

# Understanding the Relationship of Attachment with Belongingness among Young Adults

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## ABSTRACT

Many young people's lives are marked by relational instability, with them alternating between serious relationships and infrequent romantic encounters. The reason people struggle with relationships and sense of belongingness may be related to the attachment style they have with their primary caretaker. This investigation is done with an objective to determine the relationship between attachment and belongingness among young adults. 100 participants in the age group of 18-25 years and who were involved in romantic relationships with significant other were taken into consideration for this study, which was further segregated as 50 males and 50 females. The result of the study revealed that males and females do not differ significantly in attachment and belongingness. Further, attachment was found to have significant positive correlation with belongingness among young adults.

**Keywords:** Attachment, Belongingness, Relationships, Young Adults.

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## INTRODUCTION

Attachment can be defined by the long-term emotional bond between two people, having intimacy and stability in each other's existence. Attachment is a long-term psychological relationship between humans. Early attachment creates a "internal working model" that directs adult expectations and behaviour in relationships and serves as the foundation for romantic bonds (Rholes & Simpson, 2004). According to theories of learning and behaviour, attachment is a collection of learnt behaviours. The foundation of persistence in learning is to provide food. Infants primarily develop attachment to the bait. People become acquainted with the comfort of receiving from the feeder (often the mother), and to detect contact with the receiving mother through the classic conditioning process (Dollard & Miller, 1950).

Bowlby (1953) suggested that the child first form only a single basic attachment and that the attachment map acts as a shelter for space exploration. The attached relationship works as a model for every possible relationship. If communal interaction stops very much, it can have serious

outcomes. This theory shows that there is an important period (about 0-5 years) for forming attachments. If the child does not form attachment during this period, the child can experience lasting development effects such as reduced intelligence and increased aggression.

Belongingness is the sensation of being an integrated part of a structure or atmosphere as a consequence of one's own interest in the environment or system. According to Hurtado and Carter (1997), sense of belonging refers to a psychological sense of identification or cohesiveness to a cultural, regional, ethnic, technological, or other type of community or social group. A sense of personal identity can be influenced by shared values and above, self-esteem and mutual opportunities in a positive atmosphere. A belongingness motive has a long psychological history, with psychologists such as Sigmund Freud acknowledging the need for humans to be a part of communities and relationships. The desire for relationships, according to Freud, stems from people's sex drives or is more closely linked to parent-child bonds.

According to Maslow (1943, 1954), individuals are encouraged to meet some requirements, with certain desires taking primacy over others. The most fundamental requirement and the motivation behind our behaviours is physical survival. At the end of that stage, we are inspired to move on to higher stages. Take a break at first to lift air, food, beverages, covers, clothing, warmth, sex, some examples. If these necessities are not met, the human body will not be able to operate ideally. According to Maslow, physiological requirements are paramount. This is because it helps before all the remaining necessities are met. The second is a necessity of well-being after an individual's physiological preconditions have been met and security and security needs have become more important. The feeling of having a place is part of the third stage of human need, which is spiritual, after the physiological and security needs are satisfied. Relationship link requirements direct behaviour. As with receiving and giving love, friendship, proximity, certainty, and acknowledgement serve as models.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) contend that having to secure a place is an essential human desire for human beings to be persistent, positive, and to construct and maintain a basic measure of huge relationship connections. To meet these needs, it is necessary to participate in these connections in the context of continuous positive communication with people such as (a) and (b) long-term stability considerations and interest structures.

A feeling of belongingness is vital to prosperity. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), a sense of belonging has a variety of negative consequences, including decreased fitness, satisfaction, and change. They also say that people who do not feel like they belong have higher rates of mental and physical illness, as well as a greater risk of a variety of behavioral issues, such as car accidents, criminality, and suicide. The primary characteristics of attachment include a feeling of security and belonging. So that the individual does not experience misery and loneliness (**Hutchison, 2006**). **Thus, the present** investigation is done with an objective to determine the relationship between attachment and belongingness among young adults.

## Methods and Materials

### Research Hypothesis

H<sub>1</sub>: There will be no significant difference in attachment styles among males and females.

H<sub>2</sub>: There will be no significant difference in belongingness level among males and females.

H<sub>3</sub>: There will be no significant correlation between attachment styles and belongingness.

### Sample Size and Selection

100 participants (n=100) who fell under the age of 18-25 years (young adults) and were involved in romantic relationships with significant other were taken into consideration which were further segregated as 50 males (n=50) and 50 females (n=50). All the participants were taken only after getting their consent to participate in the research. The target audience mainly consisted of undergraduates and postgraduates. The sample was drawn using random sampling method. Those participants were excluded from the research that fulfilled the age criteria but were married. Male and female responses have been recognized to provide a clearer view of the sample and to benefit all.

### Scales Used in the Study

The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) was developed by Collins and Read (1990.) The scale consisted of 18 questions scored on a five-point likert-type scale. The General Belongingness Scale was initially developed by Malone et al (2012). The scale is a likert type self-report poll that is utilized to decide the degree of general belongingness of person. Each item was rated on a seven-point Likert-scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

### Procedure of Data Collection

This investigation is done with an objective to find a correlation between attachment styles and belongingness among young adults. A sample of 100 young adults was taken for fulfilling the research purpose. The sample was further categories based on their gender. The data was collected through distributing questionnaire. Only people who gave their consent to engage in the study were considered for the study.

### Statistical Analysis

After gathering the necessary information, measurable investigation was performed to decide the entirety, mean, standard deviation. t-test values was computed between males and females scores of attachment styles and belongingness. Correlation between interpersonal relationships and belongingness were calculated using Karl Pearson's Coefficient of Correlation.

## Results

*Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants*

Gender	N	%	Mean Age
Male	50	50	20.5
Female	50	50	20.48

The total sample size was 100 (N=100) comprising of 50 males (n<sub>1</sub>=50) which accounts for approx. 50% of the total sample and 50 females (n<sub>2</sub>=50) which accounts for approx. 50% of the total sample. Mean age of males was 20.5 ( $\bar{x} = 20.5$ , range 18-25) and mean age of females was ( $\bar{x} = 20.48$ , range 18-25).

**Table 2. Comparison of males and females on the level of attachment**

Grade Level	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	P
Male	50	53.56	8.37	0.134	98	<0.05
Female	50	51.02	8.46			

The calculated value of t is less than the critical value (t-crit = 1.962) therefore the Hypothesis H<sub>01</sub> is accepted. It further suggests that males and females do not differ significantly on adjustment.

**Table 3. Comparison of males and females on belongingness**

Grade Level	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	df	P
Male	50	51	6.72	0.089	98	<0.05
Female	50	48.84	5.97			

The calculated value of t is less than the critical value (t-crit = 1.962) therefore the Hypothesis H<sub>03</sub> is rejected. It further suggests that males and females do not differ significantly on the level of belongingness.

**Table 4. Correlation between attachment and belongingness among young adults**

Variables	N	M	SD	r
1. Attachment	100	35.36	8.47	-
2. Belongingness	100	49.41	6.42	<b>0.828</b>

The overall sample (N=100) mean came out to be 35.36 for attachment and 49.41 for belongingness. The standard deviation values obtained for the same were 8.47 and 6.42 respectively. The results of the study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation ( $r$  (df=98) = 0.828,  $p < .05$ ) between attachment and belongingness therefore, Hypothesis H<sub>0A</sub> is accepted.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present investigation involves the variables attachment and belongingness. The total sample size for the study was 100 participants which were further segregated into 50 males and 50 females.

The first hypothesis of the study states “there will be no significant difference in attachment among males and females”. The calculated obtained t value (t-cal = .134) was noted to be non-significant at 5% level of significance, representing that males do not vary significantly on the type of attachment. In simpler words, the adjustment styles in both males and females are similar. Observation on mean

values of attachment style, it was found that the average value of female participants was high than the average value of male participants but was non-significant.

Consequently, it can be inferred that the disparity in mean values is due to randomness and both the gender have significantly similar type of attachment styles. Segment movements of past hundreds of years have made a significant change in the existence of people. Bowlby's significant knowledge was that the connection framework is an advanced instrument whose extreme goal is to advance the baby's endurance, which is done through the general goal of keeping guardians close and accessible if there should arise an occurrence of need. Male and female newborn children are both defenseless against wellbeing and endurance risks, and both require similar degree of insurance and venture from their professions. Subsequently, there are no developmental clarifications that individuals ought to foster sex-separated connection styles.

The second hypothesis stated that “there will be no significant difference in belongingness level among males and females”. The calculated t value ( $t\text{-cal} = .089$ ) was observed to be non-significant at 5% level of significance, signifying that males and females do not differ significantly on the levels of belongingness. In simpler words, the level of belongingness in both males and females is similar. Mean values on the level of belongingness signified that male participants had higher mean value in comparison to female participants but it was non-significant.

There are various changes that happen around people and they try to fit in. By comparing oneself with others, one adopts attitudes that are similar to the group they try to fit so that they could get greater acceptance. People with greater sense of belongingness experience more positive emotions. Each and every person requires someone like a person or group to belong to where they are accepted by members of group. This makes them feel that there is someone who is there to support them.

The third hypothesis of the study stated that “there is no significant correlation between attachment and belongingness”. The calculated positive correlation value was observed to be significant at 5% level of significance ( $r(98) = .828, p < .05$ ), demonstrating that there exist a significant positive correlation between attachment and belongingness therefore our third hypothesis getting rejected. This means that attachment was positively correlated with belongingness.

The internal working models formed in childhood will continue to influence the adult's interpersonal style and the equivalent attachment approaches, which means that adults who are securely attached will perceive themselves as virtuous of attachment and other individuals as seeming to be capable of meeting their desires, whilst the contrary is most probable to be correct for those deemed apprehensively attached (Ma, 2006). The more a person is attached towards other group or person the more their belongingness needs are fulfilled. The way one is raised effects their need to belonging like the way parents or caregivers interact, their relationship, environment stability and acceptance at home etc. Individual learns from such situations and reflects them later in life with their surroundings. As the level of understanding is high all the members of group will be there to help each other at the time of crisis making their bond stronger. People with anxious attachment styles are associated with their participation in unacceptable group leading to bad habits. Such people cannot interact easily and conform to groups easily.

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