

## Emotional Intelligence and Attachment style Among Adolescents: A Correlational Study

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### Introduction

Emotional intelligence aids adolescents in the establishment of robust connections, enables them to reach sound judgments, and equips them to effectively navigate challenging circumstances. A perspective through which we can comprehend EQ is as an integral facet of possessing the ability to effectively interact with individuals, thereby enhancing our prospects of triumph in virtually every aspect of our existence. Comprehension and harmonious coexistence with fellow human beings not only contribute to our personal growth but also serve as a catalyst for attaining success across a wide spectrum of domains.

Psychologists, in their rigorous exploration of human behavior, have identified a constellation of personality traits that are commonly referred to as the "dark triad." This triumvirate of psychological characteristics consists of a manipulative attitude, narcissism, and a startling lack of empathy. When confronted with the disconcerting possibility that one may have an evil child, it is only natural to seek clarity and understanding. However, discerning whether a child is truly malevolent or simply mischievous is no easy task. Fortunately, psychologists have developed a nuanced framework that allows them to distinguish between the merely naughty and the genuinely sinister. By meticulously examining the behavioral patterns and subtle indicators, these experts can shed light on the enigmatic signs that may suggest the presence of an evil child.

Emotional quotient commonly abbreviated as EQ is the ability to use emotions wisely to relieve stress, to excel, to get support and give support. It can also help oneself to convert intensions into actions and actions into consistence efforts to be successful in life. (Bar-On 2000) Daniel Goleman once rightly said EQ is a better indicator of one's success than intelligence quotient. (Brackett and Mayer 2003)What we can understand by this is that it is not IQ that makes the person smartest/successful instead EQ. Emotional intelligence is usually attributed to four basic components-

**Self-Awareness:** it comes when an individual is aware of his/her emotions. An individual high on self-awareness knows why he/she is feeling the emotions. Such an individual knows their strengths and weakness. They engage themselves in honing their strengths rather than sulking or cribbing about their weakness.

**Self-Management:** As the name suggests, it means to manage one's emotions. It is especially important in today's world to manage your emotions. A person high on this will be able to seek support and give support in times of crises. Such an individual will be able to control negative emotions like greed, frustration, anger, jealousy.

**Relationship management:** This is one of the most important components in a corporate sector. Relationship management tool comes handy to anybody who wants to go higher in the hierarchy. It means to support one's relation with others to get help and supply help to anyone and everyone.

**Social awareness:** Lot of people gets confused between social awareness and relationship management. Social awareness, however, means to have empathy, pick up emotional cues, to make the other person feel comfortable etc.

There exists enough data to support the understanding that fundamental ethical stance in life is drawn from the emotional abilities the individual owns, which in psychological literature is called *emotional intelligence*. It is also believed that the genesis of altruism lies in being empathetic (Barchard 2003)and the potential to understand another's emotion too comes under emotional intelligence. It's imperative to hold one's rein of emotional impulse in order to lead a fulfilling life. (Ali, Amorim et

al. 2009)As Aristotle said emotional intelligence is the “ability to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way.” (Austin, Farrelly et al. 2007)

The process of understanding emotional intelligence begins with analyzing the underline linkage between brain structures and our emotions. (Picard, Vyzas et al. 2001) There are designated brain structures that govern our emotions of fear and rage and some positive emotions like passion and joy. Studying this link will also enrich the literature about how the emotions get ingrained in our system which serves as an individual’s habit. There also is a link between emotions and physical health. Researchers argue that the damage of negative emotions on our body is as risky as the damage which causes as a consequence of smoking. (Schneider, Lyons et al. 2013) It’s important to know that the brain circuits responsible for making the foundation of emotional habits are malleable. Thus, it can be assumed that childhood and adolescents are critical periods for setting down essential emotional habits to govern life. (Lea, Davis et al. 2019)

To understand emotional intelligence well, psychologists merge their perspective with biology. This amalgamation has helped researchers to acknowledge emotional intelligence on a different level. The biological perspective on emotional intelligence has helped researchers to comprehend why thinking and emotion are at war. The answer to this question lies in how the brain has evolved over the years. (Zysberg, Levy et al. 2011)The earliest parts of the brain to develop is the brainstem which surrounds the top of the spinal cord. It regulates the most basic life functions like metabolism of the body, breathing along with controlling emotional reactions and movements. From an evolutionary standpoint, the brainstem is assumed to be an emotional center. It is believed that from here other emotional areas like *neocortex* has emerged. (Dennis 2007). Neocortex is also called thinking brain. With this piece of information, it can be confirmed that the emotional brain existed even before the thinking brain. Which also means that the thinking brain grew out of the emotional brain. Thus, the first reaction to any situation is emotional only. Neocortex is the relay center of our thoughts. To be more precise, it possesses centers that help humans understand their perception. The feeling attached to the thought is produced here. Neocortex allows humans to have feelings about images, thoughts, ideas, symbols etc.

Another brain structure that helps researchers understand emotional intelligence better is the limbic system. It is said to give rise to pleasure and sexual drives. It is the connection between limbic system and neocortex that enables a mother to have a nurturing feeling towards a child. Biopsychological surgeries have confirmed that mothers without neocortex lack maternal affection. This maternal affection is especially important as the child develops a protective bond with a mother which indeed helps other brain structures to develop. It is seen that the size of the neocortex as well as the connections between the brain structures increases as we level up the phylogenetic scale. Biopsychological researchers confirm that as the number of such connection’s increases, the number of emotional responses also increases.

The development of attachment style is credited to Bowlby. He based his theory on Freud’s concept of love. Drawing parallels, Bowlby defined attachment style as a long-lasting connection among beings (Fraley and Roisman 2019).

Bowlby believed in the psychoanalytic viewpoint which posits that childhood insecurities and fear bloom in the personality in later ages. Thus, he believed that children’s attachment style with their parents play an important role in the development of the personality (Diener and Monroe 2011). Our attachment styles are developed through the love and care we get from our primary and secondary caregivers.

There are four major characteristics of attachment style (Belsky 2002).

- Separation anxiety occurs in the absence of the primary care giver.
- Haven is the feeling a child has when he/she returns to caregiver for care and security in the face of threat.
- Proximity maintenance is the innate desire to be near the primary care giver.
- Security base is when the primary caregiver acts as a security based on which a child can explore the surrounding.

Based on these characteristics, three important propositions were developed. First, children are less likely to experience fear when they have the confidence that their primary care givers are there to respond their needs (Kafetsios and Nezlek 2002). Secondly, it is believed that this confidence is laid down in the critical period of development, the expectations formed during this period remain unchanged for the rest of the life. Thirdly, these expectations are based on experiences. If children have an experience that their care givers were responsive in the past, they'll be responsive to the expectations in the future as well. (Adshead 2010)

There are four attachment styles in the psychological literature which are explained below (Bowlby 1979) :

- Secure attachment-as the name suggests the child here has maximum level of attachment due to the security of care, love, and understanding given to them. The foundation of secured attachment style can bloom trust, high self-concept, empathy, and self-awareness in a child.
- Insecure attachment- under this, the primary and secondary caregivers do not meet the needs and expectations of the child as a result the child's emotional and psychological development is arrested or delayed.
- Anxious attachment-when a care giver is inconsistent in responding to the needs and expectations of the child, the child may develop confused personality.
- Disorganized attachment- this is one where a child's needs and expectations are not only ignored but they have a sense of fear attached to their caregivers. Such children ignore their priorities and don't respond instantly.

### **Review Of Literature**

An interesting study was done by (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999), researched on how Emotional Intelligence Meets Traditional Standards for Intelligence. The result of the present study is divided into three sections. Scoring of the emotional intelligence is compared in the first section. Secondly, the emotional intelligence tasks are factor analyzed and intercorrelated. Lastly various external criteria are correlated with emotional intelligence. The first study concluded that there are three subscales of emotional intelligence: managing emotions, perceiving emotions, and understanding emotions. Consequently, the four-branch model is reduced to three branch model. It was also concluded that there was a moderate correlation between emotional intelligence and verbal intelligence which indicated the fact that without being the same; emotional intelligence is related to other intelligence. It is a very promising predictor of other personality traits such as parenting style. In conclusion, the result of the second study emotional intelligence has been linked with two important criterions of traditional intelligence out of three. At first it was used as a set of abilities. The existence of patterns of correlations can also be seen in the second criterion. In the third criterion, it was concluded that intellectual capabilities grow with age and experience from childhood to early adulthood.

Emotional intelligence and leadership in adolescents were also looked upon. (Charbonneau & Nicol, 2002) adolescents enrolled for 3-week in summer camp as participants. In the summer camps, training in military skills was provided. Basic validity was checked on two measures of emotional intelligence in adolescents. Martinez-Pons' (1998) conceptualization of EI was adopted for the present study. The conclusion of the study can be based on the argument that some aspects of emotional intelligence are majorly significant not only in adults but adolescents also.

Another very important study (Boily et al., 2017) Trait and Ability Emotional Intelligence in Adolescents with and Without Autism Spectrum Disorder concluded that in relation to youth without autism spectrum disorder; adolescent with autism spectrum disorder show significant weaknesses in ability emotional intelligence and trait emotional intelligence. This study affirms the previous researchers wherein it was concluded that low ability emotional intelligence and trait emotional intelligence

hinders social success and majorly contributes to increased distress and depression (Vickerstaff, Heriot, Wong, Lopes, & Dossetor, 2007).

Effects of the Spock videogame on improving emotional intelligence in adolescents (Cejudo & Latorre, 2015) The results confirmed that there was an increase in the global score of ability emotional intelligence as well as an increased score in emotional perception and increase in the score of emotional facilitation and emotional regulation. Through the results it can also be said that the increase in the score is partly due to active participation and varied teaching-learning techniques that were a part of the Spock video game experiment. The above statement affirms the 1st hypothesis of the study. There is also a confirmation of 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis in parts where it was seen that male students show a significant greater increase in the global score on ability emotional intelligence as compared to female students. Lastly it can be concluded that with the help of social psychology intervention, improvement and fostering of emotional intelligence can be brought into realm for leveling up the quality of education.

One of the important domains in emotional intelligence is the understanding of other's emotions. This research extended the previous studies in different views which was unique in psychological literature. Under this study, separate association of both vulnerability narcissism and grandiosity, primary and secondary with managing the emotions of others (MEOS) was studied. (Petrides, Vernon et al. 2011). The conclusion affirms the previous findings of MEOS stating that agreeableness was highly correlated with pro-social behavior towards others and all the three components of dark triad personality was linked to interpersonal manipulations.

This study proclaims the much popular belief that emotional intelligence is one of the most important criteria of job satisfaction. (Akomolafe and Ogunmakin 2014) this research was done on the schoolteachers. The conclusion pointed to the vicious cycle of low emotional intelligence of schoolteachers impacting the performance of the students.

The researchers argued that one's career assessment can be solidified by judging his/her emotional intelligence. (Zeidner, Matthews et al. 2004) they affirm many of the popular claims in the psychological discourse which says that emotional intelligence is a far better indicator of job success as compared to intelligence. Researchers also pointed out that most of the emotional intelligence scales used in the cooperate sector overlaps with personality scales. Thus, there is an urge to develop an independent instrument for the same.

It is assumed that personality and social psychologists have a lot to research when it comes to understanding attachment style of adolescents (Waters, Crowell et al. 2002). Bowlby's and Ainsworth's theory of attachment style has a lot to offer in terms of understanding the personality of an adolescent. place where parents and teachers fail to cope with temper tantrum problems, that's where the psychologists come in place. It has been observed that the first tool they use as a measure to deal with the situation is to study the attachment style between the parent and the adolescent. This foremost step facilitates the process of counselling. (Gerlsma and Luteijn 2000) found that there are certain attachment styles like secure and preoccupied that are predicted to bring improvement in psychopathy, depending on the severity of the case. The protective environment provided during the counseling gives a scope of improvement of behavior.

One of the most sophisticated studies was done by (McWey 2004) on foster children. They had an avoidant attachment style and thus, they primarily depended on themselves. It was also seen that when a potential caretaker comes into their lives, they don't show any signs of trust. The children may also behave as if they don't require any help. After scrutinizing, the researchers claim that this attitude came primarily from emotional abandonment from their origin families.

In recent years the most drastic changes in family have occurred due to rising rates in divorce (Sirvanli-Ozen 2005) therefore, children are developing flawed attachment style namely avoidant and ambivalent attachment style. The research came up with astonishing results stating that the impact of divorce on children varies based on the gender of the child as well as the fact that are they staying with the parents they like along with the support they receive from teachers and friends in the school. (Feeney & Noller, 1990) argued that the concept of attachment style in psychology has extensively been worked on children, leaving other age groups unexplored. Feeney & Noller studied attachment style as a predictor of adult romantic relationship. They

posits that no sex difference was found in the three-attachment style namely, avoidant, secure and anxious ambivalent attachment style. One of the stark differences which this study pointed in relation to the existing studies was , subjects having avoidant attachment style showed no sign of being in romantic relationships or being in love at the time of the study. In accordance with this, the romanticism of secured attachment style subjects was longer lasting as compared to anxious-ambivalent subjects who had less enduring relationships.

The present study explored the pathological attachments of late adolescents. (Lapsley, Varshney, & Aalsma, 2000). The present study aided the clinical sector with the pathological symptoms of attachments style. Here, patterns of self-reliance, care seeking, and angry withdrawal are present in the clients, which might be useful by the therapists as a potential disturbance of attachment style. This study posits that pathological attachments attempts to give a perspective in understanding the problems of adaptation as far as late adolescents are considered. (Bakar et al., 2010) This research aimed to study the environmental factors influencing pupils' academic achievement at the universities. With respect to the present psychological discourse, pupils' attitudes might be an impetus for better academic achievement. Thus, instructors like parents, teachers and psychologists must augment pupil's attitude and motivation towards learning as these would increase academic achievement in learning.

### Methodology

In the present research a correlational design is used. Correlational analysis will help to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and attachment style. 250 adolescents are used for this study. Purposive sample is used. Adolescents studying in class 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> were undertaken for the purpose of the present study. Pearson r correlation analysis is applied with the help of SPSS. Instruments for collecting data are-a) Attachment Style Questionnaire b) The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

### Hypotheses

- There will be a significant relation between emotional Intelligence and attachment style among adolescents.
- There will be a positive relation between secure attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents.
- There will be a negative relation between fearful attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents.
- There will be a negative relation between dismissive attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents.
- There will be a negative relation between pre-occupied attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents.

### Results and Analysis

**Table1.1 Correlation between Attachment Style and Emotional Intelligence**

|                        | <i>Emotional Intelligence</i> | <i>Attachment Style</i> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Emotional Intelligence | 1                             |                         |
| Attachment Style       | 0.790**                       | 1                       |

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

Table 1.1 shows the Pearson correlation (r) between attachment style and emotional intelligence. For computing the correlation, SPSS was used. The correlation between the two variables came out to be 0.790 which is a positive correlation. When computed, it was seen that the Pearson correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

**Table1.2 Correlation between Sub-variables of Attachment Style and Emotional Intelligence.**

|                               | Emotional Intelligence | Secure Attachment Style | Fearful Attachment Style | Pre-occupied Attachment Style | Dismissing Attachment Style |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Emotional Intelligence        | 1                      |                         |                          |                               |                             |
| Secure Attachment Style       | 0.867**                | 1                       |                          |                               |                             |
| Fearful Attachment Style      | -0.551**               | -0.547**                | 1                        |                               |                             |
| Pre-occupied Attachment Style | -0.642**               | -0.639*                 | 0.797**                  | 1                             |                             |
| Dismissing Attachment Style   | -0.859**               | -0.808**                | 0.572*                   | 0.650**                       | 1                           |

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

Table 1.2 depicts the Pearson correlation (r) between sub-variables attachment style and emotional intelligence. SPSS software was used for the same. The table shows that there is a positive significance of 0.790\*\* between attachment style and emotional intelligence. The Pearson correlation between secure attachment style and emotional intelligence is 0.867\*\*, fearful attachment style and emotional intelligence is -0.552\*\*, pre-occupied attachment style and emotional intelligence is -0.642\*\*, dismissing attachment style and emotional intelligence is -0.859\*\*. All the above correlations are significant at 0.01 level.

## Discussion

The discussion will follow the pattern of hypotheses. Five hypotheses are there in the present study. The first hypothesis is that there will be a significant relation between emotional Intelligence and attachment style among adolescents (H<sub>1</sub>). According to table1.1 (results and analysis) of this paper, the relationship between the two variables is 0.790 which points towards positive significance. It means that emotional intelligence and attachment style is directly proportionate. In lay man's words it can be said that if attachment style increases, emotional intelligence also increases. Two key psychological concepts—attachment style and emotional intelligence—have a substantial impact on an adolescent's relationships, self-awareness, and general well-being. The discussion intends to examine the connection between emotional intelligence and attachment styles while highlighting the significance of understanding how these connections affect social interactions and emotional control. The relationship between emotional intelligence and attachment style is intricate and multifaceted since each can affect and mold the other over the course of a person's life. The second hypothesis, there will be a positive relation between secure attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents (H<sub>2</sub>). The correlation between secure attachment and emotional intelligence is 0.867, which means it's a positive significant relation. Adolescents with secure attachment style will be able to handle their emotions well and will be able to understand the emotions of others too. When faced with difficulties they will be able to seek proper help from caregiver. Adolescents with a secure attachment style typically develop high emotional intelligence. Their early interactions with constant emotional and caring support give them a strong basis for comprehending and controlling their own emotions. Due to their improved ability to trust and empathize, individuals can apply this self-awareness and emotional control to their interactions with others.

The third hypothesis is that there will be a negative relation between fearful attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents (H<sub>3</sub>). Adolescents with fearful attachment style have a constant fear of abandonment due to which they exploit their emotions. Hence, there is a negative significant relation between fearful attachment style and emotional intelligence of -0.551. Because of their history of unreliable or traumatic caregiving, those with fearful attachment may have the most difficulty acquiring emotional intelligence. Their capacity to comprehend and regulate their emotions, as well as their ability to

understand and manage their relationships, might be severely affected. However, with time and assistance, they can recover and gain emotional intelligence.

The fourth hypothesis is that there will be a negative relation between dismissive attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents (H<sub>4</sub>). Adolescents who have been raised with a dismissive attachment style avoid emotional connections with others, thus, they often fall short in accepting relations with others and often misinterpret other's emotions towards themselves. It has also been seen that those adolescents with dismissing attachment style have poor intrapersonal relations too as they get confused with their own feelings and emotions. Recognizing and expressing emotions might be difficult for those with a dismissing attachment style. This can impede the growth of their emotional intelligence, especially in the areas of social and self-awareness. However, people can improve their ability to recognize and control their emotions via self-reflection and personal development.

The fifth hypothesis in the present study is that there will be a negative relation between pre-occupied attachment style and emotional Intelligence among adolescents (H<sub>5</sub>). The Pearson correlation between pre-occupied attachment style and emotional intelligence is -0.642 which means there is a negative significance between the two variables. Adolescents born with pre-occupied attachment style tend to be clingy in relationships. They fail to move on if the relation doesn't work thus, they always jump from one relation to another. It has also been seen that these adolescents often express their desire to be validated. For such adolescent's other's validation means a lot and they can go to any extent to seek others approval. That is the reason why adolescents raised with pre-occupied attachment style tend to have low emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence can benefit preoccupied adolescent's potential for increased emotional sensitivity. They frequently pick up on subtle emotional cues from others, yet they may have trouble self-regulating because of their fear of being rejected or abandoned. Learning to better control one's own emotions may be a requirement for developing emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence and attachment style are related and can have an impact on one another over the course of a person's life. Adolescent attachment patterns can affect how emotional intelligence develops, but emotional intelligence can also influence and even change attachment patterns as people age. Regardless of one's initial attachment style, developing emotional intelligence through self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management can result in more secure and fulfilling partnerships.

### **Summary and conclusion**

An individual's psychological composition includes both their attachment type and emotional intelligence. Although more emotionally intelligent people tend to have stable attachment styles, the relationship is complex and goes beyond this simple correlation. Although an individual's attachment style can affect their emotional intelligence, this relationship is not deterministic because emotional intelligence is a lifelong skill that can be mastered. To promote healthier relationships and personal development, understanding this relationship might be helpful.

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