

# EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD ATTACHMENT STYLE ON ADULT ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

## 1. Abstract

This case study investigates how different **childhood attachment styles** (secure, avoidant, anxious) relate to **romantic relationship satisfaction** in adulthood. Using a **mixed-methods** design combining standardised psychological scales and semi-structured interviews, the study models an advanced assignment setup that allows students to apply developmental and interpersonal theories in real-life analysis.

## 2. Introduction

Attachment theory posits that early caregiver-child interactions form internal working models that guide future relationships. Adult romantic relationships often reflect these childhood styles. Students frequently study these concepts theoretically; this case demonstrates how to **research and interpret real-world relationship dynamics** through a psychological framework.

## 3. Research Objective

To examine whether individuals with secure childhood attachment report higher satisfaction in current romantic relationships compared to those with avoidant or anxious attachment histories.

## 4. Hypotheses

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null):** There is no significant difference in relationship satisfaction between attachment styles.
- **H<sub>1</sub> (Alternate):** Individuals with secure attachment report significantly higher relationship satisfaction.

## 5. Methodology

### Participants

- **Sample:** 50 adults (25–35 years) in committed relationships for at least 1 year
- **Gender:** Balanced

- **Recruitment:** Online volunteer sign-up

### Tools & Instruments

Instrument	Description
Adult Attachment Questionnaire	Classifies individuals into Secure, Anxious, or Avoidant styles
Relationship Assessment Scale	7-item scale assessing satisfaction (score range: 7–35)
Semi-structured interview guide	Used with 6 selected participants (2 from each group)

## 6. Data Summary

### Attachment Style Distribution

#### Style      Participants      Mean Satisfaction Score (out of 35)

Secure    22                      30.5

Avoidant 14                    22.7

Anxious 14                   19.9

### ANOVA Results

- **$F(2, 47) = 11.82, p < 0.001$**
- Significant differences found between secure vs anxious and secure vs avoidant groups.

## 7. Interview Insights (Qualitative)

Attachment Style	Thematic Quote	Psychological Interpretation
Secure	“We talk openly, even when we disagree.”	Emotionally secure communication pattern
Avoidant	“I need space; too much closeness feels suffocating.”	Fear of intimacy, classic avoidant trait

Anxious	“I keep worrying they’ll leave me even if they say they won’t.”	Fear of abandonment, low relational trust
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## 8. Discussion

The study supports attachment theory’s central claim: **early relational models shape adult intimacy**. Participants with secure attachment were consistently more satisfied in their romantic relationships, as shown both by quantitative scores and qualitative reports.

### Implications for students:

- Apply developmental psychology in relational contexts
- Use both statistical and narrative data to deepen analysis
- See how psychological constructs manifest in common life domains

### Limitations:

- Small sample size
- Cross-sectional design
- Reliance on self-report measures

## 9. Assignment Learning Outcomes

Skill	Applied in This Case
Attachment theory understanding	Real-world categorisation and interpretation
ANOVA interpretation	Mean difference testing with clear outcome
Mixed-method research writing	Integrates numbers with human context
Ethical considerations	Informed consent, relationship sensitivity

## 10. Conclusion

This case demonstrates the academic and practical relevance of understanding attachment theory in romantic relationships. It gives students a model for conducting human-centred psychological research, combining numerical analysis with personal narratives to arrive at rich, theory-backed conclusions.

## 11. References

- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A Secure Base: Clinical Applications of Attachment Theory*.
- Collins, N. L., & Read, S. J. (1990). *Adult attachment, working models, and relationship quality in dating couples*.
- Fraley, R. C., et al. (2000). *The Adult Attachment Questionnaire: Reliability and Validity Evidence*.