



Attachment Styles and Their Influence on Interpersonal Relationship Quality, Conflict Resolution, and Emotional Closeness

Zanib Jabbar¹, Sana Raza², Shumaira Rahim³

¹ University of Southern Punjab, Multan. Assistant lecturer at Govt Graduate college, Chichawatni

Email: zanibjabbar1234@gmail.com

² Public Mental Health and Behavioural Sciences, Khyber Medical University, Peshawar

Email: Sanaraza.imh@kmu.edu.pk

³ Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta

Email: shumaira.rahim@gmail.com

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Corresponding author:

Sanaraza.imh@kmu.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

Attachment styles play a fundamental role in shaping individuals' interpersonal functioning, particularly during young adulthood when social and emotional relationships become increasingly important. The present study examined the influence of attachment styles on interpersonal relationship quality, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness among university students in Multan, Punjab, Pakistan. The present study utilized a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional survey design. Three hundred and fifty students from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Women University Multan, and The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Multan Campus) were surveyed using a convenience sampling technique. Instruments used included self-report surveys that assess attachment styles, quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26. The results of the study used descriptive statistics, and Pearson correlation used in Simple Linear Regression, and MANOVA. The results of the study suggested that attachment styles have a significant influence on the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. The findings of the current research suggest that the patterns of insecure attachment are related to the inability to develop and sustain healthy relationships and resolve interpersonal conflict and develop emotional closeness. The current research study offers the first empirical research study related to the role of attachment styles in the quality of interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution in the context of Pakistani higher education. The study calls for the secure attachment patterns to be promoted through counseling, relationship education, and psychosocial interventions to sustain healthy interpersonal relationships in young adults.

Introduction

Attachment styles refer to the stable patterns of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses that individuals develop from their early interactions with primary caregivers. These styles develop early, and become important throughout the life in the way they shape the self-image of a person, the way they interpret the actions of others, the way they regulate their emotions, and the way they create and sustain social relationships. John Bowlby describes how attachment styles develop in his attachment theory. Bowlby argues that infants have a natural and biological urge to seek closeness to caregivers for their survival and to establish emotional security (Bowlby, 1982). These caregivers shape internal working models for children, and

these models shape the ways that children expect others to behave, and how they control their emotions and sustain relationships with others. These models become stable over time, and continue to influence the relational dynamics of people during adolescence and adulthood. People that receive consistent, responsive and emotionally available caregiving from their caregivers are likely to develop secure attachment patterns; however, during inconsistent and neglectful caregiving, people are likely to develop insecure attachment styles.

Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues built upon previous research and constructed the Strange Situation Procedure to identify attachment patterns in young children. Edelstein, R et al., 2004 work described three major patterns of attachment: secure, anxious-resistant, and avoidant. The work of Ainsworth and her colleagues helped researchers to identify patterns of attachment in adults. Researchers recognized that the processes of attachment continue to affect adult relationships and social interactions. Most contemporary research seeks to study adult attachment in terms of two continua. The first is attachment anxiety and the other is attachment avoidance (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Attachment anxiety refers to an individual's apprehension regarding abandonment, closeness, and the possibility of inadequate emotional connection. Attachment avoidance refers to a person's discomfort with closeness, emotional connection, and dependence. Both dimensions are used to create attachment orientations. Researchers are able to study attachment as a fluid construct in comparison to a stable and unchangeable characteristic of a person's personality. This approach to the study of attachment has developed from its extensive research and application across many different cultures.

People with secure attachment are generally more self-confident and therefore more able to create relationship with others that are supportive, trusting, and fulfilling on an emotional level. Individuals with secure attachment use effective emotional regulation, balance intimacy and personal space, and practice constructive conflict resolution. They also communicate effectively and openly and help to elevate closeness in a relationship to a high healthy level. People with an anxious attachment are the opposite. They have high emotional sensitivity, fear of abandonment, and practice reassurance-seeking many times. Individuals with anxious attachment rely on emotional responses and can become jealous and emotionally distressed if they think a relationship is in jeopardy. Avoidant attachment individuals also shun emotional closeness and often withdraw from a relationship when emotional intimacy is high. Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) suggest that these attachment styles affect behaviors and functioning in many different areas of life.

Interpersonal Relationship Quality

Interpersonal relationship quality is the name given to the overall quality and effectiveness of social interactions in several social arenas like intimate relationships, friendships, and relationships with family and colleagues. Positive interpersonal relationship quality is the outcome of trust, emotional closeness, good communication, and respect and reciprocal positive regard and support. The quality of relationships shows high intimate closeness and emotional security, which nurtures a person's sense of belonging and social support, especially when one is able to communicate personally without fear of loss and rejection. Positive relationships also provide a person with the support and sense of belonging required to openly communicate personal feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Conversely, the lack of positive interpersonal relationship quality is brought about by poor and ineffective emotional, communicative, and reciprocal relationships, and unfriendly, cold, and emotionally withdrawn relationships, which may undermine social and psychological well-being, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Reis and Gable (2015) assert that positive relationship quality is the absence of conflict and the presence of interpersonal relationships that promote emotional closeness and positive cooperative and supportive relationships that foster stability.

Psychological, social, and environmental factors all influence the quality of interpersonal relationships. The personality traits, emotional intelligence, and communication skills of individuals, as well as their empathy, ability to resolve conflict, cultural values, and their previous experiences, impact the ability to form and sustain relationships. The quality of relationships is positively impacted by the ability to communicate effectively, the ability to empathize with, and the ability to be responsive to, all individuals Pietromonaco et al., (2004). The quality of relationships greatly improves when individuals within those relationships are able to express their needs, and there is a desire to resolve misunderstandings. The foundations of quality relationships are trust and commitment, as they allow individuals to feel safe and secure. Relationship satisfaction is influenced by the presence of shared values, and the ability to exercise mutual respect and cooperation, as they diminish tension. Recent studies of relationships have suggested that the quality of relationships is constantly changing and is impacted by the interactions and experiences of individuals, as well as the individuals' ability to adjust to the challenges that life may present.

Research has consistently shown that the quality of interpersonal relationships is one of the most reliable predictors of your mental, emotional, and physical health. Those who maintain satisfying and supportive relationships report greater happiness, self-esteem, and life satisfaction, as well as greater resilience and better psychological adjustment Feeney, J., & Fitzgerald, J.

(2019). All of these things positive relationships help you deal with stressful situations. They help you develop better coping mechanisms and help lower the risk of developing mental health issues (like depression and anxiety). Emotional support is one of the strongest benefits of positive relationships. Positive relationships can even help avoid loneliness. Good social relationships can help strengthen your immune system and reduce your risk of developing heart problems. They can even help you sleep better and can help you live longer. On the other hand, negative relationships can cause the opposite of all of these things. They can even cause significant emotional and psychological problems and worsen your health. These issues are particularly caused by social isolation, negative relationships, and emotional and social rejection. These results show that quality relationships are a social and health construct that can significantly affect your overall quality of life González-Ortega et al., (2021).

Conflict Resolution

There are cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components involved in the management, negotiation, and resolution of conflict in most interpersonal situations. Although most humans will eventually interact with most others, significant differences in beliefs, values, and expectations, not to mention personality and communication style, can cause conflict. These differences may also contribute to variance in emotional goals and needs. Historically, conflict was viewed predominantly as a negative aspect of human interaction. However, with the growth of contemporary relational research, conflict has the potential for constructive management of conflict where there is an opportunity for positive relational growth, understanding, and the strengthening of relational bonds. Healthy conflict resolution is achieved with active and open participation, empathy, respect, and emotional balance and compromise Soyuyigit, E. (2026). Negative conflict management will achieve the opposite. This will include avoidance, defensiveness, aggression and a general lack of participation. This will also contribute to a relational deficit in an already negative situation. Constructive conflict resolution, especially relationally, is achieved when participants have a long-term relational vision. Long-term relational goals, especially in social contexts, will provide the basis for the successful resolution of most interpersonal conflicts Scheeren, P et al., (2014).

Many psychological and social factors impact conflict resolution, such as personality, cultural values, emotional intelligence, and stress management, and prior experience in relationships. People with high emotional intelligence can recognize and manage their own and others' emotions. Because of this talent, they can participate in meaningful discussions when they are in a disagreement. Communication skills that also improve the process of conflict resolution include the ability to express concerns, correct misconceptions, and reach a solution that is reasonable to all the parties involved in the disagreement. These perspectives create collaborative solutions where all parties involved in the conflict have a communication-based solution that addresses everyone's needs and concerns. This provides a solid foundation of trust and a good working relationship Balogun, S et al., (2025).

Attachment theory explains variations in people's approaches to conflict. It proposes that attachment systems are activated by interpersonal conflicts. People rely on their internal working models to perceive relational threats and determine their response to rational concerns. While securely attached people approach conflicts with positive perceptions and emotional balance, anxious attachment manifests as emotional dysregulation, and avoidance attachment prevents emotional expression and conflict resolution. Secure individuals perceive themselves and others positively, thus approaching conflicts with emotional closeness, and mutual respect, and are willing to compromise and employ empathic and constructive communication. Anxiously attached individuals are prone to make conflicts worse and reduce satisfaction. Avoidant attachment negativity sidesteps effective conflict resolution. Attachment-based behavioral patterns influence the management of interpersonal conflicts across all relationships Popowich, A. D. (2023).

Emotional Closeness

Emotional closeness is the psychological experience of being connected, intimate, and united with others, and is based on meaningful interactions and relationships. Emotional closeness is about how connected people feel and how emotionally secure and supported they are. Consistent empathy, trust, and emotional and respectful responsiveness are important for developing emotional closeness. Emotional closeness allows people to talk about their insecurities and aspirations without the fear of being rejected or attacked. Emotional closeness is about the quality and depth of emotional relationships and connections, and the feelings of relational security that develop along with it. Somohano, V. C. (2013) argue that emotional closeness is based on the mutual and reciprocal self-disclosure and responsive communication of individuals. It is about how intimate people feel based on how responsive they are to emotionally important and personal events and communications. It is one of the most important aspects of interpersonal relationships and the emotional closeness of people and communities helps to maintain relationships over time.

Many psychological and interpersonal factors impact the emotional closeness of relationships. Here are a few of the most important factors. Effective communication and emotional intelligence play important roles in the development of emotional

closeness. Individuals with high emotional intelligence are able to understand emotional cues and strengthen the closeness of interpersonal relationships. Open and honest communication allows individuals to express their feelings in constructive ways. Emotional closeness flourishes in a trusting atmosphere. When people feel safe and secure, they are more willing to share their thoughts and feelings. Emotional bonds are strengthened through mutual support and responsiveness, especially in difficult times. Emotional closeness is a dynamic process of relationships that evolves through ongoing and repeated positive interactions and emotional investment.

Attachment theory is a widely accepted framework for understanding the emotional closeness of individuals. It considers the influence of various caregiving experiences on relational interactions throughout developmental stages. Individuals with secure attachment exhibit constructive and positive models for thinking of themselves and others, which in turn fuels their ability to trust others, engage in open communication, and partake in emotional intimacy, all means of fostering emotional closeness to others, without the fear of losing their sense of autonomy. These individuals view their relational confidence as a means of fostering emotional closeness that is constructive and positively reinforcing to all parties involved. Individuals with anxious attachment, on the other hand, engage in emotional over-involvement and experience a high level of relational anxiety. For avoidant attachment individuals, emotional expression is suppressed along with emotional closeness, as they perceive dependence on others a threat to their autonomy. Because of this, avoidantly attached individuals struggle with the desire for emotional closeness. (Shi, L. (2003). Research Objectives

- To examine the influence of attachment styles on interpersonal relationship quality.
- To investigate the effect of attachment styles on conflict resolution among individuals.
- To assess the relationship between attachment styles and emotional closeness in interpersonal relationships.

Problem Statement

Of the many ways attachment styles impact an individual's emotional regulation, the outcome of their relationships and their behavior, one of the most significant is intrapersonal conflict. Most of the existing literature has focused on the relationship between attachment styles and emotional intimacy in close relationships. However, very few studies, particularly in a multicultural context, have explored the relationship between attachment styles, emotional intimacy and the quality of interpersonal relationships and conflict. Individuals with insecure attachment styles are unable to sustain satisfying relationships and struggle with emotional intimacy, and this can be detrimental to their psychological and social wellbeing. This shows the need to understand the connection between different attachment styles and emotional intimacy, interpersonal relationships and the quality of these relationships. The aim of this research is to clarify the mechanisms that promote healthy and unhealthy relationships and improve emotional wellbeing. The end goal is to provide insights that promote healthy relationships of greater emotional intimacy.

Significance of the Study

The study adds to existing literature on attachment theory by analyzing the effects of different attachment styles on the quality of relationships and emotional closeness, as well as the management of conflicts. Developing a theoretical basis for this area of research will help to address a critical mental health need by offering psychologists and counselors new approaches for designing and implementing strategies for emotional self-regulation and the development of healthy relationships. It is hoped that the present study will provide a basis for individuals to understand their attachment styles and, consequently, develop healthier relationships. It will also enhance the research knowledge of students and professionals in the area of mental health. In addition, the present work may offer new avenues for research to explore attachment processes among diverse groups and in different cultural settings.

Literature Review

The attachment theory is a vital mechanism for determining the formation and sustenance of relationships throughout life. González Ortega, E et al., (2020) stated that the first relationships formed with caregivers develop mental models that inform the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors of individuals with respect to subsequent relationships. These models shape how individuals view and approach trust, closeness, and emotional stability and how they regard concern and dependence. Following this line of thought, Hee, C et al. (2019) found that secure attachment is the result of consistent responsiveness from caregivers, while inconsistent and rejecting caregiving leads to insecure attachment. Modern studies on attachment have primarily focused on two constructs, attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Together, they account for individual differences in the functioning of relationships and the quality of relationships (Chow, C, et al., 2017).

The quality of interpersonal relationships entails emotional support and effective communication and is founded on trust and mutual respect. A large body of evidence has shown that of the various psychological constructs, the style of attachment provides the best prediction of the quality of relationships. Securely attached individuals are reliable and caring and as a result, effectively meet the emotional needs of their partners. The level of relationship satisfaction, trust, commitment, and communication is generally higher among securely attached individuals compared to those with insecure attachment styles (Jaffar, A, 2025).

Research shows that attachment anxiety decreases relationship quality due to reassurance-seeking, fear of abandonment, emotional dependence, and a sensitivity to rejection. Behavior of this sort creates insecurity and increases relational stress. Attachment avoidance also negatively impacts relationship quality, mainly due to an avoidantly attached individual's tendency to withhold emotional expression and maintain distance. Although anxious and avoidant individuals cope in different ways, both attachment insecurities have a lasting impact on relational satisfaction and interpersonal functioning. Several recent reviews have confirmed that attachment security leads to positive relational outcomes, including effective communication, trust, and stability, regardless of the individual or relational context.

Newer work highlights that relational quality is the result of both partners' attachment patterns and their interactions. Studies that take a systems approach suggest that at least one partner's secure attachment is sufficient to promote relational resilience, effective communication, and satisfaction, in contrast to situations where both partners' attachment is insecure. It appears that secure attachment leads to emotional availability and positive interpersonal relations, while the impact of attachment insecurity is counterbalanced. This demonstrates that positive relational dynamics can exist in the presence of attachment anxiety or avoidance

Attachment Styles and Conflict Resolution

Differences in expectation, personality, and emotional needs among individuals will always result in the occurrence of some conflict in close interpersonal relationships. The level of conflict resolution, and not the absence of conflict, is what determines the strength of relationships over time. Attachment theory states that the method of resolving interpersonal conflicts activates the attachment system. During a conflict, individuals will showcase these attachment-related emotional regulation strategies. Individuals will use their attachment styles to cope with and determine the nature of the conflict and the threat it poses to the relationship (Bonache, et al., 2019).

Individuals with a secure attachment style will exhibit open, purposeful communication and emotional regulation during a conflict. They will also listen to and consider the other party's point of view, practice empathy, and exhibit a willingness to compromise and work together toward a solution. These individuals will view the relationship in a safe and secure light and so will likely not be overcome by the fear of rejection or abandonment. These conflict resolution strategies will serve to reduce the overall conflict and will boost relationship satisfaction and stability over time (Jamiu, U, et al., 2025).

In contrast, attachment anxiety involves the hyperactivation of the attachment system in the presence of interpersonal difficulties. Individuals with anxious attachment display many of the characteristics including: emotionally heightened responses, excessive reassurance-seeking, rumination, and fear of losing the relationship. Anxious individuals' emotional sensitivity contributes to the interpretation of disagreements as threats to relational security, therefore intensifying the conflict. Those with avoidant attachment employ the opposite strategy and deactivate the attachment system by withdrawing, emotionally, and avoiding the discussion of conflict. While the avoidant strategy reduces emotional discomfort, it is harmful because it prevents the resolution of the conflict and increases relational tension overall Ben-Ari, R., & Hirshberg, I. (2009)..

A recent study has increased support for the previously discussed theories. Path-analysis studies have indicated that especially for securely attached individuals, satisfaction in the relationship is contingent on the resolution of relationship conflict. Anxious attachment is correlated with emotional overreaction to relationship conflict. Avoidant attachment is correlated with emotional withdrawal, voicing a lack of desire to resolve the conflict, and ultimately harmful effects on the relationship Mandal, E., & Lip, M. (2022).

Attachment Styles and Emotional Closeness

Emotional Closeness refers to bonded feelings of trust, empathy and support in healthy relationships. It can be built through reciprocal self-disclosure and developed over time. Emotional Closeness relies on the presence of responsiveness, vulnerability, and empathic concern. Within the framework of Attachment Theory, we see how individuals differ when it comes to Emotional Closeness, specifically concerning the degree to which they are willing to trust others, and their vulnerability to concern and support (Yildiz, B. (2023).

Emotionally most secure individuals are likely to experience Emotional Closeness. There are positive emotional and internal working models of self and others in individuals who are secure in their attachments. They find it easy to support and help others as they fear neither loss of closeness, nor the loss of their independence. They are free, and so too are their relationships, to be emotionally deep and stable and to be mutually secure and psychologically safe (Otakum, N. (2017).

The mechanisms of Insecure Attachments create Emotional Closures of a different kind. Although the anxious attachment of individuals is characterized by Emotional Dependencies, and a demand for constant reassurance, combined with a fear of imminent loss of closeness, and an extremely sensitive and reactive response to perceived threats of closure, it creates a strain in relationships which makes Emotional Closeness difficult to achieve (Khoo, E. E., & Yueh, R. E. (2022).

New research shows that secure attachments are linked with higher levels of emotional intimacy and social support, and with better emotional regulation in romantic, platonic, and familial relationships. Also, the strengthening of a partner's attachment security is possible with emotional responsiveness and, therefore, the strengthening of emotional closeness and attachment security is reciprocal. There is also new research that shows attachment security can be changed with either supportive relationships or the right type of therapy, and so, the strengthening of emotional closeness and the improvement of interpersonal peace and satisfaction is possible.

Literature Review Synthesis

Studies on attachment styles have the potential to systematize and unify domains of research on interpersonal behavior. Secure attachment consistently correl with higher quality interpersonal relationships; constructive conflict engagement; and emotional closeness, and is thus viewed positively across cultures and relationship types. Conversely, attachment anxiety and avoidance, correlate with suboptimal conflict engagement, emotional closeness, and relationship satisfaction. Despite the established associations, it is undeniable that research on the simultaneous effects of the three relational outcomes on the non-Western population is inadequate. As such, the present study will offer a conduit to this research by the modeling the effects of attachment styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness.

Rationale of the Study

The extensive research on attachment styles and the subsequent interpersonal outcomes, have mostly studied interpersonal relationship quality, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness as distinct domains. Additionally, most of the research has studied Western populations. Consequently, the research is not translatable to the relational contexts of other cultures. There is also a lack of research on the developing countries on how attachment styles impact relational outcomes in the three main domains of emotional closeness, conflict resolution, and relationship quality. Hence, this study will address this by modeling the effects of attachment styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. The anticipated results will add to the current literature by offering context-specific evidence, developing the understanding of attachment processes, and tailoring psychological interventions that foster healthier relationships and emotional stability (Tayebi, T, et al., 2026).

Research Hypotheses

H1: Attachment styles significantly influence interpersonal relationship quality.

H2: Attachment styles significantly influence conflict resolution.

H3: Attachment styles significantly influence emotional closeness.

H4: Attachment styles significantly predict interpersonal relationship quality, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness collectively.

Conceptual framework

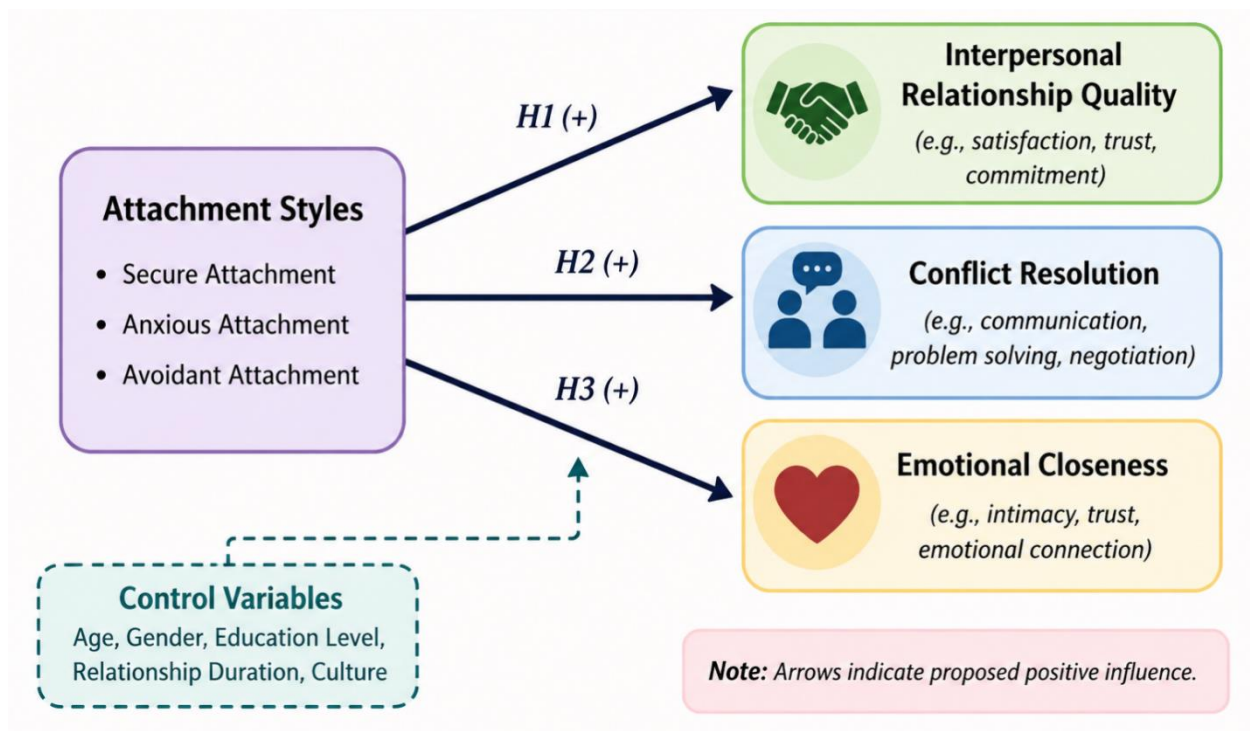


Figure 1 conceptual framework

Methodology

Research Methodology

This study embraced a quantitative research approach. It was quantitative as the aim was to assess the impact of attachment styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict, and emotional closeness using numerical data and a statistical framework. A quantitative research approach allows the researcher to objectively assess relationships between constructs and validate research hypotheses using standardized tools.

Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional correlational research design. Data was gathered at one particular time and was used to determine the relationship between attachment styles (independent variable) and the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict, and emotional closeness (dependent variables). It was the best research design to determine relationships between variables as it does not allow researcher manipulation, allowing relationships to exist naturally, while also documenting relationships and the strength and direction of relationships.

Research Setting

This study was conducted in Multan District, Punjab, Pakistan. Data was collected from the student population of Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan, Women University Multan, and The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Multan Campus). These universities offered a wide range of diverse students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, from varied disciplines and socioeconomic statuses.

Population

The population targeted in this research was young adults between the ages of 18 and 30 who study in public universities in Multan District, Punjab, Pakistan. The accessible population included both undergraduate and postgraduate students at Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Women University Multan, and The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Multan Campus). This group is appropriate because university students engage in interpersonal relationships, which can help provide adequate and informative responses concerning attachment styles and relationship functioning.

Target Audience

The target audience included university students aged 18–30. In order to promote diversity and better representation in the sample, participants from different academic programs, semesters, and levels were welcomed.

Sample Size

The sample included 350 participants. For the purpose of guaranteeing the sample size of adequate number of participants to conduct correlational and regression analysis and for the survey to possess adequate power, reliability and generalizability, it was considered that the participants included at least 300 participants.

Sampling Technique

The convenience sampling technique was used. This sampling technique included those participants that met the inclusion criteria and were present at the time of data collection. This group was invited to participate in the study during the data collection period.

Inclusion Criteria

- Male and female university students.
- Age between 18 and 30 years.
- Currently enrolled in one of the selected universities.
- Able to read and understand English.
- Willing to participate voluntarily.

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals below 18 years or above 30 years.
- Students not enrolled in the selected universities.
- Participants who submitted incomplete questionnaires.
- Individuals who did not provide informed consent.

Data Collection Instruments

Demographic Information Form

This form helped to gather some demographic information e.g., age, gender etc. and provided some basic level filtering of the respondents.

Experiences in Close Relationships–Revised (ECR-R) Questionnaire

This instrument was developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan in 2000. This 36-item scale was used in the present study to ascertain attachment styles (Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance). Participants respond to each of the scaled items using a 7-point Likert scale, whereby total score is indicative of attachment insecurity. ECR-R is one of the high-quality scales with a Cronbach's alpha of greater than .90.

Quality of Relationships Inventory (QRI)

This scale, developed by Pierce, Sarason, and Sarason, in 1991, used a 25-item scale to measure the Quality of interpersonal relationships and their support, level of conflict, and depth. The respondents measure the depth of relationships using a 4-point Likert scale.

Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI)

Conflict resolution was assessed using the CRSI (Kurdek, 1994). The inventory contains 16 measures of both constructive and destructive strategies to handle conflict. These items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Never and 5 = Always. Higher scores of the constructive subscales indicate the use of more effective strategies to resolve conflict.

Emotional Intimacy Scale (EIS)

The Emotional Intimacy Scale (EIS) (Sinclair & Dowdy, 2005) was used to measure emotional closeness. The EIS is a 17-item measure of emotional intimacy and closeness, and the perception of trust and emotionally protective behavior. Respondents indicate their level of agreement using a 5-item Likert-type scale with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Higher scores are indicative of higher emotional intimacy.

Data Collection Procedure

Before data collection commenced, approval was obtained from the appropriate authorities at the relevant university. Prospective participants were provided with sufficient information about the study, and their right to decline participation at any time was disclosed. Respondents signed informed consent letters prior to the study. Questionnaires were provided in both the print and electronic formats. Respondents participated in the study anonymously. Questionnaires were screened for completeness prior to data entry and analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were coded, entered, and cleaned, then analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). Initially, to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and study variables, the means, standard deviations, and other descriptive statistics, like frequencies and percentages, were computed. The internal consistency of each standardized instrument was assessed with Cronbach's alpha. Then, the relationships between attachment styles, quality of interpersonal relationships, and emotional closeness and conflict resolution were examined using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation. Following that, Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was applied. For Independent Samples t-test and One-Way ANOVA, appropriate use was determined based on the demographic group. All statistical analysis was performed at the $p < .05$ level of significant statistics, with 95 percent confidence.

Ethical Considerations

The research had a commitment to the strict observance of ethical principles. Prior to the data collection, approval to conduct the study was obtained from the pertinent departmental and university authorities. During the data collection, research participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, participants' involvement in the study, and the estimated time the study would take. Participants also received and signed the informed consent. Participants were assured there would be no way to identify their participation in the study, and there would be no way to identify the participants. Data collected were for the purposes of the research study. Participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. The principal researcher was the only person with access to the completed research instruments. The research instruments were kept in locked cabinets. Results were used for the research study and no other purposes.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data retrieved from 350 students of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Women University Multan, and The Islamia University of Bahawalpur carried out in this chapter. This data was analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The first step in data analysis was to conduct descriptive statistics in order to categorize the demographic information of each participant/ respondent. Descriptive statistics were followed by inferential statistics to identify the relationships among attachment styles, interpersonal relationship quality, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. These variables were defined in line with the objectives and hypotheses of the research. The presentation of these findings was done in tables formatted according to the APA 7th edition, and each table was followed by a brief description.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (N = 350)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	170	48.6
	Female	180	51.4
Age (Years)	18–20	110	31.4
	21–23	145	41.4
	24–26	70	20.0
	27–30	25	7.2
Educational Level	Undergraduate	225	64.3
	Postgraduate	125	35.7
University	Bahauddin Zakariya University	150	42.9

Relationship Status	Women University Multan	100	28.6
	Islamia University (Multan Campus)	100	28.6
	Single	205	58.6
	In a Relationship	115	32.9
	Married	30	8.5

Respondent demographics are shown in. Out of the entire sample (N = 350), 51.4% were female and 48.4% were male. Therefore, the sample achieved nearly equal gender distribution. The sample was primarily young, with two-thirds of the sample (41.4% and 31.4%) aged between 21 and 23, and between 18 and 20, respectively. Respondents were mostly undergraduate (64.3%) and postgraduate (35.7%) students. In terms where they studied, 42.9% of the sample were from Bahauddin Zakariya University. Each of Women's University Multan and The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Multan Campus) contributed 28.6% of the sample. In terms of personal relations, 58.6% of the sample were single, 32.9% were in relationships, and 8.5% were married. From the demographic data, the sample was mostly university students from the selected universities, and, was a good systematic base to assess the relationship between attachment styles, the quality of interpersonal relationships, the resolution of conflicts, and emotional closeness.

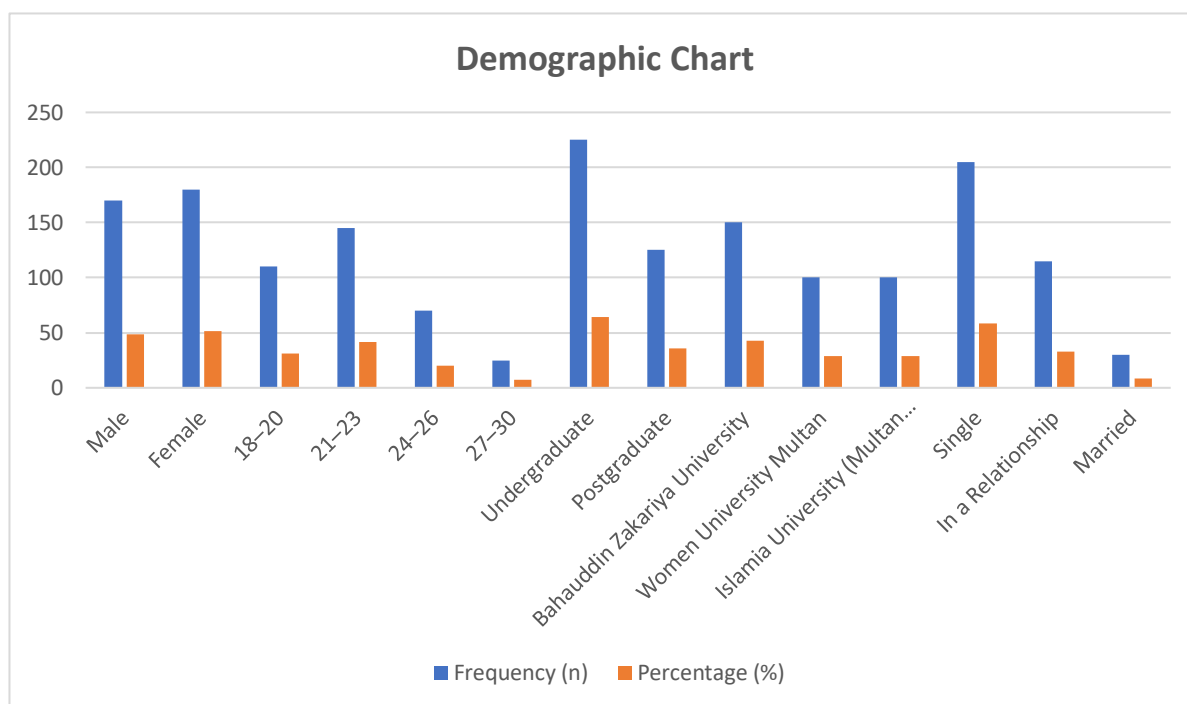


Figure 2 Demographic Chart

Table 2 Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis Among Attachment Styles, Interpersonal Relationship Quality, Conflict Resolution, and Emotional Closeness (N = 350)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Attachment Styles	—			
2. Interpersonal Relationship Quality	-.58**	—		
3. Conflict Resolution	-.49**	.62**	—	
4. Emotional Closeness	-.55**	.71**	.59**	—

Shows the correlation of study variables using the Pearson Product Moment method. In terms of the study variables, the findings were that attachment styles (as attachment insecurity) were significantly and negatively correlated to the quality of interpersonal relationships ($r = -.58$, $p < .01$), the resolution of conflicts ($r = -.49$, $p < .01$), and emotional closeness ($r = -.55$, $p < .01$). The findings showed that the greater attachment anxiety and avoidance, the lower quality of relationships, the greater avoidance of conflicts, and the greater emotional closeness. Moreover, quality of interpersonal relationships showed a strong positive correlation with conflict resolution ($r = .62$, $p < .01$) and emotional closeness ($r = .71$, $p < .01$). Conflict resolution also enjoyed a positive correlation with emotional closeness ($r = .59$, $p < .01$). In light of these correlations, the

findings indicate that secure attachment character traits correlate with the quality of interpersonal relationships and emotional closeness, and offer constructive evidence for the research hypotheses.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Interpersonal Relationship Quality from Attachment Styles (N = 350)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.580	.336	.334	.468

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	38.620	1	38.620	176.310	< .001
Residual	76.230	348	.219		
Total	114.850	349			

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	4.520	.190	—	23.790	< .001
Attachment Styles	-0.570	.043	-.580	-13.280	< .001

The effect that attachment styles have on interpersonal relationship quality is detailed in Table 4.3. The model summary shows attachment styles accounted for 33.6% of the variance of interpersonal relationship quality ($R^2 = .336$) and indicates some predictive power. From the ANOVA results, it was established that the regression model was significant, $F(1, 348) = 176.31$, $p < .001$, and as such, the model reliably predicts the dependent variable. From the coefficients table, it was seen that attachment styles predict interpersonal relationship quality in a significant, negative fashion ($\beta = -.58$, $B = -0.57$, $t = -13.28$, $p < .001$). The results indicate that insecure attachment relates to poorer interpersonal relationship quality for university students. So, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

Table 4: Summary of Hypothesis Testing (N = 350)

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Test Statistic	p-value	Decision
H1: Attachment styles significantly predict interpersonal relationship quality.	Simple Linear Regression	$\beta = -.580$, $t = -13.28$	< .001	Supported
H2: Attachment styles significantly predict conflict resolution.	Simple Linear Regression	$\beta = -.490$, $t = -10.48$	< .001	Supported
H3: Attachment styles significantly predict emotional closeness.	Simple Linear Regression	$\beta = -.550$, $t = -12.29$	< .001	Supported

The results of the hypotheses are shown in Table 4.12 and indicate that all three hypotheses were confirmed. The results indicate that attachment styles predict relationship quality ($\beta = -.580$, $p < .001$), and resolve conflicts ($\beta = -.490$, $p < .001$), and relate to emotional closeness ($\beta = -.550$, $p < .001$). The results suggest that high levels of attachment insecurity relate to low quality interpersonal relationships, poor conflict resolution, and low emotional closeness among university students. Therefore, the analysis of the results confirmed each hypothesis that was proposed.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Predicting Emotional Closeness from Attachment Styles (N = 350)

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.550	.303	.301	.481

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	34.810	1	34.810	151.130	< .001
Residual	80.160	348	.230		
Total	114.970	349			

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant	4.370	.200	—	21.850	< .001
Attachment Styles	-0.540	.044	-.550	-12.290	< .001

Here are the regression analysis results. Shows the impact of attachment styles on emotional closeness for university students. Attachment styles had a moderate predictive power ($R^2 = .303$), and explained 30.3% of the emotional closeness variance. In the regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) $F(1, 348) = 151.13$, $p < .001$, the regression model predicted emotional closeness positively and significantly. According to the coefficients table, the prediction of emotional closeness by the attachment styles was highly negative ($\beta = -.55$, $B = -0.54$, $t = -12.29$, $p < .001$). The findings show that for university students, attachment insecurity expressed high negative prediction of emotional closeness. This led to the acceptance of Hypothesis 3.

Table 6: Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) for the Effect of Attachment Styles on Interpersonal Relationship Quality, Conflict Resolution, and Emotional Closeness (N = 350)

Multivariate Test	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial η^2
Pillai's Trace	.352	62.94	3	346	< .001	.352
Wilks' Lambda	.648	62.94	3	346	< .001	.352
Hotelling's Trace	.543	62.94	3	346	< .001	.352
Roy's Largest Root	.543	62.94	3	346	< .001	.352

MANOVA assesses the combined effect of anxious attachment styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. Attachment styles appeared to have a statistically significant combined effect on the dependent variables, Wilks' $\Lambda = .648$, $F(3, 346) = 62.94$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .352$. asserted that attachment styles would significantly affect interpersonal relationship quality, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. The combined effect of attachment styles on the three dependent variables supports the hypothesis.

Discussion

The objective of the study was to analyze the effect of attachment styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. The study respondents were university students in South Africa. In accordance with the purpose of the study, the results established that attachment styles significantly affect the three interpersonal outcomes. More specifically, attachment anxiety and avoidance were negatively related to the quality of interpersonal relationships, effective conflict resolution, and emotional closeness. The results support attachment theory. Negative early attachment experiences result in the formation of maladaptive internal working models that adversely impact an adult's emotional regulation, expectations of relationships, and behaviors in relationships (Ariel, et al., 2000). The results further suggest that individuals with insecure attachment styles are likely to experience difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships, resolving conflicts, and establishing emotional intimacy.

This study's first goal was to investigate the effect of various attachment styles on the quality of interpersonal relationships. Regression analysis showed that attachment styles were negative predictors of the quality of interpersonal relationships. That is, higher attachment insecurity correlated with lower relationship satisfaction, trust, communication, and commitment. More insecurely attached individuals had poorer relationship satisfaction, trust, communication, and commitment. This is in line with other studies. Securely attached individuals are likely to develop healthier interpersonal relationships and greater relationship satisfaction because they hold positively about themselves and others (Bippus, A. M., & Rollin, E. (2003). Secure individuals are likely to perceive their relationships as stable and supportive, and as a result they are open and willing to communicate and are likely to show higher levels of empathy. On the other hand, those individuals who are anxious and who hold avoidant attachment, are likely to show worrying and withdrawing behaviors. These behaviors decrease relationship

satisfaction and cause interpersonal problems. These behaviors were also previously studied by Parvathy, A et al., (2026), and they found that attachment security is beneficial for relationship satisfaction and interpersonal behaviors.

The second objective examined the role of conflict resolution in relation to attachment styles. The results demonstrated a strong association between insecure attachment styles and the inability to manage conflict effectively. Both attachment anxiety and avoidance were associated with the use of non-constructive conflict resolution methods. Those with higher levels of attachment anxiety and avoidance tended to withdraw emotionally, become defensive, and exhibit heightened emotional responses during conflicts. These results support the research of Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) and the role of the attachment system in the regulation of emotional responses during the inevitable stressful interactions that arise during interpersonal conflict. The current results also support the research of Paquette, V et al., (2020), which showed that individuals with a secure attachment style engage in collaboration, problem solving, and active listening with a high level of emotional responsiveness, while individuals with insecure attachment styles engage in conflict resolution methods that are counterproductive and increase the level of distress in a relationship. Therefore, the study adds to the existing literature of the role that attachment security plays in the effective management of conflict within relationships.

The third objective examined attachment styles and emotional closeness. The findings indicated that attachment styles negatively predicted emotional closeness. This indicates that attachment insecurity tended to reflect diminished intimacy, emotional assistance, trust, and psychological closeness. The findings are consistent with the viewpoint that attachment security leads to emotional closeness and reciprocal responsiveness. In contrast, attachment anxiety and avoidance, create obstacles to emotional intimacy. Hample, D., & Richards, A. S. (2015) postulated that individuals with secure attachment tend to be emotionally supportive and to be responsive to needs. On the other hand, individuals with anxious attachment tend to be intimidated by emotional closeness because they fear being rejected. Individuals with avoidant attachment try to maintain emotional distance in order to exercise their independence. Similar findings were reported by Fraley (2019), as well as by Mikulincer and Shaver (2016), who found that attachment security predicted emotional intimacy in romantic relationships, as well as family and friendship relationships. The findings of this study, therefore, add to the existing body of evidence and indicate that attachment styles play a significant role in emotional closeness in young adults.

The findings of this study build upon previous research by incorporating interpersonal relationship quality, conflict resolution, and emotional closeness in the same framework. Previous studies have mostly looked at these outcomes in isolation. This study shows that attachment styles impact multiple dimensions of interpersonal functioning simultaneously. This research also provides context-specific evidence from university students in Multan, Punjab, Pakistan. This is an important step to broaden the scope of attachment theory beyond the research conducted in the West. Because the expression of attachment behaviors and interpersonal relation styles are likely influenced by Culture, research based on South Asian populations is important in determining the relevance of attachment theory to different contexts. Based on the current findings, the focus on attachment security may lead to enhanced relationship satisfaction and healthier emotional conflict and emotional closeness in young adults.

Conclusion

The current study reveals attachment styles as one of the significant psychological factors affecting interpersonal functioning among university students. Individuals with higher attachment insecurity had lower interpersonal relationship quality, poor conflict resolution, and low emotional closeness. These findings are in line with the assumptions of attachment theory. They show that attachment-related beliefs and emotional regulation frameworks have an impact on interpersonal relationships beyond childhood and into early adulthood. Trust, communication, and emotional closeness facilitate conflict resolution. Insecure attachment, on the other hand, creates barriers to the healthy development of relationships.

Overall, the study provides new evidence on these variables in the context of a Pakistani university. Research in this area is limited, and the study adds to the literature by recognizing attachment security as a significant factor in fostering positive relationships and psychological well-being. The study identifies new approaches for psychologists, counselors, and educators. Interventions focusing on attachment security and interpersonal skills for young adults are needed.

Future Implications

Only some studies have focused on the role of attachment styles in interpersonal functioning in a Pakistani context. Numerous longitudinal studies focusing on attachment security in the context of interpersonal functioning are necessary. However, the study recommends using more diverse sample populations within and outside Pakistan. Future studies on interpersonal relationships and emotional closeness may focus on the role and influence of attachment styles and the potential mediators of emotional closeness, interpersonal communication, emotional resilience, conflict resolution, self-esteem, and social support. The study aims to develop evidence-based relationship enhancement and counseling programs

within the university. The study hopes to promote secure attachment within counseling programs as well as relationship enhancement and counseling within the university setting.

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