

Emotional Adjustment in Adolescent Interpersonal Attachment and Psychological Distress

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to test the mediating role of the emotional adjustment ability of the middle school students in their interpersonal attachment and psychological distress. To do so 1586 students are conducted in this research. The results show that there is a significant negative correlation between self-reported behavior and depression. On the other hand, the dependence on father and mother and attachment to escape can be directly influencing self-reporting psychological distress, and indirectly affecting self-confidence psychological distress through emotional regulation. And the attachment anxiety to friends can be directly and indirectly influence self-reporting mental distress through emotional regulation. However, unlike expectations, friends attach to evade self-reporting for young people. The overall effect of psychological distress is not significant. The results of this study also show that there is a relationship between parental attachment and peer attachment and psychological distress among adolescents.

Key words: Interpersonal Attachment, Psychological Distress, Adolescents, Emotional Adjustment, Depression

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important transitional stage in which an individual moves from childhood to adulthood occur. In this stage of development, adolescents both body and mind face major changes. The students are also faced with a major progression challenge – the high school entrance exam. These mind and body changes with the environment often put pressure on young people. The study found that the pressure of life felt by middle school students mainly comes from academics and students. Structural changes, interpersonal problems, etc. (Xu Wei, 2007). In addition, some studies have pointed out that the students are more melancholic than high school students (Montero López L 2007) and emotions (Su Xiaoyi, Dai Jianan, 2008). It can be seen that in this stage of learning, it is easy if adolescents fail to cope with stress which is developed serious emotional distress. For example, Wang Shuxiang (2006) is conducted a survey of students from the third grades, and found that Students with severe depression and need professional assistance accounted for 15.8% of the total sample.

Parental attachment has always been considered as an important and worthwhile factor in many factors affecting adolescent mental health and stress adjustment such as factors of exploration. Bowlby (1969/1982) is first proposed the concept of the attachment, representing infants and their primary care. The emotional connection between the people, and explain the connotation of this emotional connection and its impact on individual personality development, interpersonal behavior and mental health. According to him, when young children face stress situations, they will want to be close to their caregivers in order to seek comfort and security. Self-reporting scales, measuring the way in which implicit attachments are attached (e.g, Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Brennan et al. in 1998 are defined attachment anxiety as fear/fear in intimacy. The degree of being abandoned and rejected; and attachment evasion is the tendency to feel uncomfortable and self-dependent when approaching others. Fraley and Waller in 1998 found that supporting the two-way dependency model is more likely to explain the individual's attachment differences than the category-dependent model.

Jiang Wenci in 1999 referred to adjust the level of adjustment in the five levels of emotional regulation, as an indicator of adolescents' emotional adjustment ability. The adolescents use constructive methods to reduce negative emotions and increase positive emotions when negative emotions occur. In addition, the researchers assume that for the third-year students in the middle school, in the face of the pressure to go to the school, adapt to school life, their ability and future life. The attitude of living goals and the state of depression are particularly important factors for mental health, so they are troubled by school life and self-respect. Haunting and depression are indicators of psychological distress in adolescents. Among them, "self-care troubles" is defined as the "life for the youth". Three aspects of goals, self-ability and caring for others are in a state of disharmony or imbalance" (Lin Jiaping, 2002, pp. 35).

The "school life problem" is that young people do not have "schoolwork and routine, learning attitudes and habits, and teacher discipline methods." A state of harmony or imbalance" (Lin Jiaping, 2002, pp. 35-36). Furthermore, the researchers based on the literature to investigate the hypothesis of dependence anxiety, attachment evasion and emotional regulation strategies and adolescent psychological sleepy disturbance is directly related, and attachment to anxiety and attachment evasion is also indirectly related to emotional regulation and adolescent distress. That is, when the less the teenagers worry, the dependents will abandon or reject them (meaning that they are attached to low levels of anxiety), and the more they can use the stressful event. Positive strategies adjust their negative emotions, so they have lower psychological distress; in addition, when teenagers are close to their dependents. Feeling more comfortable (meaning that the degree of evasion is low), when negative emotions appear, they may seek comfort and support from the environment. More positive strategies adjust these negative emotions and therefore have lower psychological distress.

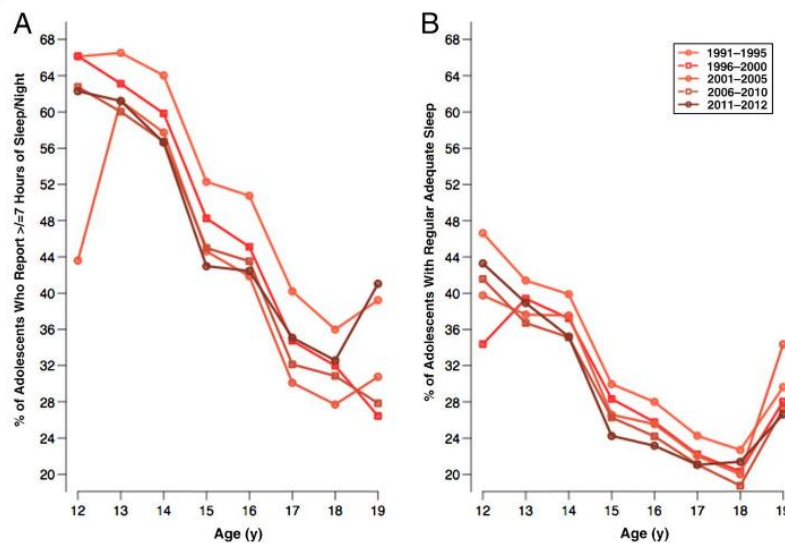


Fig.1 A, ≥ 7 hours of sleep per night; and B, getting adequate sleep per night. The proportion of adolescents who regularly got ≥ 7 hours of sleep was defined as those who responded that the frequency with which they obtain ≥ 7 hours of sleep was every day or almost every day versus sometimes, rarely, or never. The proportion of adolescents who regularly get adequate sleep was defined as those who reported that they get less sleep than they should never or seldom versus sometimes, every day, or almost every day.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this study, 15 sample questionnaires were sent from 15 Middle Schools by convenient sampling, and 1610 copies were collected. After deleting the invalid samples, 1586 valid questionnaires were used for data analysis, and the effective questionnaire rate was 81%. The average age of the sample is 15.19 Years old (Range = 12.83~17.25; SD = 0.32), including 763 boys and 823 girls. Parental relationship, the ratio of living and living together is the highest (75.8%), followed by separation or divorce (14.3%), marriage but no living (5.1%), Remarriage (4.0%) and other conditions (0.9%); in the main caregiver section, study participants self-reported by parents (95.74%), followed by grandparents or grandmothers (2.8%), and other care status was 1.6%.

Relationship Structure Questionnaire

This study uses the "Relationship Structure Questionnaire" which measures the degree of dependence and dependence anxiety of mothers, fathers, and friends developed by Lancee et al. (2004) according to Fraley et al. (2000).

The students got three questions in the "Dependency Anxiety" subscale (example: I often worry that my mother doesn't really care about me. and six questions with the "Escape from Escape" subscale. (Example: Be open to my mother, let me feeling very uncomfortable). The guidance of this scale requires the subject to answer each item in the relationship between himself and the specific dependent object. For example, the mother's guidance is "Recall the relationship between you and your mother (or a woman who cares for you like a mother).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In this study, the SPSS statistical software package was used to analyze multivariate variances to test the interdependence and emotions of adolescents of different genders.

Regulating and psychologically confusing the differences in the scores of the variables; and conducting Pearson's product difference to test the interpersonal attachment and emotional tone of the youngsters and the degree of association between the variables and psychological disturbances. In addition, the AMOS statistical suite software is used to analyze the structural equation pattern to test the teenagers. The mediating effect of emotional regulation strategies between interpersonal attachment and psychological distress.

Since young people have only moderate to low correlations between their fathers, mothers and good friends, if they are attached to this the dependency score of the image is used as the observable variable of the dependency relationship, the measurement model and the degree of adaptation of the observation data may be extremely poor. At the same time, the attachment relationship of the three dependent objects may also affect the young people in different ways.

Model tests are conducted for indicators of adolescent interpersonal attachment. Among them, depending on the potential variables of anxiety, the observations of three dependent anxiety items are observed. As for the potential variables of the evasion, if each item of the escaping subscale is an observation variable, observing the variable becomes too many parameters, and hence the number of samples required for mode testing becomes larger, so the researchers will refer to Russell, Kahn, Spoth, and Altmaier (1998). In which they suggest, with exploratory factor analysis, extracting a factor from the six items attached to the escape subscale. Depending on the factors of each item, three parcels were formed in the load level, and the scores of the subjects in the three parcels were taken as observation variables.

Potential variables also form three observational variables in accordance with this step. Finally, the psychological harassment of potential variables is based on the Self-care Subscale and School Life Subscales of the disturbance meter and the scores of the Youth Melanchomic.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary analysis results

(1) Results of gender differences analysis

The scale used in this study is the Likert five-point scale except for the "Adolescent Melancholy Emotion Self-Checklist". The average score of the item ranges from 1.79 (depending on anxiety-father) to 3.45 (emotional regulation strategy); and "adolescent depression. The total score of the self-examination table was 20 points, and the average score of the subjects was 6.45. To understand the different variables of young people in different research variables and the difference in scores, the researchers used multivariate analysis of variance to test. The scores were significantly different (Wilks' $\Lambda = .88$, $p < .001$). Further analysis shows that boys are "depending on escape - mother". The scores of "depending on escaping - friends", "depending on anxiety - father" and "school life troubles" are higher than girls (see Table 1).

As shown in table 1, there are no significant gender differences in the scores of the other subscales.

(2) Correlation analysis results of dependency relationship, emotional regulation, behavioral distress and depression

1. Correlation analysis results of attachment relationships of different objects

The significant positive correlation is evident as it is dependent on the father and the mother ($r = .63, p < .001$). The dependency escape interval ($r = .44, p < .001$) was moderately positively correlated. And the attachment relationship to the friend and the attachment relationship to the parent. However, the correlation is weak, for example, there is a low positive correlation between the friend's attachment anxiety and the parent's attachment anxiety (r is $.33$ and $.35$, respectively, $p < .001$); In addition, the correlation between buddy attachment evasion and parental evasion is close to $.1$ (r is $.06$ and $.13$, respectively, $p < .001$), for a negligible low correlation.

Table 1 Summary of the analysis of the average number of multivariate scores and multivariate variances for different genders

		Number of Questions	Scale	All		Boy		Girl		F Verification
				20124 People in Total		1009 People in Total		1115 People in Total		
				Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	Average	Standard Deviation	
1	Attached to escape - mother	6	1~5	2.73	0.84	2.87	0.8	2.59	0.85	58.98***
2	Attached to anxiety - mother	3	1~5	1.8	0.82	1.83	0.82	1.77	0.83	3.03
3	Attached to escape - father	6	1~5	3.12	0.86	3.11	0.84	3.12	0.89	0.03
4	Attached to anxiety - father	3	1~5	1.79	0.82	1.83	0.82	1.75	0.82	5.54*
5	Attached to escape - friends	6	1~5	2.12	0.68	2.31	0.66	1.95	0.66	154.44***
6	Attached to anxiety - friends	3	1~5	2.28	1.02	2.25	0.98	2.30	1.06	1.59
7	Emotion regulation strategy	7	1~5	3.45	0.66	3.47	0.64	3.43	0.68	2.29
8	Self-care troubles	10	1~5	3.22	0.67	3.23	0.68	3.22	0.66	0.10
9	School life troubles	10	1~5	3.04	0.65	3.08	0.66	3.01	0.63	6.17*
10	Melancholy	20	0~20	6.45	5.19	6.37	5.30	6.53	5.10	0.53

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$ Conclusion

2. Correlation analysis of dependency relationship and emotion regulation

As shown in Table 2, there is a significant negative correlation between avoidance and emotional regulation, and the correlation coefficient as -16 . (Friends evade and emotion regulation, $p < .001$). To -29 (mother attachment evasion and emotional regulation, $p < .001$), showing adolescents' attachment to their important others. From the table once can be conclude that the higher the tendency to escape, the worse the emotional adjustment ability.

3. Analysis of the relationship between dependency and behavioral distress and depression

This study found that parents rely on anxiety and attachment to escape and friends' attachment anxiety is significantly positively correlated with self-care troubles while school life problems can be fall between ($r = .19 \sim .30, p < .001$). It is the higher the degree of dependency anxiety and attachment evasion for parents, and the higher the anxiety of their friends. Both the ability and the future, as well as the school life, feel a high degree of trouble. Friend escaping is not significantly different from self-care which is related to, and the relationship with school life is also less than $.1$. As for the relationship between adolescent attachment and depression. This study found that the dependency of evasion and depression on friends is lower than $.1$ which is negligible. Attachment anxiety and attachment evasion to parents and attachment anxiety to friends was significant, however, that is positively correlated with adolescent depression ($r = .23 \sim .30, p < .001$).

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Multivariate analysis of variances found that in terms of gender differences in dependent relationships, boys were "depending on escape-mother" and "depending on anxiety". The scores on the three variables of "father" and "dependency escape-friend" are higher than those of girls. This study was discovered according to Kobak *et al.* (1993). As well as the findings of Doyle *et al.* (2009), it is found that boys tend to be more alienated from girls and more important than others. However, the results obtained by domestic researchers using the Parental and Peer-Dependent Scale Studies are not the same. The results of this study are identical to those of Lin Baiting (2005)—all of which found that boys had a poorer peer-to-peer relationship than girls. but, in terms of parental attachment, this study found some differences from the findings of domestic researchers. For example: Research by Ouyang Yi *et al.* (2006). There was no significant difference in the maternal attachment of male and female students, and the quality of male dependency of male students was significantly higher than that of female students. On the contrary, the paper found that the mother's attachment to the girl was superior to that of the boy, while the father's attachment was not gender-specific. On the other hand, Shi Yufeng and Tan Ziwen (2011) studies that male fathers have better attachment relationships than girls, but girls' mothers are better than boys.

It is speculated that these inconsistent findings may have several reasons. First, the parents' peers are attached to the scale, although the young people are measured separately. The degree of trust, communication and alienation of different dependent objects, domestic researchers add up the scores of the three dimensions to a generalized generation. The table depends on the total score of the relationship quality, so it is impossible to further examine the possible differences between boys and girls in different dependency degrees.

The gender differences in the dependency relationship and explore possible influence factors. Secondly, different sampling areas of different studies may also be affected. According to the attached relationship, the concept measured by this scale is different from the "Parent and Peer Attachment Scale" used by this research which make the research findings inconsistent with other research findings. Finally, the findings of this study may show that in the process of gender socialization, male youth years may be more inclined to present an independent appearance in interpersonal relationships, so there will be a higher dependency escape in the attachment score (i.e. I feel less comfortable when I am close to others, and I am less willing to discuss my troubles with others). At the same time, due to the socialization process, my father emotions that the son may tend to be less likely which make the boy more dependent on the girl's self-confidence (i.e.,

for the father-son relationship). To anxiety or to think that the father is not caring about himself, this speculation needs further investigation into subsequent research.

Table 2 Results of correlation analysis of each variable

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Attached to escape - mother	-								
2 Attached to anxiety - mother	0.32**	0.18**	0.09**	-					
3 Attached to escape - father	0.44**	-							
4 Attached to anxiety - father	0.17**	0.23**	0.07**	0.63**	-				
5 Attached to escape - friends	0.13**	0.06**	-						
6 Attached to anxiety - friends	0.13**	0.14**	0.19**	0.35**	0.33**	-			
7 Emotion regulation strategy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	0.29**	0.29**	0.16**	0.23**	0.19**	0.19**	-		
8 Self-care troubles	0.19**	0.24**	-0.01	0.27**	0.22**	0.3**	-	-	
							0.34**		
9 School life troubles	0.24**	0.26**	0.07**	0.26**	0.23**	0.23**	-	0.51*	-
							0.29**	*	
1 Melancholy	0.26**	0.23**	0.05**	0.30**	0.23**	0.29**	-	0.46*	0.59*
							0.41**	*	*

** p < .01

CONCLUSION

The mind and body changes of the students with the environment often put pressure on young people. Hence, this study made an attempt to study on emotional adjustment in adolescent interpersonal attachment and psychological distress. The study found that the pressure of life felt by middle school students mainly comes from academics and students. The paper also found the following conclusions; (1) boys are in "dependency to escape - mother", "depending on escape - friends", "depending on the scores on anxiety-father and school life distress are higher than those on girls; (2) the attachment of adolescents to fathers and mothers; It is moderately positively correlated, while the attachment to friends and the attachment to parents are weaker; (3) attachment to different subjects ; Escape and dependency anxiety and juvenile self-report behavior and depression are significantly positively correlated; (4) adolescents' emotional adjustment ability; There is a significant negative correlation between self-reported behavior and depression; (5) dependence on father and mother and attachment to escape can be directly influencing self-reporting psychological distress, and indirectly affecting self-confidence psychological distress through emotional regulation; (6) attachment anxiety to friends can be directly and indirectly influence self-reporting mental distress through emotional regulation. However, unlike expectations, friends attach to evade self-reporting for young people. The overall effect of psychological distress is not significant. The results of this study show that there is a relationship between parental attachment and peer attachment and psychological distress among adolescents.

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