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Adolescence attachment towards parents and peers and its impact on academics performance

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Abstract

People cannot live alone in society. The need of social belongingness attached them and they feel affiliation for others. This need for affiliation is based on genetics or experience. It constitutes a relatively stable trait or behavior. Basically people need social contacts that suit them. The person's first contact is with parents and then with friends. Parent attachment is stronger during infancy and childhood whereas friend's attachment is strong during adolescence. Attachment level varies with the ages and stages of life. Parental and peer attachment have been shown to affect students' academic performance and educational outcomes. Although low attachment to parents and peers was not the single predictor of poor academic performance, strong attachment was found to influence the college students' sense of self and promoted higher self-esteem.

Keywords: Adolescence, peer, academics, attachment

1. Introduction

Attachment is defined as an enduring affection bond of substantial intensity (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987, Paterson, Pryor, & Field, 1995) [6]. Attachment has different type of relation with other or person(s) and it's related to psychological health, self-image, self-esteem, well-being, empathy, core beliefs, relational development, and academic achievement (Blissett, Walsh, Harris, Jones, Leung, & Meyer, 2006) [7]. The theory of attachment is about the psychological tendency to seek closeness to another person(s), to feel secure when that person is present, and to feel worried when that person is absent or unavailable.

According to Bowlby (1982) [11], human beings are born with an innate psychobiological system (the *attachment behavioral system*) that motivates them to seek proximity to supportive others (*attachment figures*) in times of need. This system, which emerged over the course of evolution, accomplishes basic regulatory functions (protection from threats and alleviation of distress) and increases the likelihood of survival of human infants, who are born with immature capacities for locomotion, feeding, and defense.

Theory of attachment originated as an explanation of the bond that exists between an infant and the primary caregiver, typically the mother (Bowlby, 1988) [6]. This bond not only is important for general wellbeing but also functions as a template for all relationships across the lifespan. Bowlby (1969) [13], conducted considerable work in the field of attachment theory and arguing that children with secure attachments to caregivers are well-adjusted than those with low attachment. The theory implies that caregivers influence a child's development by showing the child how to cope, handle life's problems, and deal with others.

Early attachment researchers such as Ainsworth Blehar waters and wall (1978) [11] and Bowlby (1982) [11] have argued that children internalize relationship experiences with their mother into internal working models which structure and direct children's behavior in other social encounters. Young people learn from the interactions with their parents, for example, how to initiate and maintain satisfying and warm friendship. Social skills are proposed to constitute one of the mechanisms relating parental influence to the initiation of warm and satisfying peer relationship in adolescents (Buhrmester, 1990) [14]. A basic tenet of attachment theory is that it is stable over time, Bowlby (1988) [12] also assumed that it is active over the entire life span and is manifested in thoughts and behaviors related to support seeking, however research yields mixed findings.

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Attachment during adolescence is not only a period of physical, sparking hormonal changes but also a period of significant cognitive, social and behavioral transitions. Cognitively, there are huge gains in reasoning and perspective taking skills, as well as acquisition of better emotional understanding. Importantly, they impact the desire for a more independent and autonomous life and individuals develops more mature sense of identity because of such advances in behavioral, social and cognitive empire (Habermas and Bluck 2000) [28]. Socially, peer relationships become much more important than before. However, parents do not disappear from the daily life of an adolescent. In order to achieve their goals, they have to manage their emotions, and decisions for which they require strong attachment with their parents. Strong relationships of parents and management skills are more effective tools to manage personal autonomy and achieving goals (Flora 2005) [26].

Close relationships with parents and peers undergo significant changes throughout adolescence (Collins, 1995 Laursen & Bukowski, 1997) [16, 33]. The first major developmental tasks regarding adolescent relationships are, to individuate from parents while maintaining connection and secondly, to establish intimate and interdependent relationships with friends and later also with romantic partners (Bouchey & Furman, 2003 Erikson, 1968) [10, 24]. Close relationships are often defined as connections between two persons with “strong, frequent, and diverse interdependence that lasts over a considerable period of time” Kelley (1983) [32]. Close relationships is focus on adolescents relationships with mothers, fathers, friends, and romantic partners.

These relationship changes take place in a context of cognitive, physical, and psychosocial development (Collins & Repinski 1994) [17] resulted to adolescents to become more stable and mature, in terms of person and as a relationship partner (Lerner, 1985, Moore & Boldero, 1991) [34]. Development can be defined as “an ongoing series of environment” (Laursen & interactions between a changing organism and a changing Bukowski, 1997) [33]. The general aim of this thesis is to investigate development of close relationships during adolescence.

Attachment during Adolescence with Parents Historically, attachment theory focused primarily on infancy and early childhood. This is due to the notion that “children form mental representations of relationships based on their interactions with, and adaptation to, their care-giving environment” Nakash-Eisikovits, O., & Dutra, L. (2002) [37]. Few studies examine the attachment relationships that develop between child and parent figure during adolescence and their impact on this developmental phase and future development. This is where adolescents have the opportunity to rework and consolidate the early childhood separation-individuation process. Adolescents can begin to integrate multiple attachment experiences in order to construct a more generalized stance toward future attachments. Blos (1967) [8] termed adolescence “the second phase of separation and individuation” with the first phase at the end of the second year of life. This parallel is crucial to the understanding of the importance of attachment during adolescence as well. During adolescence, it is necessary for parents to provide a balance of supportive affection, discipline, and encouragement of independence in order to foster new attachment schemas (Cozolino, 2006) [20]. Communication quality between parents and adolescents is also important (Allen & Land, 1999) [3]. It is through the reassurance and support of parental attachment that adolescents are able to develop a positive sense of self.

“Attachment security contributes to development of a positive representational model of self that guides the processing of information related to the self” Duchesne, S., & Larose, S. 2007 [22]. High quality parent-child communication during adolescence is associated with positive family functioning. It includes sharing feelings, addressing difficult issues, actively listening, and encouraging children to ask for questions and help when needed (Boone & Lefkowitz, 2007) [9]. From a young age and throughout their development, “conversations in which adults and children talk about the intentions implied by each other’s reasonable comments and link these to each other’s appropriately interpreted actions may be the ‘royal road’ to understanding minds” (Fonagy & Allison, 2012) [27]. Adolescents that are more securely attached are more likely to seek out positive information about them and accept it than insecurely attached adolescents. Securely attached adolescents tend to remember interactions, even those that were negative, with their parents more positively over time due to their general positive feelings about their relationship with that parent. Insecure adolescents showed slower retrieval of emotionally significant childhood memories. There is also an abundance of evidence of significant associations between relatively poor mental health and inadequate parental bonding, as reflected by both perceived low parental care and high parental control “Adolescents who possess secure internal working models demonstrate more open and flexible processing of social information, and unlike their insecure counterparts, they do not tend to suppress attachment-relevant social information. Securely attached adolescents are more likely to have positive perceptions of family, peers and others than insecurely attached adolescents. They are able to generalize the information from the primary attachment relationship to have a more positive outlook on relationships and interaction throughout life. That is not to say that adolescence is void of trials and tribulations. As they move through adolescence, adolescents increase their tendencies toward derogation of parents and lack of recall, and perceive their parents as more rejecting (Ammaniti, van IJzendoorn, Speranza, & Tambelli, 2000) [4]. In one study, at age 17, 75% of adolescents preferred peers to parents for proximity and separation protest, as well as favoring them as secure bases. It is during this developmental phase that the search for a partnership with a peer begins. This is a relationship which involves the systems of attachment, reproduction and caregiving. “Minor” attachment relationships include teachers, relatives, close friends, romantic partners, and therapists. These individuals’ help adolescents manage emotional situations and may be long or short-term. These relationships have all of the qualities of an attachment relationship, but may be temporary and therefore seen as a “first foray” into recreating the attachment system using new figures. It is important to note that all new relationships continue to be impacted by the base relationships. Adolescents’ internal working models of attachment are linked to their processing of attachment relevant social information. In the absence of information about new individuals, adolescents will draw on previously obtained knowledge from prior attachment relationships in order to understand new potential relationships.

Attachment during Adolescence with Peers Sometimes they need parent’s help, love, care and guidance and some time they need friend’s intimacy, affection and love. Generally speaking adolescents find their friendships to be enjoyable: together they relax, joke, watch television, and participate in sports activities and talk. The peer acceptance and attachment

is as important as the parent attachment. Parental and peer attachment affects individuals throughout the entire life. It enhances self-esteem, well-being, empathy, core beliefs, as well as relational development and academic development.

The strong attachment has strong influence on personality. When this influence effects the decisions or liking, disliking of a person and a person feel forced to left their own mottos, feelings and fulfill the friends or parents expectation, this is called pressure. pressure involves expectations or demands that one behave in a certain way". They divide pressure in two types the pressure to perform and the pressure to confirm. The power of pressure is violating personal standards in order to be liked by other members of cohesive group. No one can deny this power of pressure.

The adolescents learn about themselves from friends may differs from what they learn about themselves from parents. The skills, values and behavior rewarded by one group may be different from those rewarded by the other. Parent's has certain value system and norms they want from their children to follow them and fulfil their expectations this is parent pressure. Whereas, the peer pressure is defined as the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitude, values, behavior in order to confirm the group norms Eells, T. (2001) [23] The pressure in itself is neither positive nor negative.

It is positive if it encourages positive attitude, healthy values, respect and hard work. It is negative if it encourages negative attitude. The positive pressure strengthens the potential of a person and the negative pressure reduces the person's strength. The positive pressure leads towards the success whereas the negative leads to the failure in academic life.

The children at adolescent age share their problems and feeling with their friends. The nature of relationship with friends depends on the parenting style. The strong relationship with parents may result in the weak relationship with friends and vice versa.

The Effect of Peer and Parent Pressure on the Academic Achievement of college Students The findings of the research of Carvallo & Gabriel (2006) [20] showed that "even the people who claim to have little or no need for affiliation do have affiliation need". One or the other way people need friends for social acceptance. The other reason may be the people are curious they need to know the people around them, so they are socially influenced. The social influence can occur at three levels.

At the first level one can publicly go with others but refuse to change his private beliefs at this stage little peer pressure can affect. The second level of social influence is when people behave like others because they are attracted with them. They change their style and adopt the group or person has and when they apart one returned on their own. At this stage one has no personal intention; he/she will do the same as the others in group will do. They can return to their original beliefs when the peer pressure removed. The third level is where someone has truly influenced and changes his own forever. This is the crucial stage one can build or destroy his future because of this influence or pressure. Powerles.

Thus, in adolescence, one can see the emergence of delinquent gangs, along with friendships cliques or special interest groups that are not as oriented toward violating social norms. Adolescent and peer interaction is not readily apparent before adolescence. It involves what are frequently referred to as crowds and it contingent on peer and adolescents gathering in such large numbers that it is no longer feasible for everyone to know each other personally.

Attachment at Academic level Schools make great contribution to students in their social and personality developments as well as their academic developments (Marks, 1988) [35]. In a large number of studies carried out recently, it is often emphasized that there is a positive relationship between the students' levels of school attachment and their social, emotional and academic adaptation. In this respect, being attached to the school and believing that you are valuable as a member of the school and you are being respected (Roeser 1996, Samdal1999) [39, 42] are defined as a psychological need related to the sense of belonging to the group.

(Osterman, 2000) [38]. Faircloth and Hamm (2005) [25], Jimerson, (2003) [31] explained this concept with an approach which deals with the extracurricular activities at school, the student motivation reflecting the belief of value and competency towards school activities that have a dynamic relationship with the students' attitude and the relationships with teachers and classmates. It was determined that while there is a negative relationship between having a high level of school attachment and the attitudes towards crime, running away from school, using drugs (Somers and Gizi, 2001) [44], depression, suicide (Anderman, 2002; Bullerdick, 2000) [5, 15], risky sexual behaviours (Hawkins, 1999; [30], cheat and school problems there is a positive relationship between having a high level of school attachment and academic success and motivation. Samdal *et al.*, 1999; Roeser *et al.*, 1996) [40, 42].

Adolescence is a retro of strain moment resulting from new evolving and environmental challenges, including peer pressures, family conflicts academic strains, and future career choices, However, they rely on very few coping approaches because of limited resources and experience for this reason, there is a need to find out adaptive coping styles that can be taught to adolescents to help them in developing school attachment.

School attachment among adolescent has been defined as a sense of belonging or connectedness at school. A network of relationships with peers and adolescent as well as other school personnel and a sense of inherent value for the learning process as it relates to students' lives. It is the extent to which adolescents feel accepted, valued, respected and included in the school.

High school attachment among adolescent has been associated with positive social, emotional, and academic adjustment, achievement and motivation. Low level of school attachment among adolescent may lead to school alienation demonstrated by adolescent's withdrawal from school activities or never engage in school extracurricular activities, cheating in school, delinquency, corporal punishment in school with adolescent, creating pressure to junior children, violence in school, disturbing to other adolescent group, discipline problems, low school motivation and achievement, negative attitudes towards school, poor attendance, and poor social and emotional adjustment in school, irregular or dropout from school, risky sexual behavior and substance abuse.

Those adolescent who can establish positive relationships with their teachers and other adolescent group are one of the individuals with whom they establish the most intense relationship and increase their positive attitudes. Many research states that those adolescent who have interaction with teachers and peers on regular basis are determine the nature of social atmosphere in which adolescent live, suggests that adolescent's social and moral experiences are generally formed of myriad attitudes and reactions they exhibit in the

consequence of the interactions with their teachers.

Accordingly, school attachment and the factors related to school are an importance in the increase quality of adolescent and adolescence life as well as the protection and development of their mental health. Those educationalists who involved in the field of mental health and counseling process, ensuring that the peer and adolescents under the risk in terms of school attachment, and quality of life should be identified on regular basis and these students can be assured to make effectively use of the psychological counseling services with a group and individually.

Quality of life is dealt with as a general and continual well-being and its evaluation concentrates generally on the positive experiences creating happiness, enjoyment and satisfaction and the negative experiences and emotions stating just opposite of this. These experiences are assessed within the framework of family, social circle, school, work, utilizing free times, etc. which are sense and importance in terms of individual's life

The importance of the concept of school attachment in terms of education is the fact that it is regarded as an important psychosocial source for the general well-being and health conditions of adolescent and peers. Being attached to school functions positively for the development of healthy attitudes during the period of adolescent-hood and puberty also functions as protective factor by preventing the development of anti-social behavior's. In the process of attachment, it is suggested that school plays an important role in the lives of adolescent and peers in terms of the underlying of the importance of environmental conditions.

This research attempts to analyse the attachment of adolescents towards their parents and friends circle and how their behaviour affects their school performances. The study reveals that attachment has an important role in adjustment and social transition. The low attachment to parents and peers is not the single predictor of poor academic performance and strong attachment.

Although dyadic processes are reciprocal, a balance of power exists within relationships, with the possibility of one participant's being more powerful than the other. Such is the case in the primary caregiver (parent)-child dyad as seen in physical and social facts and events. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979 & 1986), evidence suggests that the optimal situation for learning and growing is one in which the balance of power gradually shifts in favour of the developing person, as the growing person is given increasing opportunity to exercise control over situations.

Bowlby's epigenetic view of developing attachment patterns: "Thus at conception development turns on interaction between the newly formed genome and the intrauterine environment; at birth it turns on interaction between the physiological constitution, including germinal mental structure, of the neonate and the family, or non-family, into which he is born; and at each age successively it turns on the personality structure then present and the family and, later, the wider social environments then current.

This statement provides a clear association of Bowlby's perception of attachment process and behaviors with the wider conceptualizations of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development. Based on these similar perspectives of the ecological theory of development and attachment theory, this study considers the interplay between adolescents' attachments with parents and peers and their association with academics. It is also notable that influence of peer group on adolescents develops sense of self and promoted higher self-

esteem. It identifies the Adolescence Attachment towards Parents and Peers and Its Impact on Academics Performance.

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