



Exploring the Impact of Attachment Styles on Existential Crisis and Coping Mechanisms among young adults

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the correlation between attachment styles and existential crisis, determine coping mechanisms utilized by individuals, and investigate the association between attachment styles and coping strategies during existential crisis. An internal conflict is referred to as an existential crisis. It is characterized by a sense of meaninglessness in life and a host of unfavorable emotions, including tension, worry, despair, and sadness. The phrase attachment styles refer to patterns of bonding that people acquire as children and apply to their adult relationships. They are generally believed to have their roots in the kind of care a person had throughout their early years as well as any conscious or unconscious adaptation or adjustment that helps reduce stress and anxiety during a stressful event or circumstance. The data collection was done through a Google form distributed on social media platforms the tools used for data collection are the Existential Concern Questionnaire (ECQ), Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI), and Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (P-PASS) and Data Analysis to examine the relationships between attachment styles, existential crisis, and coping strategies. A total of 302 participants were included in the study, allowing for a detailed exploration of these dynamics. The study used Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to analyze relationships between Coping Scale, Attachment Style, and Existential Crisis. Results showed a weak positive correlation between the Coping Scale and Attachment Style. Coping Scale also correlated positively with Existential Crisis Attachment Style similarly correlated positively with Existential Crisis.

Keywords: Attachment Styles, Existential Crisis, Coping Strategies

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In today's fast-paced world, young people often feel overwhelmed by the numerous decisions they must make as they strive to excel in various areas. Social media adds to this pressure by displaying everyone's best moments and making others feel they're not doing well enough. This situation often creates difficulty for individuals in determining what holds genuine significance for them and when they're constantly chasing after more, they might forget about what truly matters to them and what they really want out of life.

Many people push themselves forward in the search for achievement, yet this can occasionally leave them feeling unfulfilled and stagnating. People may struggle with boredom and wonder why they work so complex, especially when the initial thrill of making progress wears off. Feeling of loneliness is increased by the trend away from the traditional joint family structure and towards smaller nuclear families. Furthermore, the increasing demands that people make of themselves exacerbate a feeling of meaninglessness and compel them to consider what their actual wants and desires are. People begin to wonder about the meaning of their lives when a number of things come together to produce a widespread sense of meaninglessness and this leads to existential crisis in an individual.

1.1 Existential crisis

In layman's term, an existential crisis is like having a mental tornado of questions churning around inside of you. It's the sensation of being lost in a web of doubts about your life, who you are, and what you are meant to do. When you are profoundly unclear of your life's purpose, you are experiencing an existential crisis. It would be like attempting to complete a jigsaw without understanding how the finished picture is supposed to look. You may wonder what your true purpose is, and what you hope to accomplish. It involves more than just being immersed in the here and now; it involves worrying about the future. You begin to question whether you will ever find the answers to your questions about the future, where your life is going, and the solutions you are looking

for. You may even begin to wonder what happens when this adventure we call life finally comes to an end. Young adults between the age of 18 and 30 are most likely to have existential crisis (Agarwal et al., n.d.). This is because people in this age range are going through significant life transitions, such as discovering their identity, relationships, and careers. Deep questions like "What's my life's purpose?" are frequently asked of them. Nonetheless, persons of any age can experience this crisis. Though less frequently, middle-aged adults, roughly 30 to 60 years old, may also experience them. Furthermore, as they reflect on growing older and their accomplishments, even persons 60 years of age and older may still have feelings of uncertainty about the purpose of life. (Andrews, 2016) Therefore, although existential crisis is most common in young adults, it can be experienced by anyone regardless of their age. According to APA "An internal conflict is referred to as an "existential crisis". It is characterized by the impression that life lacks meaning and is accompanied by various negative experiences, such as stress, anxiety, despair, and depression." (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.). The uneasiness people feel regarding purpose, freedom, and choice in life is known as an existential crisis. A common result of this existential fear is the conviction that existence is meaningless and that life is nil. (Cuncic, 2022).

Within this present study, We maintained the conceptualization of existential crisis defined by Vos & Van Bruggen in 2017 i.e. "existential crisis refers to a form of anxiety that arises from contemplating the fundamental aspects of human existence, such as death, meaninglessness, freedom, and isolation. It is a deep-seated fear or unease about the nature of existence, the purpose of life, and the inevitability of death. The existential crisis goes beyond immediate or concrete threats and is more concerned with the broader questions and uncertainties surrounding existence itself".(Vos & Van Bruggen, 2017).

Furthermore, Van Bruggen emphasized that fears or anxieties that are sparked by fundamental dangers to human existence, such as death, meaninglessness, and inherent loneliness, are referred to as existential concerns (Van Bruggen et al., 2017b). It is a concept that relates to existence in its entirety and transcends tangible threats. The fundamental issue that leads to inner conflict is when people believe that a sense of meaninglessness hinders their desire for a meaningful life. Everyone is focused on competing and succeeding in today's fast-paced environment in an effort to live up to social standards. However, people can become confused and wind up pursuing several objectives without really understanding the purpose behind them. This creates a vicious cycle of chasing after

things but never really achieving anything that fulfills one's purpose in life. Many issues arise from this circumstance, particularly for young adults who frequently become caught in the cycle and try to escape, which can result in an existential crisis.

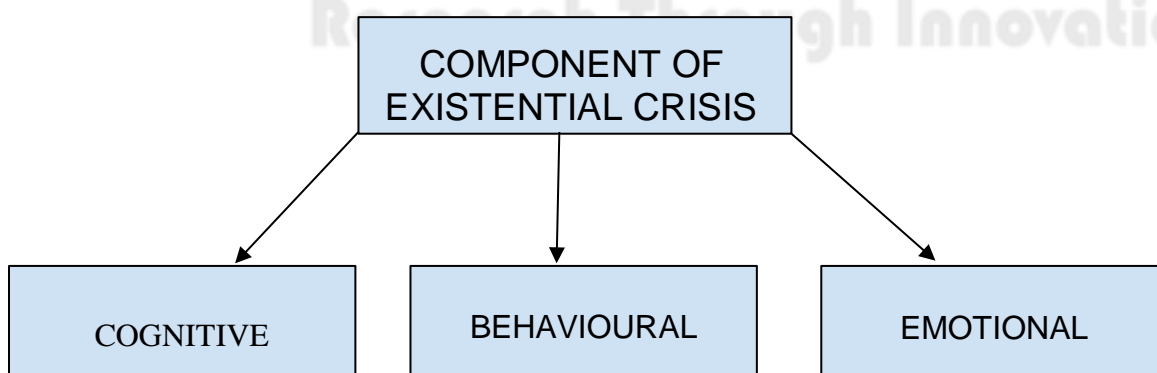
1.1.1 Components of Existential Crisis

Existential crisis are usually seen as a complex phenomenon that can be understood as consisting of various components. Butênaitè in his study distinguishes three types of components belonging to the fields of emotion, cognition, and behavior. Emotional dimensions align with the experience of an existential crisis. Emotional suffering, hopelessness, powerlessness, guilt, worry, and loneliness are typically linked to it. On the cognitive side, individuals impacted frequently experience a loss of meaning and purpose in addition to realizing their own mortality. Behaviorally, existential crisis may express themselves in addictions and antisocial behavior, sometimes paired with ritualistic behavior, loss of relationships, and degradation of one's health. Even though all cases of existential crisis have some form of these three components, there are frequently notable variations in how they present. Nonetheless, it has been suggested that these components can be used to give a more unified definition of existential crisis.(Butênaitè et al., n.d.)

In terms of feelings, people who lack a sense of purpose in life may constantly experience a saddened mood and/or unhappiness. Unpleasant emotions like panic, fear, anxiety, and despair are associated with existential crisis and can cause a person to lose hope and faith. Because of the inability to find purpose in life, this emotional suffering frequently leads to feelings of hopelessness and despair, which in turn impairs motivation and inner joy.

FIGURE 1.1

Component of existential crisis



Note: The three-component of existential crisis given by Butênaitè

Depending on what stage of life it occurs in, existential crisis can take various forms, namely; Sophomore crisis and Midlife Crisis. The Sophomore crisis is the first and usually appears in the late teens or early twenties. For young adults, this is when they are curious about the purpose of life. The mid-to late-20s see the onset of the adult crisis, which digs deeper into complicated identity concerns and frequently involves decisions about one's work and life path. Additional aspects like political opinions, religion, and sexual orientation are taken into account in this step (Wikipedia contributors, 2024).

In his study, Butėnaitė examines the components of an existential crisis through theoretical analysis, comparing and synthesizing scientific literature to interpret the data. The study identifies three main aspects: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral. Emotionally, individuals may experience pain, despair, helplessness, disrupted integrity, vulnerability, guilt, fear, anxiety, and loneliness. Cognitively, they may grapple with a loss of meaning, awareness of mortality, loss of personal values, and decision-making challenges. Behaviorally, they might withdraw, engage in rituals, suffer relationship loss, face health issues, develop addictions, display antisocial behavior, and seek therapy. These components provide insight into the complexity of existential crisis and their impact on individuals' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral realms.(Butėnaitė et al., 2016).

Subsequently, the Midlife Crisis occurs when an individual is in their late thirties and considers their previous choices, their consequences, and their perceived inadequacies. During this time, people are mostly concerned with their relationships, careers, families, and overall sense of purpose in life. Due to rising demands on their life and growing competitiveness in many industries, young adults are seeing a rising incidence of the sophomore crisis. With so many options available to them and a busy schedule geared towards accomplishing several objectives, people inevitably struggle with boredom. This makes individuals look for the reason behind their actions, wonder why they are taking the current course, and consider the possible results.

1.1.2 Causes of Existential crisis

The study titled *Determinants of Existential Crisis among Young Adults* conducted by Neupane aimed to explore what causes young people to experience existential crisis in today's world. It sought to understand the behaviors exhibited by individuals going through such crisis and to identify potential coping strategies. The researchers used in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gather information from individuals aged 18 to 30. They selected seven participants from the Kathmandu district using purposive sampling. Through this process, they

identified eight main themes from the experiences of these seven participants. These themes encompassed psychological, emotional, and sociocultural factors, as well as natural causes that contribute to existential crisis. (Neupane, 2022). According to this study, factors that lead to existential crisis among young adults are Personality Traits, Family Conflicts, Loss of close ones, Unstable childhood, Future Uncertainty, Conflicting Real and Ideal Self, Physical Infirmary, and Relationships with Partners.

Research was done by Ruhela & Tiwari to identify the causes of existential crisis in today's youth. A total of 150 people made up the study's sample 75 boys and 75 girls between the ages of 16 and 20. Researchers evaluated several facets of existential crisis using the Youth Problem Inventory. The findings demonstrated that family dynamics have a major impact on teenage existential crisis, with societal variables and personal issues coming in second and third. Additionally, the study found differences across genders in how young people face existential crisis. (Ruhela & Tiwari, 2013).

Further investigation was undertaken by Mandalaparthi & Abraham to explore the prevalence of existential anxiety (EA) among Indian youth and to examine any gender differences in its manifestation. The study comprised 30 male and 39 female participants, totaling 69 individuals aged 17 to 29 years. Researchers utilized the Existential Concerns Questionnaire for quantitative assessment and incorporated three open-ended questions for qualitative exploration. Results indicated no significant disparities ($p = 0.24$) in EA levels between males and females. Thematic network analysis of qualitative data unveiled common themes across genders, encompassing uncertainty, negative emotions, competition/success, meaning-making, social media, and life events. Notably, the theme of social pressure was uniquely prominent among females. (Mandalaparthi & Abraham, 2021).

Based on the above discussion it has been established that the experience of existential crisis is shaped by a wide array of factors such as personality, family dynamics, childhood experiences, self-concept, and attachments formed with major figures. A profound doubt about the purpose of life and one's own existence are characteristics of an existential crisis, which is frequently accompanied by feelings of confusion, uncertainty, and concern over basic life issues. Simultaneously, attachment style refers to the degree of emotional attachment that a person has with their primary carers, especially their parents, and has a substantial impact on a person's psychological growth and social interactions. The relationship between attachment style and existential crisis is rooted in the way people's answers to existential questions are shaped by the nature of their early attachment experiences. People

who have a stable attachment are more capable of handling existential uncertainty with more composure and self-assurance because they feel more autonomous, trustworthy, and emotionally resilient. On the other hand, existential anguish can be made worse by insecure attachment, which is typified by ambivalence, avoidance, or anxiety in relationships. This makes it more difficult to successfully manage existential concerns.

Essentially, the stability and strength of the attachment relationship that people have with their parents provide a basic framework within which they build their self-concept and the world, which in turn influences how well they are able to deal with existential issues. A stable attachment pattern creates psychological stability and coherence, which makes it easier to incorporate existential issues into a person's story about themselves in a resilient and adaptive way.

1.2 Attachment styles

Developmental Psychology gave rise to the idea of attachment style, which describes how people relate to each other in intimate relationships. According to APA “The characteristic way people relate to others in the context of intimate relationships, which is heavily influenced by self-worth and interpersonal trust are attachment styles.”(APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.) This psychological framework emphasizes the importance of early encounters with carers in influencing individuals' attachment patterns throughout life. It was developed by Mary Ainsworth and John Bowlby(Bowlby, 2012) & (Ainsworth, 1978). The four primary attachment styles secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant reflect different ways that people regulate their emotions, get close to others, and build trust in relationships. People who are securely linked typically feel at ease with both closeness and independence, and they also tend to have positive opinions of both themselves and other people. On the other hand, those who have an anxious-preoccupied attachment style frequently look to other people for approval and comfort because they fear being rejected or abandoned. Dismissive-avoidant people repress their connection needs and keep emotional distance in relationships, preferring their independence over intimacy. Anxious and avoidant attachment types are combined in fearful-avoidant attachment, which is typified by a need for intimacy but dread of it because of traumatic or rejection events in the past. Although early experiences of providing care have an impact on attachment styles, these are not fixed characteristics and can change over time in response to new experiences and connections. Comprehending attachment types offers a

significant understanding of relational dynamics, communication styles, and emotional requirements. This knowledge informs interventions designed to promote happy and healthy relationships.

The term attachment styles describes bonding patterns that individuals pick up as children and use in their adult relationships. They are usually assumed to have their roots in the kind of care a person receives during their early years. (Huang, 2024) means Individuals' emotional connection patterns during childhood shape their attachment types, which impact their relationships as adults. These styles influence how people develop relationships and engage with others throughout their lives and are a result of the type of care they receive throughout their early infancy. Interpersonal trust and self-worth have a major impact on how individuals interact with each other in the context of intimate relationships. APA dictionary highlights the distinctive way people connect with each other in close relationships, which is greatly influenced by their sense of self and degree of confidence in other people. (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.-c).

The degree to which parents grant their children independence and the capacity to make their own decisions is referred to as parental autonomy. The emotional connection that develops between a child and their parent and shapes how that child interacts with others in the future is known as attachment style. Put simply, the degree to which children feel firmly bonded to their parents can be influenced by the method in which they allow them to make decisions. Children are more likely to establish a healthy attachment style when parents find a balance between giving their children independence and offering them assistance. Overly controlling or aloof parents might cause their children to have insecure attachment styles, which can affect their relationships as adults. In other words, the degree to which parents allow their children to pursue their own interests can influence the degree of closeness that the children feel towards their parents.

Parenting styles are defined as parenting behaviors and attitudes that set the emotional climate of parent-child interactions (Toro & Monica, 2011). According to attachment theory, attachment refers to the emotional connection or relationship that exists between a person and an attachment figure, who is typically a carer or guardian. While these relationships may be reciprocal between two adults, a kid's desire for safety, stability, and protection—all of which are crucial during infancy and childhood—forms the basis of these bonds between a child and a carer. (Murphy et al., 2014).

Within the scope of this study, we consider the definition of attachment style given by Panzer i.e. “Parental autonomy support refers to a parenting style characterized by encouraging children to make their own decisions, providing choices when possible, communicating in an open and non-controlling manner, and fostering independence and initiative in children. Autonomy-supportive parents engage in verbal give-and-take with their children, offer rationales for expected behaviors, and support relatedness and competence in their children. This parenting approach aims to promote self-regulated behavior, problem-solving skills, motivation, and positive outcomes in academic, social, and psychological domains.” (Pazner, 2018).

The way a person was raised by their parents has a significant impact on their behavior, goal-setting, resilience to adversity, and sensitivity to outside influences. An individual's attachment style is shaped by their parents' nurturing approach, which in turn affects how they will develop in the future. A person's upbringing shapes their future aspirations and decisions in addition to influencing their behavior in the here and now.

Diana Baumrind's (1973) study distinguished three parenting philosophies: permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian parenting. The two precise variables that determine these parenting philosophies are the level of warmth, support, and acceptance a parent gives their child, as well as the level of control and demandingness the parent exercises over the child. It has been noted that authoritative parents, as opposed to authoritarian ones, usually have a close relationship with their kids that strikes a balance between tenderness and firmness. In contrast to authoritarian parents, who usually display lower levels of warmth and more demanding behavior, permissive parents usually display high levels of warmth and little to no demanding behavior. (Muraco et al., 2020)

Despite the significant impact of attachment styles on existential crisis, research in this area remains limited. Only a few studies have delved into the intricate relationship between existential crisis and attachment styles, highlighting the need for further exploration and understanding in this field. One such research done by Bodner looks at the relationship between attachment theory and meaning in life (also known as MIL) throughout adulthood. Specifically, he looks at attachment style variations in two aspects of MIL: the search for meaning (also known as SML) and the presence of meaning (also known as PML). Measures of attachment and MIL were taken from 992 participants in three age groups: established adults (31–49), older people (50–65), and young adults (21–30). The results of multivariate analyses showed that whilst younger persons reported more SML, older adults scored higher on PML. In average, participants with insecure attachment styles showed less SML and

more PML than securely attached individuals, while those with scared attachment styles showed more SML than other attachment types. Age and attachment interacted, with dismissive young individuals showing lower SML and gender differences in PML among established adults for the scared and preoccupied attachment types. In conclusion, a three-way interaction between attachment, age, and gender was discovered in relation to PML. Specifically, among established adults, apprehensive women and preoccupied males reported lower levels of PML, whereas older women with secure attachment reported greater levels of PML. (Bodner et al., 2013).

Further investigation was carried out by Roberto in which he studied the relationship between meaning in life, parent and peer attachment, and psychological symptoms in adolescence. The Purpose in Life test, the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, and the Symptom Checklist-90-R were administered to a sample of Italian high school students (N = 3,024; Attachments to parents and peers were found to be statistically strongly connected with a sense of purpose in life. Studies revealed that parent attachment was a more reliable indicator than peer attachment. Parent attachment, peer attachment, and sense of life meaning were all negatively correlated with global psychological symptoms. (Roberto et al., n.d.).

In further exploration, Helm investigated how existential isolation (Existential isolation abbreviated as EI) relates to dimensions of relational attachment. Drawing upon previous research examining the relationship between loneliness and attachment, as well as theorizing in the state-trait EI model, the study predicted that EI would be positively associated with insecure attachment, but more associated with avoidant than with anxious attachment. Three cross-sectional studies (total N = 7951) find support for these proposed relationships, with loneliness more strongly related to anxiety than avoidant attachment (Studies 2 and 3), suggesting that different forms of interpersonal isolation are especially likely to be involved with different attachment orientations. (Helm et al., 2020).

Having established the linkage between existential crisis and attachment styles, it is imperative to delve into past research to unravel their intricate interplay. Previous studies have laid the groundwork for understanding how varying attachment styles contribute to the manifestation and resolution of existential crisis. By scrutinizing the findings of past research endeavors, we can gain deeper insights into the mechanisms through which attachment patterns influence individuals' existential experiences.

1.3 The interplay between existential crisis and attachment style

The complex connection that exists between existential crisis and attachment style has a substantial impact on people's views of existential well-being and purpose in life. Secure and insecure attachment patterns have a significant impact on how people resolve existential crisis. While people with insecure attachment styles—such as the anxious-preoccupied or avoidant—typically face more obstacles in their existential exploration and search for meaning in life, those with secure attachment tend to express a higher sense of meaning and contentment in life. Furthermore, adolescent attachment to parents and peers has been linked to a stronger sense of purpose in life and a reduction in psychological symptoms, highlighting the long-lasting influence of early relational dynamics on existential fulfillment. Moreover, the complex link between existential isolation, loneliness, and attachment highlights the critical role that interpersonal interactions play in reducing existential discomfort, with different attachment styles being associated with different forms of existential isolation. To sum up, understanding how existential crisis and attachment style interact can help us better understand people's existential realities and guide the development of focused interventions that promote existential well-being and deep interpersonal relationships.

An existential crisis is characterised by a deep period of reflection during which one questions the ultimate meaning and purpose of existence. Symptoms of the crisis typically include emotions of confusion and worry. On the other hand, coping mechanisms are methods people use to deal with stress and get through difficult situations.

Coping strategies and existential crisis are related in that people use coping strategies to lessen the anxiety and discomfort that arise from existential inquiry. Coping mechanisms function as flexible approaches to managing the mental and emotional turmoil linked to existential crisis. They include a variety of behaviors, such as reaching out for social support, taking part in worthwhile pursuits, and engaging in introspection and mindfulness exercises.

Besides this, an individual's attachment style affects how they deal with stress and overcome obstacles. It profoundly alters coping strategies, impacting how people react to challenging circumstances and interact with others. Knowing how coping mechanisms and attachment styles interact might help people better understand how people adjust to different pressures and interpersonal interactions.

Coping mechanisms are fundamental tools that people use to help them negotiate the complicated situations that arise during existential crisis. They provide a way for people to regulate their emotions and maintain psychological resilience when faced with existential uncertainty.

1.4 Coping mechanism

The ideas and actions used to deal with stressful situations, both internal and external, are referred to as coping mechanisms.(Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004) It covers a broad spectrum of techniques, such as addressing problems head-on, looking for outside assistance, controlling emotions, and adopting a positive mindset Coping is a multifaceted concept that manifests itself on multiple levels, including behavioral, cognitive-reflective, emotional, and attitude.

This complex process involves applying a broad range of tactically planned techniques to overcome challenges and setbacks. People use a variety of strategies and tactics to deal with the intricacies of life, adjusting to a wide range of circumstances. Individuals seek to maintain a deep sense of fulfillment and general well-being in their life journey by using these dynamic coping mechanisms.

To cope with stress, people typically employ problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping. When you have some influence over stressful circumstances, problem-focused coping—which tries to change or remove the source of the stress—works well. Emotion-focused coping, however, becomes crucial in circumstances where total stress avoidance is not feasible, particularly when the stressors are outside of your control.(Dixon, 2022) You may change how you respond to the stress you experience in these kinds of circumstances by using this collection of tactics. people also use various maladaptive ways to cope with things like using drugs, Anger outbursts, Denying/ignoring the problem, Self-harm, Binge eating, etc.

A coping mechanism is defined as "Any conscious or unconscious modification or adaptation that eases tension and anxiety throughout a demanding event or circumstance."(APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.-b) It means any intentional or unconscious adjustments people make, consciously or unconsciously, to reduce stress and anxiety under stressful situations. These modifications, which might be behavioral or mental in nature, lessen the stressor's negative effects on the person's well-being. Based on another perspective, "Coping mechanisms are cognitive and behavioral approaches that we use to manage internal and external stressors." (Coping Mechanisms:

Definition, Examples, & Types, n.d.) means Coping mechanisms refer to the mental and behavioral skills we use to manage stressors and challenges, whether they come from outside sources or from within. These coping strategies aid in navigating challenging circumstances and preserving emotional equilibrium. Furthermore, “Coping refers to conscious strategies used to reduce unpleasant emotions. Coping mechanisms might be social or individual, mental or behavioral. Coping is the ability to manage and get past obstacles in life.” (“Cope,” 2024). People can preserve their emotional and mental health by doing this.

Within this research, We maintained the conceptualization of coping as “Proactive coping refers to the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to anticipate, prevent, or modify potential stressors before they occur. It is a future-oriented approach to coping that emphasizes self-regulatory goal attainment and personal quality of life management. Proactive coping is characterized by resourcefulness, responsibility, and vision, and involves planning, positive reframing, and acceptance. It is distinguished from other coping forms by its incorporation and utilization of social and non-social resources, employment of visions of success, and use of positive emotional strategies.” (Greenglass et al., n.d.)

People who are experiencing existential crisis frequently reflect on their lives and ask difficult questions about meaning and purpose. Coping strategies are essential for navigating the chaos and uncertainty during these introspective periods. The way people handle existential crisis can have a significant effect on their psychological health and capacity to find purpose in the face of existential dilemmas. Resilience and personal development in the face of existential uncertainty can be gained by comprehending the connection between coping mechanisms and existential crisis. To understand more on how people deal with their experience of existential crisis, let us explore more pool of literature that sheds light on people’s coping styles.

1.5 The interplay between existential crisis and coping style

Existential crisis, characterized by profound uncertainty and introspective questioning about the meaning and purpose of life, often prompt individuals to engage various coping mechanisms in their quest for understanding and resilience. When faced with existential dilemmas, individuals may employ coping strategies such as seeking social support, engaging in introspection, pursuing spiritual or philosophical exploration, or even adopting avoidance tactics to temporarily alleviate distress. These coping mechanisms serve as adaptive responses to existential challenges, offering individuals a means to navigate the inherent complexities of existence while

striving to find a sense of coherence and meaning amidst existential uncertainty. Whether through confronting existential questions head-on or seeking solace in distraction, the interplay between existential crisis and coping mechanisms reflects the dynamic process of human adaptation and existential exploration.

Ahmadi's study looked at how Korean cancer patients used existential, spiritual, and religious coping, as well as how their culture affected the coping strategies they chose. 33 individuals with diverse forms of cancer underwent interviews. Analyses of the interview transcripts revealed four distinct categories of coping resources: (1) transcendental power reliance; (2) mind-body connection; (3) belief in the healing power of nature; and (4) self-discovery in interpersonal connections. The results of this study indicate how crucial it is to look into cultural context when examining how meaning-making coping mechanisms are used in various nations.(Ahmadi et al., 2016).

In a study including 251 undergraduate students nationwide, LeSueur examined the connections between coping mechanisms, existential thinking, positive psychological resources, and mental health symptoms. The findings showed that the positive psychological resources of hope, meaning in life, and mindfulness predicted comparatively reduced rates of mental health symptoms and maladaptive coping mechanisms. More adaptive coping was predicted by existential contemplation and positive emotions. Maladaptive coping mechanisms were found to be significantly positively correlated with symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression, according to a multivariate canonical correlation study. Research has indicated that while existential contemplation is positively connected with increased mental health symptoms and maladaptive coping, it is also helpful in fostering adaptive coping and a sense of purpose in life. (LeSueur, 2019).

Additionally, Ahmadi's next piece addresses the coping mechanisms Iranian cancer patients use to create meaning in a secular way. We spoke with 27 individuals who had different types of cancer through interviews. After the qualitative interviews were analysed, nine secular existential meaning-making coping strategies were identified. Ignoring sickness, diverting attention, being altruistic, interacting with people, being in nature, talking about oneself, visualization, good isolation, positive thinking, and transformational orientation are some of these coping mechanisms. Our sample of Iranian cancer patients and survivors appears to have used these tactics to either empower themselves or deny or ignore their sickness. Examining the possible impact of cultural components such as Persian literature, mysticism, and Iranian Islam on the choice of coping mechanisms.(Ahmadi et al., 2022).

Now that we have explored the interplay of existential crisis and coping, it is time for us to delve into studies that highlights on how attachment styles influence the coping mechanisms used by the individuals. A person's attachment style can determine the coping strategies that are activated during an existential crisis, which entails challenging the basic elements of existence. Whereas those with anxious attachment may look to others for validation and assurance, those with secure attachment, for instance, may rely on supportive relationships to discover meaning and get through uncertain times. When faced with existential uncertainty, however, those who suffer from avoidant attachment may withdraw or turn to self-reliance. A thorough understanding of the ways in which attachment styles impact coping mechanisms during an existential crisis can help one better appreciate the intricate relationships that exist between identity development, existential inquiry, and emotional attachment.

1.6 The interplay between attachment style and coping mechanism

The emotional connection that forms between people and their primary carers is known as attachment style, and it has a lasting impact on how those people view and relate to other people. Conversely, coping mechanisms are methods people use to deal with stress and get through challenging circumstances. The way that people's early attachment experiences influence their coping mechanisms when faced with adversity is the reason for the relationship between coping mechanisms and attachment style. Securely attached people typically possess constructive coping strategies, behaviors that come from their sense of emotional stability and trust, such as asking for help and using problem-solving techniques. On the other hand, people who suffer from insecure attachment may use less effective coping mechanisms, such as avoiding situations or turning to unhealthy habits, as a result of their interpersonal uneasiness and mistrust.

Ford has investigated the relationship between coping strategies and attachment style in his studies. The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether adult attachment style, stress management abilities, and college graduation were related. The 81 participants in this logistic regression analysis were either recent college graduates or withdrawals. In addition to providing demographic data, participants finished the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to gauge their degree of perceived stress and the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) to gauge their attachment anxiety and avoidance. According to a substantial Wald statistic, participants were less likely to graduate from college as their attachment anxiety increased. However, there was no meaningful connection found between attachment avoidance and graduating from college. There was a significant Wald statistic between stress

coping skills and graduation, which showed that participants were less likely to graduate as their reported stress level rose. Both attachment anxiety and stress coping skills were not unique predictors of graduation when they were put together as predictor factors. (Ford, 2011).

Kuftyak conducted additional research to examine the connection between adult hardiness, coping mechanisms, and attachment. The Relationships Questionnaire (Bartholomew, Horowitz, 1998), the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire (Fraley, Waller, Brennan, 2000), the Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (Endler, Parker, 1990), and the Hardiness Survey (Leontiev, Rasskazova, 2006; based on Maddi's Personal Views Survey) were completed by the 127 adults who participated, ranging in age from 18 to 77. The findings demonstrated a lower frequency of use of coping strategies targeted at preventing anxious thoughts and overcoming problems by securely attached adults. A fearful attachment style was linked to less effort being put forth to alter the circumstances, a greater sense of helplessness, and a disrespect for strenuous exercise. For those suffering from avoidant attachment anxiety, tight relationships exacerbated their emotions of rejection and security-seeking tendencies. (Kuftyak, 2021).

Further research endeavors to comprehend the impact of mature attachment on employed adults managing discord in their marriages. To get the opinions of the 130 working folks, a three-question survey was administered. The surveys were titled: Communication Pattern Surveys (CPQ), Coping Resources Inventory (CRI), and Experienced in Closed Relationship Revised (ECR-R). To look for moderation, a multiple linear regression analysis was done. It has been discovered that adult attachment types lead to successful marriages and a variety of favorable coping strategy impacts. Married couples who want to better understand their adult attachment types to help them deal with conflict may find the study's findings useful. (Jaymess & Fatahyah, 2019).

Existential crisis, attachment styles, and coping mechanisms are three interconnected variables that play crucial roles in understanding human behavior and psychological well-being. An individual experiencing an existential crisis may grapple with questions about the meaning and purpose of life, prompting a reevaluation of their beliefs and values. This crisis can intersect with attachment styles, as one's early experiences of bonding and attachment with caregivers influence their perception of self and others. Consequently, individuals with secure attachment styles may navigate existential challenges with greater resilience, drawing on supportive relationships for comfort and guidance, while those with insecure attachment may struggle to find solace and may experience heightened

distress. Coping mechanisms serve as adaptive strategies employed to manage the stressors associated with existential crisis and attachment-related concerns. Whether through seeking social support, engaging in introspective reflection, or adopting avoidance behaviors, coping mechanisms reflect individuals' unique approaches to navigating existential uncertainties within the context of their attachment experiences. Understanding the intricate interplay between existential crisis, attachment styles, and coping mechanisms sheds light on the complex dynamics of human psychology and informs interventions aimed at promoting resilience and well-being.

1.7 The interplay between existential crisis, attachment style, and coping mechanism

The interaction of coping strategies, attachment styles, and existential crisis offers an advanced knowledge of how people negotiate big life, relationship, and purpose dilemmas. Individuals' attachment style, which is molded by their early interactions with carers, affects how they establish and sustain relationships over the course of their lives. While people with insecure attachment styles may find it difficult to build intimacy and trust, those with secure attachment styles typically feel more comfortable expressing their feelings and asking for help.

Individuals' attachment styles frequently have a big impact on how they handle existential crisis, which are periods of extreme doubt or wondering about the meaning and purpose of existence. In order to overcome existential difficulties, securely attached people may rely on their ability to solve problems and form comforting and meaningful connections with others. On the other hand, those with insecure attachment patterns could feel more distressed, which could make them avoid situations or withdraw emotionally as a coping strategy. Furthermore, the connection between coping and attachment style affects interpersonal dynamics in addition to individual behavior. Attachment dynamics influence how people communicate, resolve conflicts, and know when to ask for and give assistance in relationships.

Interventions intended to support people during uncertain and distressing times can be informed by an understanding of the interactions among existential crisis, attachment types, and coping mechanisms. Mental health professionals and support networks can offer specialised interventions to promote resilience, and healthy relational dynamics, and ease the process of meaning-making when faced with existential challenges by acknowledging the impact of attachment patterns on coping strategies and interpersonal relationships.

1.8 Research gap

In the landscape of scholarly inquiry, the investigation into existential crisis and their ramifications has been notably scarce within the Indian context. Similarly, there exists a discernible dearth of research elucidating the nexus between attachment styles and existential crisis, particularly within the Indian milieu. While numerous studies have investigated existential crisis and their causes, important knowledge gaps persist. One significant gap pertains to understanding how attachment styles, which refer to the way individuals form emotional bonds, impact how young adults navigate existential crisis and the coping mechanisms they employ. Surprisingly, there is a scarcity of research specifically examining these dynamics within the context of India. Additionally, there has been limited utilization of standardized measures to assess the severity of existential crisis among young adults in India, leaving room for a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. In simpler terms, this research aims to bridge these knowledge gaps by investigating the relationships between attachment styles, existential crisis, and coping strategies among young adults in India.

1.9 Rationale

In our modern world, characterized by the prevalence of social media and ever-evolving lifestyles, we find ourselves connecting with more people than ever before. However, maintaining these connections can be a significant challenge. The manner in which we form emotional bonds, known as attachment styles, plays a pivotal role in this process. If our attachment style isn't working well, it can trigger a profound existential crisis, where we grapple with deep questions about the meaning of life. This research endeavors to uncover the impact of attachment styles on our ability to navigate life's complexities and maintain fulfilling relationships. As our social landscape evolves, so do our desires and expectations within these relationships. By closely examining the link between attachment styles and existential crisis, this study aims to reveal crucial insights into the origins of this crisis and the coping strategies people employ when confronted with profound existential questions. Additionally, it seeks to understand how individuals with different attachment styles manage these challenges. Ultimately, this research aims to enhance our comprehension of how attachment styles shape our experiences in a world where our social lives and relationships are in a constant state of flux.

1.10 The objective of the research

1. To delve deeper into understanding the existential crisis and its complexities.
2. To analyze how existential crisis affect young adults aged 18 to 25 years.

3. To explore how attachment styles and coping mechanisms are connected to dealing with existential crisis.
4. To investigate the relationship between feeling securely or insecurely attached to others and experiencing an existential crisis.
5. To explore which coping mechanisms individuals use when faced with existential crisis.



CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research design :

The study employs a correlational research design, which involves investigating the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. The purpose of employing a correlation research design is to ascertain the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables. This method allows researchers to determine if changes in one variable correspond to changes in another variable, and if so, to what extent. By measuring the degree of association between variables, correlation research facilitates the identification of potential patterns, trends, or dependencies within the data. In this particular study, questionnaires were utilized as the primary data collection method to gather information on these variables. This approach enabled us to analyze the extent to which the variables are associated with each other. However, it's important to note that correlational research design does not establish causation; rather, it focuses on identifying patterns of correlation between variables.

2.2 Variables

Predictor variable-: Attachment Styles

Criterion variables -: Existential Crisis and Coping Mechanisms.

2.3 Hypothesis

1. There is no correlation between attachment style on young adults' levels of existential crisis.
2. There is a positive correlation between secure attachment style on young adults' coping mechanisms.
3. There is a positive correlation between existential crisis on coping mechanisms among young adults.

2.4 Sample

Participants in the study were drawn from a range of age groups: 18–25. The questionnaire was distributed via links on social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and others, and 302 respondents were obtained using Google Forms for data collecting. 126 men and 176 women made up the participant pool. All participants were asked to provide basic demographic data, such as their name, gender, age, and qualifications. To ensure that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw or withhold their responses at any time during the trial, a consent form was included with the questionnaire.

2.4.1 Sampling method

In the study, the convenience sampling approach was applied. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are chosen according to how easily and readily they can be reached by the researcher. Convenience sampling depends on finding people who are willing to engage in the study and are easily accessible, as opposed to using random selection approaches. Convenience sampling was chosen for this study primarily due to its practicality and ease of implementation. Given the target population of young adults (aged 18 to 25) and the research setting at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, as well as additional data collection in Vadodara, Jamnagar, and Indore, using social media for distributing the questionnaire allowed for quick and accessible data collection across multiple locations. This method enabled researchers to efficiently reach a large number of potential participants within the specified age range and varied geographic locations. Furthermore, convenience sampling is suitable when the primary focus is on obtaining a sample that is readily available and accessible, rather than ensuring strict random selection or representativeness of the entire population. In this case, the aim was to gather insights specifically from young adults at the university and other cities, making convenience sampling a practical choice to achieve this objective within the study's resource and time constraints. Despite its limitations in generalizability, convenience sampling served as a viable approach to gather relevant data for exploring the relationships between spiritual coping, materialism, and existential crisis among the target demographic in multiple locations. The criteria for the sampling are listed below.

2.4.1.1 Inclusion criteria

Participants in this research had to be Indian citizens, aged between 18 and 25, and capable of reading and comprehending the English language. The purpose of these criteria was to ensure that participants belonged to a specific demographic range relevant to the research topic. Restricting the age range to 18–25 years aimed to gather a cohort representative of young adults entering adulthood—a period often associated with distinct social, psychological, and economic dynamics. The citizenship criterion facilitated a more cohesive analysis of findings by maintaining uniformity in participants' backgrounds and experiences within the Indian context. Proficiency in the English language was necessary to ensure that participants could fully engage in the research process through effective communication and comprehension of study materials.

2.4.1.2 Exclusion criteria

The study's exclusion criteria included individuals who submitted incomplete forms or forms without consent. Ensuring that participants voluntarily participated in the study and were aware of its procedures, goals, potential risks, and rewards was essential to ethical research practices. Consent was fundamental to maintaining moral principles and respecting human autonomy; therefore, participation was not permitted for those who did not give consent. Incomplete forms also posed a risk to the accuracy and consistency of the gathered data, which could have affected the study's validity and interpretation. To uphold the integrity of the data and the seriousness of the research, individuals who did not fill out all the required portions of the form were likewise not included in the study.

2.5 Tools

2.5.1 Existential Concern Questionnaire (ECQ)

The Existential Concerns Questionnaire (ECQ) is a valuable tool for assessing existential anxiety related to core threats to human existence. The ECQ was developed by Vincent van Bruggen and colleagues in 2017. It consists of a total of 25 items in its initial version, which were later refined to a shortened version with 22 items. The questionnaire is designed to measure fears and concerns related to existential issues such as death, meaninglessness, guilt, social isolation, and identity. The reliability of the scale was 0.94. The scale has shown good internal consistency and test-retest reliability, indicating that it consistently measures existential concerns over time. Additionally, the ECQ has exhibited construct validity by showing expected correlations with other measures related to anxiety, distress, neuroticism, and experienced meaning. The incremental validity of the ECQ has been supported by its ability to capture unique aspects of existential anxiety beyond general distress or personality traits like neuroticism. (Van Bruggen et al., 2017)

2.5.2 Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (P-PASS)

The Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (P-PASS), developed by Mageau et al. in 2015, is a valuable tool for assessing adolescents' perceptions of autonomy support and controlling parenting behaviors. This scale consists of 22 items that measure dimensions such as providing rationale, offering choices, and acknowledging feelings, as well as inducing guilt, threatening punishment, and encouraging performance goals. With its strong internal consistency of 0.94 and concurrent validity with other parenting measures, the P-PASS has been widely

used in research to explore the impact of parental autonomy support on various outcomes, including academic achievement and psychological well-being.(Mageau et al., 2015)

2.6.3 The Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI)

The Proactive Coping Inventory (PCI), developed by Greenglass, Schwarzer, and their collaborators in 1999, is a comprehensive assessment tool designed to evaluate proactive coping strategies within individuals. Comprising seven scales and 55 items, the PCI is tailored to measure various proactive and forward-thinking coping behaviors, including self-regulatory goal achievement and management of personal quality of life. It focuses on assessing how individuals proactively anticipate, prevent, and handle stressors through strategies such as resource management, positive emotional approaches, and proactive goal establishment. Renowned for its robust psychometric properties, including construct validity, homogeneity, and reliability range from 0.4 to 0.9. (Greenglass et al., 1999)

2.7 Procedure

The study conduction was carried out in the following phases.

Phase - I - Building theoretical framework

During this stage, the primary focus was on establishing the theoretical foundation of the study. A meticulous examination of the literature was conducted, with a specific focus on research concerning existential crisis among young adults and their potential correlation with individual attachment styles. Additionally, considerable attention was directed towards identifying studies investigating the relationship between coping mechanisms employed during existential crisis.

Following a thorough review, it was observed that there was a lack of conclusive evidence establishing a correlation between the three variables under investigation: existential crisis, attachment styles, and coping mechanisms. Despite extensive exploration, no definitive relationship between these variables was identified in the existing body of literature.

This absence of a clear relationship among the variables highlighted a significant gap in current understanding. Consequently, the primary objective of the study emerged as an endeavor to unravel the intricate relationship between attachment styles, existential crisis among young adults, and the coping mechanisms employed during such crisis. By addressing this gap, the researchers aimed to contribute to the advancement of theoretical

frameworks and practical interventions aimed at better supporting individuals navigating existential challenges during this crucial developmental stage.

Phase - II - Data collection

After conducting a thorough review of the existing literature, the process of identifying standardized tools that align with our study's objectives commenced. These scales were chosen based on their relevance to the domains we aimed to explore, such as existential crisis, attachment styles, and coping mechanisms. To ensure the integrity of our data collection process, essential measures were taken to seek permission from the authors of these scales. This involved contacting them via email to request authorization for their use in our research.

Following the acquisition of permissions, we proceeded to design a Google document that served as our data collection tool. This document was carefully crafted to include fields where participants could provide demographic information, including details about their family background, educational attainment, and age. This demographic data was crucial for gaining insights into the environmental factors that might influence individuals' experiences with existential crisis and their coping mechanisms.

To make it convenient for participants to provide their responses, we created a user-friendly Google Form, which we then shared across various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. This enabled us to reach a diverse range of participants and gather a comprehensive dataset.

Phase - III - Data coding & analysis

Upon receiving responses from participants, the data was carefully screened for each submission to ensure it met our predetermined inclusion criteria. Entries that didn't meet these criteria were excluded from further analysis to uphold the integrity of our dataset.

Once the dataset was refined, the data was assigned numerical values based on the scoring system of the relevant scale used. The coding process enabled us to organize the data systematically and prepare it for statistical analysis. Subsequently, we conducted statistical analyses using JASP. JASP is a statistical software program that provides a user-friendly interface for conducting various types of statistical analyses. It is designed to be accessible to researchers and students, offering a range of features to perform both basic and advanced statistical procedures. JASP supports frequentist and Bayesian analyses, making it a versatile tool for data analysis and interpretation in

research settings. Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to assess the normal distribution of the data, ensuring the validity of our statistical analyses. Additionally, the Pearson r correlation test was employed to explore the relationships between variables such as attachment styles, existential crisis, and coping mechanisms among young adults.



CHAPTER 3

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Descriptive statistics:

Table 3.1

Descriptive statistics table

	COPING SCALE	ATTACHMENT STYLE	EXISTENTIAL CRISIS
Valid	302	302	302
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	160.301	85.887	61.795
Std. Error of Mean	1.460	1.335	1.134
95% CI Mean Upper	163.174	88.550	64.027
95% CI Mean Lower	157.429	83.225	59.562
Std. Deviation	25.368	23.511	19.712
95% CI Std. Dev. Upper	27.428	24.832	20.859
95% CI Std. Dev. Lower	23.073	22.018	18.384
Shapiro-Wilk	0.971	0.966	0.971
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	< .001	< .001	< .001

The descriptive statistics for the study's three main variables—Coping Scale, Attachment Style, and Existential Crisis—were computed based on a sample size of 302 participants, with no missing data reported for any of the variables.

For the Coping Scale, the mean score was 160.301 with a standard deviation of 25.368. The standard error of the mean was 1.460. The 95% confidence interval (CI) for the mean ranged from 157.429 to 163.174, while the 95% CI for the standard deviation ranged from 23.073 to 27.428. The minimum and maximum observed scores were

81.000 and 216.000, respectively. The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated a p-value of $< .001$, suggesting that the Coping Scale scores did not follow a normal distribution. Regarding the Attachment Style variable, the mean score was 85.887 with a standard deviation of 23.511. The standard error of the mean was 1.353. The 95% CI for the mean was between 83.225 and 88.550, and the 95% CI for the standard deviation was between 22.018 and 24.832. The scores ranged from a minimum of 32.000 to a maximum of 138.000. The Shapiro-Wilk test yielded a p-value of $< .001$, indicating that the Attachment Style scores were not normally distributed. For the Existential Crisis variable, the mean score was 61.795 with a standard deviation of 19.713. The standard error of the mean was 1.134. The 95% CI for the mean spanned from 59.562 to 64.027, and the 95% CI for the standard deviation was from 18.384 to 20.859. The scores varied from a low of 22.000 to a high of 110.000. The Shapiro-Wilk test resulted in a p-value of $< .001$, which suggests that the distribution of the Existential Crisis scores deviated from normality.

In brief, the descriptive statistics provide a comprehensive overview of the central tendency and variability of the scores across the three variables. The lack of normality, as indicated by the Shapiro-Wilk test results, may have implications for the types of statistical analyses that are appropriate for these data. It is important to consider these results when interpreting the data and to apply statistical techniques that are robust to deviations from normality.

3.2 Spearman's Correlations

Table 3.2

Correlation table between the variables

Variable		Coping scale	Attachment style	Existential crisis
Coping scale	Spearman's rho	-		
	p-value	-		
Attachment style	Spearman's rho	0.287	-	
	p-value	$< .001$	-	
Existential crisis	Spearman's rho	0.119	0.120	-
	p-value	0.038	0.036	-

The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationships between the Coping Scale, Attachment Style, and Existential Crisis variables. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant

positive correlation between the Coping Scale and Attachment Style, with a Spearman's rho of 0.287 and a p-value of less than .001. This suggests a low to moderate association between these two variables. The correlation between the Coping Scale and Existential Crisis is positive but weaker, with a Spearman's rho of 0.119. This correlation is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.038, indicating a slight but significant relationship.

Additionally, there is a positive correlation between Attachment Style and Existential Crisis, with a Spearman's rho of 0.120. This correlation is also statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.036, suggesting a similarly slight but significant relationship. However, the significant p-values indicate that the correlations are unlikely to be due to random chance, and there is a consistent positive relationship between the variables studied. These results should be interpreted within the context of the research and may have implications for understanding how coping strategies and attachment styles are related to experiences of existential crisis.



CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between attachment styles and existential crisis, as well as to analyze the coping mechanisms employed by individuals during such crisis. Existential crisis involve a sense of life lacking meaning and can lead to negative emotions like stress, anxiety, despair, and depression. Attachment styles are patterns of bonding learned in childhood and carried into adulthood, influenced by early caregiving experiences To explore the interplay between attachment styles and existential crisis, the study adopted a correlational research design involving 302 participants. Correlation analysis, specifically Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, was utilized to examine the relationships between variables such as Coping Scale, Attachment Style, and Existential Crisis experiences.

The results of the analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the Coping scale and the Secure Attachment Style. This suggests that individuals with specific attachment styles may be more inclined to utilize certain coping mechanisms during existential crisis. The strength of this correlation, as indicated by Spearman's rho, suggests a moderate association between coping and attachment styles.

This finding supports the hypothesis that attachment styles play a significant role in shaping how individuals cope with existential crisis. Further bolstering this assertion are insights from previous research endeavors. For instance, a study conducted by Kuftyak in 2021 explored the relationship between attachment styles and coping mechanisms in adults. Their findings indicated that securely attached individuals were more likely to employ problem-solving coping strategies, whereas those with fearful attachment styles exhibited a tendency towards helplessness. (Kuftyak, 2021)

Additionally, research by Jaymess and Fatahyah (2019) shed light on the influence of adult attachment on coping strategies during marital conflicts. Their study demonstrated that attachment styles positively impacted coping mechanisms, ultimately contributing to more effective conflict resolution in marriages.(Jaymess & Fatahyah, 2019).

In essence, these collective findings underscore the critical role of attachment styles in shaping coping mechanisms during existential crisis and other challenging situations. Secure attachment tends to foster adaptive coping strategies, whereas insecure attachment styles may lead to maladaptive coping patterns. Recognizing and understanding these dynamics is essential for developing targeted interventions aimed at bolstering coping skills and fostering healthier relationships.

The study's findings indicate a positive but relatively weaker correlation between the Coping Scale and Existential Crisis, with a Spearman's rho of 0.119. Despite its modest strength, this correlation holds statistical significance with a p-value of 0.038, suggesting a notable albeit slight relationship between these variables. This supports the hypothesis that there exists a positive correlation between existential crisis and coping mechanisms among young adults.

Several research studies further corroborate these findings. Ahmadi et al. (2016) delved into the realm of meaning-making coping strategies among cancer patients in Korea. Their investigation identified four coping resources, including belief in nature's healing power, mind-body connection, reliance on transcendent power, and finding solace in relationships. These findings underscored the critical role of cultural context in shaping individuals' coping strategies. (Ahmadi et al., 2016).

LeSueur's study in 2019 explored the intricate relationship between positive psychological resources, existential contemplation, coping strategies, and mental health symptoms among undergraduate students. The results revealed that mindfulness, hope, and a sense of life's meaning were associated with decreased rates of maladaptive coping and mental health symptoms. Additionally, positive emotions and existential reflection were linked to adaptive coping, while maladaptive coping was correlated with symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. (LeSueur, 2019).

Furthermore, Ahmadi et al.'s research in 2022 delved into secular existential meaning-making coping methods among Iranian cancer patients. Through interviews with 27 participants, the study identified nine coping strategies, including ignoring the illness, distraction, altruism, engaging with others, connecting with nature, introspection, visualization, embracing solitude, and cultivating positive thinking. This study highlighted the profound influence of cultural elements such as Iranian Islam, Persian mysticism, and literature on the selection of coping strategies. (Ahmadi et al., 2022). In essence, these collective research endeavors provide robust support for the notion that existential crisis significantly impacts individuals' coping mechanisms, with cultural context playing a pivotal role in shaping coping strategies.

The study findings indicate that the initial hypothesis, suggesting no correlation between attachment style and young adults' levels of existential crisis, is rejected. Instead, a positive correlation is observed between Attachment Style and Existential Crisis, with a Spearman's rho of 0.120. This correlation is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.036, implying a slight but noteworthy relationship between these variables. Therefore, while the correlation is relatively weak, it still holds significance, supporting the idea that there is indeed some connection between attachment style and levels of existential crisis among young adults.

This finding aligns with previous research, which also suggests a relationship between attachment style and various psychological phenomena. For instance, one study delves into the relationship between attachment theory and meaning in life (MIL) across different stages of adulthood. The analysis focuses on two dimensions of MIL: the presence of meaning (PML) and the search for meaning (SML). It reveals that older adults typically score higher on PML, indicating a greater sense of fulfillment and purpose, while younger adults exhibit greater SML, suggesting a more active quest for meaning. Securely attached individuals tend to show higher levels of PML and lower levels of SML compared to those with insecure attachment styles. Moreover, fearful attachment is associated with heightened SML. The study also uncovers interactions between attachment, age, and gender, with older women who are securely attached demonstrating the highest levels of PML. This study supports the notion of a consistent relationship between attachment style and MIL dimensions across adulthood. (Bodner et al., 2013).

Another study explores the link between existential isolation (EI) and dimensions of relational attachment, drawing from existing research on loneliness and attachment theory. The hypothesis posits that EI would be positively associated with insecure attachment, particularly avoidant attachment. Through three cross-sectional studies involving a substantial number of participants, support is found for these hypotheses. It's revealed that loneliness is more strongly correlated with anxious attachment than avoidant attachment, suggesting that different forms of interpersonal isolation are linked to distinct attachment orientations. This study underscores the intricate interplay between existential isolation and relational attachment, shedding light on how individuals navigate these complex psychological dynamics. (Helm et al., 2020).

In summary, both the present study's findings and prior research emphasize the nuanced relationship between attachment style and various psychological constructs, including existential crisis, meaning in life, and existential isolation. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how attachment dynamics influence individuals' experiences and coping mechanisms across different stages of life.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, our study indicates that there is no significant direct impact of attachment style, whether secure or insecure, on existential crisis. However, we did find a subtle, albeit weak, relationship between attachment style and coping mechanisms. This suggests that while attachment style may not directly influence existential crisis, it could play a minor role in shaping how individuals cope with such crisis.

6.2 Implications

The implications of the study indicate various directions for future investigation:

1. Extend the age range beyond young adults (18 to 25 years old) to gain a comprehensive understanding of attachment, existential crisis, and coping strategies across the lifespan.
2. Investigate how attachment styles, existential crisis, and coping mechanisms manifest and interact in older or middle-aged individuals to identify specific trends and challenges.
3. Explore the impact of additional variables on existential crisis, such as personality types, social networks, cultural influences, and life experiences, to better understand how individuals encounter and cope with existential challenges.
4. Utilize a diverse range of assessment instruments and approaches from psychology, sociology, and neuroscience to uncover more connections and nuances in understanding existential crisis.
5. Enhance our understanding of existential crisis through interdisciplinary research, which can lead to more comprehensive intervention techniques tailored to individuals from diverse demographic backgrounds and life stages.

6.3 Limitation

The limitations of the research are :

1. Gender representation within the research sample is uneven, potentially introducing biases and limiting the generalizability of findings. The absence of non-binary individuals further exacerbates this issue, compromising inclusivity and overlooking important perspectives.
2. The study's narrow focus on university students restricts demographic representation, potentially overlooking the experiences of individuals from diverse age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultural contexts. This limitation undermines the applicability of findings to broader populations.
3. Limited to young adults aged 18 to 25, the study's findings may not fully generalize to older age cohorts. Extending the research to include other age groups could yield different results and provide a more comprehensive understanding of attachment, existential crisis, and coping strategies across the lifespan.
4. Utilization of a lengthy questionnaire raises concerns about participant engagement and data quality. Lengthy surveys may induce participant fatigue and compromise response validity and reliability, potentially distorting the accuracy of findings.
5. The lack of random assignment in participant selection undermines the research's methodological rigor. Non-random sampling methods can result in biased samples that fail to accurately represent the larger population, limiting the generalizability of findings.
6. The study's limited measurement scope may overlook important variables or dimensions relevant to attachment, existential crisis, and coping strategies. Focusing on specific facets of these phenomena hinders a comprehensive understanding and limits insights derived from the research.



CHAPTER 6

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CHAPTER 7

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Existential Concern Questionnaire (ECQ) :

1. The question of whether life has meaning makes me anxious.
2. It frightens me when I realize how many choices life offers.
3. I worry about not being at home in the world as if I do not belong here.
5. Existence feels threatening to me, as if at any moment something terrible could happen to me.
6. It frightens me that at some point in time, I will be dead.
7. I worry about the meaning of life.
8. I try to forget that all my choices have consequences.
9. I get anxious because of losing touch with myself.
10. I struggle with the feeling that in the end, I am on my own in life.
12. It makes me anxious that my life is passing by.
13. When the question of whether life has meaning enters my mind, I try to think quickly about something else.
14. I worry about not living the life that I could live.
16. The awareness that other people will never know me at the deepest level frightens me.
17. I worry that, out of the blue, something terrible might happen to me.
18. I try to push away the thought that life will end.
19. It frightens me that things I once considered important seem meaningless when I look back on them.
20. I am afraid that I do not get out of life what is in it.
21. I try to avoid the question of who I really am.
22. I have the anxious feeling that there is a gap between me and other people.

23. I become anxious when I realize how vulnerable my body is to the dangers of life.

24. I worry about having to let go of everything at the moment of my death.

25. I am afraid that I will never know myself at the deepest level.

Scoring of ECQ :

1=Never: You rarely or almost never experience the described feeling or situation.

2=Seldom: You experience the feeling or situation infrequently or only on rare occasions.

3 Sometimes: You experience the feeling or situation occasionally, but it's not a constant occurrence.

4=Often: You experience the feeling or situation frequently or on a regular basis.

5=Always: You consistently and constantly experience the described feeling or situation.

APPENDIX B

Proactive Coping Questionnaire

THE PROACTIVE COPING SCALE

1 I am a "take charge" person.

2 I try to let things work out on their own.

3 After attaining a goal, I look for another, more challenging one.

4 I like challenges and beating the odds.

5 I visualize my dreams and try to achieve them.

6 Despite numerous setbacks, I usually succeed in getting what I want.

7 I try to pinpoint what I need to succeed.

8 I always try to find a way to work around obstacles; nothing really stops me.

9 I often see myself failing so I don't get my hopes up too high.

10 When I apply for a position, I imagine myself filling it.

11 I turn obstacles into positive experiences.

12 If someone tells me I can't do something, you can be sure I will do it.

13 When I experience a problem, I take the initiative in resolving it.

14 When I have a problem, I usually see myself in a no-win situation

REFLECTIVE COPING SCALE

- 1 I imagine myself solving difficult problems.
- 2 Rather than acting impulsively, I usually think of various ways to solve a problem.
- 3 In my mind I go through many different scenarios in order to prepare myself for different outcomes.
- 4 I tackle a problem by thinking about realistic alternatives.
- 5 When I have a problem with my co-workers, friends, or family, I imagine beforehand how I will deal with them successfully.
- 6 Before tackling a difficult task I imagine success scenarios.
- 7 I take action only after thinking carefully about a problem.
- 8 I imagine myself solving a difficult problem before I actually have to face it.
- 9 I address a problem from various angles until I find the appropriate action.
- 10 When there are serious misunderstandings with co-workers, family members, or friends, I practice before how I will deal with them.
- 11 I think about every possible outcome to a problem before tackling it.

STRATEGIC PLANNING SCALE

- 1 I often find ways to break down difficult problems into manageable components.
- 2 I make a plan and follow it.
- 3 I break down a problem into smaller parts and do one part at a time.
- 4 I make lists and try to focus on the most important things first.

PREVENTIVE COPING SCALE

- 1 I plan for future eventualities.
- 2 Rather than spending every cent I make, I like to save for a rainy day.
- 3 I prepare for adverse events.
- 4 Before disaster strikes I am well-prepared for its consequences.
- 5 I plan my strategies to change a situation before I act.
- 6 I develop my job skills to protect myself against unemployment.
- 7 I make sure my family is well taken care of to protect them from adversity in the future.

8 I think ahead to avoid dangerous situations.

9 I plan strategies for what I hope will be the best possible outcome.

10 I try to manage my money well in order to avoid being destitute in old age.

INSTRUMENTAL SUPPORT SEEKING SCALE

1 When solving my own problems other people's advice can be helpful.

2 I try to talk and explain my stress in order to get feedback from my friends.

3 Information I get from others has often helped me deal with my problems.

4 I can usually identify people who can help me develop my own solutions to problems.

5 I ask others what they would do in my situation.

6 Talking to others can be really useful because it provides another perspective on the problem.

7 Before getting messed up with a problem I'll call a friend to talk about it.

8 When I am in trouble I can usually work out something with the help of others.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SEEKING SCALE

1 If I am depressed I know who I can call to help me feel better.

2 Others help me feel cared for.

3 I know who can be counted on when the chips are down.

4 When I'm depressed I get out and talk to others.

5 I confide my feelings in others to build up and maintain close relationships.

AVOIDANCE COPING SCALE

1 When I have a problem I like to sleep on it.

2 If I find a problem too difficult sometimes I put it aside until I'm ready to deal with it.

3 When I have a problem I usually let it simmer on the back burner for a while.

Scoring of PCI:

1=Do not agree at all: This means you strongly disagree or feel that the statement does not describe your experiences.

2=Hardly agree: You slightly agree with the statement, but it's not a strong agreement.

3=Somewhat agree: You moderately agree with the statement, but there are some reservations.

4=Agree: You agree with the statement, and it aligns reasonably well with your experiences.

5=Strongly agree: You strongly agree with the statement, and it accurately describes your experiences.

6=Very strongly agree: You feel an exceptionally strong agreement with the statement, and it precisely represents your experiences.

APPENDIX C

Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale :

1. My parents gave me many opportunities to make my own decisions about what I was doing.
 2. When my parents asked me to do something, they explained why they wanted me to do it.
 3. When I refused to do something, my parents threatened to take away certain privileges in order to make me do it.
 4. My point of view was very important to my parents when they made im- important decisions concern- ing me.
 5. My parents refused to accept that I could want simply to have fun without trying to be the best.
 6. When my parents wanted me to do something differently, made me feel guilty. they
 7. My parents encouraged me to be myself.
 8. Within certain limits, my parents allowed me the freedom to choose my own activities.
 9. When I was not allowed to do something, I usually knew why.
 10. I always had to do what my parents wanted me to do, if not, they would threaten to take away privileges.
 11. My parents believed that, in order to succeed, I always had to be the best at what I did.
 12. My parents made me feel guilty for anything and everything.
 13. My parents were able to put themselves in my shoes and understand my feelings.
 14. My parents hoped that I would make choices that corresponded to my interests and preferences regardless of what theirs were.
 15. When my parents wanted me to do something, I had to obey or else I was punished.
 16. My parents were open to my thoughts and feelings even when they were different from theirs.
 17. In order for my parents to be proud of me, I had to be the best.
 18. When my parents wanted me to act differently, they made me feel ashamed in order to make me change.
 19. My parents made sure that I understood why they forbid certain things.
 20. As soon as I didn't do exactly what my parents wanted, they threatened to punish me.
 21. My parents used guilt to control me.
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22. My parents insisted that I always be better than others.

23. When I asked why I had to do, or not do, something, my parents gave me good reasons.

24. My parents listened to my opinion and point of view when I disagreed with them.

Scoring of P-PASS:

1=Not at all true: This means the statement does not describe your feelings or reactions.

2=Barely true: You feel the statement is somewhat accurate but not strongly so.

3=Somewhat true: The statement reflects your feelings or reactions to some extent.

4=Completely true: You strongly identify with the statement and feel it accurately describes your feelings or reactions.

