

# Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review www.plhr.org.pk



# RESEARCH PAPER

# Self-Efficacy as Mediator between Attachment Styles and Life Satisfaction in Adolescents

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# **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to examine the interplay between adolescent attachment styles, Self-Efficacy, and happiness. Securely connected people, as proposed by Attachment Theory, like their relationships and are easy to talk to. Strong attachments to both parents and peers help adolescents through the challenging Transitional period of adolescence by satisfying their psychological needs and boosting their levels of self-efficacy, both of which contribute to their overall sense of well-being and sense of accomplishment. The total sample size for this study was five hundred secondary school students. Teenagers and young adults were scouted from numerous schools. The Independent Sample T-test, in addition to a number of descriptive statistics and a mediation analysis, were utilized in this investigation. We found that Attachment Styles were a significant factor in determining the likelihood of favorable outcomes like Life Satisfaction. We strongly recommend awareness programs for parents to guide about secure attachments and transitional phase of Adolescence.

## **KEYWORDS** Adolescents, Attachment Styles, Life Satisfaction, Self-Efficacy

# Introduction

During one's adolescence, it is essential to build strong bonds with both parents and peers. Adolescence has been called the "storm and stress years" (Cicognani, 2011) because of all the changes that occur in a person's body, mind, and social norms during this period. Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable and formative phase for the development of emotional discomfort and vulnerability. Adolescents are more susceptible to the pressures of new challenges and major life transitions since their brains are still maturing (Smith et al., 2018). Positive psychology studies the ways in which an individual's positive experiences, qualities, and attributes contribute to who they are as a whole (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Several studies (Grolnick et al., 1997) have found that the quality of the parent-teenager connection is linked with the growth and happiness of the child.

Conventionally, an attachment is seen to be a strong bond in which the attached subject turns to the attachment object for comfort and as a springboard for greater self-exploration during times of adversity (Fraley & Roisman, 2019). Adolescents' ability to regulate their emotions and actions declined in tandem with the strength of their ties to family. The quality of a young adult's familial interactions is associated with positive mental health outcomes (Garcia et al., 2019: Muzaffar, et al. 2018). The way a person consistently processes and responds to social cues from others defines their attachment style. A person's attachment to another person, such as a parent, close friend, or romantic

partner, is the sum of their sentiments towards that person. According to research by Fraley and Roisman (2019), an attachment figure is a significant other who "provides solace in times of trouble and opens doors to new opportunities."

Attachment is a psychological process crucial to the growth of interpersonal bonds. The goal of attachment theory is to explain how social beings (usually a carer and a kid) come to form and maintain secure bonds with one another. An infant's first six months are crucial for bonding with his or her parents. A lack of secure attachment throughout childhood can have long-term consequences for a child's mental health and the quality of their adult relationships (Dennis, 2021). In order to grow into a healthy, happy adult who makes positive contributions to society, a child's relationship with his or her parents is essential (Branje, 2018). Strong attachment adolescents are also better in self-awareness and social mood regulation. They learn to better control their emotions, which in turn helps those around them (Mónaco et al., 2019). Secure Attachments leads to a higher Satisfaction with life and is boosted by higher levels of self-efficacy.

#### Literature Review

Theoretically, these traits are linked to tried-and-true parenting principles including open communication and showing affection (Koehn & Kerns, 2018). The joint efforts of parents can strengthen a child's social connections (Axpe et al., 2019). As a result, O'Connor et al. (2019) suggest that a child's sense of self and the world may be shaped by the attachments they make with their primary caretakers as they grow older. Bowlby (1982) explored the hypothesis that children who spend significant amounts of time in the arms of their care providers develop into more autonomous, secure, and sociable adults. Attachment theory suggests that early ties with care givers and authoritative figures are crucial to a child's development in these areas. The reason for this is because initial interactions lay the framework for further success in these areas (Togeer et al., 2021).

The theory's principal proponent, John Bowlby (1951), contends that the relationships formed between parents and newborns at a young age may shed light on how that child deals with stress later in life. Bowlby's (1973) research on attachment suggests that the types and quality of connections we make as children have a significant impact on our adult relationships. An individual's attachment style describes how they typically interact with others. Mónaco et al. (2019) found that adolescents with secure attachments to their parents were better able to cope with stress and other potentially harmful variables.

Mary Ainsworth (1963) began her study of mother bonding while working with Bowlby. According to her, attachment is the development of a deep emotional bond between a person and their surroundings. She contends that developing feelings of love and loyalty towards a maternal figure is vital for a person's well-being at all stages of life. Mary Ainsworth, a psychologist, conducted a battery of experiments on children's social interactions that have come to be known as the Strange Experiments. She observed the kids' behavior both before and after their mothers' return to them after they had been separated (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

One's sense of self-efficacy and confidence in their own talents is a strong indication of their happiness and motivation. Possessing faith in one's own abilities and oneself increases one's prospects of long-term success. When students are free to focus on subjects that truly interest them, they become highly motivated learners. If you have self-doubt, you may avoid challenges that would help you develop your skills. Confidence in one's own talents, on the other hand, leads to a willingness to attempt new things and a persistent

pursuit of personal growth. Teachers' high expectations for their students' work and motivation pay off in the long run (Qamar & Akhter, 2020).

Adolescents learn the most about self-esteem and confidence from their parents. Adolescents can benefit from positive reinforcement in the form of compliments. One-way parents can set a good example is by the words they choose to use while speaking to their children. Studies on intergenerational parallelism have found that parents' levels of self-efficacy have a impact on the self-efficacy formation of their children.

In reality, everyone can have a "mastery experience" if they believe in their own potential to improve their talent through hard work. It's an excellent strategy for learning material with real-world application. Positive thinkers are more likely to exert themselves fully, leading to enhanced performance (Fulgencio et al., 2021). Bandura (1977) argues that when people see others they can connect to succeed repeatedly at something difficult, they are more likely to believe in their own skills. Getting "vicarious experiences" is learning from the accomplishments of others. Those who believe in their own abilities are more likely to take cues from those who exhibit similar traits. Anyone from a close relative to a trusted friend to a fellow student or even a teacher could fall into this category (Fulgencio et al., 2021).

Why "satisfaction" in Latin for "abundance"? One must either accept one's life and make the best of it, or strive for more. The importance that a person takes on their own life might be inferred from how happy they are with it. A person's happiness can be evaluated by contrasting his present circumstances with his desired future. Michalos (1986) argues that a person's level of happiness depends on whether or not they focus on their current circumstances rather than on creating a better world in the future. One's dreams, past experiences, good fortune, and sense of entitlement all factor towards one's ability to find happiness in life. According to the comparison hypothesis stated by Joseph and Wu (2009), a person's happiness can be judjed by contrasting current situation with their ideal life, expectations, past experiences, wants, and views about the future. And he thinks it's crucial to factor in the individual's background when making such comparisons (Sousa & Lyubomirsky, 2001).

Oberle et al. (2011) found that early adolescent happiness could be substantially predicted by factors such as self-reported optimism, school connectedness, community support, parental support, and pleasant peer interactions. Teens' self-reported levels of happiness and other measures of psychological and social maturity have been studied extensively. Strong evidence suggests that when one builds up their stock of developmental assets, they also experience an improvement in life happiness (Valois et al., 2009). Taking ownership of one's decisions and the consequences of those decisions has been shown to have a profound effect on a person's happiness.

Connecting with others and having a sense of purpose and meaning in life are crucial to adolescents' development and happiness. Adolescent relationship satisfaction mediated the positive association between parental phubbing and adolescent happiness. Phubbing by parents had a greater impact on children who were more anxious or fearful to begin with (Liu et al., 2019) than on those who were more self-assured or relaxed. Teens that are emotionally strong, gregarious, open, and conscientious report the highest levels of happiness. People who feel safe in their own skin and in their relationships with others likely to be happier overall (Wan et al., 2015).

## **Hypotheses**

Based on the review of relevant literature and the aims of the study, the following hypotheses were developed.

H1: Self-Efficacy would mediate the relationship between Attachment Styles and Life Satisfaction.

H2: There would be a significant difference score on Attachment Styles, Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Adolescents in term of Gender.

#### Material and Methods

# **Participants**

The individuals that took part were selected through a random sample technique. Average age was 15.04, and students from both public and private high schools in Faisalabad were included in the study.

#### **Inclusion Criteria**

- Teens enrolled in both public and private schools were included. Ages 11-19 (teenagers) participated.
- Only teenagers without any obviously physical flaws were considered.
- Participating adolescents were those aged 13 to 19.
- Teenagers from the Faisalabad area were included.

#### **Exclusion Criteria**

- Only teenagers between the ages 15 and 19 were considered.
- Only teens who voluntarily participated in the survey were considered.
- Teenagers who were visibly struggling with their mental health were not allowed to take part.
- Young people who had any sort of visible disability were not permitted to take part.
- We only looked at Faisalabad area Adolescents for this.

#### **Measures**

#### **Informed Consent Form**

The consent form includes language meant to reassure participants that their safety was not at risk and that their data would be kept confidential and used only for academic purposes. The form also included the researcher's contact information to allow participants getting in touch with her to learn more about the study's findings. All respondents provided their informed consent before completing the surveys.

## **Demographic Form**

The Demographic Form included questions about the respondent's gender, date of birth, birth order, number of siblings, parents' occupations, marital status, and annual household income.

## Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment Revised (IPPA-R).

There were originally only three measures on the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment created by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) to measure levels of trust, alienation, and communication between parents and their offspring. The Gullone-Robinson (2005) Scale is the most recent version. Respondents were asked to rate each statement was true on a three-point scale from Always true, Neutral, and Never true, with 28 items displaying attachment to parents and 25 questions reflecting connection to peers. This study relied on Munir et al.'s (2020) Urdu translation of the IPPA-R. Approved Urdu translation was used.

# **General Self Efficacy Scale (GSES)**

Use was made of Jerusalem and Schwarzer's (1992) 10-item General Self-Efficacy measure. Respondents rated their agreement or disagreement. Each question contains a 4-point scale, with 0 being completely false and 4 representing completely true. This self-evaluation takes less than three minutes to complete and requires no outside help. How someone rates on this scale reveals how confident they are in themselves. A higher sum score is indicative of a greater belief in one's own abilities. In the present study, we employed the Urdu translation of the General Self-Efficacy Scale.

# Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The SWLS was developed by Diener et al. (1985) to judje an individual's happiness. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is among the simplest and fastest tools to conduct, comprising only five short and fundamental statements. Each statement consists of a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongest disapproval) to 7 (strongest agreement). The test-retest reliability coefficient was high, and the scale possessed other strong psychometric properties. With an alpha between.79 and 89, this scale is highly reliable. This study benefited from the availability of the scale's urdu translation.

#### Procedure

We reached out to the appropriate number of prominent institutions and secured approval to conduct recruitment from their membership. Before distributing questionnaires, students were given an explanation of the purpose of the study and how it would be conducted. The consent letter detailed the potential advantages and disadvantages of taking part, as well as how their personal data would be safeguarded and how they might withdraw their consent at any time. After participants gave their approval, a demographics survey was sent to them to fill out. All eligible participants were sent follow-up questionnaires. After completing the General Self-Efficacy Scale by Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1992) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale by Diener et al. (1985), participants were given a five-minute break before receiving the Satisfaction with Life Scale.

#### **Ethical Considerations**

The Thesis Supervisor in the Psychology Department at Riphah International University in Pakistan approved all of the data and procedures utilized in this study. The confidentiality of the participants was maintained, and they were informed adequately about the study and their rights as volunteers. Participants' rights and dignity, as well as concepts of loyalty and accountability, were upheld throughout the course of the study.

# **Results and Discussion**

This study used multiple regression analysis to explain the link between adolescent attachment styles, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction. The t-test was used to shed light on the gender differences in adolescent boys' and girls' Attachment Styles, Self-Efficacy, and Life Satisfaction.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (Frequencies & Percentages)

Variables	F	cies & Percentages) %	
Gender			
Female	298	59.6	
Male	202	40.4	
Age			
11	15	3.0	
12	55	11.0	
13	38	7.6	
14	90	18.0	
15	117	23.4	
16	55	11.0	
17	50	10.0	
18	60	12.0	
19	20	4.0	
Education			
Above matric	197	39.4	
Below matric	100	20.0	
Matric	203	40.6	
Father Occupation			
Business Job	121	24.2	
Job	379	75.8	
Mother Occupation			
Housewife	187	37.4	
Job holder	312	62.4	
Alive parents			
Both	287	57.4	
Father	190	38	
Mother education			
Less than matric	202	40.4	
More than matric	298	59.6	
Father education			
Less than matric	159	31.8	

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha for the Research Measures

Research Measure	A	Items
Attachment	0.815	52
Self-Efficacy	0.928	10
Life satisfaction	0.791	5

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variables	M	SD
Attachment	2.75	0.85
Self-Efficacy	2.85	1.05
Life Satisfaction	2.565	0.7532

Note: M= Mean and SD= Standard Deviation

**Table 4**Regression analysis for mediation of Self-Efficacy between perceived stress and wellbeing.

				<b>o</b> .			
Variable	В	95%CI	SEB	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	Ad R <sup>2</sup>	Sig
Step 1					.45	.45*	.000
Constant	-10.23*	[-13.23, -7.236]	1.52				.000
Attachment	0.29*	[0.26, .317]	0.14	.674*			.000
Step 2					.60	.15*	.000
Constant	-11.03*	[-13.23, -8.505]	1.30				.000
Attachment	0.15*	[0.127, 0.188]	0.15	0.37*			.000
Self- efficacy	0.61*	[0.525, 0.700]	0.45	0.49*			.000

Dependent Variable= Satisfaction with life. Note: p<.05

Table 04 shows how adolescents' self-efficacy and attachment type interact to affect their happiness. Given that the R2 value for Step 1 was 45 (p .05), it was found that Attachment Types explained 45 percent of the variance in Life Satisfaction. A favourable correlation between attachment types and life satisfaction was found (b = 0.67, p .05). There was a 60% (p.05) correlation between Attachment Type and Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction, as indicated by the Step 2 R2 value of 60. Life satisfaction was found to be predictably associated with both attachment type and Self-Efficacy (b = 0.61, p .001). The variance has changed by 15% between the two models, as indicated by the AR2 value of 0.15. As a result of this moderate mediation, the relative importance of Attachment Styles in the regression analyses declined from Model 1 to Model 2 (from.60 to.45). In addition, Attachment Styles have both direct and indirect effects on Life Satisfaction.

Table 5
The independent sample T-test shows the difference on the score of Attachment Styles,
Self-Efficacy and Life Satisfaction among Adolescents

Gender	Mean	SD	Df	T	P	Cohen's d
Female	108.0678	17.58349	503	2.532	0.02	0.23
Male	104.0000	18.08274		2.520	0.03	
Female	24.6949	6.08403	503	1.846	0.04	0.17
Male	23.6667	6.28915		1.835	0.04	
Female	21.4237	7.44413	503	2.967	0.00	0.28
Male	19.3810	7.87447		2.939	0.00	
	Female Male Female Male Female	Female108.0678Male104.0000Female24.6949Male23.6667Female21.4237	Female108.067817.58349Male104.000018.08274Female24.69496.08403Male23.66676.28915Female21.42377.44413	Female       108.0678       17.58349       503         Male       104.0000       18.08274	Female       108.0678       17.58349       503       2.532         Male       104.0000       18.08274       2.520         Female       24.6949       6.08403       503       1.846         Male       23.6667       6.28915       1.835         Female       21.4237       7.44413       503       2.967	Female       108.0678       17.58349       503       2.532       0.02         Male       104.0000       18.08274       2.520       0.03         Female       24.6949       6.08403       503       1.846       0.04         Male       23.6667       6.28915       1.835       0.04         Female       21.4237       7.44413       503       2.967       0.00

Note: p < 0.05

Adolescent pupils show wide variance in their attachment styles, Self-efficacy, and happiness. Comparisons of attachment style, Self-efficacy, and life satisfaction among high school males and females are shown in the table below. There are substantial gender variations in the means of all of the characteristics discussed here. That male and female students respond differently to questions assessing attachment styles, self-efficacy, and life satisfaction has thus been shown.

## Discussion

This section aims to provide a high-level overview of the research results from the empirical study that was carried out for this project and examined the association between teenagers' Attachment Styles and their levels of optimism and confidence. the quick and significant changes in a child's physical and mental growth occur during adolescence, sometimes known as the "storm and stress years," making this an ideal time to learn about the parents' preferred Attachment Style. Using Attachment Theory as a theoretical framework, this study aimed to better understand how people's behavior and the responses of their attachment figures influence their sense of security in their closest personal relationships. According to developmental theorists (Ainsworth et al., 1978), a child's first connection to his or her parents (primary attachment) provides the framework for the child's later self- and social-beliefs.

Armsden and Greenberg (1987) gave the standards that were applied to group individuals into high-security (secure attachment) or low-security (insecure attachment) categories based on their results on the three IPPA subscales. Students who reported feeling safe with their families and peers but showed no evidence of withdrawal from these groups were classified as insecure, and vice versa. Rice et al. (1995) and Armsden and Greenberg (1987) are two authors who back up this idea. Those who place a higher value on isolation than on trust or communication are labelled as avoidant, whereas those who place a lower value on trust than on isolation or communication fall into the ambivalent category.

The results demonstrated that adolescents' communication abilities had no appreciable bearing on their levels of life satisfaction. Dissatisfaction with one's life is often linked to a sense of isolation. It is possible to reduce adolescents' feelings of isolation and increase their contentment with life. Trust was also an indicator of adolescent satisfaction with life. Teens' overall satisfaction with life increases when they learn to trust others.

Researchers have shown that the way a person chooses to form bonds with others has a major impact on how confident they feel in their own abilities. The findings point to the importance, if any, of a positive mindset and a group of supportive friends in achieving happiness (Folad et al., 2017). Bandura (1986) proposed that teachers and students alike pay close attention to and act upon linguistic indications that explain what pupils can do and how well they can do it in different circumstances in order to increase students' belief in their own abilities. Children who are held to extremely high standards by their parents and teachers tend to view themselves as more important than they actually are. Positivity serves as a conduit between contentment and self-assurance in one's talents.

#### Conclusion

Our findings based on the expanding body of literature on parent-adolescent attachments and provide clues as to the significance of specific attachment traits, such trust and communication, in describing teenagers' levels of life satisfaction. Researchers found that an individual's attachment style can be used as a predictor of both self-efficacy and life satisfaction. These findings support a key hypothesis of attachment, which posits that an individual's happiness and sense of self-efficacy are strongly influenced by the quality of their connections. Positive attachments with both parents and peers help adolescents of all cultures and backgrounds navigate the challenging Transitional period of adolescence, meet their psychological needs, boost their optimism, and ultimately contribute to their subjective Life Satisfaction and their achievements.

#### Recommendations

Our findings supported the assumptions of Attachment Theory when applied to Pakistani culture. But it's important to recognize the limitations of our research. Extrapolating the results to different age groups requires extra caution because the study's participants' ages ranged from 12 to 19. It's particularly troubling that just kids took part. To create more generalizable results, future research may benefit from a more diverse sample of adolescents from various socio-demographic origins and with a range of attachment and life satisfaction preferences. Similar studies with a bigger sample size of persons from both urban and rural Pakistan may yield more reliable findings.

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