation	8.945461	9.060033
N	241	241

The table of descriptive statistics offers significant understanding of the distribution and variation of two variables: attachment styles and childhood trauma. Participants, on average, encountered a moderate degree of childhood trauma, as indicated by the mean score of 68.67 and standard deviation of 8.95; the range of scores surrounding the mean is comparatively narrow. As opposed to childhood trauma, the average score for attachment style is 53.21, accompanied by a marginally greater standard deviation of 9.06. This indicates that the participants exhibit a moderate attachment style, as evidenced by the greater dispersion of scores. The sample sizes for both variables are 241, which guarantees an unbiased comparison. These figures provide a basic overview of the features of the dataset and help direct additional research examining the connection between attachment types and childhood trauma.

DISCUSSION

The results of the regression as well as correlation studies on how childhood stress affects young adults' attachment styles within an Indian cultural setting reveal important details about how complicated this relationship is.

Regression Analysis: The non-significant outcome of the regression analysis indicates that the attachment styles of young adults are not statistically significantly impacted by childhood trauma. This suggests that childhood trauma cannot adequately account for the diversity in attachment types across young people. This conclusion is further supported by the model's low R-squared value, which shows that the diversity in attachment patterns in this sample may be attributable to childhood trauma to a very little extent.

Correlation study: Among young people, the correlation study showed a very weak positive link between attachment types and childhood trauma. Nonetheless, the correlation coefficient was nearly nil, suggesting that there is little evidence of this link. Basically, although while there is a little correlation between attachment styles and childhood trauma, it is not strong enough to make inferences about how childhood trauma affects young adults' attachment patterns in the context of Indian culture.

Among young Indian people, our results cast doubt on the notion that childhood trauma invariably molds attachment styles in adulthood. Even while childhood trauma is common and can affect attachment, the findings imply that other factors could be more important in predicting attachment patterns in this group. The existence of cultural variables that modify the association between attachment patterns and childhood trauma is one reason for these results. Indian cultural norms around emotional expression, familial ties, and coping strategies may lessen the negative effects of early trauma on the formation of attachment. The cultural environment also plays a role in how people cope with and incorporate early traumatic events into their attachment schemas, as does their resilience and flexibility.

Moreover, there can be shortcomings in the metrics employed to evaluate attachment types and early trauma. It's possible that the study's tools don't fully represent the diversity of childhood trauma experiences and the subtleties of attachment styles within the context of Indian culture. Thus, in order to better understand the relationship between childhood trauma as well as attachment patterns in Indian communities, future research should benefit from the use of culturally relevant evaluation instruments.

It is clear that there needs to be more research into the complex interplay between early life events and attachment development in different cultural contexts. Although the results do not prove a direct correlation among childhood trauma as well as attachment styles in Indian young adults, they do highlight the importance of doing so. Through the application of comprehensive techniques and cultural subtleties, researchers can enhance their understanding of the intricate relationship between attachment and early trauma in diverse cultural contexts.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Several significant conclusions may be made from the study's investigation of how attachment types among young people within the Indian cultural context are affected by childhood trauma.

First off, the regression analysis shows that there isn't a statistically significant correlation between young adults' attachment types and childhood trauma. The F-statistic of 0.2199 and the p-value of 0.6396 indicate that attachment patterns within this population are not substantially predicted by childhood trauma alone. Consequently, it is not possible to reject the Null Hypothesis (H₀), suggesting the childhood trauma might not have a significant impact on the attachment patterns of young adults.

Second, a very weak positive link between young adults' attachment patterns and childhood trauma is revealed by the Pearson correlation analysis. The correlation value of 0.030318, however, indicates that this relationship is weak and could not have any real-world significance. As a result, it is necessary to reject the Alternative Hypothesis (H₁), which suggests a substantial connection between attachment types and childhood trauma.

As a whole, the results of the regression as well as correlation analyses point to the possibility that, although there may be a small correlation between young adults' attachment styles and their childhood trauma in the context of Indian culture, this correlation is not strong enough to suggest that attachment patterns are significantly impacted by childhood trauma. Thus, it seems that attachment patterns among young adults within this demographic may be more significantly shaped by variables other than childhood trauma.

These findings offer insightful information on the intricate interactions that occur between early experiences as well as adult attachment styles in the context of Indian culture. Subsequent investigations might go more further into examining other variables that could affect attachment patterns and taking into account cultural quirks that might explain why these associations differ in the Indian setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Culturally Sensitive Assessment Tools: Provide and make use of evaluation instruments that are both contextually and culturally suitable for the Indian populace. The subtleties of early trauma experiences as well as attachment styles within the context of Indian culture should be captured by these instruments.

Longitudinal Studies: Follow up with individuals who have undergone childhood trauma to monitor how their attachment styles evolve over time. A more thorough knowledge of how childhood trauma affects attachment types across various developmental stages and into adulthood can be obtained through longitudinal designs.

Qualitative Research: Use techniques like focus groups and interviews to complement quantitative findings. Qualitative methods can provide more profound understanding of the individual experiences and cultural influences that mold Indian adults' attachment styles and reactions to traumatic events as children.

Intervention Strategies: Create culturally sensitive intervention plans with the goal of fostering positive attachment styles and lessening the damaging impacts of early trauma. For these treatments to effectively help individuals in recovering from traumatic events and forming safe attachment ties, they should consider cultural ideas, values, and practices.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons: To detect parallels and discrepancies in the ways that childhood trauma affects attachment styles, compare research done in India with study done in other cultural contexts. Comparing cultures can help us better understand how early experiences as well as attachment development are influenced by cultural influences.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Sample Characteristics:** The age, socioeconomic class, and geographic location of the sample group may have an impact on the study's conclusions. It could be difficult to extrapolate the findings to larger groups of Indian adults because of these restrictions.
- **Measurement Instruments:** The intricacy and diversity of experiences across the Indian cultural context may not be properly captured by the use of standardized measurement instruments for evaluating attachment patterns and childhood trauma. Cultural variations in how questionnaire questions are interpreted may have an impact on the measures' validity and reliability.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** The study's cross-sectional design makes it more difficult to prove a link between attachment types and childhood trauma. To more fully investigate the temporal link between these factors, longitudinal studies are required.
- **Self-Report Bias:** Due to social desirability bias and recollection bias, participants' self-reports of childhood trauma as well as attachment patterns may contain bias. Multiple data gathering methods might be used into future study to improve the reliability of the findings.
- **Cultural Variability:** India is a multicultural nation with many different regional, linguistic, and cultural traditions. The results of the study could not accurately reflect the range of experiences as well as cultural viewpoints that exist among Indians. To further understand the effects of childhood trauma upon attachment patterns in various cultural settings within India, future research should use a more comprehensive sampling strategy from a wider range of ethnic groups.

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