

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "The role of attachment style on conformity among adults," is a bonafide record submitted by Angel Mariya Baiju, SB21PSY051, of St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Princy Thobias and that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma, fellowship, title, or recognition before.

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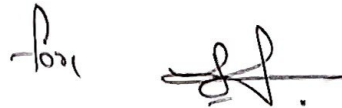


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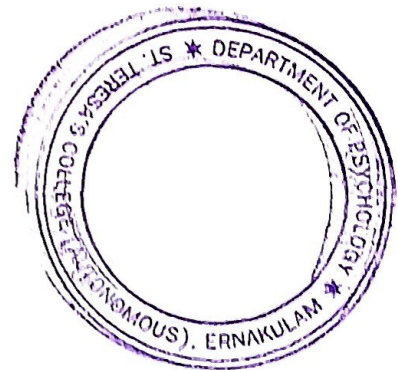
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The role of attachment style on conformity among adults

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of

Bachelors of Science in Psychology

By:

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DECLARATION

I, Angel Mariya Baiju, do hereby declare that the work represented in the dissertation embodies the results of the original research work done by me in St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Princy Thobias, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam, it has not been submitted by me to any other university or institution for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship, title or recognition before.

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Place: Ernakulam

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Abstract

In today's interconnected society, the occurrence of conformity remains as a relevant topic, particularly concerning its relation to individual attachment styles. The study aims to investigate the relationship between attachment styles and conformity among adults. A sample of 100 adults aged between 18 to 44 participated in the study. To collect data, adult attachment scale (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Levy and Davis, 1988) and conformity scale (Mehrabian & Stefl, 1995) were used. Spearman correlation was used for statistical analysis. The findings of the study revealed a statistically significant positive relation between secure attachment style and conformity among adults. No significant relation was observed among anxious and avoidant attachment style on conformity. Acknowledging the impact of attachment styles on conformity underscores the importance of considering individual differences in social interactions. This recognition may encourage a more nuanced understanding of how people engage with others based on their attachment orientations.

Keywords: attachment styles, conformity, adult

“A secure base is a prerequisite for a child’s ability to explore, develop and learn”

-Amir Levine

Attachment has a huge impact on a person’s life. Psychologist John Bowlby was the first attachment theorist, describing attachment as a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings. The number of studies in the area of attachment styles matches its importance on the development of the personality. Bowlby (1969) believed that the earliest bonds formed by children with their caregivers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life. He suggested attachment also serves to keep the infant close to the mother, thus improving the child's chances of survival. During early childhood, these attachment styles centre on how children and parents interact. In adulthood, attachment styles describe attachment patterns in romantic relationships. Adult attachment is becoming increasingly important in research because attachment influences many phenomena, including social functioning, coping, stress response and psychological well-being. Research that incorporates measurement of attachment provides a unique perspective because attachment constructs are theoretically and empirically distinct from other personality and social constructs such as neuroticism, distress, self-esteem, defensiveness, dysfunctional beliefs, and support seeking. According to Schore (Schore, 2003), neurobiology plays a crucial role in the mind's development during the first three years of life and the right brain's processes are essential to the formation of attachments and the self. He explains in detail how emotion dysregulation patterns in childhood and adulthood are caused by insensitive parenting.

Attachment theory offers a lens through which to understand how our early experiences with caregivers shape our emotional bonds and relationship patterns. The four primary attachment styles—secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant—provide insights into how individuals approach intimacy, communication, and conflict

resolution. By recognizing and understanding these patterns, individuals can cultivate healthier relationships and foster greater emotional security and fulfilment in their lives.

Attachment styles

Attachment style refers to the emotional bond individuals form with caregivers during early development (John Bowlby, 1950). The influential work of John Bowlby, laid the foundation for attachment theory. Mary Ainsworth further expanded on this theory, introducing the "Strange Situation" procedure in the 1970s to assess attachment patterns in children.

Attachment style is somewhat constant or stable (Fraley, 2002; Gallith et al., 2009; Klohnen & Bera, 1998; Simpson et al., 2007), hence, most measures of adult attachment tend to focus on its trait-like characteristics. However, in recent years several authors have suggested that nevertheless its stability, attachment style is also likely to be influenced or shaped by major life events (Cozzarelli et al., 2003; Davila & Sargent, 2003; Feeney & Noller, 1992; Hammond & Fletcher, 1991; Gallith et al., 2009), and different contextual factors (Baldwin & Fehr, 1995; Davila et al., 1997; Gallith & Shaver, 2007; Gallith et al., 2009).

Theories of attachment style

The main theory's regarding attachment styles are:

Attachment theory. The first person to propose attachment theory was British psychologist John Bowlby. A lasting psychological connectedness between human beings is what he defined as attachment. Bowlby sought to comprehend the feelings of worry and anguish that kids go through when they are taken away from their primary carers.

Bowlby noted that eating did not make people feel less anxious about being alone. Rather, he discovered that distinct motivational and behavioural patterns accompanied attachment. Children desire the presence of their primary carer during times of fear to feel cared for and comforted.

The secure style is defined by ease with intimacy and a lack of abandonment anxiety. Those who are secure feel at ease in their partners' company. The fear of being abandoned and the desire to be closer to others than they would like to be are characteristics of the preoccupied or ambivalent style. Adults who are anxious are preoccupied with the idea that their partners will leave them, and they are continuously worried or anxious about their love lives because they create and crave intimacy so much. The discomfort with dependency and closeness, as well as the perception that others want to be too close, are characteristics of the avoidant style. These people don't feel much emotion in relationships, and they don't get upset when they break up. Other prevalent traits include an incapacity to communicate feelings, thoughts, and emotions with partners and a failure to provide support to partners during trying times. Individuals who are unresolved also experience discomfort and fear from intimacy. Individuals who identify with this attachment style feel differently about intimate partnerships. They want relationships that are emotionally intimate, but they also find that emotional intimacy makes them uneasy. Negative opinions about themselves and their partners are coupled with these conflicting emotions. These individuals generally had a sort of bad and good relationship with their parents, consisting of neglectful treatment by their parents, mixed with other, more positive behaviour from them.

A comprehensive theory of social development, attachment theory explains the genesis of the patterns of intimate interpersonal relationships. Individual variations in attachment behaviour patterns result from the combination of environmental (particularly parental) and genetic influences throughout early development. Interpersonal behaviours known as

attachment behaviours aim to strengthen a person's sense of security, especially under stressful or difficult situations. Adult attachment styles are the term for these permanent interpersonal patterns in maturity. Mental images of oneself and others, according to Bowlby (1969/1982), are largely accurate reflections of real events, particularly in the context of intimate relationships. These images are updated and changed when a person enters new relationships and has new experiences. According to a review of related research on learning conforming behaviour and peer attachment, attachment plays a significant role in shaping behaviour (de Guzman & Carlo, 2004; Oldfield et al., 2015; Walters, 2020).

According to Bowlby's attachment theory, people's thoughts and feelings in attachment relationships have a significant impact on their behavioural reactions, as stated by Collins (1996). The attachment theory key aspects of attachment styles and therefore can explain it well in many cases.

Ainsworth's theory. Psychologist Mary Ainsworth expanded extensively on Bowlby's first studies in the 1970s. Her ground-breaking "strange situation" research demonstrated how connection has a significant impact on behaviour. Ainsworth described three main attachment styles based on the responses that researchers had observed: secure attachment, ambivalently secured attachment, avoidance, and insecure attachment. After that, based on their own research, researchers Main & Solomon (1986) added a fourth style of attachment called disorganized insecure attachment. It was shown by Ainsworth and colleagues that a child's qualitatively distinct experience of getting care from the attachment figure organizes into distinct behavioural and mental representational patterns: disorganized, ambivalent, avoidant, and secure (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Main & Solomon, 1986, 1990).

The Strange Situation involves eight scripted laboratory episodes in which a caregiver, her 12- to 18-month-old infant and a stranger are observed in a series of separations and reunions.

The episodes in which a stranger is introduced into the situation or the mother is separated from the infant are intended to signal danger and activate the infant's attachment system. Ainsworth et.al., (1978) observed the interactive behaviour between infants and caregivers during the eight episodes and thereby classified patterns of infant behaviour toward the mother. The infant's attachment relationship with the mother was classified into one of three main groups, or attachment styles, avoidant, anxious or secure. In the Strange Situation, the avoidant infant is characterized by a lack of interest in the presence of the caregiver, agitation when she leaves the room, wariness about the stranger, and little fussing when the caregiver returns to the room. The anxious infant is hypervigilant about the caregiver's presence and his ability to make contact with her, wariness about the stranger, a high level of visible distress when the mother leaves the room and resistance and anger when she returns. The secure infant is characterized by easy interactions with the caregiver, interest in exploring the situation, only mild wariness toward the stranger, upset when the caregiver leaves the room, and relief and proximity seeking when she returns. Using a discriminant function analysis, Ainsworth et.al., found that two linear functions most accurately assigned infants into one of the three attachment categories, thereby mapping attachment anxiety, avoidance and security as regions in a two-dimensional space. Ainsworth et.al., conceptualized the two dimensions as (1) avoidance of closeness and dependency and (2) anxiety about a caregiver's availability.

In a later study of Strange Situation classifications, Main and Solomon (1986) reported that approximately 15% of infants are difficult to classify using Ainsworth et.al.'s (1978) original classification system. Main and Solomon (1986) described the behaviour of the infants in this group as lacking a coherent attachment strategy in regard to the mother and thereby created an additional attachment style labelled as "disorganized/disoriented." The infants who fall into the disorganized/disoriented are also assigned into one of the three primary categories providing the best fit for the infant (Siegel, 1999).

Social exchange theory. According to social exchange theory (Thibault & Kelly, 1959), social behaviour involves social exchanges where people are motivated by obtaining something of value (reward) in exchange for forfeiting something else of value (cost). The theory explains that, people will pursue relationships where rewards are greater than cost (net profit) and abandon those where costs are greater than profit (net loss). These profits can be measured in the short term or cumulatively. The value of costs and rewards is highly subjective. This theory suggests that relationships are formed and maintained based on the principle of reciprocity. Individuals seek relationships where the benefits outweigh the costs, influencing the development of attachment bonds.

Types of attachment styles

Bowlby (1980) introduced attachment theory to explain the bonds that infants form with their primary caregivers i.e. attachment figures, individual differences in “attachment styles” have been conceptualized and measured in terms of anxiety, avoidance, and security (e.g., Ainsworth et.al., 1978; Carver, 1997; Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Simpson, 1990 and Gallith, Hart, Nofle & Stockdale, 2009). Attachment styles are believed to reflect individuals cognitive–affective working models (i.e., mental representations) of self and other and ensuing behavioural orientations toward close relationship partners.

Anxious/Ambivalent attachment. Children who are ambivalently attached tend to be extremely suspicious of strangers. These children display considerable distress when separated from a parent or caregiver but do not seem reassured or comforted by the parent's return. In some cases, the child might passively reject the parent by refusing comfort or may openly display direct aggression toward the parent. People with attachment anxiety mostly have self-doubt about their own worth and abilities, extreme need for interpersonal closeness, love, and support, and continuous worrying about being rejected or abandoned.

Avoidant attachment style. Children with avoidant attachment styles tend to avoid parents and caregivers. This avoidance often becomes especially pronounced after a period of absence. Attachment avoidance is characterized by unwillingness to trust others, an emphasis on self-sufficiency and autonomy, a relatively low tolerance for interpersonal intimacy and interdependence, and a tendency to down-regulate one's own emotions.

Secure attachment style. Children who are securely attached generally become visibly upset when their caregivers leave and are happy when their parents return. When frightened, these children will seek comfort from the parent or caregiver. It is related to a sense of faith in the responsiveness of attachment figures, one's own worth and abilities, and ease with intimacy and interdependence, as well as the relative absence of anxiety and avoidance (Gallith et al., 2009; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

Factors affecting attachment styles

Parental Responsiveness. How consistently and sensitively caregivers respond to a child's needs can shape their attachment style.

Early Childhood Experiences. Early experiences of safety, trust, and security within the family environment can influence attachment patterns.

Temperament. A child's innate temperament, such as their level of sociability or sensitivity, can interact with caregiving to shape attachment.

Family Dynamics. The quality of relationships between family members, including parents, siblings, and extended family, can impact attachment styles.

Life Events and Stressors. Significant life events, such as divorce, illness, or loss, can disrupt attachment bonds and influence attachment patterns.

Cultural and Societal Influences. Cultural norms and societal expectations regarding parenting practices and emotional expression can influence attachment styles.

Attachment History. Previous experiences of attachment, including disruptions or trauma, can influence attachment patterns across the lifespan.

Peer Relationships. Interactions with peers and the quality of friendships can also play a role in shaping attachment styles, especially during adolescence and adulthood.

Children raised in orphanages or without a primary caregiver may not be able to build the trust necessary to develop an attachment. Children raised in institutions develop less secure and more disorganised attachment than those raised in biological families. Children living with foster families show levels of security and disorganization in between the other two groups. One of the vital factors includes quick and consistent response given by caregivers, from this child can learn that they can depend on the people who are responsible for their care, which is the essential foundation.

Conformity

Conformity, as defined by social psychologist Solomon Asch (1956), refers to the tendency of individuals to adjust their thoughts, feelings, or behaviours to align with those of a group, often due to perceived pressure or norms within the group. It explains people's propensity to follow the opinions of the majority when under pressure from the group or in the face of serious risks. People typically rely less on their own beliefs in such situations and further on the opinions and convictions of the collective, even if the majority's claim is untrue, people might still follow it. Conformity is a person's tendency to change their beliefs to match the behaviour of others, as well as to change life patterns so that they are in harmony with the surrounding environment (Amanda & Tobing, 2017).

Theories of conformity

Conformity theory. The foundation of this study is Solomon Asch's (1951) Conformity Theory, which examined how people change their attitudes, feelings, or behaviours in

reaction to other people's presence. In this context, conformity refers to the tendency of people to modify their actions or attitudes in order to conform to the standards of a group.

The Conformity Theory developed by Solomon Asch has been essential in helping us better understand social influence and group dynamics. Through his experiments, Asch demonstrated how easily people can be persuaded by the opinions of others, especially when they feel as though their social identity is at risk. This discovery has significant effects for how attitudes and beliefs form in groups and how decisions are made. Essentially, Asch's research emphasizes the significant influence on individual behaviour in group.

Sherif's Research on the autokinetic phenomenon. Autokinetic phenomenon refers to the fact that when placed in a completely dark room and exposed to a single, stationary point of light, most people perceive the light as moving about. This is because in the dark room, there are no clear cues to distance or location. The perceived movement is known as AP.

Muzafer Sherif's research on the autokinetic phenomenon, conducted in 1935, explored how individuals' perceptions of a stationary point of light in a dark environment could be influenced by group dynamics. Sherif demonstrated how participants' estimates of the movement of the light converged over time when they were in groups, illustrating the power of social influence on individual perceptions.

Types of conformity

Conformity is mainly of two types: normative and informational conformity

Normative Conformity. is the type of conformity involves changing one's behaviour in order to fit in with a group. For example, a teenager might dress in a certain style because they want to look like their peers who are members of a particular group.

Informational conformity. is looking to the group for information and direction (this happens when a person lacks knowledge). Think of attending your first class at a new yoga

studio. One would probably watch what others were doing to see where you should hang your coat, stow your shoes, unroll your mat, and so on.

Other types of conformity are: compliance, internalization and identification

Compliance. is the ability to behave differently while maintaining an internal conflict with the group. It refers to a change in behaviour due to a direct request or instruction from another person or group. It involves agreeing to a specific request or demand, often without necessarily changing one's underlying beliefs or attitudes. Compliance can be influenced by various factors such as authority, social norms, reciprocity, and persuasion techniques.

Internalisation. is a kind of conformity shown by adjusting one's conduct to match that of another individual. Identification is conforming based on social roles. The Stanford Prison Experiment is an example of this type of conformity.

Factors affecting conformity

According to Asch (1956) and other founding researchers, conformity rises with the size of the group, but only to a maximum of three or four members; after that, it seems to level out or even decline. Group size is one of the factors as in large group are more likely to conform to similar behaviours and thoughts than smaller ones. Attractiveness of other group members in the group found to increase conformity. People are more likely to conform to the opinions or behaviours of individuals they find attractive, either physically or socially. This can be because they want to be liked or accepted by attractive individuals, or they may perceive them as more competent or knowledgeable, leading to a higher likelihood of conformity. Cohesiveness refers to the extent to which we are attracted to a social group and want to belong. The greater cohesiveness is, the more we tend to follow the norms (i.e., rules) of the group. Cohesive groups often exert greater pressure for conformity because individuals fear

rejection or social isolation if they deviate from the group's expectations. As a result, the level of cohesiveness within a group can significantly impact the degree to which its members conform to its standards. Another factor will be descriptive norms which explain what most people do in a particular circumstance by informing us about what is typically regarded as efficient or adaptable in that circumstance, they have an impact on our behaviour. In contrast, injunctive norms specify what ought to be done, what is approved or disapproved behaviour in each situation.

Rationale of the study

The study helps us to understand human behaviour by exploring how early attachment styles influence the way individuals conform or resist societal norms provides profound insights into human decision-making processes and behaviour. Recognizing the impact of attachment styles on conformity allows for tailored strategies to support individuals with different attachment styles in coping with societal pressures. Recognizing how attachment styles relate to conformity behaviours might assist therapists in tailoring interventions to address specific attachment-related challenges individuals face in conforming or asserting themselves in social contexts. Attachment theory has led to several branches of research to communicate and it has become a fundamental principle of Integrative Psychotherapy. In fact, in the sphere of psychotherapy there are many models that consider the importance of attachment theory (Psychoanalysis, Cognitive Psychology, Systemic Approach, etc.).

Statement of the problem

The study investigates how different attachment styles among adults influence their tendency to seek confirmation or validation in interpersonal relationships or situations.

Conformity, the tendency to align one's behaviour or beliefs with those of a group, is a pervasive aspect of social dynamics. While extensively studied, the influence of attachment styles on conformity among adults remains a compelling phenomenon. Attachment theory put forward that early caregiver relationships shape individual's attachment styles, which in turn influence their social behaviours. Understanding how attachment styles (secure, anxious, avoidant) impact conformity can provide valuable insights into social adaptation and decision-making processes. This review explores the relationship between attachment styles and conformity among adults, aiming to uncover its mechanisms and implications for various domains of social interaction.

In 2022, researchers Xu & Tu did a study titled 'Impact of College Students' Learning Adaptation on Learning Conformity Behaviour in Hengyang': Moderating Role of Peer Attachment. The sample consist of 650 college students and they used Learning Adaptation Scale, Peer Attachment Scale and Learning Conformity Behaviour Scale to measure their learning adaptation, peer attachment and learning conformity among college students. Peer attachment of college students could significantly and positively influence learning conformity behaviour. Positive peer relationships, serving as a secure base, may inspire individuals to strive toward goal orientations (Jin et al., 2019). If a group of college students hold the same or similar goals, they are more likely to generate learning conformity behaviour. The result shows that College students with high peer attachment had stronger learning adaptability and greater learning conformity behaviour. For students with low peer attachment, although they had stronger learning adaptability, they had limited learning conformity behaviour frequency.

Cheng, Huang & Jun xie (2022) did a study titled Facades of conformity: A value-regulation strategy link employees insecure attachment styles and task performance in the year of 2022. The sample consist of 216 working employee and they used different statistical

tools to measure conformity, attachment styles and task performance of employees and the result shows that task interdependence plays no significant effect on the relationship between avoidant attachment and facades of conformity nor the relationship between anxious attachment and facades of conformity. One possible explanation is that insecurely attached employees still feel the need to conform to others to achieve the desired and expected exchange in a high task interdependent situation.

Garnika (2019) did a study on Relationship Between Peer Attachment with Korean Wave Cultural Conformity in Early Youth. The sample consist of 88 students of class 7th and they used peer attachment instruments adapted from the inventory of parents and peer attachment-revised and Korean wave cultural conformity instruments developed by researchers to measure their parent and peer attachment and culture conformity, the result shows that the peer attachment of students was in the category of secure attachment and Korean wave cultural conformity of students was in the category of obedience. This study recommends basic group guidance services that can improve the achievement of peer attachments and can reduce the Korean wave cultural conformity of students. It means that the higher the peer attachment, the higher the conformity of Korean wave culture for students, conversely, the lower the peer attachment, the lower the conformity of Korean wave students.

Another study on Conformity to Gender Role Norms: Moderating Influence of Attachment Style and Pathological Narcissism on Gender Norm Conformity was done by researchers coker & Chantal (2018) on adults. The sample consist of adults of 193 females,103 males. They used conformity to masculine norms inventory-46 and conformity to feminine role inventory-45 on adults and the result shows that individuals who were primed for gender where more likely to conform and that individuals with high level of anxious attachment, vulnerable narcissim, old age, and heterosexual orientation would endorse great conformity to gender norms than those in the nationality based prime.

A study on Alcoholic and Non-alcoholic Parents' Orientations toward Conformity and Conversation as Predictors of Attachment and Psychological Well-Being was done by Haverfield & Jennifer Theiss (2018) on Adult Children of Alcoholics. Individual who are more than 18 years of age and be a self-proclaimed child of a parent with alcoholism were included in the sample there where 968 participants in the study. The study used a condensed version of the 26-item Revised Family Communication Patterns Instrument , Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR-R), Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), Self-esteem was assessed by the degree to which the participant is confident in his or her personal value or maintains a positive self-image (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991), items assessing the degree to which the participant believes he or she has the ability to cope with adversity, maintain life balance, and maintain an optimistic perspective (Wagnild & Young, 1993). The result shows that they perceive their parents differently in terms of their conformity and conversation orientation such that parents with alcoholism expect their children to be agreeable and obedient, whereas parents without alcoholism shoulder more of the burden in terms of engaging children in open conversations and encouraging disclosure and sharing.

Drake (2014) did a study on the effects of adult romantic attachment anxiety and avoidance on facets of compliance. 143 female and 100 male participants completed the Gudjonsson compliance scale, the relationship scale questionnaire, and the life events questionnaire. The result showed that in both males and females, attachment avoidance alone explained a significant proportion of the variance in extent to which attachment anxiety and avoidance best explain the variation in scores on compliance. In females, both attachment avoidance and anxiety levels accounted for the variance in eagerness to please and meet expectations. Neither attachment anxiety nor attachment avoidance levels explained a significant amount of the variance in male eagerness to please and meet expectations.

A study on Behavioural Norms, Moral Norms, and Attachment: Problems of Deviance and Conformity was done by Buffalo & Rodgers (2014) on 170 boys ranged from 13 to 18 years of age. Self-administered questionnaires were given to them and the findings suggest that delinquents recognize what is expected of them by society in terms of behaviour. They also believe that the ideal patterns of behaviour are not the actual or real patterns of behaviour as expressed by their perception of peer behavioural norms. Accordingly, delinquents may claim, as Matza and Sykes suggest, that their behaviour is not deviant, but somewhat conforming behaviour or at least comparatively less deviant than most boys their age.

Lickenbrock, Braungart-Rieker, Zentall, Toko Oshio & Planalp (2013) did a study on Early Temperament and Attachment Security with Mothers and Fathers as Predictors of Toddler Compliance and Noncompliance. 135 infants and their parents were recruited from a local community for the study and Infant temperament was measured via the Infant Behaviour Questionnaire—Revised (IBQ-R). The Results indicated that temperament and attachment predicted styles of toddler compliance and noncompliance. Toddlers who were secure with mothers and low in temperamental negative reactivity showed the highest levels of committed compliance. Complex interactions revealed differences in the processes by which infant attachment security, temperament and context related to defiance. More specifically, relations between infant–mother attachment and defiance depended on infant–father attachment security, infant temperamental negative reactivity, and task context.

In 2013, a study on Susceptibility to peer pressure and attachment to friends was done by Lotar-Rihtarić & Kamenov on 1,475 high school students (194 boys and 281 girls) using Peer Pressure Questionnaire, relationship Scales Questionnaire and attachment to friends was measured with Modified Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory. When susceptibility to peer pressure was measured by self-report questionnaire, the level of avoidance proved to be a significant predictor for boys, while the level of anxiety and the model of others were

significant predictors for girls. When susceptibility to peer pressure was measured experimentally, the results showed that attachment dimensions predict only girls' susceptibility and that the only significant predictor is their model of others.

Carvalho (2012) did a study on Preschoolers' compliance to mother and to father: the interplay of parenting, children's attachment representation and infants' emotion regulation on infants. For over three years, 52 families participated in a longitudinal prospective study. Fifty-two infants were observed at home at 10 months of age, at 3 years of age, 49 children were again observed with each parent in two independent laboratory sessions during a cleanup task. Children's attachment representation was also assessed using the Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT). Children's attachment representation predicted children's compliance with the mother but not with the father. However, attachment representation did not mediate the relationship between mothers positive parenting control and children's compliance. Thus, mothers and fathers parenting control behaviours play a direct role on children's compliance in the preschool years.

In 2012, R. Kok, IJzendoorn, Linting, Bakermans-Kranenburg, A. Tharner, Luijk, E. Székely, Jaddoe, A. Hofman, F. C. Verhulst & H. Tiemeier did a study on "Attachment insecurity predicts child active resistance to parental requests in a compliance task". The sample consist of 534 mother-child dyads and Mother-infant dyads were observed at 14 and 36 months and maternal and child behaviours were independently coded. The quality of compliance was assessed at 36 months in a clean-up task. Child behaviour was coded using a system differentiating between two dimensions: Compliance and Active Resistance. The result indicates that controlling for concurrent maternal sensitivity, child temperament, and gender children with a more insecure attachment relationship showed higher levels of active

resistance during Clean-Up than more securely attached children. The effect was stronger for boys than for girls and mainly driven by attachment avoidance.

In 2008, a study was done on pregnant women attending antenatal clinics at ten Primary Health Care Centres by Gudjonsson, Sigurdsson, Lydsdottir & Olafsdottir to find the relationship between adult romantic attachment and compliance. The study was done on 377 participants and they used The Multi-item measure of adult Romantic Attachment (MMARA), The Gudjonsson Compliance Scale (GCS), Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) and The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The result shows that Compliance was significantly related to both Anxious and Avoidant attachment after controlling for self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and stress. A further analysis showed that compliance was highest among the Fearful type and lowest among the Secure type. The findings suggest that compliance is an important factor in relation to maladaptive adult romantic attachment.

Landolt, Bartholomew, Saffrey, Doug Oram, & Daniel Perlman did a study on Gender Nonconformity, Childhood Rejection, and Adult Attachment: A Study of Gay Men in the year 2004. The study was done on 300 gay and bisexual men along with 876 heterosexual men using Boyhood Gender Conformity Scale (BGCS), The Mother–Father–Peer Scale (MFP), The Inventory of Peer Attachment (IPA), Peer Relationships Composite Measure and History of Attachment Interview (HAI). The result shows that Gender nonconformity was significantly associated with paternal, maternal, and peer rejection in childhood. In addition, paternal and peer rejection, but not maternal rejection, independently predicted attachment anxiety. Peer rejection and, to a lesser extent, paternal rejection mediated the association between gender nonconformity and attachment anxiety. Finally, peer rejection mediated the association between paternal rejection and attachment avoidance. Findings highlight the role of gender nonconformity in contributing to childhood rejection and the importance of peer relationships in the socialization of gay men.

A study on Attachment Theory and Group Processes: The Association Between Attachment Style and Group-Related Representations, Goals, Memories, and Functioning was done by Rom and Mikulincer in the year 2003 on eighty-nine Israeli undergraduates (65 women and 24 men ranging in age from 19 to 27) participated in the study as part of the requirements for their degree. Their first study was on construct validity of relationship attachment style within group contexts by using "Mikulincer, Florian, and Tolmacz's (1990) 10-item scale tapping attachment anxiety and avoidance in close relationships, Participants' appraisal of task-oriented groups was assessed by a 14-item Hebrew version of Folkman and Lazarus's (1985) scale, Participants' emotions toward task-oriented groups were assessed by a Hebrew version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule .The result shows that the higher the attachment anxiety, (a) the lower the appraisal of group-related self-efficacy, (b) the higher the appraisal of task-oriented groups as a threat, and (c) the stronger the negative emotions that task-oriented groups. In addition, the higher the attachment avoidance, (a) the lower the appraisal of task-oriented groups as a challenge and (b) the weaker the positive emotions and the stronger the negative emotions that task-oriented groups elicited. Overall, the findings supported the construct validity of relationship attachment style within group contexts.

Aim

To explore the relationship between different attachment styles and conformity among adults.

Objectives

To identify the relation of different attachment styles on conformity of adults.

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant relationship between anxious attachment style and conformity of adults

H2: There is no significant relationship between avoidant attachment style and conformity of adults

H3: There is no significant relationship between secure attachment style and conformity of adults

Research Design

The present study is a cross sectional study. Since the data was not normal, Spearman's correlation analysis was used.

Sample and Sampling design

The study involved a sample of adults aged 18-44 both male (42) and female(58). A total of 100 participants within this age range was recruited for the research. In this study, a non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, was employed to select the sample.

Inclusion criteria:

1. Individuals willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

2. Adults within the age group between 18-44
3. Both men and women

Exclusion criteria:

1. Individuals of age below 18 and above 44.
2. Individuals who cannot read or write English.

Operational definition of the Variables

Attachment style refers to the way individuals relate to others in close relationships, shaped by early caregiving experiences (Bowlby, 1969). The concept was developed by John Bowlby and later expanded upon by Mary Ainsworth in the 1960s and 1970s through the Strange Situation procedure, which categorized attachment styles into secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant. Later research by Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied attachment theory to adult romantic relationships, identifying additional styles such as dismissive-avoidant and fearful-avoidant. Attachment anxiety is characterized by self-doubt about one's own worth and abilities, extreme need for interpersonal closeness, love, and support, and continuous worrying about being rejected or abandoned. Attachment avoidance is characterized by unwillingness to trust others, an emphasis on self-sufficiency and autonomy, a relatively low tolerance for interpersonal intimacy and interdependence, and a tendency to down-regulate one's own emotions. Finally, attachment security relates to a sense of faith in the responsiveness of attachment figures, one's own worth and abilities, and ease with intimacy and interdependence, as well as the relative absence of anxiety and avoidance (Mikulincer & Shaver 2007; Gallith, Hart, Nofle & Stockdale, 2009).

Conformity refers to the tendency of individuals to adjust their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to align with those of a group or social norms (Asch, 1950). This concept was extensively studied by Solomon Asch in the 1950s, particularly through his famous

conformity experiments where participants were influenced by the majority opinion, even when it conflicted with their own judgment. Asch's research highlighted the powerful impact of social pressure on conformity behavior. Research in social psychology involving adult populations suggests that people conform to satisfy three primary goals: accuracy, affiliation, and self-concept, and accomplishing these objectives is intrinsically gratifying. (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Peer attachment plays a crucial role in shaping conformity in learning behaviours among college students. The stronger the emotional bond between peers, the more likely they are to engage in conformist learning behaviour, a finding supported by previous research (Neuhaus et al., 2020; Wang, 2017; de Guzman & Carlo, 2004; Oldfeld et al., 2015;).

Tools Used

1. Socio demographic details

Socio demographic sheet was used to collect information regarding age and gender.

2. Adult attachment scale (ASS):

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) was officially developed in 1990 but built on the earlier work of Hazen & Shaver (1987) and Levy & Davis (1988). The scale was developed by decomposing the original three prototypical descriptions (Hazen & Shaver, 1987) into a series of 18 items. The scale consists of 18 items scored on a 5-point likert-type scale (1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree). It measures adult attachment styles named "Secure", "Anxious" and "Avoidant". Reliability and Validity of the scale as reported by Collins & Read (1990) Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .69 for Close, .75 for Depend, and .72 for Anxiety. Test-retest correlations for a 2-month period were .68 for Close, .71 for Depend, and .52 for Anxiety.

3. Conformity Scale:

The conformity scale (CS) was officially developed in 1995 by Mehrabian & Stefl. The scale consists of 11 items scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1: not at all true of me to 7: extremely true of me). All 11 item-total correlations of the Conformity Scale exceeded .40 in absolute value and had a mean absolute value of .54. Additional evidence of internal consistency/homogeneity of the Conformity Scale was provided by an alpha reliability coefficient of .77. Considering that the scale assessed varied elements of conformity and was composed only of 11 items, the latter reliability coefficient was deemed satisfactory.

Procedure

Participation in the study was conducted through questionnaires. A sample of 100 adults aged between 18 and 44 were selected. Prior to participation, participants were provided with detailed information about the study and were asked to fill in the informed consent form. Only those who provided the consent voluntarily, proceed to complete the adult attachment scale and conformity scale. Both scales were selected based on their established reliability and validity in measuring perceived social support and assertiveness. Data collected from the questionnaires were scored according to the scoring guidelines given in them and the data was analysed using the SPSS software. Spearman correlation was employed to examine the relationship between different attachment styles and conformity. These tests were used due to the non-parametric nature of the variables. The findings were interpreted within the context of existing literature.

Ethical considerations

- Consent of the participant was obtained prior to the study
- Adequate level of confidentiality of the participants information was maintained

- Participants were treated with respect for the autonomy and dignity.
- Transparency was upheld in all forms of communication regarding the study.

Statistical Analysis and technique

The data collected from the participants was analysed using SPSS software 29.0.2.0. As the data is non parametrically distributed, the correlation of the data was measured using spearman's Correlation Coefficient.

Normality Testing

Table 1

Test for Normality using Kolmogorov-Smirnova test

	Sig.
Avoidant	.002
Anxious	.011
Secure	.024
Conformity	.063

From the table, it can be inferred that distribution is normal only for secure attachment style as the significance ($p = .024$) which is greater than the level of significance ($p > 0.05$). Other three distribution is not normal as the significance for avoidant, anxious and conformity are .002, .011 and .063 respectively ($p < .05$).

Attachment style refers to the way individuals relate to others in close relationships, shaped by early caregiving experiences. The concept was developed by John Bowlby and later expanded upon by Mary Ainsworth in the 1960s and 1970s through the Strange Situation procedure, which categorized attachment styles into secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant. Conformity refers to the tendency of individuals to adjust their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to align with those of a group or social norms. The study was done to find the role of attachment styles on conformity among adults. The study involved a sample of adults aged 18-44. A total of 100 participants within this age range will be recruited for the research. The selection criteria included individuals who fell within the specified age and were willing to participate in the study voluntarily. Participant recruitment will be carried out through university settings or other social settings.

Table 2

The table shows the descriptive statistics of the data

	Mean	Std.	N
Avoidant	18.01	2.840	100
Anxious	16.89	3.733	100
Secure	18.71	3.022	100
Conformity	40.89	.681	100

From the table it can be inferred that the mean and standard deviation of avoidant sub scale is 18.01 and 2.840, for anxious the mean and standard deviation are 16.89 and 3.733 respectively. The mean and standard deviation of secure style is 18.71 and 3.022. it can also be inferred that the mean and standard deviation of conformity are 40.89 and .681 respectively.

H1: There is no significant relationship between anxious attachment style on conformity of adults

Table 3

Indicates the correlation between anxious attachment style and conformity

	Conformity
Anxious	.174

There is a positive correlation between anxious style and conformity and the result is not significant [$r(98) = .174, p = .083$].

Anxious style is characterized by fear of abandonment. In hypothesis 1 there is no significant relationship between anxious attachment and conformity and shows weak correlation thus, hypothesis 1 is not rejected.

Lavy (2017) indicated negative associations of attachment insecurities (anxiety and avoidance) with students' self-reported functioning with their satisfaction from their group's functioning. More frequent conformity learning behaviour was observed in students with high peer connection compared to those with attachment insecurities. Stronger attachment relationships between peers' results in more students caring about peers' expectations and opinions; norms are internalized, and individuals thus engage in appropriate behaviour (Connor-Smith et al., 2000).

H2: There is no significant relationship between avoidant attachment style on conformity of adults

Table 4

Indicates the correlation between avoidant attachment style and conformity

	Conformity
Avoidant	-.107

There is negative correlation between avoidant style and conformity and the result is not significant [$r(98) = -.107, p = .290$].

The avoidant style is characterized by discomfort with closeness and dependence and a feeling that others want to be “too close.” These individuals do not invest much emotion in relationships and experience little distress when a relationship ends. Other common characteristics include a failure to support partners during stressful times and an inability to share feelings, thoughts, and emotions with partners as they may not be more conforming. In hypothesis 2 the distribution shows weak negative correlation and the result is not significant thus, hypothesis 2 is not rejected.

Cheng, Huang & Jun Xie (2022) did a study titled Facades of conformity: A value-regulation strategy link employees insecure attachment styles and task performance in the year of 2022. The result showed no significant effect on the relationship between avoidant attachment and facades of conformity nor the relationship between anxious attachment and facades of conformity and task interdependence. Lopez and Fons-Scheyd (2008) showed that avoidant attachment among college students has a negative moderating effect on role balance during periods of depression. Role balance as an “internal work model” is a manifestation of the adaptability of an individual’s inner life (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Learning conformity behaviour may emerge more readily in cases when there is an emotional bond between an individual's subjective cognition and that of a peer, as opposed to low peer attachment.

H3: There is no significant relationship between secure attachment style on conformity of adults

Table 5

Indicates the correlation between secure attachment style and conformity

	Conformity
Secure	.213*

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

There is a positive correlation between secure style and conformity and the result is significant [$r(98) = .213^*$, $p=.033$].

Secure individuals are comfortable being close to others. People with secure attachment can build secure relationships that are trustworthiness based because they have a positive sense of self and others. In hypothesis 3 correlation coefficient shows statistically significant and positive relationship between secure attachment and conformity, hence, hypothesis 3 is rejected.

In a study on Impact of College Students' Learning Adaptation on Learning Conformity Behaviour in Hengyang: Moderating Role of Peer Attachment done by Chuang Xu & Tu (2022), it is given that peer attachment has a significantly positive effect on conformity learning behaviour. Thus, greater peer attachment in college students results in more conformity learning behaviour. Positive peer relationships, serving as a secure base, may inspire individuals to strive toward goal orientations (Jin et al., 2019). If a group of college students hold the same or similar goals, they are more likely to generate learning conformity

behaviour. For students with low peer attachment, although they had stronger learning adaptability, they had limited learning conformity behaviour frequency. According to Collins' (1996) attachment theory model, attachment relationships can influence individuals' cognition and emotions, which can subsequently affect their stimulus to a particular situation. The stronger the bonded relationship, the more likely individuals are to conform to learning behaviours. Having a good social connection with peers can act as a secure foundation that motivates folks to work towards achieving their goals (Jin et al., 2019).

The study was done to find the role of attachment style (avoidant, anxious, secure) on conformity among adults. Anxious and avoidant attachment styles with conformity did not show any significant relation suggests that these attachment styles may not strongly influence conformity behaviors among adults in the studied context. On the other hand, the significant positive correlation between secure attachment style and conformity indicates that individuals with a secure attachment style are more likely to conform. This finding suggests that secure attachment promotes adaptive conformity behaviors., hence not rejecting hypothesis 1 and 2 and rejecting hypothesis 3.

Findings

- The study suggests that individuals with an anxious attachment style tend to exhibit lower levels of conformity, although this relationship was not statistically significant.
- Similarly, the study found that adults with an avoidant attachment style also displayed lower levels of conformity, but this relationship was not significant. This indicates that avoidance of close relationships may not strongly impact conformity behaviors among adults.
- In contrast, the study showed that adults with a secure attachment style demonstrated a weak but significant positive correlation with conformity. This suggests that individuals who feel secure in their relationships are more likely to conform.

Implication of study

- The findings shed light on how different attachment styles (secure, anxious, avoidant) might influence individuals' tendencies to conform in social settings.
- Understanding these dynamics offers valuable insights into social behaviours and decision-making processes within various attachment frameworks.

- The research outcomes could inform counselling practices and interventions. For instance, recognizing how attachment styles relate to conformity behaviours might assist therapists in tailoring interventions to address specific attachment-related challenges individuals face in conforming or asserting themselves in social contexts.
- Insights gained from the study can contribute to a deeper understanding of how attachment styles impact relationship dynamics.
- Acknowledging the impact of attachment styles on conformity underscores the importance of considering individual differences in social interactions. This recognition may encourage a more nuanced understanding of how people engage with others based on their attachment orientations.

Limitations

- The findings may be limited by the characteristics of the sample used in the study. For example, if the sample primarily consisted of individuals from a specific demographic or cultural background, the results may not generalize to other populations.
- The study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality between attachment styles and conformity.
- Longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how attachment styles influence conformity over time.
- Participants may have been influenced by social desirability bias, leading them to respond in a way they believed was socially acceptable rather than providing honest answers.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study on role of attachment style on conformity among adults. Before deciding to participate, please read the information given below and ask any questions you may have.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the attachment style and conformity in adults. Your contribution will help to an understanding of these aspects.

Procedure

You will be asked to complete 2 questionnaires. Please ensure you answer the questions according to your true feelings and experiences. Your honest and open responses are crucial for the success of this study. There are no right or wrong answers, everyone possesses their own views. Your participation is valued and your openness will contribute to the meaningfulness of the research.

Confidentiality and Voluntary Participation:

Your responses will be strictly confidential. No personally identifiable information will be disclosed in any reports or publications resulting from this research. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Consent:

I have read and understood the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research

Participant's Name/ Initials:

Signature:

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have been given the opportunity to ask questions and that you voluntarily consent to participate in this study,

Appendix B*Sociodemographic Details*

Name/Initials:

Age:

Sex:

Single/In relationship/Married/separated:

Educational qualification:

Occupation:

Appendix C

Adult attachment scale

Please take a few minutes to tick the number based on how you feel. Answer using the following criteria: Strongly disagree=1 to 5=strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others	1	2	3	4	5
2. People are never there when you need them	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am comfortable depending on others	1	2	3	4	5
4. I know that others will be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I find it difficult to trust others completely	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I do not often worry about being abandoned	1	2	3	4	5
8. I often worry that my partner does not really love me	1	2	3	4	5
9. I find others are reluctant to get as close as I would like	1	2	3	4	5
10. I often worry my partner will not want to stay with me	1	2	3	4	5
11. I want to merge completely with another person	1	2	3	4	5
12. My desire to merge sometimes scares people away .	1	2	3	4	5
13. I find it relatively easy to get close to others	1	2	3	4	5

14. I do not often worry about someone getting close to me	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am nervous when anyone gets too close	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am comfortable having others depend on me	1	2	3	4	5
18. Often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix D

Conformity Scale

Please use the following scale to indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements below. Select your answer to each statement by ticking one of the seven options provided for each statement. Try to describe yourself accurately and generally (that is, the way you are actually in most situations ~ not the way you would hope to be). (1 = *Not At All True of Me*, 7 = *Extremely True of Me*)

	Not at all true of me	Slightly true of me	Somewhat true of me	neutral	Moderately true of me	Very true of me	Extremely true of me
1.I often rely on, and act upon, the advice of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.I would be the last one to change my opinion in a heated argument on a controversial topic.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.Generally, I'd rather give in and go along for the sake of peace than struggle to have it my way.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.I tend to follow family tradition in making political decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.Basically, my friends are the ones who decide what we do together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.A charismatic and eloquent speaker can easily influence and change my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.I am more independent than conforming in my ways.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8.If someone is very persuasive, I tend to change my opinion and go along with them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.I don't give in to others easily.*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.I tend to rely on others when I have to make an important decision quickly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.I prefer to find my own way in life rather than find a group I can follow. *	1	2	3	4	5	6	7